

# Violence against Women in Melanesia and Timor-Leste

Progress made since the 2008 Office of Development Effectiveness report



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## List of acronyms

AMKV	Association of Men Against Violence (Timor-Leste)
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
CAVAW	Committees Against Violence Against Women (Vanuatu)
CCC	Christian Care Centre (Solomon Islands)
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
DVD	Domestic Violence Decree (Fiji)
EVAW	National Action Plan for the Elimination of Violence Against Women (Solomon Islands)
FPA	Family Protection Act (Vanuatu)
FHSS	Family Health and Safety Study (Solomon Islands)
FPU	Family Protection Unit
FRIEND	Foundation for Rural Integrated Enterprises and Development (Fiji)
FSC	Family Support Centres (Papua New Guinea)
FSVAC	Family and Sexual Violence Action Committee (Papua New Guinea)
FSVU	Family and Sexual Violence Units (Papua New Guinea)
FWCC	Fiji Women's Crisis Center (Fiji)
FWRM	Fiji Women's Rights Movement (Fiji)
GEWD	National Policy on Gender Equality and Women's Development (Solomon Islands)
ICRW	International Center for Research on Women
IPO	Interim Protection Order (Papua New Guinea)
MSF	Medecins Sans Frontieres (International NGO)
NDoH	National Department of Health (Papua New Guinea)
NGO	Non-government organisation
ODE	Office of Development Effectiveness (Australia)



PCC	Pacific Conference of Churches (regional organisation)
PCSS	Pacific Counselling and Social Services (Fiji)
PRADET	Psychosocial Recovery and Development in East Timor
RPNGC	Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary
RRRT	Pacific Regional Rights Resource Team (regional organisation)
SICA	Solomon Islands Christian Association
SOS	Sexual Offence Squad (Papua New Guinea)
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VC	Village court (Papua New Guinea)
VWC	Vanuatu Women's Centre (Vanuatu)
WHO	World Health Organisation
YLM	Yumi Lukautim Mosbi (Papua New Guinea)
YWCA	Young Women's Christian Association



# Executive summary

This report builds on an earlier report published in 2008 by the Office of Development Effectiveness (ODE) of AusAID, titled *Violence Against Women in Melanesia and East Timor: Building on Global and Regional Promising Approaches*. The ODE report assessed current approaches to addressing violence against women and girls in five of Australia's partner countries: Fiji, Papua New Guinea (PNG), Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Timor-Leste. Nearly four years after the data were collected for the aforementioned report, AusAID commissioned the International Center for Research on Women to undertake a follow-up study in preparation for the Australia-US Pacific Women's Empowerment Policy Dialogue: Stopping Violence Against Women on 3-4 November 2011.

The aim of the present study was to take stock of what has happened with regard to the three key strategies for advancing the violence against women agenda put forward by the ODE report: (1) increasing **access to justice** for survivors of violence; (2) improving access and quality of **support services** for survivors; and (3) promoting **violence prevention**. The study also investigates a fourth strategy: strengthening the **enabling environment** for ending violence against women. This report presents the research team's findings on progress made since the ODE report in these four thematic areas in the same five countries.

The study methodology consisted of a desk review, an online questionnaire, and key informant interviews. The resulting data showcase successes and lessons learned as well as gaps and shortcomings that need renewed commitment by a broad range of stakeholders.

## Key findings

**Great strides have been made in *strengthening the enabling environment* for ending violence against women in the region, with noteworthy achievements in developing policies and programs with a human rights and gender focus, expanding the evidence base, and increasing donor funding.**

- ▶ Nearly two-thirds (63 per cent) of survey respondents reported attending a training on violence against women in the previous five years, and the majority of these noted that the training reflected a gender equality perspective. The Fiji Women's Crisis Centre, known for their human rights and gender transformative approach, continues to carry out their regular regional trainings for various actors engaged in the prevention of and response to



violence against women. The Pacific Regional Rights Resource Team also carries out trainings throughout the region in human rights, policy development and advocacy.

- ▶ New, nationally representative studies on the prevalence of violence against women have been carried out or are ongoing in Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Fiji. In addition to these nationally representative studies, other research has been conducted throughout the region.
- ▶ At a regional level, the Pacific Islands Forum's recently created Reference Group on Sexual and Gender Based Violence is making an important contribution to fostering multisectoral coordination between and among government and non-government actors and political commitments around national legislation.
- ▶ The Australian Government has greatly expanded its support for violence against women work in the region, increasing its investment from approximately \$6 million in 2007-08 to \$13.6 million in 2009-10, with a commitment of an additional \$25 million over four years for the Pacific and Papua New Guinea as part of the 2011-12 Budget. Pacific countries are also able to access a new fund—the Pacific Trust Fund to End Violence against Women. The Pacific Trust Fund, with the financial support of AusAID, provides small grants, allowing more groups in the region to access funds and providing a more suitable situation for new, small-scale grantees.

**Significant advances have been achieved in expanding women's *access to justice* as a result of major legislative victories. Yet the implementation of the laws as well as the overall functioning of the judicial and police systems remains weak.**

- ▶ Some 60 per cent of survey respondents believed that women's access to justice and the legal environment had improved in the past five years. An exception to this finding was in regard to customary legal responses to violence against women, where 73 per cent believed that the situation had either stayed the same or gotten worse over the past five years.
- ▶ In Vanuatu, the Family Protection Act was finally passed and came into effect in early 2009, after more than 10 years of advocacy by women's rights activists.
- ▶ In Timor-Leste, domestic violence was entered into the penal code in 2009 as a public crime in a major victory for Timor-Leste's women's movement and political activists.
- ▶ In Fiji, the Domestic Violence Decree of 2009 and The Crimes Decree of 2009 have improved the legal framework for prosecuting cases of sexual and domestic violence.

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- ▶ In Solomon Islands, the passage of the Evidence Act 2009 with the widespread support of the Solomon Islands Parliament was an important milestone.
  - ▶ Compared to the legislative successes, progress in improving the justice sector's response to violence against women in the region, particularly the traditional justice system, has been less noteworthy, and the police response to violence against women remains an area of concern. One promising police initiative is the Timor-Leste Police Development Program, which promotes behaviour change among state agents while still respecting contextual and cultural considerations.

***Support services for survivors in the region, despite certain successes and notable new investments by key donors, has seen the least progress in recent years compared to the other areas.***

- ▶ Survey respondents were evenly split regarding whether support services, on average, have improved as opposed to remained the same or stagnated in recent years.
- ▶ There have been a number of long-term investments in certain centres of excellent practice, including the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre, the Vanuatu Women's Centre, and Psychosocial Recovery and Development in East Timor (PRADET) in Timor-Leste.
- ▶ The Vanuatu Women's Centre has expanded its presence and activities throughout Vanuatu, including increases in the number of branches and number of active Committees Against Violence Against Women.
- ▶ The expansion of PRADET's Fatin Hakmatek (Safe House) to five referral hospitals throughout Timor-Leste represents a significant improvement in access to high quality support services for rural women in that country.
- ▶ In Papua New Guinea the Family Support Centres show great potential for providing survivors of violence with high quality medical and psychosocial support.
- ▶ Civil society actors in Papua New Guinea are playing a critical role in filling the gap in government services, often with very limited resources. The Family Voice Goroka and Port Moresby Papua Hahine are notable examples.
- ▶ Papua New Guinea's National Department of Health removed fees for services provided to survivors of violence and released a Medico-Legal Proforma for use in district hospitals.



**There have been accomplishments in certain areas related to *violence prevention*, with progress yet to be made in others. Improvements have mainly been around increased availability of funding for prevention from a gender perspective and the productive engagement of men and boys and faith-based groups in violence prevention.**

- ▶ More attention has been paid to increasing awareness of violence against women with an explicit focus on gender and human rights. The Committees Against Violence Against Women (CAVAW) in Vanuatu continue to be a promising practice for community mobilisation around women's human rights issues.
- ▶ There are promising examples in nearly every country of engaging men in gender equality work and partnerships with faith-based organisations to end violence against women.
- ▶ The Fiji Women's Crisis Centre has recently launched a new training methodology for working with men on ending violence against women.
- ▶ The Pacific Conference of Churches has made an increased effort in recent years to address gender inequality and violence against women in faith-based platforms. They recently conducted a region-wide survey of women's position in church leadership, with a crosscutting investigation of violence against women in all locations, and have also convened a training workshop to advance attitude change among clergy from across the region.
- ▶ The Solomon Islands Christian Association has been conducting trainings with church leaders and community members on gender and the link between unequal power relations and violence.
- ▶ The team was only able to identify a few examples of new initiatives of integrating violence prevention into other areas of work. One of these was the expansion of Stepping Stones, an educational program that fosters gender equality and sexual and reproductive health through community participation and decision-making.
- ▶ Another promising initiative in Papua New Guinea is the Safe Cities Program. This program, which promotes a coordinated approach for increasing the safety of women and girls in cities, should provide valuable lessons for elsewhere in the region.

The results of the desk review, survey and interviews all point to the enormous progress made in a very short time period in addressing violence against women in Melanesia and Timor-Leste. These achievements have greatly enhanced the political and social environment for addressing violence against women. However, the challenge will be to consolidate and



deepen these gains over a sustained period of time. While new laws and policies are an important step, implementation is still weak in most countries of the region. Although attitudes are beginning to change, most citizens consider violence against women a normal occurrence. Women and girls are still often blamed for the violence they experience. Support services for survivors of violence continue to be insufficient in quality and quantity in urban areas, and too often non-existent in rural areas.

There is an enormous array of innovative programs being carried out, many of which could be of great interest and relevance not only to other countries in the region, but also on a global level. Priority should be given to assessing what works and what doesn't, and to identifying interventions that can be brought to scale. By building on current successes and learning from failures, it is possible to envision a future where survivors of violence have effective access to justice and support services and where equal and respectful relationships between men and women are seen as the norm, not the exception.





# 1. Introduction

This report builds on an earlier report published in 2008 by the Office of Development Effectiveness (ODE) of AusAID, titled *Violence Against Women in Melanesia and East Timor: Building on Global and Regional Promising Approaches*. The ODE report assessed current approaches to addressing violence against women and girls in five of Australia's partner countries: Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Timor-Leste. The assessment was unique in that it used a participatory approach that engaged more than 700 individuals and representatives of government, NGOs and international organisations across the five countries.

Coordinated by a team of international and national researchers, the assessment involved the creation of a local advisory group in each country to support the process. Individual interviews and focus group discussions were carried out with a diverse group of stakeholders, including police, community men and women, church leaders, magistrates, and women's rights activists. Participatory methods used during the focus group discussions included Venn diagrams, incomplete stories, free listing and ranking, mapping and timelines.

The results of each country assessment were discussed with local leaders. Together, the findings from the five assessments served as the basis for a regional strategy aligned with a multi-sectoral framework to reduce violence against women. Overall, the study's participatory methodology was effective in engaging the active involvement of a broad cross section of society, stimulating dialogue and critical reflection about a complex problem, and creating buy-in for increasing efforts to end violence against women.

The following year (2009), the Australian Government released *Stop Violence: Responding to Violence against Women in Melanesia and East Timor—Australia's Response to the ODE report*. This publication outlined an ambitious set of commitments toward ending violence against women in the region, using the framework for action presented in the ODE report (see Box 1). These commitments reflected the following principles and priorities recommended in the ODE report:

1. Australia will make a long-term commitment to ending violence against women.
2. Australia will promote gender equality as a central principle of its international development work.

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3. Australia will work in partnership with key stakeholders and align with partner government priorities.
  4. Australia will adopt an integrated approach.

Nearly four years after the data were collected for the ODE report, AusAID commissioned ICRW to undertake a study in preparation for the Australia-US Pacific Women's Empowerment Policy Dialogue: Stopping Violence Against Women, 3-4 November 2011. The aim of the study was to take stock of what has happened with regard to the three key strategies for advancing the violence against women agenda put forward by the ODE report: (1) increasing **access to justice** for survivors of violence; (2) improving access and quality of **support services** for survivors; and (3) promoting violence **prevention**. These strategies, as well as a fourth – strengthening the enabling environment – are described in Box 1. The study focusses on the five countries included in the original ODE report, namely Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste and Vanuatu.

The results of this follow-up study are meant to contribute to the policy dialogue on violence against women in the Pacific by showcasing successes and lessons learned as well as gaps and shortcomings that need renewed commitment by a broad range of stakeholders.

### Box 1 - An integrated approach for ending violence against women

Because violence against women is multicausal and multidimensional, interventions to prevent and respond to the issue must also take place on multiple levels. A World Bank review of global best practices concluded that multisectoral solutions are a critical part of any effective strategy addressing violence against women. Such strategies must improve coordination between sector-specific approaches, civil-society initiatives and government institutions. They must also take into account the need for change in all layers of the ecological framework—from national laws, policies and institutions, to community-level norms and support networks—and households and individual attitudes and behaviours. The ODE report focused on three main strategies used throughout the world to reduce violence against women:

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1. **Increasing women's access to justice** by passing and implementing laws and policies that discourage violence and impose consequences on offenders; providing women with the means to protect themselves and children from violence through access to restraining orders, divorce and child maintenance; and ensuring humane, fair treatment by justice-system personnel (including judges, police and forensic doctors). In Melanesia and Timor-Leste, where parallel systems of justice operate, women need to have their rights upheld through both formal and traditional systems, and have access to the information necessary to exercise their rights effectively.
  2. **Increasing women's access to support services**, such as psychological, medical, and legal support, as well as safe haven. The level of support for survivors of violence provided by government institutions, NGOs, women's rights groups, faith-based organisations and community-based organisations, also needs to be increased.
  3. **Prevention of violence** by coordinating efforts to raise awareness; changing community attitudes about violence; and increasing women's status in society through political, social and economic empowerment. Preventing violence against women involves dialogue between all sectors of society at national, regional, and community levels. Prevention must also include awareness campaigns, advocacy and ongoing community-level activities.

Central to these strategies is the need for an integrated approach that involves coordination and cooperation among multiple actors in **strengthening the enabling environment** for ending violence against women in the region.

(Source: Ellsberg et al 2008)



## 2. Methods

The methodology of the current study consisted of the following activities:

1. A **desk review** of more than 60 reports, articles, national plans, project evaluations, etc. (published and unpublished) produced since the 2008 ODE report.
2. An **online survey** distributed to approximately 250 stakeholders drawn from government, NGOs, international organisations and donors (including those who participated in the 2008 assessment, as well as other individuals identified by the AusAID posts). A total of 115 individuals from the five countries completed the survey (Table 1). The survey asked respondents about perceived progress in implementation of the ODE report recommendations in the last five years.<sup>1</sup> More than half (56 per cent) of survey respondents worked at the country level while 38 per cent carried out their work at the community or district level. The few remaining respondents addressed violence against women at the regional level.
3. **In-depth interviews** by phone or in person with 55 key informants, including donors, service providers, governments officials, local women's rights activists, and faith-based groups from across the five countries (Table 1). These experts were identified using a 'snowball' sampling strategy, whereby we asked each person to whom we spoke for recommendations and introductions to other individuals who could provide additional insights on the themes under discussion. The research team deliberately chose experts to represent all five countries as well as the three key strategies described in Box 1.

