

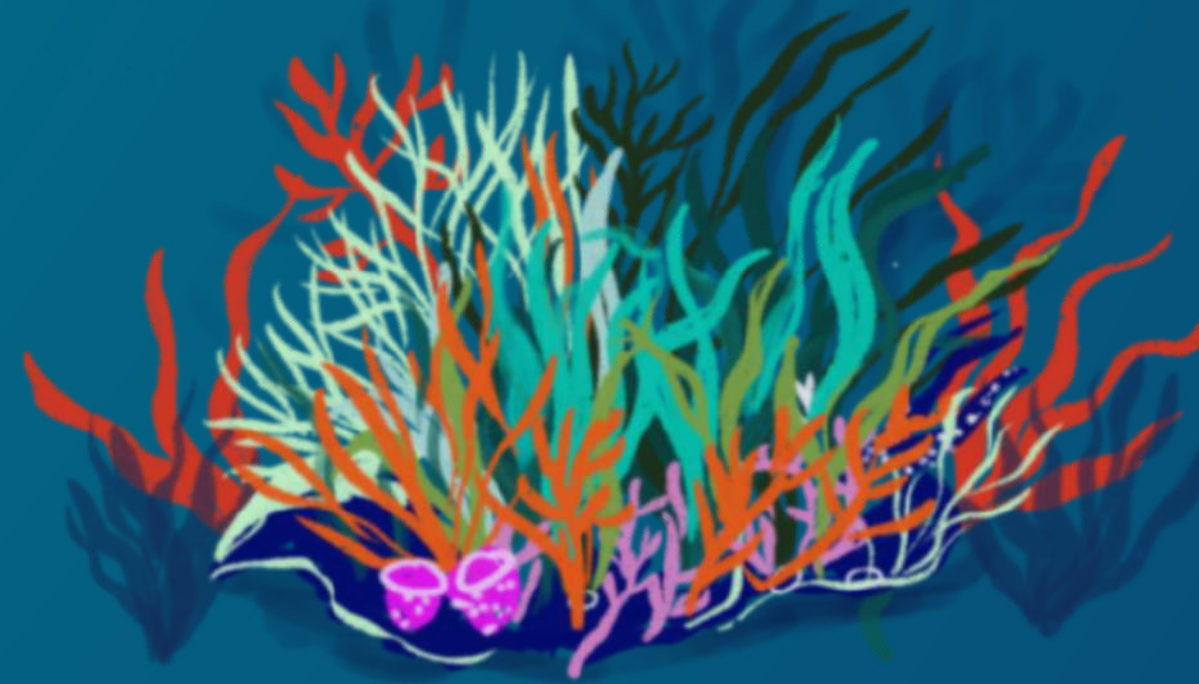


An ocean of opportunities, change and resilience



About the Strategic Plan

Our 2021 - 2024 Strategic Plan is themed around the ocean. Covering almost 80% of the earth, the ocean is truly an enormous force that impacts how we live our lives, especially here in the islands. She is both a symbol and source of life, strength and stability, new beginnings, connection, sustenance, healing and rejuvenation - all elements and aspirations of our journey thus far and here onwards as a feminist fund. Most especially, it is the beauty we have seen many times along the way in the women we support.



Acknowledgments

We dedicate our 2022 - 2024 Strategic Plan to all the many feminists, partners and allies who have supported our pioneering work in feminist funding and building the capacity of feminist and women's rights organisations and movements in Fiji to expand and enhance their work on gender justice.

Credits

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The views expressed in this publication are the author's alone and are not necessarily the views of Women's Fund Fiji's donors.



Swimming against strong currents

We liken the pandemic to a strong current that threatens to pull us under and to push us backward on the gains made by the many feminists before us. The pandemic has taught us that while we need to be agile and adaptive, we must not let it make us lose sight of what lies just beyond the reef.

