

**UNDEF**



The United Nations  
Democracy Fund

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**EVALUATION REPORT**



**TRANSTEC**  
PROJECT  
MANAGEMENT

**UDF-RAP-07-170  
The Bottom-Up Governance and Leadership Programme (BGLP) for Women  
in the Pacific (Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Tonga, Solomon Islands).**

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## **Disclaimer**

The views expressed in this report are those of the evaluators. They do not represent those of UNDEF or of any of the institutions referred to in the report.



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## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### *(i) The project*

This report contains an evaluation of the project entitled *The Bottom-up Governance and Leadership Programme for Women in the Pacific (BGLP)*, which ran from 1 September 2008 to 30 October 2010.

The BGLP was designed and implemented by the Australian NGO Foundation for Development Cooperation (FDC) to respond to the documented low participation rates of women in governance and leadership in the Pacific Island Countries (PICs). Its stated objectives were to (i) increase women's political representation; (ii) increase familiarity with governance issues; and (iii) increase women's leadership skills.

The project was implemented in four PICs: Fiji, Papua New Guinea (PNG), Solomon Islands and Tonga.

The BGLP focused on two outcomes: increasing women's knowledge of governance and leadership in the Pacific through training, delivered through an e-platform which would be evaluated as part of the project; and increasing bottom-up governance initiatives by women in their local communities. This was to be done by organizing a 'BGLP governance and leadership contest', with the successful project proposers receiving participatory project management training (PPM) and going on a study tour before being funded to undertake their 'mini-projects'.

### *(ii) Assessment*

#### **Relevance**

All of the outcomes were achieved, however the relevance of the project rested to a large extent on (i) whether the project design had appropriately assessed the reasons why women do not participate in governance and leadership in the countries concerned, and implemented a suitable (partial) solution to that problem; and (ii) whether the methodology proposed was appropriate, culturally relevant and gender-sensitive. This evaluation suggests that there was in fact a mismatch between the problem identified and the solution proposed; that additionally the differences among the four countries selected needed to be taken into account; (iii) that the delivery method of the training

was not suitable for the majority of the participants, who did not have easy, affordable Internet access; and that (iv) a potential partial solution to this latter problem – resourcing and mobilizing Affiliate Partners in each country -- was underfunded and under-used.

### ***Effectiveness***

The project was not effective for the majority of the participants simply because they did not have easy, affordable access to Internet. The grantee realized this early in the implementation stage and proceeded to produce the training materials in hard copy for distribution to the women. Despite this, assignments had either to be submitted by e-mail or put in the post – costly and difficult for those living in remote areas. As a result, many of the women did not complete the course and many of those who did were unable to submit assignments and ‘graduate’.

The five funded ‘mini-projects’ were very effective. They allowed the successful applicants to take their new-found knowledge of governance and leadership into their own communities and to share this in different ways with large numbers of women (and men). They had no ‘tools’, however, since the BGLP training materials were in English and quite academic.

### ***Efficiency***

The majority of the funds were spent in Australia, on the grantee’s staff costs (no additional expertise was brought in, although it was required), on the set-up and maintenance of the e-platform, on the PPM course and study tour. The grantee saved some funds allocated to travel by assigning in-country coordination to the Affiliate Partners, however they did not receive sufficient resources to allow them to carry out their potential tasks efficiently. Most importantly, there was a serious imbalance between the funds expended on the training component of the BGLP and the much more relevant and successful grassroots mini-project component. To this extent, the project was not efficient.

### ***Impact***

The impact of the project varied depending on the extent to which individual participants were able to follow and complete the training, and were able to test their knowledge and make their mark in their own communities. Since the numbers were low and were

reduced over the two years (168 applications, 27 participants, 10 graduates proceeding to PPM and study tour, only five mini-projects), and given that some of the participants expressed varying levels of dissatisfaction with the training materials on the basis that they were not culturally appropriate, the immediate impact of the BGLP was minimal. Any future impact will depend entirely on whether the women who did consider that the BGLP had had an impact on them are able to capitalize on their increased understanding through action or by influencing other women. The project did not put in place any mechanisms for this to happen, limiting follow-on to 12-month maintenance of the e-platform.

### ***Sustainability***

The potential for sustainability is low because, as noted above, it depends almost entirely on the individual interest and capacity for action of the women who participated, and of the Affiliate Partners.

The concrete outputs of the project – the e-platform and the training modules – may be usable in future but will need to be reviewed and revised in the light of the lessons learned through this evaluation and, in particular, to take into account a solid cause/effect analysis in the country to be targeted. The materials, additionally, will need to be reviewed by a gender specialist and to be made culturally more relevant to the projected participants.

### ***UNDEF value added***

The project fell clearly within the mandate of UNDEF, focusing on the importance of encouraging women to engage in democratic processes and in particular to take leadership roles in their communities and nations. There are, however, a number of agencies working in the area of governance and gender in the four countries concerned, in particular UNDP, UNIFEM, NZAID and AusAID. Nevertheless, the women and men who came into contact with the project through the grassroots mini-projects were extremely proud to be able to say that they were involved in UNDEF-supported work, and made banners to show UNDEF as sponsor. This underlines the importance of democracy to people in the Pacific Islands and suggests that UNDEF has a continued role in the region.



### ***(iii) Conclusions***

- Weak cause and effect analysis, and the lack of a real gender audit of the issues being addressed undermined the design of the project in relation to the most appropriate responses to select in order to effect change.
- Delivering Internet-based governance and leadership training to women whose Internet access was irregular, slow and expensive illustrates a poor understanding of the realities of daily life for women in the PICs, even women who have reached a certain level of education, are working (including in offices with Internet connections) and who have shown themselves ready to take lead roles in their communities.
- The move to use funds allocated for CD-Rom production to produce hard copy training materials was the right one, however these materials were content-heavy and the women were not given adequate support as they studied alone. The Affiliate Partners were under-resourced and could not deliver support, for example, to women in remote areas (although from the outset there had been a decision to specifically target such women as participants).
- The use of the grant primarily to fund headquarters outputs at the expense of regional processes, in-country mechanisms and grassroots pilot projects was a serious error on the part of FDC management and contributed to the low level of impact and sustainability of the project.
- Training in governance and leadership is both required and welcomed by women in the four countries, however it does not change the very real social and cultural hurdles the women must also overcome in order to be able to achieve real change, and the project did not sufficiently take these into account.
- The BGLP leaves behind it, in addition to the 27 women who graduated and others who did not but remain interested, a number of elements that might be resourced, re-energized and consulted on potential future directions.

- If any real and lasting change to women's role in governance and leadership in the PICs is to occur, then the role of men as both obstacles and potential supporters must be analysed and programming designed accordingly.

#### ***(iv) Recommendations***

These first comments are aimed at the grantee for this particular project (FDC), however they have broader relevance to organizations designing projects or programmes in this same area:

- When designing projects and programmes, FDC should ensure that appropriate subject and gender expertise is brought in where it does not exist in-house so that all initiatives are based on a thorough cause and effect analysis;
- Before embarking on web-based delivery systems, FDC should ensure that target users have appropriate access to computers and the Internet, are comfortable with using them and will not face prohibitive costs;
- FDC should ensure that risk appraisal in all projects takes account of public security in the project sites so that participants are able to be fully involved without running unreasonable risks;
- FDC might reconsider the future of the BGLP e-platform, especially if there is an opportunity to divert funds earmarked for its updating/maintenance to the Affiliate Partners or individual participants who may be able to use the funds for grassroots initiatives;
- FDC must be aware that 'gender' approaches do not mean automatically excluding men – good gender-sensitive programming will take account of the relative status and roles of men and women, girls and boys, and aim to achieve outcomes for women that allow them to progress within family, social and cultural contexts.