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<sup>1</sup> Although the field work for the ODE report took place in 2007, four years before the follow-up interviews, we decided to use a five year time frame for the survey questions to facilitate recall.

**Table 1. Number of completed surveys and interviews per country**

Country	Online surveys	In depth interviews
Fiji	12	11
Papua New Guinea	39	17
Solomon Islands	30	8
Vanuatu	12	7
Timor-Leste	22	9
Australia		3
<b>Total</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>55</b>

## 2.1 Strengths and weaknesses of the methodology

Through this methodology we were able to gain the perspective of a broad range of stakeholders in a relatively short period of time. However, since we did not carry out fieldwork and we were not able to observe the interventions, our conclusions should not be considered as a representative or exhaustive analysis of the multitude of innovative initiatives to address violence against women being implemented throughout the region. Only initiatives raised during this research have been included in this paper. However, our findings do present a fairly detailed representation of the views of a variety of distinct stakeholders and observers. In some cases, we found differing and even opposing views, representing the diversity of opinion on some issues, and these are mentioned in the report. In general, however, there was a remarkable level of agreement on major issues in each country, which should be taken as a marker of the intensive discussion and reflection that has taken place around violence against women in recent years.

Finally, it should be noted that due to the relatively small number of respondents per country, we were not able to disaggregate the answers to the online survey by country, as this might compromise the confidentiality and privacy of individual informants.



## 3. Results

The results are organised into the following sections that correspond to the key strategies described in the ODE report (see Box 1):

- ▶ strengthening the enabling environment for addressing violence against women
- ▶ access to justice
- ▶ support services for survivors
- ▶ violence prevention.

Within each section, the findings from the desk review, on-line survey and in-depth interviews are presented according to the recommendations formulated for each strategy as discussed in the ODE report. In this way the findings provide an overall picture of progress in the last few years as well as the overall barriers and setbacks in addressing the recommendations.

### 3.1 Strengthening the enabling environment for addressing violence against women

The ODE report made a series of six overarching recommendations for strengthening the enabling environment in Melanesia and Timor-Leste (see Box 2). Our results show that there has been significant progress with regard to most of these recommendations. The enormous increase in funding for violence against women work in the region on the part of the Australian Government, the development of explicit national policies and plans to address violence against women with a human rights and gender focus, and the publication of several important studies are particularly noteworthy.



## Box 2 - Overarching recommendations for strengthening the enabling environment for ending violence against women in Melanesia and Timor-Leste

1. Ensure all interventions are grounded in a human rights and gender transformative approach.
2. Support efforts to strengthen the evidence base on violence against women.
3. Encourage coordination of aid among international donors to maximise impact.
4. Support multisectoral coordination, including between government and non-government actors, at both national and local levels.
5. Strengthen women's leadership and economic and political participation at all levels.
6. Build capacity in project management, communication and gender analysis.

### ***1. Ensure all interventions are grounded in a human rights and gender transformative approach.***

The ODE report found a huge variability in the approaches used to address violence against women in the region. Many groups considered violence primarily as a 'family problem' and encouraged women to seek reconciliation with their husbands, or gave suggestions on how to become better wives so that their husbands would be less likely to beat them. These approaches did not challenge the traditional view that women should be subordinate to men, and that men were justified in using violence in certain circumstances, and therefore it was the responsibility of women to learn to be more obedient. The ODE report called for urgent training of stakeholders to ensure that all interventions on violence against women be grounded in a human rights and gender transformative approach.

The survey data indicate considerable progress in this area. Nearly two-thirds (63 per cent) of survey respondents reported attending a training on violence against women in the previous five years, and the majority of these noted that the training reflected a gender equality perspective. In particular, 76 per cent said the training discussed power relations among men and women.



From the in-depth interviews and document review, we found that many actions have taken place to improve the overall quality of violence against women programming. For example, the Fiji Women's Crisis Center (FWCC), known for their human rights and gender transformative approach, continues to carry out their regular regional trainings for various actors engaged in the prevention of and response to violence against women. FWCC has also expanded its focused training offerings in recent years to include new locations (such as Papua New Guinea) and new types of attendees (such as the Fijian police force and shelter operators). The Pacific Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT) has also carried out trainings throughout the region in human rights, policy development, and advocacy. RRRT runs numerous programs, for example in the Solomon Islands the 'Changing Laws, Protecting Women: Lobbying for Legislative Change in Violence Against Women' project (initiated in 2009) has bolstered lobbying campaigns and family law reform.

## ***2. Support efforts to strengthen the evidence base on violence against women.***

The ODE report found a scarcity of information about the prevalence or characteristics of violence against women throughout the region. In the subsequent years, an enormous effort has been made to address this gap. As noted by survey respondents, 73 per cent think that building rigorous evidence on the prevalence and situation of violence against women has improved in the last five years (Figure 1).

Most notably, prevalence studies have been carried out or are ongoing in Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.<sup>2</sup> These three studies are based on the methodology of the World Health Organisation's *Multi-country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence against Women* (WHO 2005), which has been used in about 20 countries and with more than 30,000 women globally. The use of the WHO methodology means that the findings are not only useful for policy makers and programming within each country, but that they also, together with the studies conducted in Kiribati (SPC 2010) and Samoa (WHO 2005) provide a regional view of violence against women.<sup>3</sup>

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2 The surveys have been carried out by the Vanuatu Women's Centre in Vanuatu, and the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre in Fiji, with funding from AusAID. In Solomon Islands, the survey was coordinated by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community in collaboration with the Government of Solomon Islands, with funding and support from UNFPA and AusAID.

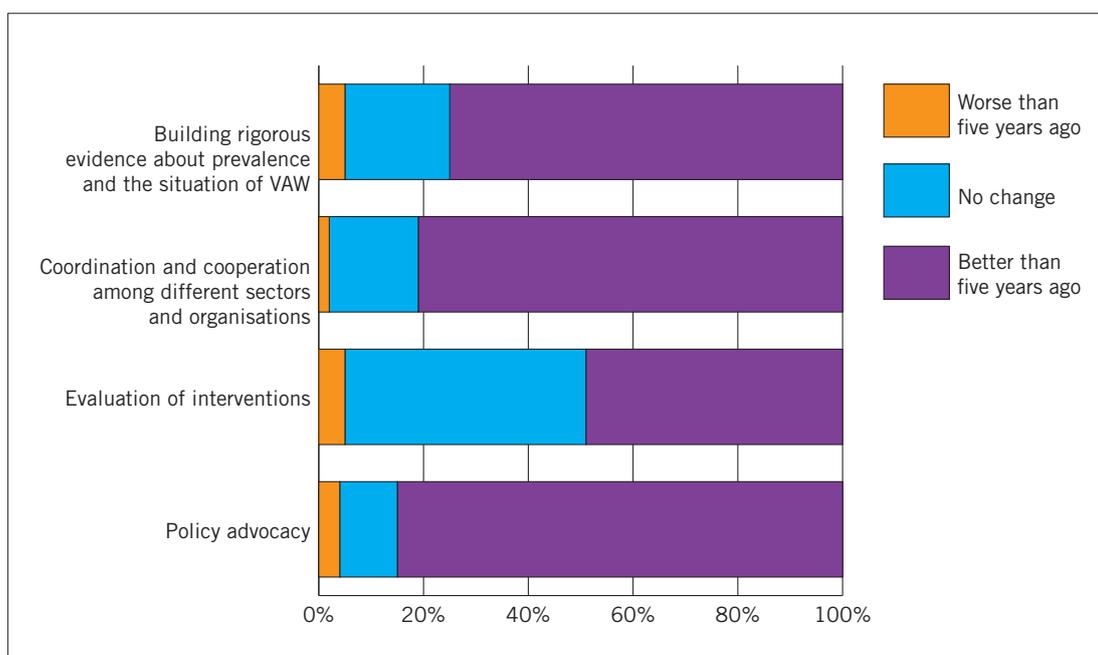
3 AusAID and UNFPA are also supporting similar studies in Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Nauru and Palau. MA'A FAFINE MO E FAMILI (For Women and Families) is conducting a similar survey in Tonga, with funding from AusAID.

The most important aims of the research were to:

- ▶ produce national-level prevalence estimates for physical, sexual and emotional violence against women
- ▶ assess the impact of intimate partner violence on a range of health outcomes
- ▶ document the strategies and services that women use to cope with violence by an intimate partner.

These three studies carried out in Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu differ from the WHO methodology in one important respect: they all used nationally representative samples (the WHO studies are typically conducted in the capital and one provincial area in each country). This makes them particularly useful for countries that have a great diversity of languages and cultures, and enhances the credibility of the findings. To achieve such a large sample required an enormous commitment and effort on the part of the organisations who carried out the studies in terms of resources and logistics. Considering that the region has been noted for its relatively low research capacity, this is particularly impressive.

**Figure 1. Online survey respondents: In the past five years, have you seen a change in the work on violence against women in your country in the following areas?**





The Solomon Islands study is known nationally as the Family Health and Safety Study (FHSS). Published in 2009, the FHSS marks one of the biggest overall milestones in addressing violence against women in Solomon Islands. This nationally representative study, carried out by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community for the Ministry of Women, Youth and Children's Affairs, found that the prevalence of violence in Solomon Islands ranks as the third highest in the world amongst those countries that have conducted this survey (see Box 3 for a summary of major findings). This finding was often cited in our interviews and appears to have had a huge impact in focusing attention on violence against women.

### Box 3 - The Family Health and Safety Survey of Solomon Islands (2009)

The FHSS of Solomon Islands (2009) is the first study in Melanesia to provide evidence of the prevalence of violence against women using internationally recognised best practice methods for collecting and presenting the data. The study, which included a nationally representative sample of 2,290 women, found very high levels of intimate partner violence, with 64 per cent of ever-partnered women aged 15-49 reporting physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner. The figures for sexual violence and physical violence alone were 55 per cent and 45 per cent, respectively.

Around one in 10 women who have been pregnant reported physical violence during a pregnancy. Women who had experienced intimate partner violence were more likely to report that their partner had tried to stop them from using family planning and to report an unwanted or unplanned pregnancy.

Violence by a non-partner is also common. Nearly one-third of women experienced either physical or sexual violence by a non-partner after age 15. More than a third (37 per cent) of respondents had been sexually abused before age 15. The most common perpetrators were a boyfriend (36 per cent), stranger (24 per cent), family member (20 per cent) or male friend of the family (16 per cent).

Nearly every expert we spoke with in Solomon Islands mentioned the FHSS as a huge achievement. Moreover, given that the process was fully supported by the national government, the report is perceived as 'government owned' and it has effectively integrated concerns over violence against women into the national policy dialogue. In addition to the report itself, a follow up study (UNFPA 2010) was published to document the challenges and



lessons learned from implementing the research.<sup>4</sup> The Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs has also been aggressive in its dissemination campaigns, and the FHSS report is largely credited with motivating the creation of the National Policy on Gender Equality and Women's Development (GEWD) and the National Action Plan for the Elimination of Violence Against Women (EVAW). When asked about recent progress in responding to violence against women, the 30 survey respondents from the Solomon Islands most often cited the FHSS report and the GEWD/EVAW policies.

The Vanuatu National Survey on Women's Lives and Family Relationships is a nationwide study funded by AusAID and conducted from 2009 to 2010 by the Vanuatu Women's Centre (VWC) in partnership with the Vanuatu National Statistics Office. This is the first national survey that provides information on the prevalence and characteristics of violence against women in this country. As previously mentioned, it also used the WHO multi-country study methodology. The study shows alarming levels of violence against women, particularly perpetrated by husbands/partners (See Box 4).

In addition to these nationally representative studies, other research, including program evaluations, has been conducted throughout the region. Two important regional reviews were published on advances in the region in legislation (Jalal 2008) and overall programming (UN Women 2011). In Papua New Guinea, in addition to a small-scale study on the prevalence of violence against women (Ganster-Breidler 2010), international organisations have undertaken several key programmatic assessments (e.g. Oxfam 2010 & 2011; MSF 2011; UN 2010) and policy briefs (Amnesty International 2009 & 2010). Independent researchers have completed several influential academic studies exploring the link between masculinity, gender norms, and violence (Eves 2006 & 2010; Onyeke 2010), and Human Rights Watch (2011) has released an important report on violence perpetrated by security personnel and police, particularly in the country's gold mines. A national study is planned for 2012 to establish the prevalence and extent of violence against women in Papua New Guinea.<sup>5</sup>

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4 The report includes lessons learned from the two recent prevalence studies carried out by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (in Kiribati and Solomon Islands).

5 The last national prevalence studies were carried out by the Law Reform Commission in the 1980s, with the final report published in 1992.

#### Box 4 - Vanuatu National Survey on Women's Lives and Family Relationships (2009-10)

The survey was administered to a representative sample from across all six provinces and the two urban centres of Vanuatu (3,619 households). Sixty per cent of women in Vanuatu have experienced physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime by husbands/partners, of which 90 per cent experienced severe violence. As a consequence, the rates of injuries are alarming: more than two in five women have been injured more than three times in their lifetime. Among those who have been injured, one in five now has a permanent disability.

Violence against women occurs in all provinces and islands, and among all age groups, education levels, socio-economic groups and religions. However, overall, levels of violence are higher in rural than in urban areas.

Intimate partner violence during pregnancy is also common. Fifteen per cent of ever-pregnant women have been hit during the pregnancy, and nine per cent have been hit or kicked in the stomach while pregnant.

Half of women in Vanuatu have experienced violence by a non-partner since age 15. In most cases the perpetrators are male family members or boyfriends.

The prevalence of sexual abuse against girls is one of the highest in the world. Nearly a third (30 per cent) of women have been sexually abused before the age of 15. For 28 per cent of all women surveyed, their first sexual experience was forced.

In Timor-Leste, the main research endeavours have been a Shadow Report for the country's Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) report which included some basic figures from shelters, and a recent Demographic and Health Survey which included a module on domestic violence and gives the first ever figures for lifetime prevalence of physical partner violence (38 per cent) and 12-month prevalence (28 per cent) for the country. Several other ongoing research initiatives include: research on the implementation of the new Domestic Violence law across the whole justice sector by the UN Mission in Timor-Leste; a study on how socio-economic community conditions influence dynamics of domestic violence by UNDP; and an assessment of shelter services across the country by UNFPA.



Given these important research achievements, it is not surprising that more than 80 per cent of survey respondents felt that policy advocacy has improved in the last five years as the evidence necessary to advocate for greater attention to ending violence against women has expanded.

### ***3. Encourage coordination of aid among international donors to maximise impact.***

Since the publication of the ODE report and the commitments made in AusAID's *Stop Violence* report, Australia has significantly increased the amount of funding dedicated to violence against women in Melanesia and Timor-Leste. Australia's investment in programs that address violence against women in the region doubled from approximately \$6 million in 2007-08 to \$13.6 million in 2009-10. And as part of its 2011-12 Budget, the Australian Government committed an additional \$96.4 million over four years for initiatives to eliminate violence against women and to support women affected by violence in developing countries. Of this, the regional allocation of this funding is \$25 million to Papua New Guinea and the Pacific Region. The focus of this funding will be to support efforts to prevent violence against women and change community attitudes towards violence against women; and to have health, education and legal response services in place that respond to the needs of women who have been subjected to violence. This increase should make a huge contribution toward scaling up and providing greater sustainability for ongoing as well as new initiatives.

