

**PROJECT Governance**THE FORTNIGHTLY  
**INSIGHT**

8 July, 2024



HRSD Director, Miles Young, during the presentation in New York

**Annual Meeting of the  
United Nations Treaty  
Body Chairpersons**

27-28 June 2024



At the end of 2023, PROJECT Governance facilitated two regional follow-up review events. These were designed to test a model of in-person reviews by the UN Treaty Body Committees as part of their new 8-year predictable reporting calendar. This is one of the options being considered by the Treaty Body Chairpersons who have been entrusted with the mandate to lead the reform process.

*(Continued on page 2)*

The outcomes of the two Pacific events were shared with the Chairpersons at their annual meeting in New York from 27-28 June in two ways. First, through an intervention made during the formal meeting by HRSD Director, Mr Miles Young. The second was at a focused side event where a more in-depth conversation was possible. This was organised in partnership with the Geneva Human Rights Platform, the Governments of Tonga and Switzerland, and was very well attended with over half of all the TB Chairpersons in the room. Mr Young shared the significant and varied impact that was observed through the two events.

The outcomes were an enriched dialogue because of the in-situ nature, the facilitation of peer-to-peer learning, a more contextualised approach by the Committee members, contextualised recommendations and a broad sense of ownership and collaboration among national stakeholders around implementation.



**Miles Young**

Director, Human Rights  
and Social Development  
Division, SPC

All of which created a reported catalyst for implementation. You will see from the report that 100% of the participants surveyed from the CRC84 Follow-Up Review and 92% from the Regional Follow-Up Review in Fiji said that increased their capacity to implement the conventions.

Hundreds of people took part in these two events, making the overall potential impact for accelerated implementation very significant. If the guiding principle of the reform process is “the increased protection of rights holders through strengthened implementation of the treaties”, then both these events in the Pacific provide strong evidence that option 3 is the most appropriate for achieving this ambition.

## So what?

Both the Geneva Academy (through its Human Rights Platform) and the Commonwealth made strong statements of support for the option of regional reviews piloted by PROJECT Governance. The intervention and side event will mean that the TB Chairpersons have a body of evidence on which to base its decisions around the future of the system.

Should the modality piloted by PROJECT Governance ultimately be adopted, this would enable hundreds more Pacific Islanders to engage with the Treaty Body system, become empowered as agents of change and likely lead to widespread and sustained accelerated implementation of human rights across the region. A final decision in this regard may not be forthcoming in the near future, but this mission ensured that Pacific voices and experiences will shape what happens next irrespective of the timeframes.





Group photo of workshop participants and IFES facilitators

## DIGITAL AND MEDIA AWARENESS TRAINING

17-18 June 2024

From June 17-18, 2024, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), in partnership with the Fijian Elections Office (FEO) and other stakeholders, conducted a two-day Digital and Media Awareness Training at the Civic Center in Suva, Fiji. A total of 25 participants (10 women), including members of the FEO, youth leaders, social media influencers, students, and media representatives, joined the training. The Supervisor of Elections for Fiji, Ana Mataciwa, provided opening remarks, outlining the workshop's goals and summarizing how disinformation affects young Fijians. The goal of the training was to build participants' confidence in their ability to recognize, fact-check, and appropriately address disinformation. Participants also learned their own agency and responsibility to create a safer and more factual information environment in Fiji through their personal and professional networks.

*I will be sharing this information, making a ripple effect. We will come up with a report and present it to our youth members. At the same time, we will create awareness on how important digital rights are. It is a human right, and we did not know that.*

Workshop participant

The first day of training included modules on "Information Landscape" and "Analyzing Information." Participants learned about the global information environment, disinformation's harm, and its impact on human and digital rights. They were trained to analyze content for signs of misinformation, gendered disinformation, hate speech, and manipulation tactics. On day two, modules covered "Techniques to Identify and Verify Disinformation" and "Responsible Content Creation." Participants practiced fact-checking, digital forensic skills, and cyber-hygiene. The workshop concluded with the creation of a national information integrity campaign strategy to boost media literacy and combat disinformation. Participants will refine their plans and recruit more collaborators in the coming weeks.

