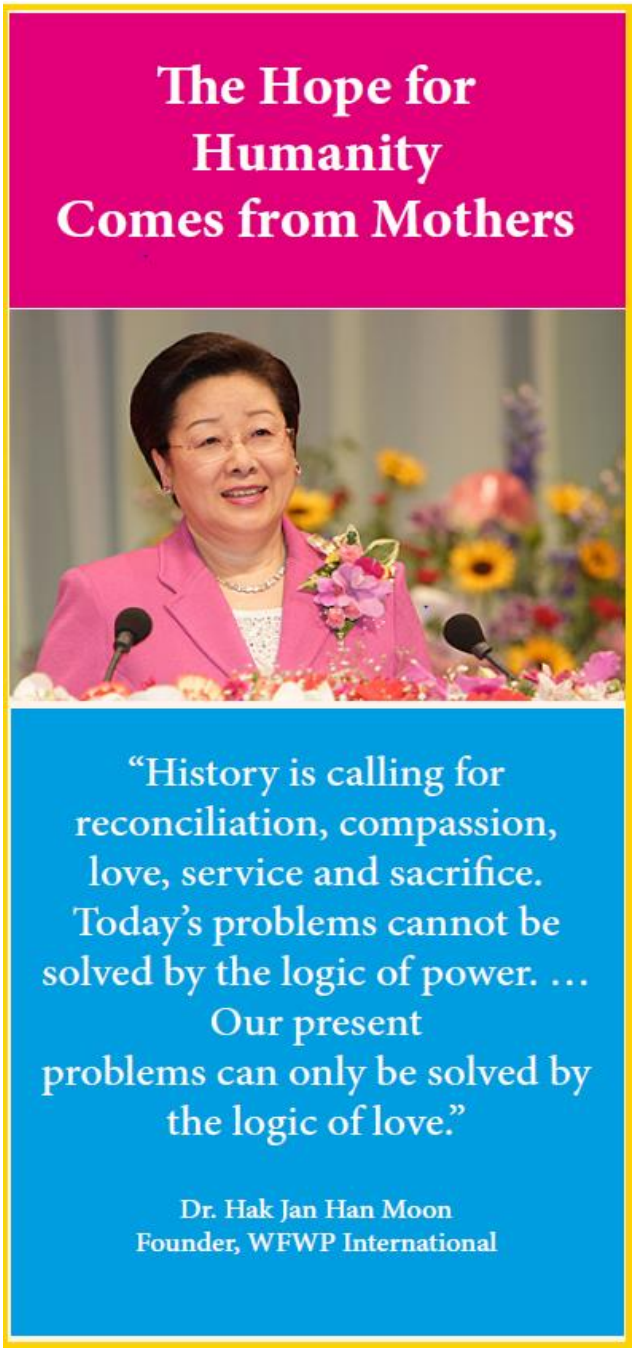
OCEANIA / S.E. ASIA WFWP NEWSLETTER

Issue 1 | 2023



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WFWP is committed to:

- Serving communities – Service projects within Australia & the Pacific Islands.
- Strengthening the family – Workshops, forums, seminars, and conferences.
- Bridge of Peace - Reconciling differences and healing wounds of the past.
- Global Women's Peace Network (GWPN) – A network of women leaders and organisations dedicated to solving pressing social issues and securing an environment for human development.

Feature Column:

