

Balance of Power (BOP) is a multi-country, locally led initiative that promotes inclusive leadership in line with national and regional priorities. Building on lessons learned about what works and what doesn't in the Pacific context to improve gender equality, BOP supports local actors working to increase women's voice and agency in leadership and decision-making, particularly in the political sphere.

## HOW DO WE WORK?

BOP recognises that deep-seated social norms, attitudes and perceptions around concepts of legitimacy and 'rules of the game' are the primary barriers to achieving gender equality and inclusion in leadership. This means valuing the critical role of men and involving norm-influencing agents, including the media and leaders of faith-based organisations and traditional structures, 'working with the grain' of each specific context. BOP itself is made up of influential Pacific Islander leaders who utilise their own networks of leverage and advocacy for influence at community, national and regional levels.

## WHAT ARE WE DOING IN VANUATU?

BOP's work in Vanuatu is guided by the *National Gender Equality Policy (2020-2030)*, under the *National Sustainable Development Plan 2030*, and the *2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent*.



Bishop of the DOBT, the Right Reverend Bishop Anthony Ling, signing the Partnership Agreement in Torba with BOP Vanuatu Country Manager, Wilson Toa.

Priority areas include:

### » WORKING WITH CHURCHES TO BUILD AWARENESS OF THE COMPATIBILITY OF WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP WITH CHRISTIAN FAITH

BOP has brokered a relationship with the Diocese of Banks and Torres (DOBT) in Torba Province, aimed at strengthening institutional capacity and promoting inclusive leadership within the institution. In collaboration with the Vanuatu Skills Partnership and the Department of Women's Affairs (DWA), the program is supporting clergy and women leaders through skills development, dialogue, and training. By working closely with a key religious institution, the activity seeks to influence social

norms, encourage male allyship within a fundamental societal influencer, and create more space for women's leadership at the community and provincial level.

### » RESEARCH ON VOTER MOTIVATIONS AND ASSOCIATED OUTREACH AND ADVOCACY

BOP has recently published its long-term research project exploring voter motivations, in conjunction with

the DWA and the Australian National University. The research is focused on understanding how voters make decisions at election time around choosing candidates, and the motivations of political parties in recruiting, endorsing and supporting candidates, with a specific lens placed on the selection of women candidates. BOP is now using the research socialisation process to catalyse and influence civic engagement and shift mindsets around the legitimacy of women's political leadership.

### » INCREASING VISIBILITY OF WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP AND INFLUENCING PERCEPTIONS OF ITS LEGITIMACY THROUGH THE MEDIA AND OUTREACH CAMPAIGNS

BOP is working with a range of influential media platforms and forums to shift attitudes around the value of women's leadership and normalise women's voice and agency. This includes the *Nation Builders* photographic and book series profiling ni-Vanuatu women in senior leadership across the private, public and community sectors; an inter-secondary schools debate competition, which is promoting civic engagement among youth, while simultaneously challenging gender norms and perceptions of women's leadership; the *Pres Klab* public dialogue platform, bringing together

policy experts, national influencers and the media, with a focus on amplifying the voices of women panelists and moderators; and the *Tru the Lens* documentary series produced by local male filmmakers to spotlight women leaders who have challenged cultural, social, and professional norms.

### » UTILISING ADAPTIVE/INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP WORKSHOPS TO SUPPORT WOMEN EXERCISE EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP AND BUILD UNDERSTANDING OF ITS VALUE BY POWERHOLDERS

Through the *Public Service Leadership Program* - a joint initiative between BOP, the Vanuatu Institute of Public Administration and Management and the Vanuatu Public Service Commission, with support from key government ministries - BOP is using adaptive management principles to strengthen inclusive leadership within the public sector and foster increased appreciation of its value to effective governance.

### » ABOUT US

Balance of Power (BOP) is funded through the Australian Government under Pacific Women Lead and led by Pacific Islanders committed to driving reform and influencing change within their unique country contexts and cultures. BOP's work is informed by national policy frameworks and regional commitments. The first phase (2019-2026) is focused on Tonga, Vanuatu and Fiji as well as supporting activity at the regional level.