The following recommendations are aimed at UNDEF, but should be read within the broader framework of UNDEF's resources and processes:

- UNDEF might consider seeking concise cause and effect analysis of submissions for funding by including a specific question on this in grant applications. It might

also be useful, during negotiation of successful submissions, to encourage grantees to demonstrate understanding of the political, cultural and social context in which intended beneficiaries live and work through specific reference in their descriptions of methodology;

- UNDEF might usefully share this evaluation report with agencies engaged in supporting governance and leadership initiatives in the PICs so that they may share the lessons, especially AusAID and NZAID.

## II. INTRODUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

### **(i) The project**

This report contains an evaluation of the project entitled *The Bottom-up Governance and Leadership Programme for Women in the Pacific (BGLP)*. The project ran from 1 September 2008 to 30 October 2010 (including a three-month extension for administrative purposes) with a total budget of US\$300,000.

The BGLP was designed and implemented by the Australian NGO Foundation for Development Cooperation (FDC) to respond to the documented low participation rates of women in governance and leadership in the Pacific Island Countries (PICs).

### **(ii) Evaluation methodology**

An international expert assisted by a national expert from Papua New Guinea (PNG) carried out the evaluation under a framework agreement between UNDEF and Transtec.

Details of the methodology are set out in a framework governing the evaluation process, agreed by UNDEF and Transtec, and contained in an *Operational Manual*. This states that the over-arching objective of the evaluation is to “undertake in-depth analysis of UNDEF-funded projects to gain a better understanding of what constitutes a successful project, which will in turn help UNDEF devise future project strategies. Evaluations also assist stakeholders to determine whether projects have been implemented in accordance with the project document and whether anticipated project outputs have been achieved”.

Planning of the evaluation was detailed in a *Launch Note* approved by UNDEF in February 2011. In preparing the *Launch Note*, the international expert reviewed the set of project documents provided by UNDEF (see list in Annex 3) and had preliminary discussions with the FDC Project Manager.

Between approval of the *Launch Note* and the planned field mission to PNG (27 February – 4 March 2011), the experts prepared a series of questionnaires to be used to seek information from three main groups of respondent:

- Personnel and ex-personnel of FDC, and consultants retained by the organization for the BGLP (equivalent in the project to “headquarters staff”);

- Affiliate Partners in Fiji, PNG, Solomon Islands and Tonga (equivalent to “country office staff”);
- Participants in all four countries (“target beneficiaries”), with an additional sub-set of questions for the five participants who implemented mini-projects.

These questionnaires translated into BGLP-specific questions the evaluation questions (EQ) contained in the *Operational Manual* (see Annex 1). The questionnaires were followed up by in-depth interviews by Skype/telephone with FDC/ex-FDC personnel and consultants, and by e-mail exchange with respondents in Fiji, Solomon Islands and Tonga. The questionnaires were also used as the basis for face-to-face interviews with Affiliate Partners and participants, and for a Focus Group discussion with some participants, in PNG.

### ***(iii) Development context***

The BGLP programme designers noted *ab initio* that, “A common element in all these countries (PICs) is that women have limited political power as a result of the low number of women candidates, elected members and civic leaders. An average 2.5 per cent of parliamentarians in the Pacific region are women, compared with a world average of 17.7 per cent. In addition, of the 25 countries with the lowest percentage of women in parliament, 10 are in the Pacific region. This has a negative impact on the quality of governance but also in terms of having issues of concern to women dealt with by governments and international bodies in an appropriate and democratic manner”.

However, these ‘Pacific’ statistics mask what are very different political, social and cultural contexts in the four countries chosen for BGLP activity. The four countries have very different political histories, current realities and social and political structures. Additionally, the geography and demographics of the four countries are not common and must be taken into account in developing an approach and methodology for change. The rationale given for choosing the four countries does not seem to have been strategic; the programme designers decided to select two Melanesian and two Polynesian states.

**The Independent State of Papua New Guinea (PNG)** is the world’s 54<sup>th</sup> largest

country, comprising the eastern half of the island of New Guinea (the western half is part of Indonesia) and numerous offshore islands covering almost half a million square kilometres. It is a rugged country, with less than 20 per cent urban habitation. Most of the people survive on subsistence farming. In 2006 the UN Committee for Development Policy downgraded PNG to least-developed country status.

PNG is one of the most culturally diverse countries in the world, with more than 850 indigenous languages. Although English is one of the three official languages, it is not widely spoken. Parliamentary debate, as well as much of daily life in the capital, is conducted in *Tok Pisin* (Melanesian Pidgin).

PNG is a parliamentary democracy with a constitutional monarchy. Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II is represented in PNG by the Governor-General. Executive power resides in the Prime Minister. Politically, PNG has remained stable in recent years, following the resolution in 1997 of the 'Bougainville crisis' when the state of Bougainville and 18 pre-independent states gained quasi-federal status as provinces. Internal conflict in 2009 between Chinese and Papua New Guinean workers led to widespread rioting, however in general PNG is currently free of political or social conflict.

**The Republic of Fiji** presents a very different political reality. Fiji is a parliamentary republic with a military junta that took power in 2006 and which was declared illegal in 2009 but reinstated by the President. Its Paramount Chief remains Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, despite the fact that Fiji has been suspended from the Pacific Islands Forum and the Commonwealth for refusing to hold elections by 2010. However, despite a recent history of coups and military interventions – including during the first year of implementation of the BGLP -- Fiji is currently politically calm.

Fiji is an island nation comprising 332 islands (of which 110 are inhabited) and 500 islets, with a total land area of some 18,300 square kilometres. Almost 90 per cent of the population lives on the two largest islands, Viti Levu and Vanua Levu. Fiji has a well developed economy, partly because of its abundance of forest, mineral and fish resources, partly because of a robust tourism sector and sugar exports. Fiji has three official languages: Fijian, which is spoken by less than half the population but which is a second language to approximately one-quarter more; English and Hindustani.

**The Kingdom of Tonga** covers some 270,000 square kilometres and is an archipelago made up of 176 islands, of which 52 are inhabited. It is the only island nation in the Pacific region to have avoided colonization, having been a kingdom since unification in

1845. In 1875 it became a constitutional monarchy and has since been ruled by an uninterrupted line of kings and queens. Despite 'home rule', Tonga has been a member of the Commonwealth since 1970. English and Tongan are the official languages.

Tonga's appointed parliament has been criticized for being unrepresentative however the pro-democracy movement has never suggested overthrowing the monarch. Social development in Tonga is theoretically advanced – education is free for all, the literacy rate exceeds 98 per cent, and women and men have equal access to education and healthcare, and equal labour rights. Uniquely, in Tongan tradition women enjoy a higher social status than men.

However, the gap between the 'haves' and have-nots' in Tonga is substantial, with the monetary sector of the economy dominated by the royal family and aristocracy. Commerce is dominated by recent Chinese migrants and by offshoots of regional enterprises. The majority of indigenous Tongans consequently survive on plantation and subsistence agriculture.

**Solomon Islands** is a sovereign state consisting of almost one thousand islands, covering approximately 28,400 square kilometres. A member of the Commonwealth, it has retained Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II as head of state, represented by a Governor-General. Executive power resides in an elected government headed by the Prime Minister, with a functioning parliamentary system.

Since the early 2000s, however, Solomon Islands has been wracked by social unrest, a breakdown of law and order, and widespread police corruption. When the country effectively declared itself bankrupt, and in 2003 requested international help, Australian and Pacific Island police and troops arrived under the auspices of the Australian-led Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI). Tensions between the Chinese business community and indigenous Islanders, no-confidence votes against the Prime Minister, evacuations of expatriate Australians and New Zealanders and continuing allegations of corruption have led many commentators to call Solomon Islands a 'failed state'.

Approximately 95 per cent of the population of Solomon Islands are ethnically Melanesian, with small numbers of Polynesians, Micronesians and ethnic Chinese. There are 74 living languages in use, with Melanesian predominating. While English is the official language, it is spoken by only 1-2 per cent of the population; the *lingua franca* is Solomons Pidgin.

The large number of languages spoken, high rates of illiteracy and the difficulty of transmission mean that most Islanders do not have television. There is consequently no national television production; ABC Asia Pacific (from Australia's national broadcaster) and the BBC are the only services that broadcast to the region. Radio is by far the most influential medium.

