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Spotlight Initiative
To eliminate violence against women and girls



PACIFIC VOICES

Vanuatu Country Programme

Newsletter: December 2023



The Spotlight Initiative in Vanuatu hosted a celebratory event on 5 December 2023 in Port Vila, bringing together civil society, government partners, youth activists, technical experts and representatives of the UN agencies, the European Union and other development partners.

The event showcased significant transformation and impact achieved in the areas where the Spotlight Initiative has played a pivotal role. Two engaging panel discussions during the event explored aspects essential for further progress towards eradicating gender-based violence. Find more on [the live video](#) and [press release](#).

Messages from Changemakers



**Cherol Ala, Director General
The Prime Minister's Office**
Co-Chair of the Steering Committee of the
Spotlight Initiative

"It is about you and me in partnership. It's about collaboration. It means that there is a need for strong leadership at all levels to ensure that we address the issues around violence against women and girls moving forward.

I will continue to call on all partners to continue to collaborate and ensure progress continues to be made in a timely manner in collaboration with all stakeholders." [\[Her message video\]](#)



**Dirk Wagener, Resident Coordinator
The United Nations**
Co-Chair of the Steering Committee of the
Spotlight Initiative

"As we reflect on the journey since 2020, marked by substantial achievements and challenges to overcome, this celebratory event provides an invaluable opportunity.

I invite all to explore potential pathways forward, ensuring that our collective efforts endure beyond this phase of the Spotlight Initiative.

While this phase concludes, our commitment to building multi-sectoral approaches to prevention must persist. [\[His message video\]](#)



**Barbara Plinkert, Ambassador
The European Union to the Pacific**
Partner and donor of the Initiative

"We are very pleased to see the results not only in Vanuatu but in the wider region. But we need to stay on course. The European Union remains determined to continue supporting the work to eliminate gender based violence.

Every action counts, and we are proud that jointly we are working to make the world a



Jennifer Kausei, Chair
The Civil Society Reference Group

"We are not working in isolation in this fight against gender-based violence. It is all about partnership which makes the breaking of silence possible, subsequently eliminating violence against women and girls at home and communities.

We need to continue to put our voices into action. We must succeed."

safer and more equal place for women and girls.” [\[Her message video\]](#)

Key Results

Contributing to Sustainable Impact

The Spotlight Initiative, a collaboration between the United Nations and the European Union, commenced in Vanuatu in 2020 with a substantial funding commitment of US\$ 4,017,746.

The Initiative’s achievements over the last four years showcase impactful collaborations among the UN, EU, government, and civil society in their collective journey towards Ending Violence Against Women and Girls, employing a systematic and holistic approach, the initiative focused on key pillars: Law and Policies, Institutions, Prevention, Services, Data, and Civil Society and Women’s Rights Organizations.

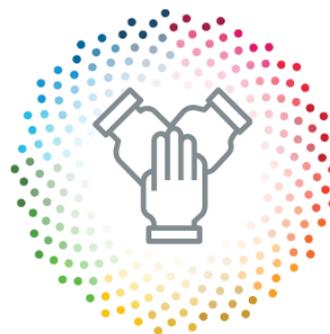


Legislation, Policies & Institutions

The Survivor-Victims Charter developed and launched through nation-wide consultations led by the Office of the Public Prosecutor and Vanuatu Women’s Centre, that provides survivor-victims of gender-based violence with a thorough guideline on how to access the criminal justice system and other support services across the entire country.

Guidelines for the Gender-based Violence Protection and Risk Mitigation in Evacuation Centers completed by the National Disaster Management Office.

Standard Operating Procedures Guidance for health workers for the Clinical Management of rape, sexual violence and gender-based violence launched and developed in consultation with obstetricians, gynecologists, psychiatrists, emergency doctors, pediatricians, public health professionals and nurses, and midwifery managers



Prevention & Transformation of Social and Gender Norms

‘Famili i Redi’, pre-departure workshops attended by current & potential labor migrants & their spouses/close family members to help maximize the socio-economic benefits of labor mobility & reduce the risk of gender-based violence. It provides the entire family unit with holistic education, skills & techniques to enhance communication despite the challenges associated with distance.

Family Life Education was advanced including the development of in-school curriculum, out-of-school modules, teachers guides and training, trainers and youth advocates as well as establishment of a multi-stakeholder FLE Committees at national and provincial levels.

