



PACIFIC GENDER OUTLOOK

Achieving the SDGs for all and leaving no woman or girl behind
2025



Pacific
Community
Communauté
du Pacifique



About this report

This report is the result of the collaborative efforts and partnership between the Pacific Community (SPC), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), and the National Statistics Offices in Pacific countries and territories. The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of SPC, UN Women, the United Nations or any of its affiliated organizations. The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of UN Women concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

Throughout this report, when references are made to the Pacific, they typically exclude Australia and New Zealand unless otherwise indicated. For regional aggregates, official SDG groupings are often used and, where available, aggregates align with official SDG aggregates for the region unless otherwise indicated. In these cases, references to the Pacific refer to the Oceania regional grouping that excludes Australia and New Zealand.

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PACIFIC GENDER OUTLOOK

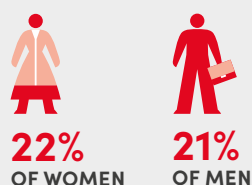
Achieving the SDGs for all and leaving no woman or girl behind

2025

In the Pacific...



Rural women and girls are **TWICE** as likely to live in poverty as those in urban areas



are employed but live in poverty



ages 15+ are food insecure

Climate change may push an additional

124,000 WOMEN

102,000 MEN

into food insecurity by 2030*



49% OF WOMEN
62% OF MEN
are overweight or obese, partly because

27% WOMEN
16% MEN
are physically inactive*



63% OF GIRLS
59% OF BOYS
complete upper secondary education

Completion in urban areas is

2.5 times
AS HIGH FOR GIRLS

2.7 times
AS HIGH FOR BOYS
as in rural areas*



Every year, **29%** of women suffer physical or sexual violence by their partner. This is **MORE THAN DOUBLE** the global average

25% of women were child brides, having married before age 18,
7% married before age 15



Less than **8%** of parliament seats are held by women.



There are **NO WOMEN** parliamentarians under age 40

There are gaps on connectivity:

89% of the wealthiest women

92% of the wealthiest men

55% of the poorest women

67% of the poorest men own a cellphone*



Roughly **1 in 3** people use basic sanitation services

2% of lower secondary schools lack single-sex basic sanitation facilities**

For women and girls, this means **UNSAFE AND UNHEALTHY** menstruation management



Less than 16% of households cook with clean fuels

Women in the richest households are

27 times

as likely as those in the poorest to use clean cooking fuels



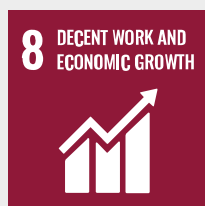
In the urban richest women are

30 times

as likely as those in the rural poorest*

*Insufficient data was available to generate a regional aggregate representative of at least half the countries in the region, or at least 50 per cent of the population. As such, these estimates should be interpreted with caution.

**Estimate includes Australia and New Zealand, as insufficient data was available to calculate an estimate for the Pacific alone.



84% OF WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES

65% OF MEN WITH DISABILITIES

ages 15 and above are outside the labour force



are not in education or employment



173 women die in childbirth for every 100,000 live births.



This is in part due to a lack of adequate infrastructure for pregnant women and new mothers

67% OF RURAL WOMEN

87% OF URBAN WOMEN give birth in health facilities



The **GINI INDEX** of

0.4 indicates income inequalities are moderate

Still, there are discrepancies: only

8.3% of people with severe disabilities receive disability cash benefits



Among the urban population

12% live in slums or informal settings

16% lack access to public transportation



34% OF WOMEN



19% OF MEN

feel unsafe walking alone in their neighborhood at night*



128 kg of food waste

1.7 kg of electronic waste

Tonnes of other litter

are generated per person per year

Among the people engaged in waste management in Kiribati, Samoa and Tonga,



23% OF WOMEN



29% OF MEN

have motorized vehicles



29% OF WOMEN



32% OF MEN

have protective equipment



Climate change affects women's unpaid domestic and care work burdens, food insecurity, mental health **MORE** than men's.



In response, NDC 3.0s are increasingly gender-responsive:

100% COVER GENDER EQUALITY

70% INCLUDE GENDER INDICATORS



62% of fish stocks are within biologically sustainable limits



Increases in temperature are reducing reef fish size

13% OF WOMEN

11% OF MEN

in Kiribati, Samoa and Tonga reduced their food intake as a result

MORE MEN THAN WOMEN

are able to change fishing locations to cope



Forest area dropped by **0.07%** between 2010 and 2020

To promote conservation,



to COP16 of the UNCCD were women



under age 15 receive physical or psychological punishment*. This affects their health later in life.



in the SDG database have at least one datapoint

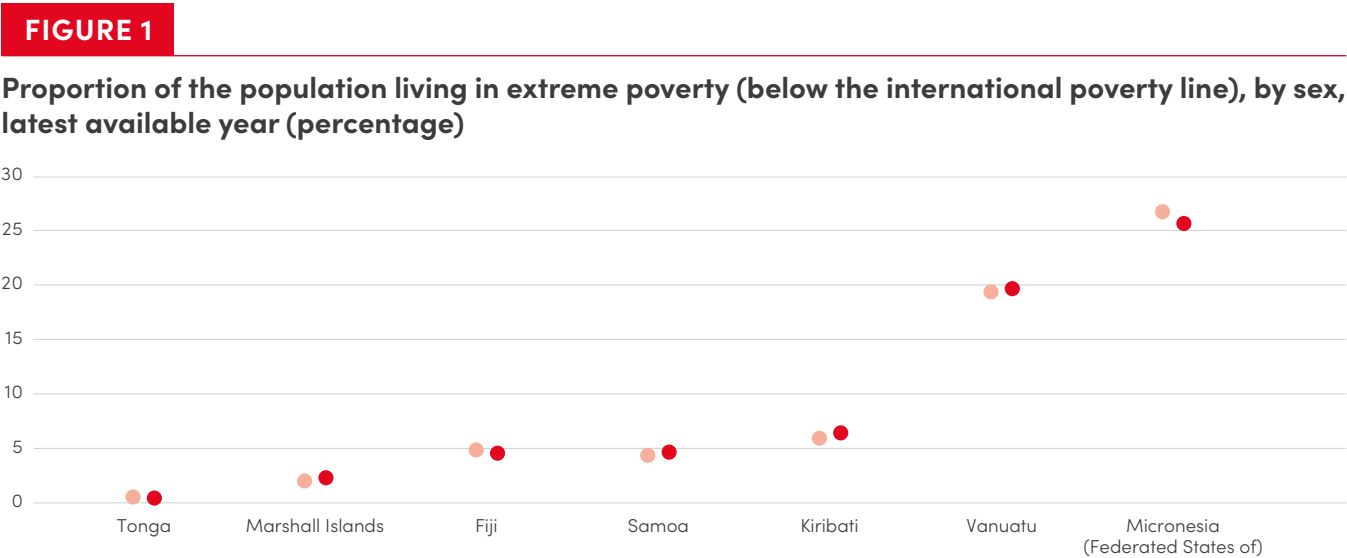
Globally, this figure stands at 58



WOMEN IN RURAL AREAS ARE THE MOST LIKELY TO LIVE IN EXTREME POVERTY.

Across the Pacific¹, women and girls are slightly likelier than men and boys to live below the international poverty line (figure 1). National poverty lines, however, provide further nuance and highlight that rural women are the population group, in almost every country, that is most likely to live in poverty (figure 2). Their challenges are compounded by the fact that rural women may encounter disproportionate barriers to access services, such as timely health care or adequate transportation, which may further diminish their likelihood of engaging in employment or accessing marketplaces to generate additional income. In addition, only 22 per cent of mothers with newborns in the Pacific receive maternity cash benefits, while only 4.2 per cent of households with children receive family grants or related cash benefits. This may worsen mothers’ vulnerability to fall into poverty, especially given that women are more likely than men to be in charge of caring for their children, and may not be able to engage in full time jobs, which could generate additional income.

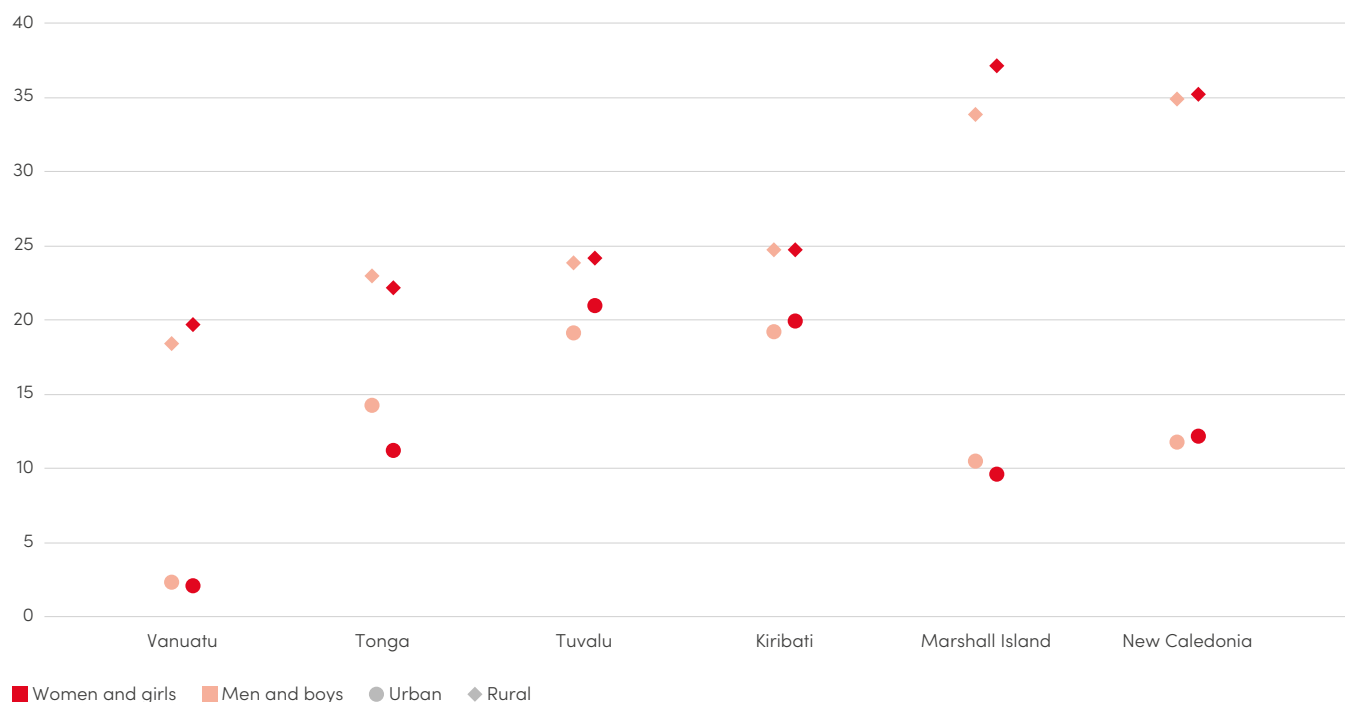
Relatedly, in the region, the share of employed population living in poverty is among the largest in the world: 23 per cent of younger people are employed but still live in poverty, compared to 21 per cent of adults (infographic 1). Women are slightly worse off than men on average (22 per cent of adult women, and 21 per cent of adult men work but live in poverty). For women living in rural areas, finding a job can be more challenging, and only 48 per cent of legal frameworks the Pacific in areas related to employment and economic benefits promote, enforce and monitor gender equality –the lowest percentage of any region of the world.



Source: United Nations Global SDG Indicators Database (Accessed 25 August 2025): Fiji (2021), Kiribati (2021), Marshall Islands (2021), Micronesia (Federated States of) (2013), Samoa (2013), Tonga (2021) and Vanuatu (2019). Data with the necessary disaggregation was unavailable for the remaining countries.

FIGURE 2

Proportion of the population living below national the poverty line by sex and location, latest available year (percentage)



Source: Pacific Community, HIES data, Vanuatu (2019), Tuvalu (2022), Tonga (2021), Marshall Island (2019), New Caledonia (2019). Data with the necessary disaggregation was unavailable for the remaining countries.

INFOGRAPHIC 1

Factors that may contribute to women's likelihood of living in poverty in the Pacific

Mothers with newborns



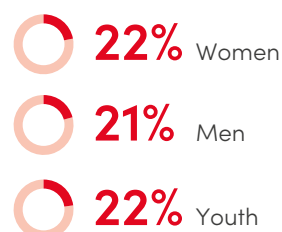
22% receive maternity cash benefits

Households with children



4.2% receive family grants

Employed population living in poverty



Legal frameworks in areas related to employment and economic benefits that promote gender equality



Source: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2025), *The Sustainable Development Goals Report: Statistical Annex*.

WHO IS LAGGING BEHIND?

Rural women

2

ZERO HUNGER



WOMEN’S NUTRITION MAY BE AT STAKE AS A RESULT OF CLIMATE CHANGE.

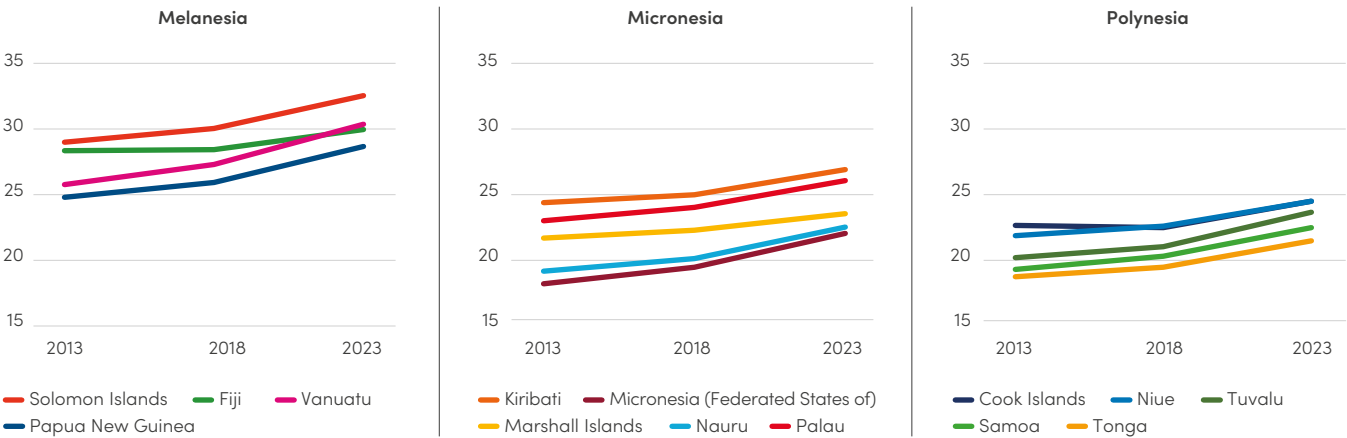
In 2023, 29 per cent of women in the Pacific experienced anaemia, a sign of malnutrition. Anaemia may be caused by low protein intake or related nutrient deficiencies (iron, vitamin B12, folate). While in some cases it may also be driven by injuries and chronic disease, food intake is a key driver globally. Worsening anaemia prevalence may point at either a reduction in overall food intake, or more likely a reduction in the nutritional value of the food eaten.

Across the region, anaemia prevalence rates have increased consistently over the past decade (figure 3). Changes in the availability of certain foods may be contributing to this trend, including changes triggered by climate change. When food is scarce, women are more likely than men to reduce their food intake to feed other household members.

In 2023, 52 per cent of people across the region were experiencing food insecurity. For people ages 15 and above, food insecurity rates were higher for women than for men in almost every country (figure 4). Unlike anaemia prevalence rates, food insecurity rates have followed a downward trend over the past decade, largely due to improvements in food production systems, overall reductions in poverty and various technological advancements, but climate change and other factors are slowing the rate of decline. In a worsening climate scenario, in which global temperatures continue to increase beyond the 1.5°C threshold, it is estimated that as many as 124,000 women ages 15 and above in the Pacific will be pushed into food insecurity by 2030, compared to 102,000 men.² The impacts on food insecurity are larger for women and girls in almost every country (figures 5 and 6).

FIGURE 3

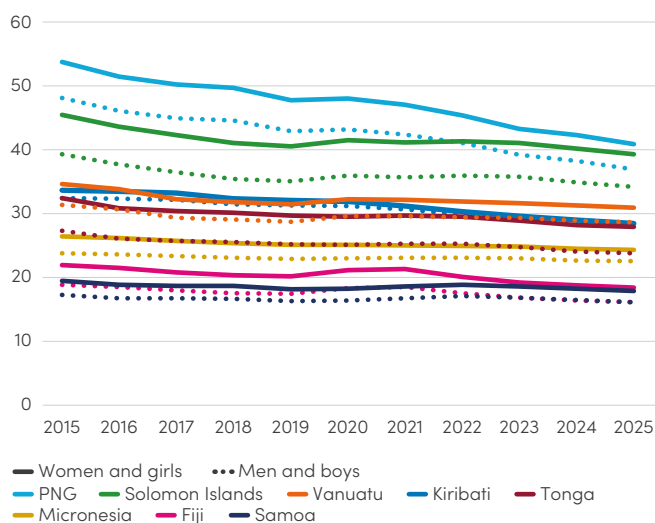
Prevalence of anaemia in non-pregnant women ages 15–49 years by sub-region (percentage)



Note: Under SDG 2.2.3 non-pregnant women aged 15–49 years are considered to have anaemia if they have a haemoglobin concentration less than 120 g/L, adjusted for altitude and smoking.
Source: WHO/NMH/NHD/MNM/11.1, available at United Nations [Global SDG Indicators Database](#) (Accessed 15 September 2025).

FIGURE 4

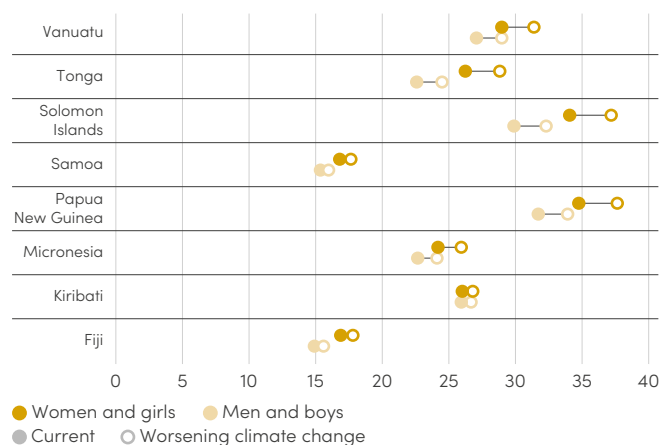
Proportion of the population ages 15 and above experiencing food insecurity, by sex (percentage)



Source: UN Women and Pardee Center for International Futures (2023). Gendered analysis of the impact of climate change on poverty, productivity and food insecurity: A technical report.

