Mobilising Young Women’s Leadership and Advocacy in Asia and the Pacific
Thank you to all the partners and individuals who contributed to the success of the Mobilising Young Women’s Advocacy and Leadership in Asia and Pacific, Phase II.

In particular we acknowledge the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), participating YWCA countries and supporting YWCA’s young women, Board members, resource persons and volunteers.
Mobilising Young Women’s Leadership and Advocacy in Asia and the Pacific
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The World YWCA empowers young women to become leaders in Asia and the Pacific

As one of the largest international women’s movements in the world with a global outreach to 25 million women and girls in 108 countries, the World YWCA is ideally positioned to make a strong and lasting impact on issues affecting women worldwide at both advocacy and programming level.

In 2011, the Mobilising Young Women’s Leadership and Advocacy in Asia and the Pacific project was initiated in Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa and the Solomon Islands. Nine projects and one sub-regional project have so far been funded to invest in young women’s leadership, and training events on young women’s leadership.

The key objective of this project has been to increase the capacity of young women to build and exercise leadership in their lives and communities and advocate for their rights. Special focus has been placed on promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), basic human rights, gender issues, ending violence against women and girls (VAW), and early and forced marriage.

As a result, over 3000 women, young women, adolescents and men have participated in peer education training, forums and workshops, or have been reached at both local and village level, thus acquiring knowledge and understanding on the core issues affecting women.

In addition, young women have been trained as peer educators for their communities and women and men provided with HIV/AIDS medical supplies, or birth control, as well as advice on women’s health and family planning. All the countries involved in the project participated in advocacy activities, in collaboration with other organisations, to raise awareness on SRHR, VAW and women’s rights. Two leadership trainings were held in Yangon, Myanmar and in the Solomon Islands in 2014 and 75 young women from across the region had the unique experience to participate in 16 regional and international conferences and trainings.

The World YWCA has become a recognised contributor worldwide in the field of women, young women and girls’ rights and leadership and will pursue and increase its participation and work in Asia and the Pacific in the years to come, with a special focus on integrating strong mentoring relationships and intergenerational leadership in all actions carried out by its Movement.

A summary of the core activities carried out by the various YWCAs of the region, as well as the key messages they wish to put forward are highlighted below, together with a selection of personal stories clearly illustrating the hands on experience obtained and the outcomes achieved through this project.
“With the continuous support and guidance from the YWCA family, I no longer feel shy to talk in front of people. The YWCA gave me the opportunity to conduct local level workshops which enhanced my facilitation skills.”
“At one training, a woman stood up crying. She said that she had never realised that not sending her daughter to school was wrong. She now understood that it was discrimination and that her daughter had the right to attend school. She hopes her daughter will be a doctor or a lawyer one day.”
Key Activities in Asia 2013 - 2015

140
- Young women trained as peer educators to deliver village/local level training on SRH and HIV, VAW, women’s rights (including CEDAW) and leadership skills.

2,800
- Participants trained through community-based training on SRH and HIV, women’s rights and HIV/AIDS.

1,900
- Young women and adolescent girls across the region acquired knowledge and information on SRH and HIV services, as well as on prevention strategies on VAW through village meetings and forums, mentoring training and adolescent programmes.
Young women received HIV treatment, access to contraceptives and information on Reproductive Health Services in India and in Sri Lanka.

All countries raised awareness on SRH and HIV, VAW and women’s rights through participation in advocacy activities in collaboration with other organisations. Over 10,000 posters, leaflets, bags distributed among local YWCAs, churches, schools and in public spaces; community street dramas were performed; radio shows and social media were reached.
YWCA OF BANGLADESH

Prevention of all forms of VAW against young women and girls

• Eradicate early and forced marriage.
• Reinforce legislation that sets 18 as the minimum legal age for marriage.
• Provide health, legal and counseling services and educational initiatives to ensure survivors are treated with dignity and respect.
• Reinforce and implement existing laws.
• Include VAW in school curriculum.
• Increase participation of men to end violence.
“Leadership is a virtue. One needs to practice and meditate on it. Leadership is attitude, behavior and activities. No one can be a good leader without patience and valuing other’s talents.”

