

Making our Families Safe through Collective Action at the Provincial Level

Regional Solomon Islands Ending Violence Against Women

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Project name: Let's Make Our Families Safe (Safe Families)

Project partners: Oxfam

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In Solomon Islands, the Safe Families project strives to create a country where family and sexual violence is no longer considered acceptable behaviour. It is taking an innovative approach to mobilise communities and build coalitions for action that will change the social norms, values, attitudes and beliefs that drive family and sexual violence.



Stakeholders at the launch of the Safe Families initiative in Malaita in 2015.

Photo: DFAT/Solomon Islands Post.

The program is being piloted in Malaita and Temotu provinces by Oxfam, in partnership with the Solomon Islands National Council of Women, Vois Blong Mere Solomon, International Women's Development Agency, Pacific Leadership Program and IOD PARC.

Central to Safe Families' approach is coalition building aimed at initiating collective action towards both prevention of family and sexual violence and also improved service delivery at the provincial level. To this end, the project established provincial alliances in both Malaita and Temotu. These alliances have helped create an environment where community members are able to have meaningful and open discussions about prevalent family violence issues and allow members to develop action plans collaboratively.

'In the past, NGOs and service providers work[ed] in isolation in addressing GBV,' explained Mr Eric Sogotee from the Solomon Islands Planned Parenthood Association in Malaita Province. 'However with this alliance in operation, I now see that NGOs and CSOs have established and strengthened relationships among themselves and communities and view each other's work as complementary rather than as competing against each other.'

Ms Martha Rurai, President of the Malaita Provincial Council of Women, has noticed improved coordination of service provision for survivors of violence, as a result of the provincial alliance.

'In this alliance, we have the police, the health workers, this safe house rep and others who are working to address GBV issues. This space has brought us all together and we know who is doing what. It has contributed a lot to improving the referral system, so when a victim goes to access the police service, this victim would then be referred to next appropriate service provider, whether the hospital or the safe house.'

The provincial alliance in Temotu is generating similar engagement. Mr Godfrey Kolia, the Temotu Provincial Alliance Coordinator said there has been increased attendance in alliance meetings 'as a result of alliance members realising the importance of collaborative effort and coordination at the provincial level.' He remarked: 'Some members who are not invited can now turn up as they were driven by interest in working together to address the deadly issue of violence.'



Coalition members at one of the meetings of the Temotu Provincial Alliance. A similar alliance has been formed in the Malaita Province, under the Safe Families initiative, to undertake collective action against family violence.
Photo: DFAT/Solomon Islands Post.

** This Story of Change was originally published in the [Pacific Women Annual Progress Report 2015-2016](#). All values are consistent with that reporting period. For the most up-to-date value of activities, visit our [interactive map](#).*