



IN BRIEF

ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS



Photo Credit: Chloé Chambraud

What's the Issue?

Violence against women and girls is a grave violation of human rights. It also has tremendous costs for individuals and societies, from greater health care expenses to losses in productivity to a pervasive sense of fear and insecurity.

Decades of mobilizing by women's movements have put ending gender-based violence high on national and international agendas. An unprecedented number of countries have laws against domestic violence, sexual assault and other forms of violence. Challenges remain in implementing these laws, however, so that women and girls can seek safety and justice. Not enough is done to prevent violence, and when it does occur, it often goes unpunished.

Violence against Women and Girls in the Pacific

Violence against women and girls (VAW) in Pacific countries is among the highest in the world. Up to 68 percent of Pacific women report having been affected by physical or sexual violence by a partner in their lifetime, in countries where surveys have been done. The economic costs of violence against women and girls are high, with increased costs to health care, social services, and policing. Despite the severity and extent of violence, services for survivors are limited, and virtually non-existent in remote areas. This issue is particularly acute in the Pacific context, where 80 percent of Pacific Islanders live in rural areas or on outer islands.

Social norms that dictate that women must be obedient to their husbands can normalize intimate partner violence as the women's 'fault' and responsibility, and are barriers to reporting.

Pacific societies are now challenging the silence around the issue, which makes it difficult for women to talk about their suffering and to seek help in breaking the cycle of violence.

Our Solutions

Women's right to live free from violence is upheld by international agreements such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the 1993 UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women. UN Women works with countries on adopting and enacting legal reforms aligned with this principle, drawing on our global base of knowledge about the most effective strategies to end violence.

We assist in extending services to survivors of violence, and advocate universal access to a core package of services covering safety, shelter, health and free legal aid. We also call for stepping up investments in prevention—the most cost-effective, long-term means to stop violence. We advocate for policies for prevention among adolescent girls, who face alarming rates of violence, and encourage youth leadership and activism. Our strong support for the involvement of men and boys helps them set new models of behaviour and champion a world free of violence.

We assist governments in integrating measures to stop violence in national development plans, such as for poverty reduction, and advocate for adequate resources to pay for them. National action plans specifically dedicated to ending violence against women enable the coordination of the diverse efforts required for sustained, meaningful action.



How We Make a Difference in the Pacific: Step by Step

Pacific Regional Facility Fund to End VAW

- Available to civil society organizations and governments in eight countries (Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, PNG, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu)
- Aims to advance human rights and gender responsive approaches to EAW, documenting and sharing learning on what works to end VAW in the Pacific
- Focus: service delivery, advancing prevention, improving quality through programme monitoring, influencing policy development and implementation
- Intensive capacity development available to funded organizations- formulated based on early experiences of funding and supporting small Pacific organizations addressing VAW:
 - Organizational management
 - Advocacy for policy change (partnership with the Regional Rights Resource Team)
 - Service provision for survivors of VAW
 - Prevention of VAW
 - Overview of gender, rights based approaches, VAW (partnership with Fiji Women's Crisis Centre)
- Grants provided in range of USD10,000 – 100,000 for 1-3 years
- Key donor partners: Australian aid program, UN Women National Committees of Australia and New Zealand

UN Joint Programmes on Ending VAW :

- Joint programming helps make the UN support to reaching national goals more coherent, effective, and efficient. UN Women is coordinating the development of UN-Government Joint Programmes on Ending VAW.
- In **Kiribati and Solomon Islands**, UN Women is working closely with governments, civil society partners and UN agencies (ILO, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, and WHO) to develop a UN-Government Joint Programme to provide coordinated support to government and civil society organisations to implement the National Action Plans on Ending Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV)/Violence against Women. In both countries, UN Women provides technical support to a wide range of partners regarding the implementation of policies, legislation and programmes. The ultimate aims are to

improve services for survivors of violence and prevent violence against women from happening.

Quality Technical Assistance

UN Women is recognized as a leader in the Pacific on ending violence against women and girls. UN Women supports and partners with a wide range of EAW initiatives and actors in Pacific countries. Governments, civil society organizations, UN and development agencies, and regional organizations have requested technical assistance from UN Women specifically on EAW initiatives. Examples of initiatives that UN Women is contributing to include:

- Providing substantive inputs on draft **legislation** on VAW in several Pacific countries- in partnership with governments, the Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT)/SPC and UN agencies. UN Women brings diverse programming perspectives to draft legislative development, widening the scope of attention. This area of work is closely aligned with UN Women's Advancing Gender Justice Programme.
- Partnering with PIFS, Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) and UNFPA to support and prepare Pacific delegates for substantive engagement during the **Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) 57 in 2013**, on the priority theme of eliminating and preventing violence against women and girls. Pacific countries made strong interventions in the negotiations among UN Member States on the CSW Agreed Conclusions, demonstrating a new level of engagement on issues of EAW at the intergovernmental level. UN Women is now working to support implementation of the Agreed Conclusions at national level.



16 Days of Activism march. Photo Credit Samoa Victim Support Group



How We Make a Difference in the Pacific: Step by Step

- Member of Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) **Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) Reference Group**. Provide technical support to specific countries, including through official country visits and specific issue areas such as costing the impact of violence against women.
- Preparing for and responding to **Gender Based Violence (GBV) in Emergencies**. In cooperation with UN Women's IREACH programme, the UN Gender Group/ GBV Working Group, and the Pacific Humanitarian Team.
- Researching and recommending possible methods for **costing the economic impact of VAW** in Kiribati, Samoa and Solomon Islands in support of the SGBV Reference Group and in response to country requests, drawing upon UN Women's expertise with costing VAW in the Asia-Pacific region.
- Providing technical inputs to an initiative led by UNESCO regarding **culture, gender inequality, and VAW** in the Pacific.