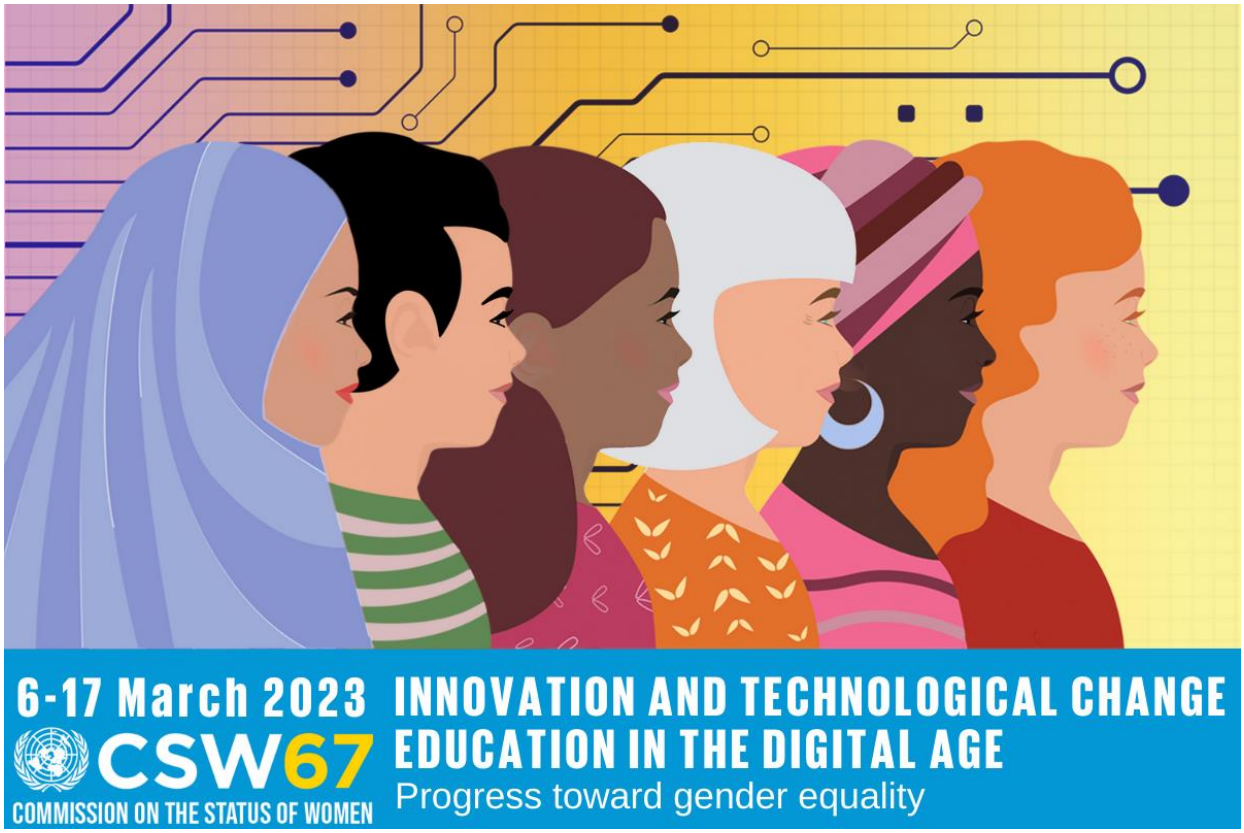
CSW67: WFWPI Parallel Event

March 9th | New York, USA

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UZwi-d4ZXKg&ab_channel=Women%27sFederationforWorldPeace%2CInternational

Overview

- For those who could not make it in person to WFWPI's Parallel Event during CSW67 in New York, follow the link above to watch.



The WFWPI Parallel event for CSW67 brought experts and practitioners from various fields of the tech world to share their wealth of information, and discussed the ways to ensure that all women and girls are equally and properly equipped and protected to be resilient, discerning, knowledgeable, and empowered in this digital age.

CSW stands for the Commission for the Status of Women which is a United Nations event held in March each year. The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is the principal global intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. A functional commission of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), it was established by ECOSOC resolution 11(II) of 21 June 1946.

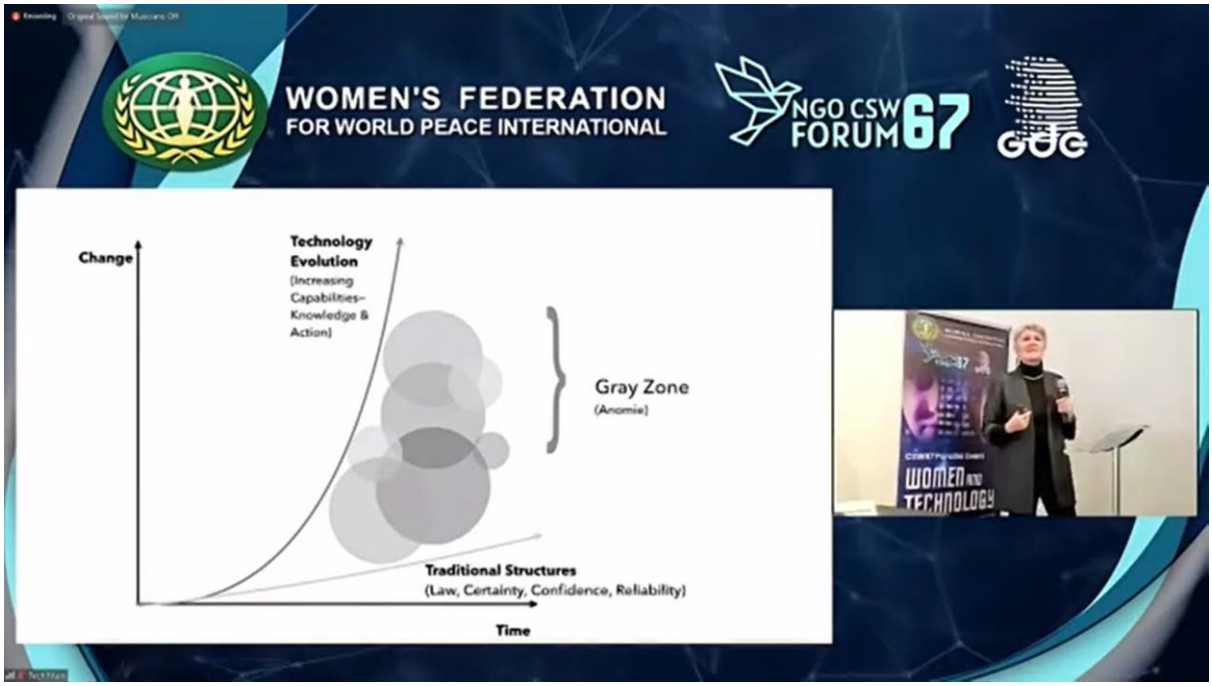
CSW67 2023 Priority themes:

- Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.
- Review theme: Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls (agreed conclusions of the sixty-second session).



