PD-ANV-873
IAN 50816
62

WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT DOCUMENTATION PROJECT:

THE FOUNDATION FOR THE PEOPLES OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC

LORRAINE SEXTON, CONSULTANT

PACT DOCUMENTATION PROJECT, NOVEMBER, 1985

001354
005093
S

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
I.	Introduction	1
II.	Method	2
III.	Women's Groups in the South Pacific	4
IV.	FSP's Programs in Tonga, Solomon Islands, and Kiribati	7
	A. Tonga Village Women's Development Program (VWDP)	7
	B. Solomon Islands Women's Interest Program (WIP)	9
	C. Kiribati National Women's Federation (AMAK)	11
V.	FSP's Approach to Women in Development	12
VI.	Institution - Building and Community Development	15
VII.	Grant Programs and Policies	23
	A. Tonga Village Women's Development Program (VWDP)	25
	B. Solomon Islands Women's Interest Program (WIP)	27
	C. Kiribati National Women's Federation (AMAK)	32
VIII.	Grants or Loans	36
IX.	Group Life Cycles	38
X.	Summary and Recommendations	40
XI.	Notes	47
XII.	References Cited	48

I. INTRODUCTION

The Foundation for the Peoples of the South Pacific employs a similar strategy in its women in development programs in the three countries discussed in this report: Tonga, Solomon Islands, and Kiribati (Map 1). In each country FSP works through existing rural women's organizations to encourage women's participation in community development and to assist women's groups to carry out projects to generate income or make physical improvements to the village or to members' houses.

FSP requested a PACT Documentation Fund grant to analyze several features of these programs related to promoting income-generation by women. First, and fundamentally, FSP decided to look at its basic strategy of assisting women's clubs to start income-generating projects. In contrast to its women's programs, FSP has not generally organized men's groups. Rather, FSP has directly assisted individual men with entreprenerial activities. The consequences and implications of these different strategies for working with women and men are major concerns of this report. Second, FSP wanted to consider the relative merits of making grants or loans to women's groups. At present FSP provides small matching grants of materials to groups that undertake construction projects or start small enterprises. Third, FSP wanted to examine the life cycle of women's groups because it appeared that groups are likely to cease functioning after raising funds or operating an income- generating project long enough to fulfill a

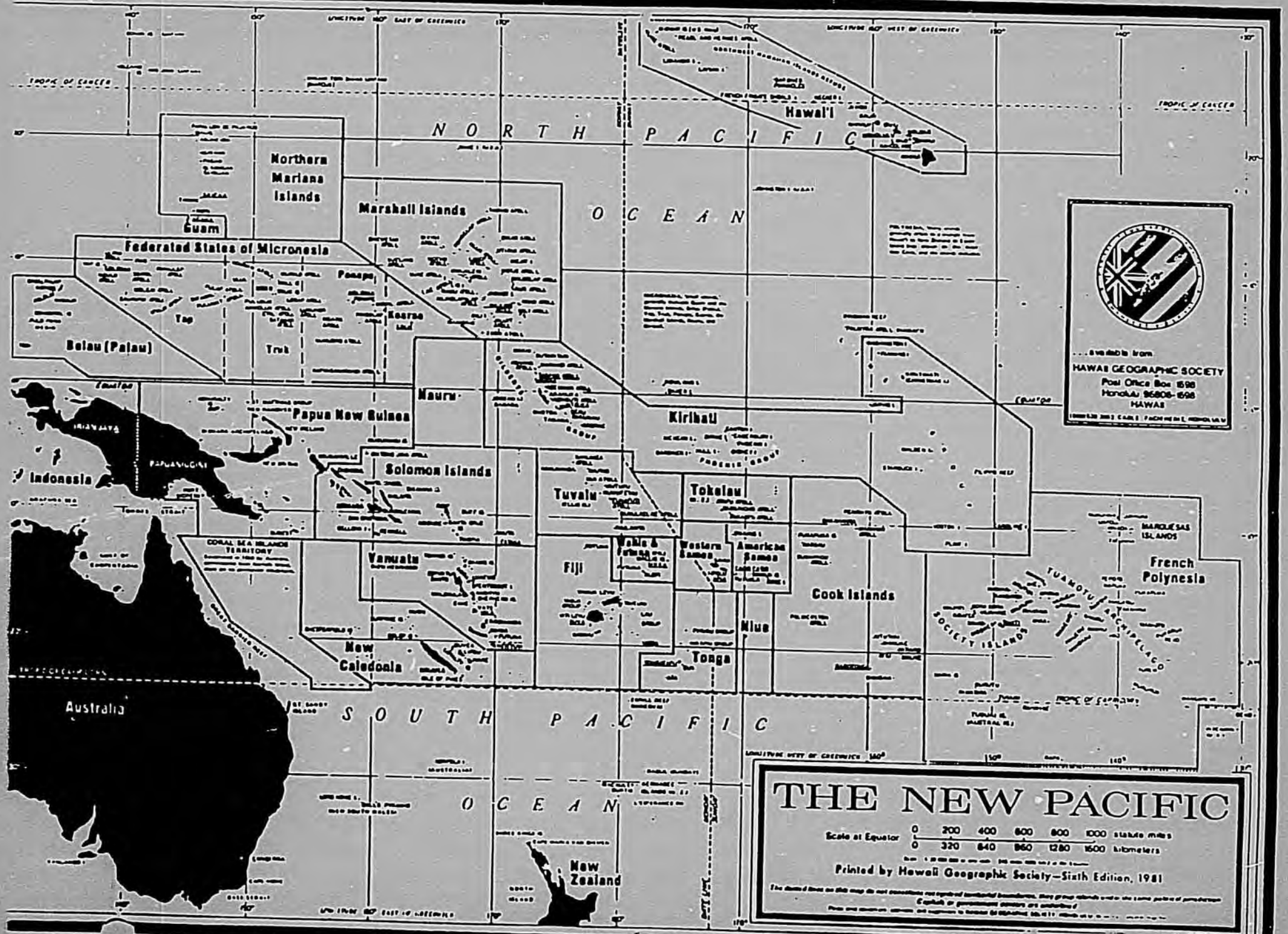
particular goal. FSP wanted to decide whether (and how, if appropriate) to promote sustained efforts by women's groups.

As work began on the Documentation Project it quickly became clear that promoting women's income-generating projects was only one, albeit an important, component of the programs. For example, virtually all FSP-assisted women's groups in Tonga engage in a series of construction projects to improve their homes, but few of these construction efforts are funded by income- generating projects. Moreover, building the community development capacity of local women's groups is a major concern of FSP's program in each country. For these reasons, and because successful projects of any type can be carried out only by groups that have learned to work together, the scope of the Documentation Project was widened to include analysis of the programs' institution-building functions and of all types of projects conducted by women's groups.

II. METHOD

As FSP's consultant for the Documentation Project I spent one week in FSP's New York office and five and one-half weeks in the field collecting information about women's programs in Tonga, Solomon Islands, and Kiribati. In New York I reviewed grant proposals, progress reports, and other program documents. I also talked extensively with FSP staff members about FSP's program in each country.