In Papua New Guinea the United Nations set up a Government of PNG – Development Partner Forum on gender equality to coordinate gender-related work between development partners, the government and key civil society organisations. One of the three technical working groups focuses on gender, violence and vulnerability. There has also been a significant increase in the visibility of the issue of violence against women in regional policy dialogue, both at the level of the Pacific Islands Forum and by supporting the work of the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development. Coordination between donors and key United Nations agencies has also improved, and is cited in the Australian Partnership Frameworks with UN Women and UNFPA. Unfortunately, during this same period other donors have reduced funding to violence against women initiatives in the region, which has made it more difficult to coordinate assistance.



#### ***4. Support multisectoral coordination, including between and among government and non-government actors, at both national and local levels.***

Reducing violence against women requires simultaneous action at many levels by multiple actors. Government commitment and capacity, the participation of women in public life, a strong civil society and an understanding of gender and human rights issues are critical to creating an enabling environment for ending this type of violence. Commitment and coordination by international agencies and donors to support the efforts of national governments and civil society are also critical. In 2008, this was a weak area for most countries in the study, as National Violence Against Women Action Plans had not been completed or implemented in any of the countries. Since 2008, enormous progress has been made in the area of policy and multisectoral coordination. This was recognised by our survey respondents (see Figure 1) as well by our expert interviewees in all countries.

At a regional level, the Pacific Islands Forum's recently created **Reference Group on Sexual and Gender Based Violence** is making an important contribution to increasing awareness on the issue. The Reference Group engages with national governments in the region to advocate for policy and legislative change around sexual and gender based violence issues. The group has representation from UN Women, FWCC, Secretariat of the Pacific Community and three government representatives from Solomon Islands, Kiribati and Tonga, and has already completed advocacy trips to several countries in the region. The most recent visit, to Solomon Islands, took place in August 2011. The reference group uses the Pacific Island Forum's mandate as well as the forum leaders' commitment to end violence against women to foster political commitments around SGBV legislation at the national level.

At a national level, the **Gender Based Violence Referral Partners Network** in Timor-Leste remains an important example of effective multisectoral coordination. The GBV Referral Partners Network was established in 2001, and has been run by the Office of the Secretary of State for the Promotion of Equality (SEPI) since 2009. The Network coordinates partners around two types of activities: advocacy and service provision. The Ministry of Social Solidarity convenes the service providers group with the participation of relevant ministries and NGOs. The groups are scheduled to meet on a monthly basis and are currently involved in the development of the National Action Plan for Gender Based Violence, which they expect to complete by the end of 2011. The process includes UNFPA, relevant civil society actors, and representatives of the ministries of justice, education, health, and social solidarity.

In Solomon Islands, a recent example of multi-sectoral coordination is the formation of a task force to oversee implementation of the **National Action Plan for the Elimination of Violence**



**Against Women (EVAW).** The EVAW Task Force is comprised of representatives from the police, health sector, education, NGO service providers, faith-based organisations, etc., with additional guidance provided by the National Steering Committee on Gender Equality and Women's Development. The EVAW Action Plan operationalises the recently approved *National Policy on Eliminating Violence Against Women and the National Policy on Gender Equality and Women's Development 2010-2015*, which commits the Government to 'exercise leadership to end all forms of violence against women and support advocacy in this regard at the local, provincial, national, regional and international levels, by all sectors and all political and community leaders, as well as the media and civil society.' As one expert reported:

*The biggest improvement [in the past few years] has been the 2 policy documents, in particular the EVAW plan. That is the most important document that we women have to work by. It is government owned, and shows that the government is committed to working towards addressing this issue, and that it is everyone's responsibility to educate each other, provide responsive services, and respond to the situation.*

*[service provider, Solomon Islands]*

In the past five years in Papua New Guinea, the Government has undertaken several promising actions at the policy level that reflect a commitment to integrating gender into national planning and a growing recognition of the need for an integrated response to violence against women. Most notably, in 2010 the Department for Community Development presented its first **CEDAW Progress Report** since Papua New Guinea ratified the convention in 1995. The Office for the Development of Women, established in 2006, is now fully operational and is responsible for monitoring CEDAW compliance.

The entity responsible for coordination on violence against women between non-governmental agencies is the **Family and Sexual Violence Action Committee (FSVAC)**. The FSVAC was established in 2000 under the Consultative Implementation and Monitoring Council with the mandate of reducing the occurrence and suffering caused by physical, sexual and psychological violence. With around nine full-time staff members, the FSVAC works mainly through its partner organisations. The FSVAC has played a critical role in: developing an extensive network that includes traditional and religious leaders; building capacity through several training initiatives; advocacy for rolling out government programs (such as the Family Support Centres); providing grass roots organisations with much needed funding; working with male advocates; and more generally sustaining the momentum around efforts to combat violence. In collaboration with the FSVAC, a **National Strategy and Action Plan for Ending**



**Family and Sexual Violence in Papua New Guinea** was developed in 2008 (Siebert and Garap 2008). This document is regarded as an overall roadmap for addressing family and sexual violence. However, the Government of Papua New Guinea has yet to articulate its own strategy or to agree to a coordination mechanism for ending violence against women. More recently (June 2011) the *National Policy for Women and Gender Equality 2011-2015* was launched and implementation plans are currently underway.

In Fiji, continuing political instability inhibits coordination among civil society organisations and government ministries. Following the 2006 coup and 2009 abrogation of the Fijian constitution, civil society organisations hoping to advance human and women's rights have faced the difficult decision of whether and how to engage with a non-democratic government. However, several experts cited two recent processes – preparing the **2010 UN Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review** and producing the **2010 CEDAW Shadow Report** – as positive steps toward fuller coordination between Fijian civil society organisations and government. As many as 20 different organisations contributed to these two papers. The FWCC has also taken a leadership role in another multi-sectoral initiative, a **National Network on Ending Violence Against Women**. Originally constituted in 2009, the network will reconvene in November of 2011 to establish, among other things, minimum standards for the nation's shelters.

### ***5. Strengthen women's leadership and economic and political participation at all levels.***

Compared to other areas, relatively little progress has been made in this area. Timor-Leste, continues to lead the way in terms of women's political participation at a national level, where 29 per cent of parliamentary seats are held by women. On the other hand, there is still only one woman in Parliament in Papua New Guinea. Coalition for Change and other civil society groups in Papua New Guinea, supported by UNDP, have lobbied extensively to change this situation through the Equality and Participation Bill to reserve 22 Parliamentary Seats for women.

In Solomon Islands, there is currently no woman sitting in the national Parliament. Although the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands' National People's Survey (2010) found that 85 per cent of respondents believe there should be women in Parliament, we did not learn about any coordinated advocacy in this area during the data collection process. As one regional policy advocate told us:



*You've got a culture of silence around these kinds of issues that's very difficult to break...it's so pervasive. You've got politicians who are almost exclusively male – in the whole Pacific region we have only three female MPs – and finding the political will to enact new legislation is very difficult.*

The **Women's Leadership Mentoring Program** (supported by AusAID) is considered by many to be a 'success story' in Solomon Islands.<sup>6</sup> Since October 2008, the program has aimed to increase women's political leadership through 'mentoring networks' that involve leaders within the government, civil society, and private sectors. Thus far 100 have received mentoring and training around leadership skills.

The **Pacific Leadership Program**, an AusAID initiative, has been working closely with the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) throughout the region in the area of young women's leadership development. A promising example of this collaboration, currently in its pilot phase, is the Rise Up! program that uses innovative methods to train young Solomon Islands women in human rights, leadership, gender equality and advocacy. The YWCA (2011), with support from the Pacific Leadership Program, also developed a young women's leadership strategy 2011-14 for the Pacific to provide specific recommendations for engaging young women and girls in leadership activities.

## ***6. Build capacity in project management, communication and gender analysis.***

The ODE report found that both governments and civil society groups in the region lacked capacity to develop and implement projects on violence against women. FWCC's ongoing training activities across the region (see pg. 8) contribute substantially towards the objective of increasing this capacity. AusAID and UN Women also undertook a major step towards addressing this gap with the development of the **Pacific Trust Fund to End Violence against Women**. The Pacific Trust Fund provides much smaller amounts of funding than the Global UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women, which allows more groups in the region to access funds, and is more suitable for small groups that may be just getting started. At the same time, UN Women created a **Help Desk** to provide technical assistance and training in proposal development and project management, thereby improving the quality of applications to donors and project outcomes. UN Women has also greatly increased its staff, and has placed EAW advisors in Fiji and Solomon Islands to provide ongoing support to grantees.

The United Nations Secretary-General's campaign **UNiTE to End Violence against Women** kicked off in the Asia Pacific region on 25 November 2010. At present, the three United

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<sup>6</sup> See <http://www.ausaid.gov.au/publications/pdf/women-leading-change.pdf> for more information.



Nations Country Teams serving the Pacific Region (Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Samoa) are working together to develop a Pacific UNiTE Campaign (2011-15) that will further develop the existing Asia Pacific UNiTE Campaign Strategy, by tailoring it specifically to the Pacific context. The Pacific UNiTE Campaign will enhance and strengthen important work implemented by well-established violence against women organisations in the Pacific to eliminate violence against women and girls. The UNiTE Campaign will support all regional efforts to adopt and enforce national laws to address and punish all forms of violence against women and girls; adopt and implement multi-sectoral national action plans; strengthen data collection on the prevalence of violence against women and girls; increase public awareness and social mobilisation; and address sexual violence in conflict (UN Women Pacific Sub-regional office website).

## 3.2 Access to justice

Effective justice systems are important in reducing violence against women. First, they can provide physical protection by invoking powers greater than that of individual offenders. Second, they can provide a crucial statement about what behaviours are not acceptable—this is particularly valuable where relations between women and men are undergoing change. And third, successful prosecution of offenders removes the sense of shame-and-blame so often felt by survivors, and contributes to their emotional recovery. Successful prosecution also acts as a deterrent to future offenders and an incentive for other survivors to come forward with their complaints.

### Box 5 - Recommendations to improve access to justice to stop violence against women

1. Improve national legislation on violence against women.
2. Strengthen both formal and community based justice systems.
3. Improve the police response to violence against women.
4. Increase support for non-government organisations offering women legal literacy and human rights training.

The 2008 ODE report pointed out significant weaknesses in the justice systems throughout the region, including outdated and discriminatory approaches to violence against women, lack of specific legislation criminalising domestic violence and sexual violence, as well as under-resourced police, lack of clear protocols and accountability, and enormous logistical difficulties in providing services to rural communities causing significant backlogs. There was limited training for police and although specific sexual offences units had been established in most countries, they were under resourced. Many rural women relied on informal or custom-based systems but felt that these systems did not provide them with the protection they needed. Low rates of education and literacy, and barriers of language and mobility, meant that many women did not know about their rights or the laws, where they existed, intended for their protection. The report proposed four main recommendations to address these gaps (Box 5).

Significant advances have been achieved with regard to women's access to justice. Several laws were passed during this period (Table 2), capping more than a decade of dedicated activism by women's rights activists and marking an important milestone in the legal protection of women's human rights in the region. On the other hand, the implementation of the laws as well as the overall functioning of the judicial and police systems remains extremely weak.

### ***1. Improve national legislation on violence against women.***

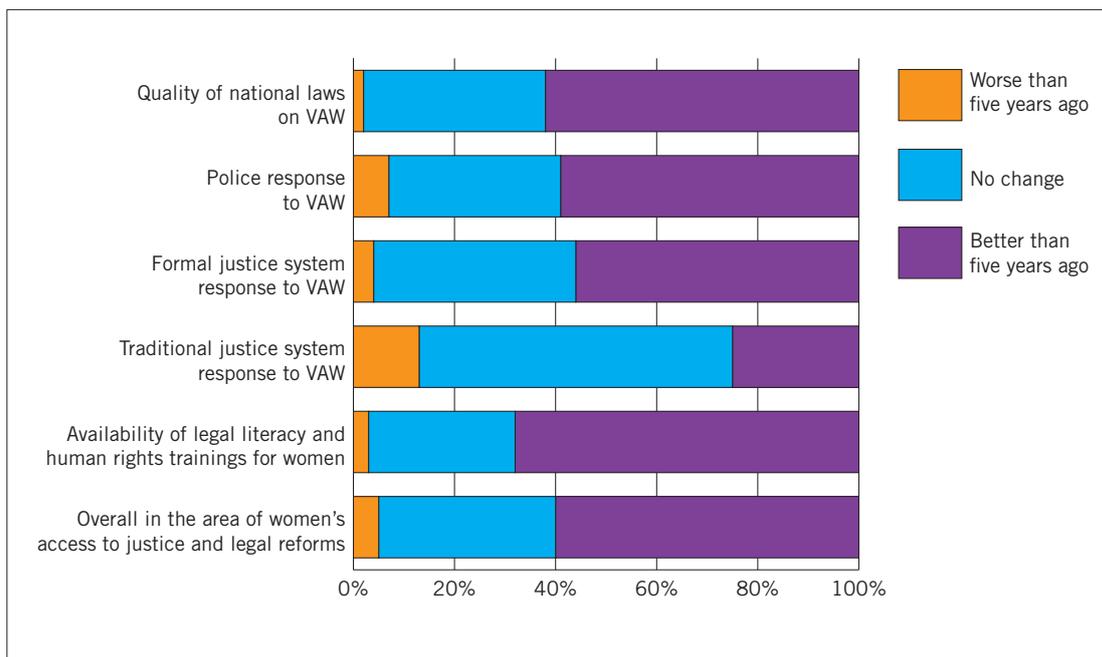
When asked about changes in the quality of national laws on violence against women, most survey respondents felt that the situation had improved compared to five years ago (Figure 2). Indeed, most experts interviewed highlighted important strides in the enactment of national legislation on violence against women.

**Table 2. Recent legislation on violence against women**

Vanuatu	Family Protection Act (2009)
Fiji	Domestic Violence Decree (2009)
	The Crimes Decree (2009)
Solomon Islands	Evidence Act (2009)
Papua New Guinea	Lukautim Pikinini (Child) Act (2009)
Timor-Leste	Domestic violence included in the penal code (2009)

One of the greatest achievements in the region occurred in Vanuatu, where the **Family Protection Act** (FPA) was finally passed and came into effect in early 2009, after 11 years of advocacy by women’s rights activists, and much resistance on the part of traditional chiefs and religious leaders. This was a huge victory for the women’s rights movement, and was celebrated throughout the region. The FPA creates a specific domestic violence offence and confers obligations on police to intervene if violence is suspected. Courts can make enforceable Family Protection Orders to constrain the behaviour of perpetrators for up to two years. The Act also states that payment of bride price cannot be used as a defence in domestic violence cases. The FPA also creates a system of Authorised Persons, who will be empowered to provide Family Protection Orders to women, thereby greatly facilitating the process for women in rural areas who do not have access to a magistrate.