### So what?

As influencers and youth advocates, participants in Fiji face disinformation and harmful content online. The USAID report highlights the effectiveness of media literacy for digitally literate populations. By equipping community leaders with digital literacy and fact-checking skills, the workshop fostered a youth-led movement for a safer information environment in Fiji. This initiative promotes collaborative efforts to maintain information integrity and uphold digital and human rights for all Fijians.



Miles Young and Ashley Bowe (SPC), Katherine Ellena and Melika Attic (IFES), with USAID colleagues following meeting with Acting Director for the East Asia and Pacific Office, Sang Lee

## PROJECT Governance in Washington DC

1 July 2024



On 1 July, a PROJECT Governance delegation had meetings with counterparts from USAID and the US State Department in Washington. This presented an opportunity to discuss the political and operating landscapes in the Pacific, emerging challenges, and opportunities, and to provide an update on PROJECT Governance and upcoming events.

Discussions were also held around the longer-term future, and opportunities for partnership beyond the end of PROJECT Governance in May 2026. The management team and US colleagues explored the importance of the relationships on which the programme is founded, and how these would enable current work to be ongoing or scaled up, and some of the new areas of work that are emerging as priorities for Pacific Countries.

### So what?

For all parties, it was an opportunity to meet face-to-face for the first time, and further strengthen the relationship between USAID, US Department of State and SPC. For the US colleagues, SPC's aim was to share information about the implementation environment and answer any questions about the current landscape and how it may be impacting on programme delivery.

The conversation about potential collaboration beyond May 2026 was welcomed by all parties as starting now will allow sufficient time for the necessary planning and discussions. Should a decision be made to extend the partnership in the governance space, this will enable the programme to continue efficiently, maintaining operational staff, retaining institutional knowledge and relationships, and continuing existing streams of work. This will negate the need for a long inception phase where relationship building, and programme validation is required prior to full implementation – the approach PROJECT Governance needed to take when it was first launched. This will enable far more funds to be allocated towards implementation and further strengthen PROJECT Governance's strong reputation among its target Pacific Countries.





## Digital Tracking Tools – A side event to the High-Level Political Forum at the United Nations



3 July 2024

A major challenge faced by most countries worldwide, and particularly in the Pacific, is tracking human rights obligations and SDG commitments. PROJECT Governance is responding to this by rolling out a piece of software designed to address this problem and enable States to effectively monitor, plan and report on their implementation. In Samoa, their version of the software – Sadata – is widely heralded to be one of the most advanced globally. It is still a relatively nascent field, with several related initiatives gaining traction in various parts of the world.

To strengthen the support PROJECT Governance can provide to the Pacific Countries in this field, a side event at the High Level Political Forum in the United Nations, New York was organised in partnership with the Government of Samoa, the Geneva Human Rights Platform, UNDP. The aim of the event was to unpack the extent to which existing human rights tools advance the implementation of development goals, facilitate peer-to-peer learning and identify common challenges and solutions.

### So what?

In the panel discussion, the deputy Permanent Representative of Samoa shared that her country had voluntarily opted to have their SDG Review in 2024, rather than choosing a later year and despite being the host of the Commonwealth heads of Government Meeting in October. She said she had asked Capital why they had chosen this rather than deferring at such a busy time and the response she got was they were confident of preparing their SDG report because of Sadata. This highlights the importance and potential value PROJECT Governance is delivering through its support to Pacific Countries wanting to utilise this type of tool.

The side event also raised the global visibility of PROJECT Governance's work and impact. In the room were Treaty Body Chairpersons, senior staff from the United Nations Development Programme, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and representatives from country missions such as Germany, Switzerland and the Pacific. It also provided the PROJECT Governance management team with new ideas on how to strengthen support for target countries and built networks in this area of work.