Even in a time of uncertainty, we remain steadfast in our vision and mission of being an empathetic and adaptable fund. Despite the challenges that have come our way, we continue to wade forward with a spirit of learning, exploration and charting a course that can weather all storms. Since our inception in 2017, we have morphed and adapted to the realities of our context and the lived experiences of feminist and women's rights organisations in Fiji.

Our three-year strategic plan truly reflects our core values of being a feminist, flexible and adaptable, accountable, transparent, inclusive, and collaborative feminist fund. We remain hopeful, focused and enthusiastic as we embrace change and challenges that come our way.

We would like to acknowledge the **Government of Australia for establishing and funding us since 2017 and the Fijian Government for their continuous support.** Our sister funds for supporting us in many ways including providing us with financial and non-financial support: Mama Cash, Equality Fund Global Advisory Panel, Global Fund for Women, Prospera International Network of Women's Funds and Prospera Asia and Pacific Chapter, Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights, Asia and Pacific (UAF A&P) and WOW Australia.

We also offer our sincere gratitude to our grantee partners, the feminist and women's rights organisations and movements, who are influencing and leading transformative change in formal and informal spaces at local, national and international levels. Special thanks also to our Trustees, Board, outgoing Steering Committee and Grants Committee members who have willingly rendered their expertise to guide our work.

Michelle Reddy
Fund Manager

Georgina Naigulevu
Governance Board Chair

Reflecting on our journey



2015

A civil society feasibility analysis recommended the establishment a women's fund in the Pacific. Led by a three-member team, the design of the Fiji Women's Fund was undertaken.

2016

After receiving overwhelming responses from feminist sisters, civil society allies in Fiji and women's funds, the Australian Government pledged AUD 10.5 million to help bring us to life. We became the Pacific's first feminist national fund – you can call us pioneers!

May 2017

To help steer and guide our journey, we sought the strength, mana and knowledge of women from civil society, private sector, government and the women's movement. They became part of our Steering and Grants Committees!

We took a consultative process to guide our branding and our logo. Our logo was inspired by a universal symbol that signifies women and femininity. The downward pointing triangle is one of the most ancient symbols of female divinity. It is the symbol of water (as it flows downward), and the womb.

We were so excited to provide our first 18 grants just six months after opening our doors. We supported initiatives that focused on Women's Economic Empowerment, Ending Violence Against Women, Women's Leadership and Decision Making and Women's Coalition for Change.

People began to hear of our existence and invited us to participate in two key events, the 13th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women which coincided with the 6th Meeting of the Pacific Ministers for Women and the Prospera X Biennial. It is in these two meetings that we saw the importance of being an independent women's fund.

An artistic illustration of several women swimming in a deep blue ocean. Sunlight rays penetrate the water from the surface. The women are depicted in various poses, some floating and others reaching upwards. They are wearing colorful clothing like orange, blue, purple, and pink dresses or tank tops. The overall mood is one of freedom and hope.

2018

While on our pioneering journey, we have always taken the time to reflect, unpack and unlearn, and many times this is meant we have changed and adapted our ways of working. We developed many of our key governance policies and also put in place a special measure in our granting process to ensure that we reach marginalised groups and women in rural and remote areas.

By our 2nd birthday, we supported nine new grantees and continued to support four existing grantees from 2017. We increased the diversity of our grantees and for the first-time supported organisations working with women in sports, science, technology, engineering and mathematics. We are proud to say that our grants impacted the lives of 7,800 Fijians. We made a commitment to allocate 10% of our annual grant funding to organisations supporting people with disabilities. We partnered with the Pacific Disability Forum and the Fiji Disabled People's Federation to guide our work on this.

We became an Associate Member of Prospera International Network of Women's Funds, the peak global body of women's funds. This broadened our horizons, we got to connect, learn and foster new relationships with 38 other women's funds in the Asia Pacific region.