Education is not compulsory in Solomon Islands, and only 60 per cent of school-aged children have access to primary education.



### III. PROJECT OBJECTIVES, STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION

#### (i) Objectives

FDC's analysis of the reasons for low female participation in governance and leadership led to the conclusion that, *"two of the major problems that confront women entering politics are: their lack of confidence in assuming leadership positions; and their lack of access to relevant information and training,"* and the programme designers concluded that, *"to reverse this situation there is an urgent need to empower women with leadership potential so that they more actively engage in governance and decision making at the local, national and international levels [and] there is a need to expose them to current thinking on democratic and governance practices, to train them on how to put these practices into context and to show them how to find relevant information to strengthen their leadership roles"*.

With this overarching objective in view, the project document gives three specific programme goals:

1. Increase women's political representation;
2. Increase familiarity with governance issues;
3. Increase women's leadership skills.

These goals were to be achieved through two outcomes:

#### **Outcome 1: Increase women's knowledge of governance and leadership in the Pacific**

- Creation of an e-learning and knowledge management platform
- Governance and leadership training to selected participants
- Evaluation of the platform's effectiveness

#### **Outcome 2: Increase bottom-up governance initiatives by women in their local communities.**

- Organization of a 'BGLP governance and leadership contest'
- Delivery of participatory project management training (PPM) to a selection of workshop participants, accompanied by a study tour

- Selection, funding and evaluation of five BGLP grassroots governance and leadership initiatives (here called ‘mini-projects’).

### **Logical impact framework**

The diagram that follows sets out the logical impact schema as described in the Project Document and which provided the basis for implementation. The crucial role played by the Affiliate Partners, and the ToT training aimed at them, are not reflected in the project logic as envisaged in the original design.

ACTIVITIES		RESULTS	DEVELOPMENT OUTCOME
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• E-platform</li> <li>• Training</li> </ul>	□	Increased understanding of governance and leadership	□
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contest</li> <li>• PPM training</li> <li>• Study tour</li> <li>• Mini-projects</li> </ul>	□	Increased confidence in participating in leadership initiatives	□

### **Strategy**

The BGLP programme aimed to address the identified “democratic deficit” by exposing a selected number of women to governance and leadership training, supplied through an e-learning platform and CD-Rom. The women’s anticipated increased interest in and capacity for leadership was then to be ‘tested’ by asking 10 women who graduated most successfully from the course to develop community-level mini-projects putting their new knowledge into action at grassroots level. These 10 women were also to be brought together on a study tour, during which they would attend a three-day Participatory

Project Management (PPM) course to support their project management skills. Five of the mini-projects submitted would then be selected, implemented and evaluated.

Additionally, the programme designers envisaged that a number of 'Affiliate Partners' in each country would be identified to (i) provide Internet resources to those women who did not otherwise have Internet access or computer facilities; (ii) provide guidance to the women as required during the training; and (iii) publicize the BGLP in anticipation of the call for participants. In the early days of the programme, it was realized that these partners should receive Training of Trainers (ToT) capacity building, and this was subsequently added to the programme.

Two Affiliate Partners were identified in Papua New Guinea (PNG):

- People's Action for Rural Development (PARD) (in the Western Highlands)
- Microfinance Competence Centre (MCC) (in Port Moresby)

One Affiliate Partner was identified in each of the remaining countries:

- Partners in Community Development (PCD) (Fiji)
- Solomon Islands National Council of Women (SINCW) (Solomon Islands)
- Civil Society Forum of Tonga (CSFT) (Tonga).

The final narrative report indicates that all activities were carried out except for evaluation of the platform's effectiveness. There was some modification to the study tour, which was relocated to Brisbane, Australia, when the security situation in Fiji was judged to be high-risk. The 10 study tour participants therefore joined a scheduled three-day PPM training course run by the consultant originally selected for PPM training and were also able to visit female parliamentarians and community leaders in Brisbane.

ToT training for the Affiliate Partners was held in Nadi, Fiji. This had not been foreseen in the original project design but was accommodated within the budget.

The major outputs of the e-learning platform and training modules (governance and leadership) were produced; the contest and winning initiatives were completed (although with some delays).

Evaluation of the e-learning platform was not completed as planned. This, as well as a number of other elements of the programme (and indeed this current evaluation

exercise) suffered from low response rates when participants were asked to submit questionnaires/exercises/reports, and from late submissions when they were returned.

## ***Implementation***

**Selection of Partners and participants** – This was originally intended to be facilitated by the University of the South Pacific’s Governance Programme, but was done by FDC when the USP partnership was abandoned. USP was to advise not only on the Affiliate Partners in the four countries but also to undertake the development of culturally appropriate training materials. FDC subsequently drew up criteria for choosing its Affiliate Partners and moved speedily to put them in place (see above).

Simple criteria were also drawn up for selecting the participants, and extensive advertising was undertaken (mostly by radio and in newspapers, replacing the original plan to print and distribute leaflets). FDC targeted women who:

- had already shown some potential for leadership within their communities;
- had not had access to tertiary education;
- demonstrated an interest in governance and leadership;
- lived in a rural or remote community;
- were likely to be able to complete the course; and
- had “fair or better” command of English.

More than 160 applications were received and 68 women eventually participated in the BGLP.

**Development of training materials** – In the absence of USP training input, FDC developed the training materials (both participants’ materials and the ToT) itself. A decision was taken to use existing staff to do this and the bulk of the material was written by a senior academic on staff who was not, however, a governance/leadership specialist. Additionally, it was decided not to engage a gender specialist to provide gender-specific advice.

The e-learning platform was built as planned. In addition to the training materials, it also has a news section, links to relevant sites, additional materials and was intended to serve as a ‘networking’ tool through which participants in the four countries could get to

know each other and keep in contact.

It became clear, however, that many of the selected participants (particularly since one of the criteria had been to target rural women and those from remote areas) did not have access to computers. Some who worked were allowed to use computers at work but some were not, and even those who did have access reported that download of the site and materials was slow and prohibitively expensive. The Affiliate Partners were to offer computer facilities where necessary, however this did not prove to be practical (in part because of the dangers of women travelling alone from remote areas) and, early in the implementation, a decision was made to produce hard copies of the training manual and to distribute these to participants.

**Training and ToT** – Participants undertook the training “in their own space”. For most this meant at work (where this was allowed), with assignments being completed at home on weekends. For some all the training was done at home; for some it was all completed during work hours.

The Affiliates received ToT training in Nadi, Fiji. This had not been anticipated in the original project design but was crucial to bridging the gap between the training/trainers and participants.

**Evaluation of the effectiveness of the e-platform** – This was not undertaken, because the participants did not respond to the questionnaires sent out. This was most likely to be because the e-platform was not widely used. Email communications also often went unanswered because the participants were not regular users of computers. The training was evaluated through a simple questionnaire.

**Assessment of achievement and completion of training** – The Brisbane-based training coordinator received assignments from participants and assessed their progress. Of the 68 women who signed on for the training, 27 completed the course and received a certificate of achievement/completion.

**BGLP contest** – The 27 graduates were invited to submit proposals for mini-projects that would demonstrate how they used their newly acquired knowledge and understanding of governance and leadership in their own communities. Criteria were drawn up and circulated.

**Study tour and PPM training** --Ten women were chosen to move forward in this process and travelled to Brisbane, Australia, on a study tour and for training in PPM.

**Participatory Project Management (PPM) Workshop, Brisbane**  
15th – 17th September 2009

**• Are you involved in Community Development (CD) projects either in Australia or overseas ?**

**• Are you an NGO, Government or Australian/International Management Contractor (AMC/IMC) Project Officer/Manager who wants to improve your Project Management (PM) skills?**

**• Are you a development studies student or returned volunteer who wants to learn more about CD/PM ?**

**Then this workshop may be for you!**

**The Workshop**  
Run at the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre, Cnr Merivale & Glenelg Streets, South Bank, Brisbane from the 15th – 17th September 2009.