Daize, 28, completed her Bachelor of Social Work and Masters of Business Administration. Since 2013, she has been working on the YWCA’s Mobilising Young Women’s Leadership and Advocacy Project, which, through workshops on violence prevention and advocacy, works to break the cycle of inequality experienced by women in Bangladesh.

Daize loves working with both youth groups and more senior members of her community. Through the project she faces many challenging and enjoyable opportunities, such as working in remote areas of Bangladesh and learning to facilitate trainings. She feels she is learning every day and increasing her confidence.

For Daize, the most important outcomes of the project are increasing young women’s knowledge of their rights, violence against women, gender equality and women’s empowerment; enabling them to enhance their facilitation skills and develop more confidence; as well as develop their networks.

Daize wants to see the project become sustainable in her community and see more young women have these opportunities and then become change makers in their communities and mentors for other young women. She also hopes that, with the contribution of the YWCA, Bangladesh will become free from violence against women.
“I didn’t have any leadership experience before I joined the YWCA, but after getting more knowledge and skills from both older and younger women around me, I felt I got better. Leading is an amazing experience.”

Young women are the champions of intergenerational leadership in the YWCA of Bangladesh, with young women like Jesy Mou Halder, Tania Daize and Sutopa Singha Toma leading the way.

“In our culture, they sometimes say the leader should be an elder, but age isn’t about leadership. It’s about who has the quality to lead,” says Sutopa, a young woman member of the YWCA of Bangladesh. “With intergenerational leadership, it’s about sharing the way we do things. There are always new learnings, different beliefs and different experiences. It can change your life.”

As a young woman, Sutopa feels loyalty towards supporting other young women. “Young women always like to change the way we do things so I find working with them very inspirational. I enjoy being a young women mentor, it’s an exciting experience.” Jesy Mou Holder also believes intergenerational leadership can change the lives of women. “Intergenerational leadership is important for the whole world. It’s very important in our country as sometimes our older people try to influence us, but if we can give them information and ideas as young women it can change things and we can share experiences.”

Sharing ideas and experiences is key to intergenerational leadership, agrees Tania Daize, a young women coordinator. “I always make sure I share my personal knowledge and skills with other women I work with. I can help give them with ideas and different leadership styles, and they can do the same for me.”
YWCA OF INDIA

End violence against women now!

• Eradicate early and forced marriage, dowry, caste based violence and other traditional harmful practices.
• Support services and remedies for survivors of violence.

Peace for all!

• Organise peace dialogues.
• Use cultural actions to spread the message of peace and peace dialogue.
• Engage young women and men in peace building processes.

Women in Power is the need of the Hour!

• Access information and services that enable young women to exercise their civil, political, social and cultural rights.
• Provide safe spaces for the participation and leadership of young women including vulnerable groups, in decisions that impact their lives.
Mobilising Young Women's Leadership and Advocacy in Asia and the Pacific
Mobilising Young Women’s Leadership and Advocacy in Asia and the Pacific

Working together to have an impact in India

There is not always much respect between generations, but it is important that we really listen to each other. It will take more than a minute to change, it’s going to happen step by step.”
“We need to hold hands and walk together. Sometimes it seems older women are resistant to change, but also younger women don’t see the value older women have in society, so we can only do this side by side. Let’s climb the steps together”.

Divya Vinod, the Young Women’s Secretary of the YWCA of India, is being mentored by Asha Ramesh, and the benefits are felt by both.

“Mentoring really supports the work we do with the YWCA,” says Divya. “Asha has a development background so her input improves the work we deliver and what we learn at the same time. We talk before trainings and hold meetings when we plan programmatic work together.”

Divya recognises that “there can be communication gaps at times”, however, one of the many highlights of the intergenerational relationship for her has been the experiences she has been exposed to since working with Asha.