We believe in providing platforms and spaces for our grantees to grow and develop their capacity. Through the expertise of many feminists, we provided 31 capacity development training to our grantees. We also partnered with Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development on our first annual reflections workshop for where our grantees were invited to share their experiences with other gender equality practitioners in Fiji.

2019

Through our third grant call, we provided 12 new grants that impacted the lives of 8160 Fijians, the majority being from rural areas. Our grantees made many important essential services available in rural areas for the first time such as sexual reproduction and health rights.

Along with seven women's fund's members of the Asia and the Pacific chapter of Prospera - International Network of Women's Funds, we hosted the first Asia and Pacific Regional Convergence. It brought together grantee-partners, regional allies, and funders to talk about resources, power, and the processes through which they are negotiated. Around 150 women, girls and trans* activists from 20 countries, speaking eight different languages converged in Bangkok to examine the multifaceted reality of feminist funding in Asia and the Pacific region. We were proud to have contributed to the development of the Feminist Funds Manifesto.

We partnered with the Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights, Asia & Pacific (UAF A&P) to commission the Where is the money for women and girls in the Pacific - a scoping study about the funding realities for women's organisations in the region. Over 40 organisations were interviewed seeking insights on the funding of women's organisations in Fiji, Papua New Guinea and more broadly across the Pacific.

2019

Along with Urgent Action Fund Asia and Pacific, we began to navigate the journey of bringing to life, a regional women's fund - the Pacific Feminist Fund. We were able to secure funding and are so privileged to be on the Advisory Group and Steering Committee working on its establishment.

We commissioned an independent Mid Term Review. The review found that we are relevant in the national and global context of building and supporting women's movements and empowering women's organisations.

We believe that our grantees have a lot of knowledge and lived experiences about what works best for gender equality work in Fiji. We are collaborating with them to document and share these learnings and best practices through our research papers. On International Rural Women's Day we released *Promising practices from Fiji in empowering women economically*.

2020

We are so excited to begin our journey to become an independent women's fund, we developed our Mobilisation Strategy and began reaching out for support and diversification of our resources. We became a full member of Prospera International Network of Women's Funds. And became a Co-Coordinator of the Prospera Asia & Pacific Chapter.

A terrible virus (COVID-19) broke free around the globe and this caused nations to shut down. We went into lockdown and witnessed an immediate increase in gender-based violence. Following that, Fiji experienced two cyclones that left many families in dire need of support. We mobilised financial resources to help nine of our grantees with recovery efforts - this was the first time that we adapted our funding to respond to a crisis.

Building on our learnings from this crisis and our Mid Term Review, we implemented a new grants mechanism and introduced three grants called Sustainability, Movement Building and Resilience Grants. We hope to become agile and more responsive to the needs of our grantees. We also disbursed nine new grants that impacted the lives of over 18600 individuals across Fiji.

We released our second research paper titled *Promising practices in preventing and ending violence against women and girls in Fiji*. The paper featured four of our grantee partners and this was launched during a panel discussion within the Fiji Annual Reflections event.

2021

We took our biggest step towards becoming an independent fund, we registered as a Charitable Trust and have a new Board of Trustees and Governance Board. We have developed our first Strategic Plan to guide our work from 2022 to 2024.

Stay tuned for more.....!!!



Setting the course of our new direction

When we started this journey four years ago, we had not yet formulated our vision and mission. At least not formally. But we have always envisioned for ourselves a world where women are equal. With this as our guiding star, we continue to swim and paddle against structures that hold women back. And we paddle as a collective agent of the change we wish to see, for we are a team. In 2020, we developed our goals, spoke life to our dreams of the kind of organisation we aspire to work for, and wrote out guiding principles we would always uphold in all that we do.

Vision

We are an agent of change influencing the flow of resources to diverse women, girls, and gender non-conforming people in Fiji.