**Facilitator**  
Mr Chris Piper, TorqAid - [www.torqaid.com](http://www.torqaid.com) with assistance from the Foundation for Development Cooperation (FDC) - [www.fdc.org.au](http://www.fdc.org.au)

**Advanced Standing**  
Eligible participants who complete the workshop, together with follow-up assignments, can apply for Advanced Standing/Accreditation in post-graduate level development studies programs as run by Deakin, RMIT and Murdoch Universities, as well as the International Health course run by Curtin University

**Costs**  
AUS \$ 990 (includes GST) for three day workshop only  
AUS \$ 1,150 (includes GST) for workshop plus optional journaling exercise  
AUS \$ 1,300 (includes GST) for workshop plus follow-up assignment<sup>1</sup>

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**TORQAID** **FDC**

<sup>1</sup> The assignment comprises the journaling exercise plus two other questions. See p.3 of this brochure for more details.

The study tour and PPM training had been planned to take place in Fiji but political instability at the scheduled time meant that the tour was relocated, within available budget.

As a result, however the participants were enrolled in a PPM training course that was already scheduled to take place (see box), and so joined other students on the course. This meant that the PPM training was not customized to their specific needs. Indeed, the PPM consultant was not asked to do this.

The PPM course – which takes a clear community-

and gender-based approach to project management – is a recognized course in Australia and elsewhere, and provides university credit to students who not only complete the three-day training but also submit a number of written assignments. None of the BGLP participants completed the assignments.

The women implementing the mini-projects were also given a copy of an FDC-produced *Project Management Guide*, which contained templates they might want to use in their projects but which, disconcertingly, had no elements of community-based project management, including participatory methods such as stakeholder consultations, and no mention of gender.

**Selection and funding of five BGLP mini-projects** – Following the study tour, five mini-projects were selected for funding and a grant of US\$5,000 was disbursed to each project leader. Three of the projects were in PNG, one in Fiji and one in Solomon Islands:

- Leadership and governance training for women in Milne Bay, PNG;
- Awareness-building programme of the Motukoita Assembly Act and gauging views on an ID/accreditation voting system for women in the western region of the Motukoita Assembly (PNG);
- Review and pilot of the BGLP in PNG;
- Provide leadership training for rural women in Fiji covering good governance, direct participation of rural women in achieving poverty reduction, and through the set-up of a microfinance group;
- Strengthening the capacity of women and young girls in Vura Three neighbourhood and educating them on the Solomon Islands electoral process.

**Monitoring and evaluation of the mini-projects** – Reporting by the mini-project leaders was irregular, however four of the projects were completed and documented by the time of the final evaluation of the initiatives and one was nearing completion. Evaluation was qualitative and undertaken by the FDC Project Manager. An extremely complex *Monitoring and Evaluation Survey for Implementers*, adapted from a survey used by the Ontario Public Health Association and taking a gendered approach to M & E, was distributed but does not appear to have been used.

## IV. EQ ANSWERS AND FINDINGS

### (i) *Relevance*

#### **Weak cause and effect analysis and lack of gender expertise affecting on project design**

The question has to be asked from the outset whether the project document's very simplified analysis of the political realities in the four PICs provided sufficient basis for the consequent analysis of the status of women in PNG, Fiji, Tonga and Solomon Islands, and whether that analysis was a relevant starting point for project design. The fundamental nature of this question means that some of the comments below are also relevant to an assessment of effectiveness and impact.

The rationale for project design presumes a homogeneous political culture across the four countries and at least similar rationale for low participation of women in governance and leadership. This is not the case; as illustrated above, the status of the political process in the four countries varies widely and the processes of political participation for both men and women are different in each country.

Additionally, there are important differences in social structures in the four countries that make the rationale for female non- or low participation in governance and leadership more complex than the project design suggests. While women may indeed lack information and feel disempowered in the political process, there are other important obstacles to their participation, including the status of women in the family, workplace and broader community, the socialization of women and men through education,

One participant from PNG noted, “[If we have governance and leadership aspirations], most families will not understand what we are doing, they think and assume that females are born and made to place at home to do house work only and look after their families.

Community will think that you're a last person [worthless], they will not know what you're doing but they will go at the back of you and starting gossiping about you to different people and people will than assume that you're a show-off.

Society will think that you're a disgrace to male counterparts because you stress your equality and believe in equal rights.



socio-economic hurdles in Fiji and Tonga, and structural and financial obstacles that differ not only from country to country but also from urban to rural.

One participant who ran a mini-project on Rabi Island, a remote community in Fiji, noted that the major obstacle to participation for women in the community there is overwhelmingly financial. The women have no form of income and so are entirely dependent on men. Her 'governance and leadership' mini-project thus focused first of all on Financial First Steps training (in Rabi language) and only then shifted to discussion of leadership.

The participants and Affiliates interviewed consistently nominated the traditional role of the woman in the family and in the community and the expectations of husbands and parents that the woman will be the mother/carer and the man the breadwinner, as the principle obstacles to female participation in governance and leadership at family, community and societal levels. In Fiji, additionally, a respondent noted the important role that religion plays in emphasizing 'traditional' male/female roles within the family and the community, despite the fact that the government is increasingly promoting female participation in governance.

The role of men in the disempowerment of women in governance and leadership is an important causal factor that should have been considered and might have emerged in a gender-sensitive analysis. Participants acknowledged not only that these roles are determinant in women's aspirations as leaders but also that the empowerment of women must be ensured in a way that will not damage family and community relationships. Moreover, participants in PNG pointed out the very different profiles of women in different parts of the country, saying that women in the northern islands are "traditionally more aggressive and into politics", while coastlands women are more conservative, "seeing themselves as mothers and carers and not interested in competing with men unless they are tertiary educated".

In short, a much more culturally differentiated, gender-sensitive analysis of the causes of female disempowerment and political participation was needed at the design stage of the BGLP. Although the project documents repeat frequently that design of the project and outputs are 'gender sensitive', this does not seem to be the case. 'Gender' does not denote simply targeting women and excluding men. Gender analysis requires consideration of the differences in the status of women and men in a given context, and

the reasons for these, and it presumes consideration of the functioning relationships between men and women in the home, workplace and community. In the absence of this, the project is predicated on a weak analysis of cause and effect.

A number of managerial decisions at the design and start-up phases of the project seem to have contributed to this weak design, according to representatives of FDC interviewed.

The first decision taken at senior management level was to discontinue the planned partnership with the University of the South Pacific (Fiji), which had been tasked with developing the training materials. The University had respected expertise in areas of governance and leadership, although the governance programme has since been closed. In the project design phase, it had been anticipated that USP would develop the training module at a cost of US\$ 30,000 (budgeted).

Early on in the implementation period, it became clear that the role of the Affiliate Partners in the project had been underestimated for a number of reasons: the costs of having an FDC staff member travel regularly to the four countries would have been significant; the need for a local 'presence' had not been sufficiently recognized; and the importance for promotion of the project, support to the participants and the opportunity of sustainability all made it necessary to invest in training the Affiliate Partners. USP was consequently asked to develop, alongside the participants' training module, a ToT module for the Affiliates. The quote received from USP for this expanded role – US\$ 100,000 – had not been anticipated and the partnership did not go ahead.

Senior management at FDC subsequently decided that the training materials and ToT module would be developed in-house. However, the decision was also taken not to bring in governance/leadership expertise nor, significantly, a gender specialist.

### **Under-estimation of the potential of the Affiliate Partners**

The underestimation of the crucial role the Affiliate Partners would play is also significant to the relevance of the project, since in them lay the crucial 'translation' function – not of language but of the aims and objectives of the project into localized, culturally appropriate, grassroots-level understanding and action. Since this understanding does not seem to have informed the project design or plans for use of the financial resources available, the Affiliate Partners found themselves under-resourced,

insufficiently backstopped and to a large extent left to their own devices. The role they played, their level of engagement with the BGLP (both during and after implementation) and the support and motivation they offered to participants thus varied significantly.

