



Dynamic, imperfect, astute: Informed policy and programming through Pacific Women's research agenda

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KEY POINTS

- “Research-informed policy making is a **dynamic and imprecise** process in the Pacific”
(Underhill-Sem et al 2014)
- **Research findings percolate into policy-making** in many diverse and sophisticated ways
- Need **good quality research**, beginning with a methodology that recognizes lived experience

OUTLINE

- Examples of **research** that have led to change, strengthened policies and policy development
- **Dynamic, imperfect, astute ??**
- **Advisory Research Group** of Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development
- Examples of **research** shaped by AGR

Dynamic, Imperfect, Astute

- **Dynamic:**

Gender inequality in the Pacific is not an endearing feature of the region but it is an enduring one, and in many places it is worsening: consider huge gender pay gaps, high rates of gender based violence and low representation of women in decision-making

- **Imperfect – evidence ‘bases’ or ‘biases’**

‘Evidence’ in policy work is based on the notion of impartial research. But ‘policy spaces’ - by their very nature - are political charged. Any information - research or otherwise - that enters these spaces are understood, translated and interpreted in many and different ways.

- **Astute – deep engagement through lived experiences of research**

Insights from lived experience is being recognised for its value. Narrative techniques in research, storying and creative practices enhance insights into the nuanced complexities of life. Standard research methods combined with lived experience produces valuable insights. It is this deep engagement that provides the insights worth noting for policy development

Advisory Research Group of Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development

- Comprises academics, independent researchers, civil society and development partners
- Objective 1. To support gender research that is considered, contextually relevant and informs PW programming and
- Objective 2 Advance quality, commitment to & resourcing of gender research in Pacific region

Key events that led to AGR

- 2015: panel discussion for PG course on gender & development at USP
- Publication on *Gender Research in the Pacific: Beginnings 2004-2014*
- 2016: Pacific Gender Research Workshop, USP

Achievements of AGR

- Provided advice to PWSU on:
- Research proposals that are relevant but require contextualization and sensitivities considered
- Developed process of ensuring research ethics
- Supported development of gender research portal
- Gender research capacity building options

SOME EXAMPLES OF RESEARCH

- Adolescent unplanned pregnancy in the Pacific
- Pacific Girl Regional Learning Network
- Sexual harassment

CONCLUSION

- Knowledge building in the Pacific that addresses gender inequality requires:
- Long standing commitment to social justice
- Respectful careful networking that generates ethical and meaningful partnerships
- Recognition of diverse range of research approaches and methodologies and recognizes value of lived experience