



IN BRIEF



ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

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What's the Issue?

The Pacific region has some of the highest rates of violence against women recorded in the world. In countries where prevalence studies have been undertaken, up to 68 per cent of women have reported experiencing physical or sexual violence by a partner in their lifetime. ¹

Despite the severity and extent of violence, services for survivors are limited, and virtually non-existent in remote areas. This issue is particularly critical in the Pacific context, where 80 per cent of Pacific Islanders live in rural areas or on outer islands.

Even when services are available, Pacific women may face other barriers, such as social norms that place blame on survivors, creating stigma, and fostering a culture of silence around the issue. These social and cultural factors make it difficult for women to talk about their experience, let alone report it and seek help. In addition to the devastating human cost of violence against women and girls, the economic costs are also high, with increased burdens to health care, social services, and policing.

Decades of activism and mobilisation by women's movements have put ending violence against women and girls high on national and international agendas. Pacific governments are exercising their political will to end violence against women as they work towards advancing national legislation, policies and action plans. In 2012, Pacific Islands Forum leaders signed the Gender Equality Declaration that condemns violence and commits to ensuring access to essential services for survivors.

Communities in the Pacific region are beginning to break the silence and speak out against violence: work on violence prevention by national governments and civil society organisations is gaining momentum.

Our Solutions

In the Pacific, the UN Women Fiji Multi-Country Office (MCO) Ending Violence against Women and Girls (EVAWG) programme has a holistic approach which centres on three key pillars:

- Supporting Pacific governments to adopt and implement laws and policies that address VAWG and overall gender discrimination and inequality.
- Preventing violence by addressing the main drivers of VAWG by transforming social norms, practices and behaviours that tolerate and condone violence against women and girls.
- Enhancing access to quality, coordinated and survivor centred essential services – social services, health, police and justice - to address immediate needs and prevent violence from re-occurring.

Central to the programme is the Pacific Partnership to End Violence Against Women and Girls (PacPartnership to EVAWG) which brings together governments, civil society organisations, communities and other partners to promote gender equality, prevent violence against women and girls, and increase access to quality response services for survivors. The EUR19.5million programme is funded primarily by the European Union with targeted support from the Australian Government and cost-sharing from UN Women.

The programme has three outcome areas being jointly coordinated by the Pacific Community (SPC) Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT), Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (Forum Secretariat) and UN Women Fiji MCO - also leading overall programme coordination.

UN Women implements the second of the three programme outcomes, aiming to promote gender equitable social norms at individual and community levels to prevent violence against women and girls, and to ensure survivors have access to quality response services.



How We Make a Difference

Recent UN Women Successes From
Around The Pacific:

- **Expanding access to coordinated, quality essential services.**

In Fiji, Kiribati, Tonga and Solomon Islands UN Women is working with government and civil society frontline service providers to develop national service delivery protocols and referral pathways to improve access to social services, health, police, justice and other services for survivors of gender-based violence (GBV). From 2019 this work, which incorporates SAFENET and the Pacific pilot of the UN Joint Global Programme on Essential Services (ESP²) for Women and Girls Subject to Violence, will expand and be supported through the PacPartnership to EVAWG.

- **Transforming harmful social norms that perpetuate GBV.**

Through the PacPartnership to EVAWG, UN Women Fiji MCO aims to transform social norms to prevent violence against women and girls at individual and community levels. This includes working through faith and sport that are powerful channels connecting people and providing a platform to challenge social norms that condone violence. UN Women is building partnerships across faith and sports, as these are key influencers across the Pacific region.

- **Evidence-based research to inform support.**

Impact evaluations on community-based prevention programmes will generate evidence-based research and insights on ‘what works’ – for use immediately to adapt existing interventions - in diverse Pacific communities to transform harmful attitudes, beliefs and norms regarding the acceptability of violence against women in the Pacific.

- **Providing technical assistance and capacity development.**

UN Women brings its technical expertise and its convening role together to drive forward work in the Pacific to stop violence before it starts. In recent years, UN Women has intensified its focus on building regional capacity in primary prevention of VAWG through training and mentoring, and has brought together diverse actors to develop common principles for prevention work in the region.

FOOTNOTES:

1 Findings from the Family Health and Safety Studies (FHSS), conducted by UNFPA and the Pacific Community (SPC) across 11 Pacific countries. Studies are online: <http://pacific.unfpa.org/en/publications?page=0%2C1>

2 UN Women Fiji MCO continues to coordinate the Kiribati and Solomon Islands rollout of the UN Joint Global Programme on Essential Services (ESP) for Women and Girls Subject to Violence in close coordination with the Australian Government, UN partners and government counterparts. The programme is a global partnership with UNFPA, UNDP, WHO, and UNODC

PROGRAMME AT A GLANCE

Timeframe: 2018-2022

Countries: 14 Pacific Island countries and territories

Funding sources: European Union, Australian Government.

Focus Areas:

- Adopting and implementing laws and policies that address violence against women, and the overall gender discrimination and inequality that impedes women from leaving an abusive relationship.
- Addressing the main causes of violence against women, as well as the social norms, practices and behaviours that tolerate and condone the violence, in order to prevent it occurring in the first place.
- Enhancing access for survivors to quality essential services to address their immediate needs and prevent violence from re-occurring.

Our Impact at A Glance:

- Within its first six months, the new PacPartnership to EVAWG assisted more than 200 people with capacity development on GBV counselling plus improved coordination of providers assisting GBV survivors in Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Fiji. It is also assisting community-led approaches in Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa and Tonga to develop faith-based and/or sport-based approaches to EVAWG.
- The Pacific Fund, from 2009 to 2018, has supported 44 organizations across seven countries, reaching more than 600,000 people with violence prevention and response activities; 50,000 survivors of VAW accessing services; 10,000 people trained (staff, community outreach programmes), and supported more than 500 partners across the Pacific region.
- Community awareness activities to end violence against women through the Pacific Fund reached more than 500,000 people, with 80% of those reached being women and girls in rural communities.
- UN Women is strengthening the capacity of national governments to develop and implement robust policies on ending violence against women and girls through targeted technical support.

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The Multi-Country Office headquartered in Fiji covers Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu