

## PROJECT Governance

# THE FORTNIGHTLY INSIGHT

15 October, 2024



## Leading Together with Respect

9-10 October, 2024

As part of the PROJECT Governance initiative, CARE International in Papua New Guinea is implementing a pilot project that is dedicated to enhancing collaborative leadership between men and women in local government. Unique to the Pacific, the Autonomous Region of Bougainville's Community Governments are legally mandated to include equal representation of women and men. CARE is working with executive members from eight of the 47 community governments in the Autonomous Region of Bougainville to address the negative effects of traditional gender roles on leadership dynamics.

*(Continued on page 2)*



We are incredibly thankful for this project. It has provided us with essential knowledge and skills for our leadership roles, allowing us to collaborate more effectively.

Now we communicate respectfully (and) plan together

**Linah Paii, Chairlady,**  
Tonsu Community Government

The initiative focuses on developing essential skills in advocacy, team-building, and institutional strengthening, emphasizing the impact of traditional gender norms on the formation of balanced leadership teams.

In the first two years, the Leading Together with Respect Project's primary activities involved mentoring and coaching field visits to Community Governments. In 2024, a series of workshops was introduced to complement these efforts. For these, CARE deliberately invites more women leaders than men. The inaugural workshop in February was well-received by 22 Community Government executives and ward members (14 women and 8 men). By July, a second workshop attracted another group of 22 participants (14 women and 8 men), mixing newcomers with previous attendees. The latest workshop, held on October 9-10, expanded participation from three to five members per Community Government, engaging 39 participants (23 women and 16 men) in two days of capacity-building activities.

During the recent workshop, participants shared their transformative experiences with the project. Here are some standout reflections:

“

To be honest, I used to really struggle in my ward but now I am a respected leader. The Chiefs work well with me. Even men and youth in my community work well with me.

I am very grateful for the CARE training because it has really changed the way men and women work together

**Adelin Kokin,**  
Ward Member, Tsitalato  
Community Government

“

When CARE first came to our community, I was very opposed to the gender training. There are things that are strictly for men only and women only and leadership is for men. Over time however, I decided to go and see for myself, what this training was all about. Gender training really changed my way of thinking and doing things, but it wasn't easy because I was schooled in the way of the Chiefs. The CARE training really helped me to appreciate the value of men and women leading together.