In Tonga, Solomon Islands, and Kiribati I travelled as widely as possible, given time and logistical constraints on transport among the islands. In each country I visited women's


THE NEW PACIFIC
Scale at Equator
0 200 400 600 800 1000 statute miles
0 320 640 960 1280 1600 kilometers
Printed by Hawaii Geographic Society—Sixth Edition, 1981
...available from
HAWAII GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY
Post Office Box 1698
Honolulu 96806-1698
HAWAII
NORTH PACIFIC OCEAN
SOUTH PACIFIC OCEAN
Hawai'i
Northern Mariana Islands
Guam
Marshall Islands
Federated States of Micronesia
Ponape
Kosrae
Yap
Truk
Belau (Palau)
Nauru
Papua New Guinea
Kiribati
Indonesia
Solomon Islands
Tuvalu
Tokelau
Vanuatu
Fiji
Wallis & Futuna
Western Samoa
American Samoa
Cook Islands
Niue
Tonga
New Caledonia
French Polynesia
MARQUESAS ISLANDS
TUAMOTU ARCHIPELAGO
SOCIETY ISLANDS
Australia
New Zealand
CORAL SEA ISLANDS TERRITORY
TROPIC OF CANCER
TROPIC OF CAPRICORN
EQUATOR
LONGITUDE 180° EAST OF GREENWICH
LONGITUDE 180° WEST OF GREENWICH
DATE LINE

clubs on the main island, where FSP also has its country headquarters, and on an outer island (Table 1). I met with groups of village women and informally interviewed as many beneficiaries as possible. It was not feasible to try to construct anything approaching a representative sample of beneficiaries to be interviewed during the relatively brief time spent in each country. FSP staff in each country spent time with me in structured interviews and gave me full access to files. However, there is a need for more detailed documentation on the outcome of of women's group projects that received grants in Solomon Islands and Kiribati in order to analyze the financial impact of the grants and to evaluate the success of the projects.

Table 1

Island Field Visits

Country	Main Island	Outer Island
Tonga	Tongatapu	Vava'u
Solomon Islands	Guadalcanal	Malaita
Kiribati	Tarawa	Abemama

In each country I also had meetings with community leaders, government officials in relevant ministries, and staff of other PVO's to discuss their perspectives on women's participation in development and on FSP's programs in particular.

While reading this analysis of FSP's women's programs in Tonga, Solomon Islands, and Kiribati, the reader should keep in

mind certain characteristics of these countries that have major implications for the development process (Table 2). Like most South Pacific countries, Tonga, Solomon Islands, and Kiribati are island nations with numerous small land masses distributed over large areas of ocean. It is difficult to achieve an economy of scale (and to work on community development) with small populations distributed over far-flung islands. Of the three countries, only Solomon Islands has mineral and timber resources. Each country sells agricultural products, mostly copra, on the world market and has untapped fishing resources. These South Pacific nations, like their neighbors, have limited potential for economic growth.

III. WOMEN'S GROUPS IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC

FSP's work with women's groups in Tonga, Solomon Islands, and Kiribati began in the late 1970's when there was renewed international interest in women's organizations as structures through which women could participate equitably in development. FSP started working with the Village Women's Development Program (VWDP) in Tonga in 1978, established its Solomon Islands Women's Interest Program (WIP) in 1979, and began assistance to the Kiribati National Women's Federation (AMAK) at the end of 1981.

However, there is a long history of women's groups in the South Pacific.[1] They date to the turn of the century when Christian missionaries established women's groups for Bible study, church auxiliary work, and training in domestic roles that were deemed appropriate by missionaries. The first groups were led by wives of overseas missionaries. South Pacific Islands

Table 2

Basic Statistics for Tonga, Solomon Islands and Kiribati[a]

Feature	Tonga	Solomon Islands	Kiribati
Number of Islands	36 inhabited islands in three main groups	double chain of six large and numerous islands	33 islands in three groups
Land Area	699 sq.km.	28,530 sq.km.	690 sq.km.
Sea Area	700,000 sq.km.	1,340,000 sq.km.	3,550,000 sq.km.
Population estimate (Mid-1980's)	97,400	225,000 sq.km.	58,600 sq.km.
Population density per sq.km.	139 (1976)	8 (1978)	85 (1978)
Gross Domestic Product per capita	$A395	$A549	$A354
Annual population growth (1970-1980)	1.5%	3.3%	1.7%
Estimated percentage population growth (1970-1980)	16.0%	38.0%	19.0%
Percentage population with no education	0.0%	49.0%	5.0%
Percentage population with primary education	50.0%	46.0%	83.0%

[a]Source: South Pacific Commission. South Pacific Economics: 1980. Noumea, 1982.

pastors' wives soon took on the responsibility for leading groups in several countries. The process of organizing church women's clubs in the South Pacific took place over the first half of this century as missionaries established themselves throughout the region. While the first Protestant church women's groups in Kiribati were established by 1896, similar groups were started much later in Solomon Islands, where they appear in the 1930's. Each denomination formed national women's organizations that at least nominally united all the local women's clubs. Interdenominational rivalries persist among women's groups in some South Pacific countries. For example, on the national level AMAK continues to struggle with entrenched competition between Roman Catholic and Kiribati Protestant women's groups for resources and prestige.

Colonial governments also supported the establishment of women's programs and organizations to improve women's status. The first example of this type of government intervention occurred in the 1920's in Samoa when village women's health committees were formed to promote public health. The efforts of most other South Pacific governments date to the 1950's and 1960's.[2] The national women's organization started by the late Queen Salote of Tonga in 1955, called Langafanua, exemplifies the dominant ideology and program philosophy of Pacific women's organizations at that time. Langafanua focused on women's domestic roles, particularly the role of mother. Women were encouraged to work through groups in each village to improve their cooking, sewing, home gardening, and handicraft production. (Handicraft

production, it should be noted, is not done solely for home use. Weaving mats and making tapa cloth are highly valued and prestigious female activities in Tonga because these objects are exchanged at important ceremonial transactions.)

In the South Pacific, nationwide organizations of church and/or government sponsored women's clubs were at least nominally in place in most countries when the UN Decade for Women drew attention to the impact of development on women. When donors made funds available to support women's self-help organizations, these existing structures were logical and attractive candidates for assistance. It appeared to be more efficient to help existing organizations than to build new ones. USAID OperationalProgram Grants are the source of most funds for FSP's programs that support institution-building through existing women's organizations in Tonga, Solomon Islands, and Kiribati.

There are benefits and drawbacks to working through existing women's organizations. Such organizations have credibilty or at least visibility in their countries and they usually have indigenous personnel. Working within an established organization also avoids problems that result from creating an alternative organization. Two organizations may be perceived as competing with each other. Their co-existence may be confusing to potential beneficiaries who do not understand the differences between them and can also result in women overcommitting their time and efforts.

However, existing organizations may have histories that are incompatible with development goals. In the South Pacific,

working with established church women's organizations poses a problem: How can the concerns of church women's groups, particularly if they are dedicated to reinforcing women's traditional domestic roles (or Westeners' conceptions of appropriate domestic roles for women), be transformed to encompass women's participation in development? Church and government sponsored women's organizations have been fundamentally conservative in that they have concentrated on women's domestic roles and have not addressed issues related to empowering women to take more active roles in the community. As discussed below, FSP's women in development programs show evidence of both the benefits and costs of working within existing institutions.

