

## Budget Recommendations | Fact Sheet 3 Reducing Violence and Empowering Women



PHOTO MARIANNE JAGO/ CARE OF AUSAID.

*“For me, seeing these women and children grinning at us through a gap above the floor boards was a moment of joy, since women and children were disproportionately killed by the cyclone. In the worst affected areas, it was the strongest - the young men - who tended to survive.” - Marianne Jago, AusAID.*

***“When women are not protected, it undermines families, communities, and even nations.”***

- Hillary Clinton, November 2010, Melbourne<sup>1</sup>

Addressing violence against women and girls is at the heart of supporting women to realise their human rights – and a core development issue. Gender violence remains a devastating reality in all parts of the world. According to a 2006 study from the UN Secretary-General, “Violence against women is the most common but least punished crime in the world.”<sup>2</sup> **Among women aged 15-44 years, violence accounts for more death and disability than cancer, malaria, traffic injuries and war put together.**<sup>3</sup> This has enormous costs.

ACFID applauds recent announcements by the Australian Government to provide \$14.5 million to UN Women over the next two years to address violence against women<sup>4</sup> and an additional \$300,000 for training to United Nations Peacekeepers in how to protect women from sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations.<sup>5</sup> However, more needs to be done. ACFID makes the following further recommendations aimed at achieving Millennium Development Goal 3, promoting gender equality and empowering women.

<sup>1</sup> Hillary Clinton, US Secretary of State (6 November 2010) *Joint Press Conference with Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Kevin Rudd MP*, Grand Hyatt Hotel, Melbourne.

<sup>2</sup> International Women’s Development Agency, <http://www.iwda.org.au/au/programs/promote-safety-security/> (accessed November 2010).

<sup>3</sup> World Health Organisation (2005) sourced from the International Women’s Development Agency, <http://www.iwda.org.au/au/programs/promote-safety-security/> (accessed November 2010).

<sup>4</sup> The Hon Kevin Rudd MP, Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs (6 November 2010) *Joint Press Conference with US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton*, Grand Hyatt Hotel, Melbourne.

<sup>5</sup> Joint Media Release, The Hon Kevin Rudd MP, Minister for Foreign Affairs, and The Hon Kate Ellis MP, Minister for the Status of Women, *Keeping women safe in war – 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.*



### **Recommendation 3.1 – Fully fund implementation of the recommendations in the Government’s Report, *Stop Violence: Responding to Violence against Women in Melanesia and Timor Leste***

*Stop Violence: Responding to Violence against Women in Melanesia and Timor Leste* is the Government’s response to a report of AusAID’s Office of Development Effectiveness on promising practices to address violence against women.<sup>6</sup> Released in 2009, many of the recommendations of the Response are yet to be funded.

**ACFID recommends the provision of \$300 million over 3 years, beginning in the 2011-12 aid budget, to implement the recommendations in the Government Response, and support initiatives in Asia.** The Response includes practical recommendations to improve women’s access to justice and support services, such as funding a range of in-country civil society organisations that are providing key services to prevent and address violence, and initiatives relating to male leadership, economic livelihoods, safe houses, and legal, health and policing reforms.

Australia is well placed to play a leadership role in responding to violence against women in Asia and the Pacific, with significant policy, legal and services expertise and experience about what works in the region such as long-term, predictable support for agencies like the Fiji Women’s Crisis Centre. Implementing locally-driven, culturally sensitive and appropriate initiatives as a core part of our country strategies, as suggested in the Response, is one way to achieve this.

Such initiatives could include a range of culturally appropriate interventions to prevent violence against women, with a focus on embedding relevant prevention activities into existing community-based services so they become part of mainstream service provision. Other initiatives could address alcohol use and gender-based violence<sup>7</sup> looking to improve the evidence base on this issue by synthesising current research, and developing and piloting interventions that address alcohol use as a strategy to reduce the incidence of gender-based violence.

Innovative initiatives such as the UNIFEM Pacific Facility Fund could be given further support. Consideration could also be given to further supporting creative approaches that have proved successful, including use of accessible and popular forms of communication to raise and challenge violence against women, such as through television drama, radio and theatre. For example, One News TV in the Solomon Islands and the Wan Smol Bag theatre group in Vanuatu use popular forms of communication to raise an issue that is often hidden in communities, encouraging discussion and community action. Australia could also make a contribution to the available information on prevalence and incidence of violence against women by assisting national statistical offices to regularly collect data, using a recognised methodology such as that used by the World Health Organisation.