Asha agrees that intergenerational leadership is a two-way street. “I have learnt so much from the younger women, including that I need to be prepared and open for fresh ideas. I’m expected, as the mentor, to guide and support, it has been a learning and an enriching journey.”

Zopuii, 24, earned her living breaking stones in a local quarry, or doing whatever other odd jobs she could find. One day a Project Coordinator from the YWCA of Aizawi visited her, counseled her and invited her to attend their Awareness Training Programme. “Until then, I was not aware of the need for treatment”, said Zopuii.

After the training, Zopuii realised the urgency of taking treatment and registered at the ART (antiretroviral therapy) centre, where she shared her story and experiences as did other participants. “God works in mysterious ways” said Zopuii, “after the training, members of the YWCA of Aizawl contributed a substantial amount of money to buy milk for my baby, as I could not breast feed him”.

Today, Zopuii is happy to announce that her health is still good and she no longer needs to take ART.
• Develop, review and effectively implement legislation policies in Myanmar to eliminate all forms of VAW by ensuring zero tolerance of violence.
• Eliminate gender inequalities to end VAW.
• End impunity for perpetrators by approving appropriate punishment.
• Support accessible, comprehensive, non-judgmental, confidential reproductive and legal services for violence survivors.
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Mobilising Young Women's Leadership and Advocacy in Asia and the Pacific
The people in my community look up to me as a leader now and tell me that the training has helped the community.
Wah Wah, 27, joined the Young Women Empowerment Training at Nant Huu Village, conducted by young woman trainers, where she learned about human trafficking, sexual and reproductive health and rights, advocacy, violence against women and CEDAW.

During the cold season, she found a young woman in the rubber plantation compound, who was drenched. After talking with the young woman, Wah Wah found out that she was a human trafficking survivor. She contacted the police through the phone numbers she received at the YWCA training. Wah Wah was thus able to successfully send the girl back to her parents.

Phyu Phyu Win, 22, joined the YWCA of Myanmar through a volunteer based home care programme. At a Training of Trainers (TOT) of the Young Women’s Leadership Training Institute in 2013, she became aware of the SRHR issues in her community, violence against women, advocacy and anti-trafficking, and since became a peer educator.

Phyu Phyu became a Young Women Champion and SRHR Champion and now conducts trainings in her community and is even invited by other volunteer organisations as a health educator for SRHR-related topics.

“Through this project, I became aware of the trafficking and SRH issues in my community. I also discovered my abilities in public speaking, conducting trainings and peer educating. I now have new experiences as a mentor for adolescent girls. I have learnt the barriers they face to access SRH services and know how to help them overcome these”.

“It’s just because I got the knowledge about anti-trafficking by joining this training that I could save a girl’s life. Now I have the confidence to be a change agent in my community”

“I will try my best to disseminate all the knowledge I gained as a peer educator and young woman champion”
Mobilising Young Women’s Leadership, Advocating for actions that protect the dignity and rights of young women and girls

- Invest in young women and girls.
- End violence against women and girls.
- Ensure meaningful participation of young women in decisions that impact their lives on national and community level.
- Ensure safe spaces for the participation and leadership of young women.

Mobilising young women’s leadership on SRHR

- Provide comprehensive and age appropriate sexuality education for all young people in and out of school.
- Offer equitable access to sexual and reproductive health services and rights including training of health care providers, to ensure evidence based, nonjudgmental and confidential service provision in rural and urban areas.
- Promote dialogue to change social norms attitudes which perpetuate child, early and forced marriage.
Mobilising Young Women’s Leadership and Advocacy in Asia and the Pacific

• Invest in young women and girls.
• End violence against women and girls.
• Ensure meaningful participation of young women in decisions that impact their lives on national and community level.
• Ensure safe spaces for the participation and leadership of young women.
Claiming basic human rights in Nepal

“I feel very blessed and proud that today I am able to do something for my community’s sisters. I would like thank to the YWCA for all their inspiration and guidance.”
Sushila, 28, a talented dancer of traditional Nepali dances, is studying English at University. After a training at the YWCA of Nepal, Sushila became a member and volunteer and, in 2012, she became the Young Women’s Coordinator of the Mobilising Young Women’s Leadership and Advocacy project.

