



Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development

Kiribati Country Plan Summary

Background

Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development (*Pacific Women*) was announced by the Australian Government at the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' meeting in August 2012. It commits up to \$320 million over 10 years in 14 Pacific Islands Forum member countries. The program aims to improve opportunities for the political, economic and social advancement of Pacific women. *Pacific Women* will support countries to meet the commitments they made in the 2012 Pacific Leaders' Gender Equality Declaration. The outcomes sought by Pacific Women are:

- Women, and women's interests, are increasingly and effectively represented and visible through leadership at all levels of decision making.
- Women have expanded economic opportunities to earn an income and accumulate economic assets.
- Violence against women is reduced and survivors of violence have access to support services and to justice.
- Women in the Pacific will have a stronger sense of their own agency, supported by a changing legal and social environment and through increased access to the services they need.

Pacific Women is managed by Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and works with a wide range of implementing partners, including the 14 partner governments, multilateral organisations, international and national non-government organisations, civil society organisations and the private sector.

The *Pacific Women* Support Unit provides technical and administrative services to assist in the management of the program, including planning, delivery and monitoring of activities, research and communications. The Support Unit is based in Suva, Fiji, with a sub-office in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea.

Kiribati

Kiribati is a republic in the Pacific, made up of one main island and 32 coral atolls. Kiribati's population of around 115,000 people face distinctive economic, environmental and social issues. Climate change, including the challenges of rising sea levels, soil salination and drought, are key concerns of Kiribati's population.

Kiribati is currently ranked 137 of 188 countries on the Human Development Index.¹ With respect to access to education, there are more girls enrolled in secondary schools than boys. However, progress is less encouraging on other indicators that demonstrate the status of women. These

¹ Human Development Index 2017, United Nations Development Programme. <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/KIR>



include the low economic participation of women, low use of contraceptives (with a quarter of women reporting an unmet need for contraception, especially among 15–24 year old women) and an increase in teen pregnancies (from 39 per 1,000 females in 2005 to 51 per 1,000 females in 2010).²

Pacific Women Country Plan

Through *Pacific Women*, the Australian Government will spend approximately **\$9.9 million over 10 years** (2012–2022) on initiatives supporting women’s empowerment in Kiribati.

Country Plans are the mechanism through which *Pacific Women* outcomes and activities are planned and agreed between DFAT and counterpart governments, following extensive national consultations. They provide detail on what will be funded and how these funding decisions are made. The Kiribati Country Plan was developed following a document review and in-country design mission in April 2013. Consultations were held with stakeholders on Tarawa, representing government ministries, civil society, the private sector and regional organisations. The joint Australian Government and Government of Kiribati-UN Women Preparatory Assistance Project was closely involved in the process.

The first three-year Kiribati Country Plan included four activities valued at \$1.8 million from 2013 to 2016. Further activities until 2020 have subsequently been added to the Country Plan. During the design process, viable entry points for women’s income generation were difficult to identify, especially for rural women. One activity under the Country Plan is therefore a women’s economic empowerment feasibility study, investigating strategies that respond to women’s low income and decision making autonomy.

The majority of funding under the Kiribati Country Plan supports the implementation of the National Policy and Strategic Action Plan to Eliminate Sexual and Gender Based Violence 2011–2021. This is being done through support to a women and children’s support centre and provision for the existing Catholic Church crisis centre.

The Country Plan underwent a review in June 2018 to assess progress and make recommendations on its future direction.

In addition to *Pacific Women*, DFAT makes an important contribution to gender equality in Kiribati through mainstreaming gender outcomes in the aid program, as well as through political, diplomatic and corporate activities.

Rationale for activities in the Country Plan

Kiribati ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women in 2004. The Government of Kiribati has taken steps to support gender equality with the creation of the Ministry of Women, Youth, Sports and Social Affairs in 2012. This ministry is responsible for progressing women’s empowerment and implementing the Strategic Action Plan 2011–2021 to support the elimination of sexual and gender-based violence. The rationale for providing a suite of support to the ministry is to promote Kiribati driven responses to the inequalities faced by women in Kiribati.

² Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (2012) Pacific regional MDGs tracking report, as quoted in Pacific Women’s Kiribati Country Plan 2013-2016



(a) Increasing women's leadership and decision making

There are three women in Kiribati's 46-member national parliament (6.5 per cent). At the local government level, there are 10 women serving as councillors out of a total of 332. While rates of women in political leadership remain low, women hold the majority of senior leadership positions within the public sector. Overall, there are 73 women high-level government officials compared to 66 men.

(b) Increasing economic opportunities for women

Economically, Kiribati has the lowest gross domestic product per capita in the Pacific region at USD2,220 (followed by USD2,363 in Papua New Guinea). For women, limited economic opportunities are a reality of everyday life where a single woman heads one in five households. Remittances from overseas account for 6.4 per cent of the gross domestic product in Kiribati. They are described as a 'lifeline' for many households.

