

# The many ways programs can be inclusive of women and girls with disability

Regional Samoa Ending Violence Against Women

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Project name: Advancing disability inclusive services for survivors of gender-based violence

Project partner: UN Women with the Pacific Disability Forum

Total funding: \$200,000 (Allocated funding also covers Kiribati.)

Funding timeframe: 2016–2018

With global data showing that people with disabilities are at a greater risk of experiencing violence, it is important for initiatives aimed at ending violence against women to incorporate strategies to support women and girls with disabilities. In Samoa, a toolkit is helping organisations address this issue.

With support from Pacific Women, UN Women and the Pacific Disability Forum worked with the Samoan disabled persons' organisation Nuanua O Le Alofa (NOLA) to develop a Toolkit on Eliminating Violence against Women and Girls with Disabilities. The toolkit uses group exercises, role play, activities and case studies to help organisations include disability in projects aimed at ending violence against women.



Samoan disability rights advocates involved in the development of the NOLA toolkit. Photo credit: Pacific Disability Forum.

The toolkit, which is being translated into Samoan, is practical and accessible for people from a range of backgrounds. It is adapted from a model developed in 2015 in Fiji. To ensure relevance, ownership and usability by NOLA and Samoan service providers, the toolkit was informed by consultations with 17 people with disabilities from NOLA, the Samoa Victims Support Group, representatives from the police and health services, UN Women, UNFPA and UNESCO. This process of stakeholder engagement ensured the Samoan context was reflected in the toolkit, and encouraged a process of local ownership of the document.

NOLA staff shared their experiences of developing the toolkit through social media:

‘Our workshop to contextualise the toolkit on ending violence against women with disabilities in Samoa was an eye-opening experience for us as an advocacy organisation on the rights of persons with disabilities. Our advocacy work should aim at raising more awareness in the services about how to make it more accessible for persons with disabilities. What we mean by that is making not only the physical environment accessible, but also [providing] access to information in alternative formats, like sign language interpreters for deaf women, braille for women who are blind, and easy to read text and visual aid support for women with mental or intellectual disabilities. We’re hoping that this toolkit will go a long way towards strengthening partnerships with service providers to ensure that our women with disabilities who experience violence and abuse are in safe hands when they seek refuge with their expert organisations.’