Community Facilitation Package facilitated dialogues on violence and harmful norms, community by-laws and allocation of funds to local-level action plans.

to ensure health facilities are 'service ready' to respond.

The Prevention Strategy on Online Child Abuse and Sexual Exploitation developed, which is creating awareness among justice actors on the emerging field of Online GBV and Technology Facilitated violence.

Terms of reference and SOP for Child Protection in Emergencies were developed to guide the child protection in emergency responses.



Access to Services

Health services to gender-based-violence survivors were upgraded by the doctors, registered nurses, midwives and nurse aids who were trained on the clinical management of rape and sexual violence based on the Gender-based Violence Clinical Guidelines. Clinicians at the Port Vila Central Hospital and an officer from the Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health Unit of the Ministry of Health were trained by the Regional gender-based violence training of trainers.

Secondment of two forensic expert and psychiatrist provided expert services to sexual and gender-based violence survivors at Port Vila Central Hospital and strengthened evidence gathering for criminal prosecution of cases.

Victims Center at the Office of the Public Prosecutor was refurbished to ensure safe and confidential space for adult and children victims to access forensic medical clinicians and counsellors on site.

Free **Child Helpline** staffed by Child Protection Officers established.

Developed and expanded **Mental Health and Psychosocial Support program** to increase awareness of GBV issues and strengthen the

U-Report captured voices of adolescents to inform government on issues related to children, engaging with communities on online safety and youth empowerment

Social Behavior Change strategy developed through youth engagement.

Under **the National Child Online Protection Framework** guidance and training for counsellors and child protection officers were rolled out.



Delivering Services Post Cyclone

Supported **5 Women and Girls Friendly Spaces** in Tanna. Within the three months, the retired midwives and social workers registered 1,930 women and girls, who received counselling and SHR services.

22 trained youth volunteers and government officials in Shefa and Tafea reached 7,500 children and adolescents with **child protection in emergency messages, play-based psychosocial support activities.**

Child-friendly spaces in emergencies were set up and operationalized provided with recreational kits and other essential materials.

66 recreational kits, 35 tarpaulins and 13 tents released to support the setup, running of child-friendly spaces.

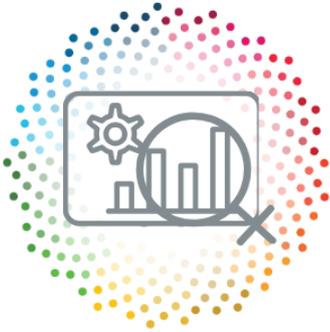
Sensitization and **training of 14 Area Council Displacement, Evacuation Shelter Management Cluster focal points**, Area Administrators, evacuation center managers and CDCCC community disaster leaders on the collection and reporting of gender and protection data.

Registration for Evacuation Centers and Host Households, weekly tracking and reporting through the DECM cluster to provide referrals and

capacity of mental health professionals and MHPSS volunteers.

situational analysis to other clusters, including Gender and Protection.

Distribution of **translated to Bislama, "Addressing Gender Based Violence in Evacuation Centers" posters** to TC Lola affected communities.



Strengthening VAWG Data Capacity

GBV Administrative data collection tools mapped and aligned with the National Gender Equality Policy on multi-sectoral service delivery protocols and referral systems, to ensure relevancy and effectiveness in monitoring GBV interventions.

Strengthened capacity to design administrative data systems, review data collection tools, and establish decision-making processes related to indicator selection, data sharing across sectors, dissemination, and utilization.

23 GBV frontline professionals were trained who will be able to monitor VAWG response and measure the effectiveness of the referral system.

8 experts from Vanuatu graduated in the KnowVAWdata Initiative, a series of capacity building workshops to support and strengthen national capacity to measure VAWG through prevalence studies.



Civil Society and Women's Movement

Partnered and directly supported with funding and technical assistance through the Spotlight Initiative:

- Action Aid
- SISTA & Human Capacity Development International (HCDI)
- Vatu Mauri
- ACTIV
- ISRAAID
- SILAEVANUA
- General Council of the Assemblies of God
- Wan Smol Bag
- Anglican Church of Melanesia
- Sunflower Association for Women and Girls with Disabilities
- Vanuatu Christian Council
- V-Pride
- Youth Challenge Vanuatu
- World Vision

Find more details of sustainable impact made in above areas in the study
"Opportunities to strengthen ending violence against women and children efforts through integrated programming"

The study is based on consultations and workshops with government representatives, CSOs, UN stakeholders and development partners in Vanuatu, along with a rapid review of UN progress reports and government policy documents and guidelines. It suggests a future integrated model of intervention to end violence against women and children including:

- Coordinating, planning and deploying efforts in partnership with government and CSOs to enhance impact and reduce the burden of engaging across multiple UN systems.
- Building linkages in prevention programming on violence against women and children (VAWG) with violence against children (VAC), to leverage common resources and messaging.
- Aligning mechanisms to continue GBV work during 'disaster' and 'non-disaster' times to ensure consistency of efforts and streamlined use of resources.

