

Outcomes Statement

ACFID-DFAT Gender Equality Workshop, 27 June 2017

Women’s Leadership

Hosted by DFAT and ACFID’s Gender Equality Community of Practice

The June 2017 ACFID-DFAT Gender Equality workshop brought together government and non-government actors engaged in supporting women’s leadership, both organisationally and through development programming. [ACFID statistics show](#) that while 67% of ACFID member staff are women, only around 40% have female CEOs, a discrepancy [ACFID members have resolved](#) to address. Similarly, DFAT’s [Women in Leadership Strategy](#) aims to raise the number of women in senior roles within the department and “enable all staff to reach their full potential.” Presentations at the workshop explored the barriers facing women, and shared the work organisations are doing to address these barriers through practical strategies for supporting women’s leadership.

This Outcomes Statement summarises the key themes arising from the workshop, alongside a number of practical steps ACFID, NGOs and DFAT will consider as part of their approaches to women’s leadership across the development sector.

Barriers to women’s leadership	Strategies to support women’s leadership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conscious and unconsciously held stereotypes around leadership and gender roles can mean that women are passed over for leadership opportunities. This is compounded for women of colour, women with disabilities, indigenous women, and LGBTIQ women; - Lack of institutional acceptance of flexible working practices impacts on the ability to balance family and work life, which tends to have a greater impact on women and may constrain their career options; - Research points to behavioural differences between men and women in the workplace, for example in terms of self-confidence, while at the same time women who buck the trend experience backlash, and are perceived as <i>over-confident</i> compared to male colleagues; - Women may lack networks and mentors who can assist and guide them in their leadership journey; - Research gaps remain around the challenges for women that are specific to the development and humanitarian sectors, such as the impact of international postings or rapid and often dangerous deployments in emergencies; - Gender training is often viewed as the solution, despite research showing it can be viewed as a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Women in leadership roles can share their stories, which can help other women let go of ‘imposter syndrome’ and improve self-confidence, while simultaneously breaking down stereotypes around gender and leadership; - Organisations can establish advocates for gender equality, including men and women from diverse backgrounds, at the SES level in government and CEO level in NGOs; - Women can participate in networks for women’s professional development and mentoring, for example through growing membership of the Women in Aid and Development network, and ACFID’s Gender Equity and Women’s Leadership Communities of Practice; - Organisations can advocate for and fund research on women’s leadership in the development and humanitarian sectors; - NGOs and DFAT can inspire and enable other organisations to make progress by sharing challenges and success stories; - Gender audits and staff surveys with disaggregated data can help organisations understand the nature of the problem and inform the best approach to take; - Organisations can standardise flexible working, for men and women, including by supporting men to share caring responsibilities;

'check box' exercise that does not change attitudes.

- Organisations offering training can insist on accountability for improved outcomes.

Stories of success – what DFAT and NGOs are already doing to support women's leadership, organisationally and through development programming

1. DFAT's Women in Leadership Strategy of 2015, '*Promoting equality and dismantling barriers*' promotes leadership from the top, with SES level advocates progressing the agenda, and has set targets for SES women in leadership – 40% by 2020.
2. CARE Australia conducted a gender equality self-assessment survey as a precursor for a wider gender strategy and is establishing an explicit organisational policy on all the agency's flexibility mechanisms.
3. The Brien Holden Vision Institute undertook a gender audit a few years ago, with three goals: Maximising impact through gender equity; leveraging and diversifying partnerships; and making organisational structures inclusive and capable.
4. Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development commits up to \$320 million over 10 years in 14 Pacific Islands Forum countries to improve the political, social and economic opportunities for women. Examples of where *Pacific Women* is supporting women's leadership in the political leadership space include the Pacific Women's Parliamentary Partnerships Annual Forum, which is providing a space for female MPs in the Pacific to get together as women to discuss issues and provide a support network.
5. The Fred Hollows Foundations' approach includes the engagement of a gender specialist in the short-term and employment of a gender programs adviser in the longer-term to create an organisation-wide gender strategy that addresses equity issues within the Foundation.
6. ACFID data shows a positive increase in the numbers of female CEOs and Board Chairs in our membership since 2012.

What more could ACFID, NGOs and DFAT do to support women's leadership?

1. Jointly with ACFID, the new Women's Leadership Community of Practice will explore opportunities to monitor the range of pathways to improving gender justice, and provide practical advice. ACFID Members are encouraged to [engage in the Communities of Practice](#).
2. ACFID's Annual Report will capture actions taken in the NGO sector against the [2016 AGM Resolution](#) to increase representation of women in governance and leadership.
3. The [2017 ACFID Conference](#) will address women's leadership – including through a panel comprising DFAT Secretary Frances Adamson and Fijian human rights activist Noelene Nabulivou.
4. DFAT will continue to drive progress towards gender equality by implementing WIL strategy actions and embedding cultural change.
5. DFAT will enhance women's voice in decision-making and leadership through persistently integrating gender equality across all its efforts.

The ACFID-DFAT Gender Equality Workshops are held twice-yearly. Through shared learning around a topic of mutual interest, the workshops provide an opportunity for DFAT and NGOs to gain a better understanding of their respective priorities and the opportunities to work together towards gender equality.