



PACIFIC WOMEN HIGHLIGHTS 2012–2021

14

Countries

182

Initiatives

192

Partners

1.45m

People

About *Pacific Women*

Over nearly 10 years, Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development (*Pacific Women*) has reached an estimated 1.45 million Pacific women, men and children.¹

Through *Pacific Women*, Australia partners with governments, local and international non-government organisations (NGOs), the private sector, disabled people's organisations, coalitions and others to improve the political, economic and social opportunities of Pacific women, and to end violence against women and girls.

With Pacific governments and Pacific NGOs implementing more than half of the initiatives under the *Pacific Women* portfolio, the emphasis is on partnerships and locally-led development. This has enabled the program to adapt and play an important role in delivering the Australian Government's Partnerships for Recovery response to support Pacific Island countries to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Pacific Women is one of the largest global commitments to gender equality. As it comes to a close in 2021, the Australian Government will continue to provide support to gender equality through the new Pacific Women Lead program.

Initiatives supported by *Pacific Women* respond to the commitments made by leaders in the 2012 Pacific Leaders' Gender Equality Declaration, and support the Pacific Step-up announced by Australia in 2018.

More information about *Pacific Women's* highlights and cumulative impacts since the program began are detailed in the Final Report 2012–2021 (www.pacificwomenreport.org).

¹ The estimate of 1.45 million Pacific people reached is an aggregate of data gathered across the program's four outcomes, relying on validity of data provided by partners and projects. Cumulative reach numbers to 30 June 2021 may include people that have been reached through more than one activity and accessing multiple services.

^{2 3} Cumulative data from 2012 to June 2021. All other data in this report is to December 2020 unless otherwise indicated



182 initiatives

Pacific Women connects more than 180 gender equality initiatives funded by the Australian Government and implemented by over 192 partners across 14 Pacific Island countries.² New and existing initiatives supported by *Pacific Women* are demonstrating that gender transformative change is happening in the Pacific.

Long-term learning, sharing and adapting

Pacific Women has given partners time and opportunity over the long term to pilot approaches, learn from implementation and put learning into practice. *Pacific Women* has supported partners to trial and nurture methodologies for women's empowerment, and to share promising models with others so they can be adapted and expanded.

Together, these partners have developed new ways of working, while forging long-term collaborative partnerships and more effective gender transformative programming.

Pacific Women has also brought together networks of people and organisations working in similar fields and across countries to collaborate on priority issues. Learning forums, roundtables, communities of practice and knowledge products all showcase national and regional initiatives to improve gender equality, and promote the exchange of ideas suited to the Pacific context.



Pacific Women's reach

Pacific Women partners reach diverse Pacific Islanders with projects to promote gender equality and women's empowerment, and to prevent violence against women and girls. Cumulative figures, from the start of program, show crisis services have been provided for 130,306 women and children experiencing violence.³ A further 1,201,480 women, men and children have participated in community awareness raising, advocacy and outreach activities about ending violence against women (EVAW). Support for women's leadership includes training and skill-building workshops for 20,754 women. Women's economic empowerment is supported with an estimated 28,806 women accessing financial literacy services and information.

Looking ahead to Pacific Women Lead

Looking ahead, the Australian Government's commitment to improving gender equality in the Pacific will continue through the new Pacific Women Lead program. The new five-year, AUD170 million program builds on nearly 10 years of *Pacific Women* and more than 30 years of Australian engagement and support in this area.

Gender equality continues to be a shared priority for Pacific Island countries and Australia. This commitment is reflected in Australia's Pacific Step-up – emphasising 'how we engage is just as important as what we do' – and in the Partnerships for Recovery prioritising gender equality in COVID-19 responses.

Pacific Women Lead will work to ensure that all women and girls across the Pacific have the right to safety and to participate fully in social and economic opportunities.



Ending Violence against Women



In some Pacific Island countries, violence against women is more than twice as prevalent as the global average, and affects over two-thirds of women and girls.⁴

Pacific Women supports work that ensures violence against women and girls is prevented and reduced, and survivors of violence have access to crisis support services and better-quality assistance.

