

THE ROAD TO CHANGE

A Pacific Regional Consultation on Prevention of Violence against Women and Girls



Final Consultation Report
December 2016



Why Address Violence Against Women and Girls?

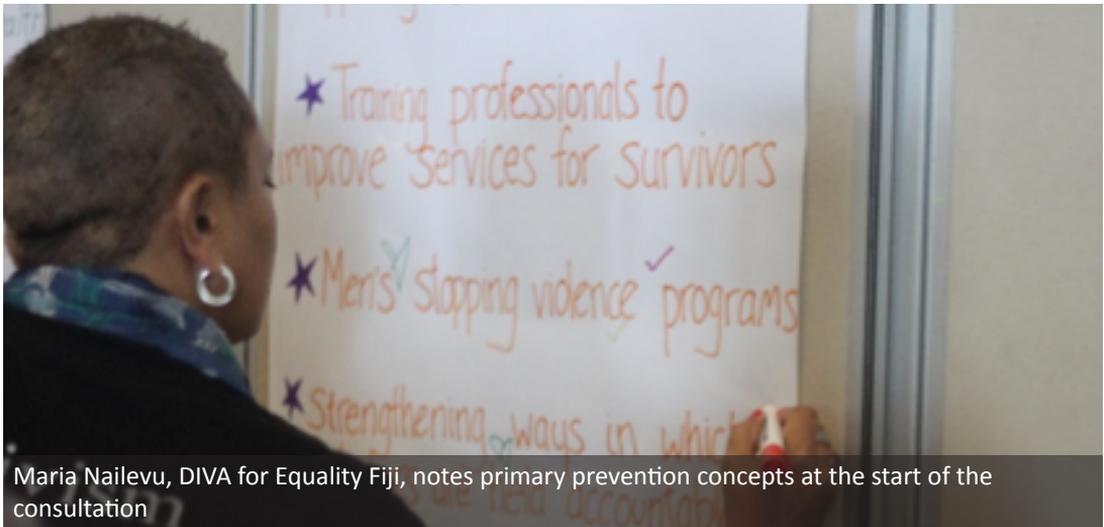
Violence against women and girls (VAWG) is one of the most widespread violations of human rights worldwide and in the Pacific. Family Health and Safety Studies (FHSS) conducted in 11 Pacific countries draw a compelling picture of the nature of VAWG across the region, including its causes, consequences, and service seeking patterns and behaviours. Studies show that 68% of ever-partnered women in Kiribati and 64% of women in Fiji and Solomon Islands report physical or sexual violence from an intimate partner.¹

Violence against women and girls has serious, long-lasting consequences for those directly affected, for their children and families, and for the wider community. Because of this, establishing response services for survivors of violence is a first priority. Across the Pacific, there have been significant investments made in establishing high quality response services, with much of this work being led by the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre (FWCC). While it is critical that response services are in place, they alone will

not stop violence completely.

Rather, a combination of both response and prevention interventions are required to stop violence from happening in the first place. To eliminate violence and to make lasting, positive changes in the lives of women and girls, strategies are needed that address the root causes of violence and promote women and girls as nothing less than equal members of society.

UN Women has an established history of working with governments, faith-based and community organisations across the Pacific towards ending violence against women. Advancing primary prevention² of violence is a critical component of UN Women's global framework to prevent and end all forms of violence against women and girls. In the Pacific, UN Women recognises and values the leadership, experience and knowledge of the Pacific women's movements on addressing VAWG, including violence prevention. UN Women is excited to work with Pacific leaders across government and civil society to continue to advance knowledge, programming and policy on preventing violence against women and girls.



Maria Nailevu, DIVA for Equality Fiji, notes primary prevention concepts at the start of the consultation

¹ FHSS statistics retrieved on 23/11/16 from <http://evaw-global-database.unwomen.org/en>.

² "Primary prevention" refers to actions taken to 'stop violence before it starts', transforming the underlying social norms and power structures that allow violence to occur.