Sushila likes working intergenerationally to empower young women and share experiences with other young women from different backgrounds, cultures and faiths. She recalls the story of a young woman from a remote area of the Kathmandu Valley who was at first afraid to speak with other women but by the end of the training became one of the most active participants, and a strong advocate for young women’s issues in her community.

For Sushila, the most important outcomes of the project, are young Nepali women’s awareness of human rights issues in their communities; they are better equipped to protect themselves against sexual and physical violence, have more confidence and networks across the country. She would like the project to offer more young women knowledge on sexual and reproductive health rights and hopes more women in Nepal will learn to speak out without fear, have access to education and, one day, have equality.

Chitwan, 30, was very happy to have participated in a seven-day Training of Trainers (TOT) in Kathmandu, on Advocacy on Leadership Development for Young Women, organised by Nepal Mahila Bishwasi Sangh (YWCA).

Usually only males in the society are able to appreciate their rights, however, the young women were now taught about this subject in depth and the training was a great experience. “Now, when working, I will be more sensitive to women’s rights. If I see any form of discrimination or women experiencing violence. I will do my best to stop this. I will always try to advocate on gender issues and sexual reproductive health rights. Many other women who were unaware of women’s rights and their own body also gained knowledge and self confidence at the training. I would like to once again thank Nepal Mahila Bishwasi Sangh, the YWCA organizer”.

“In my opinion leadership means capability to lead, initiative to do the work. Being bold, transformative and having courage.”

“After the training, I developed confidence to return to my village and share my skills on SRHR”
Meaningful participation of women in the political and peace process. Make UNSCR 1325 a reality

- Access information and services to exercise political, economic, social and cultural rights.
- Provide safe spaces for the participation and leadership of young women.

Enforce laws to end VAW against young women and girls

- Eliminate gender inequalities - eliminate VAW.
- Provide information on VAW and laws against women through mass media and street dramas.
- Eradicate early and forced marriage.
- Calling for comprehensive sexuality education in schools.
- Provide universal and equitable access to sexual and reproductive health services and rights, including age appropriate sex education.
- Equip young people with the knowledge, skills and values they need to determine and enjoy their sexuality.
Mobilising Young Women's Leadership and Advocacy in Asia and the Pacific
Sureka, 29, has a BA, a Human Resources Management and a Human Rights Diploma. She has been involved with the YWCA of Sri Lanka since she was 13, as a youth member and volunteer, and then as a youth coordinator for six years. Since June 2010, she is the Young Women’s Coordinator and manages the Mobilising Young Women’s Leadership and Advocacy project:
“I especially like working with the young women coordinators from other countries – we learn and work together, discuss, share feelings and solve problems together.”

Sureka sees many valuable outcomes from the project, including building a strong mentor network, raising young women’s awareness about issues in their community and giving them the tools to protect themselves.

Sureka recalls the story of one of the training participants who, before the training was very judgmental about widows, their role in society and their sexual well-being. After the training, she reflected on her limiting attitude and was grateful to the YWCA for helping her understand the importance of open, non-judgmental discussions on sexual and reproductive health and sexuality.

The project has allowed Sureka to learn about her own rights, and participate in international fora, including the International Council for ICPD. Coming from a traditional background where speaking about issues such as sexual and reproductive health were discouraged, she has now developed the confidence to speak openly and share her knowledge.
“All the experiences I have acquired as a mentor have helped make my life successful and enabled me to render a service, not only to my brothers and sisters, but also to the whole community”.

Randika runs a beauty parlour. She attended the SRHR training sessions while Chairperson of the Kurunegala YWCA branch.

After the training she shared what she had learnt with those who visited her beauty parlour, particularly prospective brides. She then became the National Mentor, only realising later that this implied educating the young women who came to her beauty parlour.

