



# Small Project Report

## UN WOMEN

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*Candidates Training: 'Transformative Leadership and Campaign Training for potential women candidates'*



Figure 1 Participants of the Transformational Leadership for Candidates 2014 2-6 December 2013  
Photo Credit: Marni Gilbert/UNWomen

## Project Information

Project Title	Candidates Training: “Leadership and Campaign Training for potential women candidates”
Country	Solomon Islands
Agreement Duration	1 week
Reporting Period	1 Week
Total Grant Approved	SBD\$132,203

## Project Summary

The candidates’ training was held for five days from the 2<sup>nd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> December 2013. Fifteen participants from 8 provinces in the Solomon Islands attended the training. This included three men twelve potential women candidates from 8 provinces (including Honiara) who expressed interest in contesting the 2014 National Elections were identified by the Solomon Islands National Council of Women to participate in the training.

The Vois Blong Mere Solomon (VBMS) team in Honiara coordinated and organised logistical support for the training workshop with financial support from UN Women. Vois Blong Mere engaged other facilitators to co-facilitate at the training workshop. The facilitators included Leslie Kwaiga, a private lawyer and TSM expert, Lorio Sisiolo from the National Council of Women, Josephine Teakeni from VBMS and Audrey Manu from UN Women. The training also included observers from WISDM Members, Civil Society Organisations, and NGOs.

The goal of the candidate training workshop was to strengthen women candidates for 2014 elections by utilising the transformational leadership approach combined with other strategies for effective election campaigning. Transformational leadership is fully aligned with the human rights agenda and gender equality. The objectives of the training were:

- For participants to understand transformational leadership, personal reflection and impact change;
- To increase women’s political participation, and create competent, effective and committed women politicians.
- For participants to understand that inequality exists in power sharing and decision making;
- For participants to understand the electoral systems, campaign and election strategies;
- To acquire knowledge and skills for effective political and social communication; and
- To strengthen alliances, networks and coalitions of women at the provincial and national levels as a base support for women candidates through interaction with women organisations including community based organisations.

As a result the training also contributed to the gender sensitization among the potential women and men leaders.

The five-day training was broken down into theory and practice, with days 4 and 5 concentrating on the skills building of participants through practical experience of developing a campaign strategy. The overall results from the candidates training workshop were positive, with each objective being addressed, and positive feedback from participants from daily evaluation forms and end of workshop feedback session.

The results highlighted below focus on linking the objectives within the project proposal, with feedback from participants and facilitators aligned to each objective:

- Participants now understand 3 types of leadership – Transactional, Transformative, and Servant-hood leadership;
- Participants were able to identify areas that need changes and gaps in their leadership and set goals to make the change happen;
- New Visions have been acquired by participants on how to prepare themselves and plan their Election strategies and plans;
- Realisation that preparation for the Election is important;
- Signing of MOU and creating network with Electoral Commission;
- Knowledge, wisdom and empowerment through sharing and discussions;
- Hands on experience in developing a campaign plan and message; and
- Experience in public speaking.

## Day 1: Transformational Leadership and Emotional Intelligence

*Objective: For participants to understand transformational leadership, personal reflection and impact change*

Transformational leadership and personal reflection were the focus areas on the first day of the workshop. The session addressed the difference between both transactional and transformational leadership styles, and discussed broader concepts of leadership, with a focus on women's transformational leadership and the influence of gender identity.



Figure 2 Participants during a session on Day 1 Photo credit Rachel McCarthy/Vois Blong Mere

A transformational leader is able to identify motives of followers, and recognises that transactional forms of leadership can be useful but understands the need to go further to realise the higher needs of their community. Transformational leaders work towards changing organisational culture where

necessary. They display vision, team spirit and role modelling, they are able to develop strong emotional bonds with followers, and they motivate and go beyond self-interest.

Women's transformation leadership can be found everywhere. It exists in domestic, professional and public activities in which women are the pivotal decision makers. Participants were able to see that when women and men are engaged in transformational leadership they are committed to creating changes that radically alter existing practices and processes, and introduce new strategies and outcomes at the local, national, regional and global levels.