FIGURE 5

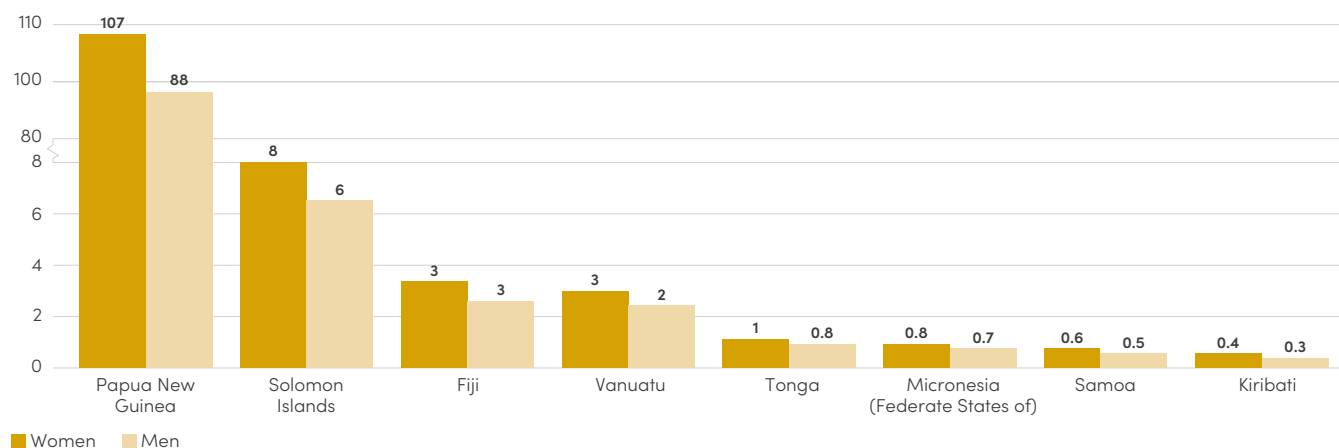
Proportion of the population ages 15 and above experiencing food insecurity; current path (leftmost marker) vs. worsening climate change (rightmost marker), by sex (percentage)



Source: UN Women and Pardee Center for International Futures, 2023, Gender analysis of the impact of climate change on poverty, productivity and food insecurity: A technical report. A worsening climate change scenario considers increases in global temperatures that surpass current trends.

FIGURE 6

Number of people ages 15 and above projected to be pushed into food insecurity by 2030 as a result of worsening climate change, by sex (thousands)



Note: A worsening climate change scenario considers increases in global temperatures that surpass current trends.

Source: UN Women and Pardee Center for International Futures (2023). Gendered analysis of the impact of climate change on poverty, productivity and food insecurity: A technical report.

WHO IS LAGGING BEHIND?

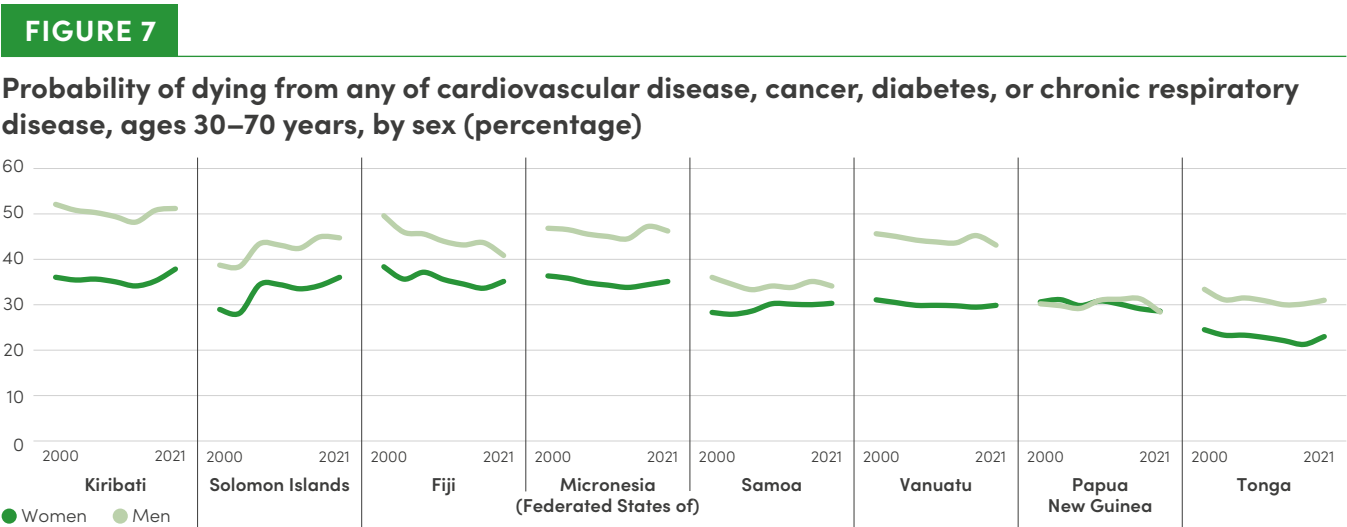
Women living in areas most affected by climate change



UNHEALTHY HABITS WORSEN THE HEALTH OF MANY PACIFIC ISLANDERS. WOMEN OLDER THAN 30 ARE CONSIDERABLY AT RISK OF SUFFERING OBESITY.

In the Pacific, the probability of dying between ages 30 and 70 as a result of key non-communicable diseases, such as cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes and chronic respiratory disease, stands at 31 per cent³. Many of these deaths are preventable, as they are highly influenced by diet, physical activity, habits, and other lifestyle factors. The overall gender gap for the region as a whole is small, with women having a 30 per cent chance of dying prematurely compared to 32 per cent in the case of men, but the size of the gaps varies across countries (figure 7). Differences in women’s and men’s lifestyle shape the distribution of risks. For example, in all countries in the Pacific, men are more likely than women to consume tobacco daily: in the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia, the gap between men and women who smoke daily exceeds 40 percentage points (figure 8). This has direct impacts on respiratory and cardiovascular disease, and some types of cancers, for instance, and contributes to men’s higher likelihood of dying early. Gender roles also influence physical activity: men are more likely to engage in physically demanding work such as fishing and farming, while women more often stay home for childcare and domestic tasks. With the exception of Niue, where the gender gaps are very small, women are more inactive than men in all countries (figure 9).

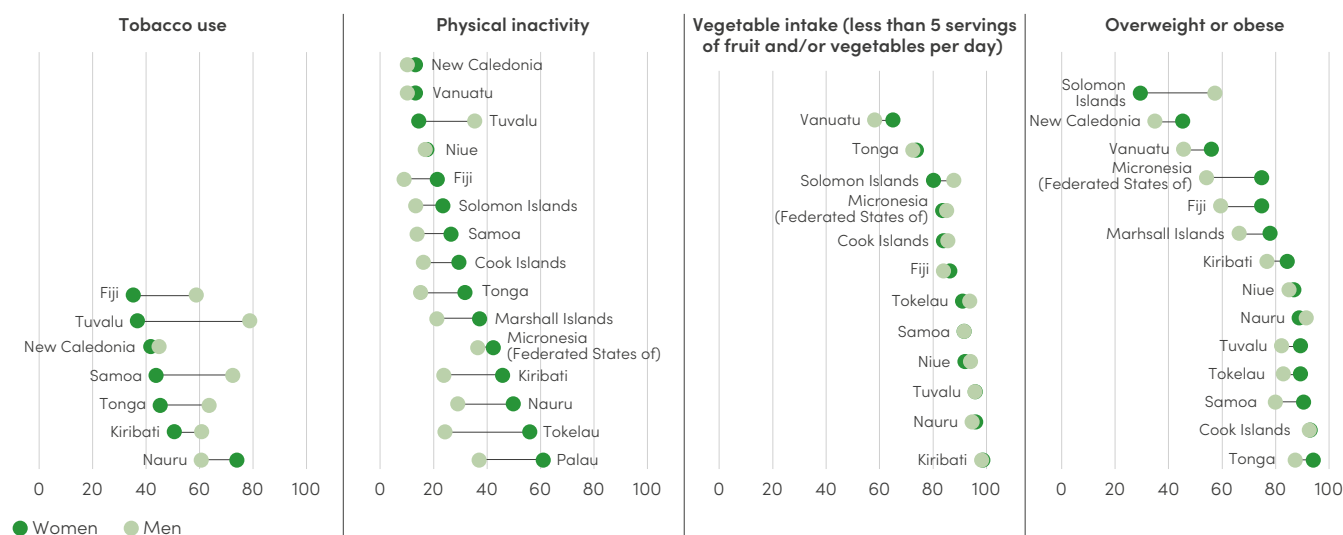
Dietary patterns across the Pacific show fewer differences between women and men, as meals are often shared within families and with neighbours. The diets of both women and men are inadequate in most cases, however, with more than 80 per cent of the population eating fewer than five servings of fruits and/or vegetables per day in all countries except for Tonga and Vanuatu. Higher intake of fruits and vegetables could help decrease the risk of chronic diseases such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes and some cancers. Obesity rates in the Pacific are among the world’s highest and affect women disproportionately, largely driven by diets and reduced opportunities for physical activity beyond domestic responsibilities. Addressing these issues at a young age is essential to prevent negative long-term effects. Data shows that, across countries, women’s obesity rates tend to increase up to age 30 and remain high thereafter, while rates of inactivity do so between the ages 30 and 40 (figure 9). Promoting healthier habits during childhood may prevent some of the negative effects of obesity and cardiovascular disease later in life.



Source: [SDG Global database](#) (Accessed 19 September 2025).

FIGURE 8

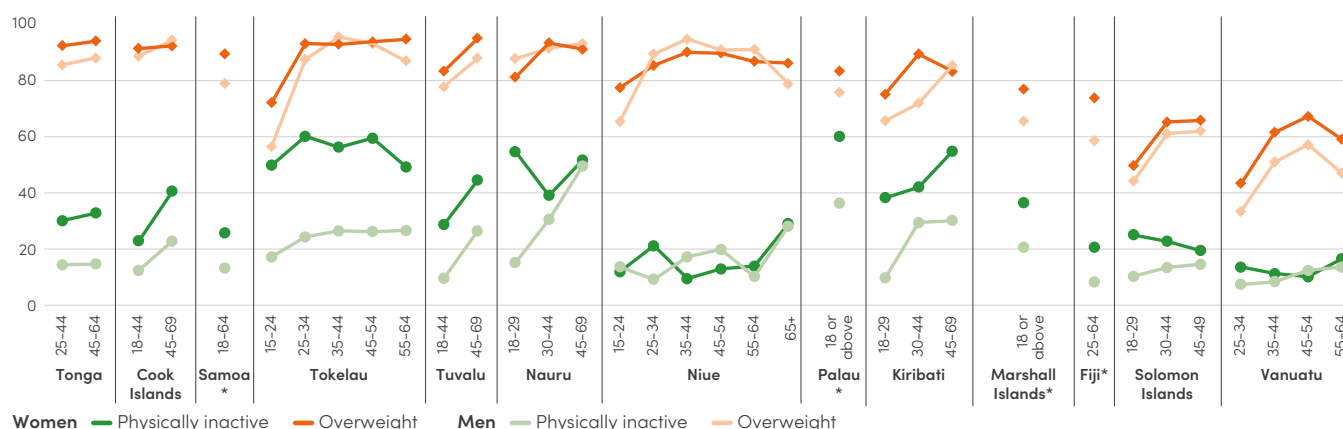
Prevalence of health-related lifestyle factors: Proportion of people (a) who smoke tobacco daily, (b) with insufficient physical activity, (c) who eat less than 5 servings of fruit and/or vegetables on average per day, (d) who are overweight or obese, latest available year (percentage)



Source: WHO (n.d.). Noncommunicable Disease Surveillance, Monitoring and Reporting: Cook Islands (2022), Fiji (2011), Kiribati (2016), Marshall Islands (2018), Micronesia (Federated States of) (2016), Niue (2011), Palau (2017), Samoa (2013), Solomon Islands (2015), Tonga (2014), Tokelau (2005), Tuvalu (2015), Vanuatu (2011) (Accessed 15 August 2025). Data for tobacco use extracted from Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys: Fiji MICS6 (2021), Kiribati MICS6 (2018–2019), Nauru MICS6 (2023), Samoa MICS6 (2025), Tonga MICS6 (2024), Tuvalu MICS6 (2019–2020). Steps survey health barometer, New Caledonia (2021–2022).

FIGURE 9

Proportion of people who are physically inactive and/or overweight, by age and sex, latest available year (percentage)



Note: (*) Age disaggregated data is not available. Source: WHO (n.d.). Noncommunicable Disease Surveillance, Monitoring and Reporting: Cook Islands (2011), Fiji (2011), Kiribati (2016), Marshall Islands (2018), Nauru (2015–2016), Niue (2011), Palau (2017), Samoa (2014), Solomon Islands (2015), Tokelau (2005), Tonga (2014), Tuvalu (2015), Vanuatu (2011) (Accessed 19 September 2025).

WHO IS LAGGING BEHIND?
Women 30 years and older

4 QUALITY EDUCATION



WOMEN COMPLETE HIGHER LEVELS OF EDUCATION, BUT MEN STILL HOLD MOST HIGHER-PAY JOBS.

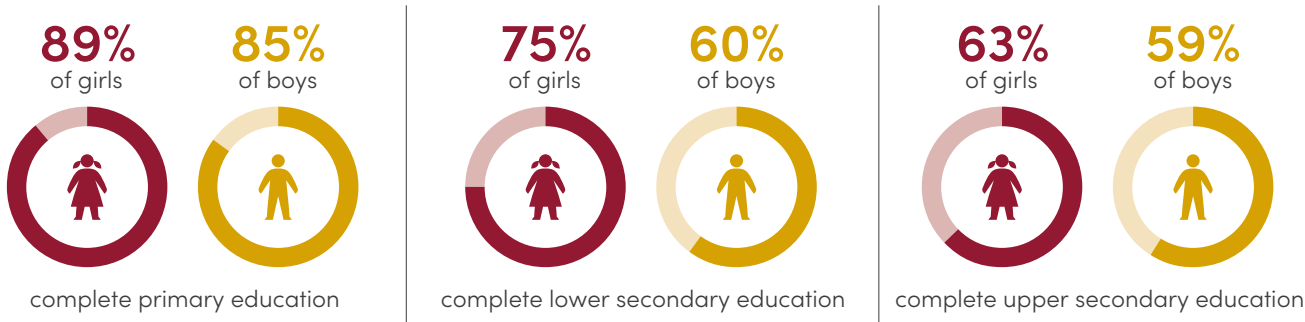
Across the Pacific, girls are more likely than boys to complete higher levels of education: while as many as 75 per cent of girls complete lower secondary education, only 70 per cent of boys do. A similar gap exists for upper secondary, with 63 per cent of girls and 59 per cent of boys completing this level of schooling (Infographic 2)⁴. Living in cities and therefore near education facilities plays an important role in ensuring access to education: people living in urban areas across the region are more likely than those in rural locations to complete higher levels of education. Women living in urban areas are generally the most likely group to complete upper secondary school (figure 10).

Completing higher levels of education correlates with better access to employment opportunities later in life, but education alone is not the only driver. Other factors may be hindering women’s equal access to higher-pay jobs: employment data shows that women in managerial positions are more likely to have tertiary education compared to men in similar roles. This may suggest that women are expected to meet higher requirements, including educational thresholds, to access managerial occupations. For clerical jobs as well, women in general are better educated than men (figure 11).

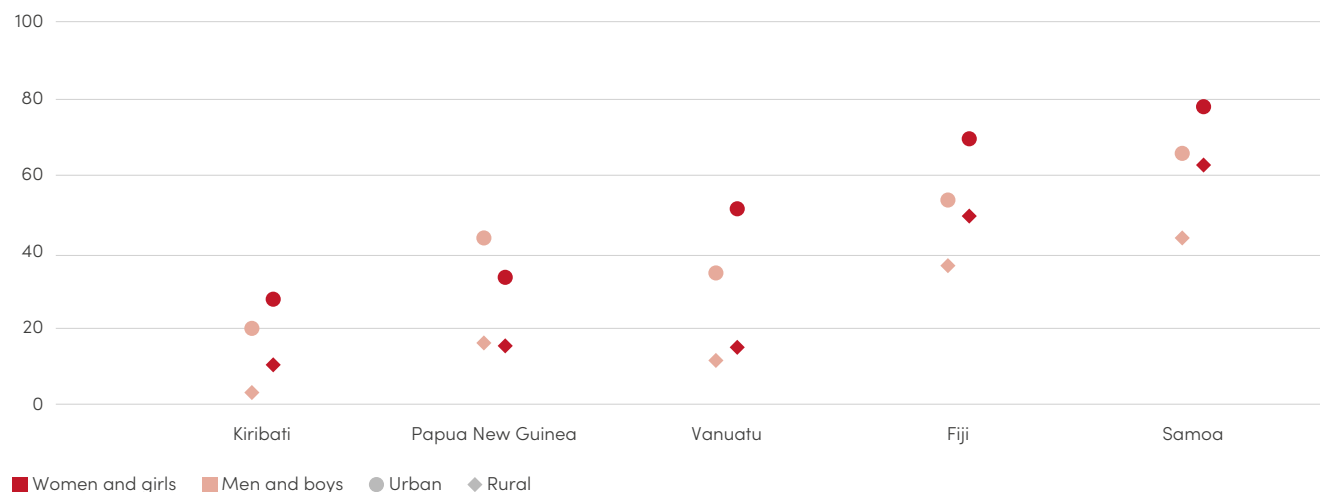
Social norms play an important part on the types of jobs women apply for and hold. As a result, skilled jobs, such as those that demand highly specialized training (doctors, plumbers, electricians, architects, etc.), are dominated by men in the Pacific, partly because women opt out of fields that do not offer sufficient work-life balance to deal with domestic tasks, and partly because gendered stereotypes influence career choices and work environments, prompting many women who enter these sectors to eventually leave⁵.

INFOGRAPHIC 2

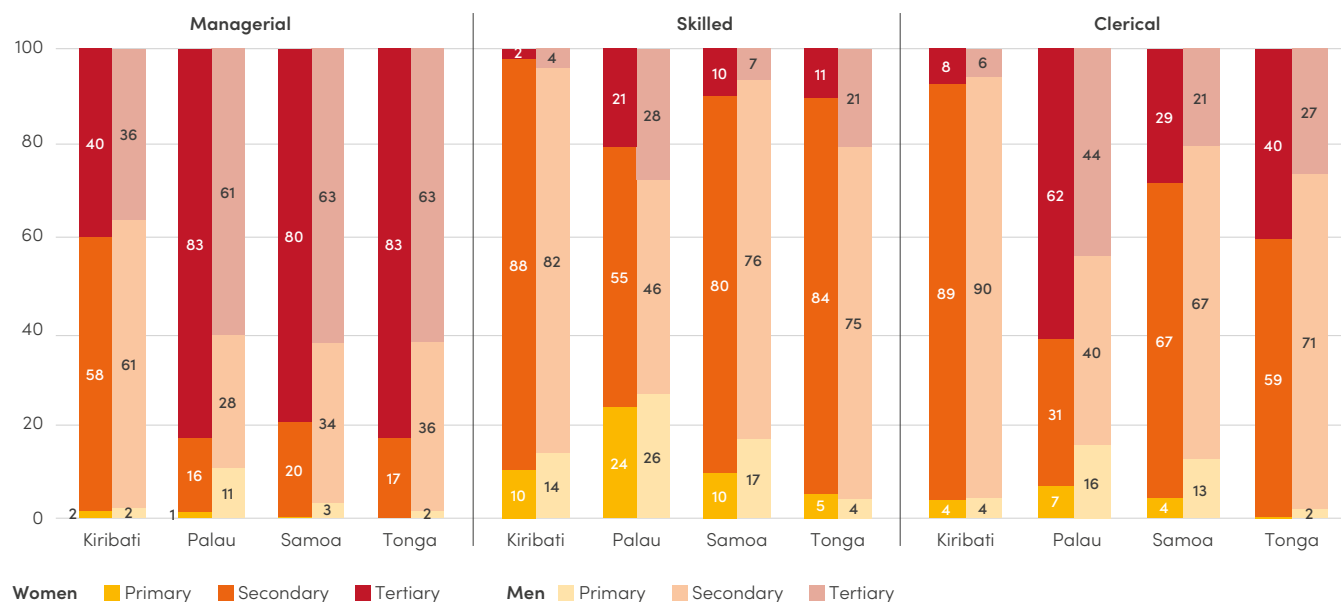
Education completion rates in the Pacific in 2024



Note: Regional aggregates include Australia and New Zealand. Source: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2025), [The Sustainable Development Goals Report: Statistical Annex](#)

FIGURE 10**Upper secondary school completion rates by sex, location, latest available year (percentage)**

Source: United Nations Global SDG Indicators Database (Accessed 24 August 2025): Fiji (2021), Kiribati (2018), Papua New Guinea (2022), Samoa (2019), Vanuatu (2023).