Why a Pacific Regional Consultation on Prevention of Violence Against Women and Girls?

Ground breaking work to end violence against women and girls has been ongoing in the Pacific for decades. More recently governments, spurred by recent gains in EAW policy making, are taking more action to advance prevention policies and programmes. Pioneer women's activists who first developed service provision for survivors of violence are being joined by newer partners from diverse fields, including the faith and sports sectors, in efforts to prevent violence. The increasing number of new actors in the EAW field brings new opportunities, and the need to ensure that all actors are working from a common framework and principles.

Between August 2015 and February 2016, UN Women conducted primary prevention of VAWG workshops for its Pacific Fund³ grantees and key stakeholders across six Pacific countries. Through these trainings regional challenges related to prevention emerged. Most notable were a lack of shared understanding of key concepts related to the issue of VAWG, including social norms change and what constituted gender transformative approaches.

At the same time, there were some very strong prevention programmes in place, including the FWCC Male Advocacy Programme for Women's Human Rights, and innovative approaches to combine prevention and response work such

as the Committees Against Violence Against Women (CAVAW) model designed by the Vanuatu Women's Centre (VWC). There are also new community based programmes in the region, such as the OXFAM Safe Families programme currently implemented in the Solomon Islands.

To advance the regional dialogue and action on primary prevention, UN Women convened a three-day⁵ consultation bringing together key stakeholders from the region to discuss current prevention programming practice, and hear from global practitioners and researchers working on violence prevention. Forty-two participants attended from across seven countries. The content and agenda were developed in collaboration with different members of the women's movement in the Pacific and built on other regional meetings such as the Pacific Women's Network Against Violence Against Women (PWNAVAW) 7th meeting. Donors and development partners from the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), the U.S. Embassy, and the European Union also attended.⁴ The three overarching objectives for the consultation were to:

- Engage in critical conversations and knowledge sharing on current approaches to violence prevention.
- Strengthen our collective understanding of what a transformational approach to violence prevention includes.
- Develop principles to guide prevention work in the Pacific.

³ UN Women's Pacific Regional Ending Violence against Women Facility Fund (Pacific Fund), supported by DFAT, offers NGOs and governments grants for projects to end VAWG, and includes an extensive capacity building programme.

⁴ See full participant list at the end of this report.

⁵ 12-14th September 2016.

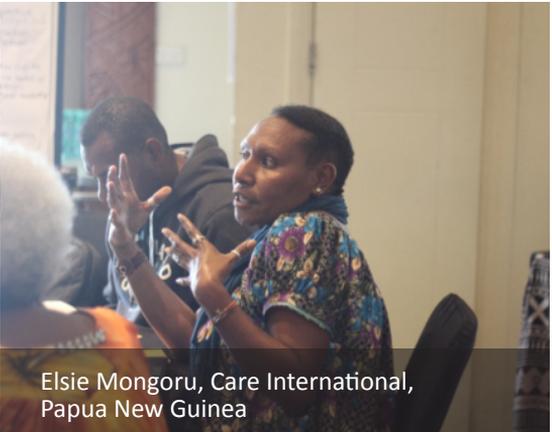
The first two days of the consultation gave participants the opportunity to share experiences and reflect on critical questions through participation on panels focusing on, What Role Can Sports Play in Prevention; Working with Faith Communities to Prevent Violence against Women; The Role of Service Delivery in Prevention; and Power and Transformation in Primary Prevention. Participants also had the opportunity to hear from external speakers including practitioners and researchers focused on primary prevention in Australia, Uganda, and the USA.⁶

The third day of the consultation focused on identifying, discussing and agreeing on key principles to guide primary prevention work to end violence against women and girls in the Pacific.