In PNG, there were two Affiliate Partners. The first, MCC, seems to have recognized early in the project the potential role they could play. In hindsight, they also recognize that they were not given sufficient resources or attention to be able to capitalize on the potential of their role; for example, it was suggested that it might have been a good idea to invite the Affiliate Partners on the study tour to Brisbane, and to participate in PPM training, so that they were better equipped not only to support the mini-projects (as MCC in PNG did) but also to carry on training and support work, particularly at grassroots level, after the BGLP had ended.

The second PNG Affiliate Partner, PARD, was selected before the participants had been chosen, and was in fact in a region where there were ultimately no participants. Following the ToT opportunity, therefore, the Partner acted independently, organizing training courses in the community (much in the same way that the mini-projects subsequently worked) and “carrying the flag” for BGLP with no active role in the project as it had been designed (see box).

This provides an excellent example of the potential of the Affiliate Partners’ positions within their communities. This potential was largely untapped because the Affiliates were seen as facilitating the participants’ actions rather than initiating their own and were consequently under-resourced and under-trained. As a result, the most positive work done by the Affiliate

#### **A COMMUNITY INITIATIVE IN PNG**

PARD produced a good example of how the BGLP might have run if it had been designed ‘closer to the ground’: The representative of the Affiliate Partner devised culturally appropriate leadership, good governance and financial literacy training using the training materials developed by the BGLP. The PARD trainer could not use the BGLP materials directly with the women (many of whom are illiterate or semi-literate) but delivered basic training in *Tok Pisin*, using examples and contexts that the women understood.

PARD has a large network of women’s groups. In 2011, there are plans to train 180 management committees from 60 village women’s micro-finance groups, 20 zone loan supervisors and 50 church boards.

This is an important but essentially

Partners was coincidental, dependant on their personal and professional interest and level of engagement, rather than strategically planned.

In Fiji and Tonga, the Affiliate Partners undertook the tasks asked of them during the project but did not go beyond this. The Fiji Affiliate underlined the untapped potential in the role played by the partner in that country, however. In Solomon



1: PARD Village Women's Microfinance, Leadership and Good Governance training, Jiwaka, Simbu provinces, PNG

Islands, the contact person in the Affiliate Partner left the organization after the BGLP had ended and it has since proved impossible to get any responses to communications to the organization.

### **Pitching of the training materials**

The third element of project design that seems to have been determinant in both the implementation and the impact of the BGLP is the poor realization of the relationship between the 'high-level' essentially academic training in governance and leadership offered to the participants and the operationalization of that training in grassroots-level actions, whether through initiatives like the mini-projects or in the aspirations and potential of individual participants.

Participants surveyed for this evaluation expressed satisfaction with the comprehensive contents of the training materials, but the majority also said that the materials were complex. Only one participant photocopied the text for further use within her community group; the rest used the materials only as occasional reference material and developed their own training modules in various languages.

For the five women whose mini-projects were funded and who attended the study tour and PPM training, the gap between this theoretical element of the BGLP and the application of the understanding at grassroots level was not so wide. The fact that, on the study tour, they also met each other and were able to discuss the materials, the challenges of governance and leadership and the needs and potential they identified in their own communities meant that, by the time they came to implement their mini-projects, they had made a 'painless' transition from theory to practice.

The same is not true for the remaining women, who completed the training but then did not have an opportunity to test their knowledge through action. Most of those interviewed reported that they have not used the materials again since the BGLP ended, and have not kept in touch with other participants (some saying they just do not have time); there appears to have been a significant divide between the five mini-project implementers and the rest of the participants.

### **Sub-optimal delivery methods for the training**

The overwhelming majority of participants surveyed for this evaluation did not use the e-platform at any time during or after the BGLP. Only one Affiliate Partner in PNG commented that the e-platform was useful (despite FDC records that there were between 80 and 150 'hits' a month on the platform). The Affiliate Partner in Fiji seems to have been the most regular user of the platform. Although the participants had in large part been selected because they were in workplaces where computers are used (a number were administrative or technical staff in offices, or technical officers in an NGO or UN agency), very few were allowed to access the Internet or even use email during work hours. The participants also advised that in most of the participating countries, Internet access is slow and expensive. Internet cafes exist but are also expensive. Besides, as working women, most needed to be able to work on the training both at their desks and at home, and found the written materials more flexible in this regard.

A number of participants who subsequently dropped out of the BGLP at various stages said that they found it difficult to work alone on the training modules. They looked for more consistent motivation and in some cases did not get this from the Affiliate Partners because some lived too far away from the city and city-dwellers sometimes found the actual location of the Affiliate Partner's offices too isolated to visit alone. This was particularly true in PNG, where public safety is a concern. One participant from a remote village noted that she completed the modules but was not able to mail them for assessment because it was too costly and logistically difficult. She had no Internet access so could not work on-line. She consequently did not graduate despite doing the work.

A number of alternative methods of delivering the training were suggested by the participants. Many thought that regular classroom-style training, scheduled to fit into

work responsibilities (say three days once a month) would have provided more opportunities for cross-fertilization of ideas, and been more likely to be negotiable with work supervisors; others suggested that training in governance and leadership should ideally be developed within an existing training institution. One participant said, “I am still looking for a real programme, not just another project”. A number agreed that governance and leadership might usefully be taught as part of civic/democracy education in schools, so that children are introduced early to the idea that women can be leaders.

A group discussion in PNG threw up the idea that governance and leadership training should be explored with the training department of their employer, suggesting that such training might be built into company career paths and structures (and thus also be funded).

It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the delivery method chosen for the BGLP -- essentially web-based with CD-Rom back-up in the original design – had more to do with the practice of the grantee (FDC has developed and maintains a number of e-platforms) than the identified needs of the target beneficiaries.

## ***Effectiveness***

### **Most quantitative outputs achieved but qualitative under-achievement**

The BGLP met all of the quantitative goals set by the project designers, except for the one evaluation task (of the e-platform’s effectiveness) that did not occur.

The e-platform and training module were created and delivered; the study tour and PPM training took place despite challenges that required speedy modification of plans; the Affiliate Partners received ToT that was not in the original plans. In terms of outputs, therefore, the project might be said to have exceeded expectations.

Qualitatively, however, the project under-achieved. The e-platform does not seem to have been a good idea given the lack of access and high costs involved in Internet connection for many of the participants. The training module was considered comprehensive but was not directly translatable into materials that the participants and Affiliates could use for additional training (and no budget was provided for translation or adaptation to the Affiliates nor the women who ran mini-projects). The opportunity to

promote networking among the participants and Affiliates, including across the four countries, was not capitalized upon.

Because the e-platform was not used as had been envisaged, the US\$15,000 allocated to it could be seen as a misallocation of funds. It might more profitably have been allocated, for example, to funding meetings of the participants in each country, promoting higher motivation and support. It might also have been allocated to the Affiliate Partners to allow them to be more active, more mobile among the participants and to have translated the materials. It could also have been used to fund more mini-projects, since ultimately they gave the women the opportunity to apply their new understanding and to reach out into their communities.

To this extent, therefore, the project can be said to have ‘ticked off’ its list of tasks and outputs, but not to have achieved its ultimate objective of empowering women to increase their participation in governance and leadership (see ‘Impact’, below).

### **No regional aspects to the programme**

Why was the BGLP implemented simultaneously in four Pacific countries? FDC says that the “participants appreciated being part of a broader project and were able to act across the subregion if they wished”. In reality, the participants showed little inclination to do this and, since most did not use the e-platform, there was little contact among the countries. The Affiliate Partners came together for ToT in Fiji and so were able to meet, although they do not seem to have kept up regular contact since the programme ended. The 10 study tour participants also had a chance to meet and, according to FDC, “appreciated sharing examples and issues”. However they also have not kept in touch across national borders, only within country. To this extent, there was no regional sharing of experiences or transnational consultation.

Additionally, there was no attempt to do differentiated/comparative analysis of the problem of low female participation in democratic processes, and no attempt to identify any differences or similarities in the women’s experiences or likely methods for empowering them. Since no regional structures or processes were initiated, and since there were no regular inter-country links other than through the e-learning platform, it has to be said that there was really no ‘regional’ element to the BGLP at all. It was just implemented in four countries at the same time.

