



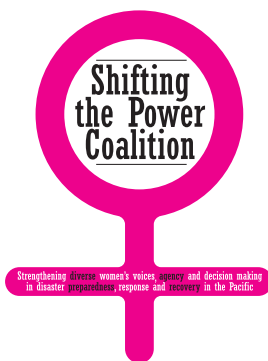
Strengthening and Localising Women's Leadership and Disability Inclusion in Humanitarian Action





Shifting the Power Coalition

A Pacific-women led Feminist Humanitarian Network



Since September 2019 we have been a member of the Feminist Humanitarian Network

The Feminist Humanitarian Network (FHN) is a global network of women leader's committed to a transformed humanitarian system that promotes a feminist agenda. Its membership is comprised of women's rights organisations and networks driving change in humanitarian contexts in the global South, INGOs, and individuals.



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A Pacific-women led Feminist Humanitarian Network

In 2016, governments and humanitarian actors adopted the Agenda for Humanity with a commitment to work differently to end need in humanitarian crises. This included recognition of the importance of reinforcing local systems and the need to invest in local capacities. Women's organisations are a core part of local systems in crises and women play a vital role as first responders in times of disaster and conflict; a role which frequently goes unrecognised, undervalued and under resourced. Since 2016 the Shifting the Power Coalition, has brought together 13 women-led civil society organisations across 6 Pacific countries to amplify the voices and leadership of Pacific women in humanitarian action. Partners of the Coalition are involved in community, local and national decision-making spaces and are bringing the perspectives of diverse women to these forums. These endeavours are recognising the rights of women's and

girls and their protection needs, as well as increasing the strength and agency of women to engage with and transform the humanitarian system. With support from DFAT's Pacific Women, we are working to build evidence and capabilities, influence policies and practice, and support the leadership of Pacific women in humanitarian decision making at all levels. Together, we are starting a humanitarian revolution.

Michelle Higelin, Executive Director,
ActionAid Australia



About Shifting the Power Coalition

The Pacific is experiencing multiple challenges – from intensifying cyclones, droughts and floods as a result of the climate crisis to recent health pandemics including the long term impact of COVID19. Ensuring sustainable responses requires a new way of driving inclusion in line with commitments from Pacific Leaders, such as the Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration and the Revised Pacific Platform for Action for Gender Equality and Women's Rights.

Learning from and building on women's leadership in response to TC Pam in Vanuatu in 2015 and TC Winston in Fiji in 2016, the

Shifting the Power Coalition (STP Coalition) was established in 2016. It brings together 13 women-led civil society organisations in six countries working together to support diverse women's leadership in humanitarian action at local, national and regional levels. We are the only women-led regional alliance focused on strengthening the collective power, influence and leadership of diverse Pacific women in responding to disasters and climate change. We focus on strengthening women's capacity to engage in policy and decision making, driving evidence-based and women-led innovations from the region, as well as engaging in national and regional advocacy.

As a result of the recent COVID19 pandemic there is increased economic insecurity amongst women. Those who rely on an income from small informal markets are unable to make a living. This is one of the root causes of the violence they then face in their homes. Single mothers and young entrepreneurs are also facing financial problems because they have either been laid off or just cannot run their small businesses.

Helena Seneka, YWCA of Papua New Guinea



The Shifting the Power (STP) Coalition is committed to ensure diverse Pacific women's voices, agency and decision-making informs disaster preparedness, response and recovery as well as humanitarian response at all levels.

We draw on our collective work in community mobilisation, peacebuilding, young women's leadership, women's rights and disability inclusion. Together we are driving a transformative agenda during crisis situations that will tackle power and gender relations over the longer term by demonstrating diverse women's capabilities and leadership. ActionAid Australia as a women's rights focused humanitarian organisation supports Coalition members to engage in the humanitarian system

**“ Shifting the Power is amplifying the voices of women with disabilities at all levels and empowering women with disabilities to advocate on the challenges they face in different spaces of leadership & decision making. It is making change for an inclusive society
Lanieta Tuimabu, Fiji Disabled People's Federation**

The STP Coalition is demonstrating how to support the localisation of women-led responses as well as integrating the specific recommendations of young women and women with disabilities, as well as women from rural communities - All of the STP Coalition members are women-led organisations representing diverse constituencies of women. The STP Coalition is the only regional alliance focused on strengthening the collective power, influence and leadership of diverse Pacific women in disaster planning and response particularly as

the STP Coalition members represent the lived experience of diverse women (women with disabilities, LGBTIQ women, young women and those in remote/rural communities) across the region, combining complementary skills, networks and capacities of its members.