Atefeh Riazi, Founder and Director of CIO Without Borders

CIO Without Borders is a global non-profit organization that uses technology to provide education, healthcare, and infrastructure services to underserved areas around the world. We will bring together the IT community in a novel philanthropic effort to apply technology to solve every day human problems. CIOs without Borders is not affiliated with Doctors Without Borders, which is a registered trademark of Bureau International de Medecins Sans Frontieres.



Dr Karen Judd Smith – Founder of GDE (Global Development Enterprise)

PARTNERS

Hosted by:

The **Women's Federation for World Peace** is an international NGO in General Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. WFWP adheres to the principle that women working together, taking initiative, and empowering one another across traditional lines of race, culture, and religion to create healthy families can resolve the complex problems of our societies and world. https://www.wfwp.org/

Co-Hosted by:

GDE (Global Development Enterprise) In today's diverse tech-driven world, effective problem-solving requires honing our thinking, communication, and decision-making skills. Gives practical tools to navigate complexity, manage ambiguity, and adapt to disruption. https://gde.onl/

Australia

Clean Up Australia Day

March 5th | Victoria, Australia

https://www.cleanupaustraliaday.org.au/

Overview

- WFWP Australia, Victoria Chapter volunteers joined together for Clean Up Australia Day to address environmental problems, while also promoting education and community connection.
- Supporting Sustainable Development Goals

  Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production

  Goal 15: Life On Land

  Goal 17: Partnerships For The Goals

The WFWP Victoria volunteers, family and friends came together in Belgrave to help keep our community clean and promote sustainability. Not only was Clean Up Australia Day a chance for WFWP to participate in helping the environment, but it was also a great activity to bring the community together and foster meaningful relationships.

With a total of 40 participants, it was a great turnout. It was also encouraging to see children participating and, in the process, learning about the importance of keeping our planet clean. This year we also worked on some major arterial roads such Wellington Road along Lysterfield Park and leading towards Emerald.







Sadly, there are many single use plastic water bottles, soft-drink cans, and plastic wrapping that are thrown out of car windows. Bags falling off utility trucks, and people using pull in spaces to dump their garbage is also a problem on these busy arterial roads.



As the day carried on, it was very inspiring to see everyone in the community stepping up and getting involved to make a difference. Participants were rewarded with a certificate of appreciation, free gloves and enjoyed a BBQ lunch to raise money to aid our Global Development and Aid projects in the Pacific islands. A great day for a great cause!

Reflection from Participants

"What a fun, great day to get the community involved in keeping our streets clean!" – Richard

"Great day with lovely people." - Angus



"It's so great to see the community get together for such a good cause."- Suz



PARTNERS and SUPPORTERS

Hosted by:

The **Women's Federation for World Peace** is an international NGO in General Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. WFWP adheres to the principle that women working together, taking initiative, and empowering one another across traditional lines of race, culture, and religion to create healthy families can resolve the complex problems of our societies and world.

In Partnership With:

Clean Up Australia is a not-for-profit Australian organisation promoting environmental conservation. Clean Up Australia Day empowers communities to address environmental problems and supports local action to make a difference in the world. https://www.cleanupaustraliaday.org.au/

Written by Suzanna Hoffman
WFWP Volunteer, Victoria Chapter

An Interview with Patricia Vaz
Theme: International Women's Day

March 8th | Victoria, Australia

https://www.un.org/en/observances/womens-day

Overview

- Celebrating women making a difference on International Women's Day.
- A wonderful interview with Patricia Vaz, GWPN Victoria Planning Committee member.



On International Women's Day in 2023 we celebrate the great achievements that have been made to ensure women enjoy equity in our world, and we recognise that we still have a long way to go in the campaign for equity.

Patricia Vaz is General Manager Corporate Services with Community Housing Limited (CHL) and a proud mentor with Women's Federation for World Peace, Australia (WFWP Australia) through the Global Women's Peace Network (GWPN).

Patricia is committed to making a difference for women and girls in Australia and internationally as part of her involvement with WFWP. "I became involved with the Federation about two years ago when I was looking for an opportunity to give back to the community," Patricia says.

Patricia shared, "as a leader I endorse Women's Federation for World Peace International for their exceptional work in promoting peacebuilding through a culture of the heart. The organisation has established a robust international leadership network called the Global Woman Peace Network, that empowers women to play an active role in building 'Equality for women and peace for all."

Patricia says the value of mentoring is not simply about boosting individual career progression but provides a means for knowledge transfer across generations and professions. “In my role as mentor in the WFWP Leading into the Future mentoring program, I aim to help women understand universal values and develop ‘soft power’ skills of peace building and reconciliation. These skills are essential for today’s leaders.”



