

iwda ^{25 years} news

international
women's development
agency inc.

When women benefit, the whole community benefits.

THINKING GLOBAL, TALKING LOCALLY

SPACE AND SUPPORT FOR WOMEN'S VOICES – STORIES OF IMPORTANT FIRST STEPS FROM A RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP IN THE PACIFIC

Gabrielle Halcrow, Overseas Program Manager

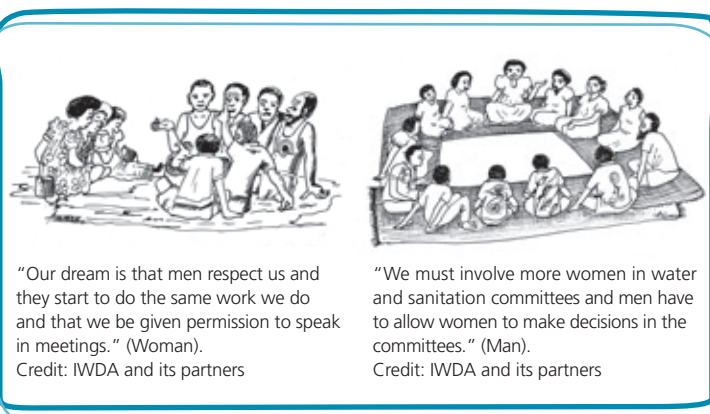
"We used to be scattered and not working together (between the women), now we have representation in the committee. Now women start to talk in meetings, now there are women who help take decisions. Before women didn't talk in community meetings, now they participate and also take decisions. It makes me so proud that we have a voice in development compared to previous years where only men talk." (Woman).

That's why we are currently undertaking research through a partnership between Institute for Sustainable Futures, University of Technology, Sydney (UTS), Live and Learn Environmental Education Fiji and World Vision Vanuatu. Our aim is to show the many positive outcomes involved when space is given for women to be included in decision-making processes in their communities. World Vision in Vanuatu, with IWDA and the research team recently documented some important 'firsts' in increasing recognition of women's right to have a voice in decision-making following advocacy for gender balance in water and sanitation committees.

Women's inclusion in their water committees means they are taking on leadership roles for the first time within their community, which builds their self-confidence, sense of growing empowerment and increases respect for women within the broader community.

"I was elected to committee and am very proud, it is unusual to have a woman on a committee and contribute to decisions e.g. about payment for water etc. I feel more respected by my husband, like my status has improved and I am taking more of a leadership role also in the religious group of which I am a part. In my family the relationship is improved and I am happier." (Female water committee member).

"I was the treasurer last year for the community [water] committee. I was very proud. The men had chosen me and voted for me. I was very proud as I was the first and only woman to be on the committee. I was faithful in attending the workshops, the community trusted me and gave me this position of high trust. It made me feel proud to be a woman." (Female water committee member).



"Our dream is that men respect us and they start to do the same work we do and that we be given permission to speak in meetings." (Woman).
Credit: IWDA and its partners

"We must involve more women in water and sanitation committees and men have to allow women to make decisions in the committees." (Man).
Credit: IWDA and its partners

Including women within the committees is the first step of many. They also need to be given space and support to contribute. *Through their involvement in the project men have become more supportive of making space for women's voices in community decision-making, recognising their roles in this, and that lack of self-confidence at times prevented women from sharing their perspectives and views.* For women to participate in decision-making, changes in men's attitude towards supporting women's involvement and genuinely wanting to hear their views is key. *"Previously during the meetings the men would tell us we are women so we can't talk and we remain silent, but now we are talking since the project." (Woman).*

It is also about building confidence to speak when the space is given. *"Women can speak but they still don't have confidence in themselves. In a meeting, women have very good ideas, but they don't really have the confidence to give them out." (Man).*

As part of the research process, women and men shared their visions for how they would like to support women's on-going involvement in decision-making and continue to strengthen their committees.

We hope that you will be as proud as us of these first steps for these Pacific women and that you share our enthusiasm for this program.

For more information, visit our website www.iwda.org.au or www.genderinpacificwash.info.

YOU STILL HAVE TIME TO DONATE TO OUR MID-YEAR TAX APPEAL!

