

PROJECT Governance

THE FORTNIGHTLY INSIGHT

20 August, 2024



Representatives during the Senior Officials Meeting in Nadi

Pacific Youth Senior Officials Set the Stage for Future Youth Governance



13-15 August, 2024

The Pacific Ministries of Youth Senior Officials Meeting (SOM), held from August 13 to 15, 2024, in Nadi, Fiji, marked a significant milestone in advancing youth development across the Pacific region. This crucial gathering brought together senior officials from ministries responsible for youth affairs, alongside representatives from National Youth Machinery (NYM), the Pacific Youth Council (PYC), National Youth Councils (NYCs), and other key stakeholders, including regional organisations, civil society, and development partners.

(Continued on page 2)

In a historic first, youth representatives from the PYC co-chaired the meeting alongside government officials, ensuring that the voices of young people were not only heard but actively integrated into the decision-making processes.

The meeting saw participation from senior youth officials and national youth council representatives from American Samoa, Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, Federated States of Micronesia, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu. Additionally, Palau, Niue, and Tokelau were represented by their national youth council representatives.

Over the course of the three-day meeting, participants engaged in comprehensive discussions, reviewing and providing guidance on the development of the next iteration of the Pacific Youth Development Framework (PYDF) and a regional youth governance mechanism. They also evaluated the outcomes of the 2024 PYC General Assembly and identified key priorities to be presented at the upcoming Pacific Ministers for Youth Meeting (PMYM) from 4- 5 September. The priority issues identified by youth include Employment, Education, and Training; Health and Wellbeing; Climate Change, Disaster Risk Reduction, and Biodiversity; Pacific Identities and Heritage; Human Rights, Peace, and Security; and Integrated Connectivity, Information, and Privacy.



So what?

The support of USAID through PROJECT Governance underscores the commitment to fostering sustainable development in the Pacific by empowering the region's youth, who are vital to the region's future prosperity. Through this event, USAID supported the participation of senior youth officials and representatives in a collaborative platform that addressed critical issues such as employment, education, health, climate change, and human rights with direct input from young leaders.

This investment strengthened regional governance structures and ensured that youth voices are central to shaping policies that will drive inclusive growth and resilience in the Pacific. USAID's funding of this meeting also aligns with its broader objectives of promoting democratic governance and social stability by equipping the next generation of leaders with the tools and networks necessary to influence positive change in their communities and beyond.

The Senior Youth Officials Meeting is supported by USAID through PROJECT Governance and the Australian Government through the Pacific Women Lead's Pacific Girl Project, and through partnerships with the New Zealand Government, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), Commonwealth Secretariat (COMSEC), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).



HRSD's Gender Social Inclusion and Human Rights Statistics Adviser, Jovesa Tagivakatini while launching the Youth Dashboard

Launch of the Pacific Youth Dashboard at the Pacific Senior Youth Officials Meeting