### **Recommendation 3.2 - Creation of an Ambassador for Women’s Rights**

The Gillard Government’s 2010 election platform recognises that the “high incidence of violence against women, combined with the culture of fear generated by it, retards women’s participation in political, social and economic life.”<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, the Coalition’s 2010 election platform recognised the need for a dialogue between women leaders in our region.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup> *Stop Violence: Responding to Violence against Women in Melanesia and Timor Leste*, 2009, is an Australian Government response to the AusAID Office of Development Effectiveness (ODA) Report *Violence against Women in Melanesia and East Timor: Building on Global and Regional Promising Approaches*.

<sup>7</sup> Currently there are no direct budget allocations for responding to alcohol-related issues in Australia’s aid budget, however some bilateral programs provide small amounts to limited community based responses. Current data linking alcohol and violence is abundant, and while data specifically for the Pacific is scarce, anecdotal reports of harmful consumption and negative consequences of alcohol use are abundant.

<sup>8</sup> Australian Labor Party, Federal Election Policy Document (2010) *A Good International Citizen: Australia’s Development Assistance*, p.13.

<sup>9</sup> Federal Coalition (2010) *The Coalition’s plan for real action on Foreign Affairs*, p.3.

**ACFID recommends that \$2 – 3 million be allocated towards the creation of an Ambassador for Women’s Rights, located in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and supported by three staff, to champion gender equality and promote the eradication of violence against women in the region, with a remit to investigate resourcing issues and innovative approaches to eliminating violence.**

The US Gender Advocate has been extremely successful in foregrounding of women’s rights. An Ambassador for Women’s Rights based on this model would assist in foregrounding this key development issue both in Australia and our region. In particular, an Ambassador for Women’s Rights would help to navigate and cultural and religious issues surrounding violence against women in our region.

### **Recommendation 3.3 – Release and fully resource implementation of the Women, Peace and Security National Action Plan**

In October 2000, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, backing it up with further resolutions on the theme in recent years. UN Security Council Resolution (SCR) 1325 recognises the relevance of women’s experiences of conflict in peace processes and in conflict resolution, and the importance of seeing women as active participants rather than simply as victims. Australia is committed to adopting a national action plan to give effect to SCR 1325, following the example of 23 other countries including Canada and the United Kingdom.

**ACFID recommends that the Australian Women, Peace and Security National Action Plan be released in conjunction with the full resourcing required for its implementation.**

While the Australian Government has acted on SCR 1325 in several ways, there are currently no broad whole-of-government guidelines for integrating gender into peacekeeping and post-conflict reconstruction. Australia’s key role assisting Pacific nations in post-conflict reconstruction and peacekeeping - along with peacekeeping and troop commitments in various conflict zones across the globe and in Timor-Leste - necessitates a national plan of action to implement SCR 1325. This would see the role of women in peace and security explicitly recognised by the Australian Government and ensure that consideration of gender in peace and conflict issues becomes a central obligation and an active consideration in the Australian community’s response to our military and defence commitments.

ACFID recognises and applauds current initiatives within the Australian Federal Police (AFP) and the Australian Defence Force (ADF) to ensure targets for women’s inclusion in deployments and training on women’s rights. To bolster this commitment, **ACFID recommends \$5 million be allocated in the 2011-12 Federal Budget for full reviews of AFP and ADF policies, practices, operations and resourcing in light of the new National Action Plan.**

Australia has been closely involved in the promotion of SCR 1325 in the Pacific region through AusAID programs. For example, peacekeepers and other support staff deployed to RAMSI (Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands) take part in pre-deployment training which examines SCR 1325 as an essential tool in increasing the participation of women in decision making. AusAID also support a number of NGOs promoting SCR 1325 in the region – including through femLINKpacific’s Peace Talks program to promote discussion about 1325 and other gender equality issues in the Pacific via radio.

**ACFID recommends that Australia further its regional commitment to SCR 1325 by assisting developing nations in our region to draft their own national action plans.** \$2 million could be allocated in the 2011-12 Federal Budget to femLINKpacific and UNDP Pacific in order to assist in the facilitation of regional engagement in drafting National Action Plans.



PHOTO ROCKY ROE/CARE OF AUSAID

A member of Anglicare's STOPAIDS theatre group in Papua New Guinea. The group, which is supported by AusAID, stages plays at local markets, schools and other community places to help educate young people about HIV/AIDS.