Mission

We are an empathetic and adaptive feminist fund that influences and mobilises financial and non-financial resources for feminist and women's rights organisations and movements, and our grantee partners, to progress the human rights of diverse women, girls, and gender non-conforming people in Fiji.



Values

Feminist

We are feminist. We promote transformative agency, autonomy, leadership, and decision-making. We are committed to supporting approaches that advance the rights of diverse women, girls, and gender non-conforming people. We practice rights-based approaches, substantive equality, non-discrimination, intersectional and transformative approaches.

Inclusive

We empathetically embrace diversity and are inclusive. We are committed to actively promoting, respecting, and supporting the rights of the most marginalised and oppressed communities of diverse women, girls, and gender non-conforming people in Fiji.

Accountable

We are accountable to ourselves and to the community of people we work with, including our grantee partners, funders and the women's and human rights movements. We are committed to being accountable by appraising and communicating the outcomes of our grantmaking and sharing our learnings.

Transparent

We strive to be transparent in the way we conduct our grantmaking, resource mobilisation, communications, administrative and governance processes, without compromising on the confidentiality and safety of our grantee partners.

Flexible & Adaptable

We are responsive to shifting contexts and circumstances. We are willing to examine the value of strategic opportunities to meet the needs of our partners.

Collaborative

We believe in the power of social movements. We are committed to forging collaborative partnerships with the community of people we work with, including our grantee partners, funders, and allies to achieve shared goals.

Riding a tide of change

As a feminist women's fund, we believe in **funding women's rights and feminist work exclusively**. Led by local feminist movement actors and principles, **we understand and can respond better to our grantees' needs**. This results in flexible, long-term funding that is cognisant of the intersectional realities of feminist social change in Fiji and the Pacific and incorporates a vision of redistribution and decolonisation.

We believe that **providing direct and core funding to the organisations and communities constituting feminist and women's rights movements** is key for the realisation of rights for women, girls, and gender non-conforming communities because it shifts power to where it should be - the movements themselves. Direct, core funding reaches movement actors and gives them the decision-making power on how and where to use resources - including for organisational expenses or collective action. This is politically liberating, powerful and contributes towards movement-building.

However, we know from experience and data tells us that less than 1% of grant funding is directed to Pacific women's organisations. Globally, funders are increasing their funding for gender equality and women's empowerment activities, however, funding disbursements by OECD DAC members for these activities have stagnated over recent years in the Pacific.

Our journey won't begin until we are ready to leave the shore, swim straight into the riptide to confront and address the **unequal flow of financial and non-financial resources from donors, funders, power holders and decision-makers to feminist and women's organisations and movements in Fiji**.

We will address the root causes collectively by:

- Directly funding and building the capacity of feminist and women's rights organisations and movements in Fiji to deliver gender justice outcomes and enhance their spheres of influence.
- Influencing and mobilising financial and non-financial resources from diverse funding sources to support feminist and women's rights organisations and movements working to enhance women's human rights in Fiji.
- Building our governance and operational capacity to establish ourselves as an empathetic and adaptive fund that is responsive to the needs of Fiji feminist and women's rights organisations and movements.

Like the ocean that connects us, we value being interconnected with local and international stakeholders. We will build, strengthen, and sustain partnerships with the Fijian Government and a diverse range of local organisations including established women's organisations and movements.

We will also explore new horizons, forge new partnerships with our bilateral and multilateral donors, international feminist and women's rights movements and organisations; international sister funds; and other public and private donors such as foundations and philanthropic organisations and individuals.

Women's Fund Fiji: Our Ecosphere



In line with Strategic Plan theme: An ocean of opportunity, change and resilience, our ecosphere shows just how diverse and vibrant our oceans are and how each person, sea creature and organism is interconnected in adding to a healthy ocean.

Our ecosphere is made up of teams of diverse people who will guide our work over 3 years. Our governance structure is made up of Board of Trustees, Governance Board and Grants Committee. The Fund Team is made up of Leadership team, a Programs Team, Finance Team and a Resource Mobilisation Team. Each of these teams are visually depicted in the broader eco-system in which we are part of.