**Figure 2. Online survey respondents: For these topics related to women’s access to justice, have you noticed any change in the last five years?**



In Timor-Leste, domestic violence was entered into the penal code in 2009 as a public crime in a major victory for Timor-Leste’s women’s movement and political activists. As was the case in many countries in the region, the process of drafting and advocating improved violence against women legislation was long and laborious. The classification as a public crime is a



crucial one as this requires police to honour and investigate cases of violence reported by anyone, not only the victim/family. Furthermore, a new article stipulates that suco chiefs, as public officials, must report violence to police when these cases come to their attention. Implementation of these new laws is progressing slowly but steadily, thanks in no small part to training programs coordinated by the UN Mission in Timor-Leste and the Timor-Leste Police Development Program. According to a community advocate:

*The law against domestic violence that was recently passed recognised that domestic violence is a public crime—therefore it gives more advantage to the victims to perceive that they are protected. Thus domestic violence cases shouldn't be solved through traditional mechanisms, because often victims are victimised two times as the decision made through traditional approaches discriminates against women victims and children.*

In Fiji, the **Domestic Violence Decree** of 2009 (DVD) and the **Crimes Decree** of 2009 significantly improve the legal framework for criminalising and prosecuting cases of sexual and domestic violence. The DVD contains elements such as improved definitions of domestic violence in accordance with international standards. It also provides expanded authority to police to investigate and prosecute cases of domestic violence. The new Crimes Decree broadens the definition of sexual violence to include any forced sexual act against a non-consenting person. As compared to the previous Crimes Decree, this definition provides additional protection to survivors of violence, and allows for prosecution of sexual violence against men for the first time.

Nonetheless, as the CEDAW committee and Fiji Women's Rights Movement have noted recently, the DVD has several serious shortcomings. It stops short of comprehensively criminalising all forms of violence against women, as the CEDAW committee points out, and still leaves the country without a multisectoral action plan to address violence against women. The DVD does not establish any training mechanisms for police officers by which the decree will begin to be implemented, nor does it make any provision for support services for survivors of violence. And as such, with all decrees, public consultation and support was not part of the process – nor has dialogue or cooperation been sought from civil society for implementation. Hence, critics observe, it is unlikely that progressive elements of the decree will be operationalised.

In Papua New Guinea, there is at present no specific legislation criminalising domestic violence (domestic violence is prosecuted under the criminal code which does not differentiate between assault committed in the community or in the home), despite strong



advocacy efforts to pass a Family Protection Bill. The Coalition for Change and the Family and Sexual Violence Action Committee (FSVAC) have been working closely with the Department of Justice and other stakeholders to develop the legislation, and the process is on track for a possible reading in 2012. In 2009, however, Papua New Guinea made progress in protecting girls from violence and other abuse through the **Lukautim Pikinini Act** (Caring for Children). The Act criminalizes all forms of violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation and discrimination against children.

Another priority issue for Papua New Guinea, which was highlighted by the CEDAW committee, is the problem of sorcery-related violence and killings (CEDAW Committee 2010). The capacity of the police to respond to sorcery related attacks is limited, due to both the outdated legislation (*Papua New Guinea Sorcery Act of 1971*) and an acute fear of sorcery and witchcraft which is pervasive throughout the country. While stronger actions are needed, the government is demonstrating its attention to this issue by mandating that the Constitutional Review and Law Reform Commission review the Sorcery Act (currently in progress).

In Solomon Islands, the passage of the **Evidence Act 2009** with the widespread support of the Solomon Islands Parliament was an important milestone. The Evidence Act offers survivors of violence a better chance of obtaining justice by removing discriminatory practices (based on outdated common law rules) such as the 'cautionary rule', which assumed that a woman's word must be treated with caution and subsequently required supporting evidence to corroborate a victim's testimony.

While the Government of Solomon Islands has yet to pass specific legislation criminalising domestic violence, the Law Reform Commission is currently reviewing the penal code from a gender perspective. The process has relied heavily on community consultations, and the Commission hopes to submit a draft bill to the Minister of Justice as part of its final report. RRRT is also supporting the law reform process under its 'Changing Laws, Protecting Women: Lobbying for Legislative Change in Violence Against Women' project (initiated in 2009 in six Pacific countries). This project has helped to bolster lobbying campaigns for violence against women and Family Law reform. Additionally the American Bar Association has been hosting workshops around trafficking in Solomon Islands and has also drafted legislation to address the issue. Informants from Solomon Islands stressed how helpful the support of regional organisations, such as RRRT, have been in their advocacy efforts. According to an international expert:



*RRRT is a regional body who advocates for human rights compliance. I think the acceptability of the messages they are giving is tied to their identity as a regional entity... We don't have that capacity here. Regional bodies can be really powerful. They have credibility and legitimacy as well as a deep understanding of the context.*

## **2. Strengthen both formal and community-based justice systems.**

Compared to the legislative successes, progress in improving the justice sector's response to violence against women, particularly the traditional justice system, has been less noteworthy (see Figure 2). In the absence of specific domestic violence legislation in Papua New Guinea, in 2009 the Magisterial Services developed practice directions for district courts to issue **Interim Protection Orders** (IPOs) with the aim of providing individuals with immediate protection for actual or threatened violence. There are differing opinions on the effectiveness of IPOs, although most experts agree that this is a positive sign of the state's commitment and that some women are benefiting from the availability of IPOs, particularly in the national capital district. As one expert from a women's NGO told us:

*A really good thing that happened was the ability to get a protection order [IPO]. The law and justice agencies put in place new regulations for getting a protection order any time of day or night, and trained magistrates how to do it. They formed a network of women magistrates and made them the contact point after hours... it was really good work.*

Under the Law and Justice Sector Program, supported by AusAID, several trainings on the process of completing IPOs have been conducted for the police, statutory and customary magistrates, and NGOs. Promising (and indirect) outcomes of the trainings are: increased awareness among stakeholders of the importance of a legal response to violence; and more support for the Family Protection Bill. Given that IPOs are a new procedure, however, there is still some concern that the police confuse IPOs with permanent protection orders, and as a result give incorrect counsel to women. An external evaluation is essential to assess the impact of IPOs and better understand the strengths and shortcomings of this approach.

An effective approach to improve Papua New Guinea's village court system (VCs) has been a legislative review of the *Village Courts Act of 1989*. Extensive consultations have shown strong community support for amending the Act to legislate that all VCs must have at least one woman magistrate, and to increase the legislative channels through which VCs can address family violence. These consultations have been accompanied by an ambitious effort



to increase the number of women in VCs (see Box 6). One area of concern to note, however, is the extent to which this community institution—with its emphasis on mediation and redistributive justice—can adopt a human rights and gender framework for addressing violence.

### Box 6 - Papua New Guinea: Increasing the participation of women in village courts

The VC system is the largest government institution in Papua New Guinea, comprising about 1,414 courts and more than 14,000 officials—approximately half of which are magistrates. For the vast majority of women, VCs are the only accessible legal institution. In 2004, a national policy directive was issued through the Director of the Village Courts and Land Mediation Secretariat mandating that each VC recruit at least one woman magistrate. The Secretariat and the LJSP, with leadership from the executive director for the VCs, Mr. Peni Keris, and Advisor Elizabeth Morgan, have undertaken several awareness raising campaigns with the aim of increasing the number of women magistrates. As a result of these efforts, women's representation has increased dramatically—from 10 women in 2004, to more than 800 women magistrates currently serving the VCs. A background report prepared for AusAID (Morgan 2010) suggests, based on qualitative interviews with female magistrates, that the presence of women in the VCs has strengthened the response to domestic violence and that they are having a positive influence on their communities by increasing access to the courts for women survivors as well as more generally strengthening the VCs' approach to gender issues. As one woman magistrate explains:

*Men were working wrong in domestic violence cases. Now the women come and talk for hours. Gender equality is important in domestic violence. If a woman does not agree with her husband then I try and mediate. But in some continuous cases I refer them to the District Court. I ask the police 'why don't you arrest and charge him – they let the men go free.'*

Source: Elizabeth Morgan 2010, unpublished report



### ***3. Improve the police response to violence against women.***

The police response to violence against women remains an area of concern. Despite extensive training carried out with the help of RRRT and other actors as highlighted below, many expert interviewees identified major shortcomings in the police response to violence against women throughout the region. Nevertheless, most survey respondents perceive that the situation is better now than five years ago (Figure 2).

One promising initiative is the **Timor-Leste Police Development Program**, which promotes behaviour change among state agents while still respecting contextual and cultural considerations. The program has successfully integrated within existing hierarchical structures of the Timor-Leste National Police to coordinate trainings on various topics related to domestic violence and other legislation. It takes a ‘train the trainers’ approach, expecting that the superintendents pass on the knowledge to inspectors, inspectors to sergeants, and on down the chain of command. This approach has proven more effective than training field officers themselves due to the hierarchical sensibilities of Timorese culture and the police force itself. Expert interviewees report modest successes in implementation of the new domestic violence law, including a recent increase in the number of cases being reported. The challenges of implementation remain enormous, however, especially considering the diversity of languages spoken in rural locations in Timor-Leste, as well as the poor infrastructure connecting remote villages to the nearest police outposts.

The **Pacific Prevention of Domestic Violence Program** is an initiative of the New Zealand Government’s aid program, New Zealand Police and the Pacific Islands Chiefs of Police, and also represents a promising new advance in the police response to violence against women. The long-term goal of the program is ‘a safer Pacific free from domestic violence.’ The program focuses primarily on building the capacity of Pacific police services to prevent and respond effectively to domestic violence. This includes the development and maintenance of effective partnerships between police and other agencies/NGOs with a role in preventing or responding effectively to domestic violence. The program involves both regional and national level components. At the regional level all Pacific countries participate in a range of training, networking and information sharing activities aimed at building the capacity of police services, to develop effective regional partnerships, and to promote the prevention of domestic violence as a priority issue in the Pacific. National level training activities are underway in Cook Islands, Kiribati, Samoa and Tonga.

Also as part of the program, an analysis of the status quo of the justice sector with respect to violence against women in Vanuatu has recently been completed. The evaluation found that



women felt that younger police officers better understood the issue but also revealed that there is much uncertainty about how cases of domestic violence should be handled (Fairbairn-Dunlop 2009).

In PNG, the Sexual Offence Squad (SOS) has been investigating cases of violence since the 1980s, and given the extent of instability in the country this long-term commitment on behalf of the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary (RPNGC) is a notable achievement. The SOS has also demonstrated strong leadership, for example Detective Sergeant Tinol Pakipon has been recognised internationally for his commitments. In late 2008, the **Frontline Policing Improvement Project** established the **Family and Sexual Violence Units (FSVUs)**, and there are currently three FSVUs in Port Moresby. It is generally felt that this pilot program has strengthened the police response to survivors of violence and has strengthened the relationship between the police and service providers. Each of these units are reported to see an average of 15-20 women daily (RPNGC 2010). A major constraint, however, for both the SOS and the FSVUs is lack of capacity, both in terms of staffing and other resources such as police vehicles and computers. Additionally as a pilot program, the FSVUs have yet to be permanently adopted and implemented nationally.

There have been several efforts to train and further sensitise police, particularly those staffing the FSVUs and SOS. For example the Commissioner Circular issued in 2009 emphasised the full investigation of *all* complaints of sexual violence and respectful treatment of victims; this Circular is included in the RPNGC *Sexual Offences Handbook* which was finalised in October 2009. According to expert interviewees, however, the implementation of trainings remains ad hoc and inadequate. According to one high-ranking officer:

*There are still a lot of roadblocks [in strengthening the police response]... training needs to be more continuous... a huge problem is that the police still turn away victims, they tell them it's a 'family problem' rather than a criminal offence.*

Lastly, a major gap in the police response is that there have been continued and credible allegations that the police are often perpetrators of violence against women in Papua New Guinea (e.g. Amnesty International 2010; HRW 2011). Although the current Commissioner has reportedly taken a stance against this issue and has prosecuted officers, impunity persists.

The ODE report cited Fiji's **No-Drop Policy** for police handling domestic violence cases as a promising practice to discourage women from withdrawing complaints against abusive



husbands due to pressure from the abuser or his family.<sup>7</sup> Although the policy has been in place for many years, and training by the FWCC and RRRT continues, services providers reported that the police have to be continuously reminded of the laws, as they still are inclined to send women home to reconcile with their husbands, or to minimise their complaints in other ways.

The current political situation in Fiji is a particular barrier to improving women's access to legal services. The harassment of human rights defenders by government agents mentioned in the ODE report has continued and is particularly problematic in light of impunity granted to police and military officers by the **2009 Public Emergency Regulation**. As the CEDAW committee pointed out, the trend of ongoing harassment of human rights defenders has been exacerbated in recent years by the impunity police and military officers enjoy under the new regulation (implemented at the abrogation of the Fijian constitution). In certain cases women's human rights defenders have been detained and abused in custody (see CEDAW 2010a). Expert interviewees report that this environment has made activism in Fiji more difficult and dangerous in recent years than it had ever been previously.

Additionally in Vanuatu it is important to highlight the establishment of a **Family Protection Unit (FPU)** at the main police headquarters in Port Vila in 2010 and new FPU set-ups in other provinces soon. The FPUs are supported by the New Zealand Government's aid program. According to expert interviewees, the most tangible progress in working with the police has been better training for new recruits on violence against women. These trainings are provided by the Australian Federal Police and New Zealand Police. The Vanuatu Police Force has eventually included a module on human rights and gender and domestic violence into their syllabus for new recruits. VWC played a central role in developing domestic violence course material for the police training college, and RRRT and Department of Women's Affairs have assisted in providing training in these areas.

#### ***4. Increase women's knowledge of rights and legal literacy.***

Compared to five years ago, most survey respondents believe that progress has been made in this area (Figure 2). However, when exploring this issue more in-depth with our experts, it is clear that women's awareness of their rights and the laws is weak throughout the region. As mentioned above (see page 8), RRRT's ongoing legal trainings continue to address this gap across the region. A few additional initiatives stand out which warrant further attention.

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7 The No Drop Policy was introduced in 1995. Intended to protect women from being pressured by husbands and families to drop charges, the policy requires police to see every case through to court, where women stand a better chance of favourable outcomes from trained magistrates.



In Papua New Guinea, UNICEF and the VCs and Land Mediation Secretariat are piloting a ‘Women and Children’s Access to Community Justice’ project (with technical support from AusAID through the Papua New Guinea-Australia Law and Justice Partnership) that aims, among other objectives, to increase the number of women contending to become VC magistrates and to increase the cases of violence against women reported to the VCs. The project provides human rights and gender training to VC court officials, women leaders, and youth, emphasising the responsibilities of duty bearers to protect the rights of women, children, and other vulnerable groups. An early evaluation by UNICEF found that the program has increased opportunities for women to have their views heard in VC proceedings as well as raised community-level awareness of CEDAW and the Convention on the Rights of Children (Einbond *forthcoming*).