13 August 2024

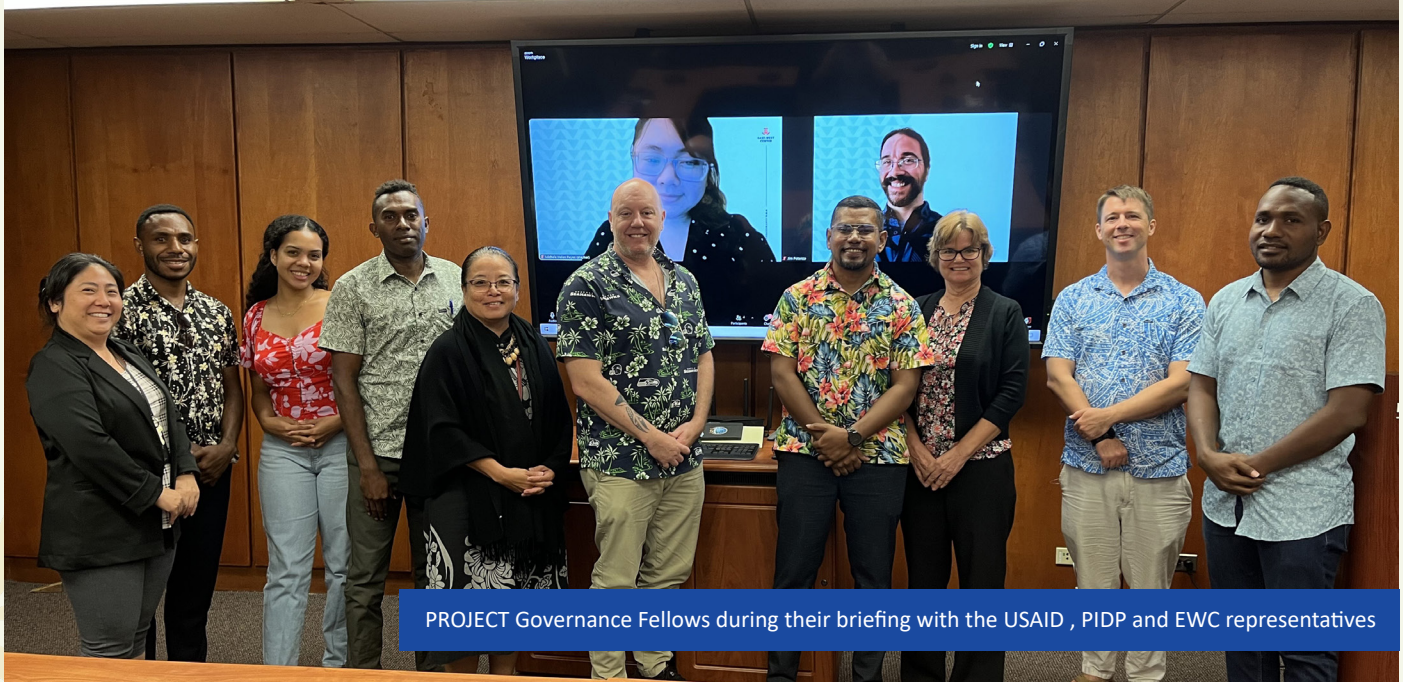
On 13 August, in a significant step towards advancing youth development across the Pacific, the Pacific Senior Youth Officials Meeting (SOM) witnessed the launch of the Pacific Youth Dashboard, an innovative tool designed to enhance data accessibility and inform policy-making for the region's youth. The Pacific Youth Dashboard, accessible at PacificData, was developed in response to a critical need identified during the mid-term Pacific Youth Development Framework (PYDF) review.

The review highlighted the necessity for reliable and readily available data on Pacific youth to support informed planning, policy formulation, and progress tracking. This interactive visualization tool is more than just a repository of statistics; it is a platform that aims to unpack the diverse experiences of young people across the Pacific and amplify their voices through data. By presenting information in an accessible and user-friendly format, the dashboard empowers policymakers, youth leaders, and stakeholders with the insights needed to drive meaningful change. The new dashboard represents a crucial tool in the ongoing efforts to address the challenges faced by Pacific youth and will ensure that youth voices are heard in shaping the region's future. As the Pacific continues prioritizing youth development, the dashboard will play a pivotal role in guiding short-, medium-, and long-term efforts. USAID supports the development of the Pacific Youth Dashboard through PROJECT Governance.

USAID's support in funding the development of the Pacific Youth Dashboard through PROJECT Governance is critical for the region's youth development because it directly addresses the pressing need for data-driven decision-making in the Pacific. By providing the necessary resources and expertise, USAID has enabled the creation of a tool that offers real-time, reliable data on youth across the region. This support is pivotal in empowering Pacific governments, youth organizations, and communities to make informed decisions that can effectively target the unique challenges faced by the region's youth. With USAID's backing, the Pacific Youth Dashboard not only becomes a valuable resource for tracking progress but also a catalyst for fostering youth empowerment, leadership, and sustainable development in the Pacific.

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Third Cohort of PROJECT Governance Fellows Arrive in Hawai'i



9 August 2024

The East-West Center welcomed the third and final cohort of the PROJECT Governance Fellows to Hawai'i before the start of the academic year later this month. Each of the five new fellows is pursuing a Master of Laws degree at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Richardson School of Law. This year's PROJECT Governance Fellows are:

Andrew Taylor Awa (Solomon Islands) - Andrew hopes to gain knowledge of advanced law principles that will enhance his ability to identify, analyze, and address fraud, corruption, and misconduct cases effectively within the Solomon Islands public service and private sectors.