IV. FSP'S PROGRAMS IN TONGA, SOLOMON ISLANDS, AND KIRIBATI

FSP's women's programs in each country share basic goals, but each program has its particular history and is related to FSP in a slightly different way that sets parameters to the kind of assistance that FSP can provide. In this section I describe each program, make some basic comparisons among the programs, and discuss FSP's structural relationship to women's groups in each country.

A. TONGA VILLAGE WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (VWDP)

The Tonga Village Women's Development Program (VWDP) was started in 1974 by Tongan Roman Catholic sisters who had been relieved of their teaching duties when church schools were integrated into the kingdom's educational system. There was a

precedent for Catholic sisters' working with women's groups because they had previously assisted village women's groups that belonged to Langafanua, the defunct national organization established by the late Queen. The sisters work with small groups of up to ten women to improve village hygiene and sanitation, to help women improve their houses, and to strengthen women's roles in the family and community. Ten is considered the maximum workable membership for a group. New groups are formed in a village as more women become interested in the program. The several groups in one village often hold joint meetings when the extension worker visits.

There are currently about 400 women's groups in ninety-seven villages in Tonga. There are eight full-time and seven part-time extension workers, four of whom are Catholic sisters and one of whom is a Peace Corps volunteer. The explicit philosophy of the program is that women who are secure in their domestic roles create happy families that form the basis for sound Tongan society. The sisters originally worked only with Catholic women, but women from the other major denominations in Tonga became interested in the program and the sisters began working with women irrespective of their religious affiliation. In 1978 FSP was asked to provide technical and administrative assistance to the VWDP in order to broaden the base of beneficiaries and to help the sisters turn over the organization and administration of the program to village women.

With FSP involvement and USAID funds, the VWDP began to give small grants to groups to help make physical improvements in

members' homes and villages. Construction of flush toilets, wash-rooms, kitchens and concrete water tanks are the major projects undertaken by women's groups in Tonga. Physical improvements are a high priority among Tongans for several reasons. First, Tongans want to build houses that can withstand destructive tropical storms that occasionally batter the islands. Second, tin-roofed houses provide surfaces for collecting water that can be stored in tanks to increase the water supply on drought-prone islands. Third, many Tongans are well-educated and well-travelled and they aspire to the high living standards of countries in which they have worked or visited.

B. SOLOMON ISLAND WOMEN'S INTEREST PROGRAM (WIP)

FSP established the Solomon Islands Women's Interest Program (WIP) in 1979 in collaboration with the Solomon Islands Government. At that point WIP was basically an extension of the government's Women's Interest Section. During the first Operational Program Grant the WIP distributed 200 sewing machines to women's groups and endeavored to train women to sew and to repair machines. The small staff found it impossible to train so many women's groups adequately during the funding period.

FSP Solomon Islands decided to restructure and broaden the WIP. Women's interest workers assist women's groups to carry out community projects or small income-generating projects and they conduct village workshops on topics such as nutrition, health, family planning, appropriate technology, and gardening. The redefined WIP still parallels the government's Women's Interest

Section, which has a small number of women's outreach workers and FSP often draws on government personnel from several departments to be resource people for workshops. However, the FSP staff is larger than the governments Women's Interest Section staff and FSP is perceived as having more resources to use for workshops.

Although the WIP has helped to establish groups, WIP works mainly through existing clubs that are affiliated with a particular church or were organized by the government's women's interest workers. FSP-assisted groups may meet for joint workshops but the groups do not interact as regularly as do the Tonga VWDP groups, nor are they organized into a national level organizations like AMAK. FSP works directly with each group, not with the churches' national women's organizations, although FSP maintains cordial relations with the latter organizations. Most village women's groups are registered with the government, so that the Women's Interest Section can gauge the level of women's group action in the country and know where services are needed. There are about 300 registered women's groups in Solomon Islands; FSP has five full-time and five part-time women's interest workers to assist them.

Although WIP has helped groups start numerous income-generating projects in the last three years, the workshops are the core of WIP and the means through which FSP Solomon Islands has attempted to organize villages for community development.

C. KIRIBATI NATIONAL WOMEN'S FEDERATION (AMAK)

The Kiribati National Women's Federation (Aia Maea Ainen Kiribati or AMAK) was established by the Community Affairs Division of the Ministry of Health and Community Services to be an umbrella organization for village level women's groups. The Kiribati Protestant Church and the Roman Catholic Church had established separate women's church groups early in the missionization of Kiribati. In an effort to get women from both denominations to work together, the government established non-sectarian Homemaker Clubs for village women in 1976 and hired women extension workers to assist the groups. Although women joined the Homemaker Clubs, they also maintained membership in church clubs and the establishment of the Homemaker Clubs did not reconcile the conflicts between the denominational organizations. The government established AMAK under its auspices to become an independent national umbrella body to unite Catholic, Protestant, and Homemaker Clubs at the national policy and planning level and to provide technical assistance to all women's clubs in the country. FSP was asked by the government to aid AMAK in its transition to independence from the government in 1982 and in the expansion of activities to include income-generating projects.

The seven AMAK extension workers conduct one to three-day training sessions as they visit the women's clubs and they assist groups that want to establish projects. There are about 180 women's clubs in Kiribati, but, as noted above, many women belong to two clubs, the village Homemaker Club and their church club.

About sixty-five grants have been awarded since the grant program started in 1983.

AMAK also devotes much of its personnel resources to building the national level federation. AMAK's national officers and staff are concerned with achieving autonomy for the federation. The FSP/USAID grant provides much of AMAK's budget. Other international donors and the Kiribati government provide the rest. AMAK would like to become indpendent of outside financial assistance and the perceived constraints that go along with it. Given the size of its budget and AMAK's limited local resources, it is not likely that the federation can be self-supporting in the near future. AMAK's concentration on the goverance of the national federation and on issues related to achieving financial autonomy have at some points taken priority over its major function of helping local women's clubs. FSP assists and offers guidance to AMAK and administers USAID funds but FSP does not directly carry out the women's program as it does in Tonga and Solomon Islands. Therefore, FSP faces some pragmatic constraints in its work in Kiribati.

VI. FSP'S APPROACH TO WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT

The Documentation Project is part of FSP's effort to reexamine its approach to women in development. FSP's explicit goal in working with women in the South Pacific has been to strengthen women's position in society by expanding their roles. In Tonga, Solomon Islands, and Kiribati women do not have

publicly recognized roles in community decision-making; nor do they have the right to control income.[3]

Women's organizations are seen by the FSP New York staff and field staff as a way for women to build their confidence and to gain men's respect by enhancing women's knowledge and skills. As men acknowledge women's growing competence, they will presumably include women in family and community decision-making. As women earn cash to contribute to the family, they will gain the right to control its expenditure. However, this is an overly optimistic scenario because powerful groups of people, in this case men, do not willingly relinquish power simply because the subordinate group becomes more knowledgeable and competent.

Women's status changes only as control of social and financial resources is redistributed between men and women. By strengthening local women's institutions that help women gain control of these resources, FSP has already implicitly committed itself to assisting women to restructure their roles, a commitment that Buvinić (1984:7) would classify as a "woman-centered" approach to women's participation in development. By Buvinic's definition, this approach "recognizes women's productive as well as reproductive roles in society and emphasizes women's contribution to economic growth and development." However, FSP has not explicity articulated this woman-centered position, which may be perceived by local men as threatening their dominance. In reexamining its approach to women in development, FSP needs to recognize that it is involved in a valid social change effort to help women restructure their roles in South Pacific societies.

