



Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development

Kiribati Country Plan Summary

Background

Through a 10-year commitment, Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development (*Pacific Women*) connects more than 170 gender equality initiatives supported by Australia and implemented by over 160 partners across 14 Pacific Island countries.

Pacific Women is one of the largest global commitments to gender equality. It partners with governments, local and international non-government organisations (NGOs), private sector, disabled people's organisations, coalitions and others to improve the political, economic and social opportunities of Pacific women and to end violence against women and girls. Its emphasis is on partnerships and locally-driven development.

Providing technical, knowledge sharing and convening support to the portfolio of partners is *Pacific Women's* Support Unit, working to improve the long-term impact of gender equality projects in the Pacific. The Support Unit's office is in Suva, Fiji, with a sub-office in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea.

Pacific Women was announced at the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' meeting in August 2012. It commits up to AUD320 million over 10 years in 14 Pacific Islands Forum member countries.

Pacific Women initiatives respond to the commitments in the 2012 Pacific Leaders' Gender Equality Declaration, while also supporting Australia's Pacific Step-up and its Partnerships for Recovery approach of working together with Pacific partners to address COVID-19 impacts on women, girls and their communities.

The outcomes sought through *Pacific Women* are:

- **Ending Violence against Women:** Violence against women is reduced and survivors of violence have access to support services and to justice.
- **Economic Empowerment:** Women have expanded economic opportunities to earn an income and accumulate economic assets.
- **Leadership and Decision Making:** Women, and women's interests, are increasingly and effectively represented and visible through leadership at all levels of decision making.
- **Enhancing Agency:** Women in the Pacific will have a stronger sense of their own agency, supported by a changing legal and social environment and through increased access to the services they need.

Since 2012, an estimated 1.22 million Pacific Island women, men and children have been able to access services and information across 14 partner countries through initiatives supported by *Pacific Women*.



Kiribati

Kiribati is a republic in the Pacific, made up of one main island and 32 coral atolls. Kiribati's population of around 115,000 people face distinctive economic, environmental and social issues. Climate change, including the challenges of rising sea levels, soil salination and drought, are key concerns of Kiribati's population.

Kiribati is currently ranked 137 of 188 countries on the Human Development Index.¹ With respect to access to education, there are more girls enrolled in secondary schools than boys. However, progress is less encouraging on other indicators that demonstrate the status of women. These include the low economic participation of women, low use of contraceptives (with a quarter of women reporting an unmet need for contraception, especially among 15–24 year old women) and an increase in teen pregnancies (from 39 per 1,000 females in 2005 to 51 per 1,000 females in 2010).²

Pacific Women Country Plan

Through *Pacific Women*, the Australian Government will spend approximately **\$9.9 million over 10 years** (2012–2022) on initiatives supporting women's empowerment in Kiribati.

Country Plans are the mechanism through which *Pacific Women* outcomes and activities are planned and agreed between DFAT and counterpart governments, following extensive national consultations. They provide detail on what will be funded and how these funding decisions are made. The Kiribati Country Plan was developed following a document review and in-country design mission in April 2013. Consultations were held with stakeholders on Tarawa, representing government ministries, civil society, the private sector and regional organisations. The joint Australian Government and Government of Kiribati-UN Women Preparatory Assistance Project was closely involved in the process.

The first three-year Kiribati Country Plan included four activities valued at \$1.8 million from 2013 to 2016. Further activities until 2020 have subsequently been added to the Country Plan. During the design process, viable entry points for women's income generation were difficult to identify, especially for rural women. One activity under the Country Plan is therefore a women's economic empowerment feasibility study, investigating strategies that respond to women's low income and decision-making autonomy.

The majority of funding under the Kiribati Country Plan supports the implementation of the National Policy and Strategic Action Plan to Eliminate Sexual and Gender Based Violence 2011–2021. This is being done through support to a women and children's support centre and provision for the existing Catholic Church crisis centre.

The Country Plan underwent a review in June 2018 to assess progress and make recommendations on its future direction.