In Solomon Islands, the Law Reform Commission’s work on a gendered review of the penal code has relied heavily on community consultations throughout the country, including with members of the provincial government and provincial women’s councils, as well as local police, church leaders, and community based organisations. In addition, the Commission sponsors general open forums—or village meetings—accessible to the public. One respondent from the commission explained that this consultative process has been very effective in countering the low levels of awareness (particularly around rights protecting women and girls) and pervasive mistrust of the state legal system that generally characterises the public view in Solomon Islands.

### 3.3 Support services for survivors

Improving women’s access to support services is a pressing need around the world. The WHO’s *Multi-country Study on Women’s Health and Domestic Violence against Women* found that in most countries more than half of the women who had experienced domestic violence had not told anyone about their experiences before the interview. Of those who had, the majority had spoken to immediate family or close friends, followed by local leaders. Only a very small percentage of women reported going to the police, a health centre, a women’s centre or another formal service (WHO 2005).

The services that women and girls who have experienced violence require vary depending on their circumstance. While in a crisis, for example, they may require medical treatment, psychological and legal counselling, or urgent protection and safe haven for themselves and their children. Women who have been living in abusive relationships for a long time may need information about divorce, child custody and maintenance options. They may also need a



sympathetic and knowledgeable advisor to help them decide what to do. Sexual assault victims need forensic documentation, prophylaxis for sexually transmitted infections (including HIV), emergency contraception and police investigation. Starting the process of leaving a violent relationship is a particularly dangerous time for a woman, and this is when women are at greatest risk of homicide (Campbell, Webster et al. 2003). Whatever the need, it is important that a range of services be accessible and coordinated, and above all, that providers are respectful of a woman's right to decide what is the best and safest alternative for herself and her children.

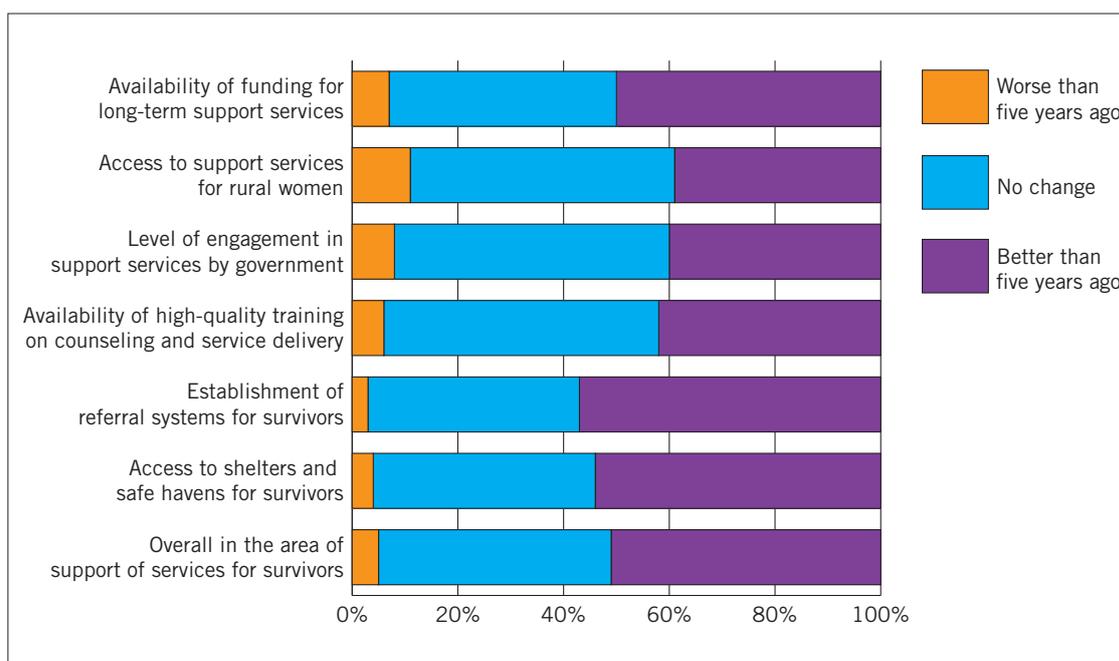
The ODE report found that there was a serious shortage of support services for survivors of violence in general, particularly in rural areas. Moreover, the quality of services was very uneven, with financial resources and well-trained counsellors in short supply across the region. A series of recommendations was made to improve access and quality of support services (see Box 7).

### **Box 7 - Recommendations for improving access to support services for survivors**

1. Prioritise long-term support and resources for organisations providing support services.
2. Encourage and invest in integrated models of service provision, with capacity-building to improve the quality of services.
3. Increase and extend access to services for rural women, including informal community-based networks.
4. Strengthen and increase government engagement in support services, especially in the health and education sectors.

As compared to the other major topics of this study, informants considered support services to be the area where the least progress has been achieved in recent years. Among the survey sample, respondents were evenly split regarding whether support services, on average, have improved as opposed to remained the same or stagnated in recent years. Nevertheless, there have been a number of important achievements in the region, particularly in the area of long-term investments.

**Figure 3. Online survey respondents: For these topics related to support services, rate whether you have noticed any change in the last five years.**



**1. Prioritise long-term support and resources for organisations providing support services.**

Though the landscape of support services in the region has been weak, the last five years have seen important long-term investments in certain centers of excellent practice in the region, including the FWCC, the VWC, and long-time Timorese support services leader PRADET. AusAID has made significant investments in all of these organisations, with the aim to ensure sustainability of their high-quality service delivery. About half of survey respondents perceived that long-term funding in this area has improved in the last five years (Figure 3).

The case of PRADET in Timor-Leste is particularly noteworthy in this regard, where AusAID investments are expanding PRADET’s **Fatin Hakmatek** (Safe House) services from one location at Dili National Hospital to additional locations at all five referral hospitals across the country. The first such expansion centre opened and began providing services at the Oecusse Hospital in 2010, with additional centres coming online in the future. This investment in expansion is well timed, as the number of referrals to support services across the country is increasing rapidly since the promulgation of new domestic violence legislation.



VWC is nationally and internationally recognised as an outstanding civil society organisation in the work on violence against women in the Pacific. Since its foundation in 1992, VWC has been the most important source of support for women living with violence. VWC includes not only provision of counselling services for survivors but also legal advocacy, community awareness and research activities. AusAID and the New Zealand Government's aid program have fully supported the VWC, particularly in the last five years. As a result of this support, VWC has expanded its presence and activities throughout Vanuatu. At present, VWC manages three branches in Sanma, Tafea and Torba and will explore the feasibility of establishing more branches in Malampa and Penama during the next phase of the program. Also, since the development of the ODE report, VWC has increased by four the number of CAVAWs in the country. VWC now has 37 CAVAWs altogether. VWC plays a critical role in the area of violence against women in Vanuatu, particularly in providing support services. For that reason, the long-term investment in the centre is paramount.

In Papua New Guinea, AusAID is in the process of developing an internal strategy aimed at addressing the underlying causes of violence against women and strengthening the support services for survivors of violence. This strategy is based on primary research and will be aligned with the government's National Policy for Women and Gender Equality 2011–2015.

## ***2. Encourage and invest in integrated models of service provision, with capacity building to improve the quality of services.***

Every country has at least one place where women can go to receive psychosocial and legal counselling, and referrals for medical or other types of support. However, a wide range of approaches is used throughout the region for providing counselling and other support services for survivors of violence, and results are uneven. In Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, services are primarily provided by non-governmental organisations, mostly women's rights and faith-based organisations, whereas in Papua New Guinea the Family Support Centres are run by a combination of government and non-government organisations. In all countries, women's shelters are managed by non-government organisations, including faith-based organisations.

The Fiji Women's Crisis Centre is the oldest and most developed women's rights organisation in the region. The FWCC provides crisis counselling and legal, medical and other practical support services for women and children who are suffering from or who have survived violence. In recent years and despite the challenges of the political climate of Fiji, the FWCC has continued to expand its services in Fiji and the wider Pacific region. A new branch of the FWCC has opened earlier this year in Rakiraki, in addition to the existing branches in Ba, Labasa, Nadi and Suva.



In addition to providing services to survivors at the centres and various trainings and community education initiatives with broad groups of stakeholders, the FWCC has also begun to take on a stronger leadership role among the shelter operators of Fiji. In an upcoming meeting of the National Network on Violence Against Women, the FWCC will work with various shelter and safe house operators from across Fiji in attempting to establish minimum standards for the nation's shelters based on their women's empowerment and feminist approach. Participating in this meeting and also continuing to provide shelter-based support services for women are groups like **Homes of Hope** and **The Salvation Army**, who continue their efforts as well. Homes of Hope is an international organisation following a method of 'rescuing, restoring, and reintegrating' single mothers and their children who are survivors of various forms of sexual and physical violence. In recent months, Homes of Hope has opened a new Special Personal Attention house in Fiji and also made an exploratory educational visit to partner organisations in Solomon Islands. The Salvation Army has 13 branch centres across Fiji which continue to provide shelter services under a faith-based philosophy. The Ministry of Social Welfare, as a frequent partner and funding source of shelter operators, will also participate in the meeting.

The services provided by the VWC are based on a similar model to that of the FWCC. A recent review of VWC conducted by AusAID and the New Zealand Government's aid program concluded that the VWC has achieved significant outcomes and it has had a positive impact on many communities in the country that includes an increase in women's and children's access to services and justice.<sup>8</sup> The new VWC program 2012–2017 establishes as one of its main components the provision of counselling, legal assistance and support services to survivors and the main outcome from this component will be that survivors are empowered, claim their rights and access justice (VWC 2011). AusAID is currently working with the VWC to develop this next phase of the program.

In Papua New Guinea there are various places women and children survivors of violence can find shelter, counselling and other support services, including the 'Meri Seif Haus' (women's safe houses), community drop-in centres, and locally run shelters. In 2004 the first

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8 Sue Finucane and Roselyn Tor (2010). Mid Term Review of the *Vanuatu Women's Centre Program Against Violence Against Women. Final Report: 30 April 2010*. AusAID and the New Zealand Government's aid program.



**Family Support Centre (FSC)** was opened in Port Moresby to provide medical, psychosocial and legal support for survivors of violence. Currently there are 10 functional Centres (MSF 2011) in a few provinces across the country, however the quality and nature of the services available vary considerably. The majority of FSCs are located in government hospitals, and funding is shared between international donors, the Government of Papua New Guinea (National Department of Health and the Law and Justice Sector) and the FSVAC.

FSCs show great potential for providing survivors of violence with high quality medical and psychosocial support. This potential is most clearly evident in the two FSCs supported by Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) in Lae (Morobe Province) and Tari (Southern Highlands/Hela Province). These MSF-run Centres are widely perceived as a ‘promising practice’ in the field, and keys to success include: adequate allocation of human, financial, and medical resources; onsite support from international staff and a strong commitment to local capacity building; adherence to the WHO clinical practice guidelines; 24-hour access; and a strong referral system. Similarly Oxfam supports a centre in (Nanakundi) in Sepik that is reputed to be operating effectively.

Despite several well performing FSCs, most of the experts we spoke with agree that there is a tremendous amount of variation in the quality of care provided and that most do not function as a ‘one-stop’ for women. In fact, the Centre at the Port Moresby General Hospital is currently not operational. The most commonly cited areas where improvement is needed are staff capacity building (particularly in specialised counselling—currently much of the social support is provided by untrained volunteers); more attention to maintaining patient confidentiality; longer operating hours; increased staffing; stronger, more structured referral networks; and more systematic monitoring and records maintenance. Additionally stronger government accountability is critical, as currently no governmental body is directly responsible for oversight of the Centres. Yet another barrier frequently mentioned—although perhaps more intractable—is limited access due to the high cost of transportation and challenging topography. Finally the name ‘Family Support Centre’ may be problematic, as anecdotal evidence suggests that women may approach a Family Support Centre to address domestic problems unrelated to violence.

With regard to access to safe havens in Papua New Guinea, the general consensus is that unmet need for safe houses has only increased in recent years. For example, a safe house run by Individual Community Rights Advocacy Forum—highlighted as a promising practice in the 2008 ODE report—has since been closed. Haus Ruth is recognised as providing services and a safe haven to survivors of violence, but operates on a shoestring budget and often lacks



space or only allows short-term stays. A Port Moresby service provider recounts its shortcomings:

*Another barrier [to accessing safe houses] is capacity. For example at Haus Ruth the maximum stay is two weeks and then what? Even if you can get an IPO, where will the woman live? She often goes back to her husband...if bride price has been paid her family may not help her.*

Some of the other centres are often criticised for lacking trained staff, emphasising reconciliation, or because the location does not provide for confidential services. For example the Meri Seif Haus, Kaugere (based on the Morata model of community-run services) is located in the Foursquare Church grounds and does not provide an anonymous place of refuge for women (Oxfam 2010).

The Law and Justice Sector Program (supported by AusAID) has started another initiative called **Yumi Lukautim Mosbi** (YLM) to provide safe spaces and remote support for survivors of violence—for example, through a toll free national hotline (Famili Seif Line). An interesting feature of the YLM is that they are supported by a public-private partnership with the Digicel Foundation (Oxfam 2010). An Oxfam report (2010) on violence against women services in Port Moresby highlights the fact the G4S (the private security company that operates the line and is responsible for ‘rescuing’ women in crisis) have not received specialised training in counselling, critical incident management, or responding to gender based violence.

Civil society actors in Papua New Guinea are playing a critical role in filling the gap in government services, often with very limited resources. For example Eastern Highlands Family Voice (based in Goroka) offers counselling support, referral services, and trains local volunteers in a highly underserved area. In Port Moresby Papua Hahine, World Vision, YMCA and other organisations similarly provide critical services (including legal aid) for survivors of violence, with staff comprised largely of volunteers. Additionally several clinics run by Family Health International and Save the Children integrate specialised care for survivors of violence along with sexually transmitted infections, HIV and AIDS services. Informants also reported that informal drop-in centres—entirely community run—exist in more remote areas where there is a complete absence of formal services. In addition to providing psychosocial and legal support, many of these civil society organisations engage the community in awareness raising activities or take up advocacy work.

In Solomon Islands there is a complete absence of formal government services specifically developed for survivors of violence. Consequently several civil society actors have developed



support programs. For example the **Family Support Centre** (initiated in 1995 and supported by Oxfam, AusAID, and the Ministry of Women, Youth and Children’s Affairs) aims to: provide support, assistance and counselling to survivors; recruit and train volunteers; and develop referral networks. While the Family Support Centre provides non-judgmental and confidential counselling services and has been able to sustain its activities with limited resources, it is only one centre and cannot adequately meet demand (the Family Support Centre sees an average of 15 women per month). In terms of shelters for survivors of violence, the **Christian Care Centre** (CCC), run by the sisters of the Church of Melanesia, is a faith-based organisation and remains the only safe haven in the entire Solomon Islands. The CCC also provides counselling, transportation, and community awareness services. Sister Doreen Awaiasi, who works at the CCC, is recognised for her unrelenting efforts to help women and as a leader in advocacy around sex trafficking. Unfortunately, however, the location of the CCC—just outside of Honiara—is difficult to access and purportedly dangerous for women travelling alone.

