



EDUCATION IS HOPE



Wilkins
Family Foundation



British
High Commission
Port Vila

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Education is critical to the future success of a vibrant and growing nation.

Bright and talented girls growing up in remote and rural locations are often, for reasons of financial hardship and family circumstances, unable to continue their education past Year 10.

The Wilkins Family Foundation (WFF) was formed to support girls in this situation to complete their learning journey and achieve their full potential.

We do this primarily through awarding scholarships to talented girls from disadvantaged backgrounds to enable them to complete their secondary education and progress to either tertiary study or vocational education, and ultimately, employment.

On the way, we work to help them build their self-esteem and resilience and develop leadership capabilities. We support our scholars in and out of the classroom or lecture hall to achieve the best version of themselves, and to move on to personal and financial independence.

We also encourage understanding of the concept of 'giving back' and the importance of the contribution they make to their family and community through the successes they achieve.





THE CHALLENGES

WFF works in an environment where young women and girls across Vanuatu face a number of significant challenges:

- Women remain under-represented at all levels of leadership and decision making in Vanuatu. There is currently only one female Member of Parliament. Progress has been slow in other areas of leadership such as increasing the number of women occupying senior roles in the public service, although there is anecdotal evidence of increased representation of women in senior roles in the private sector, including in the banking, financial services and insurance industries.
- Gender-based violence is a serious, widespread and persistent problem. Violence against women and children is the most common crime in the country, with 72 per cent of women experiencing physical and sexual violence in their lifetime.
- Vanuatu has the highest rate of child marriage in the Pacific. Around 4,000 girls are married before they are 15 and nearly 30,000 are married by 18, most commonly in the rural areas. This has a negative impact on the ability of those girls to attend school, complete their education and pursue employment.

Making sure girls finish their education and become economically empowered is an important aspect to eliminating all forms of discrimination against women. It is a vital element in promoting women's involvement and status in society.



GEORGIA'S STORY

WFF:

“We met Georgia from Lingarak, South East Malekula when we interviewed her at Rensarie Senior Secondary School at the beginning of 2019; she was 15 and in Year 9. Georgia was chosen by the staff at Rensarie as a WFF scholarship candidate because they saw her potential to shine. However, she was unlikely to complete her schooling because her widowed mother could not afford to finance three children at school. Georgia’s father had been tragically run over by a bus and killed the previous year and left his wife trying to support three children. Georgia and her family were traumatised and in grief. Five years later, Georgia has graduated from Onesua where she was a valued member of the school and is now enrolled at USP and pursuing her dreams. With the continuous mentoring and pastoral care that WFF provides, along with valuable family support, Georgia is well on her way to becoming a leader in Vanuatu.”

Georgia:

“My mum says study hard, work hard and you’ll achieve a lot. When I was 14 my father passed away, my mother brought up the 3 of us. After he died my mother was unable to pay for my school fees. Sometimes I was sent away as we couldn’t afford it. If the Wilkins Family Foundation wasn’t part of my life, I don’t think I would have finished my schooling. Thank you so much for helping all of us.”

My name is Georgia Philip and I study science at the University of the South Pacific. I want to work in health services.

JOYLINE'S STORY

WFF:

“We met Joyline in 2021 when she was in Year 10, at Lycée de Norsup, Central Malekula. Joyline’s elderly grandparents were struggling to pay her school fees. Joyline told us she wanted to be a surgeon and it was obvious that she was a leader. Her dreams were seriously challenged when she became pregnant in Year 11 and her grades began to drop. WFF believed in Joyline’s potential to push through a challenging time and advocated on her behalf, asking her school to give her a chance to prove herself. She finished Year 12 with marks to be proud of as well as giving birth to a beautiful baby, James. Today, Joyline is boarding at Lycee LAB in Vila, and pursuing her dream with determination. This has only been possible through the combined support of her loving grandparents and consistent mentoring and support from WFF.”

Joyline:

“I am originally from Malekula and there are four of us in our family, two girls and two boys. My father separated from my mother when we were young. We live together with my grandparents. My grandmother is the only one that paid for my school fees, and she stopped working. I also have a son whose name is James Olley. He is now nearly 2 years old. I have been given the opportunity where I can do more and make my family’s life easier.

My name is Joyline Bongnaim, when I complete my university studies I want to be a surgeon.



ABOUT US

- WFF was established to build on the inspiration and example of Darvall and Ida Wilkins, and to use the power of their legacy to create practical support for the most vulnerable, starting in the islands they were most involved with, now Malampa Province. Both believed passionately that education provided a route out of poverty and into a successful and fulfilling life, and actively pursued this in their working lives.
- We follow this mission through awarding scholarships to enable talented girls from disadvantaged backgrounds to complete their secondary education and to continue on to further learning or training and into their preferred careers. Importantly, our support includes building self-esteem, resilience and instilling leadership qualities.
- We began modestly in 2019, and with funding generously provided by family and close friends we initially established scholarships in two secondary schools on Malekula. This has now grown to 18 scholarships in all, with girls and young women studying in 10 schools and universities across Vanuatu and beyond.
- The goals our scholars are achieving are a source of great admiration and pride to us, and have given us the confidence and motivation to expand our programme to allow more deserving girls like Joyline and Georgia the opportunity to achieve their ambitions.
- With this in mind, we're actively seeking funding from international development agencies, corporate sponsors, private foundations and individual donors so we can build the programme to bring **Hope** to more lives through **Education**.

We welcome your support!





“This is radical, this is life changing and we need more of this work to be done in Vanuatu”

Jilda Shem - Country Manager Wilkins Family Foundation

“We are friends, we are family, we are brothers and sisters, together we can build these children, they will be great leaders, an agent of change to many lives in this nation”

John Kampai - Principal Lakatoro Junior Secondary School

“Education is Hope”

Rossie Caleb - Principal Onesua Presbyterian College

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Support us now...



Dedicated to our families, friends and partners who make this possible, and to the girls who will become future leaders in this amazing nation.

www.wilkinsfamilyfoundation.com.au