Since 2012, *Pacific Women* has supported:

- 130,306 women and girls to access crisis support services through 15 partners (including safe accommodation, counselling, medical and legal support, and disaster risk response).
- 1,201,480 people to participate in community awareness, outreach and advocacy about ending violence against women.⁵

Through *Pacific Women*, Australia provides long-term support to 15 crisis service partners across eight countries. This long-term funding model enables crisis services to operate and expand, focusing on reaching women and girl survivors in rural and remote areas.

For the first time, crisis centres for women and girl survivors of violence are operating in the Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati and the Republic of the Marshall Islands. In Papua New Guinea, *Pacific Women* established two new case management centres in Lae and Port Moresby.

Leadership and Decision Making



The Pacific region has the lowest level of political representation by women in the world, but numbers of women members of parliament have nearly doubled from 4.7 per cent in 2013 to 8.6 per cent in 2021.⁶

Pacific Women supports work that ensures women's interests are represented and women's leadership is promoted at all levels of decision making, from household and community to parliament.

Since 2012, *Pacific Women* has supported:

- 20,754 women to take on leadership roles at the community, provincial and national level (includes women participating in market decision making).
- 46,906 people reached with civic and voter education.

Pacific Women partners demonstrated women's leadership and provided critical support to at-risk populations during the COVID-19 response, and planning and response for other disasters such as cyclones.

Under *Pacific Women*, the Balance of Power program is shifting attitudes, building coalitions of influence and conducting research in support of women's leadership. It is one of several initiatives working through existing organisations and community structures, such as market vendor associations, building women's negotiation and mobilisation skills, while addressing cultural contexts and deep-seated social norms that continue to influence perceptions of women as leaders.

In the 2021 Samoan elections, five out of 19 women candidates supported by the Women in Leadership project were elected into Parliament.

Economic Empowerment



Women in the Pacific remain vulnerable to the immediate and long-term economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and *Pacific Women* activities have ensured the needs of women and girls are included in government response and recovery measures.

Pacific Women contributes to the region's fundamental shift in focus from women's economic participation to economic empowerment, including supporting expanded economic opportunities for women to earn an income and accumulate assets.

Since 2012, *Pacific Women* has supported:

- 30 economic empowerment projects engaging more than 31,000 women and girls.
- 28,806 women to access financial literacy training and financial services.

Family-based approaches to economic empowerment are showing significant evidence of positive change. In an agricultural project in Papua New Guinea, families report a 22 per cent increase in income and a 12 per cent increase in women making decisions about spending.⁷ This shift from economic participation to empowerment is increasingly being reflected in other *Pacific Women* supported initiatives.

Pacific Women ensures partners' initiatives are based on evidence of what works in the Pacific context to empower women economically. This means supporting partners to create opportunities for women to not only increase earnings, but also have equal opportunity with men to control income and assets, access decent and secure work, and participate in financial decision making like household spending.

Activities supported by *Pacific Women* have demonstrated the critical importance of collectives and cooperatives as a means of increasing women's income and empowerment, and these have been especially important for supporting families during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Enhancing Agency



Pacific Women supports work that ensures women in the Pacific develop a stronger sense of their own agency, supported by a changing legal and social environment, and increased access to the services they need, including health, education, transport, water, sanitation and hygiene.

Pacific Women builds on existing movements by supporting partners to expand their organisations' mandates and resourcing to enable them to broaden their audience and reach.

Since 2012, *Pacific Women* has supported:

- 8,828 women to access formal opportunities to share their ideas and learn from each other (learning forums, research and program learning events).
- 15,115 men are participating in male advocacy and have undertaken male advocacy training.

Working with girls is an essential part of building an enabling environment for gender equality. *Pacific Women's* dedicated Pacific Girl program is reaching thousands of adolescent girls and boys across six countries through its partners' in-school programs, leadership and empowerment initiatives, and outreach to vulnerable groups.

Pacific Women is supporting events that bring gender equality advocates and activists together to build momentum for social change. These events create space for discussing often taboo gender issues such as sexuality, violence against women, disability, gender identity, sexual and reproductive health and rights – with the program enabling an estimated 134,775 women and girls to access sexual reproductive health and clinical services.