The full FIRM cohort of reporters and editors pose with trainers and partners from EWC, RFW, and OCCRP

## Launch of FIRM Initiative

23-26 June 2024



PROJECT Governance's Financial Investigative Reporting and Mentorship (FIRM) initiative, a partnership among the East-West Center (EWC), Report for the World (RFW), and The Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project launched in earnest at the 2024 International Media Conference in Manila from June 23-26. Fifteen Pacific journalists attended the conference and the two days of follow-on training. The FIRM sponsors the salaries of full-time financial investigative journalists for up to three years, and provides mentorship editorial support, professional development, and co-publishing as part of a regional network of reporters. This inaugural cohort includes the Fiji Times, a 165 year old Pacific institution of independent daily print news; Islands Business, the leading Pacific monthly magazine for business and regional issues; Inside PNG; an online daily founded by a team of seasoned reporters to cover PNG's news without fear of political interference; In-Depth Solomons, an independent online investigative news platform for the Solomon Islands; and Talanoa 'o Tonga, a new online investigative startup founded by the publisher of Tonga's first independent paper.

As a part of the conference, EWC, RFW, OCCRP and the editors held a launch panel discussion to introduce PROJECT Governance and the FIRM's mission, as well as other panels for the FIRM reporters to discuss Pacific journalism and regional issues. In attendance for the FIRM's launch for the Fiji Times' was editor Fred Wesley, his bureau chiefs Margaret Wise and Anish Chand, and their FIRM investigative reporter Meri Radinibaravi. Editor Richard Naidu attended for Islands Business. For In-Depth Solomons, the entire news team of Ofani Eremae, Charley Piringi, Gina Maka'a, and FIRM reporter Ronald Toito'ona participated in a panel with OCCRP showcasing their investigation of the unexplained wealth of a former Prime Minister. For Talanoa 'o Tonga publisher Kalafi Moala participated in the closing plenary roundtable on regional politics, and brought with him FIRM reporter Siosifa Pomana. For Inside PNG, editor Kila Wani and her two FIRM reporters Charmaine Yanam and Julie Badui were joined by Inside PNG founder Sincha Demara, who also received a Journalist of Courage award. After the four days of conference events, the FIRM team gathered for orientation, training and story development work with EWC, RFW, and OCCRP.

### So what?

The launch of the FIRM establishes a collaborative network of Pacific new organisations committed to public interest financial investigative journalism, with fully dedicated investigative reporters and empowered editors. It further strengthens these news organizations with mentorship, co-publishing, professional development, and international networking from a cooperative team of three regional and international media support organizations, all in advancement of PROJECT Governance's objective of expanding a thriving, independent media, and with room to grow.





Workshop participants with facilitators

*Everything I learnt from this workshop makes me feel confident and more interested because as a leader, I must help us work as a team and respect each other.*

*Immaculate Tisia, Ward member,  
Haku Community Government*

## Leadership and Team Building Workshop #2



3-4 July 2024

From July 3-4, CARE International in PNG implemented the Leading Together with Respect project and convened its second workshop, bringing together 22 (14F:8M) executives and ward members from seven of the eight Community Governments that CARE is working with in the Autonomous Region of Bougainville. These Community Governments are from Hagogohe, Haku, Keriaka, Taonita Teop, Tonsu, Tsitalato Rural, and Selau. The Kokopau Urban Community Government could not participate due to a death in the community.

