

FIGHTING FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN THE PACIFIC

TERMS of REFERENCE

Background

Climate change has the potential to undermine people's right to life, security, food, water, health, shelter and culture. Most people in the Pacific live within 1.5 kilometres of the sea and therefore few people will not be affected by the impact of climate change. Natural disasters in the region mean that the people of the Pacific already face threats to human security, livelihoods and their ability to claim their human rights which will be exacerbated by rising sea levels.

Since women in the developing world are largely responsible for producing and providing food for their families, the impact of climate change means that women, who constitute the majority of poor people in the Pacific, will be most adversely affected. Women depend more than men on the ecosystems that are threatened by climate change, but they lack access to and control over natural resources, technologies and credit. ActionAid's research shows that as a result, women are more vulnerable than men to seasonal and episodic weather and to natural disasters resulting from climate change.¹

ActionAid is proposing a study that will:

1. Assess the capacity of women of the Pacific to claim their human rights in the face of climate change. The importance of land to culture and livelihoods in the Pacific needs to be factored in assessing the rights at stake in the region
2. Assess the possibilities for ActionAid to become more engaged with the women of the Pacific to enhance empowerment, solidarity and political action.

Approach

The study will be undertaken by ActionAid Australia, ActionAid International and the Masters of Human Rights and Democratisation (Asia Pacific) at the University of Sydney. The study will be overseen by a Steering Committee that will include representatives from AAA/AAI/Sydney University. The study will employ a Project Manager who will design the research outline and research plan, lead the research manage the outputs and the budget and prepare the final research paper.

When the Project Manager is recruited the terms of reference will be enhanced and finalised through a series of consultations. A literature review will then be undertaken to sharpen the focus of the study, highlight gaps in research and practice in the areas of women's rights, develop research questions and identify countries to be studied. A research methodology will be developed to address the research questions.

The project will last 12 months and will commence in November 2010 and conclude in October 2011.

¹ ActionAid. We Know What We Need: South Asian Women Speak out on Climate Change Adaptation. 2007