⁴ Office of Development Effectiveness. (2019). Ending violence against women and girls: Evaluating a decade of Australia's development assistance. Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. <https://www.dfat.gov.au/aid/how-we-measure-performance/ode/strategic-evaluations/Pages/evawg>.

⁵ Cumulative data from 2012 to June 2021. All other data in this report is to December 2020 unless otherwise indicated.

⁶ Pacific Women in Politics. (2021, May). National women MPs. <https://www.pacwip.org/women-mps/national-women-mps/>. Statistics exclude Australia and New Zealand.

⁷ Families in CARE's Coffee Industry Support Project (CARE Coffee) in PNG have achieved a 22 per cent increase in income from their coffee production.

Pacific Women's key achievements over nearly 10 years from 2012–2021

Three countries now have crisis centres for survivors of violence for the first time, enabled through ongoing *Pacific Women* technical support and funding over many years. These include: **Weto in Mour** (A Place of Life): Violence Against Women and Girls Support Service (2016) through Women United Together Marshall Islands; Kiribati Women and Children Support Centre (2018); and **Tongen Inepwineu Counseling Center** (2019) through Chuuk Women's Council in the Federated States of Micronesia. In Papua New Guinea, two case management centres have been established through *Pacific Women* support in Lae and Port Moresby.

Since 2012, *Pacific Women* has supported the **Markets for Change** (M4C) project in Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, and also Papua New Guinea's **Port Moresby: A Safe City for Women and Girls and the Safe and Prosperous Districts** project. This commitment to women's economic empowerment has led to women having a greater voice in marketplace decision making, access to safer market infrastructure, and an increase in women's financial skills to operate marketplace businesses. M4C supports more than 7,000 members (90 per cent women) across 17 market vendor associations (13 of which have elected women presidents). In Papua New Guinea, 20 market vendor associations are registered, with over 4,500 members (approximately 80 per cent women), and over 77 women in executive positions.

Family-based approaches to agriculture have been successfully trialled in Papua New Guinea through CARE's **Coffee Industry Support Project** and the University of Canberra's Family Farm Teams project. Women and men now share family decisions and workloads, have increased household income, and manage assets more equally. The successful model is already being adapted and adopted in other parts of the region.

Pacific Women partners have assisted Pacific Island countries to implement national gender equality strategies and international commitments, including through the **Progressing Gender Equality in the Pacific** project of the Pacific Community (SPC), and work by the **Regional Rights Resource Team** (now under SPC's Human Rights and Social Development Division). Central to this process has been the development of an evidence base of statistics and data. Governments have gained support to introduce legislation for gender equality and ending violence against women. Today, 14 Pacific Island countries or states have endorsed national strategies and passed laws that criminalise domestic violence or established services to support survivors of violence. *Pacific Women* partners are building on these strategies and laws, including developing referral pathways for survivor-centred response and support services.

To better connect policy and programming to gender commitments, *Pacific Women* has supported quality research to develop an evidence base to drive continuous improvement in gender equality approaches. This research has included: the **Do No Harm Research Project Reports** on women's economic empowerment as it relates to violence; **International Finance Corporation research on safe workplaces**; **Research on Women's Leadership and Decision Making in the Pacific**; **Adolescent Unplanned Pregnancy in the Pacific**; and the **FSM National Report: Assessment of EAW Services and Gaps in Services**. The FSM report, for example, provided the evidence base enabling *Pacific Women* to directly support the establishment of a crisis support centre in Chuuk, FSM.

Significant advances are also being achieved with gender transformative change (refer to back cover for details), and other achievements as outlined in the full *Pacific Women* Final Report 2012–2021: www.pacificwomenreport.org



Transformative change is happening

Positive gender transformative change is happening in the Pacific as a result of long-term Australian Government support, including through *Pacific Women*.

There is increasing momentum for changing gender relations and norms. Multiple project evaluations have found transformative changes in attitudes and behaviour are taking place within families, communities and organisations, leading to reduced tolerance of violence against women and improved women's empowerment.

