WHERE IS THE MONEY FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS IN THE PACIFIC?

MAPPING FUNDING GAPS, OPPORTUNITIES AND TRENDS

A SCOPING STUDY SUMMARY BRIEF

URGENT ACTION FUND
FOR WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS
ASIA & PACIFIC

FIJI WOMEN'S FUND

LESS THAN 1%

OF GRANT FUNDING IS DIRECTED TO PACIFIC WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS

Women's rights are challenged all over the world, however women living in the Pacific face intersecting challenges that can make them all but invisible to the rest of the world. While globally funders are increasing their financial support for gender equality and women's empowerment, funding disbursements by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee members (OECD DAC members) have stagnated over recent years in the Pacific. Less than 1% of grant funding is directed to women's organisations in the region.

The means of funding Pacific women's organisations (PWOs) is changing rapidly, bringing in new partners and a new way of working. But there is a gender data gap in relation to donor funding of PWOs. And there is a need to amplify and facilitate the voice of PWOs in funding decisions.

In early 2019 the Fiji Women's Fund (FWF) and the Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights, Asia and Pacific, (UAF A&P) commissioned a scoping study into the funding realities for women's organisations in the region. The study found several areas of possible collaboration between funders and women's organisations on the issues emerging from the scoping study.

KEY REASONS WHY FUNDS ARE NOT FLOWING TO PACIFIC WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS:

FUNDERS DON'T KNOW HOW TO REACH THE RIGHT PACIFIC WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS AND/OR WHICH INITIATIVE TO SUPPORT

INTERSECTING CHALLENGES FACING PACIFIC WOMEN

SOCIAL BARRIERS

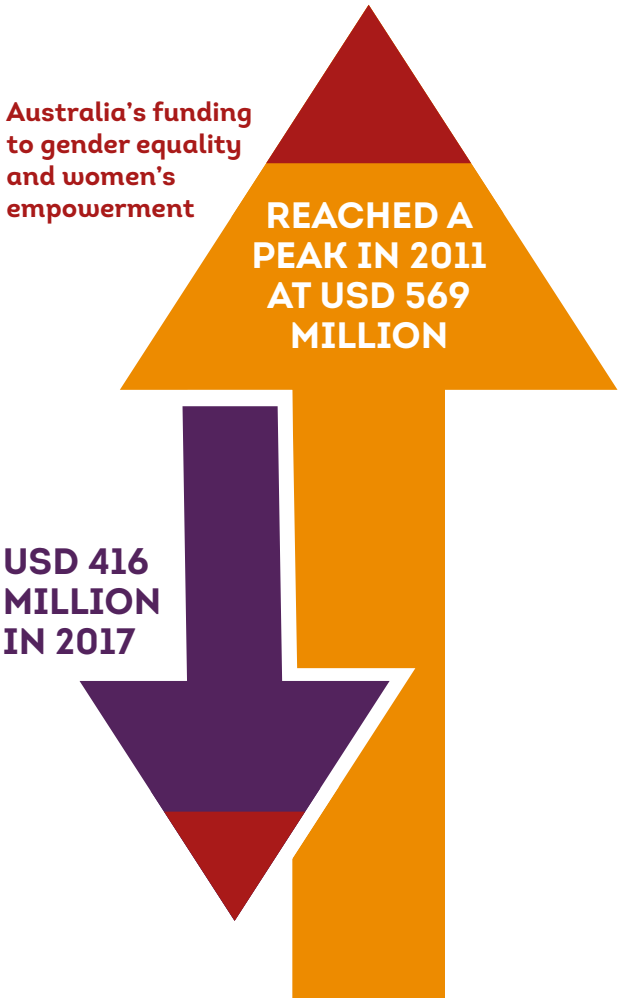
- 2 out of 3 women and girls experience violence in their lifetime – twice the global average
- Women and girls living with a disability are more likely to experience sexual or physical violence than those without disabilities[1]
- Women and girls are severely affected by extreme weather events, increasing economic insecurity and physical vulnerability
- Lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex people face criminalising laws and threats to their dignity from institutions and individuals

GEOGRAPHICAL BARRIERS

- Basic communication within the region across hundreds of islands as well as communication beyond the Pacific is difficult
- Service provision for ending violence against women and girls is challenging and expensive across the Pacific islands
- Obtaining working capital or technical assistance for women-led businesses is hampered when living outside major cities

FEW FUNDERS FOR THE PACIFIC

Globally funders are increasing their funding for gender equality and women's empowerment. However in the Pacific, funding disbursements by OECD DAC members for gender equality and women's empowerment activities have stagnated over the last three years. The Australian Government is the largest donor for gender equality and women's empowerment activities in the Pacific and therefore the stagnation in Australian funding for gender equality activities in the Pacific since 2014 has a significant effect on total gender equality funding for the Pacific region, particularly those funds directed to PWOs. Australia's funding to gender equality and women's empowerment activities in the Pacific reached a peak in 2011 at USD 569 million and has dropped to USD 416 million in 2017.