In addition to *Pacific Women*, DFAT makes an important contribution to gender equality in Kiribati through mainstreaming gender outcomes in the aid program, as well as through political, diplomatic and corporate activities.

¹ Human Development Index 2017, United Nations Development Programme. <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/KIR>

² Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, 2012. Pacific regional MDGs tracking report, as quoted in *Pacific Women's Kiribati Country Plan* 2013-2016.



Rationale for activities in the Country Plan

Kiribati ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women in 2004. The Government of Kiribati has taken steps to support gender equality with the creation of the Ministry of Women, Youth, Sports and Social Affairs in 2012. This ministry is responsible for progressing women's empowerment and implementing the Strategic Action Plan 2011–2021 to support the elimination of sexual and gender-based violence. The rationale for providing a suite of support to the ministry is to promote Kiribati driven responses to the inequalities faced by women in Kiribati.

(a) Increasing women's leadership and decision making

There are three women in Kiribati's 46-member national parliament (6.5 per cent). At the local government level, there are 10 women serving as councillors out of a total of 332. While rates of women in political leadership remain low, women hold the majority of senior leadership positions within the public sector. Overall, there are 73 women high-level government officials compared to 66 men.

(b) Increasing economic opportunities for women

Economically, Kiribati has the lowest gross domestic product per capita in the Pacific region at USD2,220 (followed by USD2,363 in Papua New Guinea). For women, limited economic opportunities are a reality of everyday life where a single woman heads one in five households. Remittances from overseas account for 6.4 per cent of the gross domestic product in Kiribati. They are described as a 'lifeline' for many households.

The 2009 Kiribati Demographic and Health Survey noted that only two in 10 married women who had cash earnings decided for themselves how it was spent.³ Around one quarter of women reported that they have no say in decisions relating to household purchases.

The lack of economic opportunities generally in Kiribati compound issues around gender equality. Fisheries and subsistence agriculture account for a quarter of the gross domestic product and involve most of the population. Kiribati has significant economic limitations due to its physical remoteness, coupled with irregular and costly outer island transport. This limits opportunities for integration with regional and international markets.

(c) Reducing violence against women and expanding support services

Violence against women and girls is widespread in Kiribati. The Kiribati Family Health and Support Study found that 68 per cent of women aged 15–49 years had experienced sexual or physical violence from their partner.⁴ Forms of violence included punching, kicking and the use of weapons; deaths have also been recorded and 90 per cent of women report controlling behaviour by their partner. Social norms dictate that women must be obedient to their husbands and violence against women has traditionally been accepted.

In 2014, the Government committed to ending sexual and gender-based violence with the passing of the *Te Rau N Te Mwenga Act (Kiribati Family Peace Act) 2014*. This Act includes measures to prevent and respond to domestic violence, gives direction on how survivors can be supported and includes provisions to hold offenders accountable.

³ Secretariat of the Pacific Community, 2009. *Kiribati Demographic and Health Survey 2009*.

⁴ Kiribati Ministry of Internal Affairs, 2010. *Kiribati Family Health and Support Study: A study on violence against women and children*.



(d) Enhancing women's agency

Strengthening civil society groups that have feminist, activist and/or disability mandates forms part of *Pacific Women's* work to promote women's agency. Support for coalition building among these groups is showing positive results in terms of awareness about and action on gender equality. Continuing and expanding this work with other partners will contribute to transformational social change.