While it is important to be culturally sensitive and to avoid imposing Western concepts on South Pacific societies, FSP must respond to women's needs to gain control over material and social resources that truly enable them to improve their position in society.

At present there seems to be some ambivalence on the part of FSP staff in Tonga and Solomon Islands about FSP's programs that benefit women specifically. Male and female staff in both countries emphasize that the ultimate goal of the women's programs is not to help women only, but to help the family and the entire community. The staff's position would be identified by Buvinić (1984:6-7) as a "family-centered" approach. Such a perspective sees motherhood as women's critical role in society and results in designing development projects aimed at improving family life, which do not address structural inequities between women and men in society.

I am not sure if staff members' statements are meant to ward off a potential male backlash against women's programs or if they indicate an implicit assumption that women's progress is made at men's expense. However, FSP staff do not express similar ambivalence about other components of FSP country programs, such as fisheries development or small commercial project development, which are directed toward men or are headed by male beneficiaries.

Moreover, FSP staff feel it is appropriate for women to be agents for social change that benefit the community, while comparable demands are not made upon men. Although women have

little authority in these societies, they are perceived as having informal influence through personal relationships with spouses and children and as having community interest at heart much more than men do. As Yudelman (1985) notes in her analysis of women's self-help organizations in Central America, women are often expected to organize themselves to work for the community without compensation. Men are rarely expected to do so. FSP Solomon Islands staff believe that the strategy of working through women's groups has not had the payoff for village development that they had expected. They are planning alternative village-wide development efforts through the establishment of model villages. It is crucial that women and women's programs not be pushed aside in the reorganization of the country program.

VI. INSTITUTION-BUILDING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

It is important to analyze FSP's institution-building role in Tonga, Solomon Islands, and Kiribati for two reasons. First, FSP's programs are intended to help strengthen women's organizations as a means to improve women's status and to increase women's participation in society. Second, the success of institution-building at the local level is directly related to the viability of income-generating and community development projects initiated by local women's groups.

Institution-building takes place at the local, regional, and national level. Ideally extension workers in each country assist groups to establish procedures, select officers, define goals, and make plans and schedules to achieve them. They train women

to lead and participate in meetings and to negotiate disagreements. This technical assistance is offered during periodic visits that extension workers make to the clubs. The effectiveness of such training depends in large part on the skills of the extension workers, their ability to sustain regular contact with the groups, and the enthusiasm of group members for the endeavor.

The training of local groups is carried out most effectively in Tonga for several reasons. First, although Tongan women may not have worked in groups precisely like the VWDP groups before, Tongan women do have a tradition of carrying out subsistence tasks in groups and of working together in cooperative weaving groups. (See Small [1985] for discussion of various types of Tongan women's development groups.) Their prior experience in group activities gives Tongan women a good foundation for their participation in the VWDP. In Kiribati, women's cooperative activities appear to have been confined to weaving mats for each other. There is no precedent for Solomon Islands women to engage in similar group activities (at least on the islands I visited).

Second, in the ranked society of Tonga, Catholic sisters are respected because of their religious position and thus bring a certain authority to the program that extension workers in other programs do not automatically have. The outcome of community education and institution-building efforts rests to a great extent on the abilitites of the extension workers. There is a shortage of trained personnel in all fields in the South Pacific. This shortage is more acute among women because women gained

access to the educational system later than males. The role of community development worker is a new one for women. It is unusual for women to travel beyond their local communities, speak in public, and provide technical assistance and guidance to other women. Most educated women who are available for such employment are young and face cultural obstacles to carrying out their responsibilities. Older village women may not easily accept assistance from younger people and young extension workers may find it difficult to put themselves in the public eye as the job requires. Moreover, young women often have competing responsibilities to their own families.

With these obstacles to overcome, extension workers need ongoing supervisory support and training to help them grow into their roles. Another alternative for staffing, which FSP Tonga and FSP Solomon Islands are trying, is to employ older village women on a part-time basis. Some of these women had various types of training before their marriage and they have earned a respected place in the community as wives and mothers.

The third reason that group training is carried out best in Tonga is that the VWDP staff is of adequate size to work with all the groups. The fifteen extension workers can visit each group at least monthly to build up strong working relationships with group members. Group visits are facilitated by holding joint meetings of several groups in the same village and by using the program's vehicles on Tongatapu, Vava'u and Eau to transport extension workers. Monthly contact between extension workers and each group is a minimal requirement for group development.

Transport among islands in each country is slow and costly. However, the size and rugged terrain of the islands in Solomon Islands makes even intra-island travel extremely difficult, time-consuming, and expensive. FSP Solomon Islands rents trucks and boats because it does not have its own. Rental fees are high and the cost limits the amount of travelling that extension workers do. The five full-time and five part-time WIP extension workers cannot work regularly enough with the approximatley 300 registered women's groups in Solomon Islands to be effective with all or even the majority of them.

Although FSP Solomon Islands finds it ethically and politically difficult to restrict its services to certain groups and regions, the program would serve women better by providing regular assistance to a smaller number of groups. At this point the WIP should not spend its resources helping to start additional women's groups as it was supposed to do under the second Operational Program Grant that ended in May 1985.

Each of AMAK's seven full-time extension workers are responsible for working with groups on two neighboring atolls in Kiribati. This is a reasonable geographic area for one worker to cover. It is difficult to say exactly how many women's clubs and members there are in Kiribati because there is a great deal of overlap between the church clubs and the Homemaker Clubs. Moreover, it is also difficult to tell how many groups the extension workers are assisting because it appears that they work only with Homemaker Clubs. However, AMAK field staff have spent a great deal of time this year in the capital attending AMAK's

trienniel conference and their own annual training workshop. This time away from the field has taken its toll on their main work of assisting women's clubs. For example, on my visit to Abemama in June I was told that the AMAK women's interest worker had not made a visit to the island this year.

In addition to group visits, extension workers also conduct workshops that cover basic topics, including nutrition, health, hygiene, sanitation, sewing, gardening, and appropriate technology, such as fuel efficient cooking techniques. The Tonga VWDP holds four three-day workshops each year in four parts of the country. Each workshop is attended by women from many groups and the workshop serves as a medium to establish links among groups in the region. In Kiribati the extension workers hold one to three-day workshops for a particular group.

FSP Solomon Islands places more emphasis on workshops for community education than does FSP Tonga and AMAK. About twenty-five village workshops of five days duration are held each year in Solomon Islands. FSP Solomon Islands began to include men in the workshops after men complained that women were receiving information that men did not have and some male leaders discouraged women's group activities because they had not been consulted beforehand. For these reasons, and because FSP discovered that information was not being shared with spouses, FSP started to include men as participants.

Workshops are planned by the WIP staff and residents of one or two villages to include topics of interest to the participants. FSP staff who have technical expertise such as

livestock management take part and government workers from various departments are resource people for the workshops. It is clear that workshops include important subjects, and that providing even basic nonformal education to rural women is an accomplishment in countries where few extension services are directed toward women.

However, I cannot evaluate the quality of the workshops because there are no written curricula and I attended part of only one workshop. Discussions with FSP staff strongly suggest that the workshops would benefit from assistance of a regional or country officer who would develop workshop plans and also provide ongoing training to extension workers who organize the workshops.

