



ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS



Violence against women and girls is a global issue and a human rights violation. The Pacific region has some of the highest rates of violence against women in the world with evidence showing that up to 68% of Pacific women are affected. This has staggering health, social, economic, development and intergenerational repercussions.

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 effect 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 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 on ending violence against women.

Non-government organisations (NGOs), some of which are funded by UN Women through the Pacific Regional Ending Violence against Women 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 violence against women and girls in the Pacific.

ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS IN THE PACIFIC

Timeframe: 2013-2017

Countries: 15 Pacific Island countries and territories.

Funding sources: Australian Government, UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women, UN Women National Committee of Australia.

Focus areas:

- Strengthening the enabling environment to

prevent and respond to violence against women and girls.

- Strengthening the implementation of legislation, policies and national action plans for delivery of multi-sectoral, quality, survivor-focused services.
- Strengthening social mobilisation, community leadership and prevention.

2 in 3

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

“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.¹

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.

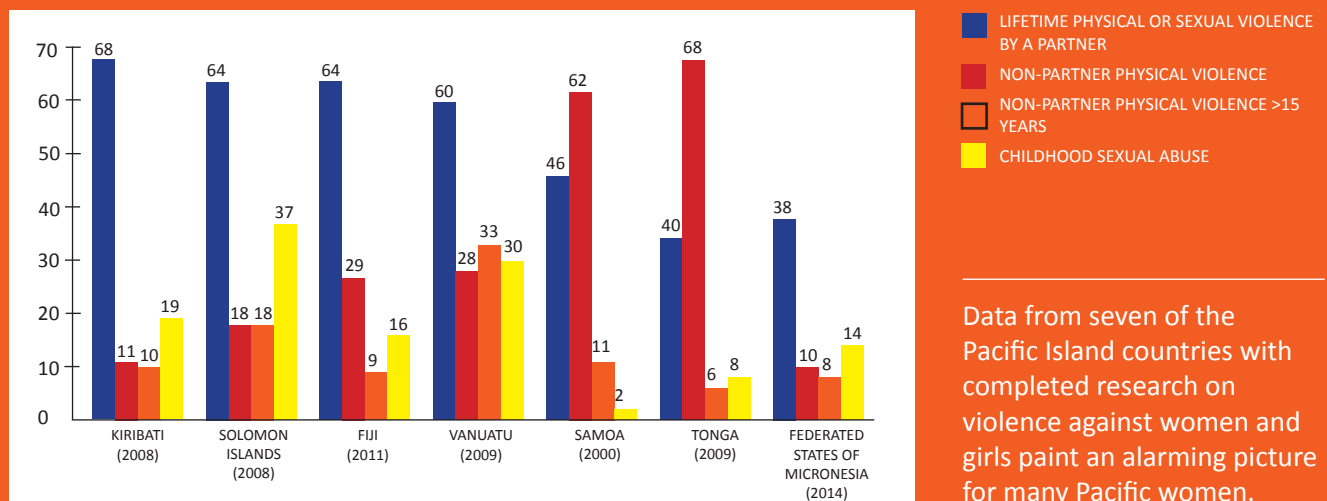
UN Women in the Pacific has been actively working on this issue for the past seven years and the regional programme builds on the organisation’s extensive global experience. UN Women is consolidating and expanding this work across the region to meet the growing demand from countries for technical assistance.

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

PACIFIC REGIONAL ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN FACILITY FUND (PACIFIC FUND)

The Pacific Fund is central to UN Women’s work towards ending violence against women and girls in the Pacific. It offers NGOs and governments grants of up to US\$100,000 for projects in this area as well as an extensive capacity building programme. Since the Fund’s establishment in 2009, 43 grants have been awarded across seven countries, totalling US\$1.7 million.

Key activities include:

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

The Pacific Fund is principally funded by the Australian Government.



JOINT PROGRAMMES IN KIRIBATI AND SOLOMON ISLANDS

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

A key part of UN Women’s approach, therefore, is to work with other UN agencies and the governments of Kiribati and Solomon Islands in implementing their national action plans in order to improve multi-sectoral support services for survivors and their families.

Key areas of assistance are:

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

The Joint Programme in Solomon Islands has received funding from the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women.

