PACIFIC WOMEN HIGHLIGHTS 2012–2021

14 Countries
182 Initiatives
192 Partners
1.45m People
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

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.
Since 2012, Pacific Women has supported: 159,306 women to access crisis support services through 15 partners (including safe accommodation, counselling, medical and legal support, and disaster risk response).

- 1,901,459 people to participate in community awareness, outreach and advocacy around ending violence against women.

Since 2012, Pacific Women has supported: 20,754 women to take on leadership roles at the community, national, and local level (includes women participating in market decision-making).

- 46,906 people reached with civic and voter education.

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.

Since 2012, Pacific Women has supported: 8,828 women to access formal education, 134,775 women and girls to access sexual reproductive health and clinical services, 15,115 men are participating in male advocacy training.

Since 2012, Pacific Women has supported: 8,628 women to access formal opportunities to share their ideas and learn from each other (learning forums, leadership training and such activities).

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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 Tonga 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 EVAW 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.