“As male advocates, our work is based on the principles of women’s human rights and women’s experiences of violence. These principles guide our work and is being lead by a strong women’s network who work to end violence against women in the Pacific.”
– Melkie Anton, FWCC, Male Advocate, PNG



The Sports Panelists: Toluiva Keneti, Samoa Rugby Union; Jacqui Joseph, Equal Playing Field PNG; Vela Naucukidi, Fiji Rugby Union



Elsie Mongoru, Care International, Papua New Guinea



Vanessa Heleta (Talitha Project) and Betty Blake (Ma’a Fafine mo e Famili), participants from Tonga, share experiences

⁶ This included Emma Fulu from the Equality Institute (Australia); Patty Kinnersly from Our Watch (Australia); Quentin Walcott from Connect-NYC (USA); Katy Chadwick from Raising Voices (Uganda).

Eight Key Themes from the Consultation

During the consultation, there was robust discussion, debate and experience sharing. Eight key themes emerged that are essential to consider in prevention efforts across the Pacific.

1. If we are to stop violence, we must first understand it.

The root causes (also referred to as gendered drivers) of violence in the Pacific was a key topic for discussion. Participants agreed that as attention to primary prevention increases and new actors become engaged in prevention work, there must be a shared understanding of the root causes/gendered drivers of VAWG in the Pacific. Key root causes for violence discussed during the meeting and evidenced by the prevalence studies in the Pacific include:

- **Condoning violence against women and girls.** Examples given include: violence against women being considered an acceptable form of discipline; a belief that when a woman is beaten by her husband then “she must have done something wrong”; and women and girls being seen as objects to be owned or used, or as ‘outsiders’ to their in-laws’ community who cannot expect protection (as in the case of nofotane in Samoa).
- **Men’s control of decision-making and limits to women’s independence.** Examples given include: men making decisions about money; and men making decisions about when to have sex. Participants noted that men’s control can be strengthened by practices that may differ from context to context. For example Solomon Islands participants shared that the practice of paying bride price reinforced men’s belief that they should retain control in their relationships.
- **Stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity.** Examples given include: the idea that women are submissive and polite; and that to be a good

“To approach broad masses of youth, rugby coaches have been selected as educators – but first they need to become experts in domestic violence, so that they can talk to youths and parents.”
– Toluiva Keneti, Samoa Rugby Union, Samoa

wife involves meeting a certain standard of housework and bearing children early. Men on the other hand must be strong and not show emotion.

Participants noted several times that the Pacific has 11 countries with completed VAWG prevalence studies. These studies provide rich information about the nature and drivers of violence at a country level and should be used to deepen understanding about the problem and develop programmes.

2. Changing harmful social norms that condone and/or perpetuate violence against women and girls is fundamental to gender equality and eliminating violence against women and girls.

Programmes challenging the harmful social norms that underpin violence against women and girls are ongoing in a number of countries. However, consultation participants acknowledged that systematic programming and policies that support social norms change are needed in the region. In order to advance effective programming, practitioners must possess a nuanced understanding of the social norms at play in their communities, and have a developed strategy to replace harmful social norms with new, positive norms.



Shamima Ali, Fiji Women's Crisis Centre

“ What happens when you go back to your your communities? [Sports] players note that it's difficult to go back to families and communities where the new norms are not embraced.”

– Pauline Soaki, MWYCFA, Solomon Islands

Consultation participants discussed the need for training on how to facilitate social norms change work at the community level and the need to go through an individual process of change, to ensure that practitioners are able to authentically

do social norms change work at the community level.

Transforming existing social norms that perpetuate violence against women requires a long-term, systematic approach at all levels of society to effectively and sustainably create positive change in attitudes, beliefs, and behaviour, and create new norms upholding respectful relationships and gender equality. Education (formal and non-formal), faith and sports were identified as strong pillars of Pacific society that can support harmful social norms, or be leveraged to promote and entrench positive norms.

Participants identified the need for transformative programming that engages communities and institutions holistically – for example, if sports are the entry point, there is a need to work on gender equality and women's empowerment in sports, to

have male and female advocates, and to promote social norms of zero tolerance for violence all at the same time.

3. Violence prevention work requires accountability to ensure that our work is grounded in the lived realities, ideas and leadership of women and girls.