The mentoring concept has been so effective that even associations which rejected the SRHR training at its outset, later applied for the training. Randika’s activities have helped her win the trust of all the senior members of the Association and increase the number of women members in the association.

Randika believes that her experiences as a mentor will help her place the future of her daughter on a successful track.
YWCA OF THAILAND

key messages

Leadership

• Provide safe spaces for women and young women to develop their leadership skills.
• Call for intergenerational leadership to support young people to live their lives to their full potential.

Women’s Rights

• Retain gender equality as a primary goal in the new agenda with accelerated efforts and expanded resourcing to eliminate discrimination.
• Educate the young people of Thailand on their human rights.

Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

• Provide comprehensive and age appropriate sexuality education for all young people in and out of school.
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Mobilising Young Women’s Leadership and Advocacy in Asia and the Pacific
“In my opinion, leadership means people who dare to change, and a chance to share, learn together and move toward new change.”
“I attended the ‘YWCA Leader for Change’ training which builds the capacity of young women to confront the social and cultural attitudes that cause gender inequality.”

Aey, a young women leader from the YWCA of Nakornrachasima, works as a Pastor for their adolescent members.

When returning to her province, after attending the training, she brought together groups of adolescents in five churches and provided a more in-depth understanding of the relation between Christian ethics and human rights, including sex and reproductive health and gender equality.

72 women and young women from 10 churches participated in the YWCA Friendly Space training. Following this training, women and young women of each church planned activities to share and discuss with others and improve access to information and services in many communities.

“When I started as the Young Women’s Coordinator, Chantanee really helped me. We put a training together as a team. It wasn’t about an older woman telling me what to do, we developed the programme in partnership”

When MaMeaw Kunasawat, started a new job as the Young Women’s Coordinator of the YWCA of Thailand, she was concerned that she would have no support. “I was really new to the YWCA, I didn’t know much. I certainly didn’t know what a mentor was and what intergenerational leadership was either.”

However, it didn’t take long for an older woman mentor to come and guide her. Chantanee Molee, the YWCA of Thailand’s General Secretary, wanted MaMeaw to have a safe space in the organisation, as well as opportunities to develop her leadership.

“We took the time to get to know each other, learn from each other and work together effectively. The word of God helps us keep the relationship together.”

Ensuring that young women hold 25% of all YWCA Board positions is an ongoing priority, and although this will take a sustained effort, Chantanee is excited about the challenge.

The relationship between MaMeaw and Chantanee is one of mutual learning. “I have learnt so much from MaMeaw, including how to develop my IT skills. I always ask her to share her skills with me and she always has new ideas” admits Chantanee.
Key Activities in the Pacific

400

Young women participants in workshops, trainings and awareness raising events on young women’s rights, ending VAW and SRH and HIV, across the region.

Agreement between Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea and Samoa to scale up and implement the Solomon Islands’ Rise Up! Program across the region.

Development of action plans by Samoa, Solomon Island and Papua New Guinea at the Pacific Regional Training. Commitment to develop advocacy plans, undertake governance training at the next AGM and take steps to implement the Rise Up! Program. Increased participation and advocacy in regional forums, including the Third International Conference in Small Island Developing States Action Platform and The 12th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women, hosted by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) and the government of Cook Islands.

The YWCA’s of Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia partnered with Pacific Island YWCA’s to support institutional and programme capacity building.
End all forms of violence against women and girls

- NGOs, CBOs, Churches and the Government to collaborate and increase safe space for women and girls.
- Increase support services for survivors of violence (housing, counselling, legal and health).
- Educate to end harmful traditional practices including sorcery related killing.
- Fully implement the Family Protection Act and ensure police enforce the law.