## ***Efficiency***

### **Imbalance between expensive training and cost-effective grassroots action**

The project would have been more effective and had greater potential for sustainability if the balance between training and grassroots action had been skewed much more in favour of the action.

One third of the budget (US\$100,000) was taken up by staff costs at FDC. It is not clear from the documents provided whether the US\$40,000 originally allocated to the USP for work that was subsequently done in-house was also consequently kept by FDC. If it was, then almost half of the available grant was used in Australia.

Ironically, FDC's final report notes that there were "significant savings in travel costs (US\$18,000)", which really meant that the FDC staff remained even more remote from the project and from the realities faced by participants on the ground. Similarly, noted "savings" of US\$8,000 in the meetings and training budget left the Affiliate Partners under-resourced and could have been used to fund more meetings among the participants and/or with the Affiliates. One respondent noted that the funds provided to Affiliate Partners (US\$2,000 each) were barely enough to cover telephone costs for the two-year project.

The creation and maintenance of the e-platform, including equipment to 'house' it, amounted to US\$22,000. This does not represent good value for money, given that the e-platform was under-used. The FDC training coordinator himself noted in his responses to the questionnaire that this method of delivering training did not provide sufficient opportunity for "one-to-one" exchange and that the potential coach/mentor role of the Affiliate Partners was not widely understood nor resourced.

Finally, although there were cost savings when the study tour was moved from Fiji to Brisbane, there are questions about the value of the tour at all. It is true that it was combined with the PPM training (although the money could have been used to purchase customized training services from the same consultant), however only 10 women were able to participate, and some questioned the value of the exercise. Two Fiji participants filed complaints about the 'service' they received, and a PNG participant noted that the female parliamentarians in Queensland were "inspiring, but they made it



sound so simple. It's not so easy in PNG”.

Using these funds to bring together all the graduates for PPM training would most likely have resulted in more submissions being received for mini-projects, and would have exposed more women to high-quality PPM training customized to their needs.

These significant expenditures should be seen in relation to the modest US\$25,000 allocated to five grassroots mini-projects that FDC estimates reached out to 700 women (if the work done by the PNG Affiliate Partner on his own initiative is added to this, the total would exceed 1,000 women -- and men). In contrast, the BGLP training was directly delivered to just 68 women, only 27 of whom completed the course and only five of whom were able to put their newly acquired knowledge into action.

As such, the project cannot be said to have been ‘efficient’.

## ***Impact***

### **Difficult to assess impact of training in the absence of a baseline**

The impact of the training on individual participants is difficult to assess in the absence of a baseline indicating their levels of understanding and knowledge of governance and leadership before they began BGLP training. It would have been relatively easy (notwithstanding low response levels to questionnaires) to have administered a pre-test that could then be matched against an appropriate post-testing of specific elements of the training. This was not done, so there is no way to make an objective, quantitative assessment of the impact of the training.

Qualitatively, the impact of the training on individual women seems to have been good, although it must be stressed that the women who agreed to be interviewed and/or who responded to the questionnaires sent out by the evaluators are most likely to be those who are committed to the BGLP, including some who did not complete the training modules. Several women said that they had learned a great deal, that they had better understanding of both governance and government after the training and that they appreciated the opportunity given to them. However, most also said that training is not sufficient to engender real change in their aspirations to take up leadership positions. Two women gave concrete examples of how they believed the training had affected

them, both saying that they found it easier to discipline their children and lay down rules in the home. These behavioural changes, however, are far removed from the objective of increasing female participation in political processes in the PICs.

**The design and implementation meant that few women lasted the distance and so impact was reduced**

It is strange that a project that aimed to achieve high-level development objectives was designed so that the numbers of women involved were reduced as the project progressed. The design saw the 168 submissions from women to join the project whittled down to just 68. Of these 68, only 27 completed the course. Of these, 10 were chosen to go on the study tour, receive PPM training and be invited to submit mini-project proposals. Funds were made available for just five selected mini-projects to proceed.

The indirect beneficiaries of these mini-projects, and potentially of other initiatives that take place now that the BGLP has ended, are more significant, however they were not guaranteed and in some instances are entirely coincidental to BGLP's planned outputs.

The impact of the BGLP on a small number of women – those who saw the project right through to the end – was positive. These women said that they had learned new things. One woman said that the project had made a difference to her “as a person”. One said that the knowledge she had gained was “still in my system”. Another said that participating in the training “gave me hope”. Several hoped there might be further opportunities for more advanced training or opportunities to submit mini-projects for actions in their communities. One woman said that, although her remote home base meant she had not been able to complete the training, she had been prompted to look for other avenues to further her leadership aspirations and had found the PNG arm of the International Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW-PNG), where she could find a mentor and engage in not only national but ultimately international policy debate and leadership initiatives. Thus the project could be said to have been a catalyst to her eventual involvement in BPW. However these impacts seem to be very individual and result to some extent from the fact that the women selected to participate in the project in the first place were already predisposed to action (many, for example, already work for grassroots NGOs). The actual impact of the BGLP, even at individual level, therefore, is difficult to assess.

### **Training materials valuable but require modification, adaptation and translation to have real impact**

Most of the respondents consider that the training manual provided is comprehensive, although most also recognized that it is essentially a 'reference' rather than a practical training tool. What is required if the contents of the manual are to remain useful is for someone to develop a customized, culturally appropriate, gender-sensitive training resource in local languages (this does not have to be a manual; it could be a series of slides, transparencies, posters or hand-outs, depending on the literacy levels and technological profiles of the communities reached).

### **Men should have been taken into account for real impact to be possible**

Many of the respondents insisted that, for real change to occur, it is not enough to empower women but to change the way men think and act. This would have been obvious from a thorough gender analysis at programme design stage. As one respondent said, "As women move forward, it is vital that men should be with them".

The men did not necessarily have to be trainees – other actions could have been designed to include them without putting them into a competitive relationship with the women. This occurred in one mini-project, for example, where the women received training but then went on a tour of local parliament buildings with the male members of their families.

### **Understanding and awareness are not enough where systemic social change is required**

All the respondents noted that the 'real problem' is that the subordinate/perceived subordinate role of women in all four countries is the main obstacle to female participation in governance and leadership, and that the few women who do "make it to the top" are generally both educated and wealthy.

For real change to occur, therefore, the cultural, social and financial barriers that keep women subordinate need to be dismantled. This is happening to some extent in PNG and Fiji, however the tools for change need to be systematized: in the education system at all levels as a priority, in public discourse including through training of media professionals, and at decision-making levels. A number of women who had completed the BGLP said that, even after they were equipped with governance and leadership 'tools', they still lack the supportive environment they need to be able to progress:

support of their spouse, family and boss.

As one respondent who did not complete the BGLP said, “The reality is that [her country] is just like [the television reality show] ‘Survivor’”. To succeed, you have to be manipulative, know how to cheat, be enticing and have money. And that’s not good governance!”

## ***Sustainability***

### **A seed has been planted but in poor soil**

There is no doubt that the BGLP has ‘planted a seed’ in a very small number of women who participated in the project. However this seed sits in quite infertile ground and will need to be nurtured. The ground itself will need to be improved. Otherwise it is most likely that the results of the BGLP for these few women will fade.

No mechanism was put in place for keeping the women motivated or even in touch with each other. FDC intends to maintain the BGLP e-platform through 2012 (when it will put it into archival state), however the value of this is questionable given that very few of the participants in the BGLP used it even while they were participating.

### **Training materials useful only as reference and not as tools for future action**

Since the end of the BGLP, the training materials have been reviewed and updated, however it is not clear what they are intended to be used for. They have been sent to the original Affiliate Partners, however most of them are now not engaged in governance and leadership work. FDC advises that there have been no requests for the materials outside the programme itself.