FIGURE 11**Educational attainment of women and men in different occupations (percentage)**

Source: Tonga HIES (2021), Kiribati HIES (2023), Palau HIES (2023), Samoa HIES (2023).

WHO IS LAGGING BEHIND?

Rural boys in education, and women in skilled employment

5
GENDER EQUALITY

ALTHOUGH PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE FOR SOME TARGETS OF GOAL 5, MANY REMAIN OUT OF REACH IN THE PACIFIC.

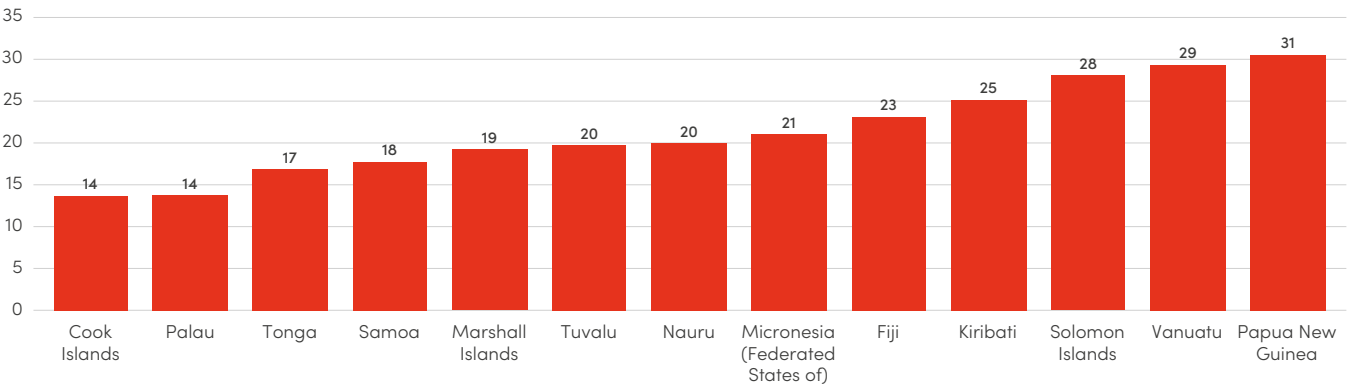
(SDG 5.2.) Violence against women remains a major crisis across the region, with many people justifying violent behaviour

Violence against women remains worryingly high in the Pacific, with almost 29 per cent of women suffering from physical or sexual violence at the hands of their intimate partner in the past 12 months.⁶ The rate in the Pacific more than doubles the global average of 12.5 per cent and signals the importance of tackling this regional health and safety crisis. Many women survivors of violence experience debilitating long-term health effects, ranging from chronic pain and digestive issues, to depression, post-traumatic stress disorder and suicidal tendencies. Women who experience intimate partner violence may also have behavioural issues such as substance abuse, eating disorders, and harm to children, among many others.⁷ As a result, the health and economic costs of intimate partner violence are substantial, including lost wages and productivity and demands on health care, social services and the justice system.

Legal protections are strengthening across the Pacific, yet implementation remains uneven and community acceptance and impunity continue to enable violence.⁸ Across the region, both women and men consider wife beating to be justified if women neglect their children, argue with their husbands, and go out without telling their husbands (figure 13). This is especially true in rural areas, where wife beating is more commonly justified compared to urban areas (figure 14). To address this crisis it is essential to shift social norms to change these mindsets, especially as evidence suggests that the risk of violence may increase during crises such as disasters, political unrest and mobility restrictions,⁹ many of which are increasingly affecting the Pacific and putting women, their children and families in harm’s way.

FIGURE 12

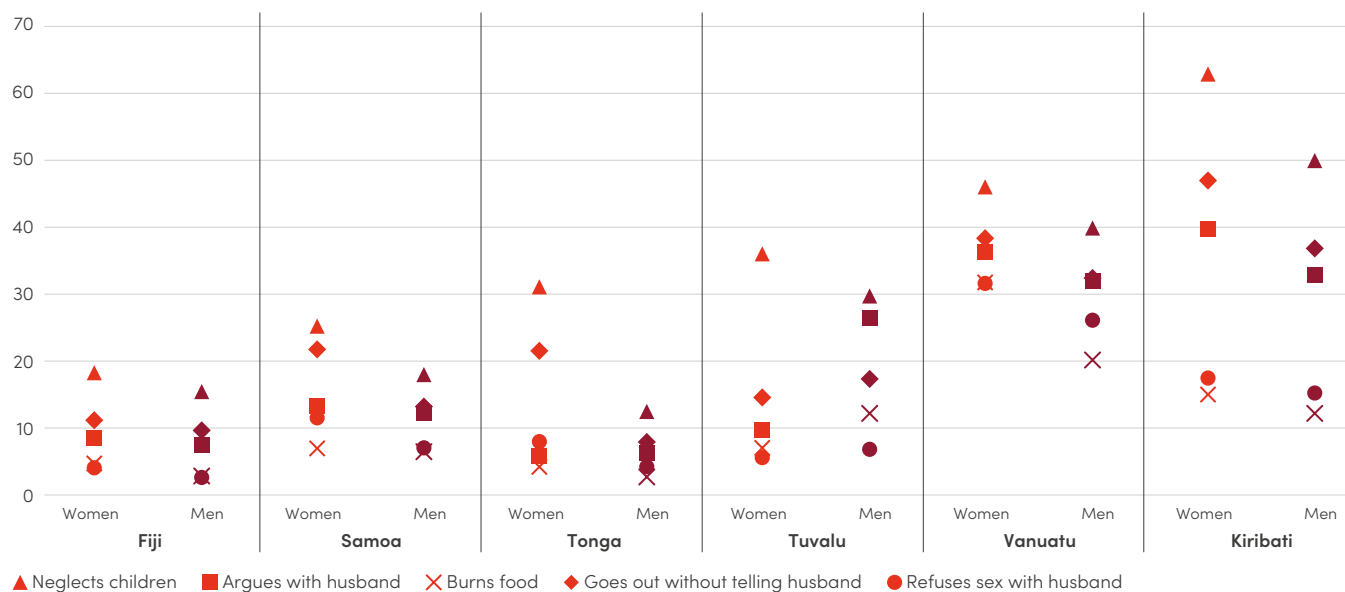
Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls ages 15–49 subjected to physical and/or sexual violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months (percentage)



Source: United Nations Global SDG Indicators Database (2018). (Accessed 12 August 2025).
 Note: New global and regional estimates on this indicator are scheduled for release on 19 November based on national prevalence surveys harmonized for comparability. As these estimates were not harmonized at the time of this report, additional information can be found at [here](#).

FIGURE 13

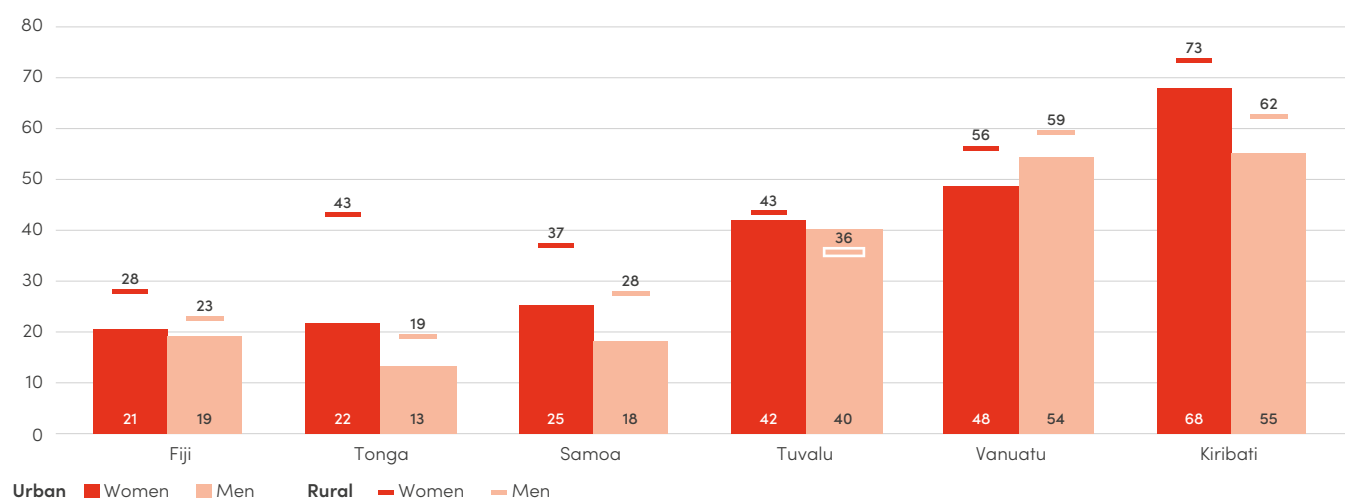
Proportion of population ages 15–49 that believes a husband is justified in beating his wife, by sex and reason (percentage)



Source: Fiji MICS (2018–19), Kiribati MICS (2018–19), Samoa MICS (2019–2020), Tuvalu MICS (2019–20), Tonga MICS (2019), Vanuatu MICS (2023).

FIGURE 14

Proportion of population ages 15–49 that believes a husband is justified in beating his wife for any 1 reason, by sex and location, latest available year (percentage)



Source: Fiji MICS (2018–19), Kiribati MICS (2018–19), Samoa MICS (2019–2020), Tuvalu MICS (2019–20), Tonga MICS (2019), Vanuatu MICS (2023).

WHO IS LAGGING BEHIND?

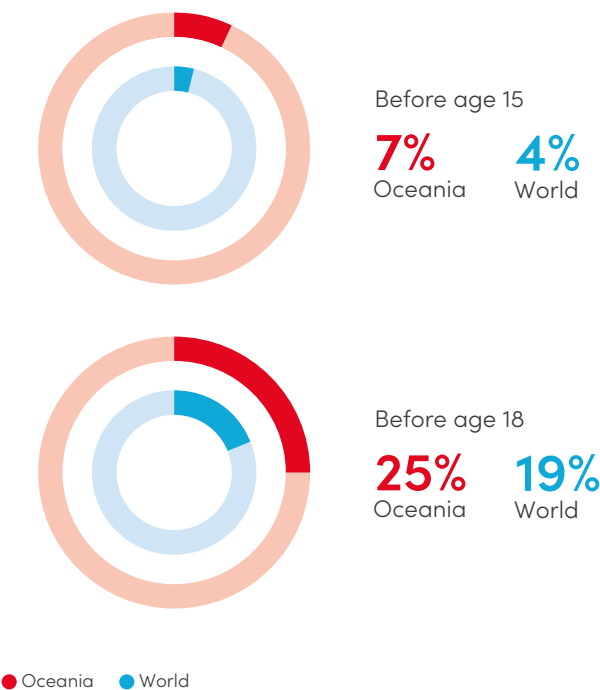
Rural women

(SDG 5.3.) Child marriage rates remain high, especially among those with lower levels of education

Child marriage remains a pressing issue in the Pacific. Around 25 per cent of women aged 20–24 were married before the age of 18, and 7 per cent were married before the age of 15 (figures 15 and 16). These figures are substantially higher than the global average of 19 per cent and 4 per cent, respectively. Marrying before adulthood carries significant health, safety, economic and other consequences. For instance, evidence shows that young brides are more likely to drop out of school (figure 17), have children early, and attain lower paid jobs later in life. A correlation also exists between early marriage and higher prevalence of intimate partner violence¹⁰.

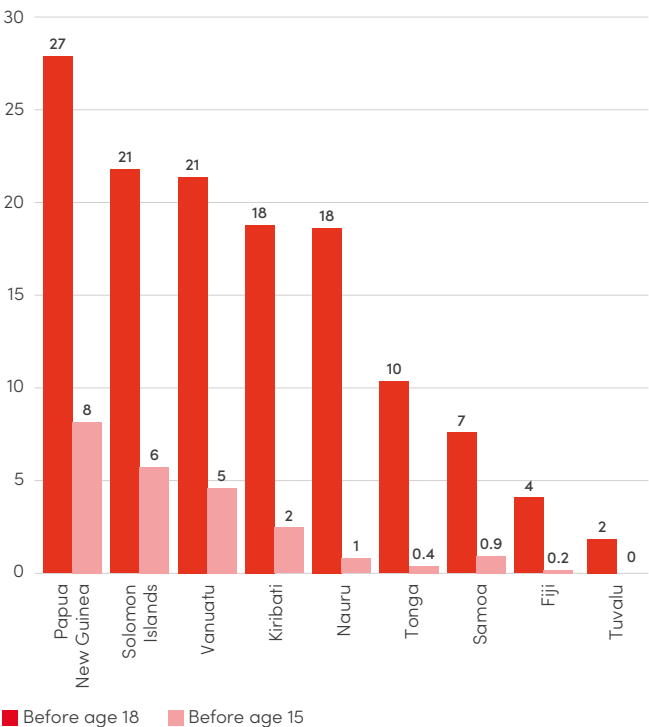
Child marriage rates differ substantially across countries and territories: while in Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu more than 20 per cent of girls were child brides, in Fiji and Tuvalu, this share remains below 5 per cent. These differences are substantially driven, among other factors, by social norms and traditions, which also explain why women in the Pacific are more likely to marry before age 18 in rural areas than in urban areas. In various countries, educational attainment of key family members remains a protective factor: women born to parents with higher educational attainment are less likely to marry as children, compared to other women. Similarly, men that are more educated are less likely to marry a child (figure 18).

FIGURE 15
Proportion of women in the Pacific aged 20–24 who were married or in a union before age 15 or 18, 2025 (percentage)



Source: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2025), *The Sustainable Development Goals Report: Statistical Annex*.

FIGURE 16
Proportion of women aged 20–24 who were married or in a union before age 15 or age 18, latest available year (percentage)

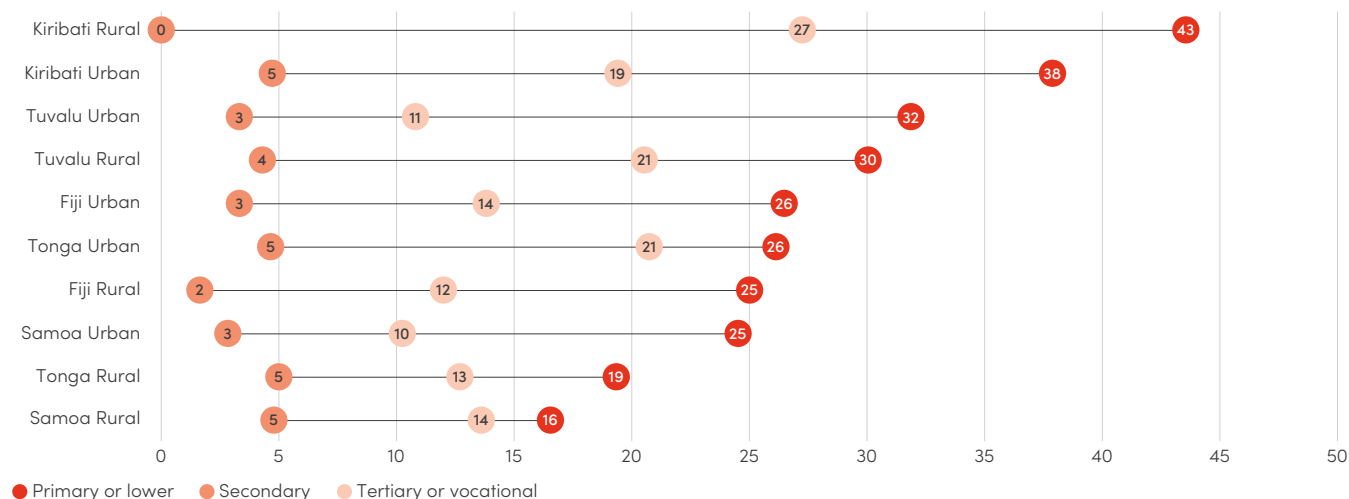


Source: *SDG Global Database* (Accessed 16 September 2025).

Note: Data from the Marshall Islands has been omitted as no estimates were available after 2015.

FIGURE 17

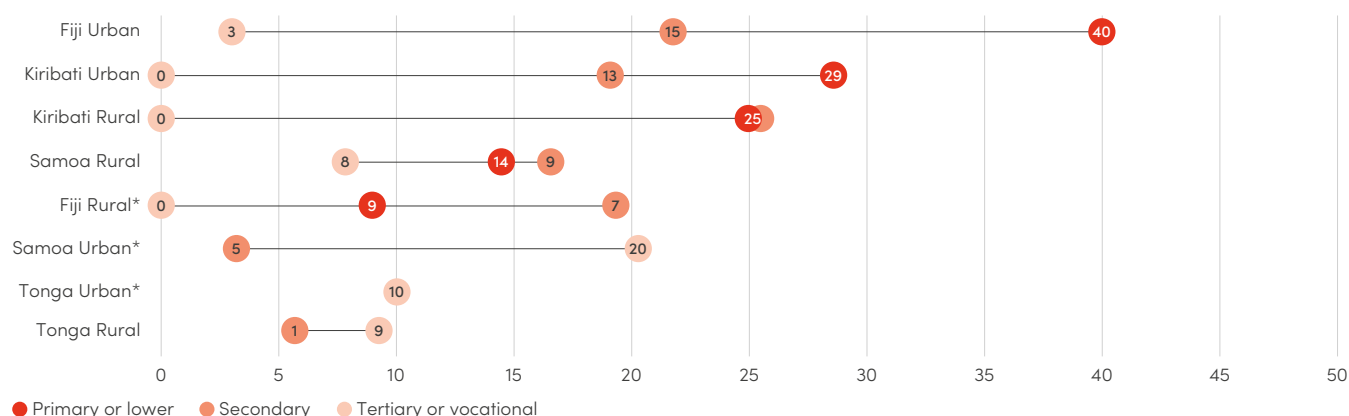
Proportion of women ages 25–49 who were married or in a union before age 18, by location and educational attainment, latest available year (percentage)



Note: For Tonga, “secondary” refers to lower secondary education, while “tertiary or vocational” corresponds to upper secondary education. Source: Fiji MICS6 (2021), Kiribati MICS6 (2018–2019), Samoa MICS6 (2025), Tonga MICS6 (2024), Tuvalu MICS6 (2019–2020). Data from the Marshall Islands has been omitted as no estimates were available after 2015.

FIGURE 18

Proportion of women ages 25–49 who were married or in a union before age 18, by location and household head’s educational attainment, latest available year, (percentage)



(*) Survey samples include fewer than 100 observations for child marriage in rural Fiji, urban Samoa and urban Tonga; therefore estimates should be interpreted with caution. Values for those who only completed primary education in Samoa (urban) and Tonga (urban and rural), as well as for those who only completed secondary education in urban Tonga, have been omitted because the number of observations was too small. As there were fewer than 50 observations for child marriage in Tuvalu; the country is not shown in the figure. For Tonga, “secondary” refers to lower secondary education, while “tertiary or vocational” corresponds to upper secondary education. The analysis links each woman’s record to household characteristics from the household listing file. Education level is derived from the household head rather than the woman’s partner because the MICS does not provide identifiers to link individual women with their specific spouses within the household. The household head’s education level was therefore used as a proxy measure. Source: Fiji MICS6 (2021), Kiribati MICS6 (2018–2019), Samoa MICS6 (2025), Tonga MICS6 (2024), Tuvalu MICS6 (2019–2020).