Participants were required to explore and discover their potential and power, to get to know each other in profound ways, in order to distinguish their profile, their power and potential contribution. Participants were asked to write down and share answers around their own qualities and talents, their influences and values as part of a self-evaluation exercise. Participants identified some challenges around self-evaluation and knowing one's own strengths and weaknesses. In participant evaluation forms for day one, participants identified this as a challenge, and something they would like future training to address in more detail.

Participants were able to view leadership critically as the presenters were clear that transactional leadership can not be disregarded and acknowledged that there is a link between the transactional and transformational types of leadership.

Participants were actively engaged in this discussion, and illustrated an understanding of transformational leadership by addressing the Solomon Islands situation. The participants identified the challenges in political leadership as affected by religious and/or biblical contexts, which are often used to justify 'big man' leaders who espouse transactional leadership tenets. A clear understanding of the subject matter was apparent, as participants were able to identify transformational and transactional forms of leadership.

#### How does Transformational Leadership relate to Gender?

The end of the session the facilitators introduced the idea of looking at leadership through the lens of gender. This process leads to the redefinition of gender and power relationships and the strengthening of leadership that is bold and innovative and builds on the skills of women and men in our society.

As an exercise, participants gave examples from Solomon Islands national parliament around motivations of leaders currently. Some identified challenges focussed on Men and Women needing to work together more, and using a gender lens to cover both men's and women's issues. One male participant noted that there needed to be more male champions to support women in parliament. Participants also voiced the need for women to push boundaries, 'be radical' and question the traditional power structures in place to create change.

## Day 2: Solomon Islands Political Economy, Gender Responsive Budgeting

*Objective: For participants to understand that inequality exists in power sharing and decision making and to acquire knowledge and skills for effective political and social communication*

Throughout the workshop, the facilitators stressed that an understanding of the political systems in place, both locally and nationally, were fundamental to a successful and comprehensive election strategy. Therefore a deeper understanding of the Solomon Islands Political Economy and an introduction to Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) is necessary.

### *Solomon Islands Political Economy*

A presentation was made on the Solomon Islands Political Economy that focused on the interrelationships between political and economic processes, the choices made between politics and the allocation of resources on a national level, and what influences enforce these decisions. Participants of the workshop and potential candidates were encouraged to understand these relationships and the processes so that they could be empowered to be effective agents of change.

The Solomon Islands follows the Westminster model (unicameral), however there is a weak political party system. The current FPTP electoral system, coupled with the weak party system usually forms coalition governments, which often have the characteristics of instability, poor decision making, motions of no confidence and 'grass hopper' politics.

Candidates were made aware of the changing demographic figures that relate to socio-economic factors. For example, the Solomon Islands Exclusive Economic Zone compared to land area is large in the Solomon Islands, and with a population of around 520,000 (with a high % being under 15 years old) there are implications for service delivery and job creation in the coming years. Literacy and primary enrolment rates have increased over the past few years, as has the HDI ranking and Real GDP per Capita. Logging is 55% of the export market but there are questions around the implications of impact on other resources, land use and benefits back to the community. GDP trends show a trajectory of growth over the last 10 years; however external shocks such as the GFC affected Real GDP growth in 2009.



Figure 3 Participants during group discussion Rachel McCarthy/ Vois Blong Mere

While this session provided an overview of the Solomon Island Political Economy as it currently stands, many participants noted in their evaluation that they desired an increased understanding of the underlying socio-economic factors that affect the Solomon Islands. They also wanted to understand how these issues could be leveraged effectively in their own constituencies into campaign platforms.



## *Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB)*

Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) is an important part of bringing a gender equality focus to a candidate's election campaign and to gender responsive governance. Budgets on the surface appear to be a gender neutral policy instruments. However they impact men and women differently because of the role that women and men play in society and how women and men interact with the formal economy. Budgets can also reinforce gender-based disadvantages faced by women unless special measures are taken.

During this session the facilitators focussed on the idea that GRB is an important part of accountability and transparency and acknowledging the governments existing commitments to such agreements as the Beijing Platform, ICPD, CEDAW. Gender policy is embedded in Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs but within SI Government; currently the resources committed to those policies are not adequate enough.

Participants were provided with the basic tools of how to go about GRB, with a focus on gender disaggregated data. The feedback on the session on GRB was generally positive, with participants saying that they clearly understood the importance of it, but wanted more information on strategies to educate their constituencies on GRB, discussions around national and provincial budgeting processes.

