



United Nations
Association
of Australia

AUSTRALIAN AID AT WORK SPOTLIGHT ON UN WOMEN

Gender equality is not just a basic human right – it is a necessity. Empowering women fuels thriving economies, spurs productivity and growth, and helps developing countries to prosper.

UN Women was created as the driving organisation within the United Nations to address the challenges posed by gender inequality. UN Women is a dynamic and strong champion for women and girls at global, regional and local levels.

Australia was one of the first countries to pledge multi-year core funding to UN Women and contributed \$17.2 million in 2015, making it one of the top 6 contributors to UN Women.

Australia was elected to the UN Women's Executive

Board in 2013 and the Australian National Committee for UN Women (UN Women Australia) is one of 18 National Committees globally. UN Women Australia raises public awareness of development and gender issues and fundraises for UN Women projects around the world.

Every year, UN Women Australia hosts International Women's Day events across the country celebrating the achievements of women. In 2015, more than 10 million people engaged in International Women's Day celebrations, 26,000 purple ribbons were sold to raise awareness of gender equality, and UN Women Australia raised \$750,000 in funds to assist women in marketplaces across the Pacific become economically independent.

> FOCUS AREAS

WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION

Women's participation in political processes and increased female representation in government directly contributes to ensuring women's issues are given greater priority in policy development.

Similarly, increasing female representation in business and leadership positions enables companies to access the widest possible talent pool, assist in building a strong public reputation and improve financial performance.

- Just 21% of members of parliament worldwide are women
- In the Pacific, 5.4% of parliamentarians are women, compared to the global average of 21%
- As of April 2015, four of the six countries in the world that have no women in parliament are in the Pacific.



Photo: UN Women

UN Photo/Christopher Herwig



WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

Women have different experiences of war than men. Rape is often used as a tool of war, with ongoing consequences for women after conflict. Increased involvement of women in governance, reconstruction, and peace-keeping processes is needed to address the issue.

- 90% of casualties in contemporary conflicts are civilians, the majority of whom are women and children
- Fewer than 4% of signatories to peace agreements are women
- Less than 10% of negotiators at peace tables are women



UN Photo/Christopher Herwig

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Violence against women is a human rights violation which denies women their most basic rights and freedoms, such as freedom of opinion, mobility and participation in society. This fundamental violation of women's rights remains widespread and affects all nations. Strong laws, backed by implementation and services for the protection and prevention of violence are needed to end violence against women.

- 35.6% of women experience physical or sexual intimate violence by partner, or non-partner in their lifetime
- Every 10 minutes, somewhere in the world, an adolescent girl dies as a result of violence.
- 2 in 3 women in the Pacific will experience physical and/or sexual violence at the hands of an intimate partner
- Up to 80% of men in the Asia Pacific admit to perpetrating physical and/or sexual violence against women and girls in their lifetime.

WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Facing ongoing discrimination in accessing education, health care and employment, women are more likely than men to be at risk of hunger and poverty, further inhibiting their ability to access clean water, food and medical care. Women face further difficulties in accessing credit and financial systems, placing them at risk of having to enter insecure and unsafe work.

- In a majority of countries, women's wages are between 70-90% of men's wages
- Only half of women are in the labour force compared to three quarters of men
- The current rate of progress, the gender pay gap will close in 75 years.

> SNAPSHOT OF UN WOMEN PROJECTS

NEPAL EARTHQUAKES

UN Women has been working to provide supplies, support and improve communications, safety and health for women and girls in Nepal since the earthquake in 2015. UN Women mobilised 500 women's groups to raise awareness and advocate on the protection of women and girls from gender-based violence, and to combat discrimination faced by older women, women with a disability and female heads of households seeking relief, supplies and information. Multi-purpose women's centres have also been established as hubs to provide information, cash to work programs and supplies to those affected by the earthquake.

Photo: UN Women



Photo: Brooke Dahlberg

MARKETS FOR CHANGE (M4C)

The M4C project is a six-year, multi-country initiative that officially launched in Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu in 2014. M4C focuses on four key areas:

1. Inclusive, effective and representative marketplace groups
2. Improved socioeconomic security of female market vendors
3. Gender-responsive, effective and accountable local government and market management

ENCOURAGING WOMEN TO RUN FOR OFFICE

Pacific Island Countries have some of the lowest levels of representation of women in parliaments and local governments in the world. UN Women is working across the Pacific to help women recognise and build on their strengths and skills, and to prepare them to become community leaders and candidates for elected office. In Vanuatu for example, leadership training was provided to 45 potential women candidates, covering how to engage in community consultation, campaign strategy, policy development and hands-on interview skills. Vanuatu's municipal elections in January 2014 saw five women elected – all of them graduates of UN Women's leadership training.

For further information about UN Women Australia:

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