Fulfillment of sexual and reproductive health rights

- Education in and out of schools.
- Access to Sexual and Reproductive health services.
- Provide universal and equitable access to sexual and reproductive health services and rights, including age appropriate sex education.
- Equip young people with the knowledge, skills and values they need to determine and enjoy their sexuality.
Mobilising Young Women's Leadership and Advocacy in Asia and the Pacific

- NGOs, CBOs, Churches and the Government to collaborate and increase safe space for women and girls.
- Increase support services for survivors of violence (housing, counselling, legal and health).
- Educate to end harmful traditional practices including sorcery-related killing.
- Fully implement the Family Protection Act and ensure police enforce the law.
“A leader is a person who has vision, is intelligent, creative, can hold a team together and can steer the team to a common goal.”
In recent years, the YWCA of Papua New Guinea has faced many challenges, but through commitment to intergenerational leadership and the energy of a youthful leadership team they are working toward transformative change both within the organisation and for the women of Papua New Guinea. Young women like Diane Kambanei, 30, the Secretary General and Serah Mek, 29, a key Board member, are leading the way.

Diane first became involved with the YWCA of Canberra as a human resources/payroll officer. She realised that the mission and values of the YWCA were aligned with her own, and she acquired the skills and experience to move into a leadership role within the association.

Serah became involved in the YWCA of Papua New Guinea when residing in the local YWCA hostel. Within months, she was nominated a hostel representative and her leadership potential became clear. She held several voluntary positions and was on the Board of the local association before becoming treasurer of the National YWCA of Papua New Guinea.

“I never thought I had the capability to run an organisation, but the YWCA has given me the tools to be General Secretary. The mentoring in this organisation is first class. The leaders support and empower young women and the mentors believe without a doubt that you are a leader. That adds something to your self-esteem.”

“I have always wanted to help my community but didn’t know how. Becoming a member of the YWCA was a dream come true. I always believed in women and girls’ rights. I knew that there was a way to tell the world about those rights. I am so excited to be a member of the YWCA because I know that millions of women around the world in the YWCA movement share the same experiences with me. I believe that together we can make the world a better place for us women and girls.”

Both Serah and Diane believe that intergenerational leadership is essential and that mentoring, and providing a platform for young women to be part of decision-making is the only way to address issues constructively.

Diane has big dreams for the YWCA of Papua New Guinea and is determined to work with the women around her from all generations to achieve this:

“I want the YWCA to be financially viable, I want it influencing policy on a government level, I want us educating women in the rural areas of PNG .I want good governance practices, I want policies and procedures revised. I want the constitution amended I want intergenerational leadership to be practiced, I want increased membership of young women. I want it to be the leading women’s organisation in Papua new Guinea.”
Young women leaders! Today and tomorrow

- Hear us, we have good ideas.
- Create safe spaces for us to lead with you.
- Involve us in decisions that are about us.
- Walk hand in hand with us when we are in leadership roles.
- Recognise we are leaders NOW, not just in the future.

Teenage Pregnancy Is NOT the End of the World

- Don’t use religion, culture and tradition as an excuse to shame and exclude us.
- Support us to reach our potential, independent of where life has taken us.
- Ensure we can access our HUMAN RIGHT to education.
- Help us to be the best mothers we can be!
‘I want a world where minorities have greater knowledge of and access to education, health services, human rights and freedom.’
- Cherelle, Samoa.
“I was given positions of responsibility, but I still didn’t realise I was a leader. It was being elected in the YWCA that made me realise this, because others saw leadership qualities in me that I had not recognised.”
Gloria, 24, works as a Financial Officer for the Samoan National Council for Early Childhood Education, an NGO focusing on preschool education. She recently started volunteering with the YWCA of Samoa, where she joined a group of motivated young women working on rebuilding the association, which for several years has remained dormant.

Her involvement with the YWCA is an intergenerational one: “My Sunday school teacher, who is my mentor, encouraged me to join the YWCA of Samoa. She supported me to attend the Pacific Regional Training in the Solomon Islands in 2014. Ever since I met her, she has encouraged and advised me.”

Gloria’s vision for the YWCA of Samoa is to see it grow into a vital women’s organisation which will influence change for women in Samoa, including improving women’s representation in parliament and stopping violence against women.