Andrew Bosa (Solomon Islands) - Andrew hopes to establish a legal framework that can strengthen the independence of media. He also aims to protect the rights of Solomon Islands citizens to access credible information.

Marisha Jones (Pohnpei in the Federated States of Micronesia) - Marisha intends to learn more about incorporating indigenous practices in her work and hopes to one day contribute to the development of municipal, state, and national laws that advance equitable and transparent governance in the Federated States of Micronesia.

Nathan Kilali (Papua New Guinea) - Nathan strongly advocates against corruption and for citizens' rights in education, land ownership, health, youth empowerment, and equal opportunities in employment. His passion and lifetime goal is to combat corruption and uphold the rule of law in Papua New Guinea.

Joseph Work (Fiji) - Joseph aims to identify and address the loopholes and gaps in Fiji's criminal laws specifically relating to corruption as well as examining the impact of the competing human rights challenges of witnesses and whistleblowers.

The PROJECT Governance Fellowship program has proven to be a valuable and well-sought-after opportunity for promising Pacific Island individuals to advance their knowledge and skills and be empowered as young leaders to promote sound, just, and responsive governance in their home communities. The meeting with USAID and PIDP allowed the fellows to discuss the issues that motivated them to apply for the fellowship.

The fellows also gained a contextual understanding of the aims of PROJECT Governance. Building on the success of the first two cohorts, the third cohort will leverage these experiences and utilize the resources of the wider East-West Center student community to reflect on their sense of place in the Asia-Pacific region and personal goals and establish connections that are foundational to a successful fellowship experience.



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The meeting with USAID and PIDP provided the fellows with a platform to personally discuss the issues that motivated them to apply for the fellowship, while also gaining a contextual understanding of the aims of PROJECT Governance as a whole.

Building on the success of the first two cohorts, the third cohort is able to leverage these experiences and the resources of the wider East-West Center student community to reflect on their sense of place in the Asia-Pacific region, personal goals, and establish connections that are foundational to a successful fellowship experience.

Community Champions: Mary Jack – A woman leading change



Leulik Chairlady, Mary Jack with other CDC Chairmen, Provincial Councillor, Thomas Laput, Central Tanna Area Administrator, John Bill, Leulik Community Chief, Nakapue, and Leulik Vice-Chairman, Thomson

Mary Jack hails from Leulik Community in the Central Tanna Area Council of Tafea Province. Following her participation at a PROJECT Governance funded good governance and social accountability workshop for community development committees (CDC) conducted by CARE in Vanuatu in mid-February 2024, Mary was appointed chairlady of her community's development committee.

As Vanuatu commemorated its 44th year of independence on 30 July, the people of Leulik celebrated the opening of their community hall, an infrastructure project completed under Mary's leadership.

Following her election as chair of the Leulik CDC, Mary led participatory processes for the identification of priority community development needs and the preparation of an action plan to address those needs. Leulik CDC commitments included improvements to roads, building a community hall, and improving access to clean water.

Within four months of developing their action plan, the Leulik community managed to make improvements to existing road infrastructure, and complete construction of a community hall with the support of the Tafea Provincial Councillor and the Central Tanna Area Council.

As a woman in a key leadership position, Mary faces her fair share of challenges. For instance, although some men would not collaborate, she did not have any issues working with them when they offered their assistance. However, Mary is unwavering in her resolve to see priority projects completed according to schedule; and encourages other female executives of the CDC to embrace their duties rather than denigrate them.

As women, we must adjust to this time of change by assuming responsibilities that will benefit our communities. Women are community-minded so taking on leadership positions enables us to work towards addressing concerns that are most significant to the community

Mary Jack

So what?

Mary Jack's leadership after the PROJECT Governance workshop led to the completion of Leulik community's hall in just four months. Her resilience in overcoming gender-based challenges and mobilising resources highlights the impact of empowering women in leadership roles, driving tangible community development, and inspiring other female leaders in Vanuatu.