The 2009 Kiribati Demographic and Health Survey noted that only two in 10 married women who had cash earnings decided for themselves how it was spent.³ Around one quarter of women reported that they have no say in decisions relating to household purchases.

The lack of economic opportunities generally in Kiribati compound issues around gender equality. Fisheries and subsistence agriculture account for a quarter of the gross domestic product and involve most of the population. Kiribati has significant economic limitations due to its physical remoteness, coupled with irregular and costly outer island transport. This limits opportunities for integration with regional and international markets.

(c) Reducing violence against women and expanding support services

Violence against women and girls is widespread in Kiribati. The Kiribati Family Health and Support Study found that 68 per cent of women aged 15–49 years had experienced sexual or physical violence from their partner.⁴ Forms of violence included punching, kicking and the use of weapons; deaths have also been recorded and 90 per cent of women report controlling behaviour by their partner. Social norms dictate that women must be obedient to their husbands and violence against women has traditionally been accepted.

In 2014, the Government committed to ending sexual and gender-based violence with the passing of the *Te Rau N Te Mwenga Act (Kiribati Family Peace Act 2014)*. This Act includes measures to prevent and respond to domestic violence, gives direction on how survivors can be supported and includes provisions to hold offenders accountable.

(d) Enhancing women's agency

Strengthening civil society groups that have feminist, activist and/or disability mandates forms part of Pacific Women's work to promote women's agency. Support for coalition building among these groups is showing positive results in terms of awareness about and action on gender equality. Continuing and expanding this work with other partners will contribute to transformational social change.

³ Secretariat of the Pacific Community, *Kiribati Demographic and Health Survey 2009* (2009).

⁴ Kiribati Ministry of Internal Affairs, *Kiribati Family Health and Support Study: A study on violence against women and children* (2010).



Table 1: Bilateral Activities

PROJECT NAME AND PARTNER	DESCRIPTION	BUDGET
Outcome: Economic Empowerment		
Feasibility study to determine viable economic opportunities for women in Kiribati (Consultant)	Conducted a feasibility study on women's economic opportunities across three islands in Kiribati (Kiritimati, South Tarawa and Butaritari), including consideration of microcredit access options for women on outer islands.	\$40,000 (2017–2018)
Outcome: Ending Violence against Women		
Strengthening Peaceful Villages in Kiribati (UN Women)	Providing funding through UN Women to implement the 'Strengthening Peaceful Villages in Kiribati' program. This program is aimed at changing community and individual behaviours to prevent violence.	\$1,647,984 (2017–2020)
Respectful Relationships program (Ministry of Women, Youth, Sports and Social Affairs, Women's Development Division)	Funding to implement a school-based program incorporating a respectful relationships program into the school curriculum.	\$41,455 (2016–2018)
Support the implementation of the Kiribati Women and Children's Support Centre's Strategic Plan (Kiribati Family Health Association)	Supporting establishment of the first formal support centre in Kiribati for women and children survivors of violence, including funding for recruitment and training of staff. Technical assistance was also provided to the Kiribati Family Health Association to facilitate the finalisation of a three-year strategic plan for the Kiribati Women and Children's Support Centre. The Centre opened in 2017.	\$321,880 (2014–2018)
Extension of Kiribati Police Domestic Violence and Sexual Offences office based in Betio to provide a safe place and referral centre for survivors of violence (Kiribati Police Domestic Violence Unit)	Provided survivors of violence with temporary shelter and comfort while awaiting referral to relevant services. This funding also supported the training and capacity development of over 200 outer island police officers, special constables and village wardens.	\$143,725 (2014–2017)
Judiciary enabling rights outreach to the vulnerable (Magistrate Court)	Supported consultations on the <i>Family Peace Act</i> 2014 and training on human rights and sexual and gender-based violence for lay magistrates on Tarawa and outer islands. This project also supported the community and outer islands to improve understanding of the court system and services in relation to ending violence against women.	\$125,398 (2014–2017)
Improved infrastructure and training for Ministry of Health staff (Ministry of Health)	Funded the extension of an existing gynaecology room in the main hospital in South Tarawa to enable improved access to treatment, care and referral services for survivors of violence. Also supported training of frontline officers working with survivors of sexual violence.	\$150,000 (2014–2016)
Support for the Ministry of Women, Youth, Sports and Social Affairs to undertake work to support Ending Violence against Women (Ministry of Women, Youth,	Providing funding to employ project staff to support the Government of Kiribati's implementation and monitoring of gender equality activities, including the Shared Implementation Plan on Ending Violence Against Women, the UN Joint Program on Ending Violence Against Women and the Respectful Relationships initiative.	\$483,996 (2013–2019)