For example, a reduction of violence against women was reported by 90 per cent of community participants in the **Responding to Gender-Based and Sorcery-Related Violence in the Highlands** project in Papua New Guinea; marital rape and physical assault within marriage is reducing as a result of **Komuniti Lukautim Ol Meri** in Western Highlands and West Sepik provinces; while the **Gender Justice and Healing** project in Bougainville is changing people's attitudes and behaviours with reductions in sorcery accusation-related killings, family and sexual violence, teenage pregnancy and early marriage.

These, and many more initiatives supported through *Pacific Women* are showcased in the *Pacific Women* Final Report 2012–2021. They form just one more chapter in the story of the pursuit of gender equality in the Pacific, which continues to be written by extraordinary Pacific women, as it has for generations.



PACIFIC WOMEN
SHAPING PACIFIC DEVELOPMENT

Pictured: Front cover from left to right is Rachel Lume, Adolescent Girls Advisory Group (AGAG) member of CARE Vanuatu's Laef blo mi, vois blo mi project supported by Pacific Girl (credit: CARE Vanuatu); Teretia Tokam, Coordinator of the Kiribati Women and Children Support Centre (credit: *Pacific Women*, Tara Chetty); Christina "Kiki" Stinnett, President of Chuuk Women's Council (CWC) in Federated States of Micronesia (credit: *Pacific Women*, Clutch Guam); Savina Nongebatu, disability advocate from Solomon Islands (credit: *Pacific Women*, Sian Rolls); Ana Malia Falemaka, youth mentor with the Talitha Project in Tonga (credit: *Pacific Women*, Pasifika Communications); Betty Blake, Chair of FI-E-FI-A 'a Fafine Tonga (credit: Balance of Power); Agnes Titus, Advocacy Coordinator of the Nazareth Centre for Rehabilitation in the Autonomous Region of Bougainville (credit: IWDA, Harjono Djoyobisono); Roselyn Sidal, graduate of the Fiji Women's Rights Movement's GIRLS program (credit: *Pacific Women*, First Fighter); Daisy Alik-Momotaro, Executive Director of Women United Together Marshall Islands (WUTMI) (credit: *Pacific Women*, Chewy Lin).

Photos on pages 2–3, from left: Counsellors and caseworkers at the *Tongen Inepwineu* Counseling Center (TICC) operated by Chuuk Women's Council (credit: *Pacific Women*, James Benito); three presenters in a Pacific Girl webinar: Roselyn Sidal, graduate of the Fiji Women's Rights Movement's GIRLS program, Mia Kami, musician and youth climate advocate, Anna Vea, poet and youth advocate (credit: *Pacific Women*, Sian Rolls); Ken and Karolin Gigmal, Keto Tapasi, PNG (credit: CARE, Tom Greenwood); Participants march at the Bougainville Young Women's Leadership Forum (credit: IWDA, Harjono Djoyobisono); a plant grower sells plants at Suva's foreshore in Fiji (credit: Women's Fund Fiji, Rob Rickman).

Photos on pages 6–8, from left: Chelle Fruean, advocate from Samoa (credit: *Pacific Women*, Shazia Usman); Adolescent Girls Advisory Group (AGAG) members of CARE Vanuatu's Laef blo mi, vois blo mi project supported by Pacific Girl (credit: CARE Vanuatu); Lululeen Santos, Federated States of Micronesia gender and human rights advocate (credit: *Pacific Women*, Sian Rolls); Maere Tekanene, Kiribati, *Pacific Women* Advisory Board former-member (Photo credit: AHC Suva (Australian High Commission in Fiji)); two market vendors at Gerehu Market in Papua New Guinea (credit: UN Women); Honourable Niki Rattle, Speaker, Parliament of the Cook Islands and *Pacific Women* Advisory Board member (credit: *Pacific Women*, Shazia Usman); Tuvalu National Women and Youth Forum participants (credit: *Pacific Women*); Candida Kaious, Women United Together Marshall Islands (WUTMI) (credit: *Pacific Women*, Chewy Lin).

Back cover: The Nazareth Centre for Rehabilitation (NCfR) Male Advocate Forum team in Chabai, Autonomous Region of Bougainville (credit: IWDA, Harjono Djoyobisono).



Refer to the Final Report for full details about topics covered in this Highlights Booklet by scanning the QR code or at: www.pacificwomenreport.org

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