Table 1: Bilateral Activities

PROJECT NAME AND PARTNER	DESCRIPTION	BUDGET
Outcome: Economic Empowerment		
Feasibility study to determine viable economic opportunities for women in Kiribati (Consultant)	Conducted a feasibility study on women's economic opportunities across three islands in Kiribati (Kiritimati, South Tarawa and Butaritari), including consideration of microcredit access options for women on outer islands.	\$49,093 (2017–2018)
Outcome: Ending Violence against Women		
Support to KWCSO operations (Kiribati Women and Children Support Centre)	Supporting the Kiribati Women and Children Support Centre to continue to the provision of psychosocial support and counselling services to survivors of domestic violence.	\$260,000 (2019–2020)
Strengthening Peaceful Villages in Kiribati (UN Women)	Changing community and individual behaviours to prevent violence through local approaches.	\$1,539,944 (2017–2020)
Respectful Relationships (Ministry of Women, Youth, Sports and Social Affairs, Women's Development Division)	Implementing a school-based program that incorporates a respectful relationships program into the school curriculum.	\$41,455 (2016–2020)
Establishment of the Kiribati Women and Children's Support Centre (Kiribati Family Health Association)	Kiribati's first formal support centre for women and children survivors of violence. Supported the establishment of the Kiribati Women and Children's Support Centre, including funding the recruitment and training of staff, which opened in 2017. Provided technical assistance to facilitate a three-year strategic plan for the centre.	\$368,767 (2014–2019)
Support to the Domestic Violence and Sexual Offences (DVSO) Unit (Kiribati Police Domestic Violence Unit)	Extended the office of the Kiribati Police Domestic Violence and Sexual Offences Unit to provide survivors of violence with temporary shelter and comfort while awaiting referral to relevant services. Trained over 200 outer island police officers, special constables and village wardens.	\$143,725 (2014–2017)



PROJECT NAME AND PARTNER	DESCRIPTION	BUDGET
Judiciary enabling rights outreach to the vulnerable (Kiribati Magistrate Court)	Supported consultations on the <i>Family Peace Act 2014</i> and training on human rights and sexual and gender-based violence for lay magistrates on Tarawa and outer islands. Supported community understanding of the court system and services in relation to ending violence against women.	\$125,398 (2014–2017)
Improved infrastructure and training for Ministry of Health staff (Kiribati Ministry of Health)	Funded the extension of an existing gynaecology room in the main hospital in South Tarawa to enable improved access to treatment, care and referral services for survivors of violence. Supported training of frontline officers working with survivors of sexual violence.	\$150,000 (2014–2016)
Support for the Ministry of Women, Youth, Sports and Social Affairs to undertake work to support Ending Violence against Women (Ministry of Women, Youth, Sports and Social Affairs, Women's Development Division)	Funded project staff to support the Government of Kiribati's implementation and monitoring of gender equality activities, including the Shared Implementation Plan on Ending Violence Against Women, the UN Joint Program on Ending Violence Against Women and the Respectful Relationships initiative.	\$370,904 (2014–2019)
Pacific Partnership to End Violence Against Women and Girls (UN Women and Kiribati partners)	Funding for key projects under the Pacific Partnership to End Violence Against Women include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SASA! adaptation – Strengthening Peaceful Villages project (Ministry of Women, Youth, Sports and Social Affairs) Evaluation of the Strengthening Peaceful Villages project (Equality Institute) 	\$7,627,948 (2018–2022) ⁵
Outcome: Enhancing Agency		
Restoration of Kiribati women's umbrella organisation – AMAK (Ministry of Women, Youth, Sports and Social Affairs, Women's Development Division)	Supporting the revival of <i>Aia Maea Ainen Kiribati</i> (AMAK), Kiribati's national women's umbrella organisation, through technical assistance to assess the current status of the organisation and provide recommendations on the way forward.	\$76,200 (2017–2020)

⁵ This project is supported by the regional program and this allocation is not for Kiribati alone but for multiple countries under the Pacific Partnership to End Violence Against Women and Girls project.



PROJECT NAME AND PARTNER	DESCRIPTION	BUDGET
2015 One Billion Rising Campaign (Kiribati Family Health Association)	Supported Kiribati to be part of a revolutionary, global ending violence against women movement where the Kiribati Family Health Association worked with young people to lead the campaign using creative arts, including stage performances, dancing, singing and marches.	\$6,800 (2015)