**“ As a Shifting the Power Coalition focal point I would like to support women and girls' access to safe spaces that also enable them to access updated information on humanitarian support and work together with local networks and partners to sustain this movement
Taimalelagi Ramona Tugaga, YWCA Samoa & Chairperson Le Teine Crisis Center Trust**

There is a need to sustain support for diverse women leaders to increase their capacity to engage in humanitarian and disaster coordination mechanisms and influence decision making, document their needs and capacities in crises to contribute to evidence-based disaster planning and establish and sustain national platforms to strengthen their voices and influence in policy and decision making.

**“ Shifting the Power, means working together to address the number of challenges faced by young women who are members of the Talitha Project including sexual harassment in streets, physical and emotional violence and economic insecurities, access to sexual and reproductive health services and information
Alovale Manuaifua, Project Manager at the Talitha Project in Tonga**

The STP Coalition with the members of the GPPAC Pacific network are demonstrating the value of localisation and feminist collaboration between partners; As Pacific women we have the local networks to enable more effective humanitarian action which requires investment in enhancing national and local capacity of women's leadership, so that women of all diversities are meaningfully engaged in the disaster management coordination system, and not simply regarded as vulnerable beneficiaries of aid. This is an important model of engagement of bringing together and supporting women leaders and their organisations to put into practice skills, knowledge and learnings acquired through the current STP Coalition project – addressing the peacebuilding-humanitarian and development nexus supported by ActionAid Australia.

**“ Information is also vital for local communities This must be in local language, as well as accessible for people with disabilities and focus on reaching more remote communities
Lisa Horiwapu, Solomon Islands**

Women's leadership is vital throughout the planning, prevention and response cycle
We take a rights-based approach that recognises the capacity of women to lead change in their own lives and communities and focuses on building women's individual and collective power to influence change. This combination enables the Coalition to be effective in supporting localised, women-led action on issues critical to diverse Pacific women and their communities.

**“ To me Shifting the Power means, breaking down the patriarchal norm that says only men can lead. It also means that we should start to think outside the box (because) women can take the leadership roles to bring about the transformation we need in our communities.
Audrey Seru, Fiji**

There is an important need to ensure there is accountability to and compliance by national and regional response mechanisms to women's rights and gender equality commitments:

Our efforts are aligned with CEDAW, the Pacific Forum Leaders Gender Equality Declaration, Pacific Platform for Action on the Advancement of Women's Rights and Gender Equality, and the Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific (FRDP).

**“ It is about women coming together and working to support each other so that every person is treated as a human being first
Angeline Chand, Pacific Disability Forum**

The STP Coalition is well placed to respond to crisis situations within the Pacific

We put a focus on and contribute to ensuring women's diverse voices and priorities are integrated into gender responsive and inclusive humanitarian responses in times of crisis, recognising that this is one of the key decision-making spaces where Pacific Islander women's leadership is notably absent.



Mobilising women's leadership and solutions in response to the health and climate change crises

The Shifting the Power Coalition Emergency Grant mechanism has been able to provide a much-needed avenue for coalition members to quickly mobilise humanitarian funding in times of crisis. Small grants of up to AUD \$5,000 are available for members to organise at the community, local and national level to enable them to take the lead in ensuring that the needs and interests of women and girls are addressed in long-term response and recovery efforts.

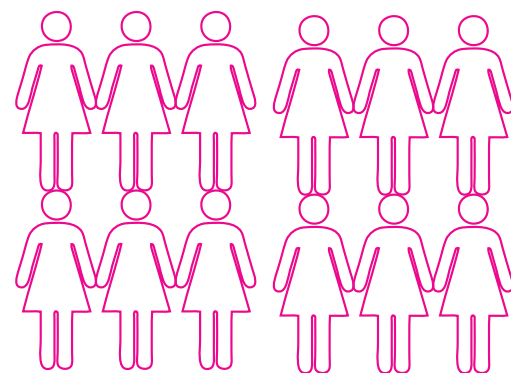
The emergency grant mechanism was used by the Shifting the Power Coalition to strengthen women's leadership in the responses to the measles epidemic in Samoa. The Coalition tracked the measles epidemic in collaboration with the YWCA of Samoa and Le Teine Crisis Centre, monitoring the response and support for the Samoan Government from UN agencies and other governments.

The Coalition identified gaps in information that were critical in ensuring a comprehensive response. Specifically, they noted the lack of gender analysis on the impact of the epidemic, including how it was increasing the burden of women's unpaid care, particularly for young women and single mothers, as well as the effects on people with disabilities and LGBTIQ community.

