

Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development: Tonga

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 \$10.1 million over 10 years (2012–2022) on initiatives to support women's empowerment in Tonga.

Figures¹

Community awareness and outreach

- 961 people trained on gender equality and human rights by Tonga Women & Children Crisis Centre (WCCC).
- More than 4,300 social media page views from people globally, reading the WCCC's 20 stories of women and resilience.
- A second cohort of eight men completed the full three stages of Male Advocacy Training in the Tongan language.

Crisis support services

- 1487 people accessed counselling and referral services through WCCC and the Tonga National Centre for Women and Children (TNCWC).
- 135 people accessed the WCCC safe house.
- 337 women were provided with emergency psychosocial support by WCCC following severe Tropical Cyclone Gita in 2018.
- 367 clients supported by the Legal Aid Centre in its first year.

Achievements

Leadership and Decision Making

- Support for women's leadership was provided through Women Affairs and Gender Equality Division (WAGED)-facilitated training for women candidates in the lead up to the 2017 election. Fifteen women candidates contested the election and two women were successfully elected. This is an improvement from the 2014 election when no women were successful.
- RRRT and the Pacific Leadership Program (PLP) support to the Tonga Women's Coalition has resulted in the submission of a Private Bill to Parliament proposing Temporary Special Measures to guarantee women's political representation in Parliament, with the proposal under consideration since 2017.

Economic Empowerment

- TNCWC has commenced a pilot program to support survivors of violence to have expanded economic opportunities.

Ending Violence against Women

- WCCC has attracted more than 4,300 social media page views from people reading the #womenoftonga and #thisismystoryofresilience, with 20 stories of resilience distributed through social media and the WCCC website, supported by the Australian Government and UN Women.
- Awareness raising activity in remote and island communities about violence against women and girls is improved through WCCC's Faguna radio counselling program accessible to all island groups in Tonga.
- Tonga's first Family Protection Legal Aid Centre opened in March 2018, under the Ministry of Justice. The centre provides free legal services for survivors of domestic violence and assists survivors to apply for Protection Orders.

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



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- Gender mainstreaming through WAGED with the Families Free of Violence program is being supported by a Gender Equality Taskforce, started by Tonga Police representatives and approved by the Commissioner of Police.

Enhancing Agency

- WAGED launched three key documents in 2019, through support from the Australian Government's Gender Equality Adviser for the Nuku'alofa Post: National Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality Tonga Policy and Strategic Plan of Action 2019–2025; Gender Equality: Where Do We Stand?; and the Gender Mainstreaming Handbook – Government of the Kingdom of Tonga.
- Tonga Family Health Association staff (TFHA) attended Pacific Community (SPC) Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT) regional training on improving access to reproductive health services for people with disabilities. Afterwards, TFHA upgraded its clinics with ramps and rails.
- In partnership with the National Disability Association, WCCC carried out community awareness programs in eight villages on gender-based violence attended by 111 people including 10 women and girls with disabilities, and four were men and boys with disabilities.

Pacific Women Partners

Government of Tonga: Women's Affairs and Gender Equality Division (WAGED); Tonga Police; Ministry of Justice.

Four Tongan civil society partners: Tonga Women & Children Crisis Centre (WCCC); Tonga National Centre for Women and Children (TNCWC); Talitha Project; Tonga Family Health Association (TFHA).

Other partners: Australian Federal Police and Families Free of Violence (FFOV); Australian Department of the House of Representatives; Fiji Women's Crisis Centre; International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF); Pacific Community (SPC) and its Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT) and Progressing Gender Equality in the Pacific (PGEP); Pacific Leadership Program (PLP); Pacific Partnership to End Violence Against Women and Girls; Shifting the Power Coalition; UNICEF; ProPa Network; UnitingWorld, UN Women; and *Pacific Women's* regional partners.