### *3. Increase and extend access to services for rural women, including informal community-based networks.*

Despite the promising work that has been done in expanding different models of service delivery, these initiatives have largely taken place in capital cities or major urban areas. Access for rural women continues to be a problem throughout the region—especially in Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu. Indeed, more than 60 per cent of survey respondents felt that access to services in rural areas is either worse or has not improved over the last five years (Figure 3).

In Solomon Islands, a key finding of the FHSS was that only 18 per cent of abused women seek help and support from formal services or institutions (FHSS 2009). This is not surprising as very few services exist, and those that do are principally based in Honiara.

One way of addressing the need for more services has been the development of referral networks for domestic violence by both the Family Support Centre and the Solomon Islands Christian Association (SICA). The Family Support Centre network has reportedly been active since 2000, and includes representatives from the Public Solicitor’s Office, the police force (Sexual Violence Unit), the Department of Social Welfare, and the CCC. The SICA referral network (known as ‘Refnet’) is a pilot initiative currently being funded by the European Union. Refnet teams include an average of 10 people, and the network operates through the structure of the churches. SICA has provided three week trainings to a number of Refnet teams, and the expectation is that these groups will inform their communities about the network and services available. Although the initiative is still in a nascent stage and no



monitoring data are available, the goal of introducing services in remote areas and educating communities on an integrated response to violence addresses a critical need in Solomon Islands, where the geography and lack of infrastructure poses serious barriers to providing services outside of major urban centres. One expert noted that the arrival of mobile phone technologies throughout Solomon Islands has increased access to services in rural areas since it is now possible to call the police or a health provider in Honiara during emergency situations. FWCC's new efforts to train informal shelter providers in Solomon Islands are also promising in this regard.

Despite these efforts, there is essentially no funding or other resource available for local organisations outside of Honiara working on a small scale. When asked for his/her 'top recommendation' for eliminating violence against women, a survey respondent in Solomon Islands replied:

*Making sure efforts reach out to the provinces and that small organisations in rural areas have a chance to access some funding to go ahead with efforts to involve groups in their community (young people, men, churches etc.) in their efforts to end violence against women. It is difficult for these small groups to speak out or gain support without some small grant to cover their costs and allow them to run small projects.*

The aforementioned expansion of PRADET's Fatin Hakmatek to five referral hospitals throughout Timor-Leste, which is currently underway, represents a significant improvement in access to high quality support services for rural women in that country.

In Vanuatu, the CAVAWs enable VWC to provide basic information and support to survivors in rural areas. As previously mentioned, a total of 37 CAVAWs operate in Vanuatu and there are some efforts to try to expand them. At present, the main challenges in providing support for survivors in rural areas remain on islands where CAVAWs are not available.

#### **4. Strengthen and increase government engagement in support services, especially in the health and education sectors.**

In terms of the health sector involvement in violence against women, there have been some key advances in Papua New Guinea. An important accomplishment of the **National Department of Health (NDoH)** was the **removal of fees for services provided to survivors of domestic violence**. In November 2009, the Secretary of Health Dr Clement Malau issued a directive to all hospitals, provincial health advisors, and district health officials requiring that all services for survivors of family and sexual violence, child abuse, and tribal aggression be provided free of charge.



In July 2010 the NDoH—with WHO support—released a **Medico-Legal Proforma** for use in district hospitals, including the FSCs. This document is a first of its kind in Papua New Guinea, and includes guidelines for collecting medical evidence of sexual assault, emphasising principles of confidentiality and objective documentation.

While the Medico-Legal Proforma is an important step, the more comprehensive **Clinical Practice Guidelines** for all cases of sexual violence have yet to be approved and disseminated by the NDoH. Although these guidelines have been drafted for some time, formal endorsement is pending and delays appear to be due, in part, to the difficulty in filling the Gender Advisor position. The absence of such guidelines undermines quality of care for survivors.

The Government of Papua New Guinea has also adopted a **National HIV and AIDS Strategy 2011-2015**, which is commendable for its gender inclusiveness, incorporation of several strategic objectives related to preventing violence, and detailed implementation and monitoring guidelines. As a government-owned document with a clear implementation plan, the Strategy allows for strong coordination and funding commitments, and provides a framework for civil society organisations seeking funding.

In Fiji, the Pacific Counselling and Social Services (PCSS) provides counselling and referral services to survivors of violence through the major hospitals in Fiji (Nadi, Ba, Lautoka, Suva and Labasa). PCSS has incorporated a set of gender based violence screening questions into an interview administered to pregnant women in antenatal clinics across Fiji. Incorporating gender based violence screening into this antenatal interview represents a unique opportunity to comprehensively screen entire cohorts of women throughout Fiji. In addition, since women are expected to return to health clinics for regular checkups throughout their pregnancy and after giving birth, women in abusive relationships can safely return to access PCSS services through the health clinics on the same day without risking suspicion or escalating abuse from their partners.

A recent study coordinated by the Ministry of Health, Fiji School of Medicine, and WHO sheds new light on the health sector response to violence against women in Fiji. More such studies and richer data are desperately needed. The authors of the aforementioned paper (Tuiketeti and Rokoduru 2010) reviewed available data on violence against women reporting from FWCC and conducted a retrospective survey with a sample of health professionals to help establish the disease burden of violence against women in Fiji. The results provide insights into how health care workers address individual cases of violence against women presented to them in the workplace. It also reveals that the majority of the health workers, while confident in handling the medical needs of patients, simultaneously acknowledge the need for further



training in specific areas such as violence against women counselling, medico-legal issues and clinical management.

As mentioned above, another promising development related to support service delivery in Fiji will come later this year in the form of a meeting of the FWCC-coordinated National Network on Ending Violence Against Women, where minimum standards for shelter operators shall be discussed.

Outside of the general care provided at public hospitals and health centres, no specific government services for survivors of violence exist in Solomon Islands. Currently the Ministry of Health and Medical Services does not have any specific protocol that outlines the health sector response to cases of violence and no records are kept to document the number of violence against women cases that pass through the health system. UNFPA and WHO have recently conducted trainings on gender and violence against women with health sector professionals in Solomon Islands, however, in a positive step to improve the response in that country.

In 2010, PRADET negotiated accreditation with the Timor-Leste Ministry of Health to conduct a training program for health workers on medical forensic examinations of victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and child abuse. This thorough training, which includes a weeklong practicum in PRADET's Fatin Hakmatek, is a promising advancement not only in government engagement in responding to domestic violence but also in the health sector's ability to adequately document survivors' injuries and treat them appropriately.

In Vanuatu, the Ministry of Health is working on a medical protocol for the referral of violence victims, especially rape victims. This is still in its early stage and needs a lot of support from experts to ensure that it is finalised and implemented. It is expected that in the next few years the VWC will strengthen its relationship with the health sector.

### 3.4 Violence prevention

One important lesson learnt over three decades of work around the world is that prevention efforts must be a key part of any strategy to eliminate violence against women. Prevention involves providing communities with the information and skills needed to take action against the harmful impact of violence against women on families and communities, as well as challenging attitudes that promote men's power over women and acceptance of violence as a legitimate way to resolve conflict. Transforming deeply held values and beliefs that justify men's violence against women is a crucial long-term goal of violence prevention efforts.



Efforts to reduce violence against women must therefore be intrinsically linked to women's political, social and economic empowerment, and must be considered within the context of changing gender norms and increasing women's human rights. Programs attempting to address violence without addressing the root causes of the problem (e.g. those encouraging reconciliation and forgiveness, or anger management among men) are unlikely to reduce violence over time, because they do not challenge the belief that violence is justified.

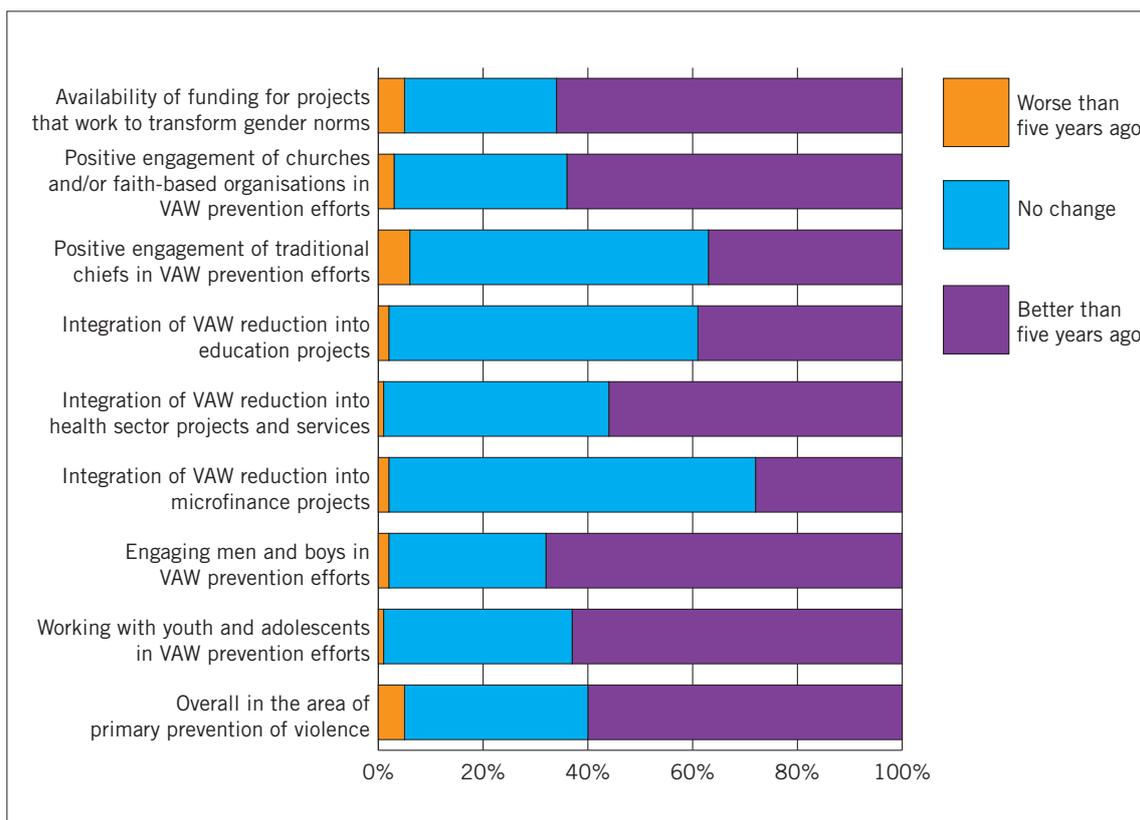
Prevention of violence requires coordinated efforts at all levels aimed at raising awareness, changing community attitudes about violence, and increasing women's status in society. The greatest obstacle to eliminating violence against women is the belief, commonly held throughout Melanesia and Timor-Leste, that it is justified. Women are often considered to be 'at fault' and, therefore, deserving of the violence. A second obstacle is the perception that violence is a problem to be addressed by women only, and that others do not have a role to play. Violence is often seen as a private, family matter in which outsiders should not intervene. Consistent with global trends, longer-term prevention strategies have received less attention across the region compared with efforts to improve women's access to justice and services. The ODE report made the following recommendations for strengthening violence prevention efforts (see Box 8):

### Box 8 - Recommendations for strengthening prevention efforts

1. Support initiatives with a strong emphasis on identifying and transforming gender norms.
2. Strengthen partnerships with a range of actors and sectors not traditionally involved in addressing violence against women, such as youth, traditional and male leaders, and faith-based communities.
3. Identify strategic opportunities for integrating interventions that address violence against women into different areas, for example, health promotion, education, economic empowerment projects and community development.

Great strides have been taken in certain prevention arenas, with progress yet to be made in others. Improvements have mainly been around increased availability of funding for prevention efforts from a gender perspective and the productive engagement of men and boys and faith-based groups in violence prevention.

**Figure 4. Online survey respondents: For these topics related to prevention of violence against women, rate whether you have noticed any change in the last five years.**



### 1. Support initiatives with a strong emphasis on identifying and transforming gender norms.

From the survey and interviews it is clear that much more attention has been paid in recent years to increasing awareness of violence against women with an explicit focus on gender and human rights, although there is still a long way to go in terms of achieving substantial change. As one expert from Papua New Guinea explained, *‘Currently, if there’s violence on the street, people just walk by...or even cheer.’* Similarly, the Family Health and Safety Survey of Solomon Islands (FHSS 2009) reported that 73 per cent of women believe that violence against an intimate partner is justified under certain circumstances. Yet, we found important examples of initiatives that concentrate on shifting gender norms in ways that benefit women and girls. Moreover, more than 60 per cent of survey respondents perceived there was greater funding available for transforming gender norms (Figure 4).



The CAVAWs in Vanuatu continue to be a promising practice for community mobilisation around women's human rights issues, and the model has now been replicated in other countries in the region. Another exceptional organisation in Vanuatu that was highlighted in the ODE report, Wan Smol Bag, continues to use 'edutainment' programs, including community theatre and television, to raise awareness and challenge traditional norms around violence against women (see Box 9).

### Box 9 - Wan Smol Bag current programs

Wan Smol Bag Theatre is an NGO based in Vanuatu with more than 20 years of experience raising community awareness on several issues including violence against women, in particular sexual harassment. Some of the current programs that Wan Smol Bag is carrying out related to violence against women are:

- ▶ workshops with community leaders and chiefs in different parts of the country to engage them in discussions on gender and violence against women
- ▶ development of a soap opera called *Love Patrol* where issues of violence against women, gender and discrimination are discussed
- ▶ a radio drama that includes themes related to domestic violence heard over radio in Vanuatu.

For many organisations in the region, the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence offers an important opportunity for awareness raising. Informants from multiple countries also mentioned supporting activities in support of White Ribbon Day. For example, the Police Force in Vanuatu celebrates White Ribbon Day and makes it a major part of their community outreach. In Papua New Guinea, several civil society groups are working to sensitise communities on the link between gender norms, harmful cultural practices, and violence (for example Papua Hahine engages in community activism around bride price). A range of approaches are used, and several experts expressed that the use of radio is particularly effective. Informants in Solomon Islands also reported notable progress in raising community awareness of violence against women and other gender issues. Oxfam's Standing Together Against Violence program in the Solomon Islands focuses specifically on combating cultural acceptance of violence against women. The Family Support Centre in Honiara also conducts awareness and gender sensitisation activities in the community (including the use of radio



aired through the radio broadcasting service). The aforementioned UNiTE campaign (see page 17) serves the objective of awareness raising as well.

While many of these activities have seen results on a small scale, overall a coordinated, multi-sectoral strategy in this area is lacking in all countries.

## ***2. Strengthen partnerships with a range of actors and sectors not traditionally involved in addressing violence against women.***

The most important achievements in this area have been in: (a) engaging men in gender equality work and (b) partnerships with faith-based organisations. There are promising examples of these partnerships in nearly every country.