"In my country, the men say "Yu meri tasol" (you're only a woman)." In the Pacific, many women struggle to have a say in the use of economic resources which have a profound impact on their lives. You are in position to change this situation!

That's why we need your assistance to raise \$155,000 by the end of this financial year to establish programs that enable women to have a sustainable livelihood. We are implementing, through our partners, programs that give women the skills, the knowledge and the self-esteem to face the issues in their lives.

To ensure you are eligible for a tax deduction this year, please make your donation before 30 June 2010. If you can help, please send whatever donation you can. Call us on 1300 661 812 or visit our website: www.iwda.org.au.

Your donation will support us to enable women to build on their own strength, to make their own choices, to be heard and hence, to have fulfilling lives.



Photo: Anna Stone

ABOUT INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (IWDA)

IWDA is an Australian not-for-profit organisation that for 25 years has been creating positive change for women and their communities. Our practical and rights-based projects directly address poverty and oppression in developing countries.

We work in partnership with women from local communities, supporting their innovative responses to the issues they identify as most critical in improving their lives.

In the period 2008–13, IWDA will pursue the following goals in six key areas:

- ☀ livelihood and economic empowerment
- ☀ safety and security
- ☀ social, physical and mental health
- ☀ education
- ☀ environmental sustainability
- ☀ civil and political participation.

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the whole community benefits.*

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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Robyn Hood and her merry gender lens

Well the latest in our advocacy efforts here at IWDA has been joining the campaign for a global financial transactions tax that has the potential to direct funds to help alleviate poverty. Known earlier as the Tobin Tax and now as the more marketable Robin Hood tax, we've joyfully gone one step further and recast the main character as Robyn Hood, complete with a merry gender lens to ensure that women and girls get a fair go with the division of the funds.

While the tax that is proposed is tiny – one twentieth of one percent (0.05 percent) on banks' financial transactions, and particularly on hedge funds and investment banks – the revenue from such a tax is estimated to be between \$US240 billion and US\$700 billion per annum. Ross Buckley, Professor of International Finance Law at the University of NSW, has estimated that this represents between two and six times the total aid budgets of donor countries.

If the intention is partly to rebalance the equation between rich and poor then to be effective, funds generated must go proportionally to those suffering the greatest impact of poverty. As we know, two thirds of the poor are women. So Robyn would be doing two things, emerging from Sherwood Forest with the 0.05 percent gathered painlessly from financial flows, and helping to redistribute it to initiatives that are designed with women and girls as both decision-makers and beneficiaries.

Wouldn't the green woods ring with joy!

Jane Sloane,
Executive Director

James Tobin, Nobel Laureate economist, conceived the Tobin Tax (now Robin Hood) in 1972.



Photo: Courtesy of femLINKPACIFIC
The Generation Next team



Photo: Courtesy of Nobel women's initiative

WOMEN SPEAKING TO WOMEN FOR PEACE

femLINKPACIFIC'S RADIO PROGRAM DEVELOPS WOMEN LEADERS OF THE FUTURE

Claire Rowland, Overseas Program Manager

"I have realised that I can play a much greater role in raising the issues of women and young women in my community through the use of the media technology and it started with me writing my script, my story!" Generation Next Volunteer

femLINKPACIFIC is feminist women-run media agency in Fiji, focusing on community media initiatives that promote "women speaking to women for peace". The **Generation Next project** emerged in 2005–06 from a series of training programs for young women funded by IWDA. To date, femLINKPACIFIC has trained more than 50 young women, and this year their programs have focused on in-depth features exploring women's peace and security, as well as weekly "vox pops" and the Women's Market Reports: stories from women working in the capital's busy marketplaces.

By focusing on building the capacity of a core group of young women producers both in the capital city and in two target rural communities, femLINKPACIFIC is using community media to link the experiences and concerns of young women across the rural-urban divide, whilst at the same time building their confidence

and skills to stand up for women's rights. Annual week long skills development workshops bring these young women together providing an empowering space for exchange. "This workshop provided me with that safe space to communicate the issues which affect me deeply and which can help other young women who are going through the same issues." Sherine Lata, Volunteer.