BILATERAL AID

In 2017, the total bilateral allocable aid to the Pacific by OECD DAC members was USD 1.6 billion in gross disbursements. But only 36% was directed to activities in which gender equality and women's empowerment was a significant or principal focus. Only a fraction of that aid (see the diagram on the right) was directed specifically to women's organisations. Just USD 2.5 million went to women's organisations, managed by Pacific women and organised at the national level, based and operated in a developing country. This represents less than two-tenths of 1% of all aid to the Pacific.

Foundations: Data from Philanthropy Advancing Women's Human Rights (PAWHR) on their mapping of 2017 grants from their 12 member foundations shows that in 2017 0.5% was dedicated to groups in the Pacific region.

New funding opportunities are opening up
But the means of funding women's organisations in the Pacific is changing rapidly, bringing in many new partners and new ways of working.

WHERE'S THE MONEY?

Impact Investing
The 2019 World Economic Forum highlighted the global trend for fund managers and investors to back investments that produce returns and have a positive social impact

Globally growing middle class
The Charities Aid Foundation estimates up to 2.4 billion people globally could enter the middle classes by 2030, potentially generating USD 319 billion a year in funds for civil society organisations, more than double the annual aid from OECD DAC members

New funds and initiatives
There are several emerging opportunities for PWOs to engage with new funds and facilities from existing funders

However, the participation and knowledge of PWOs need to be actively facilitated so that they have a seat at the table when investment decisions are made that affect the region.

LESSER FUNDS FLOWING TO PACIFIC

USD 1.6 BILLION
GROSS DISBURSEMENTS TO THE PACIFIC

THE YAWNING GAP IN FUNDING

USD 13.3 MILLION
GROSS DISBURSEMENTS TO WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS

USD 2.5 MILLION
GROSS DISBURSEMENTS TO PACIFIC WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS

DATA GAP RELATED TO FUNDING

It is challenging for PWOs and disabled persons organisations (DPOs) in the Pacific to obtain data that presents a picture of total funding for gender equality and women's empowerment activities, including funds already disbursed to such groups, in a readily accessible format.

The three main funders in the Pacific – Australia, the European Union and New Zealand – do not publish summary information on their websites on funding disbursements for the previous year that reach PWOs, women's funds and Pacific DPOs directly.[3] Therefore, it is difficult for PWOs and DPOs to compile a comprehensive picture of the scale and modalities of bilateral, multilateral, corporate and philanthropic grants disbursed. However, for the first time the OECD DAC will publish information from DAC members on how their aid activities in 2018 contributed to disability policy outcomes.

NEED TO AMPLIFY THE VOICE OF PWOS IN FUNDING DECISIONS

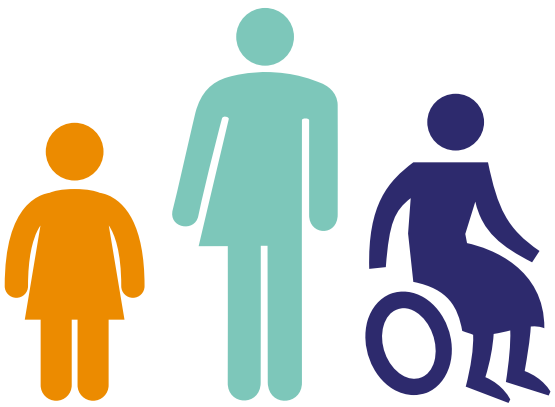
Pacific women leaders and organisations expressed a sense of disempowerment in their discussions with funders, both in relation to influencing the priority areas that receive funding and the way this funding is managed.

FUNDING CHALLENGES FACED BY PWOs

- Complexity of the process for obtaining the grant
- The power dynamic existing between donor and grantee in determining how the funds may be spent
- Complexity of the process for reporting on the funds
- Flexibility in other disbursement arrangements for the funds, including requirements for bank accounts, organisational registration and several years of annual reports and/or audited accounts
- Whether the grantor requires that the funds are disbursed to a grantee via a managing contractor and/or International Non-Governmental Organisation or other intermediary organisation, with the consequential reduction in funding ultimately allocated to PWOs and DPOs

DPOs working with women and girls with a disability face even more hurdles in accessing funding for their work in the Pacific, and in reporting on the use of these funds. DPOs and the national disability organisations they work with are staffed by people with disabilities and face significant challenges in receiving funding through both mainstream grant processes, and being considered as a partner in business readiness support programmes.

PWOs and DPOs are uniquely placed to connect with the millions of women living across the region and help them build a more secure and sustainable life for themselves and their children. However, PWOs need support and resources to do this in a flexible manner that allows them to strengthen their voice, and leadership in their community, country and region.



