PARTNERS FOR CHANGE

UN WOMEN AND AUSTRALIA

Partners for progress

Australia is a longstanding advocate for gender equality and women’s empowerment on both a domestic and an international scale. Australia has been a key partner, politically and financially, since UN Women’s establishment in 2010/11. The Government of Australia is also a strong supporter of the Australian National Committee for UN Women.

Sharing common goals

UN Women and Australia share a fundamental commitment to gender equality and women’s empowerment. UN Women’s mandate and current priorities complement Australia’s Foreign Aid Policy in the Indo-Pacific region, particularly in the areas of women’s economic empowerment, ending violence against women, leadership and participation, and peace and security.

In 2016, Australia and UN Women finalized the new Partnership Framework agreement 2016-2020, which outlines shared objectives in the Indo-Pacific region and globally, as well as Australia’s multi-year commitment to regular resources.

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Australian Ambassador for Women and Girls, Dr. Sharman Stone, challenges gender norms to prevent violence against women and girls.

Banner photo: Market vendors at the formal ceremony marking the start of infrastructural upgrade of the Lugarville Market in Santo (Vanuatu) to ensure a safer and resilient marketplace.

June 2019
Together we achieved:

Women’s Economic Empowerment and Safe Cities in the Pacific

Australia is UN Women’s largest contributor in the Pacific region, and since 2014 has supported the Markets for Change programme which ensures that marketplaces in rural and urban areas of Fiji, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu are safe, inclusive, and promote women’s participation in decision-making and leadership.

To date, over 10,000 market vendors, 75 to 90 per cent of whom are women, are now represented through Market Vendors Association (MVAs) Executive Committees, advocating for their interests with market management and local authorities. The majority of MVAs have 50 per cent women in leadership positions.

Launched in 2011, the Port Moresby Safe City Programme in Papua New Guinea is making three of the city’s markets safe for users, especially women and girls, and empowering women economically. In 2015, the programme expanded to support the provision of safe, reliable and affordable public transport to enable women, youth and children to move freely and safely. This public transport has provided safe transport to over 100,000 women in 2018 alone.

Since the beginning of the programme, it has helped establish 19 vendor associations with a membership of over 4,000 women. The national government has taken on the vendor association model to engage with the informal sector across the country. This model has now been institutionalised within a new National informal sector policy.

Working with government, civil society, the private sector, and men and boys, the programme has contributed to the inclusion of women’s safety inputs in market by-laws, a significant reduction in violence against women, and the establishment of a mobile phone bank account and bill paying system for vendors, among other things.

Ending Violence Against Women

The Pacific Partnership to End Violence Against Women and Girls (Pacific Partnership) brings together governments, civil society organisations, communities and other partners to promote gender equality, prevent violence against women and girls (VAWG), and increase access to quality response services for survivors.

The Pacific region has some of the highest rates of violence against women recorded in the world – twice the global average with up to two in every three Pacific women impacted by gender-based violence. With support from Australia, UN Women is working to promote gender equitable social norms at individual and community levels to prevent violence against women and girls, and to ensure survivors have access to quality response services.

The first year of the Pacific Partnership saw extensive community mobilization focused on social norm and behaviour change to prevent VAWG in Fiji and Kiribati; the adoption of Standard Operating Procedures for responding to VAWG in Fiji, Kiribati, and the Solomon Islands; the opening of a crisis centre for survivors of violence in Kiribati; and the training of counsellors to provide support to VAWG survivors in line with global standards in 11 Pacific island nations.

Gender Data and Statistics

A longstanding advocate on the importance of gender statistics, Australia is a key donor for the multi-year Evidence and Data for Gender Equality (EDGE) initiative which is implemented by UN Women and the United Nations Statistics Division, in collaboration with other partners. The initiative is enhancing an international online platform to disseminate gender indicators on health, education and employment in support of evidence-based policy formulation.

Australia also supports the Making every woman and girl count: Supporting the monitoring and implementation of the SDGs through better production and use of gender statistics global programme. Part of UN Women’s Gender Statistics flagship initiative, the programme will ensure gender statistics are available, accessible, analyzed and used to inform policymaking, advocacy and accountability for delivering gender equality and women’s empowerment.