



Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development

Tonga 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*.



Tonga

Tonga is a Pacific Island nation that comprises 176 islands, 36 of which are inhabited. It is governed by a constitutional monarchy, with approximately 70 per cent of Tonga's population residing on the main island of Tongatapu. Tonga's economic structure revolves around five main sectors: agriculture, trade, public administration, tourism and finance. Tonga currently ranks 101 out of 188 countries included in the Human Development Index.¹

Tonga is one of only six countries globally that has not ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Despite this, through its national Gender and Development Policy, adopted in 2001 and reviewed in 2014, Tonga has pursued national planning measures in support of women's empowerment.

Pacific Women Country Plan

Through Pacific Women, the Australian Government will spend approximately **\$10.1 million over 10 years** (2012–2022) on initiatives to support women's empowerment in Tonga.

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 Tonga Country Plan was developed following an in-country design mission. The first three-year plan included five activities valued at \$2.9 million for implementation from 2013–2016. A review of the Tonga Country Plan took place during October 2015 to assess progress and make recommendations on the future directions of the plan. The Tonga Country Plan was updated and extended for additional three years until June 2019.

The Country Plan prioritises women's economic empowerment in a holistic manner by supporting the Tonga National Centre for Women and Children. Through this initiative women and girls, including survivors of violence, have expanded economic opportunities that they can use to make strategic life choices. It is envisioned that by taking a partnership and multi-sectoral approach, this will increase the sustainability of programs to empower women to be economically independent.

Funding for the women's centres such as Women and Children Crisis Centre and Tonga National Centre for Women and Children will ensure the continuing provision of vital services to survivors of violence, as well as trialling prevention approaches in communities. Another new initiative is the Families Free of Violence (FFOV) program, a three-year program managed by the Australian Federal Police (AFP), in cooperation with the Government of Tonga, working across multiple sectors in the government. These include the Ministry of Internal Affairs' (MIA) Women Affairs Division (WAD) and Tonga Police, to strengthen the response efforts to family violence in Tonga and increasing community awareness of the impacts of family violence.

The Country Plan also supports work by UN Women to strengthen best practice (including in monitoring and evaluation) across the many organisations that are delivering prevention programs in Tongan context.

Through the Tonga Gender Equality Adviser position, *Pacific Women* provides additional technical support to DFAT sector programs in Tonga to ensure that program design properly addresses the needs of women and men and to ensure that monitoring and evaluation is gender sensitised and captures positive change.

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





Country Plan support for a local Monitoring and Evaluation Officer and a Policy and Legislation Officer will strengthen the work of the Women's Affairs Division. This is complemented by continuous support and mentoring from the Gender Equality Adviser and the Monitoring and Evaluation Adviser.

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

Rationale for activities in the Country Plan

Despite the 10-year timeframe of *Pacific Women*, it is critical for the first phase of the Tonga Country Plan to respond to immediate needs, but also lay sound foundations for better understanding the causes of gender violence and the most appropriate responses.

Given the scale and reach of the Australian bilateral program in Tonga and the limited articulation of gender equality objectives within the current program, there is an opportunity to improve gender mainstreaming and gender analysis in Australia's sector aid programs in Tonga.

(a) Increasing women's leadership and decision making

Tonga's Legislative Assembly consists of 17 members elected by the people of Tonga, nine members elected by the Nobles of Tonga and up to four members appointed by the King, as recommended by the Prime Minister. The Pacific Leadership Program worked with the Women's Affairs Division of Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Civil Society Forum of Tonga (one of their existing partners) to support women candidates from the 2016 local government elections and in 2017 during the government re-election. Following the 2017 elections, the Tongan Government has two women members of parliament.

(b) Increasing economic opportunities for women

Employment of women in Tonga is predominantly concentrated in handicraft production, trade and education. The 2009 Household Income and Expenditure Survey showed that over one third of rural households relied on handicrafts for subsistence income,² an industry made up mostly of women. The large role that women play in agriculture and food production is under recognised in official statistics. Women and women's groups have limited access to credit, business development skills and business knowledge.

Tongan households rely considerably on remittances from overseas-based family members. These remittances are often provided from work undertaken as part of the Australian government's seasonal migrant worker scheme. This scheme has opportunities and potential challenges for increasing the economic opportunities for Tongan women.

(c) Reducing violence against women and expanding support services

The extent of violence against women and girls in Tonga was confirmed in the 2012 National Study on Domestic Violence against Women, which found that one in three ever-partnered women experienced physical violence and 68 per cent of women had experienced physical violence by a person other than their partner.³ The *Family Protection Act* 2013 established domestic violence as a criminal offence and introduced expanded access to protection and restraining orders, including the authorisation of police to issue on-the-spot restraining and eviction orders to protect women.

Recognising the link between women's economic empowerment and family violence is also important to better understand the needs of survivors of violence in Tonga. Implementing effective strategies for the prevention of violence against women and children is a priority. Several organisations are undertaking advocacy, community awareness raising and behaviour change interventions, but few of these programs appear to be founded on an evidence base of what works in delivering prevention programs in the Tongan context or have a robust monitoring and evaluation system.

² Statistics Department of Tonga – Prime Minister's Office, 2009. *Kingdom of Tonga – Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2009*.

³ Ma'a Fafine mo e Famili Inc, 2012. *National Study on Domestic Violence Against Women in Tonga 2009*.



(d) Enhancing women's agency

Stakeholders have acknowledged the valuable contributions of the Gender Equality Adviser to date and it is recognised that there remains a need for additional human resource capacity at the Women's Affairs Division. During 2014, *Pacific Women* funded a local Gender Mainstreaming Officer and in 2016 the position was absorbed by government. *Pacific Women* is now funding a local Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, Family Protection Act Coordinator and a Policy and Legislation Officer to strengthen the work of the Women Affairs Division's as the government's machinery to addressing gender equality and gender mainstreaming.