Our approach

Since our creation, we have built our niche as an empathetic resource mobiliser within the Fijian women’s movement. We have worked with and continued to support the work of diverse women, girls and gender non-conforming people in Fiji. From the beaches of Rotuma to the highlands of Naitasiri, under mango trees, in boardrooms and at village meeting halls, our grantees are building agency, raising their voices, expanding their economic reach, and their ability to make decisions. We work in a region and in a country where the prevalence of violence against women and girls is amongst the highest in the world. Our grantee partners face riptides of patriarchy, toxic masculinity, archaic laws and social norms that try to hold them back and keep them from reaching their full potential. Yet, we continue to wade forward, swimming with our sisters to a new horizon of change.

We feel wisps of sea breeze on our skin, we smell her beautiful breath, she is waiting for us. As we make our way there, our journey is enriched as we seek to support, consult and learn from our allies and grantee partners. They have been our guiding compass in helping us to inch closer to our vision. Together, we dream of the beautiful sunrise that will greet us on that new shore.

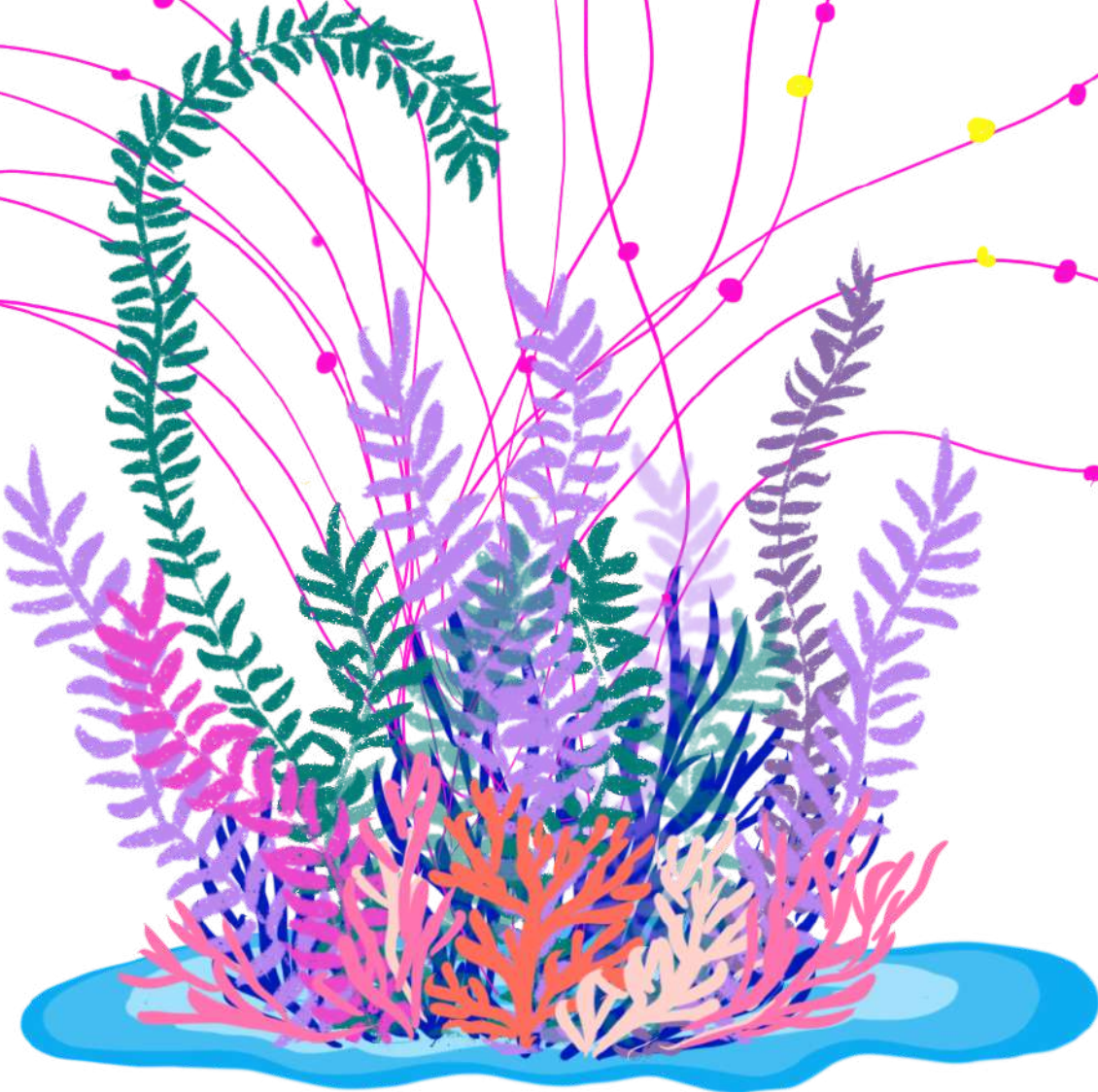
In the next three years, we will continue to harness our strength and learnings in the foundation we have already built.