Table 2: Regional Programs with Activities in Kiribati

PROJECT NAME AND PARTNER	DESCRIPTION	BUDGET ⁶
Outcome: Leadership and Decision Making		
Pacific Women Parliamentary Partnerships (Australian International and Community Relations Office, Department of the House of Representatives)	Supported building the capacity of Pacific women parliamentarians and their staff to ensure gender equality issues are better addressed in parliament.	\$2,850,037 (2015–2018)
Outcome: Economic Empowerment		
Building prosperity for women producers, processors and women owned businesses through organic value chains (The Pacific Community (SPC) POETCom)	Identifying and supporting organic value chains that benefit women as producers, suppliers, processors and entrepreneurs whilst also enhancing their capacity for inter-regional organic trade within the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Palau and Kiribati.	\$3,884,100 (2018–2022)
Outcome: Ending Violence against Women		
Pacific Partnership to End Violence Against Women and Girls (UN Women)	Promoting gender equality and reducing violence against women and girls across communities and nations in the Pacific, while producing promising practices. Focusing on three essential intervention areas: formal and informal education; contextualised, community-based prevention approaches; and civil society organisations' capacity to engage with national and regional institutions and authorities. Refer to Table 1 for more information.	\$7,627,948 (2018–2022)
Gender Equality Theology – Institutional Transformation (GET-IT) (UnitingWorld)	Supporting institutional transformation within churches and participating organisations by challenging and shifting traditional gender theologies, then reviewing church polices to align them with new gender equality theologies. Establishing procedures and response mechanisms for situations of violence that respect the rights of women and that act in accordance with protection laws.	\$1,895,451 (2018–2021)
Fiji Women's Crisis Centre programs to End Violence against Women in Fiji and the Pacific (Fiji Women's Crisis Centre)	Funding the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre's regional activities, including: the Regional Training Program; the Male Advocates Program; and the Pacific Women's Network Against Violence Against Women.	\$2,250,000 (2016–2020)

⁶ This allocation is not for Kiribati alone but for multiple countries under *Pacific Women*.



PROJECT NAME AND PARTNER	DESCRIPTION	BUDGET ⁶
Support to the Pacific Community Regional Rights Resource Team (The Pacific Community (SPC))	Supporting work on ending violence against women, human rights and good governance with Pacific Island governments and civil society organisations. Providing technical assistance and training. Advocating for women and girls to have increased access to justice for domestic violence and to promote and protect human rights commitments.	\$5,750,000 (2015–2020)
Partnering Women for Change (UnitingWorld)	Supported work with churches to ensure that women, girls and people living with disabilities have increased safety and well-being in their homes, communities and churches.	\$370,000 (2015–2018)
UNICEF Pacific Child Protection Program (UNICEF)	Phase one (completed) worked across 14 Pacific Island Countries to strengthening protection of children from violence, abuse and exploitation. Phase two focusing on Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu and has three components: strengthening child protection laws, policies and implementation plans; strengthening services; and promoting social behaviour change.	\$7,000,000 (2014–2018) \$5,000,000 (2019–2022)
Pacific Fund to End Violence against Women (UN Women)	Supported civil society organisations and governments to prevent violence and provide services for survivors of violence, including for counselling, paralegal aid, shelter and referral services. Strengthened the capacity of organisations working to end violence against women through training in advocacy, law reform, women's human rights, community education and counselling services.	\$1,500,000 (2014–2017)
Outcome: Enhancing Agency		
Partnerships for Health and Rights: Working for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights for all in the Pacific (International Planned Parenthood Federation)	Supporting the expansion of access to sexual and reproductive health services in the Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu and, from phase two, Papua New Guinea.	\$3,000,000 (2015–2022)
Progressing Gender Equality in the Pacific (The Pacific Community (SPC))	Phase one (completed) conducted stocktakes of Pacific Island governments' capacity to integrate gender equality and women's empowerment into policies, legislation and programs and strengthened the collection and analysis of data to better track outcomes. Phase two is supporting Pacific Island countries to adopt evidence-informed policies and legislation that promote gender equality and women's human rights.	\$3,941,712 (2013–2018) \$5,494,203 (2019–2023)



PROJECT NAME AND PARTNER	DESCRIPTION	BUDGET ⁶
Women's Leadership Research (Developmental Leadership Program, La Trobe University)	Researched women's leadership programs at a community level in the Pacific and assessed how working politically and through coalitions can contribute to program outcomes.	\$250,000 (2014–2016)

