



ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS



Violence against women and girls (VAWG) in Pacific countries is among the highest in the world. Evidence shows that up to 68% of Pacific women are reported to be affected.

Considering the accompanying health, social, economic, development and intergenerational consequences, few problems in the Pacific have a more lasting and large-scale effect than violence against women and girls.

Gender-based violence has a substantial economic impact through increased healthcare, social services, and policing costs, as well as devastating emotional and physical consequences for those involved. The impact on children is also enormous. There is now evidence that shows violence against women increases levels of child mortality as well as emotional and behavioural problems.

Despite the severity and extent of the violence, services for survivors are limited and virtually non-existent in remote areas. This is of particular concern as 80% of Pacific Islanders live in rural areas or on outer islands.

Often the traditional silence around the issue makes it difficult for women to talk about their suffering and to

seek help in breaking the cycle of violence. Even when services exist, few access them.

Many women in Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs) don't have equal access to resources and opportunities, and their voices are often suppressed. In many cases, women face social norms demanding that they be obedient to their husbands, therefore placing the blame for the abuse on the women themselves. These norms also often result in women being encouraged to return to their abusive partners.

Despite the enormity of the problem, change is occurring in the region; governments are beginning to advance legislation, policies and national action plans (NAPs) on ending violence against women.

Non-government organisations (NGOs), many of which are funded by UN Women through the Pacific Regional Ending VAW Facility Fund (Pacific Fund), are gradually providing more support to women and families affected by violence.

There is also an appetite for more change and this makes it a historic opportunity to implement a systematic approach to prevent and respond to VAWG in the Pacific.

POLICY TO ACTION: EVAWG IN THE PACIFIC (2013-2017) AT A GLANCE

Aim: For women and girls to live a life free from violence.

Components:

- Strengthening an enabling environment to prevent and respond to VAWG, in line with international standards
- Strengthening the implementation of legislation, policies and national action plans for delivery of multi-sectoral, quality, survivor-focused essential services.
- Strengthening social mobilisation, community leadership and prevention.

2 in 3

women in the Pacific region experience physical and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner or sexual violence from a non-partner in their lifetime.

“IT WAS WELL KNOWN IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD THAT I WAS BEING TREATED SO BADLY BY MY HUSBAND. NO ONE, INCLUDING MY RELATIVES, WAS PREPARED TO HELP ME FOR FEAR THAT THEY WOULD END UP IN A FIGHT WITH MY HUSBAND.”

Female respondent, Family Health and Safety Study, Kiribati.

30%

of women abused by their partners in Vanuatu reported having their work disrupted.

22%

of them had money taken from them by their partner.

ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS IN THE PACIFIC

“From Policy to Action: Ending Violence against Women and Girls in the Pacific” is UN Women’s flagship five-year programme (2013-2017). It aims to help women and girls live a life free from violence and is designed around international and Pacific evidence that promotes a holistic approach.

The programme supports Pacific-led activities to improve the policy environment on ending violence against women and girls as well as to meet the immediate needs, at a community level, of women who are experiencing violence. It supports Pacific organisations in delivering services that meet survivors’ needs, as well as taking steps to prevent violence from occurring in the first place.

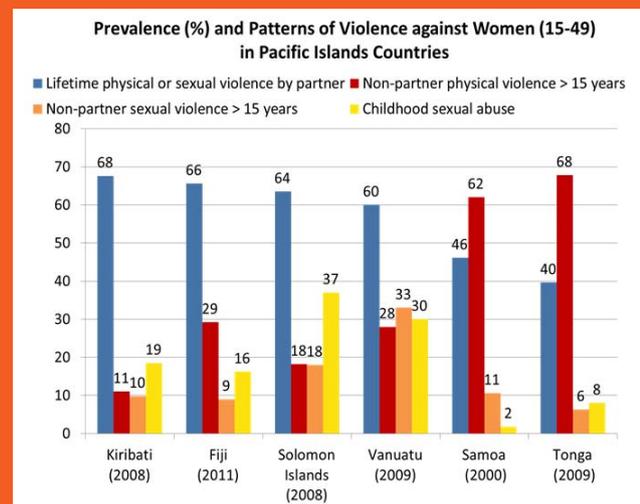
UN Women in the Pacific has been actively working on this issue for the past seven years and the regional programme builds on the organisation’s extensive experience. The groundwork has been laid and UN Women is consolidating and expanding this work across the region to meet the growing demand from countries for technical assistance.

Ultimately UN Women’s programme is about empowering women and men to break the cycle of violence, while also strengthening capacity among duty bearers to manage the associated social and economic costs. Violence against women and girls is a complex issue that requires a long-term and sustainable approach, so the programme offers a step-by-step approach tailored to individual countries and founded on supporting capacity development.

UN Women takes every opportunity to support strengthening evidence-based approaches to ending violence against women and girls.

The organisation provides PICTs with technical assistance in legislation and policy development, as well as the critical needs for implementing such policies. This includes supporting research into the costs of violence against women and implementing policies to address it, strengthening the monitoring of policy implementation, and emphasising multi-disciplinary approaches to violence that involve health, policing, social welfare, education and justice actors.

THE PREVALENCE AND PATTERNS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN



Data from the six Pacific Island countries with completed research on violence against women and girls paint an alarming picture for many Pacific women.

THE PACIFIC REGIONAL ENDING VAW FACILITY FUND

The Pacific Fund is central to UN Women’s Ending VAWG work in the Pacific. It offers NGOs and governments grants of up to US\$100,000 for projects to end VAWG as well as an extensive capacity building programme. Between 2009 and 2013, more than 40 grants – a total of US\$1,235,737 – were authorised across seven countries.