Coming from a very strong male dominated society, Mary is a wonderful demonstration of the value of women in leadership; and what can be achieved when men and women lead together.



The SCE team with teachers and representatives during the capacity building mission

Capacity Building for Teachers in RMI



5-9 August 2024

Over the period of 5 to 9 August, the SPC Social Citizenship Education (SCE) team recently concluded a productive week of capacity-building for teachers at eight new schools in the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI). These schools have joined Phase Two of the Pacific Partnership to End Violence Against Women and Girls (PPEVAWG) programme. The initiative is focused on integrating Social Citizenship Education into the curriculum, which promotes essential values such as respect, dignity, and non-violence within the school environment and the broader community.

During the week, teachers engaged in sessions with representatives from the Public School System (PSS), Women United Together Marshall Islands (WUTMI), National Nuclear Commission (NNC), and SPC. Dr. Natalie Nimmer, the Commissioner of Education, emphasized the alignment of Social Citizenship Education with the RMI constitution and the PSS mission, underscoring its role in fostering a community built on fairness, kindness, and cooperation.

SPC's Director of HRSD, Miles Young, welcomed the addition of the eight new schools, reaffirming SPC's commitment to ensuring the programme remains relevant to the Marshallese context. This includes translating all learning resources into the Marshallese language and providing ongoing support to teachers. The programme ultimately aims to empower students to be active contributors to a more just and peaceful society.

So what?

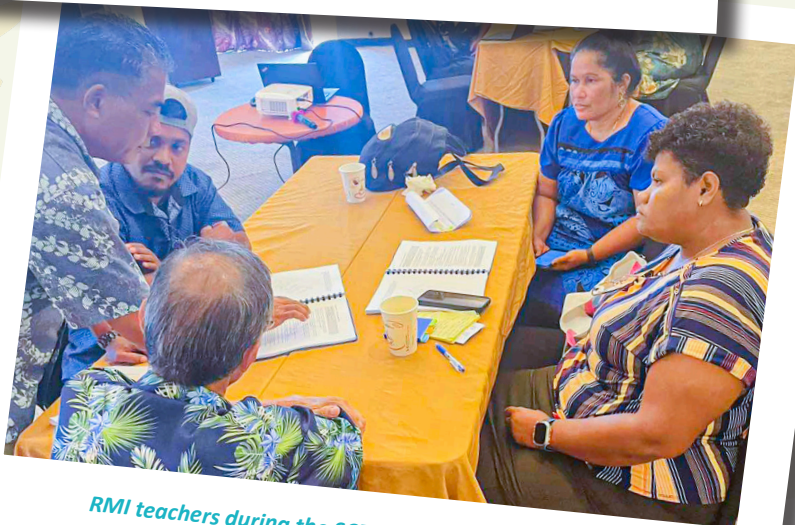
By integrating SCE into the school curriculum, SPC and its partners are not just expanding the reach of the PPEVAWG programme but are also embedding essential values into the very fabric of the community. This initiative underscores the importance of culturally relevant and sustainable education that not only empowers teachers with the knowledge of human rights and gender equality but also equips students with the skills and values necessary to foster a more just and peaceful society. The inclusion of the Marshallese language in learning resources ensures that the programme remains accessible and impactful, reflecting the commitment to creating meaningful and lasting change in the region.

Note: The PPEVAWG programme is funded by the European Union, the Government of Australia, and UN Women. The SCE component is funded primarily by the EU, the Government of Australia and USAID (PROJECT Governance).

Snapshots



Launch of the Youth Dashboard, Nadi, Fiji



RMI teachers during the SCE capacity building workshop



Youth Senior Officials Meeting, Nadi, Fiji



MARK THE DATE

4-5 September:
Pacific Ministers for Youth Meeting - Nadi, Fiji

16 September:
3rd Interface Meeting between citizens and service providers - Vanuatu

17 September:
Visit Ambae to begin discussions for PROJECT Governance support towards the Penama Provincial Government's Five-Year Strategic Development Plan - Vanuatu

October (TBC):
3rd Leadership & Team Building Workshop for community government executives - PNG