

fact sheet #8.

IMPROVING WOMEN'S FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE AND LEADERSHIP

Women must be supported to claim their rights by speaking out and taking action to reduce and prevent violence against women in their communities.

FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE

In some cases, financial dependency increases women's isolation and vulnerability to violence. It is also used as a controlling tactic by violent perpetrators. Initiatives that support women to live economically independent lives are an effective way to prevent violence against women.

Examples of things that could improve women's financial independence:

- Workshops that help women plan for their financial future, including savings, insurance and superannuation.
- Support to help women return to further education and training.
- Support to help women gain employment, or re-enter the workforce after time off.
- Flexible working arrangements and parental leave provisions that allow women to remain in the workforce.

LEADERSHIP

In Australia, women are still underrepresented in decision-making roles across many areas, including all levels of government and virtually all sectors of the paid workforce¹. Improving women's leadership is an important strategy to achieving gender equality and preventing violence against women.

Examples of things that can improve women's leadership:

- Training and skills development programs that build women's self confidence and leadership abilities.
- Provisions that ensure women's equal representation at all levels of decision-making.
- Mentoring programs that support women to achieve their goals.

¹ Australian Human Rights Commission, Gender Equality Blueprint, 2010



1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732)

A free 24 hour national domestic and family violence and sexual assault counselling service for people who have experienced violence, and for workers supporting them.

CASE STUDY: 10THOUSANDGIRL CAMPAIGN

10thousandgirl is a social enterprise that aims to improve the financial literacy of 10,000 Australian women. The 10thousandgirl programs assist women to develop a life plan and understand the cornerstone financial principles, strengthening their ability and confidence to create financial security. 10thousandgirl achieves this by offering webinars, one day Life Planning Workshops and supporting women across Australia to form Girl Investment Groups (GIGs) in their local areas. The programs help women help each other share knowledge and plan for the future by developing savings plans, having the necessary insurance in place and learning to effectively manage their superannuation and investments for the future. The programs are fun and lighthearted and women leave with increased confidence to live inspired independent lives.

In the near future, 10thousandgirl aims to expand their programs with a specific focus on reaching young women in remote and regional communities. You can find out more about the Campaign and request a workshop in your town by visiting the website at www.10thousandgirl.com

CASE STUDY: RURAL WOMEN'S E-LEARNING AND LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

An initiative of the National Rural Women Coalition, the E-Learning and Leadership Program aims to build the leadership and representative capacity of women in primary industries and further develop the resilience of rural, regional and remote Australian communities.

At the beginning of the program, participants are paired up with mentors to support them through their journey. Mentors and mentees then participate in a series of live webinars and online forum sessions throughout the course of the Program, as well as work on a range of tasks together to further each other's skills and knowledge. Topics covered in the program include leadership, business development, social media, capacity building and climate change action.

Find out more about the program by visiting the website at www.nrwc.com.au/projects/recognising-women-farmers-project

RECOMMENDED READING



Title Best Practice Guide for Leadership Programs for Immigrant and Refugee Women (2010)
Author The Multicultural Centre for Women's Health
Link www.mcwh.com.au/leadership/resources.php



Title A Business Toolkit for Indigenous Women
Author Australian Commonwealth, State, Territory and New Zealand Ministers' Conference on the Status of Women (MINCO)
Link www.fahcsia.gov.au/our-responsibilities/women/publications-articles/economic-independence/a-business-toolkit-for-indigenous-women



Title Money Smart Website
Author The Australian Government
Link www.moneysmart.gov.au



Title 2010 Gender Equality Blueprint
Author Australian Human Rights Commission
Link www.humanrights.gov.au/sex_discrimination/publication/blueprint



This is 8 in a series of 15 fact sheets to help communities stop violence against women before it happens. Download the full set at www.nrwn.org.au