Sports and Social Affairs, Women's Development Division)		
Outcome: Enhancing Agency		
Support for the Ministry of Women, Youth, Sports and Social Affairs to undertake work to support Ending Violence against Women (Ministry of Women, Youth, Sports and Social Affairs, Women's Development Division)	Supporting restoration of Aia Maea Ainen Kiribati (Kiribati's national women's umbrella organisation) through recruitment of technical assistance to assess the current status of the organisation and provide recommendations on the way forward.	\$26,200 (2017–2018)
2015 One Billion Rising Campaign (Kiribati Family Health Association)	Supported Kiribati to be part of a revolutionary global ending violence against women movement where the Kiribati Family Health Association worked with young people to lead the campaign using creative arts such as stage performances, dancing, singing and marches.	\$6,800 (2015)



Table 2: Regional Programs with Activities in Kiribati

PROJECT NAME AND PARTNER	DESCRIPTION	BUDGET ⁵
Outcome: Economic Empowerment		
Building prosperity for women producers, processors and women owned businesses through organic value chains (Pacific Community POETCom)	Identifying and supporting organic value chains that benefit women as producers, suppliers, processors and entrepreneurs, while also enhancing their capacity for inter-regional organic trade within the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Palau and Kiribati.	\$3,884,100 (2018–2022)
Outcome: Leadership and Decision Making		
Pacific Women Parliamentary Partnerships Project (Australian International and Community Relations Office, Department of the House of Representatives)	Supported building the capacity of Pacific women parliamentarians and their staff to ensure gender equality issues are better addressed in parliament.	\$2,850,037 (2015–2018)
Women's Leadership Research (Developmental Leadership Program, La Trobe University)	Funded the Developmental Leadership Program to undertake research on women's leadership programs at a community level in the Pacific and to assess how working politically and through coalitions can contribute to program outcomes.	\$250,000 (2014–2016)
Outcome: Ending Violence against Women		
Pacific Partnership to End Violence Against Women and Girls (UN Women)	The program focuses on three essential interventions: formal and informal education; contextualised, community-based prevention approaches and civil society organisations' capacity to engage with national and regional institutions and authorities. These approaches create a comprehensive program to promote gender equality and reduce violence against women and girls across communities and nations while producing promising practices on the prevention of violence against women and girls in the Pacific	\$7,627,947.80 (2018–2022)
Gender Equality Theology – Institutional Transformation (UnitingWorld)	The program supports institutional transformation within churches and participating organisations by challenging and shifting traditional gender theologies and then reviewing church polices to align them with new gender equality theologies. This is anticipated to lead to establishing procedures including responsible codes of conduct for leaders and members and response mechanisms for situations of violence that respect the rights of women and that promote and act in accordance with the protection laws within each country.	\$1,895,768 (2018–2021)
Women's Crisis Centre Programs to Eliminate Violence against Women in Fiji and the Pacific (Fiji Women's Crisis Centre)	Funding for the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre's regional activities, including: Fiji Women's Crisis Centre's Regional Training Program, the Male	\$2,250,000 (2016–2020)

⁵ This allocation is not for Kiribati alone but for multiple countries under *Pacific Women*.



PROJECT NAME AND PARTNER	DESCRIPTION	BUDGET ⁵
	Advocates Program and the Pacific Women's Network Against Violence Against Women.	
Support to the Pacific Community Regional Rights Resource Team (Pacific Community)	Focusing on supporting work on ending violence against women, human rights and good governance, RRRT works with Pacific island governments and civil society organisations by providing technical assistance, training and advocating for women and girls to have increased access to justice for domestic violence and to promote and protect human rights commitments.	\$5,750,000 (2015–2020)
Partnering Women for Change (UnitingWorld)	Supporting work with churches to ensure that women, girls and people living with disabilities have increased safety and well-being in their homes, communities and churches.	\$370,000 (2015–2018)
UNICEF Pacific Child Protection Program (UNICEF)	Supporting governments in 14 Pacific Island countries to strengthen the protection of children from violence, abuse and exploitation.	\$7,000,000 (2014–2018)
Pacific Fund to End Violence against Women (UN Women)	Supported civil society organisations and governments to prevent violence and provide services for survivors of violence, including for counselling, paralegal aid, shelter and referral services. The Fund also strengthened the capacity of organisations working to end violence against women through training in advocacy, law reform, women's human rights, community education and counselling services.	\$1,500,000 (2014–2017)
Outcome: Enhancing Agency		
Partnerships for Health and Rights: Working for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights for all in the Pacific (International Planned Parenthood Federation)	Supporting the expansion of access to sexual and reproductive health services in the Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea ⁶ , Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.	\$3,000,000 (2015–2022)
Progressing Gender Equality in the Pacific (Pacific Community)	Conduct stocktakes and support for the strengthening of government capacity to integrate gender equality and women's empowerment into policies, legislation and programs and improve the collection and analysis of data to better track outcomes.	\$3,941,712 (2013–2018) \$5,494,203 (2019–2023)

⁶ Papua New Guinea included in phase two from 2019-2022