**Timothy Tarensi,**  
Executive (also a traditional Chief),  
Taonita Teop Community Government

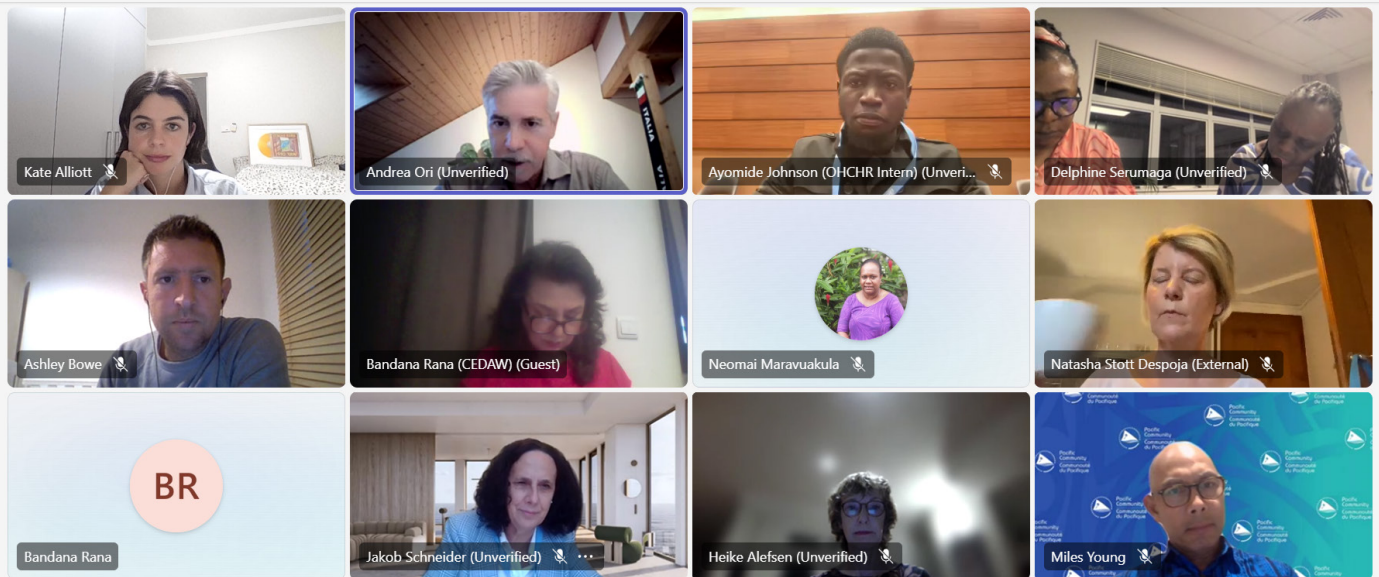


## So what?

Through these initiatives, PROJECT Governance is not only fostering a culture of respect and collaboration in leadership but also challenging long-standing gender norms that have traditionally limited the role of women in decision-making. By promoting equal participation and strengthening the skills of both men and women, the project is paving the way for a more inclusive and effective leadership structure in Bougainville.

This shift is setting a vital precedent for other regions, demonstrating the positive impact of gender-balanced governance in addressing community issues and building a more equitable future.





The steering committee during the online meeting

## CEDAW Steering Committee - 2nd Convening

9 October 2024



The Pacific CEDAW session Steering Committee met for the second time on 9 October, to continue planning for April 2025. Discussions included exploring how the session scope may be expanded to address critical regional women's rights issues, and inviting widespread participation from Pacific governments including those who have yet to ratify CEDAW. The Steering Committee was also advised by PROJECT Governance how the prospect of the session is already having a positive impact in the region, proving to be a catalyst for reporting with several governments on the brink of submitting their overdue reports. It is expected that up to five will have submitted by the end of the calendar year, and the first three to do so will be selected to be reviewed by the Committee during the session.

### So what?

The Extraordinary Pacific CEDAW Session is a result of almost three years advocacy by PROJECT Governance, and at the request of the Pacific Women Leaders and Heads of Government. The session will be only the second time in history that any of the United Nations Treaty Body Committees have formally met outside Geneva or New York and will attract a lot of high-level engagement and regional/international media attention.

The Pacific has some of the highest rates of domestic violence globally, as well as the lowest levels of women in Parliament. Gender equality is a regional priority issue and the visit of the CEDAW Committee offers a unique opportunity for Pacific nations and civil society to engage directly with international experts, driving progress on women's rights and gender equality in the region. This dialogue therefore has the potential to be transformative for women's rights and good governance in the region. The initial impact is already evident, and the submission of State reports is the first step towards constructive dialogue and planning around how countries can better protect and promote women's rights at the national level.



Forum participants with the provincial councilor, the Vice President for Tafea Provincial Council, United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation officers, and CARE staff

## Celebrating Tafea Day: Empowering Communities Through Inclusive Governance



1-2 October 2024

From 1-2 October, the Tafea Day celebrations in Southwest Tanna provided CARE International in Vanuatu, under the PROJECT Governance in the Pacific initiative, with the opportunity to host a two-day forum on inclusive governance in collaboration with the Tafea Provincial Government.

The forum was attended by high level dignitaries and key stakeholders, including the Minister responsible for Local Authorities, Hon. Andrew Napuat, the Director General of the Department of Local Authorities, Leith Verimaito, the Acting Assistant Secretary General of the Tafea Provincial Government, Samson Nalau, the provincial councilor, pillar representatives and area administrators from the seven area councils on Tanna Island, and representatives of various sector departments of government, civil society organizations, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation, and community members.

Forum participants engaged in vibrant group discussions on their roles and responsibilities and the challenges they face. One of the challenges identified for Southwest Tanna was functioning Community Development Committees (CDCs). As part of the forum, Southwest Tanna Area Council committed to supporting governance and social accountability training for CDC members and foster economic activity through the creation of village savings and loans associations.

At the end of the deliberations that took place on 1st and 2nd October, attendees reached nine resolutions, two of which are closely aligned to CARE's Inclusive Governance project, namely:

- **Commitment to establishing Community Development Committees in all Area Councils in Tafea Province**
- **Strengthening Area Council Pillars**

### So what?

Drawing from experiences in Central Tanna, the Tafea Provincial Government aims to pilot the establishment of community development committees as a mechanism for community consultation in the preparation of the Southwest Tanna Area Council Development Plan. Moreover, the discussions and resolutions from the forum are a demonstration of the collective desire for positive change and stronger governance structures across the province.





