

# Pacific girls shaping Pacific development

Federated States Of Micronesia | Fiji | Papua New Guinea | Regional  
Solomon Islands | Tonga | Vanuatu | Enhancing Agency

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Project name: Pacific Girl: Supporting adolescents to reach their potential (design)

Total funding: \$161,500

Funding timeframe: 2018

A new Pacific Women program focuses attention and resources on adolescents. Pacific Girl planning activities in 2017–2018 have ensured that girls and young women will shape the final program design.



Adolescent girls who participated in the two-day Pacific Girl priority setting meeting and their guardians and facilitators in May 2018. Photo credit: Pacific Women Support Unit.

Girls and young women in Pacific Island countries share many of the challenges faced by adolescents in other parts of the world. In the Pacific region, however, these challenges are compounded by the effects of climate change and the realities of life in small island states.

In seeking to address the under-representation of adolescent girls in decisions that affect them, Pacific Women ensured the participation of girls and young women in the Pacific Girl program design. The Pacific Girl Regional Stakeholders' Dialogue, held in Suva in May 2018, brought together 20 adolescent girls from across the region to discuss barriers to leadership, sexual and reproductive health and rights and gendered social norms.

'Some of the challenges that the girls are facing in our countries are teenage pregnancy, access to education, safety, custom, culture, religion and also cyberbullying,' said Rachel Lume, 17, from Vanuatu. '[The] solution is education, starting at preschool, and parents' education.'

'A change I would like to see in Tonga is girls becoming leaders,' said Anamalia Falemaka, 15. 'Not only in schools but also in the communities and also in the country, like involving them in parliament and becoming town officers.'

Other girls from Pacific Island countries contributed their experiences and aspirations through the Pacific Girls SPEAK video project, organised by Plan International Australia, to inform the design of the Pacific Girl program.

'Pacific girls should be confident, flexible and strong,' said Roselyn Sidal, 17, at the Stakeholders' Dialogue. 'We should always make sure that girls are also included when it comes to decision making in a country, because it also does affect them. Girls are authentic and unique in the way they walk, talk, laugh and smile. A goal should be set from now on that no girl should be seen as a flower but as the next Wonder Woman!'