### **Engaging men and boys as partners for ending violence against women**

According to survey respondents, working with men and boys is the area that has seen the most progress within the prevention arena (Figure 4). In Timor-Leste, Asosiasaun Mane Kontra Violensia (AMKV, Association of Men Against Violence) has been working for many years to sensitise young men and challenge violence against women and girls through group education sessions. More recently, AMKV has been trying to build their model into a life skills intervention, with a selection of activities appropriate to the local context. AMKV has succeeded to a great extent by working in harmony with the extensive work already being done to address violence against women in Timor-Leste by women's groups, government ministries, international actors and others.

In the Pacific, the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre has led the way for engaging men and boys on violence against women. FWCC started conducting training courses for Male Advocates in 2000, and due to the training's success, it has spread throughout the region. The Vanuatu Women's Centre has also been training male advocates for several years, and now has approximately 400 trained advocates throughout the country.

FWCC has recently launched a new training methodology for working with men, called *Speaking the Language of Women's Human Rights*. As FWCC director Shamima Ali explains, the Male Advocates program is rolled out after trainings for women activists and advocates has taken place. This method of working with men by building a foundation first with women around human rights is an innovative approach to addressing violence against women. In addition to Male Advocates, who tend to be local leaders such as police, traditional leaders, etc., the program is also training community men and boys.



*We've had some new strategies for outreach among males—we've had young people in sporting teams come in. They ask for sponsorship for their uniforms. We train them and then they raise awareness of violence against women at their tournaments.*

*[FWCC expert]*

In Papua New Guinea, the FSVAC has trained over 300 male advocates who are located in all provinces. The advocates work with their communities to reduce family and sexual violence in rural and urban areas, including in settlements in Port Moresby. In addition, several international and local NGOs (e.g. Partners for Prevention, World Vision, Lifeline, Help Resources, and Papua Hahini) are undertaking training activities for male advocates. These programs, based on a peer training model, generally aim to sensitise men on gender issues and the underlying causes of violence, and to encourage the formation of community advocacy groups. Another approach to engaging men in Papua New Guinea has been through the cultivation of 'Male Champions' who often serve as critical allies and leaders in the movement to end violence.

### **Working with faith-based organisations**

Faith-based organisations have long been in the forefront of civil society responses to violence against women. In many countries, these groups have provided the main and sometimes the only safe havens available for women fleeing abusive relationships. The Christian Care Centre in Solomon Islands, Haus Ruth in Papua New Guinea, and The Salvation Army in many countries are examples of these committed groups. Faith-based organisations have been less active in violence prevention, and many experts have noted that they have tended to employ a conservative approach, emphasising reconciliation and forgiveness rather than safety and justice. This is changing, however, and religious groups have increasingly taken on a strong role in encouraging attitude change among their particular constituencies.

In Fiji, for example, progressive faith-based organisations—including growing numbers of feminist theologians—continue their promising work to integrate gender-equitable and non-violent messages into regional Christian culture. At the regional level, the Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC) has made an increased effort in recent years to address gender inequality and violence against women in faith-based platforms. The PCC recently conducted a region-wide survey of women's position in church leadership, with a crosscutting investigation of violence against women in all locations. The study documents certain clergy members' misuse of Bible verses, specifically Ephesians 5:21-24, to promote inequitable or



even violent relationships between men and women.<sup>9</sup> Informed by the data collected in the survey, the PCC has convened a training workshop in October 2011 to advance attitude change among clergy from across the region. The workshop is facilitated by PCC staff and gender equality champions comprising male clergy from Fiji and other Pacific countries. In the near future, PCC plans to convene regional feminist theologians to prepare a report on violence against women and the Bible.

The Solomon Islands Christian Association has been conducting trainings with church leaders and community members on gender and the link between unequal power relations and violence. SICA is also just beginning a youth engagement program funded by the Pacific Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women which aims to give youth the skills and awareness to build 'zero tolerance communities'. The Christian Care Centre is also a strong player in efforts to prevent violence in Solomon Islands, and in recent years has been an outspoken advocate for the rights of trafficked minors.

The Vanuatu Christian Council has begun working in the area of violence in the last few years. This council has a gender focal point who concentrates on increasing awareness about gender and violence against women among church leaders. Lately they have been actively participating and organising meetings with the Department of Women's Affairs and with VWC to discuss different ways to collaborate together on issues related to gender equality and violence against women.

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9 Ephesians 5:21-24 (from the New Revised Standard Version Bible): 'Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the church, the body of which he is the Saviour. Just as the church is subject to Christ, so also wives ought to be, in everything, to their husbands.'

### *3. Identify strategic opportunities for integrating interventions that address violence against women into different areas.*

The team was only able to identify a few examples of new integration initiatives to prevent violence in the region. One of these was the expansion of Stepping Stones, an educational program that aims to improve gender equality and sexual and reproductive health through community participation and decision-making. The program, originally developed in Africa and adapted in Fiji for use in the Pacific, was highlighted as a promising practice in the ODE report, and has now been expanded to other Pacific countries (see Box 10).

#### **Box 10 - Regional expansion of Stepping Stones**

Stepping Stones is a workshop series that aims to improve gender equality and sexual and reproductive health through community participation and decision-making. The Secretariat of the Pacific Community together with the Pacific Regional HIV Project supported the introduction of Stepping Stones in the Pacific in June 2006, with a promising pilot program in Fiji. The program is currently being expanded to Cook Islands, Guam, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu. The scale-up is ambitious, but program directors are considering very carefully how to introduce the project in new locations in a way that will be sustainable beyond simply one round of project funding. A significant contributor toward this sustainability is the ongoing FWCC Male Advocates program, which has trained many co-facilitators of Stepping Stones. Half of Stepping Stones facilitators are men, most of whom have graduated from FWCC trainings.

Another promising initiative in Papua New Guinea is the **Safe Cities Project** (see Box 11). This program, which promotes a new coordinated approach for increasing the safety of women and girls in cities, should provide valuable lessons for scaling up the approach elsewhere in the region.

Although the ODE report noted an urgent need to address violence against women in other types of development efforts, such as educational programs, micro-finance and community development programs, we found very few examples where this was being done. While there are several local initiatives promoting vocational training and support for small-scale income generating activities (many organised by faith-based organisations), the financial resources for



these activities are limited and subsequently much of the training occurs on an informal, infrequent basis. According to an expert in Solomon Islands:

*We are also trying to look at life skills and income generating activities. Women know about violence and peace building and human rights, but what do they do with this knowledge? They need income. ... When we go to the [training] workshops, over the weekend we call the women out of our own hearts and try to teach some life skills. We ask them to focus on traditional crafts and try to revive them. Women need to make money. Sometimes I ask 'Why does he hit you?' 'Because I nag.' 'Why do you nag?' 'Because I need money.' And the list keeps going. So women need to have skills so they can support themselves and their own lives.*

In Fiji, the Foundation for Rural Integrated Enterprises and Development (FRIEND) was cited by some informants as a promising program that combines rural community development with support for gender equality. FRIEND conducts training sessions and launches income-generating activities for women, and has been successful in engaging the support of local authorities in projects that promote a greater role for women in development with a gender perspective.

Also in Fiji, Homes of Hope helps survivors as well as those vulnerable to sexual exploitation by providing a residential campus for young single mothers who are pregnant or have children under the age of two years. The campus provides training opportunities to empower women and create a profit from operating microenterprises. Their business centre provides job skill training for off- and on-campus women so they may live productively and independently. Mothers may also learn to steward their personal finances to provide housing, food, medical care, schooling, savings, and a sustainable future for their children.



### Box 11 - The Safe Cities Project in Papua New Guinea

The Global Safe Cities Free of Violence Against Women and Girls Programme is an initiative coordinated by UN Women that aims to create a tested methodological model focused on the right of women to use and enjoy public urban spaces by making cities safer for women, which will be disseminated for adaptation and scaling up around the world. In 2010 Port Moresby was selected to be part of this initiative.

The goal of the Port Moresby Safer City for Women Project is to create a safer city through the reduction of violence against women and girls and empowerment of women and girls in market places. This comprehensive multi-sectoral initiative involves diverse actors including the local government, private sector, civil society and researchers. It is expected that the project will be rigorously evaluated.

An assessment of the situation of sexual violence and sexual harassment in public spaces in the market has already been carried out in order to obtain important information for the design of the intervention and evaluation. The implementation of this initiative, including baseline data collection, will happen this year. This is considered by UN Women to be the most innovative initiative on violence against women in the Pacific area. The initiative is fully supported by Port Moresby's Governor.

We found an encouraging trend in the education sector in Papua New Guinea. While the Department of Education and the Office for Higher Education have yet to take a strong stance on integrating violence prevention in the school curriculum, in recent years the department has begun to prioritise gender equality and acknowledge the importance of transforming the way boys and men are socialised. For example, the Department of Education recently reformed its teaching curriculum and text book to remove 'sex stereotypes' and insert 'gender-friendly' phrases (Government of Papua New Guinea 2010, CEDAW response). Another promising step was the introduction of a Gender Equality in Education Policy and a Gender Equity in Education Strategic Plan (2009–2014), which includes the specific aims of 'challenging unfair cultural practices' and encouraging 'the development of positive behaviours in male and female students which promote social responsibility, empathy, and sensitive, equal and non-violent relationships.' While this Plan emphasises important actions, notable achievements with respect to implementation have yet to materialise.



UN Women has also brought particular attention to linkages between violence against women and HIV and AIDS in recent years. In Fiji, their Pacific Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women has opened a 'Special Window' to fund projects addressing the intersection between violence against women and HIV and AIDS.



## 4. Conclusions

The results of the desk review, interviews and survey all point to the enormous progress made in a very short time period in addressing violence against women in Melanesia and Timor-Leste. This has been the product of many fortuitous circumstances, of which the following stand out.

- ▶ The passage of key legislation criminalising domestic violence and other forms of violence against women, after years of advocacy on the part of women's rights organisations. This enhanced legal framework, together with the enactment of national policies and action plans to address violence against women, represents a watershed moment in the region, demonstrating the commitment of the governments of the region to address this issue with the urgency it deserves.
- ▶ Increased coordination within and between governments, civil society organisations, and international donors, as well as greater acceptance of a human rights and gender framework as the basis for work on ending violence against women.
- ▶ Greatly increased resources available for funding both small-scale initiatives, as well as national and regional initiatives, particularly on the part of the Australian Government. An important feature of the new funding environment is an emphasis on longer-term funding, based on the recognition that ending violence against women involves significant social change, and sustainable impacts cannot be achieved with short-term funding cycles.
- ▶ Increased emphasis on prevention, particularly through raising awareness in the population regarding violence against women and transforming traditional gender norms. The progress made in engaging men and faith-based communities in this process of change is particularly noteworthy.

These achievements have greatly enhanced the political and social environment for addressing violence against women. However, the challenge will be to consolidate and deepen these gains over a sustained period of time. While new laws and policies are an important step, implementation is still weak in most countries of the region. Although attitudes are beginning to change, most citizens consider violence against women a normal occurrence. Women and girls are still often blamed for the violence they experience. Support services for



survivors of violence continue to be insufficient in quality and quantity in urban areas, and too often non-existent in rural areas.

According to the views of the individuals interviewed, the recommendations and commitments presented in the ODE and the Stop Violence reports continue to provide a relevant blueprint for investments and activities in the future. One increasingly critical area is the need for effective monitoring and evaluation of ongoing interventions. There is an enormous array of innovative programs being carried out, many of which could be of great interest and relevance not only to other countries in the region, but also on a global level. Priority should be given to assessing what works and what doesn't, to identify interventions that can be brought to scale. By building on current successes and learning from failures, it is possible to envision a future where survivors of violence have effective access to justice and support services, where equal and respectful relationships between men and women are seen as the norm, rather than the exception.

## 5. Appendices

### Appendix 1 - List of organisations interviewed

Action for CEDAW Today Coalition, Vanuatu	Médecins sans Frontières, Papua New Guinea
Alola Foundation, Timor-Leste	
American Bar Association, Solomon Islands	Ministry of Social Solidarity, Timor-Leste
AusAID	National Department of Health, Papua New Guinea
Coalition for Change, Papua New Guinea	Oxfam VAW Project, Solomon Islands
Commonwealth Youth Program, Solomon Islands	Pacific Conference of Churches, Fiji
Department for Community Development, Papua New Guinea	Papua Hahine, Papua New Guinea
Department of Women's Affairs, Vanuatu	Pacific Regional Rights Resource Team, Regional
Divine Word University, Papua New Guinea	Pacific Island Forum's Reference Group on Sexual and Gender Based Violence, Regional
Family Support Centre, Papua New Guinea	Office of the Secretary of State for the Promotion of Equality, Timor-Leste
Fiji Women's Crisis Centre, Fiji	Solomon Islands Christian Association, Solomon Islands
Fiji Women's Rights Movement, Fiji	Timor-Leste Police Development Program, Timor-Leste
FOKUPERS, Timor-Leste	UN Mission in Timor-Leste
Foundation for Rural Integrated Enterprises and Development, Fiji	UN Women, Pacific Regional Office
Foundation of the Peoples of the South Pacific International, Fiji	Vanuatu Christian Council, Vanuatu
Family and Sexual Violence Action Committee (FSVAC), Papua New Guinea	Vanuatu Women's Center, Vanuatu
Independent Consultants	Wan Smol Bag, Vanuatu
Law and Justice Sector Program (LJSP), Papua New Guinea	Women's Action for Change, Fiji
Law Reform Commission, Solomon Islands	



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## Appendix 3 - Recommendations of the 2008 ODE report

### Recommendations for Australia

There are no recommendations for Australia that cannot be implemented by other actors and there are no regional recommendations that Australia cannot incorporate into its day-to-day programming and activity identification and design processes. There are, however, recommendations Australia can act on *now*, either as part of its program management or in existing activities, without having to wait for others to come on board. These represent an integrated approach and are intended to be implemented in entirety. They are not a menu from which options for addressing violence against women should be selected in isolation. In other words, these recommendations will not make much of an impact on treating and preventing violence against women if they are not implemented in an integrated way. Indeed, if they are implemented in isolation, they may cause more harm than good.

#### ***1. Ensure all interventions are grounded in a human rights and gender transformative approach.***

While this is a recommendation for *all* actors, it provides Australia, in the immediate term, with a touchstone for helping to determine whether an activity or form of support is likely to be gender transformative and therefore effective in dealing with the root causes of violence against women. This means all programs at national, provincial and local levels should explicitly acknowledge that violence against women is based on unequal power relations between women and men and women and that gender inequality is reflected in community norms, institutional policies and practices and laws. Wherever possible, programs should adopt an integrated approach and aim to address the causes of violence and transform gender relations, rather than simply providing palliative care.

#### ***2. Step up its high-level policy dialogue on violence against women with partner governments.***

Significant and sustained progress in reducing violence against women is contingent on a demonstration of greater leadership on this issue from partner governments in each country. Australia can encourage partner governments to assume greater leadership. It should prioritise frank discussions about the problem of and solutions to violence against women in its policy dialogue with each partner government. (This needs to be handled with sensitivity, much like Australia's approach to corruption.)