The issue of accountability came up repeatedly during the consultation. Participants noted the need to be accountable to women and girls first when designing and implementing a prevention programme. Participants

“ We are accountable first and foremost to the women and girls we serve.”
– Lynffer Wini Maltungtung,
Family Support Centre,
Solomon Islands

noted the multiple types and levels of accountability (i.e. to donors, to regional and global instruments) when doing violence prevention and response work. Ultimately though, the consultation focused on programmatic accountability to women and girls and the need to ensure that programmes to ‘engage men’ did not take focus away from the violence women and girls face. The FWCC Male Advocacy model was a best practice example from the Pacific, especially in relation to men’s accountability to women’s voices and experiences. Consultation participants were largely united in the approach that women and girls remain at the centre of all prevention efforts.

4. Effective prevention programming requires a community-based approach, ensuring that concepts used are well-understood by communities and are

relevant to their experience.

There is a need to promote community-based approaches to prevention without compromising a survivor-centred approach to service delivery. The potential for tension between community and individual rights requires more discussion and unpacking. Recognising the deeply influential role of the church in communities across the region, participants from faith-based

“ We need to have a deep knowledge of communal rights and individual rights, and never move from the stance that women have the right not to be violated.”
– Shamima Ali, Fiji
Women’s Crisis Centre, Fiji

organisations shared the work that they are doing to shift the patriarchal values held by some church leaders and congregations. Participants discussed the need to find language that can bridge Biblical and rights-based perspectives, such as by emphasising the dignity of all and God’s intention for all to live in their full abundance.

5. Prevention requires an intersectional approach that is inclusive of diverse women and girls.

Participants encouraged service providers and practitioners to intensify their efforts to be inclusive, to name and unpack the specific rights of diverse groups of women. Participants noted that service providers and those doing community based prevention work must recognise the different power dynamics at play and the importance of understanding individual situations.

Participants noted that it is the responsibility of service providers to ensure diverse

communities of women, such as lesbian, bisexual and transgender women and women with disabilities, among others, know they are welcomed in the various services and programmes.

It was clear that in order to develop a meaningful Prevention Framework for the Pacific, it is imperative to better understand how violence is experienced among different groups of women and to ensure there is a process in place to meaningfully include all groups of diverse women in the formulation of prevention policy and programming.

6. Programming must be contextually appropriate for the Pacific, and must recognise the diversity of the region.

Participants held up examples of good practice in prevention programming in the

region, and noted the need to improve monitoring, evaluation and documentation of successful home-grown programming. Participants shared that rather than replicate models from outside the region, effective programming combines deep knowledge of the specific community with the elements that make up best practice in programming. Tools that can support knowledge of the community include the VAWG prevalence studies.

Elements of best practice in prevention programming include: programming that is designed based on a clear understanding of what we are trying to change and how; a long-term approach that addresses the root

“As for me personally, I don’t feel that I am disabled until I am trying to access a service.”
–Lanieta Tuimabu, Fiji Disabled Peoples Federation, Fiji

“We need to strengthen prevention together with response and look for areas of collaboration, not taking space alone but complementing and expanding space so we can reach out to the last woman.”
– Reijjeli Mawa, Ministry of Women, Children & Poverty Alleviation, Fiji



Ruth Dovo, Vanuatu Christian Council, Vanuatu



Miki Wali, Haus of Khameleon, Fiji

causes in a manner that transforms gender norms; opportunities to engage women and men in different ways; opportunities for people to practice new behaviours and skills; and programming that has an impact beyond the target group, in the wider community.

7. Integration of prevention and response is critical to ending VAWG in the Pacific.

Service delivery across the Pacific is often limited to capital cities or main islands of each nation, while 80% of the population lives in rural or remote locations. Service providers shared the innovative approaches they are using to reach more women, including through mobile and long-distance services. There is a need for prevention efforts to be rolled out extensively, but participants highlighted that this cannot be in place of advancing access to quality services for women and girls who experience violence. Work to prevent VAWG must be informed by service providers who work directly with survivors, and by the lived realities of women and girls. Prevention and response to violence

go hand in hand - they cannot be separated. It is recommended that joint strategies be in place that adequately expand service delivery and prevention efforts to ensure that one does not eclipse the other.

