

Pacific Partnership to End Violence Against Women and Girls (Pacific Partnership)



SOLOMON ISLANDS COUNTRY SUMMARY

Updated November 2020

Solomon Islands is a priority country of the Pacific Partnership to End Violence Against Women and Girls (Pacific Partnership) programme.

Violence against women and girls is recognised worldwide as a social, political, and public health problem as well as a fundamental violation of human rights.

Solomon Islands has one of the highest documented rates of violence against women and girls in the world with a reported **64 percent¹ of women experiencing physical or sexual violence in their lifetime** – many experiencing severe forms of physical partner violence. Research indicates this gender-based violence is most likely connected to social norms around the acceptability of violence against women as a form of discipline.

The Pacific Partnership programme brings together governments, civil society organisations, communities and other partners to promote gender equality, prevent violence against women and girls (VAWG), and increase access to quality response services for survivors.

Pacific Partnership Priorities in Solomon Islands

The improvement of survivor-centred services is the focus for Solomon Islands, under the programme. The Pacific Partnership activities in Solomon Islands revolve around two key outcomes.

1. Improving access to quality, essential services for survivors of gender-based violence (led by UN Women)

The programme advances international best practice, adapted to the Pacific context, to improve quality and access to essential services for survivors of gender-based violence.

Under this area of work, UN Women provides technical support and funding to the Solomon Islands Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs (MWYCFA), the Family Support Centre (FSC) and the Malaita Christian Care Centre (MCCC) to help strengthen the overall governance and coordination of essential services (health, police and justice, social services) and technical and financial support to improve social services.

ABOUT PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP

The Pacific Partnership is funded primarily by the European Union, and the Governments of Australia and New Zealand, and UN Women, and is led by the Pacific Community (SPC), UN Women and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat.

In Solomon Islands, two of the three coordinating agencies have Pacific Partnership activities: UN Women and PIFS.

In addition to Solomon Islands, other countries and territories in the Pacific region benefiting from the five-year programme include, but are not limited to Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Timor Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

The programme operates to the end of 2022.





This involves work with local front-line service providers to strengthen access to, and quality of social services for survivors, including but not limited to: strengthening disability inclusive services; adapting services to meet the needs of women and girls with diverse sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and sex characteristics (SOGISEC)ⁱⁱ; improving gender-based violence counselling and shelter responses; and supporting innovative models to increase access for women and girls in remote and hard to reach locations.

2020-21 initiatives activities supported by UN Women include:

Supporting national and provincial coordination mechanisms

Enhancing levels of funding and technical support to MWYCFA to coordinate the rollout of the existing

- **National SAFENET Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and coordinated referral pathways for gender-based violence survivors**, developed by the SAFENET network of government and non-government organisations (NGOs) working with survivors of gender-based violence in Solomon Islands. SAFENET, initially funded through Essential Services Programme and now by the Pacific Partnership, has been operating for more than eight years.
- Providing technical support and funding to **MWYCFA to strengthen and coordinate provincial SAFENET referral systems**. In all nine provinces there are informal gender-based violence networks operating, similar to SAFENET, that need to be formalised and interconnected with each other, and within the national SAFENET structure, SOPs, protocols and government policies.
- Supporting MWYCFA with technical support and funding for the implementation of the **National Counselling Guidelines and Ethics and Practice Standard for Domestic Violence**. The framework will assist government meet legislative requirements under the Family Protection Act, by outlining the processes, core elements and standards to guide the delivery of quality DV counselling services, while also guiding the registration, de-registration, supervision, monitoring and accreditation processes.

Supporting women's crisis centres and NGOs

- Providing direct granting and technical support to the Family Support Centre and Malaita Christian Care Centre as frontline service providers to ensure women and girls have access to quality essential services This approach will include working with partners to develop and implement a plan to train and monitor provincial staff providing gender-based violence and domestic violence support including gender-based violence counselling. The training will be survivor-centred, especially for first responders.

2. Monitoring and reporting government commitments to gender equality and EAWG (led by PIFS)

2020-21 initiatives targeting non-state actors supported by PIFS include:

Solomon Islands' non-state actors (NSAs), including civil society organisations and women's groups, also benefit from Pacific Partnership through **strategic engagement, capacity development for monitoring the implementation of national commitments on gender equality, and projects support through small grants**. The PIFS' NSA component of the Pacific Partnership programme works in close concert with the overall approaches supported by UN Women. In 2020, the NSA programme supported the **active engagement of women's CSOs** like the Family Support Centre (FSC), as well as the Honiara Youth Council and the Pacific Islands Climate Action Network to engage in PIFS consultative mechanisms including the Annual Regional CSO Forum, 2020 Virtual Forum Economic Ministers' Meeting (FEMM), CROP Heads and NSA Executive Meetings. NSAs also participated in other activities including the Regional Non-State Actor Capacity Building Workshop, the development and validation of a **Policy Monitoring Toolkit on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls, strategic planning toward a Leaders and Mentors Initiative for 'Gender Equality Agents for Change'** and providing technical input toward training modules for NSAs and governments on gender responsive budgeting.





BACKGROUND

In the Solomon Islands, the 2009 national prevalence study shows that nearly 2 in 3, or 64 percent of ever-partnered women, aged 15-49, reported experiencing physical or sexual violence, or both, by an intimate partner. Forty-two percent of women reported experiencing physical and/or sexual partner violence in the past 12 months. Generally, levels of intimate partner violence were higher in Honiara than in the provinces. These higher levels could relate to the wider availability of alcohol and social problems such as unemployment, overcrowding and high cost of living in the capital city, which may make women more vulnerable to abuse. Women in Solomon Islands are more likely to experience severe forms of physical partner violence, such as punching, kicking, or having a weapon used against them, rather than just moderate violence.ⁱⁱⁱ

There is strong political will in Solomon Islands to advance a national strategy for primary prevention of violence, that brings together all stakeholders and agrees to a common approach. This is largely driven by concern over the significant levels of gender-based violence affecting Solomon Islands’ women and girls. Key legislation in Solomon Islands is the Family Protection Act 2014.

Solomon Islands’ scattered geography presents formidable challenges to the delivery of violence against women and girls services leaving women and children in rural areas particularly vulnerable. The bulk of services are available only in Honiara and therefore a primary strategy of Pacific Partnership’s is to support the decentralisation of services

ⁱFindings from the Family Health and Safety Studies (FHSS), conducted by UNFPA and the Pacific Community (SPC) across 13 Pacific countries including Solomon Islands. Studies are online: <http://pacific.unfpa.org/en/publications?page=0%2C1>

ⁱⁱSOGISEC is a term that has evolved from the more commonly known acronym LGBTQI+ which is for people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex. UN Women is now using this term to ensure we are using terms most preferred by the communities themselves.

ⁱⁱⁱFindings from the Family Health and Safety Studies (FHSS), conducted by UNFPA and the Pacific Community (SPC) across 13 Pacific countries including Solomon Islands. Studies are online: <http://pacific.unfpa.org/en/publications?page=0%2C1>

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Imagery inspired by empowering female-specific tattoo motifs used in the Pacific region.