The Coalition also recognised the critical need for strong protection messages to support

women in their communities. To achieve this, they undertook research that drew lessons from the crisis on how best to communicate to young women, as well as pregnant women and young mothers – an important target group – about the importance of vaccinating babies and children in preventing further outbreaks of the disease. This work is important in ensuring that long-term responses to the crisis are gender-responsive and effective in reaching critical target groups.

Following a coalition-wide assessment as the COVID19 pandemic reached the Pacific Island region, informed how the emergency grant mechanism could support Coalition members to respond to COVID19 and TC Harold as well as provide urgent relief and support to their networks



Meet Our Coalition Members

ActionAid (Australia and Vanuatu)

ActionAid is part of a global organisation working in 45 countries with humanitarian programming that focuses on advancing women's leadership in emergencies, shifting power to local actors and promoting accountability to crisis affected communities.

ActionAid brings technical expertise in women-led humanitarian response, disaster risk reduction, community-based protection and resilience building. In Vanuatu, ActionAid is supporting the growth of the 4000-strong Women I Tok Tok Tugetha movement which enables rural women's leadership and community voice in disaster planning and response and works in partnership with the Department of Women's Affairs.

“As a feminist Pacific Islander, what I learn I will make sure that I transfer the learning and skill to my sisters circle that I have around me to be better, stronger and to take lead in everything we touch, do and say to be resilient and be the game changer.
Flora Vano, Country Program Manager, ActionAid Vanuatu



femLINKpacific (Fiji)

femLINKpacific is a women-led community media organisation that works to amplify the voices of diverse women. They initiated Women's Weather Watch which is now globally recognised as an innovative interoperable information and communication system and is being adapted throughout the region.

“With the Shift the Power Coalition our commitment to support rural women, young women, women with disabilities and LGBT networks is enhanced in collaboration with members of the coalition. This is vital as collectively we can enhance women-led resilience, amplify the vibrant narratives on the WPS agenda in order to transform humanitarian action and disaster response.
Kele Gavidi, Programme Manager, femLINKpacific



Fiji Disabled People's Federation (Fiji)

The Fiji Disabled People's Federation (FDPF) is a national cross-disability organisation that includes four affiliated disability specific organisations: Spinal Injuries Association (SIA), Fiji Association of the Deaf (FAD), United Blind Persons of Fiji (UBP) and Psychiatric Survivors Association (PSA). FDPF fosters collaboration between the women's groups and networks of the Federation's affiliates and also provides capacity support in specific areas such as project design and development.

“Women's rights simply mean to me: my right as a woman with a disability in accessing information, communication, accessibility to facilities, services... I think gone are the days that we work in solo. Once we are working together, our issue becomes stronger. Lanjeta Tuimabu, Office Manager, Fiji Disabled People's Federation



Nazareth Centre for Rehabilitation (Bougainville)

Nazareth Centre for Rehabilitation works in Bougainville working through the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflicts (GPPAC Network). It works with women human rights defenders to strengthen their knowledge on disaster preparedness through coordination, communication, and planning.

“I look at the Pacific region and I see the many issues that we deal with in terms of human rights, or women's rights for that matter. And I see that many times we still have a lone voice. But I see that in instances where partners have brought organisations together the echo is greater. Agnes Titus, Advocacy Coordinator, Nazareth Centre for Rehabilitation



Talitha Project (Tonga)

Talitha Project is an NGO for young women in Tonga. The project is committed to giving young women and girls an opportunity to have a voice and make informed choices. The organisation specifically caters to young women and girls between the ages of 12 – 25 years.

“As women, we come from different contexts and different parts of the world. Yet we can achieve something collectively... As women, we don't need to be taught to protect everyone. It's instinctual. We are born with it. It's our nature. Vanessa Heleta, Director, Talitha Project



Transcend Oceania (Fiji)

Transcend Oceania is grounded in non-violent approaches to relating with others, the environment and creating just, peaceful, inclusive, participatory, sustainable and resilient communities. Through education and training, it advocates for just-peace communities that protect women and support their dignity in leadership by engaging men and boys as partners in the reduction and prevention of violence against women and girls. They also engage with women leaders through peace process facilitation and healing, restorative community 'peace talanoa' to reduce violence; promote partnerships for justice and development initiatives and research that build on local knowledge systems, skills and approaches; and recognise other effective ways to building just-peace communities.

“I believe that we each have our different strengths and power and we can only achieve our goal if we put our hands together and be inclusive around the table. Adi Vasulevu, Executive Director, Transcend Oceania



Vanuatu Disability Promotion and Advocacy Association

Vanuatu Disability Promotion and Advocacy Association (VDPA) is the national disabled persons organisation of Vanuatu. DPA was established with the mandate to advocate for the rights of people with disabilities in Vanuatu and promote their abilities.

