

Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development: Tuvalu

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.

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 Australian Government, through *Pacific Women*, has committed approximately \$1.8 million over 10 years (2012–2022) on initiatives to support women's empowerment in Tuvalu.

Figures¹

Community awareness and outreach

- 20 police officers participated in gender-sensitisation training through the *Pacific Women* Gender and Social Inclusion Adviser.
- 10 men participated in refresher training on being male advocates for gender equality.
- 30 women and 41 youths from eight islands participated in the first Tuvalu National Women and Youth Forum in 2019. 466 people with disabilities (4.5 per cent of the population) were interviewed in the first study on people with disabilities in Tuvalu; previously only 72 people had been listed with disability NGO Fusi Alofa Association.

Counselling and other support services

- 90-day target for case resolution for court cases involving women and children.
- 20 volunteer counsellors trained and mentored on selfcare and basic counselling skills including for gender-based violence.
- 59 women and girls supported with specialised counselling and psychotherapy through the *Pacific Women* in-country Psychosocial Counselling Adviser.
- 40 people with disabilities accessing financial support following technical support provided to review and finalise the Tuvalu Disability Policy as well as the procedures and guidelines on Financial Support for People with Disabilities.

Achievements

Leadership and Decision Making

- The Tuvaluan Attorney General and first female lawyer, Eselealofa Apinelu, is using skills and networks developed as member of the 2019 cohort of the Women's Leadership Initiative to change perceptions of women's leadership in Tuvalu. The initiative links Australian Awards Scholarship alumni from Pacific Island countries with mentors and provides leadership coaching.

Ending Violence against Women

- By establishing a dialogue between major stakeholders, including a roundtable meeting in 2019, the *Pacific Women* Psychosocial Counselling Adviser assisted in the creation of minimum standards for survivors of violence. The minimum standards are helping service providers understand their own responsibilities and the roles of other agencies.
- Justice service providers are being supported to carry out their obligations under family protection legislation, through the Pacific Community's (SPC) Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT). This is resulting in prioritisation of court cases that involve women and children, with a 90-day target for case resolution.

¹ Information collated from *Pacific Women* implementing partner reports cumulative to June 2019 unless otherwise stated.



Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development: Tuvalu

Enhancing Agency

- Support to conduct the first Tuvaluan study on people with disabilities is informing disability NGO Fusi Alofa Association's approach to supporting women and children with disabilities. The study has been translated into Tuvaluan and is the basis for the government's national disability policy that is being drafted.
- Tuvaluan youth and women from Funafuti and the outer islands are involved in guiding the development of national policies and programs, through the Outcome Statement developed at the Tuvalu National Women and Youth Forum 2019. Government and civil society participants discussed ways to improve equality between women, men, girls and boys, to inform plans, policies and programs on gender and social inclusion in the Tuvaluan context.
- Support enabled a representative from the Gender Affairs Department to join the government delegation to the United Nations for Universal Periodic Review of Tuvalu in 2018; and to submit a Beijing +25 national report. These activities are enhancing Tuvalu's ability to meet international commitments and approach them through a gender lens.
- More sexual and reproductive health services are available in rural and remote areas with an expansion of outreach clinics by the Tuvalu Family Health Association (TuFHA). Tuvaluans in outer islands learn about TuFHA's services and outreach schedules through radio broadcasts. TuFHA is also a member of the Tuvalu National Advisory Committee for Children's Rights that successfully pushed for legislative amendment repealing corporal punishment in schools in 2017.
- SPC's Progressing Gender Equality in the Pacific (PGEP) project has improved the Tuvaluan Government's capacity to produce and use gender statistics to directly guide national policy and decision making including for human rights.
- Gender advisory support for the Tuvalu Gender Affairs Department and the Education Department is improving pathways for teenage mothers to return to school. This includes the Education Department taking ownership of developing human rights guidelines to be adopted as school rules. Families are learning about teenage pregnancy and the link to gender equality through a public awareness campaign by Education Officers on eight islands.

Pacific Women Partners

Government of Tuvalu: Department of Social Welfare and Gender Affairs Department, Ministry of Health, Social Welfare and Gender Affairs.

Tuvaluan civil society partners: Fusi Alofa Association; Tuvalu Family Health Association.

Other partners: Australian International and Community Relations Office, Department of the House of Representatives; International Planned Parenthood Federation (with local partner Tuvalu Family Health Association); the Pacific Community: Progressing Gender Equality in the Pacific (PGEP) and the Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT); UNICEF; and *Pacific Women's* regional partners.

