

From research to policy and practice for gender equality in the Pacific

Regional Vanuatu

SHARE

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The Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development (*Pacific Women*) program's Advisory Group on Research (AGR) continues to be a mechanism to support critical gender research in the region.

The AGR is comprised of research academics and practitioners who have an interest in gender equality issues in the Pacific region. Members include representatives from academia, research institutions, development partners, civil society and regional organisations as well as individual research practitioners.

The group's third meeting was held in Vanuatu at the end of February 2019, with members discussing the implementation of the *Pacific Women* Research Strategy and upcoming research initiatives. The variety of experience and backgrounds of the AGR members enriches the group's discussions.



Pictured: left to right: Milika Sobey, Jennifer Butukoro, Meghan Chisholm, Leonie Whyte, Margaret Mishra, Yvonne Underhill-Sem, Heather Worth, Heidi Tyedmers, Nicole Haley, Linda Petersen, Kim Robertson and Betty Lovai.
Photo credit: *Pacific Women* Support Unit.

Heidi Tyedmers is an independent researcher on the AGR. She is the lead researcher and in-country research manager for the Natora Research Collective in Port Vila, Vanuatu, which she co-established.

Ms Tyedmers has engaged in research as both a practitioner and an academic. Her current work involves using research at the community level with a strong focus on access to justice, gender and culture and ending violence against women and girls. The talented ni-Vanuatu researchers that make up the Natora Research Collective have carried out various pieces of applied research and fieldwork in a variety of sectors.

As a member of the AGR, she values the 'collegiality of the many esteemed women colleagues in the group' and the 'collective interest in furthering feminist, Pacific-led research on women in the region'.

The AGR is a space which facilitates and encourages collaboration between feminist practitioners and academics, with the potential for meaningful partnerships.

Megan Chisholm is CARE's Country Director for Vanuatu and is one of two NGO representatives currently in the AGR. She works with partners in the Pacific to implement programs which aim to bring about gender equality and an end to violence against women and girls. Her work involves using research daily to advocate for improved policy and practice.

'In that way, NGOs are an important bridge between researchers and policy makers and a critical part of the equation if you want research to influence policy,' she said. According to Ms Chisholm, her involvement with the AGR provides an opportunity to 'make sure [her organisation's] practice is evidence-based'.

Although Ms Chisholm and Ms Tyedmers come from two different realms of gender research, what brings them together is a shared passion for addressing gender equality issues in the Pacific region.

As Ms Chisholm pointed out, 'quality research in a development context requires academic institutions and practitioners working together.'

She said that research institutions have 'expertise, experience and systems' to assure the quality of research, while NGOs and other development

practitioners '[bring] relationships with communities, contextual understanding and operational capacity'.

With the *Pacific Women* Research Strategy paving the way, members of the AGR will continue to guide the program's aim of supporting high-quality, locally-appropriate and sustainable research that addresses and informs responses to gender inequality in the Pacific region.

The meeting of the AGR was held from 27–28 February in Port Vila, Vanuatu.