Our feminist journey is seeking us to dive deeper and continue to focus on:

- Women’s Economic Empowerment
- Elimination of Violence against Women and Girls
- Women’s Leadership and Decision-Making
- Women’s Coalition for Change

To unlock opportunities, we will also course uncharted oceans, we will immerse ourselves in new focus areas:

- Climate Justice and Humanitarian Action
- Aid and Philanthropy



We are pioneers. We are the first national feminist women’s fund in Fiji and the Pacific, we will strategically pursue partnerships, alliances, networks and funding opportunities that secure and increase the flow of financial and non-financial resources to ensure gender justice in Fiji.



Oceans of influence, carrying our feminist allies with us

Through our work, we wade closer each day to transformative change - gender justice outcomes. Transformative change is complex. It takes time to achieve, yet we must not stop swimming and paddling no matter what storm lies ahead. **We know that we cannot do this alone and we must journey together, as an ecosystem of feminists.** Along the way, we will empower each other and bring new resources that will help us enhance our sphere of influence. We must ensure that no one is left behind, we must include our sisters and allies from all walks of life, carrying their herstories and experiences forward with us, using them as our strengths. We will call out and call in for each other making sure everyone feels the change coming.

We will continue to provide grants that are sustainable, resilient and build movements. We will continue to work with empathy and with our feminist guiding principles as our paddle, we will adapt our grants to support the needs of our grantee partners. We will remain cognizant of our ever-changing context and build the foundations of self-care in all aspects of our work.

For our journey, we will need tools, tools that we will shape together to help us achieve transformative change. We will continue to provide grantee partners support to enhance their capacity. In enhancing we will work with our grantee partners to be ready to access and increase their chances of accessing financial and non-financial support opportunities from other donors.

On our journey, the feminist ecosystem is at the heart of our work. We will continue to create spaces and connect either through us or by providing resources to our grantee partners. It is in these movements that change begins and we will support the catalysts of this change.

Can you hear our davui trumpeting the change we bring



We will blow our davui (conch shell) calling to our sisters on islands and worlds beyond. We hope to influence a change in funding flows to the Pacific by cultivating relationships and building partnerships with donors, international and United Nations agencies, investors, private sector and philanthropic organisations and individuals based on our shared vision, values and power. We choose not to swim with sharks, those who seek partnerships for financial and publicity benefits. The ocean is big enough for all of us to swim in and we will find individuals that espouse our feminist values and principles and we will bring them with us on this journey.