## **Day 3: Fundraising, Communication and Developing Campaign Messages**

### *Objective: To acquire knowledge and skills for effective political and social communication*

The purpose of the communication session was to create a basic understanding of key concepts of communications, effective communication and related challenges, with the ultimate aim of candidates being able to create a communication strategy.

Participants said that communication means passing on a verbal message, written communication, eye to eye contact, body language and signalling, telephone, radio, social media, theatre and drama. Participants also thought that communication requires an appropriate and responsive audience. There is a sender a receiver, message and feedback. It was identified that to develop communications strategy participants need to identify the following:

- Main messages;
- Why should people listen;
- Whose support you need;
- What messages will persuade them;
- How and when will you reach time; and
- Who are your best messengers.

The presentation focussed on the need for participants to define goals, identify and analyse target audiences, trying to identify what the audience will respond to and identifying language that is relevant to the audience. 'Messengers' are just as important as messages, and participants were

encouraged to find people within your constituency that can relate to and deliver your message throughout the constituency.

Participant feedback acknowledged that communication is important, but you need to be careful about the messages that one shares because there is always potential for messages or actions to be misconstrued, causing damage to your campaign and image. This conversation identifies the critical thinking skills of participants on the topic of communication.

### *Tips for an effective speech/ public speaking*

In this session, participants built on the previous general topics around communication and moved towards effective public speaking techniques and techniques to reduce anxiety. This presentation focussed on using your voice as a tool, non-verbal communication, preparation for a speech, interviewing and debating skills. Many participants have already been involved in public speaking.

Participants identified important things to note as gestures, stage presence, body language, pitch, tone and engagement with the audience. Physical appearance is also important –participants identified jewellery, colours, clothes, shoes, hair, and makeup as important. Discussion moved towards the importance of preparing our remarks before you start. When writing it is important to write like you speak, outline form, avoid technical terms, and avoid words that are hard to say. Participants agreed that preparation and practice is key to successful public speaking.

### *Developing a campaign message*

This presentation focussed on the importance of research and data collection about your electorate, your opponents, and trends of voting in the area. This way, candidates can effectively develop a strong campaign message to their constituency.

The presentation covered the importance of strategy when developing a campaign message. Being strategic means finding out how many votes you need to win an election, looking at eligible voters, and those likely to vote. The key is to remember that you cannot please everyone, and you don't need 100% of voters on your side. Be strategic and maximise your resources and efficiencies by focussing on the persuadable voters- not the ones you know that you have support from or your strongest opponents.

In groups, participants had a chance to develop their own campaign message, a skill that they would be able to utilise in the skills building session and within their own campaigns. While this exercise was effective, there were some problems differentiating messages from slogans, but in reporting back were able to gain insight from other participants and the presenter for clarification.

## Day 4: Advocacy, Campaigning and Coalition Building

*Objective: For participants to understand that inequality exists in power sharing and decision making; and to understand the electoral systems, campaign and election strategies*

### *Coalition Building*

The segment on Coalition building focused on the importance of candidates building power relationships – from the beginning of their campaign, through the election and also within government.

Participants identified the advantages of coalition building as having a support base, progressing issues, delegating, sharing resources, more voices, increased visibility, focus on strengths, shared resources, new skills, and diversity. They identified some of the challenges as being potential disagreement, instability, leadership, minority disadvantage, group dynamics, commitment, sharing credit, trust, and loss of control.

Participants discussed how to go about building a coalition, and identified the key components for a coalition to be a clear objective, compromise, reach all stakeholders, and to determine the most effective type of coalition for your purposes. Participants identified that it is important to determine which the best coalition partners for you are – work with male allies to broaden your base of support.

### *Advocacy Campaign – Advocacy, research and coalition building.*

This presentation focussed on how candidates can conduct advocacy campaigns, and the importance of them. Participants were asked initially, what their thoughts were on advocacy. Responses included awareness, talk, Information sharing, that advocacy is a planned process, deliberate and sustained effort to advance an agenda for change.

The presenters identified the steps in advocacy campaigning to be defining the issue, planning, community mobilisation and effective messaging.