Representatives at the MOU Signing. Photo source: Fiji Village

## Advancing Digital Inclusion



3 October 2024

On 3 October 2024, the PROJECT Governance team attended the signing ceremony of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Pacific Disability Forum (PDF) in Suva, Fiji.

The MOU establishes a collaborative partnership under the Digital Connectivity and Cybersecurity Partnership (DCCP) Pacific Activity, aimed at promoting inclusive digital access, cybersecurity initiatives, and the development of digital skills across 12 Pacific Island countries. A core focus of the partnership is ensuring that persons with disabilities can participate meaningfully in the digital age by improving access to technology, public services, and digital literacy opportunities.

Following the signing ceremony, a roundtable discussion was held with representatives from Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) to explore the intersection of Information Communications Technology (ICT) and the challenges faced by persons with disabilities. The discussion highlighted key barriers to accessibility, gaps in public policy, and potential measures to enhance inclusion.

Participants emphasised the importance of fostering an open, secure, and inclusive digital ecosystem that addresses the needs of persons with disabilities and enables their full social, economic, and political participation in the Pacific region.

### So what?

The PROJECT Governance team's attendance at the MOU signing underscores their commitment to advancing inclusive digital access. Their involvement highlights the importance of governance in ensuring that persons with disabilities are included in digital transformation efforts across the Pacific, promoting accessibility, cybersecurity, and equitable digital opportunities.



## Meet Nathan Kilali, PROJECT Governance Fellow



As the third of five children born to two primary school teachers in Enga province in Papua New Guinea, Nathan Kilali credits his parents as his inspiration to aim higher in education as they encouraged him to strive “to take one step further than they did.” Motivated by them and a deep desire to help people and make the law work for the betterment of society, Nathan passed the bar in April this past year to become a first-generation lawyer in his family.

“Growing up in a place where only a wealthy few could manipulate the law to their advantage, I was motivated to serve underserved communities through the legal system.”

Nathan has long seen it as his lifetime goal to combat corruption and uphold the rule of law in Papua New Guinea. While attending university, he worked as a part-time librarian at an international private law firm until he passed the bar and started work as a graduate lawyer at Allens law firm for five months before stumbling upon a LinkedIn post about a previous PROJECT Governance fellow from Papua New Guinea. Inspired, Nathan ultimately applied and was accepted to pursue a Master of Laws at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa through the PROJECT Governance Fellowship with the East-West Center (EWC).

“What particularly motivated me to apply was the fellowship’s focus on just, sound, and responsive governance, aimed at building a stronger Blue Pacific. I am passionate about efforts to fight corruption. The Fellowship’s mission aligned well with this goal,” said Nathan.

Though he is just a couple months into his fellowship, Nathan notes that his experience thus far has been incredibly unique and fulfilling, particularly EWC’s “Community Building Institute,” a two-week-long program of activities and orientations prior to the semester’s start for new and returning participants of EWC programs.

“I love the friendly, multicultural community fostered by the East-West Center. The island setting makes it feel almost like home. I had the opportunity to meet people from various countries and form meaningful friendships. For many of them, I am the first person they’ve met from Papua New Guinea. I cherish the opportunity to represent my country in different settings, learn about other cultures, and gain a new perspective on the world and the distinct and shared experiences we all have.”

These positive experiences have cemented Nathan’s belief that collaboration is key to supporting good governance.

*Respecting diverse viewpoints, listening to ideas and experiences, and finding shared solutions through constructive dialogue is crucial to supporting good governance. It needs collective effort from all individuals in all walks of life to promote governance for collective benefit*



## Snapshots



*The Inclusive Governance project team in the background with Central Tanna Area Administrator, John Bill and Acting Assistant Secretary General & Compliance for Tafea Provincial Government, Samson Nalau.*



*A women only group work session in Workshop 1, PNG*



*A mentoring and coaching session with the Taonita Teop Community Government executives*

## MARK THE DATE

### 15-17 October:

Regional Speakershop on Pacific Island Oral Statements to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) Advisory Proceedings - Nadi, Fiji

### 21-25 October:

Decentralisation Roadshow for Torba, Sanma and Penama Provinces - Vanuatu

### 22 October:

Communications Strategy Workshop for Fiji Human Rights and Anti Discrimination Commission - Suva, Fiji

### 5-7 November:

PSC Reflections Workshop - Port Vila, Vanuatu

## For more information, please contact:

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