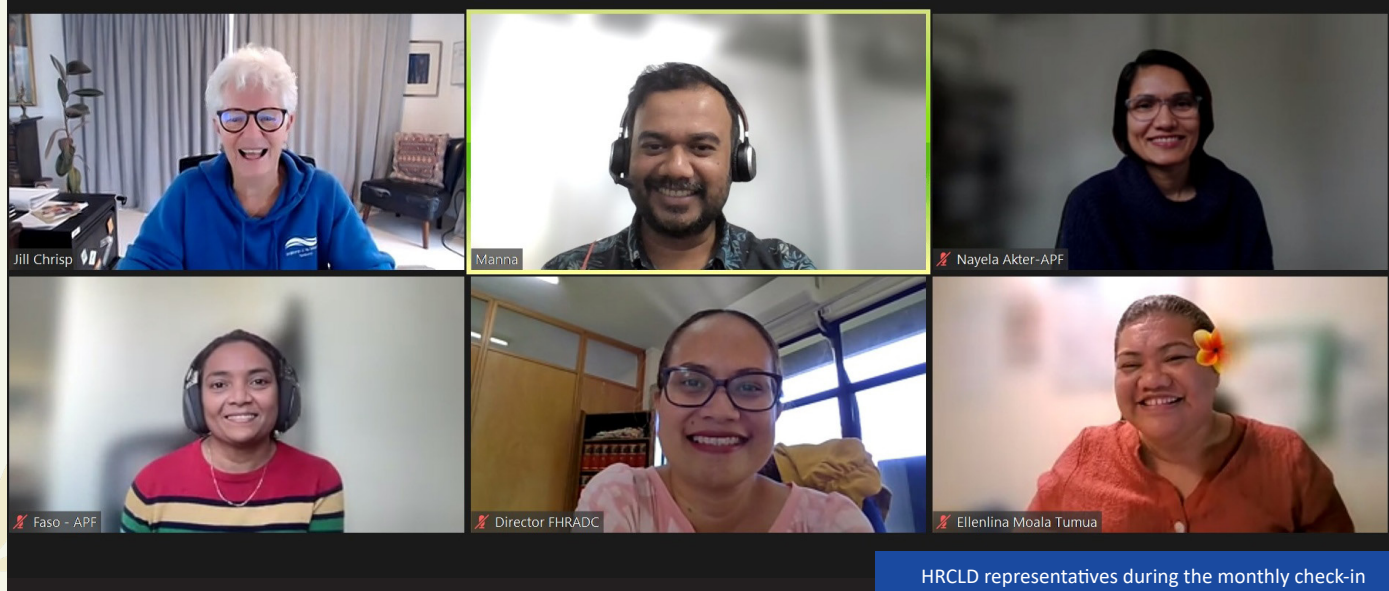
Building on content delivered in Workshop 1, participants actively engaged in group activities, role-playing, reflection, and discussion sessions to further strengthen their understanding and build strong teams of women and men leaders who are respectful, communicate effectively, and employ inclusive practices in their roles and responsibilities.

The workshop was deemed valuable by these leaders, who also expressed sincere appreciation for the opportunity to have rich exchanges of experiences, ways of working, and know-how among themselves. This workshop included participants sharing how the project had impacted them to date. Feedback from this session will be shared in another write-up.

Similar to Workshop 1, feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive.

### So what?

The workshop format and approach is proving to be very valuable to members of the second house of the Community Government in the Autonomous Region of Bougainville. Following the first workshop, several ward members and executives took it upon themselves to conduct activities and further disseminate the learning and inspiration they gained the workshop. More commitments were made at this workshop. PROJECT Governance is playing a critical role in strengthening inclusive governance through this structure of government.



## HRCLD Progress Reflections

26 June 2024



On June 26, Human Rights Community-led Development (HRCLD) practitioners held their monthly online check-in, inclusive of representatives from the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (APF), the Pacific Community (SPC), and human rights bodies in Fiji, Samoa, and the Cook Islands. The practitioners provided updates from their current projects, challenges faced, upcoming opportunities, and facilitate support. At the heart of the discussion, there was an emphasis on community-centric approaches, cultural sensitivity, and long-term engagement for sustainable HRCLD initiatives.

The Fiji team is in Phase 4, focusing on implementing the community's Action Plan by organising a talanoa to address access to fresh water with key stakeholders, with outcomes being monitored and a follow-up planned for next quarter. The Samoa team is developing a Samoa-centric HRCLD toolkit to be piloted and trialed in the next phase. The Cook Islands team faced challenges due to key staff losses and is currently discussing their next steps. Additionally, the HRCLD Guide has been finalised using case studies and learnings from the Pacific HRCLD project and will be published soon by APF.