8. There is a need to develop enabling infrastructure to support high quality prevention programming.

Participants highlighted several structural needs, including partnership; a robust coordination mechanism; sustained funding; and the need for a well-trained workforce that demonstrate the transformational change that is the objective of programming. The latter is increasing in importance as the number of actors working in prevention of VAWG increases.

Six Principles

Building on these key themes, participants developed six principles to underpin prevention efforts in the region. The principles are a foundational component of a regional framework to ensure best practice approaches to prevention of violence against women and girls.

Prevention programming in the Pacific should:

1. Be Accountable to Women and Girls.

Programmes to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls must be guided by the voices and experience of women and girls. Participation and transparency are key elements of accountability, and consultations with women and girls must begin at the earliest possible stage of programme design and continue throughout the programme cycle.

2. Do No Harm.

Whatever the programme or intervention, the well-being of survivors and all women and girls must be prioritised. All programming must include ongoing risk analysis and be conducted by trained staff.

3. Be Grounded in a Rights-based Approach.

Violence against women and girls is a human rights violation as set out in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, as well as regional human rights instruments. Women's human rights, including their rights to physical integrity, agency and autonomy must be at the centre of prevention efforts. Measures to prevent violence must be consistent with other rights of women, e.g. their right to freedom

of movement and to full participation in education, employment, entrepreneurship, politics and society more broadly.

4. Be Inclusive.

All women and girls, regardless of location, sexual orientation, gender identity, or physical ability must be able to participate in or access programming. Duty bearers, activists, service providers and implementing organizations should engage in a continual process of reflection on biases to ensure that they do not unintentionally create barriers to women and girls' participation.

5. Be Gender Transformative.

Prevention approaches must identify and challenge the different gender norms and roles that affect women and men and contribute to violence and women's subordinate status. Where the gender norms are negative and condone or promote violence against women and girls they should be replaced with positive norms demonstrating respect, balanced power and shared decision making.

6. Be Informed by Context.

Programming must build on the knowledge and experience of existing women's groups, networks, and services in the Pacific. Interventions must be developed or adapted in a manner that is appropriate to the community it will be implemented in.



Ume Wainetti, National Coordinator of the Papua New Guinea Family and Sexual Violence Action Committee



Kepreen Ve'etutu, UN Women, Tonga and Pauline Soaki, Ministry of Women, Youths, Children and Family Affairs, Solomon Islands

The Road Ahead

Supporting the Development of Regional and National Prevention Frameworks across the Pacific.

The Road to Change Pacific Regional Consultation on Prevention of VAWG, and the resulting Principles, are a crucial first step supporting the development of regional - and national - prevention frameworks across the Pacific region. UN Women aims to work in close partnership with Pacific governments and civil society leaders on advancing a prevention agenda across the Pacific. In 2017, UN Women will identify key 'co-conveners' in moving a Regional Prevention Framework forward. It is envisaged this Regional Framework will be finalised by mid-2017 and will inform National

Prevention consultations. The Framework will help guide policy and programming focused on prevention of VAWG across the region, and will inform national consultations.

Recommendations for the Development of a Pacific Regional Prevention Framework on Violence Against Women and Girls, based on the discussions and outcomes of the Road to Change Consultation.

Participants from the regional consultation already offered critical feedback in the overarching design and contents of a Regional Framework. Some of the key points coming out of the consultation which should inform the development of the Regional Prevention Framework include:

1. Build on the six guiding principles agreed at the consultation, as a key mechanism for ensuring quality and consistency across prevention work in the region.