Can you hear our sisters, they too are calling... calling for more gender-equality funding to be directed to Women's Funds over the next five years (2021-26), as a commitment to furthering the goals and objectives of governments, the private sector, and civil society after 26 years of the Beijing Conference. This funding is critical, it is the canoe that helps us travel to our sisters in grassroots organisations – the very organisations on the frontline of tackling gender inequality.

We are seeking a Pacific sister with skills and knowledge to help steer our journey to secure financial and non-financial resources to enhance women's human rights. We know she is also waiting for our call. We will cultivate a culture of co-responsibility for resource mobilisation amongst our team.

Through the synergies in our Resource Mobilisation and Communications Strategies, we will articulate our approach and partnership with donors. We will build targeted narratives by developing our evidence and information base on the issues and challenges diverse women, girls and gender non-conforming people face in our six strategic focus areas. We will harness the power of technology, social media and innovation to support our grantees and provide opportunities to amplify their networks, advocacy and fundraising efforts.

Through our membership in Prospera International Network of Women's Funds, we will continue to engage and participate alongside our grantees in regional and international forums that will help us build new connections and to help draw light to the plight of Pacific women.

We aim to ensure our long-term sustainability as a Fund by building our reserve funds and securing unrestricted funding.

Anchored in shared values and leadership

In reverence to the diverse communities of people we work for and alongside, we strive to create empathy in our work. We will ensure our governance, operational systems and processes reflect this and are adaptive to the ever-changing currents, waves and tides of our context.

We respect that as a relatively younger feminist fund and the first of our kind in the Pacific, we will at times, be voyaging in uncharted waters that we must navigate with care. Our people are the life force of our work, and we recognise this life force needs to be continuously equipped, nourished, and supported to thrive. We value each other as individuals with aspirations and as team members working together for transformative change.

Our journey over the next three years will be steered by the wisdom and advice of our newly formed Governance Board and Grants Committee who will be oriented by our guiding feminist values and principles.

This strategic plan will be reviewed in 2024 and a new one will be developed to guide our work beyond 2024.

Our team members bring with them their unique gifts, herstories and realities, that when valued and nurtured where needed, are our greatest strength. To ensure that we don't drift apart along the way, we believe in offering anchorage for each other. Making stops along the way to rest, reflect together and remind ourselves of our journey's intent and the values and principles that helped to bring us there. We will also support team members who choose to chart their own new paths along the way.





Adjusting our sails to catch the wind

In the later part of 2021, we will develop our monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) framework for our strategic plan.

A compass for our path, the MEL framework will help us determine if we are advancing towards transformative change – the True North of our work.

The MEL Framework will articulate how we will monitor our progress, reflect, learn and evaluate our work and context over the life of this plan. Honouring our herstory and those of our partners, we will continue to build on the lessons we have learned from implementing our previous M&E plans.

We want to see diverse women, girls and gender non-conforming people have the freedom to make choices about their own lives and wellbeing. We will know the success of our work when the communities of people we serve are able to use their voices to influence decision-making in local spaces and are recognised by their community as change agents. Our work aims to shift values so that gender justice outcomes are realised across the communities we work for and alongside.

To achieve this outcome, our grantee partners are pushing beyond their horizons, acting on confidence to influence spaces beyond their communities for transformative change.

The winds in our sails as a feminist fund are our ability to provide greater resourcing to feminist and women's organisations in Fiji. We will have a capable resource mobilisation team and will secure long-term funding from diverse funders and donors.

We have a role in influencing funders to have greater value for feminist and women's organisations and movements in Fiji. It is therefore important that we are recognised as such and are an active partner in the global feminist funding ecosystem, helping to reshape values and shift power and resources towards more and better resources for feminist and women's rights work.

We owe it to ourselves and the community of people we serve to be a thriving organisation with established systems

and processes that embody feminist principles. Our internal processes must champion the needs of our team so that they are happy and able to carry out their work. As the saying goes, we cannot give from an empty cup.

We look forward to welcoming you on our journey of opportunity, change and resilience!



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