UN Women, through the Pacific Fund, makes immediate investments to support the enhancement and expansion of essential services for survivors.

Key activities include:

- Grants to selected service providers for delivery of services to survivors of VAWG (counselling, medical, and legal assistance) especially in remote and rural areas.
- Intensive capacity building including in-country training, mentoring and technical advisory services.
- Support regional and national level exchanges on promising practices, innovations and evidence.
- Documentation of innovative practices for replication across the region.

JOINT PROGRAMMES IN KIRIBATI AND SOLOMON ISLANDS

A key part of UN Women’s approach is to work jointly with other UN agencies to provide intensive multi-sectoral support to the governments of Kiribati and Solomon Islands in implementing their NAPs on VAWG.

Multi-sectoral, inter-agency, coordinated approaches involving health, social welfare, police, justice and education are central to ending VAWG.

Key areas for assistance are:

- Intensive technical support to the two governments to strengthen whole-of-government governance and coordination mechanisms for NAPs.
- Development of integrated response protocols and referral/coordination mechanisms across sectors.
- Technical support to relevant government ministries and agencies to plan, coordinate and monitor VAWG response services and systems.
- Strengthening coordinated data collection systems.

87%

of women in Tonga have to report their whereabouts to their partner, limiting their freedom of association.

“AFTER ATTENDING THE PEER EDUCATION TRAINING PROGRAMME, I LEARNED THAT IT IS NEVER A GIRL’S FAULT IF SHE IS RAPED OR SEXUALLY ASSAULTED ... THROUGH THE PROGRAMME I WAS ABLE TO HELP MY FRIEND IN HER HARDSHIP.”

Male student participant in National Substance Abuse Advisory Council training, Fiji.



THE WAY FORWARD

- Technical support for developing comprehensive ending VAWG legislation, as well as for developing and adopting policies and NAPs on VAWG.
- Training for parliamentarians and policy makers on the causes and consequences of VAWG.
- Support for Pacific engagement in international and regional inter-government processes.
- Support to ending VAWG costing and mapping exercises on the implementation of services.
- Working with the media to effectively communicate messages on ending VAWG in a responsible and ethical manner.
- Engaging community groups, women's organisations and youth groups in social mobilisation, capacity building and peer support to transform acceptance of VAWG.
- Supporting inter-agency partnerships and communication activities under the UNiTE campaign to end gender-based violence.
- Providing technical support to select Pacific organisations that are designing, implementing and evaluating programmes to end or prevent VAWG.
- Providing financial support to select Pacific organisations to implement innovative prevention interventions.
- Generating regional and country-level evidence on promising practices to prevent VAWG in the Pacific, including models for community mobilisation.
- Technical support to governments to support implementation of integrated response protocols and referral/coordination mechanisms across sectors.
- Implementing curricula on integrated responses to VAWG for leading ministry personnel and UN staff.
- Assisting with integrating gender, human rights and VAWG issues into government training curricula as well as UN and donor-supported sectoral training programmes.

REFERENCES

All statistics, quotes and the page 2 graph: Henriette Jansen, UNFPA, 2013, based on: Fiji: Report forthcoming; Kiribati: http://www.spc.int/hdp/index2.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_view&gid=211&Itemid=44; Samoa: http://www.spc.int/hdp/index.php?option=com_docman&task=cat_view&gid=41&Itemid=44 and http://www.who.int/gender/violence/who_multicountry_study/en/; Solomon Islands: http://www.spc.int/hdp/index2.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_view&gid=49&Itemid=44; Tonga: <http://mfftonga.files.wordpress.com/2012/12/tonga-vaw-report-final-2012.pdf>; Vanuatu: <http://www.ausaid.gov.au/countries/pacific/vanuatu/Documents/womens-centre-survey-womens-lives.pdf>.

CAPTIONS:

Page 1: 1 Billion Rising, March 2013, Fiji. Credit: UN Women/Chloe Chambraud.
Page 3: Men taking part in the 16 Days of Activism campaign in Solomon Islands, 2013. Credit: UN Women/Marni Gilbert.

KEY RESULTS

- In 2013, the Samoa Victim Support Group (SVSG), a UN Women Pacific Fund grantee, established a 24-hour helpline. Since its launch in April 2013, the helpline has had a dramatic impact in Samoa. In the first five months, the service answered more than 1,764 calls, 83 of which were life-threatening domestic violence cases requiring overnight shelter assistance. Not only has access to counselling for survivors of violence against women in Samoa improved but it has also encouraged witnesses to speak out, and in doing so has saved lives.
- Strengthened capacity among regional parliamentarians on ending violence against women, better practices in ending VAWG legislation, and how to integrate and implement Commission on the Status of Women 57 agreed conclusions during the Regional Rights Resource Team regional consultation on human rights.
- Strengthened a broad and inclusive network of multi-sectoral ending VAWG service providers in Kiribati.
- Provided technical assistance on domestic violence to key stakeholders during the drafting of domestic violence legislation in Kiribati and Solomon Islands to promote a comprehensive approach and alignment with child welfare legislation. Advocacy to align draft legislation with international best practice guidelines on ending VAW legislation was also provided.
- Supported prevention programming reaching youth in schools and faith-based community networks in Solomon Islands through UN Women's Pacific Fund. This was the first time many of the people involved had been exposed to information that showed them that violence against women was a crime and a violation of their rights.

For more information please contact:

UN Women
Level 3, Kadavu House
Victoria Parade, Suva, Fiji
asiapacific.unwomen.org
www.facebook.com/unwomenpacific