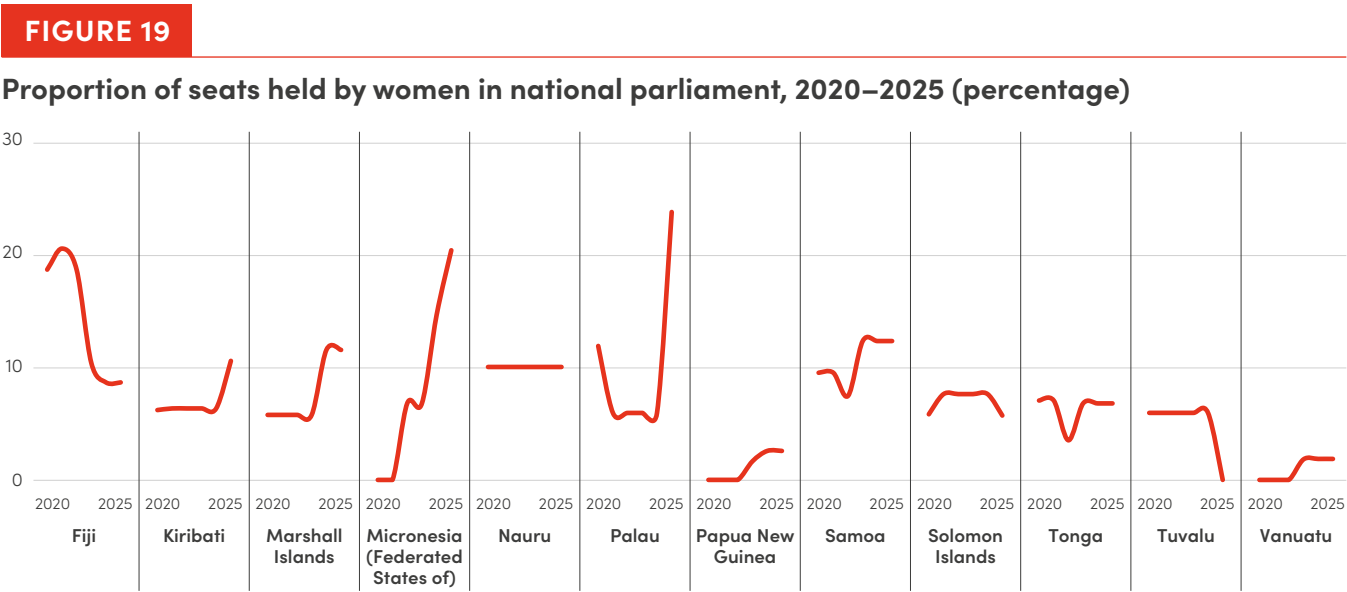
WHO IS LAGGING BEHIND?

Rural women and women in low education contexts

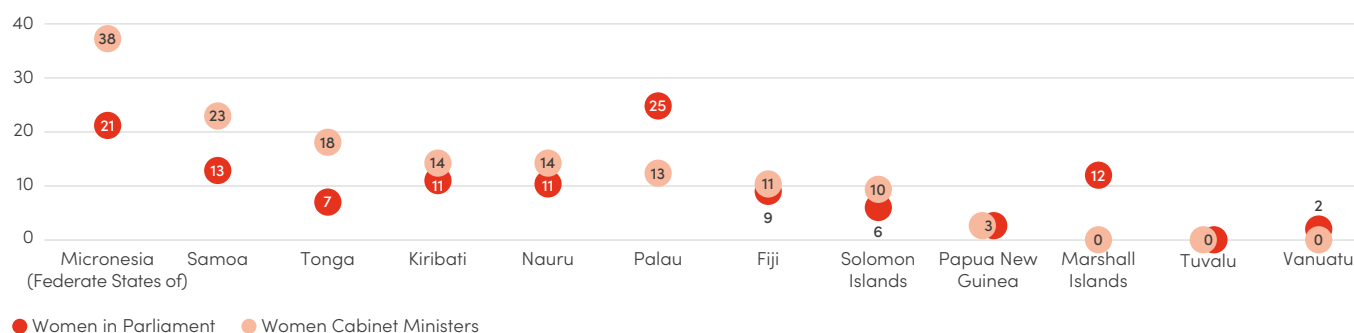
(SDG 5.5.) Women’s representation in Pacific parliaments remains world’s lowest, but some countries are making substantial progress

Over the past five years, substantial progress has been made in the Pacific on women’s representation in politics. In the Federated States of Micronesia and Palau, where the share of national parliament seats held by women was previously low, representation has increased by more than 10 percentage points in recent years – the two countries are now ahead of most others in the region in this regard (figure 19). These shifts reflect a growing commitment to inclusive leadership and can pave the way for more inclusive representation in future elections. The Marshall Islands and Samoa stand out for having women serving as Head of State and Head of Government. Similarly, in New Caledonia and French Polynesia, women’s participation in political life has almost reached parity (in the latter, women held 49 per cent of parliament seats in 2023). However, at 7.93 per cent on average, the share of parliament seats held by women in the Pacific remains the lowest in the world. There are differences across countries and territories: in the Federated States of Micronesia, for instance, women make up 38 per cent of Cabinet members and 21 per cent of parliament members (figure 20). In contrast, in Marshall Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu, none of the current Cabinet members are women. Across all countries, younger women are substantially less likely to be represented in parliaments or chambers: per the latest available data, no members of parliament are women under age 40, and only two per cent are women ages 41–50 (figure 21).

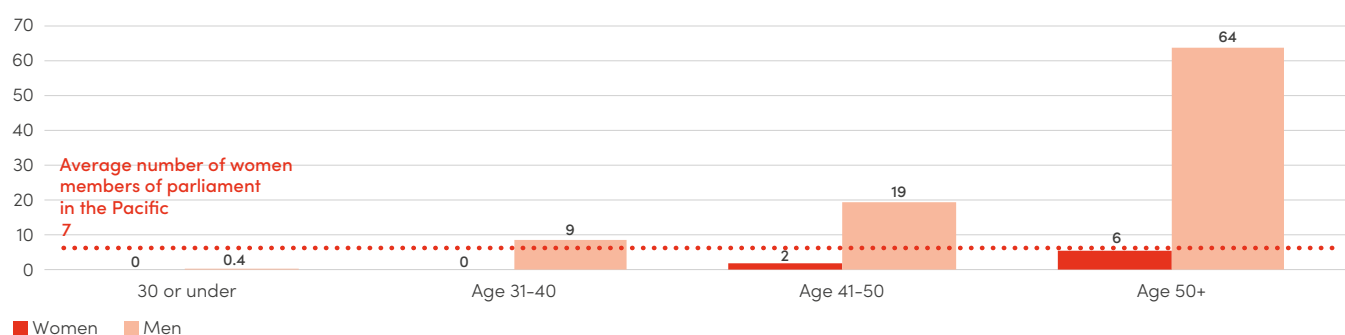
In local governments, women’s presence is more widespread. Holding 23 per cent of elected seats in deliberative bodies, allows more women to contribute to shaping local policies, although the Pacific (excluding Australia and New Zealand) is, again, the world’s region that sees the lowest representation. Promoting women’s participation in politics, both at the local and national level, could promote more inclusive governance systems, and the implementation of solutions that are better reflective of women’s and men’s needs.



Source: [SDG Global Database](#) (Accessed 25 August 2025).

FIGURE 20**Proportion of Cabinet members that are women, and proportion of parliament seats held by women, 2025 (percentage)**

Source: IPU (2025). *Women in Politics: 2025* (Accessed 16 September 2025).

FIGURE 21**Proportion of current members of parliament or chamber in the Pacific, by sex and age, latest available year (percentage)**

Source: IPU (2025). IPU Parline: Global data on national parliaments (Accessed 29 September 2025). Data from Fiji Parliament (2022) FMS Congress (2025), Nauru Parliament (2022), Papua New Guinea National Parliament (2022), Palau Senate (2025), Solomon Islands National Parliament (2024), Tonga Legislative Assembly (2021).

WHO IS LAGGING BEHIND?**Younger women****(SDG 5.b.1.) Despite recent gains in connectivity, poorer women face barriers to stay connected**

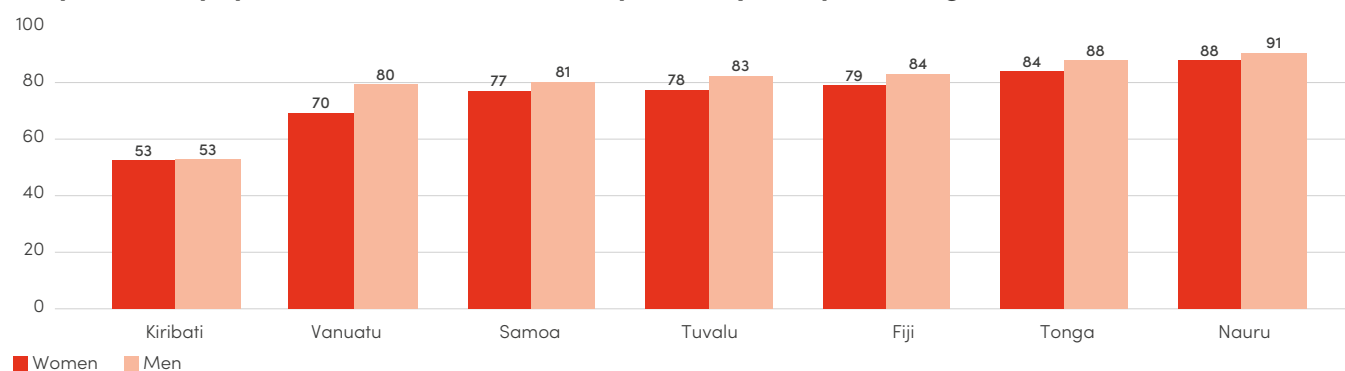
In almost all countries in the region, men are more likely than women to own mobile telephones (figure 22). The ownership and use of cell phones, and especially smartphones, enhances people's agency and enables men and women to access early warning information to prepare for environmental hazards, phone-based banking and finance, and information about public services and how to benefit from them. Poorer women across countries are, in general, less likely than wealthier women to own mobile phones (figure 23). This gap can impact their connectivity and access to opportunities, including job and safety notifications that could help them enhance their income opportunities.

Besides limited phone ownership, affordability of phone data and slower Internet speeds are an added challenge in some Pacific countries, where there is limited access to subsea cables and other telecommunications infrastructure, resulting in higher costs. Yet, for those who can afford cell phones and data packages, phone use is frequent. Women owners use phones more often than men overall. For instance, in Kiribati, Nauru, Samoa and Vanuatu, women owners are substantially more likely than men to note they use their phones almost every day (figure 24). The same is true for use of the Internet more broadly, whether on phones, computers or other platforms: in five of the seven countries with available data, women are more likely than men to use the Internet almost every day (figure 25).

To promote better connectivity and accessibility to information, investing in telecommunications infrastructure remains essential. While most people across the region are covered by a 2G network or faster (voice, SMS, and non-broadband data services) and coverage has risen from 89.3 per cent in 2015 to 91 per cent in 2024; coverage by 3G (broadband-capable services) and 4G/LTE networks (high-speed mobile broadband) remains significantly lower (figure 26). This means that while most people live within range of some level of connectivity, far fewer can access the faster networks that enable Internet-based services, e-learning, financial inclusion, or digital participation.

FIGURE 22

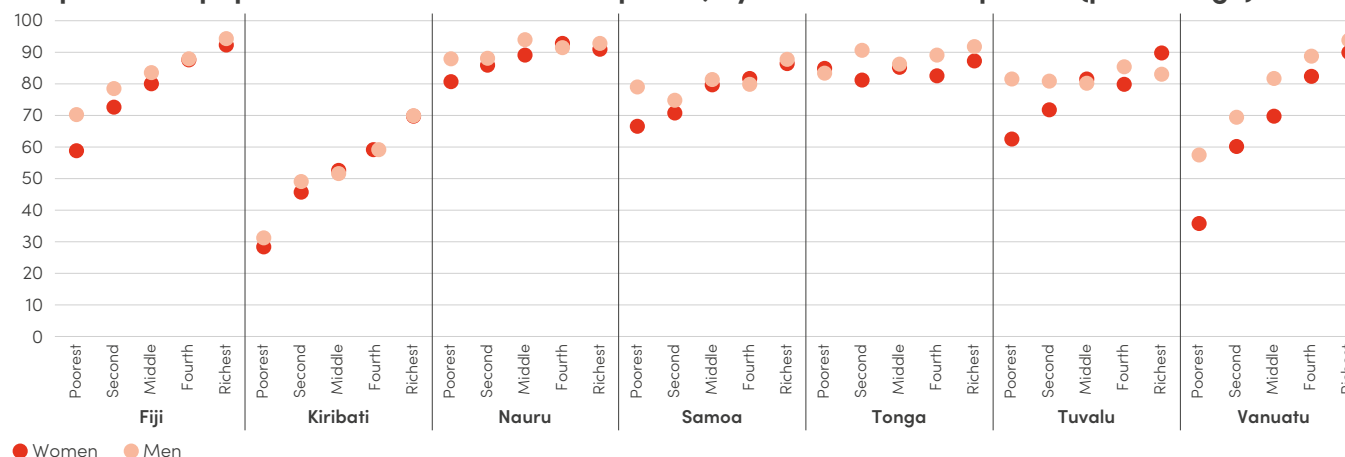
Proportion of population who owns a mobile phone, by sex (percentage)



Source: Fiji MICS (2018–19), Kiribati MICS (2018–19), Samoa MICS (2019–2020), Tuvalu MICS (2019–20), Tonga MICS (2019), Vanuatu MICS (2023).

FIGURE 23

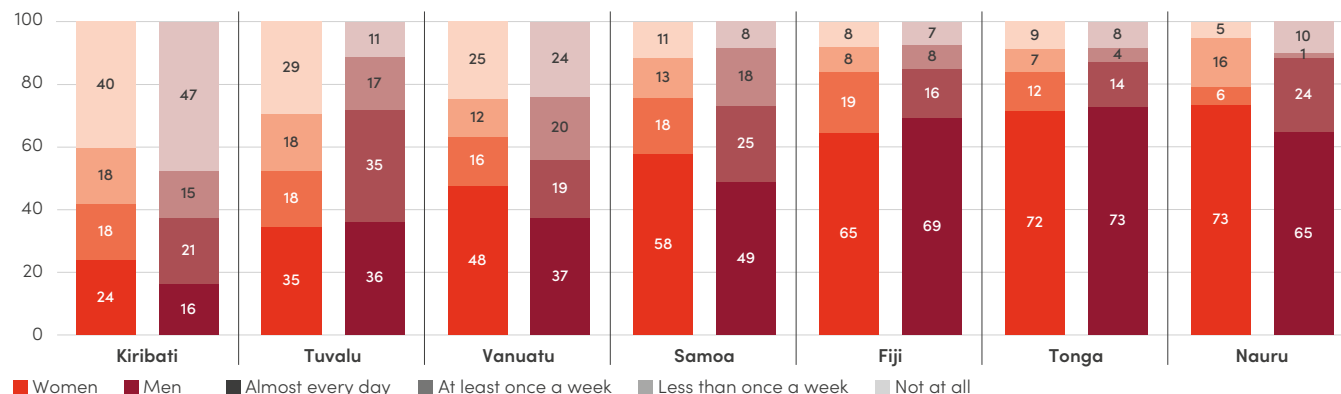
Proportion of population who owns a mobile phone, by sex and wealth quintile (percentage)



Source: Fiji MICS (2018–19), Kiribati MICS (2018–19), Samoa MICS (2019–2020), Tuvalu MICS (2019–20), Tonga MICS (2019), Vanuatu MICS (2023).

FIGURE 24

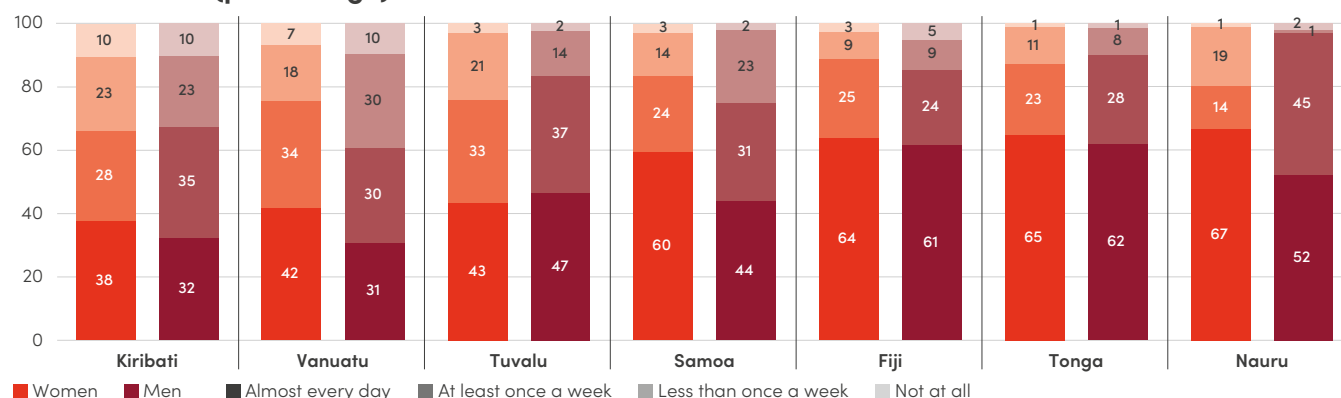
Proportion of population ages 15–49 who used a mobile phone in the past three months, by frequency of use and sex (percentage)



Source: Fiji MICS (2018–19), Kiribati MICS (2018–19), Samoa MICS (2019–2020), Tuvalu MICS (2019–20), Tonga MICS (2019), Vanuatu MICS (2023).

FIGURE 25

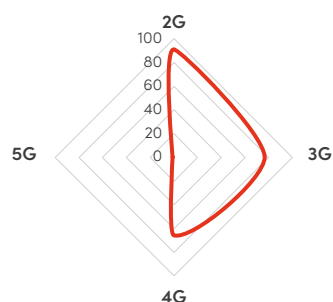
Proportion of population ages 15–49 who used the Internet in the past three months, by frequency of use and sex (percentage)



Source: Fiji MICS (2018–19), Kiribati MICS (2018–19), Samoa MICS (2019–2020), Tuvalu MICS (2019–20), Tonga MICS (2019), Vanuatu MICS (2023).

FIGURE 26

Proportion of the Pacific population covered by a mobile network, by type of network (2G, 3G, 4G, 5G), 2024 (percentage)



Source: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2025). *The Sustainable Development Goals Report: Statistical Annex*.

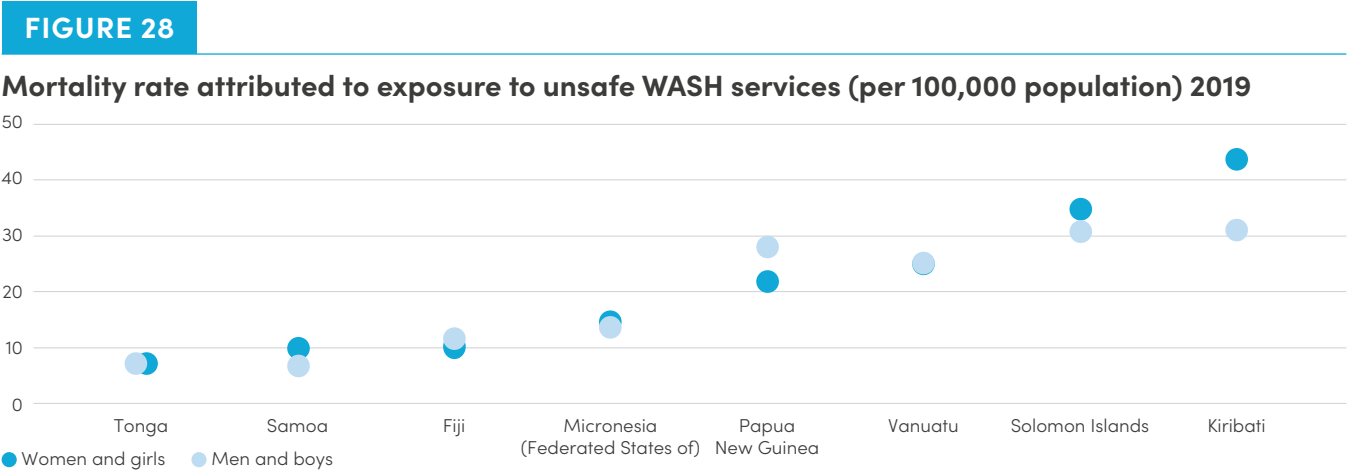
WHO IS LAGGING BEHIND?
Poorer women



CLEAN DRINKING WATER AND SANITATION ARE STILL LACKING IN RURAL AREAS, IMPACTING HEALTH AND EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS.