Additionally, as has been noted above, the training materials are essentially valuable only as a reference guide; what is needed is practical, culturally appropriate training ‘tools’ in the languages used by the intended beneficiaries. A number of respondents said that they would be interested in such tools and would incorporate them into their own training in areas such as financial literacy, micro-finance planning and advocacy, however they do not have immediate sources of funding to develop these.

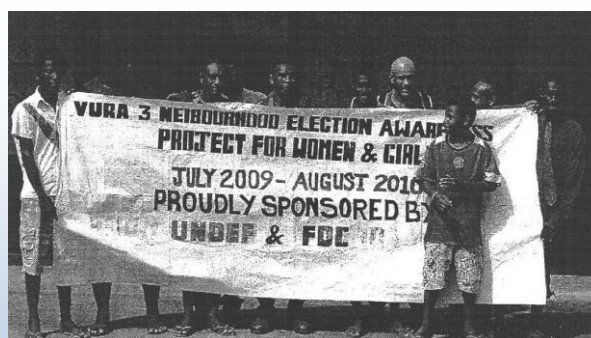
### **No processes, systems in place**

The BGLP was never designed to put systems or processes in place that would make the contents or outcomes of the project sustainable. The only elements that had real life beyond the project were to be the e-platform and the training materials, and the limitations on these are noted above.

### ***UNDEF value-added***

#### **Intended objectives relevant to UNDEF mandate**

There is no doubt that the intended objectives of the BGLP, focusing on governance and leadership and on women's empowerment, were entirely consistent with UNDEF's mandate. Moreover, respondents report that the UNDEF name/emblem gave the women a heightened sense of credibility and importance. The mini-projects, for example, proudly highlighted the UNDEF link.



*Solomon Islands mini-project: Men and boys visit  
Parliament with the women*

#### **Other initiatives in this area**

FDC advises that it did a scan of governance and leadership initiatives in the four PICs at programme design stage and found nothing similar to the BGLP.

However, there are a number of ongoing governance and leadership initiatives in the PICs, and it might have been useful to see whether/how the BGLP fitted into these and whether, in fact, some kind of link with these initiatives might have both improved the

contents/implementation of the BGLP and also potentially made its outcomes more sustainable.

UNDP, for example, has two programmes in women's empowerment and fostering democratic governance in PNG, and governance programmes in Tonga, both of which include a training element and advocacy.

As part of its 'Pacific Plan', the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat put in place the web-based Pacific Islands Governance Portal (funded by the EC, AusAID, USP and NZAID) as a resource to all those interested in governance issues across the region. Through this, interested parties can subscribe to the Pacific Governance Newsletter. A second Gender, Citizenship and Governance Portal is also maintained by the Royal Tropical Institute, Netherlands (KIT).

The Inter-Parliamentary Union also has a gender programme in the PICs, focusing on Promoting Gender Equality in Politics. Finally, the Australian Government has nominated good governance in the PICs as one of the priorities of its international aid programme and, through AusAID, makes funding available for a range of civil society initiatives in this area.

## V. CONCLUSIONS

### **The BGLP was ultimately a good idea compromised by poor project design**

- Delivering Internet-based governance and leadership training to women whose Internet access was irregular, slow and expensive illustrates a poor understanding of the realities of daily life for women in the PICs, even to women who have reached a certain level of education, are working (including in offices with Internet connections) and who have shown themselves ready to take lead roles in their communities.
- The move to use funds allocated for CD-Rom production to produce hard copy training materials was the right one, however these materials were content-heavy and the women were not given adequate support as they studied alone. The Affiliate Partners were under-resourced and could not deliver support, for example, to women in remote areas (although from the outset there had been a decision to specifically target such women as participants).
- The use of the grant primarily to fund headquarters outputs at the expense of regional processes, in-country mechanisms and grassroots pilot projects was a serious error on the part of FDC management and contributed to the low level of impact and sustainability of the project.

### **Social and cultural obstacles to female participation in democratic process subsist and require systemic action**

- There is no doubt that training in governance and leadership is both required and welcomed by women in the four countries, however it does not change the very real social and cultural hurdles the women must also overcome in order to be able to achieve real change. Such 'training' needs to be integrated into existing structures and to start much earlier – in school in the form of civic/democracy/rights education for both girls and boys; in workplaces so that employers are 'on board' with women's growing expertise; and in the public domain through ongoing information and education campaigns, including for example through the promotion of female role models in the media.
- The BGLP leaves behind it, in addition to the 27 women who graduated and others who did not but remain interested, a number of elements that might be resourced,

re-energized and consulted on potential future directions. Three of the Affiliate Partners, if appropriately resourced and supported, might take BGLP-derived training (suitably adapted and translated) into grassroots projects. The women who ran mini-projects plus others who had the capacity to do so but for various reasons did not submit proposals or were not chosen, have begun to see how what they have learned can be made to fit into other processes they are involved in at grassroots level. This interest and embryonic expertise might profitably be tapped in the future.

- If any real and lasting change to women's role in governance and leadership in the PICs is to occur, then the role of men as both obstacles and potential supporters must be analysed and programming designed accordingly.



## VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

### *(i) For FDC*

These suggestions are aimed at the grantee for this particular project (FDC), however they have broader relevance to organizations designing projects or programmes in this same area:

- When designing projects and programmes, FDC should ensure that appropriate subject and gender expertise is brought in where it does not exist in-house so that all initiatives are based on a thorough cause and effect analysis;
- Before embarking on web-based delivery systems, FDC should ensure that target users have appropriate access to computers and the Internet, are comfortable with using them and will not face prohibitive costs;
- FDC should ensure that risk appraisal in all projects takes account of public security in the project sites so that participants are able to be fully involved without running unreasonable risks;
- FDC might reconsider the future of the BGLP e-platform, especially if there is an opportunity to divert funds earmarked for its updating/maintenance to the Affiliate Partners or individual participants who may be able to use the funds for grassroots initiatives;
- FDC must be aware that 'gender' approaches do not mean automatically excluding men – good gender-sensitive programming will take account of the relative status and roles of men and women, girls and boys, and aim to achieve outcomes for women that allow them to progress within family, social and cultural contexts.

### *(ii) For UNDEF*

The following recommendations are aimed at UNDEF, but should be read within the broader framework of UNDEF's resources and processes:

- UNDEF might consider seeking concise cause and effect analysis of submissions for funding by including a specific question on this in grant applications. It might

also be useful, during negotiation of successful submissions, to encourage grantees to demonstrate understanding of the political, cultural and social context in which intended beneficiaries live and work through specific reference in their descriptions of methodology;

- UNDEF might usefully share this evaluation report with agencies engaged in supporting governance and leadership initiatives in the PICs so that they may share the lessons, especially AusAID and NZAID.

## VII. OVERALL ASSESSMENT AND CLOSING THOUGHTS

The BGLP was a project that had potential but which did not deliver on that potential, for a number of reasons:

The programme design was flawed in relation to understanding of the problem being addressed, appropriate responses that might be attempted, and means of delivery appropriate to the intended beneficiaries.

In implementation, there was insufficient consideration of the potential that existed within the four participating countries to set up active support networks, mentoring services and grassroots 'test' activities. Additionally, the country activities were grossly under-resourced and the budget was ill-used to fund headquarters activities at the expense of country partners and actions.

The training modules produced were robust but not customized to the participants and so should be seen as a reference guide rather than a 'tool' that can be used to further the participants' aspirations to share their knowledge with others and potentially take up leadership roles within their communities or workplaces.

Ultimately, the Affiliate Partners and participants in the four countries have been left awakened to issues of governance and leadership but frustrated at their inability to act.

## VIII. LIMITATIONS, CONSTRAINTS AND CAVEATS

### *Limitations*

Because of the considerable distances between the four participating PICs, the infrequent and complex scheduling of flights to and among the islands (often non-existent and requiring return to the Australian mainland), and the fact that the mission was to take place during the northern monsoon/cyclone season that makes travel more difficult and unreliable, the international expert was able to visit only one of the project sites -- PNG.

