

Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development: Solomon Islands

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. 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 Australian Government, through *Pacific Women*, has committed approximately \$34.8 million over 10 years (2012–2022) on initiatives to support women's empowerment in Solomon Islands.

Figures¹

Community awareness and outreach

- 638 women members of Market Vendor Associations (MVAs) in Honiara, Auki and Gizo were able to participate in market decision-making processes, at December 2019.
- Three MVAs have women presidents and between 53-87 per cent women in leadership positions, at December 2019.
- 16,000 people know how to help prevent violence across 24 communities, through Safe Families.
- 2,439 men in seven sports clubs received training on preventing violence against women, through Live & Learn Solomon Islands.
- 59 registered members of the Solomon Islands Women in Business Association (SIWIBA) savings club can save money and access loans to expand their businesses.

Crisis support services

- 1,262 women and girls received crisis support services from the Family Support Centre (FSC) including 256 women living in rural or remote areas, for the 12 months to December 2019.
- 220 per cent increase in women and girls receiving crisis support services through FSC between 2018 and 2019.
- 276 women and children provided with safe accommodation, psychological first aid and referral services through the Christian Care Centre (CCC) during 2019.

Achievements

Leadership and Decision Making

- 44 women emerging leaders are applying knowledge learned from their Certificate IV in Leadership and Management in their workplaces. The Certificate was completed in a women-only classroom through the Australia-Pacific Training Coalition (APTC).
- 60 women candidates intending to contest provincial or general elections are trained to better understand the electoral cycle, constituency profiling and resource support, through support to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Economic Empowerment

- Western Provincial Government has involved MVAs in planning the new Gizo market and allocated 20 per cent of its budget to women's development work. An MVA forum and two-day market business fair was held in Auki. MVAs are being included for the first time in government processes, including developing market by-laws.
- SIWIBA continues to ensure members benefit from a dedicated market place for cruise ship passengers docking in Honiara after the association built a relationship with the Solomon Islands Ports Authority, Visitors Bureau and private sector cruise ship operators.

Ending Violence against Women

- Capacity development support for the FSC by the International Women's Development Agency (IWDA) has contributed to the Centre's expanding services: the number of clients accessing services doubled from 2016–2017 to 2017–2018.

¹ Information collated from *Pacific Women* implementing partner reports cumulative to June 2019 unless otherwise stated.



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- The Waka Mere initiative implemented by International Finance Corporation (IFC) has worked with more than 6,500 workers. The number of employees who did not feel comfortable (33 per cent) or safe (29 per cent) at work fell from 25 per cent to 10 per cent over the life of the project.
- The Safe Families project has established provincial alliances of stakeholders working to end violence against women and provided support services in Malaita and Temotu provinces, resulting in an increase in regular meetings between civil society organisations and government frontline responders.
- World Vision's faith-based approach supports church leaders and other stakeholders including police, civil society and community leaders to lead transformational change of negative cultural and religious attitudes towards women, while helping communities to engage in actions to prevent violence against women.
- Anglican Sisters from the CCC are using skills and relationships developed through a learning exchange with the Nazareth Centre in Bougainville to improve services for survivors of violence. This builds on support provided to develop a five-year plan to improve CCC's strategic operation.

Enhancing Agency

- Partners designing economic empowerment activities are better able to understand the links between women's economic empowerment and violence against women. They are using the Australian National University's and IWDA's 'Do No Harm' research and the toolkit developed from the research.
- The Pacific Community (SPC) and its Progressing Gender Equality in the Pacific (PGEP) project is improving the government's gender mainstreaming capacity along with its ability to produce and use gender statistics for policy monitoring, evaluation and learning, and human rights reporting.
- Solomon Islands Planned Parenthood Association's mobile outreach clinics are referring survivors of sexual violence to counselling and other services, including survivors in vulnerable populations like sex workers and people with disabilities.
- SPC's Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT) has produced a video to increase awareness about human rights, culture and religion and has actively engaged with UnitingWorld when working with faith-based leaders.
- The Women's Development Division at the Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs is implementing its work plan to progress outcomes in accordance with its key policies, the: Gender Equality and Women's Development Policy, Eliminating Violence Against Women and Girls Policy and the National Action Plan for Women, Peace and Security.

Pacific Women Partners

Government of Solomon Islands: Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs.

Solomon Islands civil society partners: Christian Care Centre (CCC); Family Support Centre (FSC); Solomon Islands National Council of Women; Solomon Islands Women in Business Association (SIWIBA); Vois Blong Mere.

Other partners: Australian International and Community Relations Office, Australian Department of the House of Representatives; Australian National University; Australia-Pacific Technical Coalition; Burnet Institute; Fiji Women's Crisis Centre; International Finance Corporation; International Women's Development Agency (IWDA); IOD PARC; Live & Learn Solomon Islands; Oxfam (Australia, PNG and Solomon Islands); Pacific Community (SPC): Progressing Gender Equality in the Pacific and Regional Rights Resource Team; International Planned Parenthood Federation (with local partner Solomon Islands Planned Parenthood Association); Pacific Leadership Program; the Protection and Pacific Network Save the Children; Shifting the Power Coalition; Solomon Islands Resource Facility; UNICEF; United Nations Development Programme; UnitingWorld; UN Women; World Bank Group; WaterAid; World Vision Solomon Islands; and *Pacific Women's* regional partners.