Approximately two in every three people in the Pacific (63 per cent) use basic drinking water services, meaning they benefit from improved water sources located in or near their homes. But substantial differences in access to clean water still exist between and within countries. While only 54 per cent of households in rural areas across the region have access to basic drinking water services, as many as 90 per cent of urban homes do. The challenges are even more pronounced when it comes to accessing basic sanitation services: only 36 per cent of people have access. The urban/rural divide is, again, substantial, with only 26 per cent of rural households benefiting from basic sanitation services, compared to 65 per cent in urban settings.¹¹ Barriers to accessing basic sanitation include lack of infrastructure in the dwelling location, which may be missing in some rural settings, as well as affordability. Across the Pacific, richer households are substantially more likely than poorer households to have access to basic sanitation facilities, both in urban and rural areas. Overall, the sanitation infrastructure gaps between richest and poorest households are largest in rural settings in Vanuatu and Kiribati (figure 27).

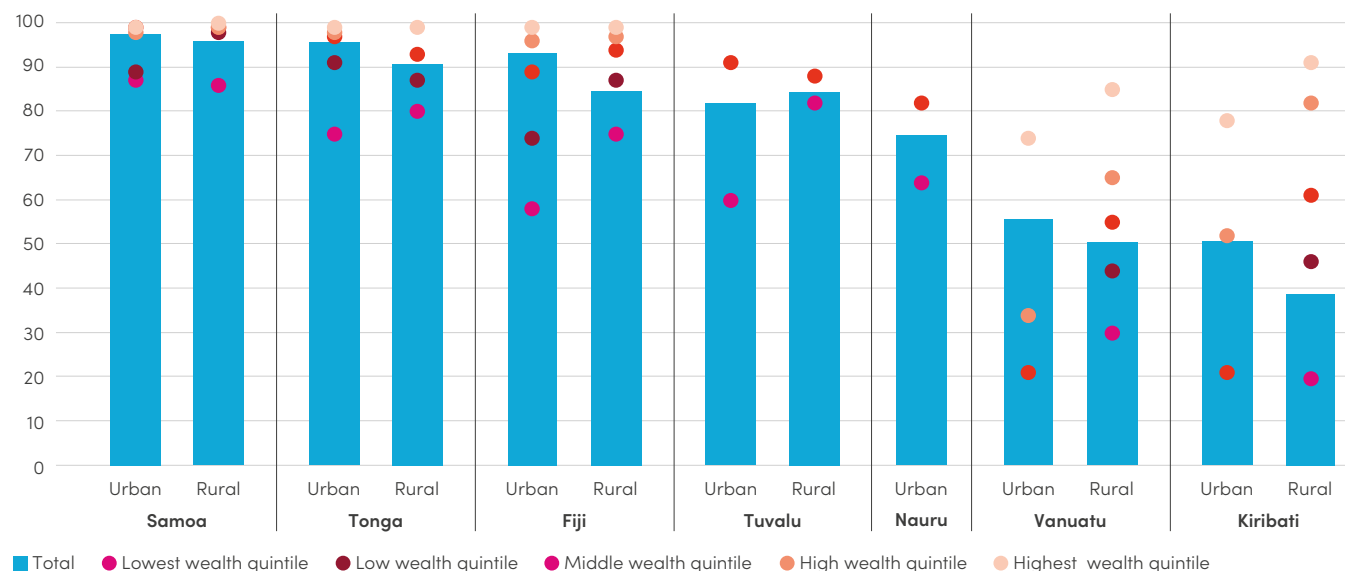
Lacking access to basic drinking water and sanitation facilities exposes people to unsafe environments, both in terms of greater risks of diarrhoea and other digestive issues, and greater vulnerability to violence when accessing shared facilities, especially if these are located away from the household, are poorly illuminated or lack door locks¹². In the Pacific, women and girls are more likely than men and boys to die from exposure to unsafe water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services in Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Samoa and the Federated States of Micronesia (figure 28).¹³ Being exposed to health risks while using water and sanitation during menstruation and childbirth, when women are particularly vulnerable to infections from contaminated water, increases this risk. Further, if women lack private spaces to manage their periods, and pregnant women lack clean water for delivery, this can lead to infections and even maternal and newborn deaths. In educational facilities, the availability of single-sex bathrooms helps reduce barriers to education, especially for girls, as many adolescent girls may drop out of school or miss school days to deal with menstruation if adequate facilities are not available. The percentage of schools with single-sex basic sanitation facilities is shown in figure 29.



Source: World Health Organization, Global Health Observatory (accessed 30 August 2025)

FIGURE 27

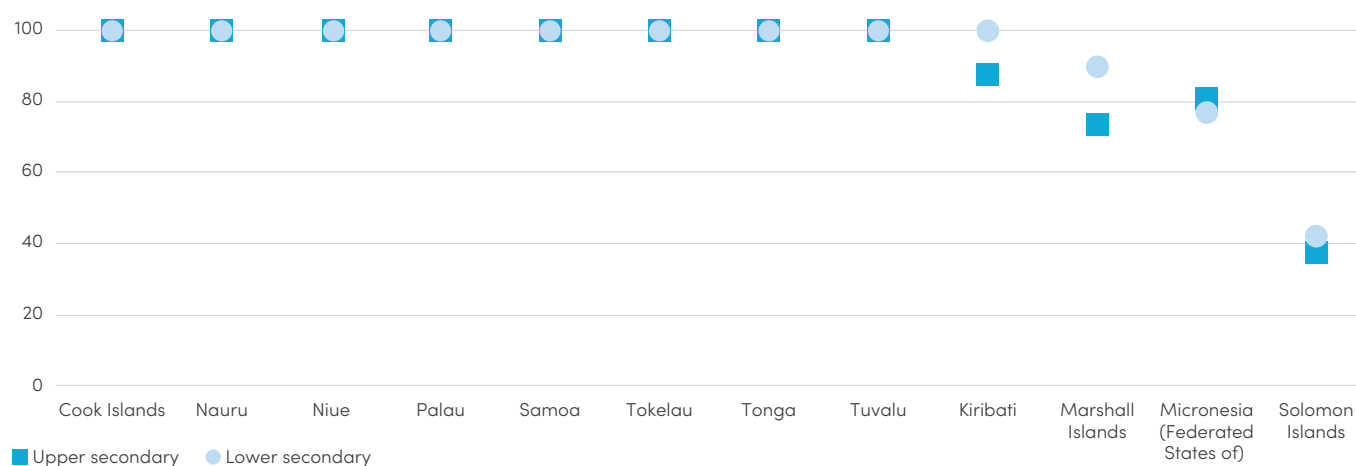
Proportion of population with basic sanitation services, by location and wealth quintile, latest available year (percentage)



Note: Due to small population size, data for the bottom 40 and top 60 per cent wealth brackets could not be included for Tuvalu and Nauru. Nauru is 100 per cent urban. Source: MICS Survey. Fiji 2021, Kiribati 2019, Nauru 2023, Samoa 2019–20, Tonga 2019, Tuvalu 2020, Vanuatu 2023.

FIGURE 29

Proportion of schools with single-sex basic sanitation facilities, by level of education (percentage)



Note: All data is for the year 2023, except for Solomon Islands where the data is for 2018.

Source: Pacific Data Hub, SDG Dashboard (accessed 30 August 2025).

WHO IS LAGGING BEHIND?

Poorest people in rural areas



THE POOREST RURAL WOMEN ARE DISPROPORTIONATELY EXPOSED TO UNCLEAN COOKING FUELS, INCREASING THEIR HEALTH RISKS.

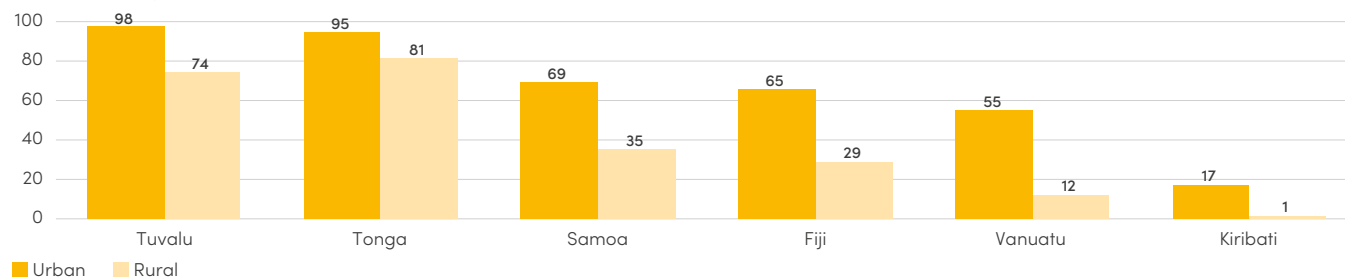
Less than 16 per cent of households in the Pacific cook with clean fuels, such as electricity, liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) or biogas¹⁴. Most people cook in stone stoves with open fire (burning wood, charcoal and other biomass), or they use kerosene or other forms of unclean fuels, which reduce indoor air quality in households and worsen the cardiovascular and respiratory health of those who cook or spend more time at home. In the three Pacific countries with available data on the person typically in charge of cooking (Kiribati, Samoa and Tonga), cooking chores fall largely to women, who are four times as likely as men to be in charge of cooking for the household.

To ease women's unpaid domestic work burdens, and limit some of these harmful effects on their health, a shift towards clean cooking fuels remains essential across the Pacific. Efforts are particularly necessary in rural areas, where women are far less likely to use clean cooking fuels (figure 30). This is largely due to two key factors: a lack of infrastructure in some remote areas, which translates into a lack of access to sufficient electricity, LPG or biofuel production systems; and affordability. Compared to wood, charcoal, kerosene or plastic waste (unclean fuels), clean cooking fuels such as electricity or LPG are unaffordable to people in the lowest income brackets. With the exception of Nauru, where almost everyone cooks with clean fuels, there are substantial gaps between the use of these fuels in richest and poorest households across the Pacific (figure 31). On average, women living in the richest households are 27 times as likely as those who live in the poorest households to use clean cooking fuels. What is more, women living in the richest urban households are 30 times as likely as those in the poorest rural households to use clean cooking fuels.¹⁵

Outside the home, gender differences are also substantial in the production of energy. Across the Pacific the production of energy, including through mining, extraction of oil and other energy production activities is largely concentrated in the hands of men (figure 32). Depending on the type of energy and employment activity, energy-production jobs can be harmful for human health as well. For instance, miners are known to experience skin infection, occupational injuries from accidents, and severe respiratory illnesses more frequently than many other workers. In turn, those working in executive positions in energy firms are seldomly exposed to these risks and make decisions with substantial environmental impacts for whole ecosystems and societies. It is therefore important to promote a shift towards more sustainable energy production processes across the region. This will require promoting women's employment in renewables, and enhancing their participation in related managerial jobs for more inclusive decision-making.

FIGURE 30

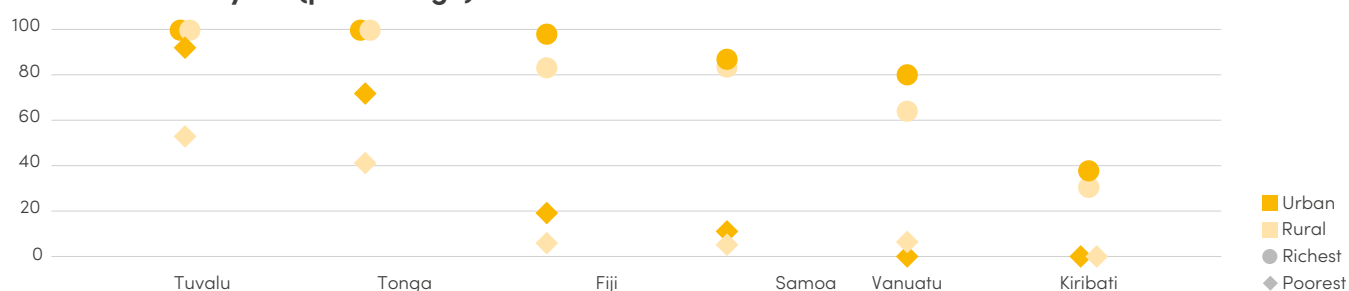
Proportion of women living in households using clean cooking fuel by location, latest available year (percentage)



Source: Fiji MICS (2021), Kiribati MICS (2019), Samoa MICS (2020), Tonga MICS (2019), Tuvalu MICS (2020), Vanuatu MICS (2023).

FIGURE 31

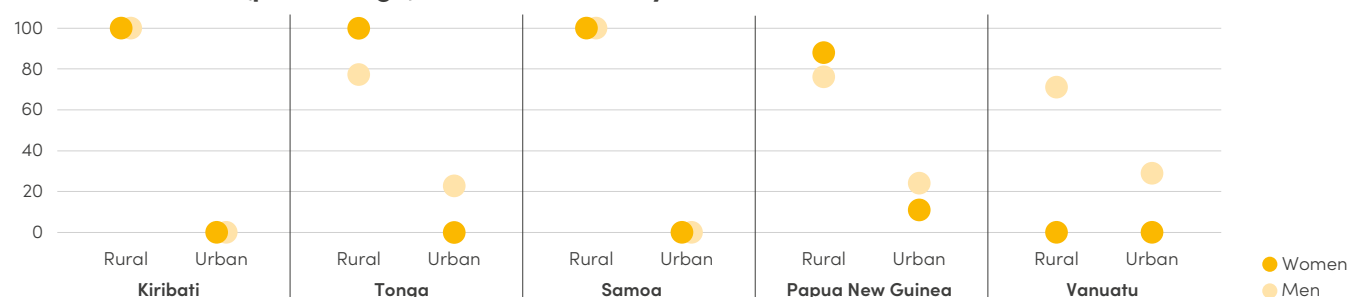
Proportion of women living in households using clean cooking fuel by wealth quintile and location, latest available year (percentage)



Source: Fiji MICS (2021), Kiribati MICS (2019), Nauru MICS (2023), Samoa MICS (2020), Tonga MICS (2019), Tuvalu MICS (2020), Vanuatu MICS (2023).

FIGURE 32

Proportion of people employed in energy sector activities (mining, quarrying, oil production), by sex and location (percentage), latest available year



Note: Women's involvement in mining and material extraction in the Pacific is largely concentrated in rural or remote island settings. Data for women were not available for Vanuatu. The energy sector includes mining (coal and other minerals), oil and gas extraction; however, data on oil and gas production were not available for all countries. Source: Gender and Environment Survey: Kiribati (forthcoming), Samoa (2023), Tonga (2022); and ILOSTAT data explorer (Accessed 7 October 2025).

WHO IS LAGGING BEHIND?
Women in the poorest rural households

8
DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH


WOMEN ARE MORE LIKELY THAN MEN TO BE UNEMPLOYED. WHEN THEY HOLD JOBS, THEY ARE OFTEN MORE PRECARIOUS.

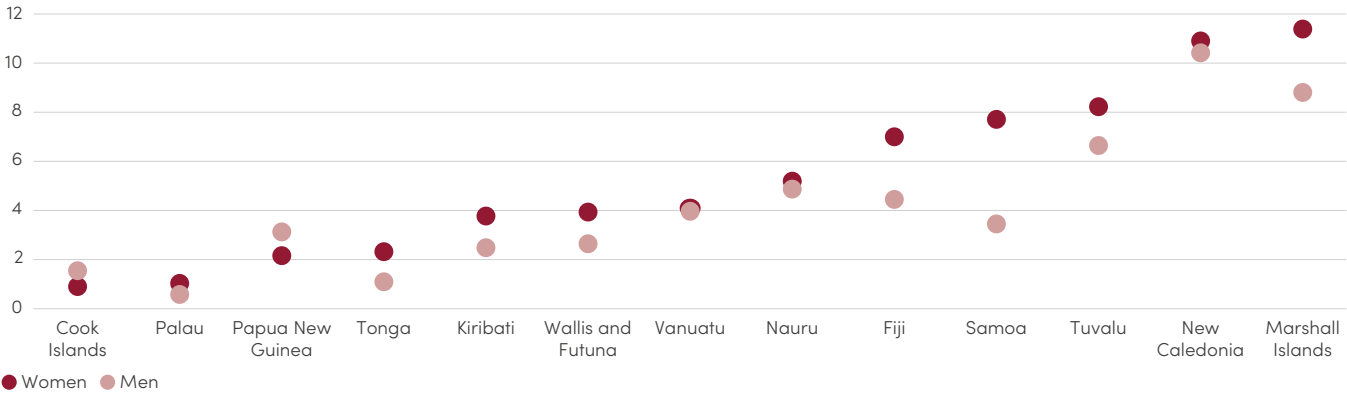
Except in Papua New Guinea and Cook Islands, women are more likely than men to be unemployed in the Pacific (figure 33). The gender gaps, which are particularly large in Samoa and Marshall Islands, are driven by women’s disproportionate unpaid care and domestic work burdens, limited access to finance and the scarcity of urban-based full-time job opportunities in fields that align with women’s educational backgrounds. In countries where there is sufficient data available to calculate these statistics, women with disabilities are more likely than men with disabilities to be unemployed. Overall, however, unemployment rates are higher for women and men without disabilities in all countries, largely because many people with disabilities remain outside the labour force altogether (figures 34 and 35). Intersecting and compounded forms of discrimination (based on gender and ability) often result in women with disabilities being the most likely group to stop looking for employment.

Women and girls are the population group that is most likely not in education, employment or training (NEET) in all countries except for Niue. Gender gaps among NEET populations are generally large (figure 36). Factors such as teenage pregnancies and related unequal burdens of unpaid care work and the limited availability of quality jobs across the region are key contributors to these wide gaps.¹⁶ Women who are in neither education nor employment may face substantial barriers to prosperity and well-being, and may end up facing social and economic exclusion later in life.

When employed, women often end up working in informal jobs, many of which lack social security benefits, stability and a decent pay¹⁷. Apart from the agricultural sector, women are more likely than men to hold informal jobs in all countries except Samoa. For those working in agriculture, fisheries and forestry, women are disproportionately engaged in informal jobs in every country (figure 37). Persons with disabilities in the Pacific are even more likely to be in informal employment relative to persons without disabilities. Employment subsidies or apprenticeship schemes particularly targeted towards women with disabilities, may therefore help tackle both the existing gender gaps, disability gaps and large shares of NEET across the region.

FIGURE 33

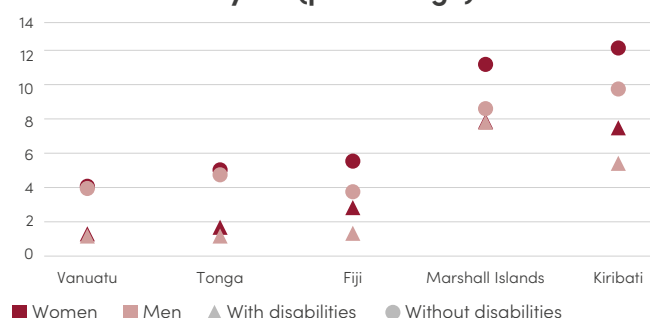
Unemployment rate among population age 15 years and older, by sex, latest available year (percentage)



Source: ILO Statistics in Asia and the Pacific – ILOSTAT and United Nations Global SDG Indicators Database (accessed 26 August 2025): Cook Islands (LFS, 2019), Fiji (LFS, 2024), Kiribati (HIES, 2023), Marshall Islands (PHC, 2021), Nauru (PHC, 2021), New Caledonia (PHC, 2022) Palau (PHC, 2022), Papua New Guinea (SDES, 2022), Samoa (LFS, 2022), Tonga (LFS, 2023), Tuvalu (PHC, 2022), Vanuatu (PHC, 2020), Wallis and Futuna (PHC, 2023).

