



Community Based Water Management

Water for Women is the Australian Government's flagship Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) program aimed at improving the health, gender equality and wellbeing of Asian and Pacific communities through inclusive, sustainable WASH.

Research is an important element of Water for Women, it is a key pathway for development innovation and helps to inform policy-making and program delivery. Investments in research facilitate access to diverse partnerships and networks, contributing to Australia's aid policy and wider diplomatic engagement with our partner countries.

In the Pacific, poor management of water sources and services is associated with inadequate WASH outcomes, negatively impacting on human health and wellbeing. This often affects women and girls disproportionately.

Partnering with **The International WaterCentre (IWC)**, this research project will partner with Universities, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), government and communities in both Fiji and the Solomon Islands to identify how CSOs and governments can better enable rural community based water management in the Pacific.



Research is a key pathway for development innovation, policy-making and program delivery



IWC / Diana Gonzalez Botero (Fiji)

Inclusive, resilient and sustainable WASH outcomes in the rural Pacific: approaches to enable effective community-based water management

Poor management of water sources and services in the Pacific region is associated with inadequate WASH outcomes, negatively impacting on human health and wellbeing, and often affect women and girls disproportionately.

Across the Pacific, community-based water management (CBWM) remains the necessary model for rural water services due to the limited presence of government and private sector.

However, global and Pacific evidence indicates that current approaches to enabling CBWM don't lead to inclusive, integrated and resilient WASH outcomes, and that external support is necessary. Although Pacific governments appreciate support is required and invest in providing support for CBWM, there is a lack of evidence about what support is effective, including in different community contexts.

In partnership with CSOs, government and communities in both Fiji and the Solomon Islands, this research seeks to answer how CSOs and governments can better enable rural CBWM in the Pacific to improve SDG6 outcomes, including the resilience, inclusiveness and sustainability of WASH outcomes.

“*Currently, governments and CSOs know communities need support to manage their own water supply systems but don't have any evidence of what works and why. The practical tools of this research, co-developed with academics and practitioners, will allow us to improve practice by CSOs and government, and increase the likelihood of sustainable and reliable water services in communities.”*

Tom Rankin, WASH Program Manager, **Plan International Australia**

This will be answered by:

1. Evaluating a variety of existing models of CBWM, and
2. Co-developing and piloting a toolkit of context-sensitive community engagement approaches to enable effective CBWM.

The approach involves male and female local university and village ‘researchers’, strengthening local research capacity as well as promoting gender equity in academia and local WASH outcomes, and participation of women in local water governance.

Water for Women is proud to be partnering with the **International WaterCentre**, the University of the South Pacific, Plan International, Habitat for Humanity, Ministry of Health and Medical Services of Fiji, the Water Authority of Fiji and Solomon Islands Government in this important research work.



Australia believes that equitable WASH access is of crucial importance to develop communities. Water for Women and our partners provide innovative solutions to WASH delivery and use research to contribute evidence to the global WASH sector. By working together and building evidence, we can create better, more sustainable WASH outcomes whilst also contributing to strengthened gender equality and inclusion.



Type 2 Awards support implementation of Water for Women projects. Research is closely associated with the work of partner CSOs and covers inclusive WASH approaches, partnerships and topic areas. Research results will help improve projects and inform future inclusive WASH design and implementation.