Bringing women from diverse backgrounds together and creating a culture of empathy, compassion and inclusion are the key elements of building a more peaceful world, Patricia says. “As leaders we understand the importance of how we treat and embrace people in our organisations and communities.”

“Women’s Federation for World Peace International embodies these values and provides a platform for women leaders to make meaningful contributions towards creating an equal and peaceful world. I wholeheartedly support this vision and I am committed to being part of this important work.”.

WFWP Australia is hosting the GWPN Assembly on transformative leadership on July 1st. Visit the website for more information: https://www.wfwpaustralia.org/gwpn

New Zealand

Reflections during CSW67, and Best Practice from the WFWPI Training

Theme: New Zealand delegate to the UN

March 6-17 | New York, USA

Overview

- Understand the mechanisms of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and its advocacy platform at the United Nations.
- To create a global network with likeminded organisations and leaders.
- To place the voices of the Myanmar refugees (Ms Tin Ma Ma is of Myanmar heritage), and advocacy for peace in Myanmar within the global discussion table.
- To have personal and professional development opportunities.



From the left: Ms Carolyn Handschin (WFWPI Vice President, Director- Office for UN Relations - Geneva), Ms Tin Ma Ma Oo (WFWP – UN Representative, New Zealand), Dr. Sun Jin Moon (WFWPI Senior Vice President – fifth daughter of WFWP Founders, Rev. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon), Ms Matapa Shelley (WFWP President, New Zealand), Ms Merely Barlaan (WFWPI Vice President, CAO Director, Office for UN Relations - New York), Ms Moriko Hori (WFWPI President). Photo was taken at the Lobby of the UNHQ in New York on the 6th of March 2023.

Reflections by Ms Tin Ma Ma Oo, WFWP NZ's UN Delegate

At CSW67, held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, I had a highly successful experience. I had the opportunity to network with other women's rights advocates, attend informative workshops, and participate in panel discussions. The event allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of the issues facing women globally and to learn about successful strategies and initiatives that have been implemented to address these issues. I was also able to share my own experiences and insights with others and make valuable connections that will be useful in my future work.



Overall, attending CSW67 was a fulfilling and empowering experience that left me with a greater sense of purpose and motivation to continue advocating for women's rights.

The Women's Federation for World Peace New Zealand is an organisation of great importance, and I strongly believe that we as New Zealanders can contribute significantly to its advocacy team. Our participation can add value to the movements towards women's empowerment and support our government in achieving its commitments within the Global Sustainable Development Goals.

We are fortunate to live in a peaceful country where we do not have to worry about our next meal or live in fear like women and girls in other countries who face gender-based violence, poverty, and live amongst bombs. Therefore, we have a unique opportunity to promote peace within our own homeland by promoting diversity and inclusion for women from various backgrounds, including ethnic women, migrant and refugee women, women from displaced backgrounds, and those from other marginalised identities.

As the UN Representative for Women's Federation for World Peace New Zealand, I have a personal commitment to empower young women in leadership and encourage them to participate in policy-making spaces to positively impact the lives of women and girls in New Zealand and globally.

To achieve this goal, I aim to educate and train young women and other interested parties to join me in a learning journey, working alongside our WFWPI UN Office to strengthen our knowledge of the UN Mechanisms and equip us with best practices on advocacy and policy change as change makers.

WFWPI 3-Day Training

Three days training was fruitful and engaging. I had the opportunity to get to know leaders from other Chapters and build friendships.

Social Impact Projects

The training sessions were engaging, with the presenters sharing their valuable experiences and best practices. Notably, the projects from the Philippines, such as the PERMACULTURE LITERACY PROGRAM, stood out as excellent examples of social impact initiatives, thanks to their committed and fearless leaders.



One key takeaway was the importance of building a trustworthy and reliable 'A-Team' before expanding and empowering individuals from the team to develop their own networks and implement the projects.

Additionally, conducting a needs assessment is crucial to ensure that the services offered are desired and required by the local community, without whose participation and involvement, the projects are unlikely to succeed. Expect to face challenges and scrutiny from the locals, who will test your dedication and resilience. It may take time to earn their trust and respect, but staying among them and persisting with your approach will bear fruit. Identifying role models who can represent the success story of your project, such as talented youth leaders, and investing in their development can inspire and motivate others, including elders, to follow suit.

Lessons to take away/Best Practice



We have the vision; but we also need people who will inherit it after us.

Before you secure the funding, be sure to know who in your team will inherit your vision and know your immediate stakeholder. We need at least 3 ppl, who will run in heart

with you, who will not betrayal you, and who will work harder than you.

For example: 3 political leaders, 3 academia, 3 financial sectors.

Work with them, conduct research and be aware of whatever you envisioned and always ask, ‘is this what the community need’?

We need to prepare our departure so that people can inherit our implementation. And Community needs to take ownership, as well.

Question 1 – who are your team?

Research – list down 5 questions



Five questions that you want to know from your community to understand the needs of the community.