“We have the support of some of the business community, as well as our families. We need older women in Samoa who used to be part of the YWCA of Samoa to guide and support us during this transition phase.”

Since joining the YWCA, Gloria has gained confidence to speak in public and voice her ideas on how to improve the YWCA of Samoa. One of her proudest achievements was writing a YWCA newsletter about the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in Samoa in 2014. The newsletter was published on the UN website and helped raise the profile of the fledgling YWCA movement in Samoa.

“I was proud to have the opportunity to say how it feels to be a YWCA member and hopefully inspire others to join the organisation.”

Gloria felt privileged to attend the Pacific Regional Training in November 2014: “I have been inspired by so many things, especially the way young and older people work together and share ideas in the YWCA of the Solomon Islands. We don’t see that as much in our community”.

Gloria was also impressed by the YWCA of the Solomon Islands’ Rise Up! Young Women’s Leadership Programme. She would like the YWCA of Samoa to develop its own such programme.
YWC A OF SOLOMON ISLANDS

**Fulfillment of Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights**
- Advocate for actions that protect the dignity and rights of young women and girls.
- Provide comprehensive and age appropriate sexuality education for young people in and out of school.
- Universal and equitable access to sexual and reproductive health services and rights, including training of healthcare providers to ensure evidence based, non-judgmental and confident service provision.

**Every Human Being is Created in the Image Of God**
- Advocate for the promotion and full implementation of the family protections bill.
- Advocate for an increase of services for survivors of violence.
- Prevent all forms of violence against women, young women and girls including the most vulnerable (PWD), especially ending impunity for perpetrators.

**The YWCA of the Solomon Islands Supports Mobilising Young Women in All Aspects of Life**
- Encourage that 25% of young women are elected into leadership positions.
- Ensure Young Women Programmes are designed and led by young women.
Mobilising Young Women’s Leadership and Advocacy in Asia and the Pacific

• Advocate for actions that protect the dignity and rights of young women and girls.

• Provide comprehensive and age appropriate sexuality education for young people in and out of school.

• Universal and equitable access to sexual and reproductive health services and rights, including training of healthcare providers to ensure evidence based, non-judgmental and confident service provision.

• Advocate for the promotion and full implementation of the family protections bill.

• Advocate for an increase of services for survivors of violence.

• Prevent all forms of violence against women, young women and girls including the most vulnerable (PWD), especially ending impunity for perpetrators.

“The future I want is a world free from all forms of violence against women and girls.”

-Nohseh, Solomon Islands
Margaret, 32, a Bachelor in Accounting, became involved with the YWCA of the Solomon Islands when she moved into the YWCA hostel. Seeing potential for personal growth, she joined the fundraising and religious committee in the hostel. In 2010, she was elected a Board member representing the hostel.

Her life has since changed and she now has the confidence and skills to develop other important areas of her life. In 2012, she even became the Lauru United Church Youth Group President.

“What I have learned at the YWCA has helped me design programmes for the church group. Being on the YWCA Board has taught me how to run meetings with an agenda and Board papers.

Margaret is proud of what she brings to the YWCA. Her full time job as Project Accountant for the Ministry of Infrastructure on the Domestic Maritime Support Program has taught her skills she is able to share. She has helped streamline the financial processes of the YWCA, and together with her mentor, Afu-Billy, has worked on developing a new finance policy for the organisation.

“I now see the potential I have as a leader. I have gained confidence and skills in public speaking.”
“My relationship with Afu is very important to me. She is one of my mentors. We work together and understand each other. She always listens to me. It helps that we think similarly about things.”

“Sometimes I have doubts but I can always get advice... I always feel my input is valued and I am given feedback and ideas on how to handle an issue.”

In 2009, Alice Iwebu Kale became a young General Secretary of the YWCA of the Solomon Islands. She was concerned about meeting the expectations of the role, but found support from the more senior women on the YWCA Board.

One of Alice’s key mentors was Afu-Billy: “Afu is an inspiration to many young women in the YWCA. She encourages younger women. She is involved with many other organisations and has much knowledge to share.”