Participants were asked to contextualise different kinds of advocacy campaigns within in the Solomon Islands. Examples included:

- Political parties give a constructive approach mainly by consulting and then develop policies from this
- Adversarial and constructive approaches come from teachers (Min Education) e.g. negotiation and agreement, but also move towards an adversarial approach through striking etc
- Senior Students also utilise adversarial and constructive approaches.
- Anti-corruption groups and peaceful protests take an adversarial approach



Participants were asked to list various advocacy tools (specific actions in one word) and how they would use them.

<i>Lobbying</i>	<i>Media</i>	<i>Social Media</i>	<i>Legal Activities</i>	<i>Research and documentation</i>
Petition	Advert	Facebook	Conventions	Audited reports
Letters	Radio	Twitter	Court action	Reading and analysis
Lunches and dinners	Newspaper	Youtube	Sue	Survey
Face to Face	Press statement or conference	FSII	Legal opinion	Polling
Public hearings	Letter to editor	Website		Best practice, lessons learnt (evaluation)
Round table	Documentary			Case studies

Strategic timing was identified as being important e.g. knowing electoral cycles, international meetings, policy development and visible issues. This is an ongoing part of campaigning.

In conclusion it was agreed by participants that anyone can be an advocator, but to ensure that your advocacy is heard you need to plan for it. There are basically two approaches to advocacy that can assist in developing an advocacy campaign.

## Day 4 & 5: Skills Building Session

*Objective: To increase women's political participation, and create competent, effective and committed women politicians.*

Days 4 and 5 saw participants use the skills and theories gained throughout the week to develop campaign plans for a candidate from a certain constituency. It also gave participants the opportunity to practice public speaking skills and receive constructive feedback from the facilitators and fellow participants. The three groups presented campaign plans on the following constituencies: GaoBogotu Constituency, Central Honiara Constituency, Vatu Constituency.

Each constituency had a different cultural make up – from central Honiara being very diverse in culture, and Vatu being remote and isolated. Feedback from participants was positive and constructive. Participants said the



Figure 4 Participants creating their presentations

exercise gave them a feeling of excitement, energy, and ideas. Some noted that listening for 3 days can be quite isolating, and the skills building session had brought things together. All groups expressed a feeling of confidence and pride in being able to present their plans to the wider audience. Facilitators gave constructive feedback, identifying research and strategy as areas for all groups to improve on. Participants also noted there was a lot of knowledge transfer, particularly from those participants who had run in elections before.



Figure 5 Participants during group work

## Recommendations to WISDM

Participants were invited to share recommendations with the organisations present. The following are the recommendations provided to WISDM:

1. Interpret WISDM plans and program for clear direction and translation e.g. WISDM approach;
2. Identify activities for specific purposes and focus on Women Candidates to 2014 National Elections;
3. Fundraising to roll out WISDM Coalition Plan for 2014 Elections;
4. Include more potential male candidates in future trainings;
5. WISDM Candidates Handbook; and
6. WISDM Civic Education Manual.

## Challenges and Lessons Learned

During the final session on day 5, the candidates identified the following challenges and needs going forward in their campaign preparation.

- Addressing the real obstacles during your campaign (gender issues). Participants asked for more information on how we can overcome these obstacles.
- Another workshop on presentation skills and public speaking.
- After the workshop, candidates acknowledged the need to do their own research on their specific constituency, then return for another workshop with this information.
- Importance of maintaining contact with one another via email, phone, network connections.
- Participants asked for further training and information on Gender issues.
- Facilitators, participants focus on the areas for female intending candidates, civic education,
- Participants raised the idea of tours to parliament, reading political documents, understanding processes and a mock Women's parliament.
- Further access to any form of assistance for women candidates such as fundraising assistance, campaign planning and strategy, as well as logistical assistance.
- Raising new leaders, creating mechanisms for young women to be more involved (WISDM).
- Identifying potential running candidates and keep a record.
- Look at information in the appropriation act from the Ministry of Finance.

## Next Steps

1. Report from the training will be sent to UN Women Regional Office in Fiji and the UN Country Office in Honiara, Solomon Islands.
2. Report of the training, lessons learnt and recommendation will be shared with the Women In Shared Decision Making (WISDM) Coalition to influence the WISDM Strategic Plan 2014 National General Elections.
3. For future training, identify participants from a list of confirmed candidates.
5. Review participant's feedback and prepare for future workshop, with content based on the needs of confirmed candidates.