1. What challenges do you face within the community relating to gender equity in accessing education and employment through digital education?
2. Please give us individual challenges, and then the barriers to you from accessing equal opportunities in employment and education.
3. What kinds of project can we implement for you to help you access the resources?
4. How can we make sure the success of the project investments to make is sustainable?
5. Are there any conflicts we need to be aware of that might affect the project?

Who are the stakeholders?

Political Leaders.

Religious leaders.

Community leaders.

Sponsors.

Project managers and

Workers.

Identify two national agenda/priority.

Check that what you implement align with the national Sustainable Development Goal (SDG).

Align with your local community's priority. If not align, then it will become challenges.



Matapa Shelley (WFWP NZ President) with Tin Ma Ma Oo (WFWP – UN Representative, New Zealand) at the UN.

In your project, find social and economic progress. How do you add value to the community development that align with the national priority?

Once the questions are answered, you can write proposals to work with your local government i.e., the mayor's office.

Send proposal to the funder.

Make an Implementation Timeline.

Create a Survey – for database information before the project, after project is implemented, then we review and analysis the outcome of the project. How has your project improved the lives of the recipients?

Guide the community through their own resolution for their own problems so that they hold accountability for their own problems.

Always conduct a 'Needs assessment' – Problem defines, policy and program development, Government develop policy to overcome the gender gap.

You need to be aware of your country's administration's priority, so that you can work in alignment with the government so that you are not working based on your own opinions. Will it align with the national priority which will help boost your project as you are seen as a partner helping the government serve the people.

What is the best way to create a safe space for an organisation to operate a project?



1. Start a small programme, make sure it is manageable and then look for a funder who believe in your project to carry on and create impact.

2. Education and personal relationship are important. The world is short on relationship of hearts and personal relationship, not short of talent.

3. Have a Vision and Mission. Write down 3-5 objectives, and then 3,5,10 years goals.

4. Use PESTLE and SWOT analysis framework. Lay the Foundation.

   Phase 1 – lay foundation,

   Phase 2 – the project

   Phase 3 – where are you now?

5. Look for circle of support and sector partnership. Community needs to be in partnership with you, also.

6. Create an impact in the community and they will support you. However, make sure you give them incentives for their participation, and hold them accountable if they do not stick with the plan i.e., a child can attend school only if the parents follow the rules of the organisation, and if the parent broke that rule, a child can't attend school. Holding people accountable for their action and rewarding them for their commitment to the betterment of the project is the crucial part of a sustainable project.

Communication



Participants at the WFWPI Parallel Event

Our work is about building relationships, connecting with people, and speaking in public forums. Therefore, it is very important that we learn to speak professionally, and precisely. Be articulative and constructive with your speech. Grab the attention of your audience and crate an impact.

Technical Knowledge

Knowledge is power, and the support network is the force to help you succeed your mission. No matter what you do, educate yourself and become the 'subject expert'. Reach out and connect with people who can support you and enrich your goals. Count your blessings and celebrate every small win. Break down the big mission, progress slowly to master the matter, and only take on what you can manage.

Be aware of your demographic, your local and national government's position on the matter you are trying to fix. Learn to work with the authorities and influence change from within and out.

Written by Tin Ma Ma Oo,
WFWP NZ's UN Delegate

Tin Ma Ma's SELFCARE PLAN

It is always important to take time out and enjoy yourself! Healthy body = healthy mind! Most importantly, spend quality time with your colleagues!

Papua New Guinea

Pasifika Micro-credit Project

January 19-21 | Sogeri, Papua New Guinea

https://www.wfwpaustralia.org/pasifika-micro-credit-project

Overview

- Taking a partnership approach between WFWP Australia and the WFWP Chapters within the Pacific Island Nations, Pasifika Micro-Credit aims to empower women in the Island Nations of Oceania by directly investing in their business idea, economic activity, or micro-enterprise with a micro-credit loan.
- Pacific women are under-represented among business owners, and face financial barriers to start and develop businesses. As a result, female-headed businesses are less likely to be successful due to limited capital.
- Studies show that when women are given economic opportunity, it benefits not only their families, but their community, and ultimately national economic development. Highlighting the first Global Goal, providing economic opportunities for women puts poverty reduction on a faster track.



Who benefits?

- Women with low to moderate-income who have viable business ideas that do not meet the criteria of banks or other traditional lenders and, therefore, are unable to access bank credit for their small businesses.

- Women with existing businesses and/or start-up businesses that have strong business plans.



Applicants meet with the WFWP PNG Executive team to understand the process before the training program. Repayment of lent funds will be repaid over a 1–3-year period. Returned funds will replenish the available funds for the local Chapter to lend to future applicants. All lending arrangements will be incremental and staggered. WFWP will use the model developed in this project, to extend micro financing to other areas of the Pacific.



The Pasifika Micro-Credit Program (PMC) is a project established by WFWP Australia specifically to support women within the island nations of Oceania.