From 10 young women based in Suva, the Generation Next project now also includes 8 rural young women based with femLINKPACIFIC's rural correspondents and focal points in Labasa and Nadi. All the young women are being trained to produce content for the weekend "suitcase radio" broadcasts. Many of the Generation Next members have found that working with radio and community media has also given them the confidence to speak out in public. New recruit, 19 year old Lucille Chute said of her training with femLINKPACIFIC: **"I have gained confidence to speak out in public and also gained the knowledge of how to use media to communicate similar stories of women and young women in my community."**

Every day femLINKPACIFIC is assisting young women value their skills, capacity and strengths and contribute to the development of the women's movement and spaces for women to be heard on radio. We proudly support Generation Next Program!

Go to femLINKPACIFIC's website for interviews and programs: **www.femlinkpacific.org.fj** femLINKPACIFIC can also be found on Facebook.

BURMESE WOMEN SPEAKING OUT IN NEW YORK

Renaë Davies, Overseas Programs Manager

Last month 12 women from Burma courageously gave testimonies in New York at an International Tribunal on Crimes Against Women of Burma, hosted by the Nobel Women's Initiative and IWDA's partner organisation, the Women's League of Burma (WLB). The tribunal aimed to highlight the systemic abuse faced by women in Burma and to urge political leaders and policymakers to take action and end the impunity of Burma's brutal military regime.

Recommendations by the panel, including Nobel Peace Laureates Shirin Ebadi and Jody Williams, called for the international community, particularly the United Nations, to take stronger actions to protect human rights and implement resolutions, and strongly urged the UN Security Council to refer Burma to the International Criminal Court.



On a recent field visit, I met with Lway Moe Kham, a member of the tribunal delegation who spoke on behalf of survivors of human trafficking. She highlighted the significance of this first ever quasi-legal event, saying "This is our first experience of a trial for Burma and we hope to get this kind of real tribunal in the future, to get justice for the women who are suffering in Burma."

When asked about her experience, she noted, "I am proud of WLB and proud to be a woman – to do this kind of activity. And I am happy with the recommendations from the tribunal, they are strong and clear. **We are happy we can show the international community that our women suffer but they are strong to speak out and show our oppression under the regime. We are not only victims but activists who are fighting against the regime."**

To view the webcast of the event or see the full recommendations, visit: **<http://www.nobelwomensinitiative.org/blogs/burmatribunal/webcast>**

YES! I WANT TO PROMOTE WOMEN'S VOICES...

Please accept my tax deductible **donation today** of:

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OR I would like to join **Empower** and make a regular monthly, tax deductible donation of:

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<small>* Required information</small>	

HER STORY: EMERGING LEADERS SCHOOL STUDENT

Renae Davies, Overseas Program Manager

The Emerging Leaders School builds the capacity, confidence and knowledge of young women on the Thai-Burma border. During her last field trip, Renae met with a 20 year old student from Rakhine Women's union.

Can you tell me why you wanted to study at this school?

I was told this is a women's leadership program so I was very interested and wanted to learn about human rights, and women's rights and politics so I applied to this school.

The curricula is also strange for me, but we need [to know] this to be a leader and I think the curricula is very good for us. The subjects are so wide, human rights, International Criminal Court, United Nations etc and we learn again and again.

Have you noticed any changes in yourself since attending this program?

Yes! Before I have heard about human rights but I didn't really know or understand it, but now I do. I used to be very sad, because I want to say something but when I try the direction of what I want to say changes and it doesn't come out the way I want. But after 2 months I can talk about things in the class and have more confidence and can speak what I want to say, and I can think more. I think more now.

What are you looking forward to when you finish this program?

Now I get a lot of knowledge, of women's rights and human rights and politics, at first when I go back [to my village] I will share my knowledge with my family, and change my family, and then I will share and work with my community. To help make change I need to know fluently about these subjects [that we learn at the school].

What is your dream for the future – for you personally?

I love children, and now inside Burma I have a school for children – it is not a government school. My dream is to get more money for them and be a good guide, and I want to change Burma.



Photo: Renae Davies
For security reasons, her visage can't be shown.

How do you think change in Burma will happen?