87%

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

“I AM HERE TODAY FOR MY CHILDREN’S SAKE, AND BECAUSE I CARE FOR OTHERS AND I ALWAYS WANT TO HELP PEOPLE ESPECIALLY WOMEN WHO FACE VIOLENCE. I SEE PEOPLE WHO ARE VERY GOOD PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNITY BUT ARE VERY DIFFERENT IN THE HOUSE. I WANT TO CHANGE THAT.”

Leanne iking Ataria, volunteer for Gizo-based Family Support Organisation, Solomon Islands.

65%

of women in Federated States of Micronesia agree that physical violence from a partner is acceptable under certain circumstances.

THE WAY FORWARD

- Technical support for developing comprehensive ending violence against women and girls legislation, as well as for developing and adopting appropriate policies and national action plans.
- Training for parliamentarians and policy makers on the causes and consequences of violence against women and girls.
- Support for Pacific engagement in international and regional inter-governmental processes.
- Support for ending violence against women and girls costing and mapping exercises on the implementation of services.
- Working with the media to effectively communicate messages on ending violence against women and girls in a responsible and ethical manner.
- Engaging community groups, women's organisations and youth groups in social mobilisation, capacity building and peer support to help make violence against women and girls unacceptable.
- 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 violence against women and girls.
- Providing financial support to select Pacific organisations to implement innovative prevention interventions.
- Generating regional and country-level evidence on promising practices to prevent violence against women and girls in the Pacific, including models for community mobilisation.
- Technical support for governments in the implementation of integrated response protocols and referral/coordination mechanisms across sectors.
- Implementing curricula on integrated responses to violence against women and girls for ministry personnel and UN staff.
- Assisting with integrating issues of gender, human rights and violence against women and girls into government training curricula as well as UN and donor-supported sectoral training programmes.

REFERENCES

All statistics and the page 2 graph are based on: Federated States of Micronesia: <http://countryoffice.unfpa.org/pacific/drive/FSMFHSSReportweb.pdf>; Fiji: <http://fijiwomen.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/1.pdf>; Kiribati: http://www.spc.int/hdp/index2.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_view&gid=211&Itemid=44; Samoa: <http://countryoffice.unfpa.org/pacific/drive/SamoaFamilyHealthandSafetyStudy.pdf>; Solomon Islands: <http://countryoffice.unfpa.org/pacific/drive/SolomonIslandsFamilyHealthandSafetyStudy.pdf>; Tonga: <http://www.pacificwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/tonga-vaw-report-final-20121.pdf>; Vanuatu: <http://www.pacificwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/womens-centre-survey-womens-lives.pdf>.

¹ <http://asiapacific.unwomen.org/~media/field%20office%20eseasia/docs/publications/2014/4/fiji%20multi%20country%20office%202013%20annual%20report.ashx>

CAPTIONS:

Page 1: 16 Days of Activism, November 2014, Solomon Islands. Credit: UN Women/Patrick Reoka.
Page 3: Pacific Fund grantees and UN Women staff, 2014. Credit: UN Women/Ellie van Baaren.

Updated 17 February 2016

KEY RESULTS

- Projects funded by UN Women's Pacific Fund have reached more than 175,000 people since the Fund was established in 2009, 90 per cent of whom live in rural areas and more than 28,000 of whom are survivors of violence. In 2014, more than 3,000 survivors across four countries – Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa and Tonga – accessed services through local organisations as a result of the support of UN Women's Pacific Fund.
- In 2013 Samoa Victim Support Group (SVSG), a grantee of UN Women's Pacific Fund, established a 24-hour helpline that has had a dramatic impact in Samoa. In the 12 months to March 2015 more than 420 cases were referred to SVSG via the hotline, almost 400 of which were cases of violence against women and children as well as 31 suicide attempts. Not only has access to counselling for survivors of violence in Samoa improved but it has also encouraged witnesses to speak out, and in doing so has saved lives.
- With UN Women's support, the Government of Kiribati established an inclusive network of local multi-sectoral ending violence against women and girls service providers, leading to the development of a shared national plan to implement strategies to end violence against women. Through wide consultation and partnership, a strengthened ministry for women's affairs was developed, and the first legislation on domestic violence was passed.
- In 2014 four Pacific countries – Federated States of Micronesia (one state only), Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu – passed important new legislation covering violence against women. Alongside other partners, UN Women provided support to the governments of Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu in formulating their legislation.

For more information please contact:

UN Women

Level 3, Kadavu House

Victoria Parade, Suva, Fiji

asiapacific.unwomen.org

www.facebook.com/unwomenpacific

www.twitter.com/unwomenpacific