The 3-day micro-business training workshop was held at the first High school in PNG (Sogeri National High School) built by the Australian Government in the village of Sogeri, located in the mountains above Port Moresby, where the Kokoda Trail begins.

During the training workshop, participants engaged in the following modules:

- Philosophy of WFWP and the PMC project
- Knowing Your Strengths

- Setting Goals
- SWOT Analysis
- Small Business Plans
- GANNT Planning tools and Business Planning
- Large Business Plans
- Loan Application Process
- Graduation





Although the focus of the training program was to support and empower local women, the men of the community were encouraged to attend to offer their support for their wife's or sister's prospective business in the future.



With a mix of presentations, worksheets, group discussions, and business plan show and tell sessions, participants actively engaged with the program. A Pidgin English interpreter was present to assist some of the women.



Participants were organised into small groups led by a supervisor who assisted them in filling in their business plans during the Business Planning sessions.

Some of the businesses chosen were to raise livestock such as chickens, pigs, fishponds for sale in the local markets, setting up trade stores, and wholesale businesses. One of the groups who came from a remote village above Sogeri decided to work as a co-operative to better support each other and was to be led by one of the supervisors who gave up her desire to receive the micro-loan due to conflict of interest.



The supervisors who are local professionals will continue to provide mentoring support on business management. It is our hope that these women will become trailblazers whose success will provide an example for women in other provinces to follow suit. This picture shows WFWP PNG President Prisca Mauve (far right) with most of the National Executive who are also supervisors.



After attending the three-day workshop, thirty-five women were presented with their certificates at a colourful and cheerful Graduation Ceremony.





Closing with some fun and singing, participants gathered to celebrate a closing dinner prepared by volunteers. A big thank you to all the volunteers who helped to make the workshop memorable and run smoothly.





We look forward to hearing from our friends throughout the Sogeri area in PNG to learn how they are progressing in their business endeavors, and we wish them every success as they work towards long term positive outcomes for their rural communities.

Reflection from Participants

Mary – great day, simple enough for everyone can understand. Good that supervisors went around to help participants to understand points in the presentations.

Tau – interesting part of training was that we did not go straight into how to start a business but started with how I do the work to determine how I do the business – ex. know our values, strengths & how to set goals.



Velatom – privileged to attend this financial literacy training. Some words are technical, so I need to look them up. We really understand what was being taught such as time frames for planning the business.

Angela - Many of us have started something small. What we have learnt is how to start again, but this time with the tools to re-start the business. This is the way forward for us by learning to how to work towards our goals.



Madeline – I have a big interest in the business plan. I already have a small business, but this training is teaching the planning process & giving hints on how to plan my business to make a bigger chicken farm for the PNG population, rather than purchasing imported goods.

Cecilia - I never knew how to allocate the cost, price & therefore, the profit that I make at the end of the day. This training has opened my mind to understand how to manage my money.



Elizabeth - I always stay in the village. This is the 1st time I have attended such a training. I have learnt about how to manage money & do some marketing.

Philo – With local knowledge I have managed my little business. This training has expanded my mind to expand my business & help the other farmers.

Dorothy - I thought that making a business is money comes in & money goes out. I have learnt about making a business plan through this workshop I will make sure that my business grows according to the scheduling I wrote on the GANTT chart. I will use this knowledge to help women in my village.

PARTNERS and SUPPORTERS

Hosted by WFWP Australia and WFWP PNG:

The **Women's Federation for World Peace** is an international NGO in General Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. WFWP adheres to the principle that women working together, taking initiative, and empowering one another across traditional lines of race, culture, and religion to create healthy families can resolve the complex problems of our societies and world.



Written by Anne Bellavance
IVP representing Asia Pacific 2 (Oceania & S.E. Asia)
President, WFWP Australia

Creating Awareness in PNG

January 18th 22nd | Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea

Overview

- Create awareness of WFWP PNG with professional women in Port Moresby.
- Develop the capacity of WFWP PNG members.





Prisca Mauve, President of WFWP PNG prepared the groundwork with the National Executive, who networked to gather local women professionals to learn more deeply about WFWP International's philosophy, life education programs based on values education, and the Global Development and Aid projects.



Anne Bellavance travelled to PNG, Port Moresby in her capacity as International Vice-President representing the Asia Pacific 2 region of Oceania and S.E. Asia to support the developing WFWP PNG Chapter and run the Pasifika Micro-Credit training program.
Left to right: Rev. Mansoo Han, Anne Bellavance, Prisca Mauve

Travelling with Anne was Rev. Mansoo Han, National President of FFWPU PNG. Rev. Han attended many of the WFWP activities during his visit.



Following the Pasifika Micro-Credit workshop, Anne had the chance to share with the PNG WFWP National Executive team and support the developing Chapter.

Anne brought with her 2nd hand sewing machines to start women's sewing centres, Day For Girls re-usable menstrual pads to be given out in High Schools, WFWP booklets for marketing and branding, Mother Moon, and Father Moon's autobiographies, three laptops, a data projector, and a printer for the WFWP PNG office. A deep thank you to our WFWP Australia members who paid for these items to support the development of the new WFWP PNG Chapter.

