

# PACIFIC REGIONAL PROGRAMME January – June 2022 Results

| Total Budget Phase I | EU Contribution | UN Agency Contributions                                                                       | Duration         |
|----------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| USD 7,835,932        | USD 7,077,830   |  USD 758,102 | July 2020 - 2023 |

**Recipient UN organizations:** UN Women, UNFPA, UNDP, UNICEF, IOM

**Other partners:** The Pacific Island Forum Secretariat (PIFS), The Pacific Community (SPC); National Legislatures, Ministries of Women, Health, Education, Youth and Sports, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Tonga, RMI (Republic of Marshall Islands) Ministry of Health and Human Services, RMI Ministry of Culture and Internal Affairs, University of Melbourne, Nossal Institute, Fiji Broadcasting Corporation, and over 50 international, national, local, and grassroots civil society organizations (CSOs).

## Context

During the first six months of 2022, the regional Pacific Spotlight Initiative continued implementation in a very complex environment. Several Pacific countries experienced their first community transmission of COVID-19 and widespread lockdowns, the Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai Eruption and Tsunami hit Tonga, highlighting once again the fragile Pacific ecosystem, and fractured regionalism continued creating tension to the detriment of other priorities such as ending violence against women and girls (EVAWG) and gender equality. New waves of COVID-19 continue to threaten the fragile balance of Pacific Island countries relying on tourism and labour mobility, challenging progress made across all development indicators. During the 1st semester of 2022, the composition of the Pacific Regional Multi-stakeholder Programme Steering Committee was officially announced with the addition of Mereseini Rakuita, SPC's Principal Strategic Lead – Pacific Women, as co-chair, along with the UN Resident Coordinator. The Civil Society Reference Group for the Pacific region met regularly, and numerous consultations were held with national stakeholders, UN agencies, and CSOs leading up to the development of Phase Out proposal to create a shared sustainable exit strategy for the Programme.

## Spotlight Initiative's Response

Despite the uncertainty, in the first half of 2022, the Spotlight Initiative has been able to expand and scale up on foundational work done in 2021, continuing to support Pacific governments' leadership and effectiveness by facilitating work on the costing of violence research and gender-responsive budgeting, and strengthening of women machineries. The programme supported faith-based organisations in scaling up the "Creating a Safe Church for Children Pacific Regional Toolkit", and supported the roll out of in and out of school CSE/FLE curricula. Progress was made in defining the needs of online child protection, as well as in providing menstrual health and sexual and reproductive health education. Comprehensive GBV data collection was further strengthened with over 100 technical staff in government and CSOs trained. In addition, Spotlight supported the 3rd Pacific Feminist Forum - PFF and facilitated CSOs access to global platforms such as CSW66. The programme continued to work across sectors and stakeholders, to leverage complementary mandates, and technical contributions for effective, comprehensive, and coherent support to EVAWG in the region.

## Key Results

- ✓ **Increasing Pacific governments' leadership and effectiveness to implement domestic violence legislation** (Pillar 1: Legislation and Policy): Facilitated dialogues and action planning with national women's machineries and EVAWG stakeholders in Solomon Islands and the Republic of Marshall Islands leveraging on the findings from the costing of violence research and gender-responsive budgeting activity.
- ✓ **Strengthening women's machineries to influence national resourcing for ending VAWG** (Pillar 2: Institutions): Key findings from the costing of violence research in Fiji were integrated into entry points within Fiji's legislation, including the forthcoming Fiji National Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls.
- ✓ **Transforming gender inequitable social norms and behaviors through engagement of adolescents and faith-based organizations** (Pillar 3: Prevention): The "Creating a Safe Church for Children Pacific Regional Toolkit" developed in 2021 is being currently piloted in Fiji, and subsequently in RMI and Solomon Islands. In 2022, 38 church enablers (12 men and 26 women) in Fiji, from 9 national churches in 6 islands have been trained so far. Church enablers provide contextualised learnings to their communities

and church denominations on the importance of protecting children from violence and abuse. Once the trainings are completed in the three pilot countries, the toolkit will be updated, and a curriculum will be developed for pre-service and in-service training for clergy on safe church practices and preventative measures that eliminate violence, harm and abuse against children through families and communities.