To get democracy in Burma and fair government depends on our citizens. The inside people know the government is not good but they are very scared because the government kill many people – [some people] say it is genocide. The military government is not afraid of the international pressure. Change will only come from inside Burma – the people need to get knowledge – we need to give many trainings [to our people].

What about the situation for women in your area, do you think there is equality for women and men?

There is many discrimination [and strong gender stereotypes], for example, if a boy sweeps or helps with the housework he is told to stop, as it is not his role, it is women's work. The school curricula says only housework is the mother's work and outside work is the father's work and only men can be leaders. They teach us women to be polite and quiet and wear the longi etc they say if we wear pants or Western clothes we are no good.

Anything else you would like to say?

Your organisation is so important for us and for Burma, because if you didn't support us then we don't have any money to do this kind of activity and work. So I want to thank you for support our school and for come to visit us.

**YOU ARE OUR BEST
AMBASSADOR! SHARE
THESE STORIES WITH
YOUR FAMILY, FRIENDS
AND COLLEAGUES.**



Photo: Gabrielle Halcrow



International Women's Development Agency is a signatory to the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) Code of Conduct which defines minimum standards of governance, management and accountability for non-government development organisations. Adherence to the Code is monitored by an independent Code of Conduct Committee elected from the NGO community. Our voluntary adherence to the Code of Conduct demonstrates our commitment to ethical practice and public accountability. More information about the ACFID Code of Conduct can be accessed at www.acfid.asn.au

WOMEN COUNT!

DESIGNING BETTER INDICES OF POVERTY AND GENDER EQUITY

Jo Crawford, Research and Policy

Is there any country where US\$1.25 a day would buy you the basic 'stuff' you need (shelter, food, water, sanitation, security, transport, health services) to keep you out of poverty? If you are sceptical, then you share one of the concerns at the core of a major research project with which IWDA is involved.

And should global gender equality measures tell us something about the situation of poor women relative to poor men, not just use indicators of most relevance to better off women (like representation in parliament)? If your response is a resounding 'Yes', you'll understand why we are excited about this research.

IWDA is contributing significant funding and staff time, alongside the Australian Research Council, to this three-year international collaboration¹ which seeks to move beyond criticism of existing measures and come up with alternatives that are informed by the views of those experiencing poverty.

The main global poverty metrics are not gender-sensitive. They use information about the circumstances of households, which effectively assumes all household members experience the same level of poverty and deprivation. *We know this is simply not true. Women and girls are often the first to miss out if food is short, or to be pulled out of school if money is tight.*

The common global metrics also focus on income, which may not fully capture other factors that we might consider part of poverty, such as lack of assets, hunger, or physical insecurity. In most countries, just having a bit of income won't buy you access to the many things you need to survive, stay well and feed your family.

The research brings together a fantastic cross-disciplinary team including local researchers to coordinate fieldwork in Angola, Fiji, Indonesia, Malawi, Mozambique and the Philippines. In Fiji, the local research partner is 'femLINKPACIFIC'. Many of the researchers met in Canberra in late March to develop the detailed research questions to use in the fieldwork, starting in June/July.

Better measurement of poverty and gender equality will enable better assessment of impact, more informed choices about where to focus development resources, and a sounder basis for policy development and service delivery.

A FEW WORDS FROM OUR PRESIDENT, MARY HAWKINS

The contrast of the isolation and heat of the Bibbulmun track to the snow and bustle of New York couldn't have been greater. I'm sure many of the thousands of women representing many NGOs at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, CSW, felt that same stark contrast.

This year's CSW focused on the progress in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. The Women, Faith, Development Alliance (WFDA) held a session to report on the commitments made at the 2008 Breakthrough summit and the WFDA Asia Pacific Breakthrough held in December 2009. The session, attended by over 300 people, provided encouragement and support for this new global movement and its aim to mobilise common action, to increase investments in women and girls to end global poverty.

Australia sponsored an event "Women Decision Makers in Action" hosted by Pacific Island Forum Secretariat and focusing on women's political leadership in the Pacific. It featured speakers from New Zealand, Samoa, Tuvalu and Solomon Island. Each spoke of their own experiences of being a woman in politics and the challenges of women's representation in Pacific parliaments.