### ***3. Support efforts to strengthen the evidence base on violence against women in Melanesia and East Timor.***

Australia is in a position to take the lead in the need for more research on violence against women, first with its own programs and then as a regional actor. Priority should be on:

- ▶ research that documents the prevalence, characteristics and risk factors of all types of violence against women and girls—based on methodologies already in use internationally (to enhance the ability to compare findings across countries)
- ▶ efforts to strengthen national statistics offices and incorporate indicators of violence against women into national information systems, such as HIV and AIDS surveillance
- ▶ monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of promising practices, with a particular focus on identifying and reacting to any potential backlash that may arise
- ▶ support for broadly disseminating research findings and building regional capacity to carry out research in women's rights organisations and formal research institutions.

### ***4. Ensure that programs are coordinated.***

Multisectoral coordination is key, particularly for partner governments; however, Australia can 'start at home' by:

- ▶ ensuring large programs are coordinated with each other as well as internally: AusAID should work across sectors within program areas to ensuring own sectoral programs are coordinated and working together to increase women's access to justice, improve support services and prevent violence against women
- ▶ encourage coordination of aid among donors to maximise impact: As much as possible, support should be provided to organisation working on violence against women as core funding with multiple year grants, rather than just project-focused or earmarked funding. AusAID should particularly seek to reduce the multi-donor reporting burden on CSOs working to address violence against women.



## **5. *Build capacity in project management, communication and gender analysis.***

Australia has an opportunity to greatly improve its own capacity in gender analysis and gender sensitive programming. In supporting capacity building of local organisations more broadly, priority should be on building build a common body of knowledge and experience in the region, through:

- ▶ supporting regional initiatives for building the capacity of local groups in key areas such as monitoring and evaluation, program management, counseling skills, communication and advocacy
- ▶ strengthening existing networks, including opportunities for shared learning with innovative programs inside and outside the region
- ▶ supporting joint initiatives in developing tools, program materials, etc. to improve the quality of work in the region
- ▶ supporting exchanges and mentoring opportunities for organisations in the region.

## **6. *Ensure that all training delivered or funded by AusAID is based on best practice.***

Training, particularly in the law and justice sector, is a common approach for AusAID when the Agency is seeking to raise awareness of violence against women and build the capacity of key actors to respond. However, more effort is needed to incorporate lessons learnt on successful approaches to training. To maximise impact AusAID must ensure:

- ▶ training is based on a human rights approach and is gender transformative
- ▶ training is appropriately targeted and ongoing (rather than one-off or ad hoc)
- ▶ appropriate follow up and support for those who have been trained
- ▶ monitoring and evaluation systems are in place to assess the impact of the training and monitor potential backlash.

The recommendations listed above are not exclusive to Australia, and should be viewed as a critical part of any plan for action.



## Recommendations for all stakeholders

### ***1. Encourage coordination of aid among international donors, to maximise impact.***

As much as possible, support should be provided to organisations working on violence against women as core funding, rather than project-focused or earmarked, with multiple-year grants.

### ***2. Support multisectoral coordination, including government and non-government actors, at both national and local levels.***

Support could include:

- ▶ developing and implementing national, provincial, municipal and community plans of action for preventing violence against women
- ▶ supporting interagency task forces on violence against women (e.g. within the context of CEDAW reporting)
- ▶ conducting national coordinated campaigns and awareness-raising activities
- ▶ collaborating on training and capacity building of local stakeholders across sectors.

### ***3. Strengthen women's leadership and economic and political participation at all levels.***

Priority should be given to providing women the necessary tools, skills and opportunities to participate fully in the social and economic development of their communities and nations.



## Recommendations for increasing women's access to justice

### ***4. Support national legal reform efforts.***

This should address specific new or reformed legislation on domestic and sexual violence, including the age of consent and marriage, and other areas of law limiting women's ability to obtain protection (such as laws relating to marriage breakdown, custody of children, maintenance, property rights, inheritance and sex work). Equally important is monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of any new or reformed legislation.

### ***5. Commit long-term support to strengthening police response to violence against women.***

Four concurrent approaches are recommended:

- ▶ ongoing training for police at all levels, including introducing clear protocols for responding to domestic and sexual violence that emphasise women's legal right to be protected from violence
- ▶ strengthening and monitoring the dedicated units for domestic and sexual violence that exist in all countries in the region
- ▶ applying consistent disciplinary action against police offenders
- ▶ monitoring women's experiences and case outcomes.

### ***6. Strengthen the response of the formal justice system to violence against women.***

Ensure that laws and policies on violence against women are properly implemented by:

- ▶ transforming discriminatory attitudes through systematic training of lawyers, magistrates, judges and other justice system personnel on gender and human rights issues
- ▶ promoting women's participation at all levels of the justice system.

### ***7. Strengthen the willingness and ability of community-based justice systems to respond to women's right to protection from violence.***

Support dialogue between justice-sector personnel, women's NGOs and traditional leaders on how to honour women's human rights through traditional or restorative justice.



Promote increased participation of women in justice-related decision-making bodies, and monitoring outcomes.

**8. *Increase support for NGOs offering women legal literacy and human rights training.***

Wherever possible, men should also be informed about women's legal and human rights.

## **Recommendations for improving support services**

**9. *Prioritise long-term support and resources for organisations providing support services.***

Long-term commitment, especially in the form of core funding, enables promising programs to develop capacity, deepen human rights perspectives, scale up services and expand the breadth of support for victims. This is especially important where capacity is a challenge and access is usually limited to urban areas.

**10. *Encourage and invest in integrated models of service provision.***

Integrated, multisectoral approaches facilitating women's access to critical services and resources are key to meeting the holistic needs of survivors of violence. Models for support and scale-up include:

- ▶ one-stop shops at health-care facilities that integrate medical care and counselling with access to police and legal services, shelter and longer-term support where available
- ▶ women's groups and NGOs that provide counselling, safe haven and other services aimed at empowering women, offering options and supporting their choices regarding leaving abusive relationships—support should be prioritised for organisations demonstrating good levels of coordination and communication with other groups working in the area

**11. *Increase and extend access for rural women.***

In tandem with recommendation 13, aim to ensure that women living far from urban centres have meaningful access to services. Support should include strengthening health-sector initiatives on violence against women.



**12. Increase support for informal community-based networks, including safe havens.**

Informal networks provide the only meaningful access to services at the village level for the vast majority of women in all five countries and, as such, need increased support. They are essential components of any strategic approach designed to strengthen overall reach and access.

**13. Strengthen and increase government engagement in support services, especially in the health and education sectors.**

Place emphasis on:

- ▶ **Health sector:** creating conditions in which primary health care providers can gain the skills and knowledge to: identify women living with violence; provide basic information, counselling, and appropriate medical care and documentation; and refer women to services for follow up.
- ▶ **Education sector:** developing national policies to prevent and sanction violence against girls in schools, and deal appropriately with misconduct.

**14. Support capacity-building to improve the quality of services.**

This should include providing standardised/accredited training on counselling for violence against women and standardised protocols for service delivery.

**Recommendations for strengthening violence prevention efforts**

**15. Prioritise support for initiatives with strong emphasis on identifying and transforming gender norms.**

Primary prevention of violence against women is based on fostering community norms of gender equality as well as on nonviolent behaviour. A number of innovative strategies have already been adopted that address the norms, attitudes and behaviours (rooted in gender equality) that underlie violence against women, but many require additional support. Priority should be given to:

- ▶ advocacy efforts aimed at raising community awareness around violence against women and calling for legislative and policy-level action to address the issue
- ▶ mass and alternative media initiatives that increase the visibility of women's rights initiatives and offer a forum for women's voices to be heard

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- ▶ multimedia 'edutainment' activities that offer a safe, entertaining and community-wide forum for opening dialogue around violence against women and related issues
  - ▶ community mobilisation that focuses on prevention as a process of social change that requires sustained action on the part of the entire community.

### ***16. Strengthen partnerships with a range of actors and sectors not traditionally involved in addressing violence against women.***

Initiatives that show the most promise engage all sectors of the community, especially key decision-makers and opinion leaders. Churches and faith-based organisations and traditional chiefs are important partners in galvanising community-based transformation of gender norms and related behaviours. Men and male youth generally have not been engaged in efforts to prevent violence against women, yet they are critical partners in effecting long-lasting change.

### ***17. Identify strategic opportunities for integrating interventions that address violence against women into different areas.***

These include:

- ▶ micro-finance or micro-grant initiatives targeting women living in poverty and offering women a measure of economic empowerment
- ▶ workplace initiatives and policies addressing sexual harassment and promoting gender parity and equity
- ▶ education-sector programs aimed at:
  - (a) challenging stereotypes and gender norms in materials and curricula, and promoting gender equality;
  - (b) achieving gender parity in classroom representation of girls and boys at all educational levels; and
  - (c) implementing policies to prevent violence against girls in schools, and punish violent offenders.
- ▶ health-sector programs addressing the links between violence against women, HIV infection, safe motherhood, sexual rights and factors that increase women's vulnerability
- ▶ peace-building activities, especially where women are mobilising to end conflict and foster peace and reconciliation in their communities
- ▶ disaster preparedness and response programs.



## Appendix 4 - Online survey questionnaire

Please see the following pages.

# Violence Against Women (VAW) in the Pacific Region

## Welcome and Basic Information

Welcome to this brief questionnaire on Violence Against Women (VAW) programming in the Pacific region and Timor-Leste, coordinated by the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) and the Australian Government Overseas Aid Program (AusAID). The results will be used to inform a policy dialogue on eliminating VAW in the region and, potentially, future programming in this field. This survey will take you 10-15 minutes to complete. Your participation is completely anonymous, voluntary and confidential.

### **\*1. Which of the following activities best describes your area of work with regard to VAW? Choose all that apply.**

- Advocacy
- Capacity building (trainings, development of tools, etc.)
- Changing gender norms
- Community mobilisation
- Development and implementation of policies and laws
- Legal services / prosecution of offenders
- Media (campaigns, radio, TV, etc.)
- Medical care to survivors
- Provision of shelters
- Psycho-social counselling to survivors
- Research
- Security (police, military, special security forces, etc.)
- Sensitisation / Awareness
- Other (please specify)

### **\*2. Who are the main target groups that you work with? Choose all that apply.**

- Health workers
- Men and boys / Male advocates
- Offenders
- Police / Security forces
- Schools
- Social workers
- Survivors adults
- Survivors children
- Youth
- Other (please specify)

# Violence Against Women (VAW) in the Pacific Region

## Basic Information (continued)

### \*3. Which forms of violence do you address in your work? Choose all that apply.

- Child abuse / incest
- Harmful traditional practices (genital mutilation, honor killing, forced marriage, etc.)
- Intimate Partner Violence
- Sexual harassment
- Sorcery
- Trafficking / Forced prostitution
- Violence in conflict settings
- Other (please specify)

### \*4. Which kind of VAW do you deal with in your work? Choose all that apply.

- Sexual
- Physical
- Psychological
- All of the above
- Other (please specify)

### \*5. Which type of organization do you work for?

- Academic / University
- Church or faith-based organization
- Community-based organization
- Government
- International organization (e.g. UN, Oxfam, AusAID, HRW, MSF, etc.)
- Local national non-profit or NGO
- Private sector
- Other (please specify)



# Violence Against Women (VAW) in the Pacific Region

## Basic Information (continued)

### \*6. What is your primary role in your organization?

- Activist
- Attorney
- Counsellor
- Director
- Health provider
- Police
- Policymaker
- Project manager
- Researcher
- Social worker
- Traditional leader
- Other (please specify)

### 7. For how many years has your professional work been connected to efforts to eliminate VAW?

- 2 or less
- 3-5
- 6-10
- more than 10

### 8. Have you received any kind of training related to VAW in the last five years?

- Yes
- No

### 9. If yes, did this training discuss power relations between men and women and gender equality?

- Yes
- No
- N/A

## Violence Against Women (VAW) in the Pacific Region

### 10. What is your sex?

- Female
- Male
- Other

### 11. At which level do you undertake the majority of your work to address VAW?

- Community level
- District/Province level
- Country level
- Regional level

### \*12. Which of the following countries are you most familiar with? For those working in multiple countries, please select only one for the purposes of this survey.

- Timor-Leste
- Fiji
- Papua New Guinea
- Solomon Islands
- Vanuatu
- I have no specific knowledge of any of the above 5 countries

# Violence Against Women (VAW) in the Pacific Region

## Violence Against Women (VAW) in your country in the last five years

Please answer the following questions related to the main changes in efforts to address VAW in your country in the last five years. If you work at a regional level, please respond in relation to the country that you feel most familiar with in terms of VAW programming.

### 13. In the past five years, have you seen a change in the work on VAW in your country in the following areas?

	Worse than five years ago	No change	Improvement in the last five years	N/A
Building rigorous evidence about prevalence and the situation of VAW	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Coordination and cooperation among different sectors and organizations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Evaluation of interventions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Policy advocacy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### 14. For these topics related to women's access to justice, rate whether you have noticed any change in the last five years.

	Worse than five years ago	No change	Better than five years ago	N/A
Quality of national laws on VAW	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Police response to VAW	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Formal justice system response to VAW	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Traditional justice system response to VAW	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Availability of legal literacy and human rights trainings for women	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall in the area of women's access to justice and legal reforms	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

# Violence Against Women (VAW) in the Pacific Region

## 15. For these topics related to support services, rate whether you have noticed any change in the last five years.

	Worse than five years ago	No change	Better than five years ago	N/A
Availability of funding for long-term support services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Access to support services for rural women	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Level of engagement in support services by government	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Availability of high-quality training on counseling and service delivery	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Establishment of referral systems for survivors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Access to shelters and safe havens for survivors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall in the area of support of services for survivors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## 16. For these topics related to prevention of VAW, rate whether you have noticed any change in the last five years.

	Worse than five years ago	No change	Better than five years ago	N/A
Availability of funding for projects that work to transform gender norms	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Positive engagement of churches and/or faith-based organizations in VAW prevention efforts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Positive engagement of traditional chiefs in VAW prevention efforts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Integration of VAW reduction into education projects	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Integration of VAW reduction into health sector projects and services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Integration of VAW reduction into microfinance projects	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Engaging men and boys in VAW prevention efforts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Working with youth and adolescents in VAW prevention efforts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall in the area of primary prevention of violence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

# Violence Against Women (VAW) in the Pacific Region

## Violence Against Women (VAW) in your country in the last five years

### 17. Which area of work in VAW do you perceive to receive the most funding in your country?

- Women's access to justice / legal reforms
- Support services for survivors / shelters
- Prevention of violence
- Policy advocacy
- Other (please specify)

### 18. In your opinion, are most programs to reduce VAW in your country based on a human rights for women and gender perspective?

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

### 19. Please rate the advances in efforts to eliminate VAW in your country in the last five years (1 is poor and 10 is excellent)

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10

Other (please specify)

## Final Questions (Optional)

### 20. What has been the most important new advance in efforts to eliminate VAW you have noticed in your country in the last five years?

### 21. What is your top recommendation to further advance the field of efforts to eliminate VAW?

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. You have reached the end of the questionnaire. Your input is incredibly valuable toward our efforts to further advance the field of VAW programming in the region. With any additional questions, please feel free to contact ICRW at [info@icrw.org](mailto:info@icrw.org).