FIGURE 34

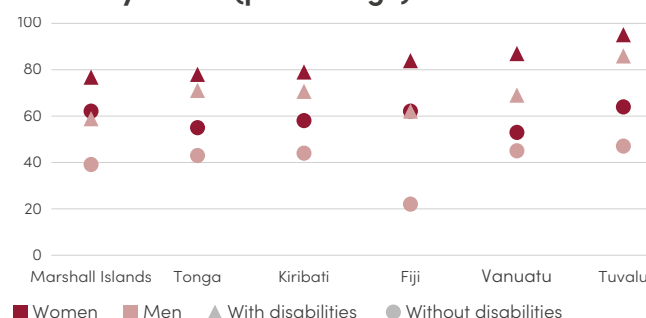
Unemployment rate among population ages 15 years and older, by sex and disability status, latest available year (percentage)



Source: ILO Statistics in Asia and the Pacific - ILOSTAT (accessed 26 August 2025): Fiji (LFS, 2016), Kiribati (PHC, 2020), Marshall Islands (PHC, 2021), Tonga (PHC, 2021), Vanuatu (PHC, 2020).

FIGURE 35

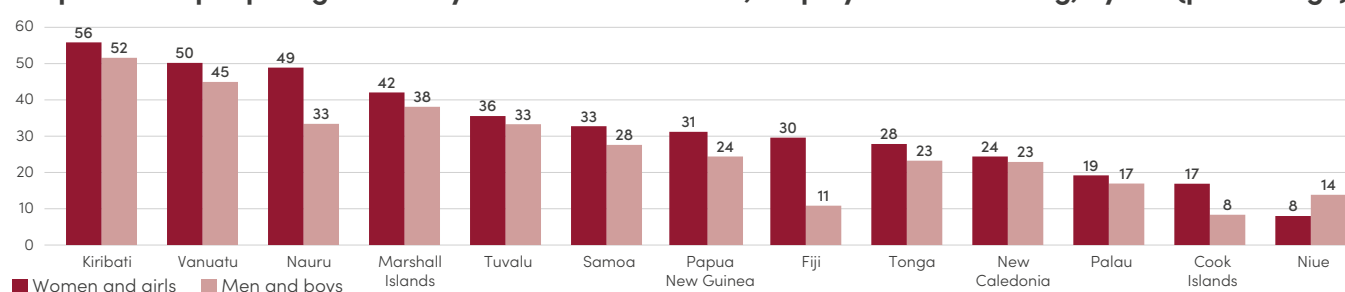
Proportion of the population ages 15 years and older outside the labour force, by sex and disability status (percentage)



Source: Pacific Community disability dashboard [Disability Dashboard](#) - Pacific Data Hub, and country disability monographs. Fiji (2017), Kiribati (2020), Tonga (2021), Marshall Islands (2021), Tuvalu (2022), Vanuatu (2019).

FIGURE 36

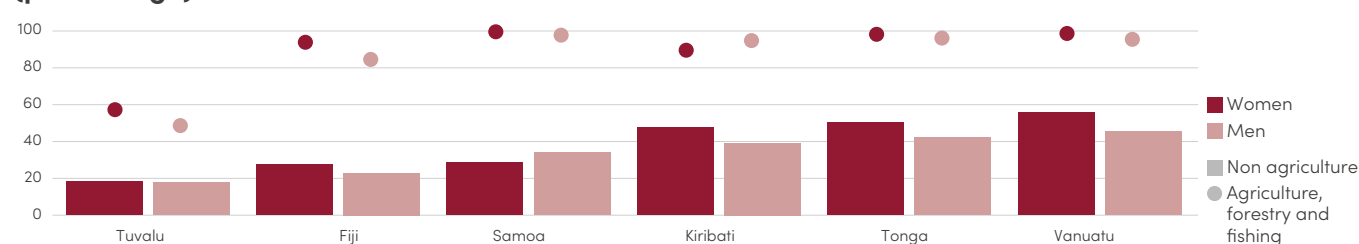
Proportion of people ages 15–24 years not in education, employment or training, by sex (percentage)



Source: Pacific Data Hub PDH.stat Data Explorer (Accessed 02 September 2025): Fiji (LFS - Employment, Unemployment Survey, 2016), Kiribati (PHC, 2020), Vanuatu (PHC, 2020), Marshall Islands (PHC, 2021), Nauru (PHC, 2021), Nauru (PHC, 2021), Papua New Guinea (SDES, 2022), Samoa (LFS, 2022), Tonga (LFS, 2023), Tuvalu (PHC, 2022), New Caledonia (2022), Palau (2020), Niue (2022), Cook Islands (2019).

FIGURE 37

Proportion of the population ages 15 years and older in informal employment, by sector and sex (percentage)



Source: United Nations Global SDG Indicators Database (Accessed 25 August 2025): Fiji (LFS - Employment, Unemployment Survey, 2016), Kiribati (PHC, 2020), Samoa (LFS, 2022), Tonga (LFS, 2023), Vanuatu (PHC, 2020)

WHO IS LAGGING BEHIND?
Women with disabilities



IN THE PACIFIC, UNEQUAL HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE MEANS STARK DIFFERENCES IN MATERNAL HEALTH OUTCOMES.

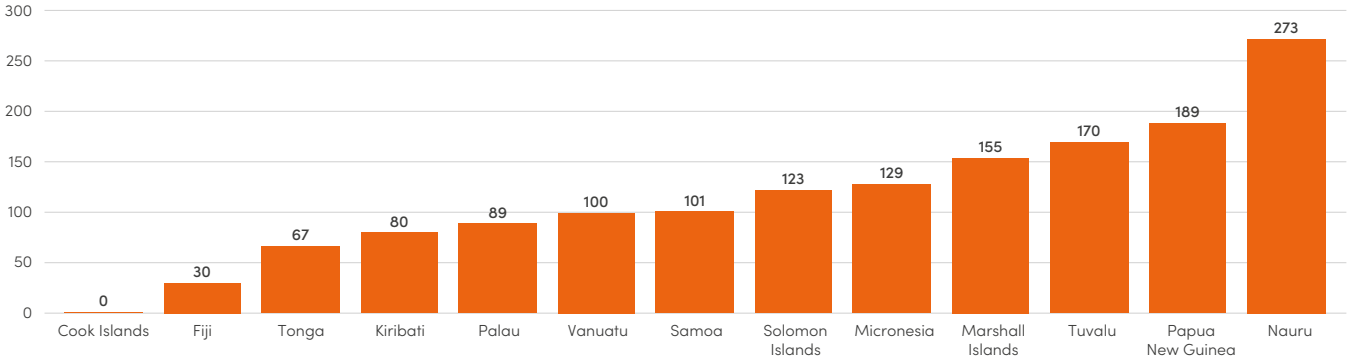
Health infrastructure is uneven across the Pacific. Urban areas have more and better health facilities compared to most rural areas, but challenges such as shortages of staff, limited resources, and vulnerability of facilities to environmental hazards are widespread. Furthermore, other infrastructural challenges such as limited access to electricity, improved sanitation, clean water and Internet connectivity in some of the more remote areas limit the reach and reliability of healthcare facilities in some settings. This has important consequences for women’s reproductive health¹⁸.

Although they have decreased over time, maternal mortality rates remain high in the region. On average, an estimated 173 women die for every 100,000 live births in the Pacific (see figure 38 for country-level data). Severe bleeding (haemorrhage), infections, and high blood pressure disorders like pre-eclampsia and eclampsia cause most maternal deaths globally. Many of these can be prevented if adequate facilities exist and are easily accessible for women. Emergency obstetric care facilities can provide life-saving care in the case of haemorrhage, both for mothers and children, while pre-eclampsia and eclampsia can be managed when detected early, usually through antenatal care visits. Across the Pacific, most births are delivered in health facilities, which can help with haemorrhage or other complications at delivery. However, it is not always possible for women living in rural areas to access health facilities in time for delivery: in all countries with available data, rural women are less likely to deliver in health facilities (figure 39). Similarly, rural women in Kiribati, Samoa and Papua New Guinea are less likely than their urban counterparts to complete at least four antenatal care visits,¹⁹ the recommended minimum by the World Health Organization in order to safely detect and manage potential complications for pregnant women and their babies as early as possible (figure 40).

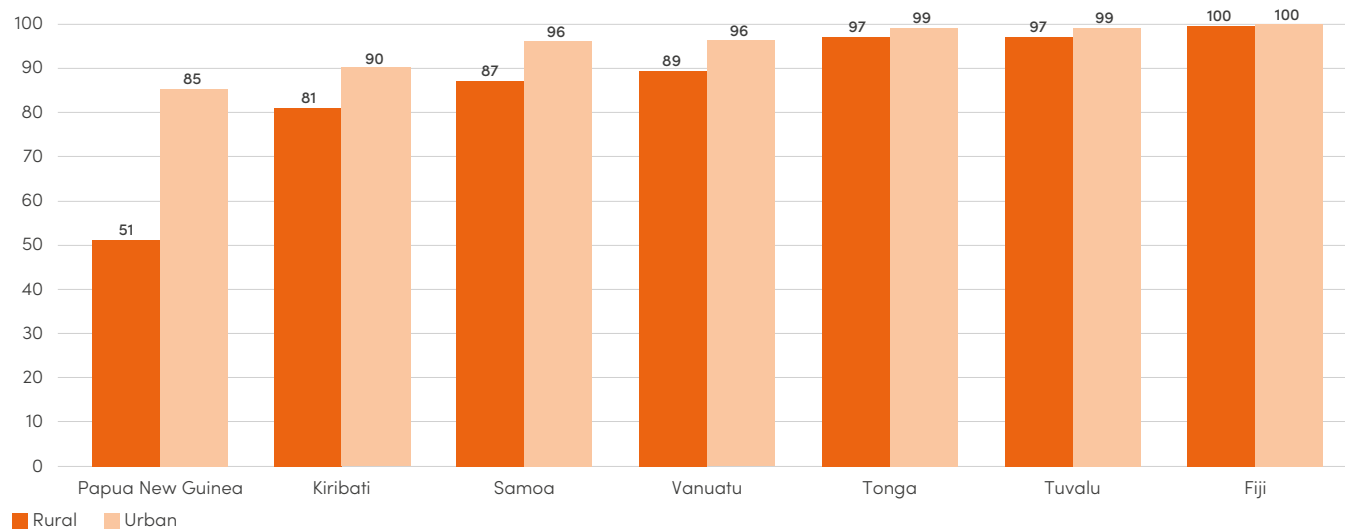
Analysis of infrastructure availability across different the Pacific indicates there is a correlation between how build up an area is and the numbers of advanced health facilities that could provide lifesaving interventions during pregnancy-related emergencies, demonstrating the importance of infrastructure to support women’s reproductive health^{20,21}.

FIGURE 38

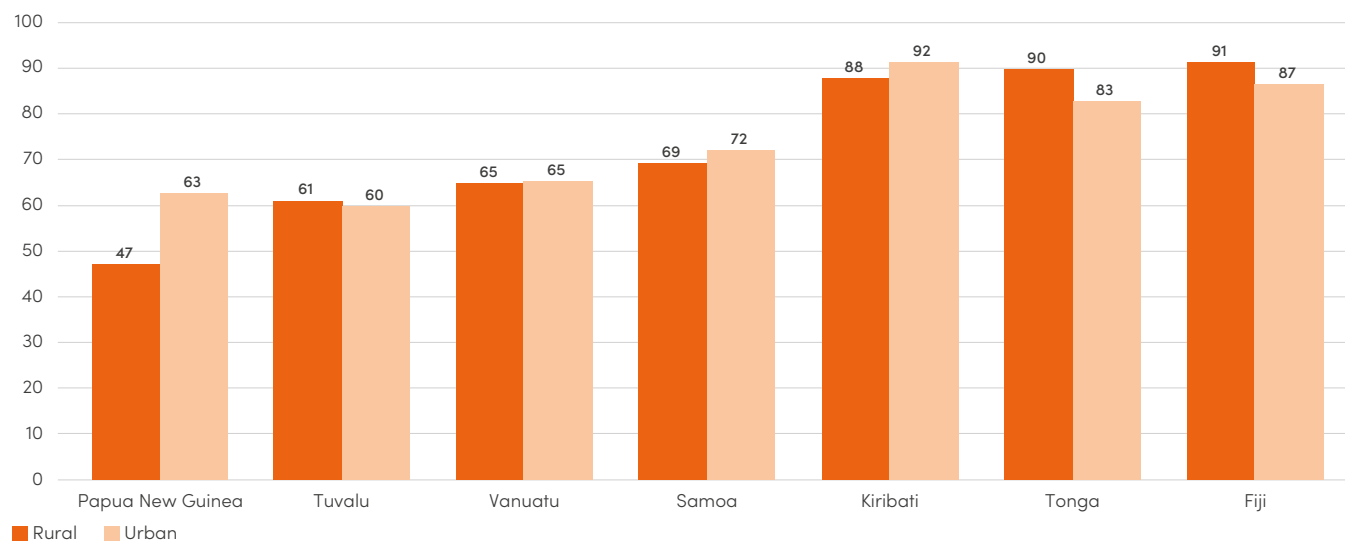
Maternal mortality ratio (deaths per 100,000 live births)



Source: United Nations Maternal Mortality Estimation Inter-agency Group (MMEIG), Maternal Mortality Estimates (2023), United Nations Global SDG Indicators Database (Accessed 30 September 2025)

FIGURE 39**Proportion of deliveries in a health facility by location, latest available year (percentage)**

Source: Fiji MICS (2021), Kiribati MICS (2021), Papua New Guinea DHS (2016–2018), Samoa DHS–MICS (2019–2020), Tonga MICS (2019), Tuvalu MICS (2019–2020), Vanuatu MICS (2023).

FIGURE 40**Proportion of women who received at least 4 antenatal care visits, by location, latest available year (percentage)**

Source: Fiji MICS (2021), Kiribati MICS (2021), Papua New Guinea DHS (2016–2018), Samoa DHS–MICS (2019–2020), Tonga MICS (2019), Tuvalu MICS (2019–2020), Vanuatu MICS (2023).

WHO IS LAGGING BEHIND?

Women in remote areas

10
REDUCED INEQUALITIES

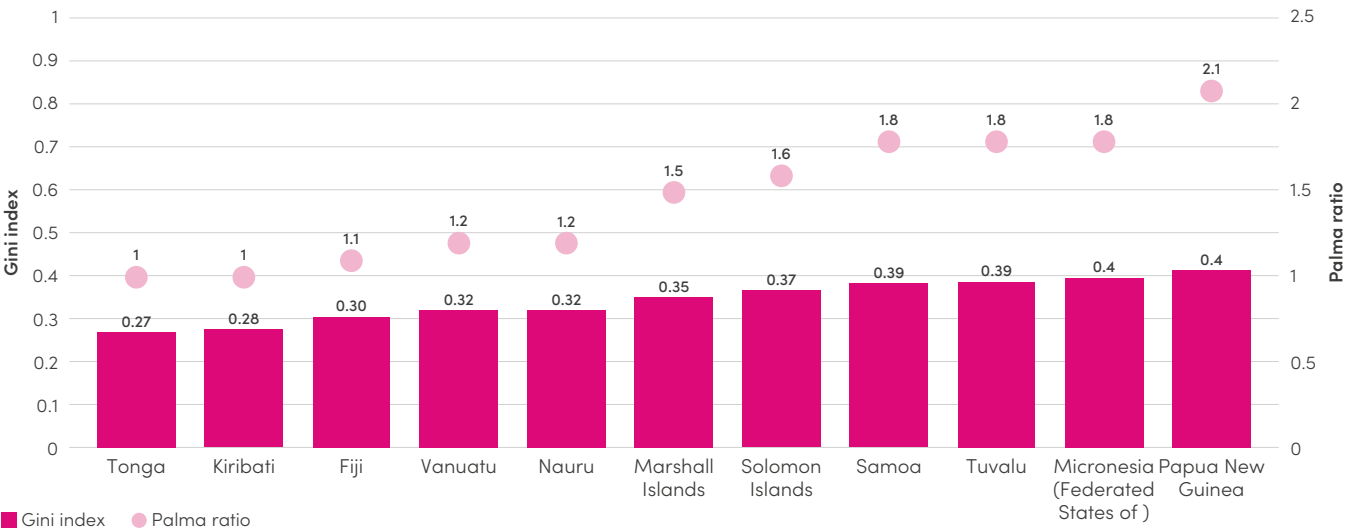
INCOME INEQUALITIES IN THE PACIFIC ARE RELATIVELY SMALL, BUT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES STILL LAG BEHIND.

Compared to other regions, income inequalities in the Pacific are relatively small, although there is substantial variation across countries. A standard measure of income inequality, the Gini index, indicates that while people in Tonga and Kiribati see relatively small disparities when it comes to income, people in Papua New Guinea and the Federated States of Micronesia see larger gaps (figure 41). Still, as the Gini values in all countries in the region remain above the Palma ratio (a measure of how skewed inequalities are towards the extremes of an income distribution), this indicates a relatively lower share of income held by the richest 10 per cent compared to the poorest 40 per cent. To guarantee the well-being and safety of all population groups, it is important for countries in the Pacific to continue advancing towards inclusive sustainable development that does not widen inequalities.

However, inequalities do exist, especially when it comes to people with disabilities. In all countries with available data, women with disabilities are more likely than women without disabilities to earn less than 50 per cent of the country’s median income, and the same is true for men, respectively (figure 42). Barriers to accessing employment, education and other public services may all contribute to these outcomes. For instance, in the region, only 8.3 per cent of people with severe disabilities are currently receiving disability cash benefits. These numbers differ across and within countries, and by sex: for instance, women in the Cook Islands are less likely than men to receive these benefits. In 2022, 46 per cent of women with severe disabilities received disability cash benefits, compared to 51 per cent of men with similar conditions (figure 43).

FIGURE 41

Income inequality comparison, Gini index and Palma Ratio

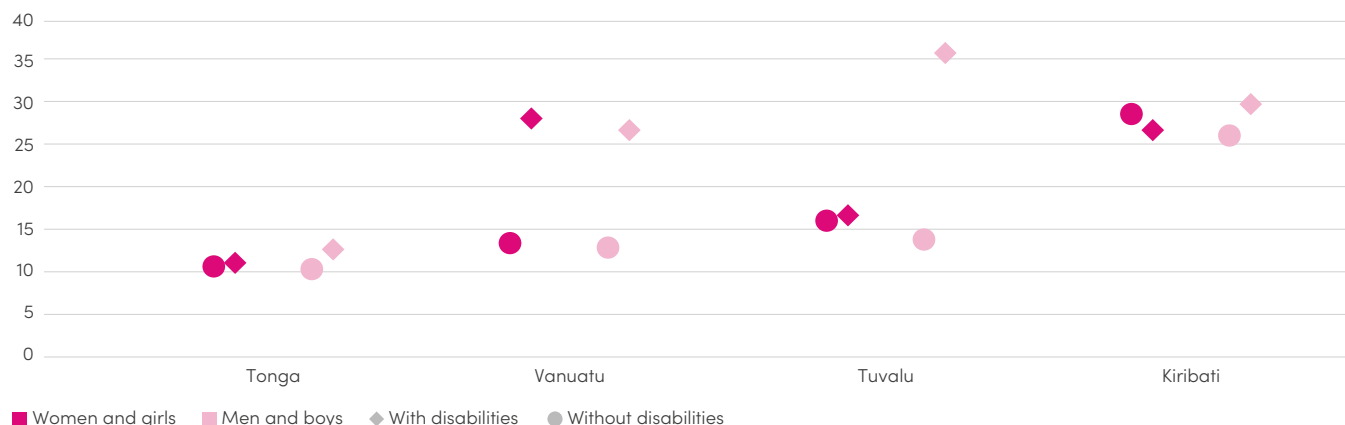


Note: The Gini index is a statistical measure of the degree of variation or inequality represented in a set of values, used especially in analysing income inequality. The Palma ratio is a measure of economic inequality calculated by dividing the share of national income or wealth held by the richest 10 per cent of the population by the share held by the poorest 40 per cent.