“Climate justice means protection, safety, and security for all. Especially for people with disabilities... We need to build the capacity of women, their confidence. We need to include them in different kinds of international meetings and regional meetings. Nelly Caleb, National Coordinator, Disability Promotion and Advocacy Association



Vanuatu Young Women for Change (Vanuatu)

Vanuatu Young Women for Change empowers young women leaders in their leadership role and decision making when it comes to disaster coordination, creating spaces where stories can be shared from both the community level in Vanuatu and from women leaders around the Pacific.

“You have to shift the power to others around you to leave no one behind. Sabrina Brown, CEO Vanuatu Young Women for Change



Vois Blong Mere (Solomon Islands)

Vois Blong Mere Solomon is a non-government organisation representing Solomon Islands women working through the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflicts (GPPAC Network). Their purpose is to link the women of the Solomon Islands through information sharing. They do this through the Mere radio programme on SIBC, newsletters, projects and by coordinating collective integrated systems of information sharing amongst rural, provincial and national women's organisations in the Solomon Islands.

“Women's rights are what women as human beings are entitled to because they are human beings... And coalitions are the best things we can have, because you have more people together, advocating for the same issue.

Josephine Teakeni, Director, Vois Blong Mere



YWCA (Papua New Guinea)

The Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) is a global network of women leading social and economic change in over 120 countries. The YWCA of Papua New Guinea (PNG) is an organisation dedicated to developing the leadership of women and girls in Papua New Guinea. YWCAs around the world develop the transformative leadership and collective power of young women to achieve justice, peace, health, human dignity, freedom and care for the environment.

“Young women should be given an equal opportunity to be included in decision making, planning and implementing, as the current climate changes that are happening now will affect our generation and the generation after us in the near future. In order for us to be able to fully address climate change we need to break barriers and be more inclusive. Let's be resilient, take a stand and make a change for the love of mother nature.

Helena Seneka Project Officer, YWCA PNG



SHIFTING THE POWER COALITION

“A lot of things can happen to affect our climate. But one thing that we must not forget is that whenever there are negotiations going on in terms of climate change... there has to be spaces where women and young girls and vulnerable groups can participate in all policy dialogues in relation to climate disaster management.

Anne Pakoa, Founder and Technical Adviser, Vanuatu Young Women for Change

YWCA (Samoa)

YWCA Samoa is a member of World YWCA and have expertise in developing transformative leadership and the collective power of women and girls. There is a particular focus on young women's leadership development through peer education on human rights, climate justice, sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), gender equality, violence against women, justice and peace for all people. They also bring expertise on village level advocacy and connections with national disaster management committees.

“There is a lot of violence during disasters. Because when it comes to disaster... there is no safe space because everywhere else has been damaged... We have a great responsibility as strong women: as we speak, we are, and so we need to walk and make sure we are out there to help create safe spaces when it comes to disasters.

Ramona Tugaga, General Secretary, YWCA Samoa



Pacific Disability Forum (Regional)

Pacific Disability Forum (PDF) is a regional peak body that works in partnership with Disabled Persons Organisations (DPOs) across the Pacific region. PDF provides links to DPO networks and knows their capacities. It has technical expertise on inclusion, including women and girls in disaster risk reduction, disability rights and the new regional disability framework. PDF is part of the Pacific Humanitarian Team in the protection cluster which provides access to decision making and strategic planning in the region.

“As the regional peak body for disability rights in the Pacific, we are proud to be a founding member of the Shifting the Power Coalition. Together we are more powerful to strategically enhance women and young women's leadership across disabled persons organisations in our region, and amplify the call for full and effective participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organisations in relation to disaster management and humanitarian action.

Angeline Chand, Team Leader, Programs Pacific Disability Forum



“The pursuit of women's rights and gender equality is really about, for want of a better word, balancing the scales. In the mission of the Shifting the Power Coalition, it really is about addressing the power structures and shifting the power so that there is equality between men and women in terms of all diversities.