REIMAGINING THE LANDSCAPE: THE WAY FORWARD

1 Set up an Independent Pacific Feminist Fund

The needs and constraints in the Pacific are challenging. Due to the small size of many PWOs and the thousands of small grants needed across hundreds of islands, a regional Pacific Feminist Fund could act as a central facilitator. It could reduce the risk of grants made by a range of funding partners by helping to distribute the funds to the women's organisations. If a Pacific Feminist Fund was established, the legacy would be seen in 2030 and beyond.

The Contours of a Feminist Fund

Working with PWOs and DPOs

- Advocate for gender-lens investing strategies
- Broaden the range of funders and extend their commitment
- Promote discussions concerning women, girls and gender non-conforming people in the Pacific
- Get climate change and its impact on women, girls and gender non-conforming people on the agenda
- Amplify the voice of women's organisations and activists in the Pacific
- Help PWOs and DPOs understand how impact investing may support them
- Work with Pacific Leaders, role models, celebrities and philanthropic networks to raise awareness

2 Facilitate engagement with new funding partners and financing modalities

As the funding partners and financing modalities change, PWOs need to understand where opportunities are arising that will support their aims. The change is rapid and smaller women's organisations and DPOs in the Pacific will need support to keep abreast of developments that could be beneficial to them.

It is recommended that the FWF and UAF A&P (and in time the Pacific Feminist Fund) co-lead **three peer-to-peer dialogues each year** inside and outside the Pacific.

The aim of these dialogues would be to bring together the private sector, philanthropists and governments with PWOs, DPOs and activists, building trust and understanding on the range of modalities for funding gender equality and women's empowerment activities and demonstrate the complementary nature of grant funding, impact investing and market-based initiatives in delivering sustainable and flexible funding for PWOs and DPOs.

3 Improve the transparency of funding data

Our transparency overview shows that funders and PWOs do not have the same information when discussing the funding of gender equality and women's empowerment activities in the Pacific. It is either delayed; difficult to access or difficult to track against declared funder disbursements; contributing to a breakdown in trust as to where the money is going.

Ways To Improve Data Transparency And Inclusion

Key funders **publish more comprehensive data** on their websites about total gross funding (specified in the Scoping Report) within six months of the financial reporting year.

The Prospera International Network of Women's Funds, in collaboration with FWF and UAF A&P, produce an **annual traffic-light scorecard** for Pacific funders.

Funders collaborate with leaders from PWOs and DPOs to create an **infographic** that presents annual and 10-year trend data on funding.

As DPOs are staffed by persons with disabilities, funders could consider ways to **improve support** and reporting mechanisms to these organisations.

4 Implement 2016 OECD Report Recommendations

Funders in the Pacific could consider implementing the 10 recommendations put forward in the 2016 OECD report, *Donor support to southern women's rights organisations: OECD findings*. A summary of these recommendations is in the scoping report and the full OECD report can be found on their website.[4]

ABOUT THIS BRIEF

The Fiji Women's Fund (FWF) and Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights, Asia and Pacific, (UAF A&P) commissioned a scoping study on:

- the funding realities and trends, providing an overview of the funding of women's organisations and gender equality in Fiji and Papua New Guinea
- the differences between the perspectives of funders and women's organisations
- areas of possible collaboration between funders and women's organisations on the issues that emerge from the scoping study

In early 2019 interviews were conducted with over 40 stakeholders from international funders to women's organisations, seeking insights into the funding of women's organisations in Fiji, Papua New Guinea and more broadly across the Pacific.

The full scoping study can be accessed at: https://fijiwomensfund.org/where_is_the_money/

ENDNOTES

1. UNESCAP Disability in Asia and the Pacific: The Facts
2. Data presented in this Summary Brief is from: OECD Stats 2009-2017 https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?QueryId=92115
3. Transparency Overview infographic
4. Donor support to southern women's rights organisations: OECD findings https://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development/donor-support-to-southern-women-s-rights-organisations.htm

ABOUT US

The Fiji Women's Fund is an initiative of the Australian Government's Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development (*Pacific Women*) Program. The Fund has committed AUD 10.5 million from 2017 to 2022 for funding and capacity development support to women's groups, networks and organisations in Fiji to expand and enhance their work on women's empowerment and gender equality.

FIJI WOMEN'S FUND

For more information about the Fiji Women's Fund please visit: https://fijiwomensfund.org/

Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights, Asia and Pacific, supports the resilience of women and non-binary human rights defenders by strengthening and sustaining webs of security and care. Our strategies are multifaceted and linked to a transformative agenda of achieving social justice, building a solidarity economy and re-imagining cultures, including the culture of giving in Asia and the Pacific.

URGENT ACTION FUND
FOR WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS ASIA & PACIFIC

For more information about the Urgent Action Fund, Asia and Pacific, please visit: https://www.uafanp.org/

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