Source: Gini index, Word Bank Poverty and Inequality Platform [Gini index | Data](#) (accessed 3 October 2025); Plama ratio, UNDP 2018 [Human development index report](#).

FIGURE 42

Proportion of people living below 50 per cent of the median income, by sex and disability status, latest available year, (percentage)

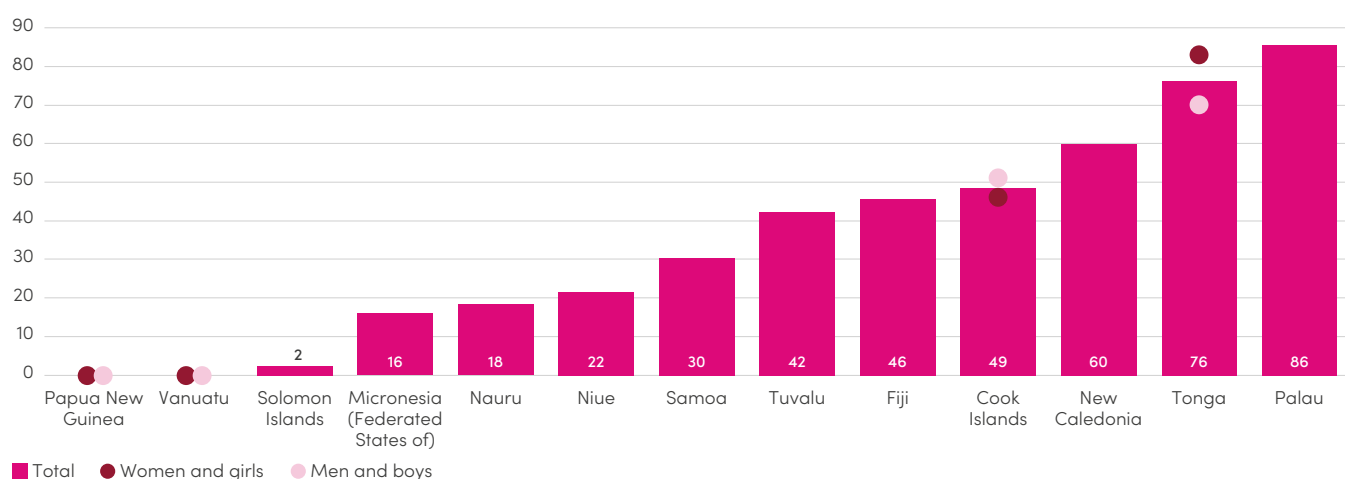


Note: This is a proxy indicator, calculated at the household level, as median income is derived from household data rather than individual earnings. Caution is advised when interpreting the results.

Sources: Pacific Community, Vanuatu (HIES, 2019), Tuvalu (HIES 2022), Tonga (HIES, 2021), Kiribati (HIES 2023)

FIGURE 43

Proportion of population with severe disabilities receiving disability cash benefit, by sex, (percentage)



Source: United Nations Global SDG Indicators Database (Accessed 1 October 2025): Solomon Islands (2019), Federated States of Micronesia (2021), Nauru (2019), Niue (2018), Samoa (2022), Tuvalu (2019), Fiji (2022), Cook Islands (2022), New Caledonia (2017), Tonga (2022), Palau (2019). Note: Sex-disaggregated data was unavailable for Fiji, Micronesia (Federated States of), New Caledonia, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu.

WHO IS LAGGING BEHIND?
People with disabilities



AS URBANIZATION ACCELERATES ACROSS THE REGION, WOMEN ARE FEELING LESS SAFE THAN MEN.

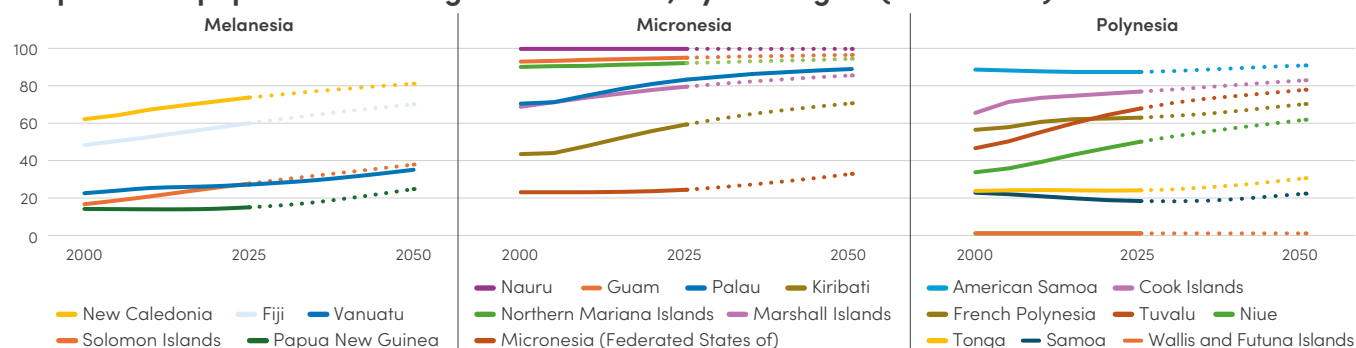
Over the past decades, urbanization in the Pacific has risen steadily. Large differences exist, however, across countries and territories, with nearly none of the population in Wallis and Futuna residing in urban areas, compared to Nauru where nearly the entire population is urban (figure 44). Cities create important opportunities for women and men, including access to jobs, public services and civic voice, but may also pose challenges to people, especially to those who migrate to urban areas in search for income opportunities but end up engaging in lower paid jobs than previous urban dwellers, often living in slum settings or informal settlements. An estimated 12 per cent of the urban population in the Pacific lives in slums or informal settlements: that is, in households that lack improved drinking water, improved sanitation, are overcrowded (three or more persons per bedroom) or are made of non-durable materials.

Living in these settings may disproportionately expose people to unsafe conditions, both in terms of disease, as well as regarding exposure to violence and other forms of crime. People living in slums also have more limited capacities to cope with the effects of climate change. Further, to fully benefit from the opportunities cities have to offer, access to transportation and green spaces are essential. In the Pacific, only 16 per cent of people have access to convenient public transportation²² and as few as 30 per cent have convenient access to open public spaces.^{23, 24} Besides limiting their economic opportunities and posing limitations for their mental and physical health, encountering barriers to utilizing buses and other forms of public transit, and to enjoy parks, boardwalks and other green public spaces may also be linked to lack of safety.

Feeling safe to move around enables people to participate fully in urban life, yet women are more likely than men to report feeling unsafe overall, and a smaller share of women compared to men report feeling very safe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark (figure 45). Women are also more likely to report that they never walk alone after dark, which constrains mobility, access to services and public life, and therefore agency. The magnitude of this pattern varies by country, with the share of urban women who report never walking alone after dark ranging from less than 1 per cent in Tuvalu to nearly 16 per cent in Tonga. The feelings of insecurity are not necessarily linked to wealth, as the shares of wealthier and poorer women that feel unsafe are similar across most countries. Consistent-ly, however, women are more likely to feel unsafe than men regardless of the location (figure 46).

FIGURE 44

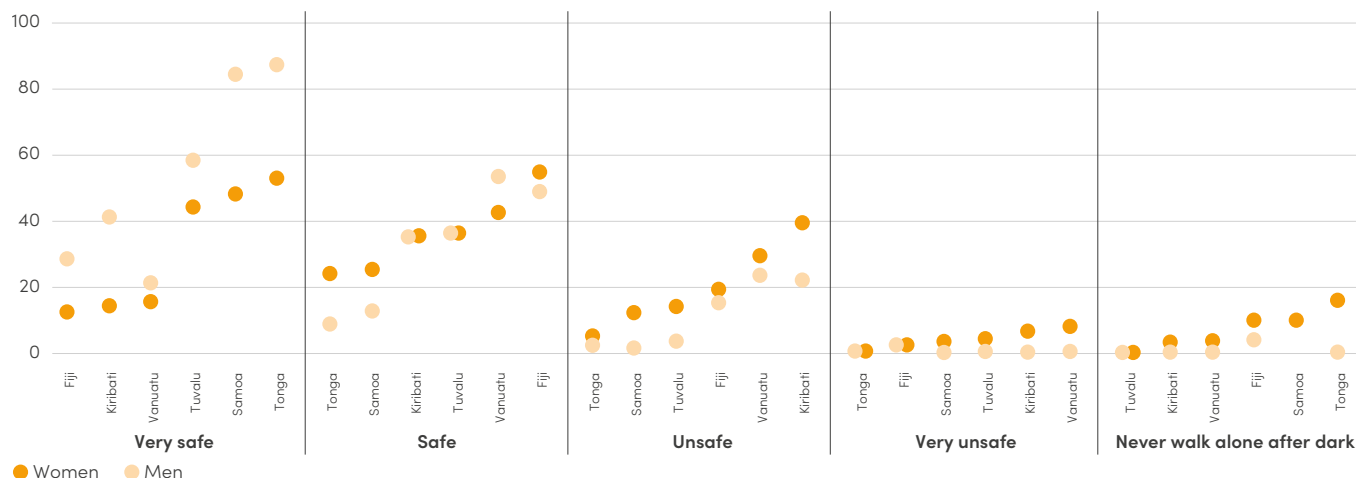
Proportion of population residing in urban areas, by sub-region (2000–2050)



Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2018). World Urbanization Prospects: The 2018 Revision, Online Edition.

FIGURE 45

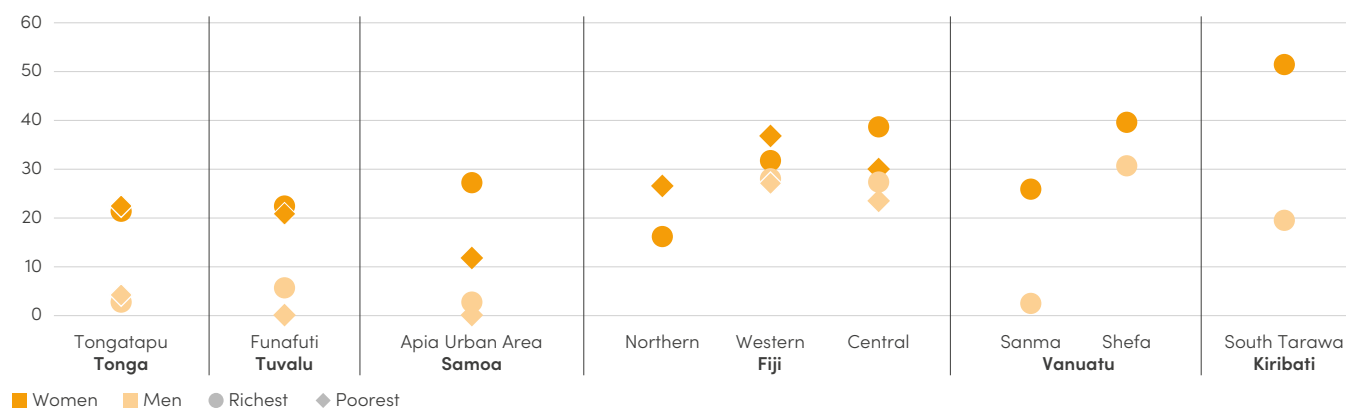
Perception of urban population 15–49 years on safety of walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark, by sex (percentage)



Source: Fiji MICS (2018–19), Kiribati MICS (2018–19), Samoa MICS (2019–2020), Tuvalu MICS (2019–20), Tonga MICS (2019), Vanuatu MICS (2023). Data with the necessary disaggregation was unavailable for the remaining countries.

FIGURE 46

Proportion of urban population 15–49 years who feel unsafe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark, by sex, region, and wealth quintile (percentage)



Source: Fiji MICS (2018–19), Kiribati MICS (2018–19), Samoa MICS (2019–2020), Tuvalu MICS (2019–20), Tonga MICS (2019), Vanuatu MICS (2023). No observations were available for the urban population in Vana'u, Ha'api, 'Eua and Ongo Niua in Tonga; Nanumea, Nanumaga, Niutao, Nui, Vaitupu and Nukufetau in Tuvalu; North West Upolu, Rest of Upolu and Savaii in Samoa; Torba, Penama, Malampa and Tafea in Vanuatu; and Northern Gilbert, Central Gilbert, Southern Gilbert, and Line and Phoenix Group in Kiribati. Due to small sample sizes, estimates are not included for the urban Eastern region in Fiji; for the urban poorest women and men in Northern Fiji; for the urban poorest women and men in Sanma and Shefa in Vanuatu; and for the urban poorest women and men in South Tarawa in Kiribati.

WHO IS LAGGING BEHIND?

Urban women

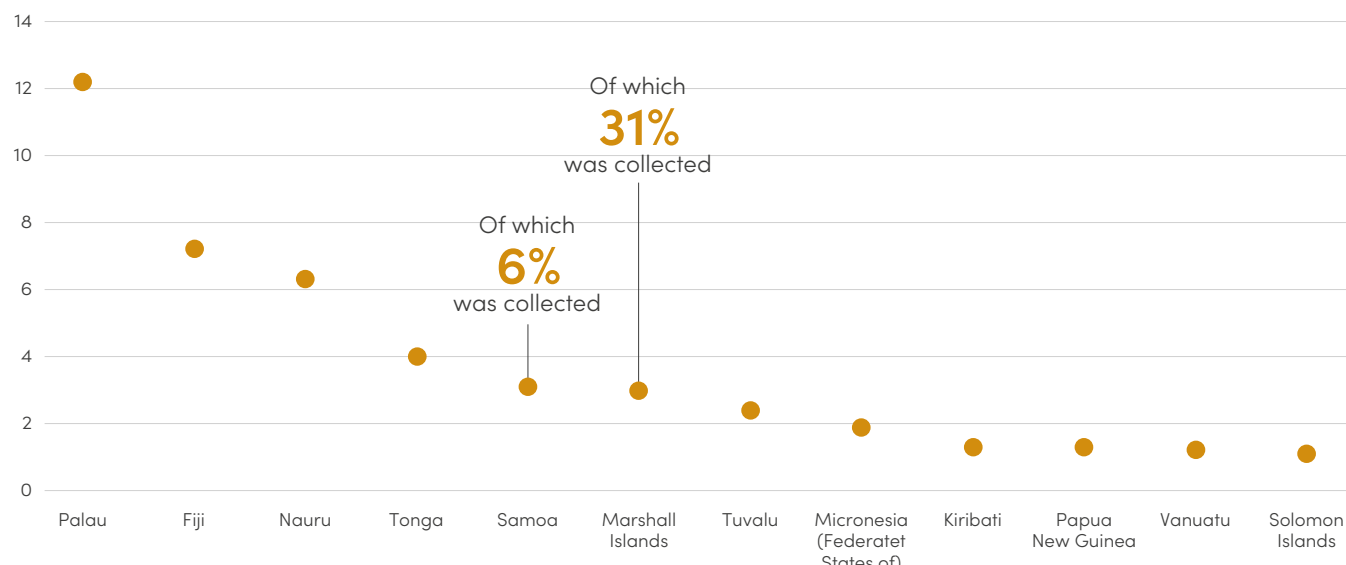


LIMITED MUNICIPAL WASTE MANAGEMENT CAPABILITIES LEAVE INDEPENDENT WASTE PICKERS EXPOSED TO HEALTH AND SAFETY CONCERNS.

An estimated 1.74 million tonnes of food are wasted in the Pacific every year, largely in households (1.18 million tonnes). This amounts to almost 128 kg of food per person per year. In a region where large shares of food are imported from abroad, food waste not only carries consequences in terms of methane emissions and related pollution, but also regarding fuel use for transportation purposes, worsening the environmental footprint. Other types of waste, such as electronic waste, are also growing over time and are much harder to manage in the Pacific, as facilities and even collection services are missing in numerous locations. In 2022, 1.7 kg of electronic waste per capita was generated in the Pacific (figure 47), out of which only 41 per cent was collected and taken to facilities for treatment, storage or disposal, largely in Australia and New Zealand²⁵. The capabilities for e-waste processing are limited across the Pacific, as the region lacks the infrastructure for environmentally sound processing of e-waste. The treatment of domestic wastewater and municipal solid waste is also limited: roughly half (52 per cent) of all municipal solid waste is managed in controlled facilities, and only 16 per cent of domestic wastewater is treated safely. This, compounded by the increased production and use of plastics, metals and other products, contribute to a continuous production of municipal waste, and are placing enormous burdens on already overwhelmed waste management services.

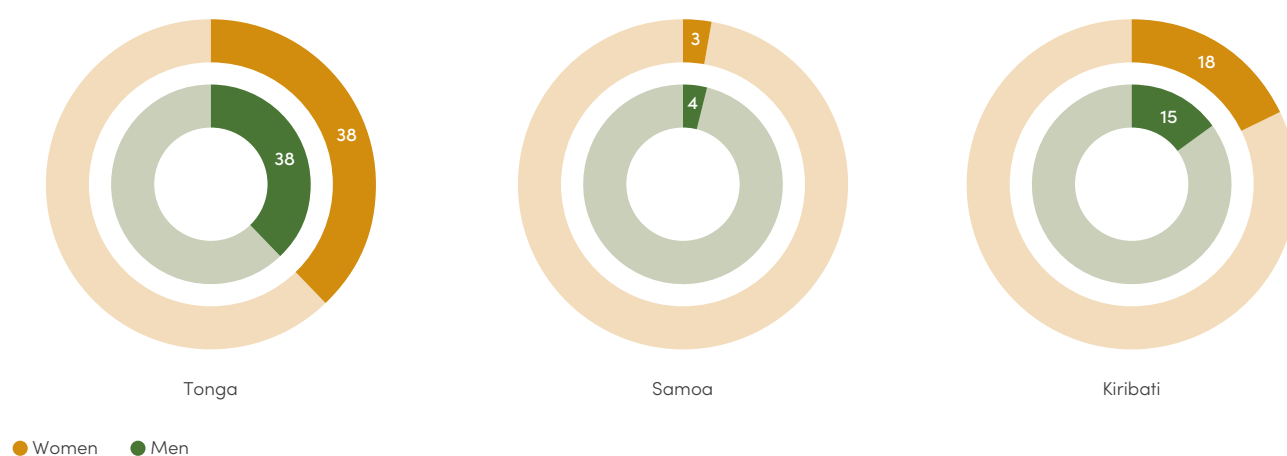
To deal with household and other forms of waste generated across the region, many women and men engage in waste collection, transportation and sorting, largely in informal settings and with the purpose of generating some additional income for the household. Collecting waste and bringing it to sorting centres is practiced by as many as 17 per cent of people in Kiribati, 4 per cent in Samoa and 38 per cent in Tonga. Of these, roughly 20 per cent are women (figure 48). Engaging in waste management in these settings can be dangerous, as it can expose people to injuries (e.g. cuts, lacerations, etc.) from handling metals and other sharp materials, as well as illness (e.g. skin disease, respiratory conditions, digestive issues, etc.). These issues are particularly common among people who do not use protective equipment, such as gloves, masks or other gear – which are only used by 6 per cent of people who engage in waste management in Kiribati, 30 per cent of those who do it in Tonga, and 46 per cent of those in Samoa (figure 49).