Through all technical support, advocating for and advancing **multi-sectoral, rights-based, survivor-centred approaches to VAW response**, and increased use of evidence-based **prevention** approaches.

Community Mobilization and Transformation: UNITE

UN Women engages Pacific partners through the UN Secretary General's UNITE to End Violence against Women campaign as a tool for social transformation. Highlights from recent Pacific engagement with UNITE and the Say NO-UNITE online platform (www.saynotoviolence.org):

- Supporting grantees of the Pacific Fund to End VAW as well as country and regional partners to communicate on Say NO-UNITE, which gives easy access to a global platform to tell their story and report on actions they are taking to end VAW in their Pacific communities.
- UN-Government Joint Programmes on Ending VAW-major interagency partnerships that contribute to the UNITE campaign

UN Women provides practical tools, evidence on what works, and resources for practitioners, policymakers, researchers and advocates against violence against women through the knowledge hub, the Virtual Knowledge Centre to End Violence against Women and Girls (www.endvawnow.org).

"From Policy to Action: Ending Violence against Women and Girls in the Pacific" Regional Programme

In response to the significant demand for assistance that has arisen in the Pacific keeping pace with increasing evidence about the extremely high levels of violence against women in the region, UN Women has developed a regional programme on Ending Violence against Women. This four-year programme will support Pacific-led activities to improve the policy implementation environment on ending VAWG and place increased attention on services reaching survivors of violence, through high quality and in-depth technical assistance services, and will devote increasing attention to leaders to prevent VAW. The programme has the following three main components:

- Implementing legislation, policies, national action plans and budgets to end VAW
- Expanding access to services for survivors of violence against women and girls
- Social mobilization, community leadership and prevention



1 Billion Rising march, Fiji, 2013

Photo Credit: Chloé Chambraud

Success stories:

In 2013, the Fiji Government made new commitments under UN Women's global COMMIT campaign to advance policies and programming to improve services for survivors of violence against women. UN Women is supporting the newly reinstated Ending Violence against Women Task Force to improve services, develop standard service protocols, monitor government initiatives and draft new policies that will benefit survivors of VAW.

In **Kiribati**, UN Women is supporting the Government and civil society organisations to implement the National Action Plan on Ending Sexual and Gender Based Violence. This National Action Plan, combined with national prevalence research on VAW, has provided an excellent platform for UN Women's support to Kiribati. UN Women has joined together with five other UN agencies - ILO, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, and WHO - to form a joint programme with the Government, in collaboration with civil society groups, to implement the National Action Plan in a coordinated and coherent fashion, building on existing and future UN investments to end sexual and gender based violence in Kiribati. Through this joint work, UN Women has supported the Government to develop a detailed implementation plan for the National Action Plan. Progress in one year has been substantial.

Solomon Islands. UN Women has joined with five other UN agencies to consolidate efforts to end violence against women and girls - ILO, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, and WHO - as part of a joint programme to support implementation of the National Action Plan on Ending Violence against Women. The joint programme model allows for more streamlined, coordinated and efficient support to government and civil society organizations, avoiding duplication and maximizing on shared interests to prevent and respond to violence in a comprehensive way.



V-day, Fiji

Photo Credit: Chloé Chambraud

Pacific Region. In July 2012, prior to the PIFS Leader's meeting in the Cook Islands, UN Women collaborated with SPC and RRRT to provide specialized capacity building to Pacific parliamentarians during a regional meeting in Brisbane. The result of the intensive sessions on ERAW was a signed statement by the parliamentarians under the UNITE framework, calling for increased, comprehensive action to eliminate VAW in countries across the region.

Pacific Regional Facility Fund to End VAW Stories:

Rainbow Women's Network (RWN) in **Fiji** provides support to uplift and promote the dignity and rights of marginalized women. The first women's network in Fiji to work directly with sex workers, lesbians and other female marginalized communities, RWN is breaking new ground. With support from UN Women's Pacific Regional Facility Fund to End Violence against Women and funding from AusAID, the Sounds of Silence project supports and empowers marginalized women whilst providing information and referrals for concerns related to violence against women. The project emphasizes empowerment, by engaging women in marginalized communities on self-esteem issues and strengthens their knowledge base through the provision of information and necessary tools to equip them to make informed choices that will positively benefit their lives. Many women have actively transformed their lives with support from RWN.

The Samoa Victim Support Group (SVSG), through support from the Pacific Regional Facility Fund to End VAW, has established a national Help Line and community alert system to assist survivors of VAW with crisis support, information and referrals, with strong community support from villages across the country. The widespread support for this initiative reaches across the country, ranging from grassroots supporters, to High Chiefs, to private corporations in a true collaborative effort. "SVSG believes in the importance of a family, of a community in solidarity and the strength of all sectors of the community taking ownership of the security in our homes," stated Lina Change, SVSG President.

For more information please contact:

Melissa Alvarado
 Programme Specialist – Ending Violence Against
 Women Programme
 UN Women
 Level 3, Kadavu House
 Victoria Parade, Suva, Fiji
Melissa.alvarado@unwomen.org