The emphasis on regional and national linkages among local women's groups varies across the three programs. In Solomon Islands there is little interaction among local groups, except at workshops that include participants from several neighboring villages. In Tonga the four annual regional workshops are occasions at which women from many groups can learn about each other's activities. Members from groups in the same vicinity also attend each other's annual inspections of projects, which are held as an incentive to achieve group goals.

The Kiribati AMAK differs structurally from the Solomon Islands WIP and Tonga VWDP because AMAK is by definition a federation of local women's groups. Each women's group belongs to an island-wide council of women's groups, which in turn sends representatives to national federation meetings to set policy. Each island's women's council also appoints a nominated women's

representative to the Island Council, which is the local governing body for the island. The women's representative has the same rights to participate in council deliberations and to vote as do elected council members. AMAK is the only one of the three FSP-supported women's programs discussed here that attempts to change women's participation in the political process. I cannot assess the impact that AMAK has had in the island-wide political arena on the basis of such a short visit. However, senior (male) national government officials commented to me that in their travels they had observed that women were more visible in public life in Kiribati since AMAK was formed. AMAK extension workers, by virtue of their role in providing assistance to women's groups, have the right to speak in the village maneaba on AMAK business. The maneaba is the forum for village community decision-making and women ordinarily speak only through men at these meetings. AMAK's extension workers told me they were proud to be able to take on this new role for women. Thus AMAK has already had an observable impact on women's participation in public life in Kiribati.

As a national women's organization AMAK combines characteristics of both the national women's councils that have been and are being set up in the South Pacific to lobby for women's interests and of an indigenous PVO that administers grant funds to local women's development groups. The combination of functions does not work well at present. For about the last year AMAK's national staff and officers have been devoting their efforts to national level reorganization and internal disputes at

the expense of working with local groups. At the recent triennial conference AMAK's constitution was changed to exclude from membership local groups that were not registered as Homemaker Clubs. This means that any church women's club that does not re-register as a Homemaker Club will not be eligible to receive grants or the services of extension workers. In fact, my observations indicate that church-based clubs have not received AMAK assistance for some time. This constitutional change grows out of longstanding dissension between Catholic and Protestant women and may result in the withdrawal of Catholic women's clubs from the federation because they resist the transformation of their clubs into Homemaker Clubs. The constitutional change also provides a new challenge to FSP because it flies in the face of FSP's original mandate to help improve the working relationship among Catholic and Protestant women's clubs in AMAK.

The mid-range strategy of informal integration of women's groups by region in Tonga through attendance at workshops and inspections works best in terms of supporting the activity of local women's groups. I have discussed the institution-building and community development work of FSP's programs in the three countries because they are the foundation for all FSP's work and for the grant programs in particular. I conclude from my field visits that grants have often been given to groups that had not firmly established themselves, were not prepared to operate projects, and did not receive the ongoing assistance from extension workers that they needed to succeed.

VII. GRANT PROGRAMS AND POLICIES

FSP makes small matching grants of materials to women's groups for a community development project (such as building a water catchment tank), for starting an income-generating project, or for fundraising for construction projects. The projects or profits from an income-generating project must benefit the entire village as a whole or at least all the group members. The benefit to the entire village of a communal tank or improved access road is obvious. In most cases, however, groups choose to carry out projects that benefit each members' individual family by, for example, building toilets for each household or distributing the group's earnings among members to buy kitchen utensils.

Women's participation in income-generating projects is intended not only to have a financial impact, but also to have educational and organizational benefits for the women's groups. Through establishing and managing a project women learn basic business principles and gain experience in decision-making and other aspects of working together in groups. In the late 1970's income-generating projects were seen by the international development community as an all-purpose remedy to improve women's access to financial resources and to train them in management, political skills, etc. Many income-generating projects were undercapitalized, were not established on a sound business footing, and channelled women into marginal enterprises. Unfortunately, many of the FSP-assisted women's income-generating projects that I observed or learned about from project files or interviews can

be characterized as marginal enterprises. FSP staff in the South Pacific and in New York have been rethinking ways to encouage women's participation in small-scale enterprises that have a sound financial base.

FSP staff in Tonga and in Solomon Islands have already begun to distinguish between women's group income-generating projects and small businesses. They have found the latter to be more successful when organized by extended families than by community-based women's groups. When everyone owns a business, no one owns it, that is, individuals are unwilling to take personal responsibility for group-operated enterprises.

The distinction between income-generating projects and businesses is based on expectations and outcomes rather than on differences in the activities themselves. For example, poultry production may be a women's group income-generating project or a family business under the FSP Solomon Islands country program. Poultry production is more likely to flourish under family than women's group management because the kin group will more readily make a long-term commitment in expectation of rewards for the family. The limitations that club members implicitly place on their commitment and FSP staff members' predictions of success, based on past experience, have important effects on women. In Solomon Islands women's projects have become, by definition, limited money-earning activities that are expected to make modest profits, if any. When a women's group's income-generating project shows promise of taking off financially, it is redefined into a Small Community and Commercial Project (headed by a male

family member), and the participants become eligible for larger grants and more technical assistance. Thus, women's projects per se are allowed to be only moderately successful.

FSP's grant programs differ somewhat from country to country and are in different stages of implementation in Tonga, Solomon Islands, and Kiribati. Therefore, it is necessary to consider each program separately before making further generalizations about FSP's grant strategy.

A. TONGA VILLAGE WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (VWDP)

In Tonga, although many groups have been working for several years, new groups are formed each year as more women become interested in taking part in the VWDP. Each new group receives a small seed grant worth about $20 to start them toward their goal for the year. These 'moving forward' (fakalakalaka in the Tongan language) groups throughout Tonga concentrate on completing basic physical improvements: flush toilets, washhouses, kitchens, concrete water storage tanks, and tin-roofed timber houses. The seed grant is used by most groups for fund-raising materials. The most popular way for women's groups to raise funds are to hold kava parties, dances, and movie nights in the community hall. Kava is a mildly intoxicating drink that is made from the kava root. Throughout the course of the evening it is drunk by groups of men who pay women to prepare the beverage. At traditional dance parties, the audience contributes money to show their appreciation of the dancers' skills. As the evening

progresses, audience members demonstrate their generosity with larger and larger contributions.

The 'moving forward' groups are extremely effective fundraisers. FSP statistics indicate that in the first half of 1984 alone small grants worth $5,883.86 were distributed and local funds of $57,509 were raised. Over longer periods, much higher rates of return have been reported. The 'moving forward' groups are important for motivating women to save, but they do not usually increase production. The money raised comes ultimately from group members' household incomes.

Members contribute food and other supplies to fund-raising events, and they attend similar events held by other groups. Small (1985) conducted extensive study of VWDP groups and other types of cooperative women's groups in a village on Tongatapu, the main island in Tonga. Small concluded that even after excluding the cost of women's labor contribution, women had not earned additional money through their group activities. Rather, Small found that the groups fulfilled the important function of legitimating women's ability to safeguard household money from the demands of spouses and children and to use it to improve household conditions.

After a group meets its first annual goals, it sets the next goals with the assistance of the VWDP worker. The group is eligible for another small grant of up to $80, usually for building materials. In the past these grants were given to each group annually, but FSP's Assistant Country Director, who supervises the program, has changed the policy so that only groups deemed to

need further grants will receive them. The policy has been changed for two reasons. First, the administrator is concerned that the grants may be undermining self-reliance because women have begun to expect grants as their due for belonging to VWDP groups. Second, she is trying to inculcate a spirit of generosity and willingness to help others. A group that can afford to carry out its own project without assistance should forego a grant so that a needier group can get one.