Afu joined the YWCA in 1978 when she was a cadet reporter for the Solomon Islands Government Information Service. Her long association with the Pacific women’s sector, including the National Council for Women, and her various roles promoting and defending human rights are an inspiration to many young women in the Solomon Islands.

Afu first realised that violence against women was a crime when attending an Asia Pacific Young Women’s Leadership event in Fiji as the Youth Representative for the YWCA of the Solomon Islands.

“I heard a young woman from the Philippines speak about violence against women. It blew me away! I had never realised that a man beating his wife was bad.” For Afu, intergenerational leadership means being a constant source of support, advice and encouragement to younger women.

The support of mentors has enabled Alice to thrive as General Secretary, a Pacific representative on the World YWCA Board, and National Board member for the YWCA of the Solomon Islands.

Afu and Alice believe intergenerational leadership is critical for the YWCA of the Solomon Islands, but Alice also has bigger plans: “I would like to see us go beyond the YWCA and share the idea of intergenerational leadership with the wider community, as it would have a great impact for the Solomon Islands.”
Shared Leadership Statement

Asia and the Pacific

Intergenerational approaches to Bold and Transformative Leadership

Shared Leadership is…


We the women of the YWCAs of Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Nepal, PNG, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, and Thailand affirm our commitment to shared and intergenerational leadership as a vital way to achieve bold and transformative leadership in our YWCAs and our communities.

We recall that the purpose of the World YWCA is to develop the leadership and collective power of women and girls around the world to achieve justice, peace, health, human dignity, freedom and a sustainable environment for all people.

The YWCA is an organisation with a long history, and from our earliest days we have worked across generations with a focus on serving and building the leadership of young women, anchored by the experience and commitment of older women.
Since the young women’s project began in 2012 our YWCAs have seen a period of intense investment in the recruitment and development of young women advocates and leaders. This is vital to the sustainability of our YWCAs and our ability to serve the young women and girls of our communities.

Opportunities and Challenges
The call to increase shared leadership across the generations in our movement is not new. It was noted in the report of the General Secretary to the first World Council in 1898, and has been the subject of on-going resolution and programme work at local, national and international levels since.

As we know from our work in communities having a right to civic participation is one thing, it is another to ensure that these rights are recognised, known, and claimed. In order to realise our goal of shared and intergenerational leadership our YWCAs need to ensure that our organisational cultures and ways of working adapt to the changes and challenges each new generation faces.

This requires each of us to develop intergenerational competencies and recognise that this is a life-long process.

We need to recognise that this is often difficult work. Some women fear that in sharing leadership they are giving up leadership and that their contribution to the organisation is not respected. Some women feel they are not being given the opportunities they need to develop and demonstrate their leadership.

Learning to share leadership requires us to move beyond the idea of leadership as being a quality of individuals and to learn to practice leadership as a collective and learning process. We are aiming to grow leader-full organisations, rather than to replace one set of leaders with another.

We believe these new practices will be built on:
• respectful and empowering dialogues
• genuine and sincere engagement that moves beyond tokenism
• recognising who has power and access to opportunities and ensuring that these are shared
• engaging in intergenerational dialogues on critical issues.

What should we do?
The solution to this challenge is collective. Each of us must commit to learning the skills and practices to share leadership across the generations.

We commit to:
• Developing strategies within our own YWCAs to meet the World YWCA’s requirement that 25% of our national Boards be young women, and to adopt similar internal quotas.
• Continuing to develop the mentoring model as a way of building leadership, relationships and sharing history across generations.
• Developing our YWCAs as safe spaces where we can develop intergenerational competencies through discussions and debates across the generations.
• Ongoing investment in the recruitment and development of each new generation to ensure a critical mass of women across each generation.
As a doctor, I know first hand what happens to young women when they get pregnant and the family and the village try to chase them out of the community. I feel we must do something about that. I am passionate about doing something for these young women.
Leadership is not just a position, but an opportunity not only to exercise leadership skills but also to empower others to become leaders.