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Pacific and Timor-Leste Reducing Gender-Based Violence Project

Thank you for helping us transform the lives of children and communities
in the Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste and Vanuatu.

Annual Progress Report
2018

Project Summary

Country: Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste and Vanuatu
Duration: July 2014 – June 2018
Goal: To reduce tolerance of gender-based violence in communities across the Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste and Vanuatu.

The Pacific and Timor-Leste Reducing Gender-Based Violence Project aims to lower the rate of family and intimate partner violence in the Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste and Vanuatu by educating faith and community leaders on gender equality and non-violence in the home so they can become agents of change in their communities.

Extremely high rates of family and intimate partner violence in the Pacific and Timor-Leste are the result of many complex factors, including patriarchal social systems, the economic dependence of women on men, and the widespread belief that the Church approves the dominance of men over women in public and private life. As well as working with church and community leaders, this project strengthens partnerships between community groups and service providers so that women, children and men can be referred to counsellors and emergency services, while community action teams help individuals change their behaviour and alter the mindset within the community so that gender-based violence is no longer tolerated.

Faith and community leaders have increased their awareness of gender-based violence and are committed to promoting gender equality, which has led to a drop in incidences of family violence in communities.

We are here

October 2014 June 2018

A message from our CEO

It is with immense gratitude that I share with you this Annual Progress Report for the **Pacific and Timor-Leste Reducing Gender-Based Violence Project**.

As you read through these highlights, I hope you will share our excitement at what has been achieved with your support.

Every time I visit projects like this one I'm reminded of the profound change that together we are part of. Dedicated staff and volunteers, committed donors and hard-working community members united in the pursuit of transformation in children's lives.

By choosing to support this project, you are enabling us to deepen our impact and expand our presence into the hardest to reach places, where children need help the most.

You are unlocking the value of powerful grants that make it possible to deliver activities at scale and to expand on and iterate approaches that have been successful elsewhere.

Always at the very heart of this work is empowerment of individuals at the grassroots level. It's the long-term, often incredibly challenging work of building skills, changing mindsets and growing resilience so that children and adults can change their own lives and change the lives of others.

With your continued generosity and commitment, I do believe that together we can build a safer, more sustainable world for children.

Thank you.

Claire Rogers
 CEO, World Vision Australia



THE GLOBAL GOALS
For Sustainable Development

We are committed to working with governments, civil society, faith partners, peer organisations and individuals to realise our vision for life in all its fullness for every child.

To ensure that all children, especially the most vulnerable, enjoy good health, are educated for life, are cared for and protected, and empowered to reach their potential.

We are also committed to keeping and championing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals because they are central to achieving this vision. The goals interconnect and in order to leave no-one behind, it is important that we achieve each goal and target by 2030.



The Pacific and Timor-Leste Reducing Gender-Based Violence Project directly addresses these Sustainable Development Goals:



Achievements in 2018

When the project started, two out of three women were experiencing physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner, which is nearly twice the global average. Now, attitudes towards domestic violence are changing. In Vanuatu, for example, where faith leaders have been trained in counselling workshops about gender-based violence, 79 percent of participants stopped using violence against their families.



255 community and religious leaders

were trained about gender equality and gender-based violence. This included 62 faith leaders in Vanuatu who gained skills to support families experiencing violence and help keep survivors safe, six churches in Timor-Leste which began to provide family violence referral information through church programs, and 30 church leaders in the Solomon Islands who began to incorporate messages in their faith work about gender equality, the need to protect survivors of gender-based violence, and that violence is always a choice and people who commit violence are responsible for their own actions.



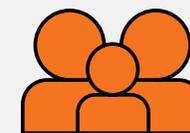
5,005 people

in the Solomon Islands benefited from information sessions, training and public awareness-raising activities. Community and church leaders gained tools to discuss family violence and gender equality with the wider community in order to use their influence to change people's mindsets and behaviour. 14 Savings Groups were supported to help address the issue of women's economic dependence, and 1,000 women were trained in leadership through a partnership with the Ministry of Women. Six community groups were formally registered with the Ministry of Commerce and are now able to introduce by-laws to support better governance around gender-based violence.



2,198 people

in Timor-Leste gained access to support through community-led family groups, government agencies, women's groups and leadership training sessions for women. Stronger links to organisations to help survivors of family violence were formed to ensure women and children could receive immediate support before being referred on to shelters and justice services. The project also trained 163 community leaders and 80 newly-elected officials, while 800 people underwent awareness training on gender equality and family violence.



11,053 people

participated in the program across the three countries and an additional 7,000 people were reached with media campaigns about gender-based violence and gender equality. Communities learned about services available to assist survivors of family violence and many men are changing their attitudes and putting an end to violent behaviour following awareness-raising campaigns.



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partner organisations and key service providers across all three countries were trained, increasing their knowledge of gender equality and gender-based violence, and are now providing more effective services and referrals.

A church leader ends his own violent behaviour before influencing others

Tovok, a mother of three from Vanuatu, has been amazed by the difference the Reducing Gender-Based Violence Project has made in her life.

"I must tell you my husband was a very hard man," she says. "My husband treated me and our children terribly. I was expected to do all the work around the house on top of gardening, cutting firewood and watching our kids. If I didn't meet his wishes or expectations, he would beat me badly, even if I was tired."

In Vanuatu, the Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste, high rates of family violence plague communities, causing untold hardship for women and girls. In Vanuatu, 60 percent of women have been physically or sexually abused by a partner. Gender stereotypes are strongly entrenched and the abuse of women is normalised.

When the project first began working with community and church leaders to help them understand family violence, promote gender equality and support survivors of violence, Tovok's husband Jean was not receptive to the change.

"He was very vocal in his position towards World Vision's message of gender equality and banned me from attending programs connected to them or their ideas," Tovok says. "And he was a church deacon."

In the Pacific region and Timor-Leste, over 83 percent of people are Christian and faith influences everyday life. This project is structured around the importance that faith leaders like Tovok's husband occupy in their communities, and the power they have to influence others and spark change. For Tovok, change finally came when Jean attended one of World Vision's counselling skills workshops.

"Suddenly, after attending the counselling workshop, for me a big change started to happen within him and in our home," she says. "He would cut the firewood, clean the house, prepared some of the food. He even went on to inform the other young married men who were mistreating their wives in the community of what he has learned from the World Vision workshop!"

Not only Tovok's life, but the lives of many others around her have gradually begun to change for the better, now that messages of equality and peaceful conflict-resolution are spreading and survivors are able to find referrals to essential services like shelters.

"I am very happy and grateful for what World Vision has contributed to my home and I believe that it is as God intended, that there is a time for everything to happen," Tovok says.

Your support has made a huge difference for people like Tovok and their children, who now have safer homes and communities thanks to the reduction of gender-based violence.



After participating in counselling skills workshops, Tovok's husband changed his behaviour and the family is now much happier.



3,850 people

in Vanuatu benefited from a range of programs, including counselling skills workshops to address violence within families for faith and community leaders who play a key role in ensuring that mindsets on family violence change within communities. 18 staff from partner organisations were trained in how to refer survivors of violence to appropriate support services so they can receive immediate help. A respect campaign to raise awareness about sexual consent and positive intimate partner relationships reached around 2,000 men, women, boys and girls through activities, videos and promotional materials. 111 Sunday and Sabbath School teachers were trained and went on to deliver lessons on gender equality to over 1,000 children.



**Thank you for helping us build
brighter futures by supporting the
Pacific and Timor-Leste Reducing
Gender-Based Violence Project.**

When you commit to humanity, amazing things can happen.

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