Sharon Bhagwan Rolls, Technical Adviser, Shifting the Power Coalition

SHIFTING THE POWER COALITION

A gender-responsive approach is more than simply getting women to the table. It is time to shift the power. Greater accountability is needed to address the realities of climate change and disasters for women. Sustained investment women's organising, capacity enhancement, and solidarity is essential to tackle power and gender relations so that women can collect and bring our evidence based recommendations to the table. Integrating women's knowledge and scientific knowledge is key to developing gender responsive approaches to climate change and associated crises building on our innovation and cumulative, customary and localised knowledge to determine the best way to use appropriate and accessible information and communication technology – which is why we will be enabling young women from our Coalition to access climate science and services information to develop and communicate their messages about their future. The Shifting the Power Coalition seeks to redesign the table, define and demonstrate meaningful participation in our village communities, in local government, national and regional decision making

Sharon Bhagwan Rolls,
Technical Adviser, Shifting the Power Coalition



PACIFIC WOMEN SHAPING PACIFIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

DFAT's Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development Programme is contributing AUD 895,000 between 2018 – 2021 to support the strengthening of diverse women's leadership in humanitarian action through the Shifting the Power Coalition project.

Shifting the Power in Disaster Management Systems

The collective advocacy of StPC members in Fiji and Vanuatu are seeing important developments in disaster management

system that is resulting in gender equality and social inclusion language in disaster management policies. In Fiji, the National Disaster Risk Reduction Policy specifically notes *"Women and their participation are critical to effectively managing disaster risks and designing, resourcing and implementing gender-sensitive DRR policies, plans and programmes; and measures for adequate capacity building need to be taken to empower women for preparedness as well as build their capacities for alternate livelihood means in post-disaster situations"*. The policy is also inclusive of human rights approaches to inclusion for the LGBTQI

community and persons with disabilities. In Vanuatu, the creation of designated spaces for women in national disaster management operational arrangement such as the Community Disaster Coordination Committees in Vanuatu builds on the safe spaces project led by ActionAid Australia with local women leaders in response to TC Pam, while Vois Blong Mere has been a consistent voice in lobbying for the participation of women in sector committees in Solomon Islands

Supporting Women-Led Responses

Drawing on the technical expertise of ActionAid Australia, the Steering Committee of the Coalition has collectively developed and adopted an emergency funding criteria to support local women's leadership in response to an emergency ranging from increasing human resource capacity and/or specific activities led by women and/or focused on responding to the specific needs and protection of diverse women in response to cyclones, floods, disease outbreak, earthquake, food crisis other emergency that affects a significant part of the population and has been declared by the Government as a national emergency. As a result of the funding support from the Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development Programme, since 2019, a total of AUD 36,500 has been mobilised to 7 Coalition partners in response to the Samoa measles epidemic, COVID-19 health emergency as well as TC Harold. The grants are directly benefitting 162 women including women with disabilities, rural women, young women, traditional women leaders, and LGBTQI community representatives. As many of the emergency response initiatives are supporting women and their families, it is anticipated at an additional 1620 family members including children are benefitting from the assistance.

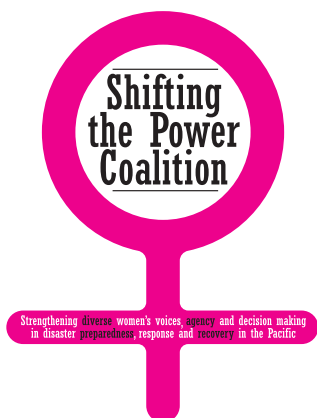
Driving Accountability to Women's Rights

As women leaders come together through the Coalition from their work in community mobilisation, peacebuilding and disability rights, ActionAid Australia, a women's rights focused humanitarian organisation supports Coalition members to engage in the humanitarian system. Together the Coalition members are also committed to inter-generational learning and leadership development.

This was evident at the Training of Trainers on Women's Leadership and Disability Inclusion in Humanitarian Action which took place from the 7th-9th September in Nadi, Fiji where 35% of participants were under 30 years of age and 26% were women with disabilities. Local workshops led by YWCA of Papua New Guinea, Transcend Oceania in Fiji, ActionAid Vanuatu and Vanuatu Young Women for Change will enable 30 women leaders, young women and women with disabilities who represent more than 6000 women from local clubs and networks to become part of national efforts to shift the power in disaster management and humanitarian action.

Feminist Collaboration

ActionAid Australia as a women's rights focused humanitarian organisation supports Coalition members to engage in the humanitarian system is demonstrating a strategic role within the feminist partnership, ensuring Coalition members collectively realise a humanitarian and disaster management system where there is equal and meaningful engagement in humanitarian coordination by national, community-based and women's rights organisations in the cluster system. In doing so AAA is also demonstrating to other international actors how feminist practice in programme partnerships can result in a transformation of the humanitarian system including local and national disaster management.



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Watch our film:

 <https://act.ai/33QkUqu>

Shifting the Power Coalition is a member of the Feminist Humanitarian Network:

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