Written by Anne Bellavance
IVP representing Asia Pacific 2 (Oceania & S.E. Asia)
President, WFWP Australia

Fiji

Values Education Workshop

February 24th | Suva, Fiji

Overview

- Values are universal regardless of age, creed, gender, and cultural background. The workshop seeks to empower people with character development not just at an individual or societal level, but for everyone.
- Encourage the need for good values to live by and incorporate in our daily lives, our education system, and our relationships.
- Twenty-three participants where empowered and inspired as they learnt about universal values, and survival amidst climate change.



Presenters

Santosh Neupane, PR Director UPF Oceania and Vice-President UPF Australia spoke via video about the 'Need for Heart Education'. He spoke on the significance of building good character and family values.

Dr John Bellavance, National Vice-President and VIC State President of UPF Australia received his PhD from Monash University on Values Education. Dr John spoke via video about 'Why Values Matter'. As an educator, author, and speaker, Dr Bellavance's presentation was informative and data focused, proving the importance of Values Education. He explained what personal and moral behaviours are, and the differences between personality and character.

Member of Parliament, **Hon Rinesh Sharma** spoke about 'Values Education for Youth Empowerment in Mitigating Climate Change'. He said it was values education that enabled him to use his knowledge, skills, and good values to have the initiative of starting hydroponic farming in Fiji at a commercial level. Incredibly, Hon Sharma has taught more than 13,000 students in the past 4 years.



Hon Rinesh Sharma is an award-winning software engineer having specialized in building automated climate resilient greenhouse modules to help grow food in a sustainable way with technology embedded agriculture. He was the 2020 recipient of the Commonwealth Youth Award for Excellence in Development, the Award recipient for "Social Innovation" at the World Summit for Innovations in Vietnam 2019, and the Fiji Prime Minister's International Award for Young Entrepreneur in 2018.

Dr Rajesh Maharaj is President of FCGP, a medical practitioner of almost 3 decades, and a spiritual leader. Dr Rajesh shed light on family values and the role of religion. He stated the need for instilling values education with children from a very tender age. Dr Maharaj highlighted the need for good values to develop good behaviours that create exemplary people who display the positive attitudes and actions.

Ms Letila Sandys, a retired High School Counsellor spoke on the 'Importance of Moral Education for Children'. Letila shared unanimously about experiences with children in high schools, stating that the need for good values education is imperative.

Reflection from Participants



"I really enjoyed the workshop, I felt very encouraged. It was the first time for me to attend such a forum. I learnt about hydroponic farming and want to attend training. This will help us in survival." ... Avenia

"I am overjoyed to be part of this workshop. It's my first time to be invited and I am very inspired. I have learnt a lot today." ... Sokoveti

Written by Sharila Lazarus
President, WFWP Fiji

IWD Women's Empowerment workshop

Theme: Embrace Equity

March 7th | Suva, Fiji

https://www.un.org/en/observances/womens-day

Overview

- Dedicated to the empowerment of women using the 2023 theme for International Women's Day; Embrace Equity.



Participants Embracing Equity

Thirty participants attended representing the Fiji Police Force, Indian High Commission (Womens Wing), National Women's Club, corporate businesses, housewives, and tertiary institutions.

During the workshop participants were enlightened about the importance of good health, wellbeing, and peacebuilding. Women are the cornerstones in their families playing multiple roles and face significant challenges in their daily lives; thus, it is important to encourage each person to maintain self-care.

Presenters

Aseri from Fiji Police Force commented on the importance of mobilizing your voice in decision making.

Sabita Gandhi has many years of experience and knowledge in tertiary institutions and NGO's. She asked the Director of Health to elaborate on behavioural habits that result in individuals making poor food choices and how to avoid noncommunicable diseases (NCDs). The response was that individual's need to make healthy decision and have strong willpower.



Assistant Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, **Hon Sashi Kiran** is a Fijian politician, social entrepreneur, and activist, who since December 2022 has been serving in the Fiji Government. She is the founder and former director of a non-profit community organisation called the Foundation for Rural Integrated Enterprises and Development (FRIEND). Hon Kiran has worked with the Commonwealth Foundation creating a regional report on citizens and good governance and served on the executive council of international NGO CIVICUS.



Doctor Devina Nand is Director for Health and Wellness in the Ministry of Health. She obtained a master's in public health in 2010 with Dean's Honours. Dr Devina spoke in depth about social and commercial determinants of health, and the post pandemic challenges faced by women. It was an intriguing and thought-provoking session.

Catherine Pleass has a diverse operations background, incorporating business development and marketing strategy, workforce development, major change management, shareholder engagement, and a demonstrated track-record of transforming business performance through workplace culture development and rigorous cost management. Cate has a career spanning senior management roles in health, pharmaceuticals, FMCG manufacturing, Aged Care Housing and Aviation, and has worked for public and private organisations. Cate has served on boards and has been a Director for 16 years. She is currently Senior Manager and Director of Pleass Global Limited with final responsibility for Sales and Marketing (Domestic and Export markets), HR and Quality.

Written by Sharila Lazarus
President, WFWP Fiji

WFWP FIJI ARTICLE ON FIJI GOVERNMENT PAGE FACEBOOK ON 8 MARCH, 2023

Fiji Government

INNER PEACE IMPORTANT FOR SUSTAINABLE PEACE IN FIJI - HON. KIRAN



The Assistant Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, Hon. Sashi Kiran applauded the commitment of volunteers of the Women's Federation for World Peace Fiji who have been dedicating their time to help build peace in Fiji and serve the women in need to give them relief and peace of mind.

At the commemoration of International Women's Day at their office in Suva yesterday, Hon. Kiran shared her own journey of healing and peace building. She thanked Roko Tui Dreketi Ro Teimumu Kepa for her vision to build bridges and enabling a peace process across ethnic divide.

Asst. Minister Kiran shared that below the surface, stereotypes and ethnic divide is real in Fiji and rears its ugly head each time we are uncomfortable especially during political events. She says it is everyone's responsibility to take ownership of healing their own wounds before sustainable peace can be achieved. She shared that she had to face her own demons of stereotype and had to open her heart and develop patience to learn about other cultures.

According to Kiran, she meditates, undergoes reflection exercises and retreats often so she can deal with the impressions she may accumulate from her daily interactions, thereby building on her inner strength. In order to spread sustainable peace, we need to have inner peace, be secure within ourselves.



"When we are secure, we are open to trust others, others reciprocate, we build genuine relationships ".

Hon. Kiran shared her experiences with working with hardened criminals and said she could bridge the divide because she was willing to trust.

Hon. Kiran mentioned that sustainable peace in Fiji can be achieved if we are willing to look at each other as humans, learn from the many lessons of love across divides, take time and patience to learn cultures and show respect to those who are different from us.

“The Women’s Federation for World Peace Fiji, in its pioneering stages have been conducting seminars and reaching out to women for conversations around peace and development," Asst. Minister said.

“The month of March marks an important month on our calendar as we the government and non-government partners join forces to commemorate International Women’s Day to take stock on how

far we have reached towards gender equality and violence free society. And most importantly reaffirm our commitment towards our fight which we all strongly believe in."



On this year's International Women's Day, the Asst. Minister encouraged everyone to challenge gender stereotypes, call out discrimination, draw attention to bias, and seek out inclusion. "Collective activism is what drives change. Please use #EmbraceEquity to join the conversation about equity issue and its impact".



Malaysia

International Women's Day Celebration

Theme: Bringing Cultures Together - Friendship and Food

March 19th | Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

https://www.un.org/en/observances/womens-day

Overview

- 70 participants gathered for International Women's Day, Malaysia style.
- The day created the opportunity for cultural exchange and showcased national integration through food sharing and cooking demonstrations.



The IWD celebration was a warm and exciting event themed, "Bringing Cultures Together - Friendship and Food'. Participants were dressed elegantly in traditional clothing, including Cheongsam, Kebaya, Saree, Yukata, and Hanbok to enjoy enticing performances, cooking demonstrations, and food sharing.

"#EmbraceEquity" is the theme for IWD 2023, which spotlights the need to go beyond equal opportunities and understand the differences in individual circumstances.

In her welcoming remarks, the President of WFWP Malaysia, Madam Lina Cheng said, "IWD is a time to celebrate the achievements of women, whether social, political, economic, or cultural. When we embrace equity we embrace diversity, and we embrace inclusion. Each one of us can actively support and embrace equity within our own sphere of influence... this will forge harmony and unity and help drive success for all," she explained.

The programme started off with a fun-filled ice-breaking session led by our lively emcee, Jenisse, whereby participants interacted and know one another through exchanging positive compliments.



The audience also enjoyed a highly energetic modern dance performance by the Teletubbies, a group of young and dynamic high school students.

This was followed by the main highlight of the event - cooking demonstrations.



Madam Shin Pil Hyo shared the recipe of cooking the popular and savoury Korean dish, Jap-Chae (stirred fried glass noodles).



Our next cooking demonstration was led by Madam Osaka Yumiko, who demonstrated the making of the all-time favourite Japanese Maki Sushi.



To celebrate friendship and unity in diversity, a choir group led by Madam Chan Seok Ping presented the songs "Friendship" in two languages.

The event concluded with a potluck variety of food and cakes from various cultures. We are very grateful and blessed to be living in a multi-cultural community that embraces peace and harmony.

Reflection from Participants

“I learn the new Japanese and Korean cuisine which I can cook for my family in future. The demo was so interesting.” ~ Choong

“There were some traditional clothes provided for people to try, I really enjoy the moment with my friends.” ~ Tan

Written by Tan Wan,
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Quality junior and secondary school books: *Books for the Islands* donates to primary and secondary schools within the Pacific to either establish school libraries, or enrich them.

Contact us to organise a pick-up or drop off time.