Furthermore, HRCLD project extensions were granted, with applications open for the period from August 5, 2024, to May 30, 2025, requiring alignment with the Pacific HRCLD Approach and the Lautoka Navigation Guidelines.

### So what?

The next steps are crucial for the ongoing success of HRCLD projects in the Cook Islands, Fiji, and Samoa. Timely report submissions to APF and SPC ensure accountability and transparency. Engaging in Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning capacity-building, through APF's online courses and focused mentoring, enhances the effectiveness of HRCLD initiatives.

The project extension guarantees continuity and sustained impact, while monthly convenings provide essential support and timely updates, reinforcing the collaborative effort to uphold human rights in the region.





PROJECT Governance Fellow Debbie Akane (bottom right) sits with fellow conference organizers at the Protecting Oceania Conference as a part of the 13th Festival of Pacific Arts and Culture in Honolulu, Hawaii

## PROJECT Governance Fellows at FESTPAC's Protecting Oceania Conference



10-12 June 2024

Project Governance fellows Solomon Yeo (LLM) and Debbie Akane (LLM) supported the Protecting Oceania Summit as part of the 13th Festival of Pacific Arts & Culture hosted in Honolulu, Hawai'i. From June 10-12, Protecting Oceania welcomed nearly 200 participants from across Oceania to explore what threaten's genuine security in the region, as well as the collective values which define the broader blue Pacific continent.

Solomon and Debbie provided support to the planning committee as well as serving as rapporteurs documenting the discussions to guide future collective actions.

### So what?

Solomon Yeo and Debbie Akane's involvement in the Protecting Oceania Summit at the 13th Festival of Pacific Arts & Culture highlights the proactive steps being taken to address security threats in Oceania.

Their work helps facilitate important conversations and document key insights, which are essential for shaping future strategies and collaborative efforts to protect the region's collective values and security.

## Meet our new recruits



**Philip Wayaki Bongi**  
Monitoring and Evaluation Officer

Philip brings 11 years experience of working in the development space as a MEL personnel in various programs in Papua New Guinea.

Some of the organizations include Clinton Health Access Initiative, CARE International, Save the Children and recently with DT Global in the Biodiversity programme as MEL Specialist & Data Management Coordinator.

Philip will provide 50% MEL support to PROJECT Governance & 50% to PPAC.



**Delvin Rajnal Prasad**  
Finance & Project Officer

Delvin is no stranger to the PROJECT Governance team. He brings with him 19 years of experience in the finance and procurement sector. As a volunteer,

He also serves as a school manager, treasurer, and secretary across various schools in the Central Division of Fiji. This helps strengthen his community advocacy along the lines of finance and good financial practice.

With Delvin now on board, the PROJECT Governance finance team is complete, with all positions filled.



## Snapshots



*Left to right: EWC's Jim Potenza, RFW's Preethi Nallu, OCCRP's Aubrey Belford, Inside PNG's Kila Wani, In-Depth Solomon's Charley Piringi, Islands Business' Richard Naidu, Fiji Times' Fred Wesley, and Talanoa 'o Tonga's Kalafi Moala present on the launch of the FIRM at the IMC.*



*Participants work together to create a collaborative strategic plan for combating disinformation in Fiji.*



*Investigative Reporter Panel: Left to right: Inside PNG reporter Julie Badui discusses PNG with fellow reporter Charmaine Yanam, RFW's Preethi Nallu, and other FIRM reporters at the IMC.*

## MARK THE DATE

**22-24 July:**

15th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women - Majuro, RMI

**25-26 July:**

8th Meeting of Pacific Ministers of Women - Majuro, RMI

**13-15 August:**

Pacific Ministries of Youth Senior Officials Meeting - Nadi, Fiji

**9-15 September:**

North Pacific Independent Media and PIO Workshop. Koror, Palau