



For the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence campaign, we asked SPC directors and staff to share a few words on the importance of gender equality and the need to eliminate all forms of violence against women. Here is what they said:

*'In our work with young people in the Pacific, talking about gender equality and gender-based violence is so critical as they develop their independence and social and intimate relationships.'*

Mereia Carling, Youth Adviser, Social Development Programme, Pacific Community

All forms of violence have serious implications for young women, negatively impacting their physical, mental, sexual and reproductive health, as well as their role in all areas of life. For this reason, young women – including women with disabilities and regardless of their sexual orientation and gender identity and expression – are one of the five target groups targeted by the Pacific Youth Development Framework (PYDF).

The PYDF aims to enhance efforts of Pacific Island countries to reach groups of young people who currently face challenges in benefitting from mainstream development efforts. A targeted approach is essential to strengthen the networks that reach young women and connect them to development opportunities and processes. In our work with young people in the Pacific, talking about gender equality and gender-based violence is so critical as they develop their independence and social and intimate relationships.

The Pacific Young Women's Leadership Alliance – a network of young women leaders and local, regional, and international organisations working with and for young women across the Pacific region – have called for an acceleration of the elimination of sexual and gender-based violence as one of the five key strategic recommendations needed to ensure that young women are safe, respected, included, connected and skilled. They recognise that certain Pacific traditional practices are harmful and perpetuate violence against young women, such as bride price, early and forced marriage, and marketised traditional compensation.

SPC works together with governments and partners from civil society to provide support to young people in building societies where women and men of all ages and in all their diversity are equally respected and protected.

*The 16 days of activism campaign, which runs every year from 25 November – International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women – to 10 December – Human Rights Day – calls for the elimination of violence against women and invites everyone to take action against it.*