The main thrust of VWDP group activities is to conserve income to fund the group's projects, but some groups do engage in activities that increase production and generate income. Most of these activities are carried out by individual members and the money earned is used for the projects decided upon by the group. VWDP extension workers encourage women to establish small kitchen gardens for family consumption and marketing. Many women are reluctant to market food, however, because until recently surplus produce was always shared with relatives. There is a lingering sense of shame attached to selling food instead of distributing it among kin. Production of vanilla, handicrafts, and raw materials for handicrafts are other regular sources of income for women's group members.

B. SOLOMONS ISLANDS WOMEN'S INTEREST PROGRAM (WIP)

Grants specifically for income-generating projects are a more important component of FSP's work with women in Solomon Islands and Kiribati than in Tonga. The Solomon Islands WIP started making grants to women's groups in 1982, during the

second FSP/USAID Operational Program Grant. The establishment of sixty-five income-generating projects a year was the program target. Thirteen grants were made in 1982, forty were made in 1983, and about forty-two were made in 1984, for a total of at least ninety-five grants during the three-year period. Approximately one-third of the registered women's groups in Solomon Islands have received small grants through FSP. Income-generating projects in 1984 included poultry production, sewing projects, piggeries, bakeries, and market gardens (Table 3).

Table 3

Solomon Islands Women's Interest Program Grants (1984)

Type of Project	Number	%
Poultry	24	57.1
Sewing	7	16.7
Vegetable Gardening	5	11.9
Bakery	3	7.1
Piggery	2	4.8
Combined Piggery & Poultry	1	2.4
	42	100.0

Unfortunately a good opportunity to evaluate the impact of the grant program has been lost because no data have been collected about the functioning of projects after FSP funds and

group funds have been disbursed. It is therefore impossible to say how many of the projects are functioning, how many have made or lost money, or how profits have been used. FSP Solomon Islands staff agree that it is important to establish a simple data collection and analysis system so that the grant program can be monitored and evaluated. FSP Solomon Islands would like to have assistance with developing and implementing a basic management information system.

My comments on the grant program in Solomon Islands are based on field visits to projects on Malaita and discussions with FSP staff. The two ongoing women's income-generating projects that I saw on Malaita were a village bakery and a women's sewing project in Auki, the administrative center of Malaita. In the first project, a village man who is a former teacher and member of a religious order assists women with the day to day management of the enterprise. Women's group members take turns working in the bakery, which operates every day. Women earn a daily wage in cash or in bread and group profits have been reinvested in equipment for the business. The sewing project in Auki was established by a Malaitan women who has her own sewing business. She has trained group members who occasionally earn a wage for producing garments for her own business and who sew clothing that she sells for them in her store. Such relatively successful income-generating projects appear to be rare in Solomon Islands.

There are several reasons why many women's income-generating projects have troubled histories. First, in their eagerness to reach program targets, I suspect that women's interest workers

have helped women's groups to start projects without sufficient preparation. A group may not fully understand the commitment involved in managing an income-generating project or how to go about doing so. Some groups have no clear goal in mind when establishing a project and the project, not surprisingly, unravels.

Based on my observations, it is clear that women's income-generating projects in the Solomon Islands require a good deal of regular and ongoing assistance from women's interest workers or other dedicated individuals, like the former teacher or the tailor shop owner. As stated above, the FSP women's interest workers have been spread too thin in Solomon Islands to work effectively with groups and some of the women's interest workers require training before they can teach other women how to operate income-generating projects.

As the 1982-85 FSP/USAID Operational Program Grant was conceived, the WIP and a Fisheries Project were the two components. The Fisheries Project did not get off the ground for several reasons. The OPG was rewritten to substitute a Small Community and Commerical Projects (SCCP) component. The SCCP makes grants and provides technical assistance through FSP Solomon Islands' new training center at New Koleula. There is some overlap between the WIP grants and SCCP grants, which ultimately, I think, makes it difficult for women's groups to obtain the kind of sustained support they need to make their income-generating projects viable.

The WIP can give an initial matching grant of $50-100 worth of materials to a group that starts an income-generating project

and an additional grant of $100-200 to the same group. The SCCP gives $400-500 in materials to a family-owned business that is officially headed by a male beneficiary. Both women's groups and families can receive training in livestock management or gardening at New Koleula, but male beneficiaries in the SCCP program are more likely to be trainees at the center. In our discussions of the two grant programs, the FSP Solomon Islands staff were open to my comments about the importance of including female family members in the SCCP training and of talking with female family members when male extension workers visit project sites.

Some of the more successful WIP income-generating projects have been recategorized into SCCP projects. In fact, FSP Solomon Islands staff members call this process "upgrading" the women's projects. In effect, this shift of women's projects into SCCP projects means several things. First, when a women's group income-generating project appears to be successful, it is transferred from the ownership of a women's group to a particular extended family (I do not understand why and how a women's group allows this change in ownership to take place). Second, as a result of this transfer the project is no longer formally under the control of women, even the women in a particular family. All SCCP projects are registered in the name of one male beneficiary through whom FSP deals with the family. Third, removing viable enterprises from the WIP makes WIP a residual category for marginal projects. Another way of describing this process is that WIP becomes a training ground in which women start projects that men can later take control of through the SCCP. As I discussed

with FSP Solomon Islands staff, the relationship between WIP and SCCP grant programs is at present a problematic one for women and FSP should re-examine the directions that these grant programs are taking.

C. KIRIBATI NATIONAL WOMEN'S FEDERATION (AMAK)

AMAK gives grants of materials to women's clubs to make community improvements, such as building water catchment tanks, or to start income-generating projects whose profits are to be used for a particular goal that is specified when the group applies for the grant. Although grants were intended to be matched by group contributions, it appears that the grants of up to about $225 have covered total project costs in some cases.

The AMAK grant program began in 1983 and sixty-five projects were approved by September 1984. Data on the types of approved projects are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Kiribati AMAK Project Grants (1983-September 1984)

Type of Project	Number	%
Water Tank Construction	18	27.7
Sewing	17	26.2
Bakery	11	16.9
Piggery	4	6.2
Poultry	4	6.2

Vegetable Garden	1	1.5
Toilet Construction	1	1.5
No Data	9	13.8
Total	65	100.0

Construction of eighteen water catchment tanks and the establishment of eighteen sewing projects and eleven small bakeries account for seventy-one percent of project grants. The remaining grants were distributed among a few piggeries, chicken projects, vegetable gardens, and toilet construction projects. The expatriate women's interest advisor was in the process of assessing the progress of grant projects when she left FSP Kiribati in late 1984. Her files on each project visit have been misplaced, but her summary of findings provides some information about the status of projects. At the time the women's interest advisor completed her report, most of the water tanks and the toilets had not been built and the piggeries, poultry projects, and vegetable gardens were being established. Of the six functioning bakeries, four were making a profit, one was losing money, and one was in difficulty but could probably be turned around. Five of the seven sewing projects were doing well and generating income, while two had problems but had received advice from the advisor or a women's interest worker about changing their management procedures. On the whole, the women's interest advisor's summary indicated that bakeries or sewing projects were functioning relatively well.

On visits to three Abemama villages, I met with two groups that had received grants. One group had purchased hand-drawn carts, which were rented out for freight hauling. It was not clear from the women's comments how regularly this business was operated at present. However, the owners said they had earned enough money from renting carts to contribute to the cost of laying a cement floor for the village maneaba. Another Abemama group had a defunct poultry project. The chickens had died shortly after their arrival and the group was not enthusiastic about starting another project because of the labor entailed. Women from the third village said they were interested in applying for a grant to start a bakery.

The AMAK grant program raises questions fundamental to FSP's re-examination of its grant policies. The matching grant requirement should be enforced in Kiribati to foster self-reliance. In fact, AMAK's president and coordinator (like FSP staff in Tonga and Solomon Islands) are concerned that the grants encourage dependence among village women. They would prefer a loan program (although this would require renegotiating the current FSP/USAID Operational Program Grant) so that women would have a vested interest in the success of their projects.

AMAK's fears were borne out during my meetings with women's groups on Abemama. There was confusion among women about the purpose of the grants and requirements for receiving them. Women in one club believed that each club was to receive an annual grant to spend as they wish; they were angry that their 1985 funds had not arrived yet. The women who had started the poultry

project were annoyed because they had contributed fifty percent of the cost while they had heard that women on other islands received grants to cover all project costs.

Project monitoring should be resumed as soon as possible. It appears that few or no grants were made after the third quarter of 1984 because the women's interest workers spent little or no time in the field for the first half of 1985. More important than the hiatus in funding grants is the lack of regular contact between women's interest workers and holders of existing projects.

Although they had not been visited by women's interest workers recently, the Homemaker Clubs I visited were functioning on their own. Members meet regularly, assist each other economically, and raise funds through parties that are similar to those held by Tongan VWDP groups. In some clubs women weave mats or thatch for a member who needs large quantities of these items for a ceremony in exchange for the recipient's nominal contribution of money to the club's treasury. Clubs also hold gambling parties where losers forfeit money to the group fund and winners receive prizes of food prepared by members. Individual members earn money for the club by selling prepared weaving materials, twine, hair oil, or garlands.

Women expressed interest in making money for two purposes - to equip their households and to contribute to building iron-roofed and cement-floored community maneabas that last longer than those built from local materials. Most groups distribute

the common fund among members annually to pay for new household goods such as cooking pots and utensils.

A minority of women belonged to the Homemaker and church women's clubs in the villages I visited. But for those women who choose to work within a group, the Homemaker Clubs are a structure through which women earn and save money to meet household needs and to fulfill their desire to share in the prestige of building the community maneaba. Some groups may decide that fund-raising activities they can start and stop at will are preferable to income-generating projects that require ongoing commitment.

VIII. GRANTS OR LOANS

The case studies of each country grant program raise questions about the relative merits of grants and loans to assist group projects. There is evidence that women's groups in Tonga and Kiribati now expect to receive grants as their due for participation in clubs. FSP staff in Tonga and AMAK staff in Kiribati are concerned that women's expectations of financial support undermine self-reliant development. The amounts of most grants are relatively small and in many cases motivated women's groups can accumulate the resources needed to start projects on their own. In the long run, FSP's major contribution to the region is the assistance it provides to help women organize themselves, not the grant funds it disburses.

While loans encourage self-reliant development better than grants, FSP needs to consider carefully before changing its

funding policy. Beneficiaries have not yet been consulted in a systematic way about the costs and benefits of grants and loans. In some cases women's expectation of automatic grants have come about through misunderstanding the program and its purposes. It is possible to work with women's groups to reorient their expectations of the support they need. Even if loans become the dominant form of financial assistance in FSP programs some flexibility should be built into country programs so that grants can be made when circumstances warrant them. For example, it is probably more difficult for Solomon Islands women than Tongan or I-Kiribati women to gain control of enough money to establish an income-generating or other project.

Should loans be made to women's groups, it becomes increasingly important that women's enterprises be feasible, well-planned, and properly managed. Failed projects with loan obligations entail a greater financial hardship for women's groups than the failure of current grant-funded projects. Thus, the institution-building and training components of the women's program in Tonga, Solomon Islands and Kiribati must be strengthened. When groups invest borrowed money in their enterprises, it is crucial that groups are functioning well enough and have the necessary training in business management to operate an enterprise that will generate money to pay back the loan and return profit to the group.

IX. GROUP LIFE CYCLES

FSP has been concerned that women's groups tend to cease their activities after they achieve a particular goal. However, I found the reality of group life cycles to be less straightforward than this statement indicates and to be different in Tonga than in Solomon Islands and Kiribati. The Tongan VWDP groups have a history of sustained effort over a period of years. In contrast, the immediate problems I observed in Solomon Islands and Kiribati are how to help a group define its first goal and to persevere with its efforts to maintain the project until the goal is achieved.

There are several factors that contribute to the longevity of the Tongan women's groups, which have applications to FSP's women's programs in other countries. A major reason the the VWDP groups continue to work together is that the program has tapped into a desire for improved housing that is widespread in Tonga. The program helps women to achieve goals that are culturally approved and personally important to them. Second, the program emphasizes that women should set achievable goals and builds in mechanisms to encourage women to reach them. Monthly visits by extension workers are a check on the group's progress and the annual inspections are a major ceremonial event in the community. While the extension workers emphasize that group members set their own goals, the workers take an active part in urging members to set schedules and to plan for meeting goals. A third reason that the Tongan groups move relatively smoothly from one project to the next is that the new set of goals flows logically

from what they have just accomplished. Once a toilet and washroom are constructed, building a sheltered kitchen or improving the roof are logical next steps.

In contrast to Tonga, there is not a national consensus on women's development priorities in Solomon Islands and Kiribati. Therefore, it takes more time and effort for extension workers in Solomon Islands and Kiribati to work with each group to identify their particular needs and to set goals. In these cases, it is even more important that groups have regular contact with extension workers, as I have stressed elsewhere in this report.

Another important difference that sets Tonga apart from Solomon Islands and Kiribati is that women's participation in income-generating projects is emphasized less in the former than the latter. Few Tongan women's groups finance their home improvements through income-generating projects. Tongan women raise money through sponsoring parties and through individual efforts in manufacturing and selling handicrafts or raw materials for handicrafts. These activities can be conducted around women's other responsibilities and can be stopped and started at will. Operating an income-generating project requires a more regular commitment of labor. For this reason, income-generating projects are more difficult to sustain than fund-raising activities. Kiribati would be a good test case for this hypothesis because some groups rely only on fund-raising activities like those used in Tonga while other groups have established income-generating projects. Unfortunately the data are not currently available to test the hypothesis.

Income-generating projects are potentially open-ended, but Pacific Islands women are accustomed to working for specific goals or for relatively circumscribed periods. It is not surprising that women's groups should be willing to operate an income-generating project or raise funds until they accumulate enough money to build a community hall, equip their kitchens, or achieve another such medium-range goal. It takes time for women to begin to appreciate the possibilities of having a regular source of income and to plan for its use. Once again I emphasize that working closely with extension workers is part of the process through which women become skilled in longer-range planning.

X. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

FSP has had a long-standing commitment to women's participation in development. The goal of the FSP Documentation Project was to examine the history and current status of FSP's women in development policies and programs in Tonga, Solomon Islands, and Kiribati in order to help FSP evaluate its overall approach to women in development and its future WID programs. The Documentation Project focused on the following issues:

a. FSP's strategy of working with women in groups, rather than as individuals, to generate income;

b. the extent to which FSP's small grant program is a more effective funding strategy than a small loan program; and

c. FSP's perception that many income-generating projects are finite and short-term because women are likely to work together

for a specific goal, while FSP would like to encourage women to sustain their efforts to build from goal to goal.

The terms of reference were expanded to include analysis of all types of FSP-assisted projects conducted by women's groups when it quickly became apparent that income-generating was only one aspect of group activities and that its importance varied among the three countries.

The Project findings are summarized and recommendations are presented below:

I. FINDING

FSP's decision to work with women in groups to generate income while working with men as individual entrepreneurs was consistent with mainstream development thinking in the late 1970s. It was believed that working with other women would provide the social support for women's embarking on new economic ventures and for building their social and political skills. However, in some FSP country programs we see that the outcome of this decision is that men control greater resources and in some cases are learning valuable new skills while women's group income-generating projects are at best marginally profitable.

RECOMMENDATION

As FSP has begun to do, it must consider in which circumstances it will assist individual women, as well as men, to establish businesses that will produce significant income. In general, FSP field staff have found that community-based group efforts to manage income-generating projects are not as successful as businesses run by individuals or families. In

businesses that involve entire families, it is important that FSP staff promote women's participation in project management by including female family members in all project meetings and in training provided for project holders.

In some cases it will remain appropriate to assist groups of women to generate funds collectively for group undertakings, such as building projects. In other cases, women's groups may function just as well if they concentrate on community improvements selected by the beneficiaries and financed through traditional fundraising methods (as is done so successfully in Tonga and appears to occur also in Kiribati).

II. FINDING

Having decided to work with women's groups, FSP made a culturally sensitive and pragmatic decision to assist groups affiliated with existing women's organizations in each country. However, the conservative history and domestic orientation of these organizations present FSP with a challenge in promoting development rather than welfare activities.

RECOMMENDATION

Having committed itself to working within existing organizations, FSP needs to initiate a process through which the organizations can re-evaluate their approach to women in development. The process I am suggesting is obviously a delicate one that cannot be accomplished overnight.

FSP can set an example by articulating its own commitment to development that supports women's increased access to control of resources and social power rather than to a welfare-oriented

approach to women's participation in development. FSP can start a dialogue among its own headquarters staff, field staff, and beneficiaries about women's goals to develop an internal consensus that will reinforce FSP's local level implementation of programs that support FSP's position on women in development.

Furthermore, FSP can monitor group activities, income-generating projects, and businesses that it funds to insure that they promote development goals for women.

III. FINDING

FSP's role in institution-building was emphasized in this report because: 1) FSP works to strengthen women's associations as the means to improve women's status and to increase their participation in the community, and 2) strong women's groups are a prerequisite for carrying out any type of collective effort. I observed two basic problems with the training components of institution-building efforts in FSP's country programs. First, there is a need to upgrade extension workers' skills through improved and ongoing training. Second, in Solomon Islands in particular, extension workers are expected to work simultaneously with many more groups than they can effectively assist in order to have a significant impact on a group.

RECOMMENDATION

I recommend that FSP create the position of Regional Training Coordinator, based in the South Pacific, whose job it would be: 1) to work with women's program heads and staff in each country to identify staff training needs and to work with beneficiaries to identify their training needs; 2) to conduct

regular training sessions for FSP extension staff to enhance their skills; 3) to help extension staff design and conduct workshops and other types of training for beneficiaries, based on their identified needs; and 4) to monitor and evaluate the training sessions conducted by extension workers to provide ongoing feedback to the staff and to assist them to alter training as beneficiaries' needs change.

I also recommend that FSP and USAID recognize the labor intensive nature of institution-building in the South Pacific environment by setting realistic targets for the numbers of groups that can be effectively assisted by each extension worker.

IV FINDING

My observations of income-generating projects that receive grants led me to conclude that: 1) many are undercapitalized small enterprizes that at best can be marginally profitable and 2) many fail because groups are insufficiently prepared, unclear about their goals in carrying out the projects, and/or are in need of additional assistance in dealing with problems in project management.

RECOMMENDATION

As it has begun to do, FSP should explore alternative ways to help women earn income. Many of the "traditional" development projects for women, such as sewing and crafts, simply keep women marginal to the modern sector of the economy and produce little, if any, income. FSP should collaborate with other organizations, such as ILO, who have also been trying to develop appropriate enterprises for women in the South Pacific.

Again, I stress the need for trained field staff to provide ongoing assistance to entrepreneurs or groups who operate enterprises.

V. FINDING

Based on observations of projects and discussions with beneficiaries and field staff, I conclude that in many cases, particularly in Tonga and Kiribati, an expectation of grant aid may be undermining self-reliant development. In many cases, especially since grants are relatively small, groups can accumulate their own resources for small projects or businesses. Loans are appropriate when groups or entrepreneurs need help to capitalize business ventures.

RECOMMENDATION

Loans should be explored as an alternative strategy for encouraging projects and businesses. However, a shift from grants to loans makes it even more imperative that women's enterprises be financially feasible and properly managed. The importance of the need for ongoing assistance from extension workers with training in small business management cannot be overemphasized.

In calculating the size of loans it is also critical that realistic assessments be made of the cost of starting businesses so that the ventures will be adequately capitalized.

VI. FINDING

Groups were able to sustain their activities to achieve goals and work toward new ones where the program was keyed into women's self-perceived needs and where there was sufficient contact and continuity between field staff and beneficiaries.

These conditions were met best in Tonga, where there is basically a national consensus on development goals and where there are enough extension workers and relatively adequate transport to enable them to meet with groups regularly.

RECOMMENDATION

I once again underline the importance of frequent contact between extension workers and groups. Tonga is unusual in the extent to which there is widespread agreement among women about their development goals, a consensus that the VWDP has had a major role in building. In other countries, workers have a more difficult challenge in helping groups define their goals. The regularity and continuity of contact between extension worker and group in Tonga provides a model to be followed in other countries.

XI NOTES

1 Information in this section on the history of women's groups in the South Pacific is drawn from Forman (1984).

2 Buvinić (1984) summarizes the parallel history of women's organizations in other parts of the Third World in the same time period.

3 It is difficult to make similar generalizations that apply throughout Solomon Islands because, unlike Tonga and Kiribati, it is a culturally heterogenous country.

XII. REFERENCES CITED

Buvinić, Mayra. 1984. "Projects for Women in the Third World: Explaining Their Misbehavior." Washington, DC: International Center for Research on Women.

Forman, Charles. 1984. "Sing to the Lord a New Song: Women in the Churches of Oceania." In Rethinking Women's Roles: Perspectives from the Pacific, edited by Denise O'Brien and Sharon W. Tiffany. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 153-172.

Small, Cathy. 1985. "The Powers and Limitations of Women's Cooperative Organizations in Tonga." Paper presented at the second conference of the Association for Women in Development, Washington, DC, April 1985.

Yudelman, Sally. 1985. "Preliminary Conclusions from a Forthcoming Study on Five Women's Development Organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean." Paper presented at the second conference of the Association for Women in Development, Washington, DC, April 1985.