In the Solomon Islands, in partnership with OXFAM, U-Reporters (youth ambassadors who advocate for the collection of data and opinions on issues relevant to children and young people through a mobile app) developed questions and designed polls on safer internet use and use of phones. The poll on safer internet use garnered 543 responses and 662 on the use of phones.

With complementary funding from MFAT, the PSS/Department of Education completed scoping and sequencing for all targeted grades for CSE/FLE in and out of school curriculum integration in FSM and RMI. With support from Spotlight the governments of RMI and FSM, have developed plans for training/orientation of curriculum specialists and head teachers, and subsequent rollout of the revised curriculum from August 2022.

In RMI, through *Cookhouse Confidential Small Grant*, reusable menstrual pads were made locally and distributed to 6th grade students in the Ebeye community, along with menstrual health and sexual and reproductive health education. In Ebon Atoll, with the support of the Medical Society, a doctor and a nurse were able to visit the community and provide basic reproductive health services.

- ✓ **Strengthened comprehensive GBV data collection** (Pillar 5: Data): Four workshops of the data capacity building training series were delivered, as a build on to the data capacity building plan for Pacific. In 2022, a total of 102 technical staff in government and CSOs were trained on safe and ethical administrative data collection and management systems in the five countries of: FSM (3); Palau (3); Nauru (2); RMI (48); Solomon Islands (10); Samoa (8); Tonga (5); Vanuatu (23). Additional 42 participants were enrolled into the formal kNOVAWdata course to complement the skills base, 31 of which have graduated from the course. Through the UoM, the administrative data toolkit which includes the Disability and Measurement of VAW fact sheets was developed, and the Knowledge Hub and Community of Practice on kNOVAWdata is near completion.
- ✓ **Leaving no one behind through small grants** (Pillar 6: Women's Movements and Civil Society): Advanced regional movement building and intersectional advocacy with grassroots CSOs through the Pacific Feminist Community of Practice, which convened six FreeSkool and Movement Building sessions, launched a website hub and developed advocacy resources for activists.

Provided continuous technical assistance and resources to approximately 20 grassroots organisations focused on gender equality and EVAWG in the Pacific. Partnered with Haus of Khameleon in Fiji to mark the region's first Transgender Day of Remembrance.

### **One Story of Impact:** [\*Breaking the bias: Marshall Islands police officers learn how to better support survivors of violence\*](#)

Unconscious gender biases can affect first response and influence a survivor's ability to access services that are critical for their physical and mental health. Cases of sexual assault and intimate partner violence are particularly prone to police gender bias, which can result in failure to register a case according to procedure, shaming and blaming, or even accusing the victim/survivor of false reporting. To address such biases, Women United Together Marshall Islands (WUTMI) has been training Marshall Islands Police Departments on how to take a survivor-centered approach, promoting positive masculinities, and providing guidance on responding to violence against women and girls.

#### **In their own words...**

"Through this training, I have learned about the important role I play in ending violence against women and girls," said Police Officer Anitelu. "I have a better understanding of domestic violence and gender-based violence. My mission is to first change my approach and the way I work, and then work towards changing the approach of my colleagues. I want to contribute to the community and end all forms of violence."

### **Innovative, Promising or Good Practices**

In the state of Kosrae (FSM), the Spotlight Initiative, through the small grant mechanism, supported Utwe Women's Organisation a women-led grassroots organisation, in their advocacy efforts for the right of women's paid maternity leave. Through coordinated joint efforts, on 5th April 2022, the amendment to the State Law (S.L. No 12-163) was passed, granting 30 days of paid maternity leave. The bottom-up approach enabled the advancement of women's rights. Paid maternity leave means better physical and psychological health for the mother and the child, yet the entire community reaps the benefits of the advancement of human rights.