Table 1: Bilateral Activities

PROJECT NAME AND PARTNER	DESCRIPTION	BUDGET
Outcome: Economic Empowerment		
Provision of economic empowerment services for women survivors of violence alongside their counselling and support services (Tonga National Centre for Women and Children)	Supported women and girls, including survivors of violence against women and girls, to have access to and control over expanded economic opportunities and to be able to make strategic life choices.	\$143,277 (2017–2019)
Outcome: Ending Violence against Women		
Families Free of Violence Program (FFOV) (Australian Federal Police)	Strengthening the response to family violence, working closely with the Women's Affairs and Gender Equality Division and Tonga Police.	\$2,100,000 (2017–2020)
Support to Women and Children Crisis Centre (Women and Children Crisis Centre)	Supported existing violence against women service providers to increase the quality, coverage and awareness of services. Funded additional support following Tropical Cyclone Gita.	\$1,970,411 (2014–2019)
Funding to the Women Affairs Division, Ministry of Internal Affairs (Women Affairs Division)	Providing institutional strengthening and gender mainstreaming support to the Women's Affairs Division. Supporting coordination of media and events for key celebration days (such as International Women's Day and White Ribbon Day). Providing core funding to the Tonga National Centre for Women and Children.	\$205,000 (2014–2020)
Pacific Partnership to End Violence Against Women and Girls (UN Women and Tongan partners)	Funding for key projects under the Pacific Partnership to End Violence Against Women include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 'One Voice' campaign (Pacific Conference of Churches) ▪ Front Row Against Violence project (The Talitha Project) ▪ Design social norm change prevention interventions (Women and Children's Crisis Centre) ▪ Supporting the development of Standard Operating Procedures 	\$7,627,948 ⁴ (2018–2022)
Outcome: Enhancing Agency		
Pacific Girl: My Body! My Rights! (The Talitha Project)	Improving community perceptions of girls' value, amplifying girls' voices through creative media and training 10–14 year old girls on health, sex and sexuality and self-esteem in four locations around Tonga, including outer islands.	\$364,015 ⁵ (2019–2022)

⁴ This project is supported by the regional program and this allocation is not for Tonga alone but for multiple countries under the Pacific Partnership to End Violence Against Women and Girls project.

⁵ The regional program, through Pacific Girl, supports this project.



PROJECT NAME AND PARTNER	DESCRIPTION	BUDGET
Pacific Girl: Cyber Security Project (PACMAS)	Exploring Pacific girls' and boys' experiences of online activity and cyber-safety issues to be able to guide and support those affected by cyber harassment.	\$150,000 (2019–2020) ⁶
Gender Adviser (Consultant)	Providing technical assistance through a Gender Adviser who works with DFAT staff to improve gender considerations in planning, programming, monitoring and learning of all Australian-funded aid programs. Works with the Government of Tonga and sectoral program managers to improve outcomes for women.	\$312,000 (2014–2017) \$197,563 (2017–2020)
Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Adviser (Consultant)	Improving country level monitoring and evaluation processes, including finalising the Tonga <i>Pacific Women</i> Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, evaluation capacity building support to <i>Pacific Women</i> implementing partners and compiling an annual progress report for <i>Pacific Women</i> in Tonga.	\$176,130 (2017–2020)

⁶ The regional program, through Pacific Girl, supports this project.



Table 2: Regional Programs with Activities in Tonga

PROJECT NAME AND PARTNER	DESCRIPTION	BUDGET ⁷
Outcome: Leadership and Decision Making		
Strengthening Diverse Women's Leadership in Humanitarian Action (Shifting the Power Coalition: ActionAid Australia, femLINKpacific, Pacific Disability Forum, Nazareth Centre, Transcend Oceania, Talitha Project, YWCA PNG, YWCA Samoa, Vanuatu Young Women for Change, Vois Blong Mere, ActionAid Vanuatu)	Ensuring diverse Pacific women's voices provide leadership in disaster planning and response through a coalition approach. Supporting diverse women leaders to engage in disaster coordination mechanisms and influence decision making. Documenting needs and capacities in crises. Establishing platforms to strengthen diverse Pacific women's voices to influence policy and decision making.	\$895,000 (2018–2021)
Support for Women's Groups and Coalitions (Pacific Leadership Program)	Supported adaptive leadership training for women leaders and coalition members supported them to develop new skills and perspectives to progress initiatives, build a support base and overcome barriers to change. Contributed to research in Samoa and Solomon Islands and a CEDAW campaign in Tonga.	\$433,963 (2015–2017)
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 (2013–2018)
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)
Fiji Women's Crisis Centre Programs to Eliminate 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 (2016–2021)

⁷ This allocation is not for Tonga alone but for multiple countries under *Pacific Women*.



PROJECT NAME AND PARTNER	DESCRIPTION	BUDGET ⁷
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)	Worked across 14 Pacific Island Countries to strengthening protection of children from violence, abuse and exploitation.	\$7,000,000 (2014–2018)
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		
Pacific Girl	<i>Pacific Women's</i> dedicated program to support adolescent girls. Working with Pacific-based organisations to support change in the social norms that underpin gender inequality and perpetuate discrimination against adolescent girls aged 10–19 years in the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu. Refer to Table 1 for more information.	\$4,500,000 (2018–2022)
Gender Equality and Climate Change in the Pacific (The Protection and Pacific (ProPa) Network)	Raised awareness of the nexus between gender equality and climate change. Generated more informed decision making in this space to ensure women's voices influence decision making, and that climate agreements are implemented in a gender-responsive way in the Pacific.	\$500,000 (2015–2017)
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)