The low response to subsequent email and phone requests for input from the three countries not visited, and the low response to the evaluation questionnaires, is regrettable (although not determinant). In particular, however, the lack of response from the Affiliate Partner in Solomon Islands is to be particularly regretted.

Additionally, the coincidence of a series of natural disasters (floods and Cyclone Yasi) in Queensland, where FDC is based, meant that it was more practical to interview FDC personnel and ex-personnel by Skype/phone.

Unfortunately, the evaluators note that, despite repeated attempts to secure a telephone interview with the former CEO of FDC, this eventually did not take place. Since early management decisions at the programme design and resourcing stages are mentioned critically in this report, it would have been helpful to discuss these with the person responsible for them.

## ANNEX 1: EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The following table shows the overarching evaluation questions used for this exercise:

DAC criterion	Evaluation Question	Related sub-questions
Relevance	To what extent was the project, as designed and implemented, suited to context and needs at the beneficiary, local, and national levels?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Were the objectives of the project in line with the needs and priorities for democratic development, given the context?</li> <li>▪ Should another project strategy have been preferred rather than the one implemented to better reflect those needs, priorities, and context? Why?</li> <li>▪ Were risks appropriately identified by the projects? How appropriate are/were the strategies developed to deal with identified risks? Was the project overly risk-averse?</li> </ul>
Effectiveness	To what extent was the project, as implemented, able to achieve objectives and goals?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To what extent have the project's objectives been reached?</li> <li>▪ To what extent was the project implemented as envisaged by the project document? If not, why not?</li> <li>▪ Were the project activities adequate to make progress towards the project objectives?</li> <li>▪ What has the project achieved? Where it failed to meet the outputs identified in the project document, why was this?</li> </ul>
Efficiency	To what extent was there a reasonable relationship between resources expended and project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Was there a reasonable relationship between project inputs and project outputs?</li> <li>▪ Did institutional arrangements promote cost-effectiveness and accountability?</li> </ul>

	impacts?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Was the budget designed, and then implemented, in a way that enabled the project to meet its objectives?</li> </ul>
Impact	To what extent has the project put in place processes and procedures supporting the role of civil society in contributing to democratization, or to direct promotion of democracy?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To what extent has/have the realization of the project objective(s) and project outcomes had an impact on the specific problem the project aimed to address?</li> <li>▪ Have the targeted beneficiaries experienced tangible impacts? Which were positive; which were negative?</li> <li>▪ To what extent has the project caused changes and effects, positive and negative, foreseen and unforeseen, on democratization?</li> <li>▪ Is the project likely to have a catalytic effect? How? Why? Examples?</li> </ul>
Sustainability	To what extent has the project, as designed and implemented, created what is likely to be a continuing impetus towards democratic development?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To what extent has the project established processes and systems that are likely to support continued impact?</li> <li>▪ Are the involved parties willing and able to continue the project activities on their own (where applicable)?</li> </ul>
UNDEF value-added	To what extent was UNDEF able to take advantage of its unique position and comparative advantage to achieve results that could not have been achieved had support come from other donors?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What was UNDEF able to accomplish, through the project that could not as well have been achieved by alternative projects, other donors, or other stakeholders (Government, NGOs, etc).</li> <li>▪ Did project design and implementing modalities exploit UNDEF's comparative advantage in the form of an explicit mandate to focus on democratization issues?</li> </ul>

For this evaluation, these questions were used to develop three BGLP-specific questionnaires, designed to elicit responses from (i) grantee personnel and consultants involved in project design, implementation and management; (ii) affiliate partner personnel; (iii) participants (with a set of additional sub-questions for those implementing the five mini-projects).

Additionally, the local expert sent out an email questionnaire designed to prompt personal reflections on the BGLP experience, particularly in relation to the participants' work and family status.

Response to the questionnaires from participants was low, despite repeated reminders, an extended deadline and follow-up phone calls. Two participants replied that they did not have time to respond and were not willing to be interviewed by phone.

**ANNEX 2: PEOPLE INTERVIEWED**

**a) Grantee personnel and consultants (e-mail exchange and telephone interviews):**

Carly Stephan	Project Manager	FDC (Brisbane)	Skype interview+ emails
Vladimir Pacheco	Training Coordinator, materials writer	Ex-FDC (Melbourne)	Telephone interview + emails
Luse Kinivuwai	Pacific Coordinator	FDC	Skype interview
Chris Piper	Training Consultant	Torquaid	Telephone interview + emails

**b) Papua New Guinea – Field mission**

Joseph Pumai	Affiliate Partner Rep.	PARD	Questionnaire + telephone interview
Kori Tua	Participant/mini-project		Questionnaire + interview
Samani Pupdi	Participant/mini-project		Questionnaire + interview
Christina Yaliki	Participant		Questionnaire
Rubby Kenny	Participant		Group interview
Rose Henry	Participant		Group interview
Aquino R Kango	Participant		Group interview
Clare Tutuana	Participant		Group interview
Christine Yaliki	Participant		Questionnaire

**c) Fiji**

Annie Madden	Affiliate Partner Rep.	PCD	Questionnaire + email exchange
Yvonne Breckterfield	Participant/mini-project		Questionnaire + email exchange

**d) Tonga**

Emeline	Affiliate Partner Rep.	CSF Tonga	Email exchange
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**e) Solomon Islands**

Christina Mitini	Participant/mini-project		Email exchange
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## **ANNEX 3: DOCUMENTS REVIEWED**

### ***(a) Project documents***

Project Document No.3791-UDF-RAP-07-170, signed 23 July 2008

BGLP Milestone Two Report, dated 28 May 2009

BGLP Mid-Term Report, dated 23 October 2009

Final Project Narrative Report, dated 6 December 2010

### ***(b) Training materials***

BGLP Course Materials 2009 (for participants)

BGLP Course Materials 2009 (for ToT)

BGLP Project Management Guide (provided to those running mini-projects)

Torquaid PPM workshop outline and approach

### ***(c) Other project-related***

BGLP Monitoring and Evaluation survey for implementers

Press release announcing BGLP, dated 29 April 2009

Combined Progressive and Final Report on mini-project: Awareness programme and gauging views on ID/accreditation voting system for women, dated February 2011

Final Report on mini-project: Strengthening capacities of young girls and women in Vura Three neighbourhood on the Solomon Islands electoral process, dated 20 July 2010

Final Report on mini-project: Review and pilot BGLP in PNG, dated 5-7 May 2010

Five small initiatives evaluation report, dated 14 September 2010

### ***(d) Websites and other***

*The Economist Country Profiles*: Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga

Australian Government AusAID: [www.ausaid.gov.au](http://www.ausaid.gov.au)

BGLP e-learning platform: [www.bglp.org](http://www.bglp.org)

KIT: <http://portals.kit.net>

New Zealand Government NZAID: [www.nzaid.net](http://www.nzaid.net)

Pacific Islands Forum: [www.forumsec.org.fj](http://www.forumsec.org.fj)

UNDP: [www.undp.org](http://www.undp.org)

UNIFEM: [www.unifem.org](http://www.unifem.org)

## **ANNEX 4 :       ACRONYMS**

ABC	Australian Broadcasting Corporation
AusAID	Australia's international development agency
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BGLP	The Bottom-up Governance and Leadership Programme for Women
BPW	Business and Professional Women (international organization)
CSFT	Civil Society Forum of Tonga
CSR	Corporate social responsibility
EC	European Commission
EQ	Evaluation questions
FDC	Foundation for Development Cooperation (Australian NGO)
ILO	International Labour Organization
KIT	Royal Tropical Institute, Netherlands
M & E	Monitoring and evaluation
MCC	Microfinance Competence Centre
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NZAID	New Zealand's international development agency
PARD	People's Action for Rural Development
PCD	Partners in Community Development
PICs	Pacific Island Countries
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PPM	Participatory project management
RAMSI	Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands
SINCW	Solomon Islands National Council of Women
ToT	Training of trainers
UN	United Nations
UNDEF	United Nations Democracy Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIFEM	United Nations Fund for Women (now UN Women)
USP	University of the South Pacific