[\[Read more\]](#)



New Releases



[New video] Building a strong women's movement to end gender-based violence and the climate crisis in Vanuatu

Climate change isn't just about the environment. It is intertwined with social issues including the alarming rise in gender-based violence. Flora Vano of Action Aid Vanuatu, a Spotlight Initiative partner, sheds light on how the climate crisis impacts her community putting women at higher risk of violence, and how women and vulnerable groups are finding solutions. [\[Watch the video\]](#)



[New Story] From whispers to revolution: breaking the chains of gender-based violence in Vanuatu

The 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence concluded on 10 December, but the stark reality of violence against women persists beyond this designated period. It's an everyday struggle for countless women globally; in their homes, communities, workplaces, and online. [\[Read more\]](#)



[New story & video] Climate change and violence against women: Zero degrees of separation

Conversation on the linkages between climate change and gender-based violence, and the women and girls'-centred solutions to accelerate global climate action. The event was held during the gender thematic programme of the 28th United Nations Climate Change conference (COP28), on 4 December 2023 in Dubai. [\[Find more\]](#)



[New report] Integrating gender-based violence prevention into climate action

Climate change is one of the most pressing global emergencies of our time, with devastating social, cultural, economic, health and human rights impacts that affect people across every region of the globe. As climate change and environmental degradation increase, so too do incidents of violence against women and girls (VAWG). [The two-page publication](#) illustrates how climate change practitioners can integrate gender-based violence prevention into climate action.



[New Story] In unity our advocacy becomes a chorus – the women working to end violence in Vanuatu

PORT VILA, Vanuatu – What comes to mind when you think of the Pacific? The rhetoric often centres on happiness and holidays, the cordial shout of "Bula" in Fiji, "Welkam" in Vanuatu or "Mālō e lelei" in Tonga. But, there is another story that needs to be told: the work of an incredible cohort across the region working to end all forms of violence against women. [\[Read more\]](#)



[New Story] Vanuatu launches safe spaces for women and girls in cyclone-stricken Tanna Island

TANNA ISLAND, Vanuatu – "Our vision is to sustain this safe space where women and girls can gather, support and empower each other to improve their sense of dignity, wellness, and livelihoods," said Patarie, the wife of the Launaula Village Chief, as she joined the community's launch of the "Women and Girls Friendly Space" (WGFS). The space started operating just a couple of days ago in her village on Tanna Island in TAFEA Province of Vanuatu. [\[Read more\]](#)

Resources



STANAPSTRONG website brings together resources to help us stanap strong tugeta against gender-based violence of all kinds. It was inspired by the concept of storian – the Pacific tradition of coming together to share stories, build understanding and make wise decisions for the collective good. In this website you will find many things ... [\[Find out more on the website and Facebook\]](#)

kNOwVAW data Pacific



With the support of the **Spotlight Initiative**, the University of Melbourne, UNFPA Pacific Regional Office and SPC are working to improve data for measurement of violence against women and children in the Pacific countries of Samoa, Tonga, Kiribati, Fiji, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Republic of Marshall Islands and Federated States of Micronesia.



PACIFIC kNOwVAWdata HUB, a website enhances access and knowledge sharing on standardized and internationally accepted GBV data collection tools and methodologies. [[Find out more](#)]

SHINE

Sign up [here](#) now!
Find more about [SHINE](#)

SHINE is an online hub for global knowledge exchange on ending violence against women and girls. It aims to connect a range of partners and changemakers to co-create, collaborate and amplify knowledge and learning to end violence against women and girls. It overcomes language barriers through instant translation to provide a space to share experiences and learn from others in 50+ languages. Feel free to engage in the language(s) you are most comfortable with. Explore the site and engage as much as you would like – ask questions, leave comments and respond to others!



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