

# Promoting Bodily Integrity and Rights for Girls

Tonga [Ending Violence Against Women](#)

November 27, 2017

Project Name: My Body, My Rights  
Project partner: Talitha Incorporation  
Total funding: US\$90,000  
Funding timeframe: 2016-18

Since 2009, the Talitha Project has been empowering young women and girls between the ages of 10-25 to make sound decisions that will lead to a life free from violence. A grant from the Australian aid program's [Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development](#) initiative is enabling Talitha to continue rolling out its work in Tonga.



Participants in the My Body, My Rights project. Photo: Talitha Incorporation  
Through a range of activities, the Talitha Project educates young women and girls on their fundamental human rights and reinforces the importance of protecting these rights. One activity is the My Body! My Rights! program, which worked with 36 young girls and representatives from key partner organisations between March 2016 and February 2017.

‘They teach us how to protect our body and our rights and know when they saw a violence and then STOP because everyone has a right,’ explains Ms Tolofi Folaumoetu’l, who is 10 years old.

The project also provides several platforms for girls to speak out, share, and debate issues affecting them. The project places a special emphasis on the topic of ending violence against women at regular focus group discussions after school.

A radio talk-back show on Friday afternoons at a popular radio station is hosted by young women who have been trained under the project. The radio show gives young women a public voice to share their views and experiences on violence, along with issues such as human rights and the Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

Through its mentoring program, Talitha has partnered 30 girls with six mentors. This creative program includes confidence building through choreography, team building, artistic development and expression through poetry, photography and choreography, basic journalism skills, and self-defence.

In one exercise, girls and their mentors talked about different areas in the community where violence occurs. They identified home, school, church, and public spaces as places where violence against women and girls takes place. The mentoring program has created a safe space for young girls and their adult mentors to share their secrets and their stories.

The Talitha project continues to work to support positive changes to social norms through interventions with adolescent girls and young women, through these primary prevention approaches.

*\* This Story of Change was originally published in the [Pacific Women Annual Progress Report 2016 – 2017](#). All values are consistent with that reporting period. For the most up-to-date value of activities, visit our [interactive map](#).*