



Checklist | Gender inclusive COVID-19 response

This Checklist proposes strategic actions to encourage and support a gender inclusive COVID-19 response in the Pacific. It aims to help people working in government ministries, civil society and other organisations by providing ideas and strategic guidance to ensure COVID-19 response plans are gender inclusive.

All people are affected by, and must adapt to, the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Across Pacific Island countries there are governments, civil society, private sector, donors and other partners working together to mitigate the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and, in some countries, also the effects of TC Harold.

The contribution of both women and men is essential to effective crisis response. There is a need to include women, alongside men, in response planning as leaders, policy makers and care givers to assist with key decision making.

It is important to understand that women and men are impacted differently by a crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic. During a crisis women and girls are disproportionately impacted and typically face even higher rates of violence and sexual abuse, undertake more unpaid domestic work, access fewer essential health services and are more vulnerable to economic hardship. (For more details refer to [Pacific Women's Thematic Brief on Gender and COVID-19](#).)

Only some Pacific Island countries and territories have so far reported COVID-19 cases but all have implemented some form of COVID-19 response such as border closures, curfews or other restrictions. These responses, moreso than the virus itself, will likely have a greater effect on the Pacific and its resilience to the crisis. **Monitoring and assessing the gendered impacts of the COVID-19 response** will require consideration of both the negative impacts of the response on many women (such as lockdown restrictions limiting access to employment and services) and aspects of the response that will benefit women (such as government subsidies accessible by women).

Actions

This checklist proposes actions in five specific areas: learn from women's experience and support their leadership; develop and implement gender-sensitive responses to COVID-19; support women's economic security; prioritise support to domestic violence survivors and ensure continued access to health services.

1. Learn from women's experience and support their leadership

Learn from women's experience as caregivers in the household and in the community, and as professionals in the health care system, to develop preventative and recovery measures.

- Use this *Checklist - Gender inclusive COVID-19 response*.
- Consult women in the development of measures to prevent and respond to COVID-19.
- Involve women in decision-making at all levels in the management of the COVID-19 crisis, including in relation to health, economic and social impacts.
- Support women's leadership in implementing responses to COVID-19.
- Mobilise men and boys to undertake unpaid care work in their households and communities.
- Provide support to carers. This may include training on the provision of care with dignity, protecting their own health, as well as the provision of psychosocial support.
- Adopt measures to protect the safety of healthcare and frontline workers, against COVID-19 and also against abuse from patients or communities.



2. Develop and implement gender-sensitive responses to COVID-19

Apply a gender perspective across all sectors of the COVID-19 response.

- Identify the different impacts COVID-19 may have on the health, economic security, social protection, and mobility of women and men of different ages, abilities, ethnicities, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression (SOGIE). Identifying specific vulnerabilities will require collecting data disaggregated by sex, age and dis/ability and, wherever possible, ethnicity and SOGIE.
- Respond to the respective needs and priorities of women and men in all aspects of the response.
- Monitor the gendered impacts of government and civil society response efforts and the benefits women and men may respectively receive from the COVID-19 response.
- Get support from specialists with experience in gender mainstreaming.

3. Support women's economic security

Support women's livelihoods in the economic recovery package.

- Implement measures to respond to the adverse socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 on women's livelihoods, in the formal, and informal sectors.
- Provide resources to women to support their role in the food security of their households, ensuring inclusion of women with disabilities, women in female-headed households and other vulnerable women.
- Improve basic infrastructure (water, sanitation, energy, transport, communication) to reduce the burden of unpaid household work and support women's income generating opportunities.
- Adopt measures to improve the social protection of women living in hardship, ensuring inclusion of women and girls with disabilities and their carers.

4. Prioritise support to domestic violence survivors

Include protection and support to domestic violence survivors, also referred to as victims, in response priorities.

- Ensure women and girls are able to access life-saving domestic violence response services, including health care, counselling, protection, and access to justice. Support existing services to meet additional need, adapt to operate safely during the COVID-19 pandemic and, where gaps exist, support the establishment of new services.
- Raise awareness amongst first responders to domestic violence, such as the police and healthcare workers, about the increased vulnerability of women and children to violence during a crisis. Build their capacity to ensure the safety and health of women and children.
- Monitor the impact of COVID-19 prevention measures on domestic violence, including any barriers for survivors in accessing services.
- Include information about crisis centres and other support services for survivors of domestic violence in COVID-19 information briefings, including briefings by government and local authorities.

5. Ensure continued access to health services

- Ensure continued access for women and adolescent girls to essential health services, in particular sexual and reproductive health services.
- Ensure survivors of domestic violence receive comprehensive health care.
- Support access to water and sanitation infrastructure so that women can adopt safe hygienic practices.
- Make sure that adapted medical services (such as phone consultations, booking services) during the COVID-19 pandemic are accessible to people with disabilities, including quarantine infrastructure.

Support Unit: Technical support available for partners in the Pacific

The *Pacific Women* Support Unit provides expertise and gender inclusive crisis response support for Australian High Commissions and Embassies in the Pacific along with their partner governments, civil society organisations, private sector and other partners. The Support Unit provides gender advisory services to DFAT programs in the Pacific, including those developed to address COVID-19 and mitigate its impacts. Areas of technical advice include: disability and inclusion; humanitarian disaster response and risk reduction; adolescent girl engagement; working with small island state governments; economic analysis; value chain analysis; leadership and decision making; civil society capacity strengthening; ending violence against women; crisis services and response; project design, scoping and feasibility studies; infrastructure; climate change; community development and local stakeholder engagement.

For more information about this Checklist email the Support Unit: information@pacificwomen.org.fj