Another great event was the "Equality means Business" workshop and launch of the Women's Empowerment Principles prepared jointly by the UN Global Compact and UNIFEM. I'd encourage you to review their website www.unglobalcompact.org/Issues/human_rights/equality_means_business.html and see how your workplace could adopt these principles.

Mary Hawkins,
President

1. The project is housed at the Centre for Applied Philosophy and Public Ethics at the Australian National University in collaboration with the Crawford School of Economics and Government. Other partners are Oxfam Great Britain (Southern Africa Regional Office), University of Colorado at Boulder, and Philippines Health Social Science Association.



Photo: Gita Chetty
Celebrating International
Women's Day

Photo: Ali Capp
Great Ocean Walk



25TH ANNIVERSARY

In 2010 IWDA marks 25 years of supporting and empowering women worldwide. Help us celebrate by getting involved in a range of our commemorative activities:

- ☀ Host your own birthday party and raise funds for the important work of IWDA. Visit our website for a do-it-yourself event kit. We can help and inspire you.
- ☀ Take a walk for IWDA – join our Charity Challenge from 30 October to 1 November along the magnificent Great Ocean Road. (See below for further details).
- ☀ Get crafty – we are commissioning special textile works of art for a nationwide exhibition. Contact Jo Shaw for more details jshaw@iwda.org.au or check the website for more details.
- ☀ Buy us a birthday present and sign up a friend as an Empower Donor. Their long-term commitment means greater certainty for our program partners.
- ☀ Plus more exciting 25th birthday events so check our website regularly for more details.

CHALLENGE FOR CHANGE 2010: GREAT OCEAN WALK

Last year, the IWDA Challenge for Change took place along the spectacular Great Ocean Walk and it was such a fabulous weekend that we're doing it all over again.

From 30 October to 1 November you can trek along 91 kilometres of breathtaking coastal scenery, deserted wild beaches and sheer cliffs whilst encountering an abundance of Australian flora and fauna – all in support of IWDA and our partners!

Registrations are now open for this fantastic opportunity to participate in a fundraising initiative which will help improve women's lives in Asia and the Pacific.

For more information, call us on 1300 661 812 or visit our website, www.iwda.org.au.

Get involved!

- When** 30 October–1 November, 2010. 3 days walk.
- Where** The Great Ocean Road, from Blanket Bay to Wreck Beach, Victoria.
- Cost** \$890 and fundraising target \$1,000.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2010

You could have been mistaken for wondering where you were upon arriving at our International Women's Day One Just World Celebration on 10 March at Federation Square in Melbourne.

Women's circus performers dressed as suffragettes greeted the crowd with the suffragette song from Mary Poppins, while others juggled and hula-hooped around the guests; Kankaley the Sierra Leone women's choir in dazzling jewel-coloured African dress sang and danced traditional village songs from their homeland; and Kavisha Mazella wowed the crowd with her rousing Love and Justice Women's Anthem.

Renowned human rights law specialist Professor Hilary Charlesworth from ANU and our own Jane Sloane provided a compelling reminder of the need for vigilance and continued advocacy on behalf of women's rights everywhere. For a schedule of next One Just World events please visit www.onejustworld.com.

Thanks must also go to our friends and supporters who partnered with us to mark International Women's Day around the country.

In particular the Third Sector Magazine who held their inaugural Women's Networking Lunch as a fund-raising event for IWDA and raised over \$4,000 towards our work, the National Australia Bank employees who sold over 2,000 Kachin pins, the Department of Justice in Victoria, Yabbo Thompson, Jane Bange and Amnesty International Tasmania, Hepburn Shire Victoria, University of Sydney, Latrobe University, Maurice Blackburn Law Firm, Williamstown High School, Amnesty International Sydney, Craigieburn Health Service and Tap Gallery Darlinghurst.

CALLING ALL UNSUNG HEROINES AND HEROES!

As an IWDA supporter have you got an interesting story to tell? Have you recently volunteered abroad, made a personal sacrifice to raise funds for IWDA partners, held a fundraiser, visited a community we work with?

We'd love to hear from you.

Contact Ali Capp on acapp@iwda.org.au or 1300 661 812.