2. Include an explanatory model of violence based on the research done in the Pacific region. The Framework should be explicit in the language it uses to centre women and girls and articulate the focus on the violence they face. The framework should clearly address gender inequality as a key driver of violence against women and girls.
3. Describe how work to prevent VAWG at different levels (individual, community, societal) is mutually reinforcing, and emphasise the need for a coordinated and consistent approach. Service delivery is integral to effective prevention in the Pacific, and must be considered at all levels.
4. Clearly articulate the role of key stakeholders in the region around prevention of VAWG. Many sectors, institutions, community groups and individuals have a role to play in the prevention of VAWG. Prevention work is most effective when stakeholders work in partnership, ensuring that work reaches different population groups, people at different stages of the life cycle, and through multiple entry points.
5. Include a broad theory of change that promotes accountability and provides a clear basis for evaluation. The Framework will identify priority actions to progress coordinated prevention efforts, with expected outcomes and measurements of success.
6. Articulate the key infrastructure (resources and arrangements) needed to advance prevention at all levels, including governmental commitments; human resources and capacity; coordination mechanisms; and integration of prevention and service delivery.
7. Ensure there is a clear link between service delivery and prevention. It is essential that where prevention programming takes place, access to essential services for survivors is available.



Rev. Sereima Lomaloma, House of Sarah Fiji, speaking on the faith panel.

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Participant List

Fiji

Lanieta Tuimabu, Fiji Disabled Peoples Federation
Maria Nailevu, DIVA for Equality
Miki Wali, Haus of Khameleon
Reijieli Mawa, Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation
Rev. Sereima Lomaloma, House of Sarah
Shabina Khan, UN Women
Shamima Ali, Fiji Women's Crisis Centre
Tevita Seruilumi, Male Advocate
Vela Naucukidi, Fiji Rugby Union

Kiribati

Froline Takaa, Ministry of Women, Youth and Social Affairs
Tiero Tetabea, Kiribati Family Health Association

Papua New Guinea

Elsie Mongoru, Care International
Eriko Fufurefa, Kafe Urban Settlers Women's Association
Jacqui Joseph, Equal Playing Field
Melkie Anton, Male Advocate
Miriam Dogimab, FHI 360
Ume Wainetti, Family Sexual Violence Action Committee

Samoa

Lina Chang, Samoa Victims Support Group
Toluiva Keneti, Samoa Rugby Union

Solomon Islands

Elmah Panisi, Live and Learn
Lynffer Wini-Maltungtung, Family Support Centre
Pauline Soaki, Ministry of Women, Youths, Children and Family Affairs
Samantha Kereka, Oxfam Safe Families Programme
Shalom Waita, UN Women

Tonga

Ana Bing Fonua, Ministry of Internal Affairs
Betty Blake, Ma'a Fafine mo e Famili

Fuiva Kavaliku, National Centre for Women and Children
Kelianita Pongi, Women and Children Crisis Centre
Kepreen Ve'etutu, UN Women
Ofa Guttenbeil-Likiliki, Women and Children Crisis Centre
Vanessa Heleta, Talitha Project

Vanuatu

John Joe, Male Advocate
Lotty Riri, World Vision
Lynrose Tule, Vanuatu Women's Centre
Merilyn Tah, Vanuatu Women's Centre
Ruth Dovo, Vanuatu Christian Council

Regional

Bronwyn Frasier, Uniting World
Laisani Peterson, UNICEF
Lautoa Faletau, Australian Federal Police
Nga Utanga, Pacific Prevention of Domestic Violence Programme

Additional facilitators and presenters

Emma Fulu, The Equality Institute
Heidi Lehmann, The Lehmann Group
Katy Chadwick, Raising Voices
Patty Kinnersly, Our Watch
Quentin Walcott, Connect NYC!

Development partners

Barbara Caleres-Pereira, European Union
Eric Aldrich, US Embassy
Linda Peterson, Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development
Nilesh Goundar, Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Seema Naidu, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
Virisila Buadromo, Independant Consultant

UN Women Fiji Multi-Country Office

Abigail Erikson	Kolianita Alfred
Aleta Miller	Luisa Vodonaivalu
Alia Bloom	Lauretta Ah Sam
Dominique Maidment	SandrineTonoukouin
Kate Davidson	Taina Williams