Other safety concerns associated with engagement in waste management relate to violence and crime. As waste collection usually takes place in unsafe settings and/or at night, activities are largely informal, and no reporting mechanisms exist in most waste management locations in case of abuse, many people, both women and men, feel unsafe while performing these tasks (figure 50). In Samoa, women are more likely to feel unsafe when performing waste management tasks with a partner; in Kiribati, as many as 21 per cent of women collecting waste with other people outside their family noted feeling unsafe. Besides social norms that normalize violent behaviour towards women more than men, the fact that men are more likely to practice waste collection and transportation using vehicles, may also contribute to their enhanced sense of safety, as they may be able to escape dangerous situations more rapidly.

FIGURE 47**E-waste generated per capita, 2022 (kilograms)**

Note: The data on proportion of electronic waste collected was extracted from United Nations Global SDG Indicators Database, in which data for Marshall Islands was collected in 2007, and for Samoa in 2017 (Accessed 2 October 2025). No other countries had available data for collections.

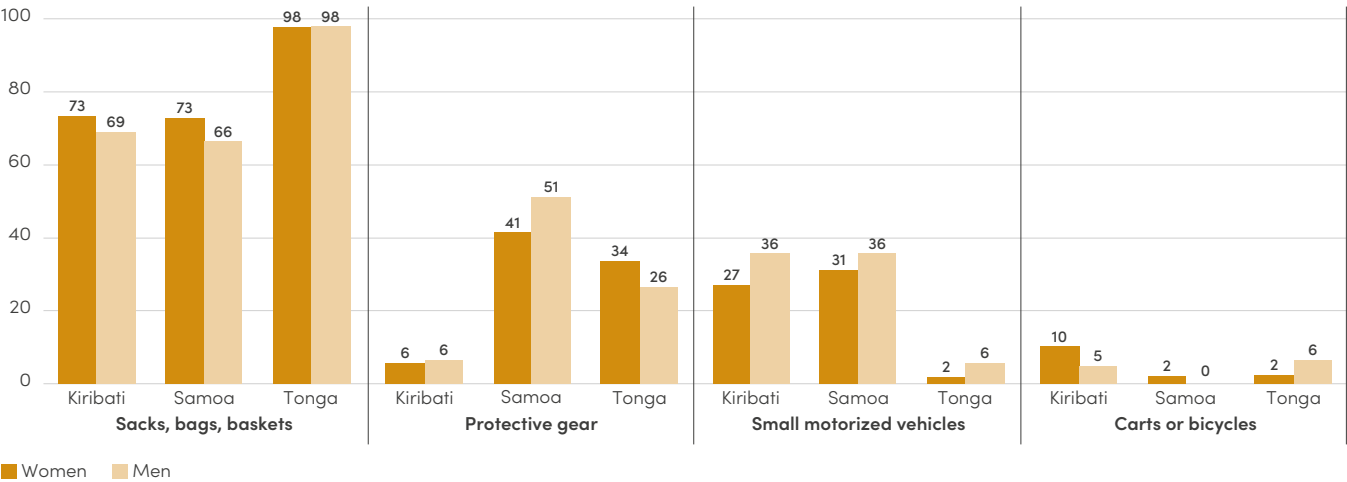
Source: UNITAR (2024). *The Global E-Waste Monitor 2024* (Accessed 13 September 2025).

FIGURE 48**Proportion of the adult population who engage in waste management, by sex (percentage)**

Source: Gender and Environment Survey: Kiribati (2024), , Samoa (2023) and Tonga (2022). Note: Engagement in waste management refers to the performance of these activities, whether or not it is for economic purposes, and regardless of formality.

FIGURE 49

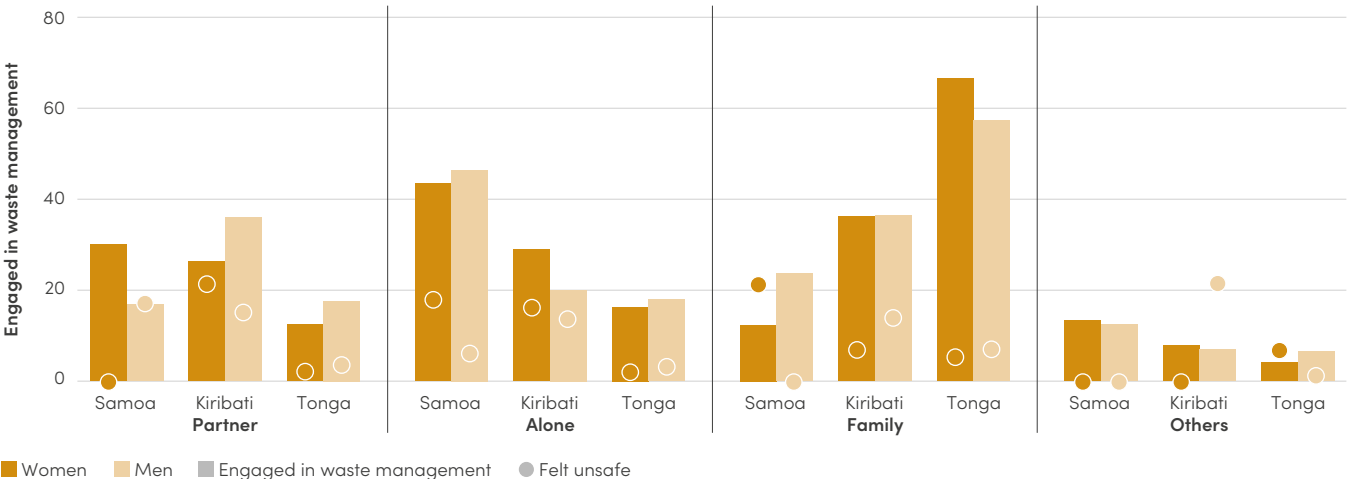
Proportion of the adult population engaging in waste management, by type of equipment used, and sex (percentage)



Source: Gender and Environment Survey: Kiribati (2024), Samoa (2023), Tonga (2022). Note: Engagement in waste management refers to the performance of these activities, whether or not it is for economic purposes, and regardless of formality.

FIGURE 50

Proportion of the adult population engaging in waste management that perform these activities alone/accompanied and share of those that ever felt unsafe, by sex and companion (percentage)



Source: Gender and Environment Survey: Kiribati (2024), Samoa (2023) and Tonga (2022). Note: Engagement in waste management refers to the performance of these activities, whether or not it is for economic purposes, and regardless of formality.

WHO IS LAGGING BEHIND?
Urban waste management population



CLIMATE POLICIES ARE INCREASINGLY PRIORITIZING GENDER, A KEY STEP TOWARDS REDUCING THE GENDERED IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

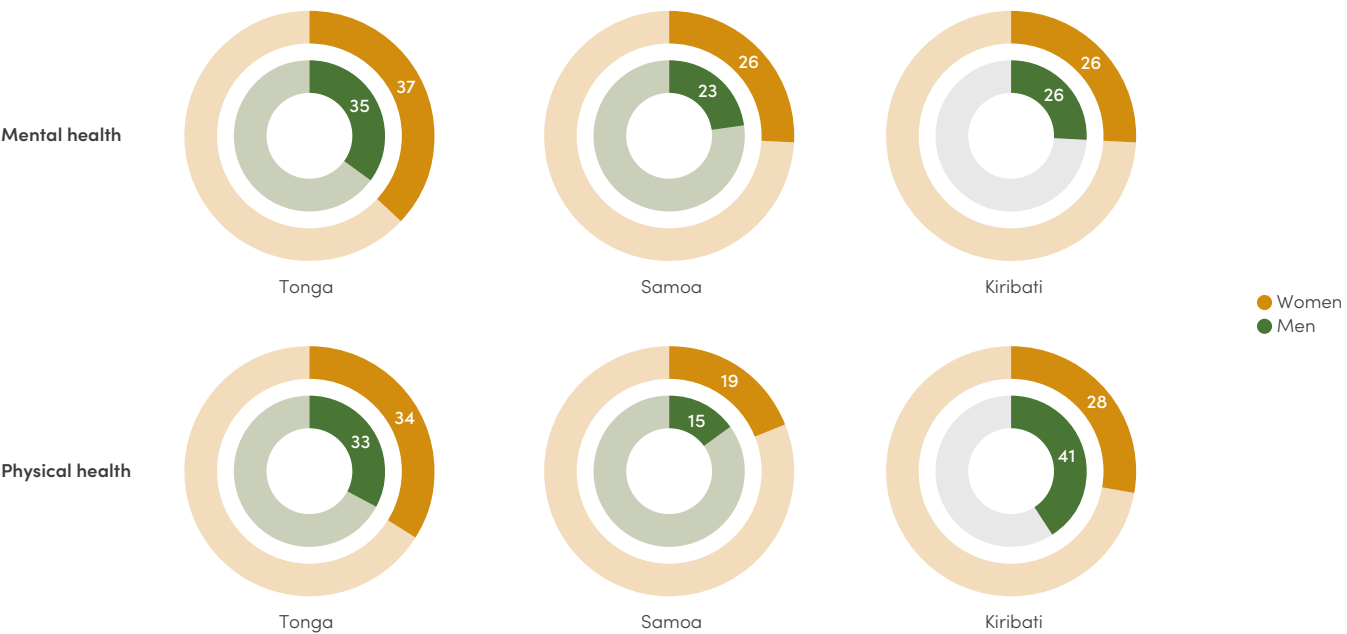
In 2015, Governments in the Pacific drafted and submitted their first Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) towards meeting the goals of the Paris Agreement. These national climate policies and action plans were, for the most part, gender blind. Since then, the gendered effects of climate change have been increasingly explored across the region. Recent data shows that climate hazards, including both slow and rapid onset events, affect women's mental health disproportionately. In some countries, though not all, climate hazards also affect women's physical health more than men's (figure 51). Climate change is also driving drops in agricultural yield, and, when food is scarce, women are more likely than men to give up their food in favour of feeding other household members, especially single mothers (see SDG 14). Disasters and other climate hazards also increase unpaid domestic and care work burdens (figure 52). For instance, the effects of floods, storms, and wind episodes, often worsen water and vector borne disease, and cause physical injuries and mental stress and anxiety. As a result, they also increase care burdens. Similarly, the impacts of climate phenomena such as droughts, floods and sea level rise on water shortages, power cuts and dwelling conditions, for instance, often worsen domestic workloads. Across countries, women are more likely than men to note their unpaid care and domestic workloads worsen as a result of climate change and disasters, and this is despite the fact that they were already doing more than men before these events to begin with.

The increased availability of gender data that examines the gendered impacts of climate change, coupled with enhanced political will to apply a gender lens to climate action, has driven important progress in the gender responsiveness of climate policies over recent years. In the first round of reporting on NDCs to the Paris Agreement only one country (Papua New Guinea) placed high priority on gender issues (in connection to participation in environmental decision-making), but in the second round, both Fiji and Marshall Islands placed high priority on integrating gender across policies and systems. In addition, the Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Nauru and Vanuatu highlighted some gender issues across other pillars of their NDC reports (figure 53 and 54), including climate and unpaid care work, women's participation in decision-making and, to a lesser extent, linkages between climate and reproductive health. As the third round of NDC reporting reaches completion, Governments in the Pacific that have submitted their renewed plans are showcasing further improvements in the gender sensitivity of their NDC reports (figure 55). For instance, all of the new plans now make references to women, men, sex or gender, and they reference gender equality explicitly. Further, most third round NDC reports now include a stand-alone section on gender equality and social inclusion, largely focusing on the importance of addressing structural barriers to women's participation and promoting equitable access to adaptation and mitigation benefits. The NDC report of Tonga even makes an explicit reference to gender data and highlights the importance of using gender-environment surveys to inform environmental decisions and planning, an excellent practice to highlight the importance of evidence-informed policymaking.

While only time will tell whether or not these plans will be successful in achieving gender-responsive climate change adaptation and mitigation, their increased gender focus offers hope for tackling this important challenge across the region.

FIGURE 51

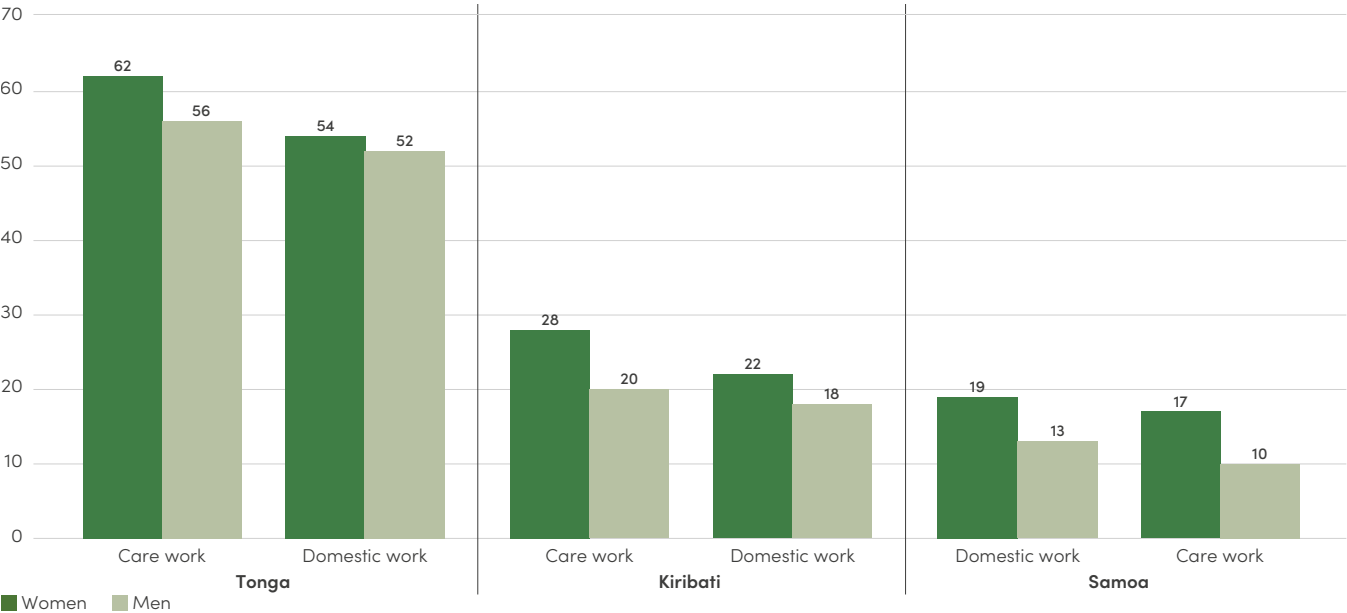
Proportion of the population exposed to hazards in the past 12 months whose health was affected as a result, by sex and type of health (percentage)



Source: Gender and Environment Survey: [Tonga \(2022\)](#), [Samoa \(2023\)](#), [Kiribati \(2024\)](#).

FIGURE 52

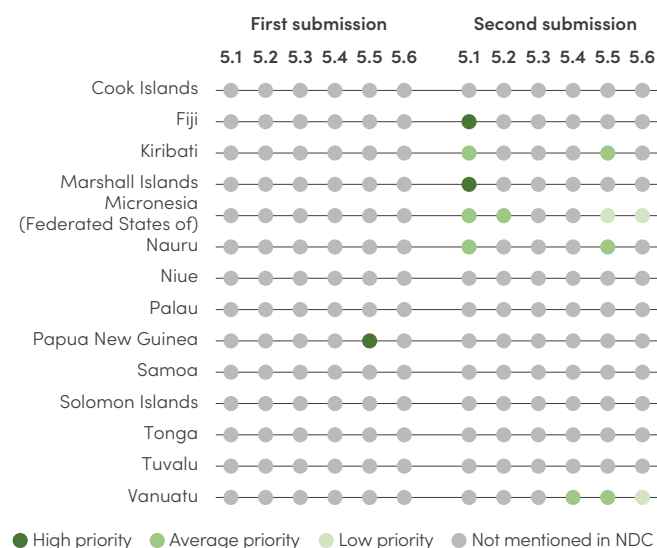
Proportion of population whose unpaid care and domestic work burdens increased as a result of climate change, by sex (percentage)



Source: Gender and Environment Survey: [Kiribati \(2024\)](#), [Samoa \(2023\)](#), and [Tonga \(2022\)](#).

FIGURE 53

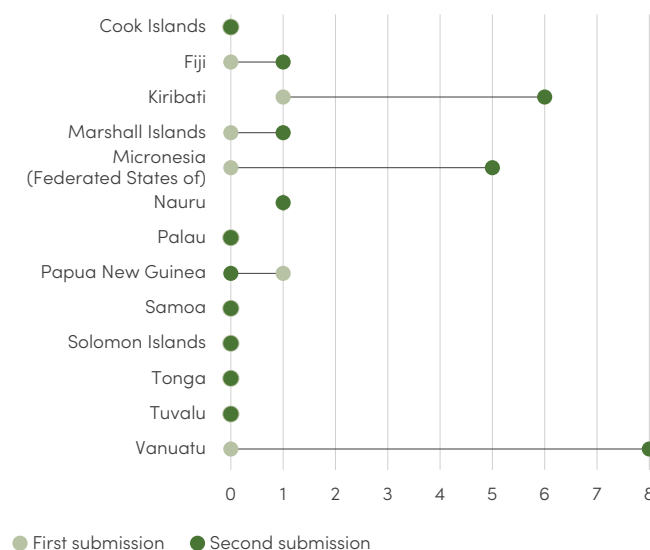
Prioritization of gender equality goals in nationally determined contributions (NDCs), latest available year



Source: German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS), Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI), [NDC-SDG Connections](#).

FIGURE 54

Change in the number of climate activities related to gender equality goals between the first and second NDCs, latest available year



Source: German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS), Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI), [NDC-SDG Connections](#).

FIGURE 55

Prioritization of gender in the third round of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), as submitted by 1 October 2025



WHO IS LAGGING BEHIND?
Women in climate-vulnerable environments



WITH WARMER OCEANS, FISH SIZES ARE DROPPING. THIS IMPACTS WOMEN IN COASTAL AREAS DISPROPORTIONATELY.

Fish stocks are dropping globally. In the year 2000 approximately 73 per cent of fish stocks were within biologically sustainable limits, but this figure stands at 62 per cent two decades later. In the Pacific Ocean, the availability of fish stocks ranges widely from only 33 per cent in the South-East, to 84 per cent in the East-Central area (see figure 56). Overfishing, changes in ocean temperatures, acidification and changes in salinization are all affecting the health of fish stocks. While some fish species of key biological relevance, such as sharks and rays, are known to change their range to cope with increasing temperatures, the warming oceans are also impacting the size and location of many reef-fish species – a key source of food for coastal communities in the Pacific. Data shows that the mean length of coastal-reef fish (in particular herbivores, invertivores and planktivores) decreases with warmer waters, and even small temperature changes are linked to substantial shifts in fish community composition and body size²⁶ (figures 57 and 58). In Tonga, individual level fishing and income data indicate that both women and men fishing in warmer areas see lower yields (figures 59 and 60).

From a gender perspective, this decline has strong implications. Women in the Pacific are heavily engaged in subsistence reef fishing and are more likely than men to practice gleaning in coastal areas rather than using boats or other large fishing gear (figure 61). Smaller fish sizes mean reduced catch volumes and lower nutritional value of the fish harvested. They also mean reduced income for those depending on coastal fisheries. Although switching fishing locations could be a coping mechanism to maintain yields (figure 62), women’s fishing practices and lack of gear often render them unable to switch fishing locations. Even in double-adult households, where men may be able to search for fish elsewhere, if the amount of fish or other foods is not enough for all household members, social norms in the Pacific often result in women reducing their food intake, or turning to foods of lower nutritional value in order to feed their children or other family members (figure 63). This contributes to heightened food insecurity and increases the burden on women, who may need to fish longer to secure adequate food.

FIGURE 56

Proportion of fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels in the Pacific Ocean , latest available year (percentage)

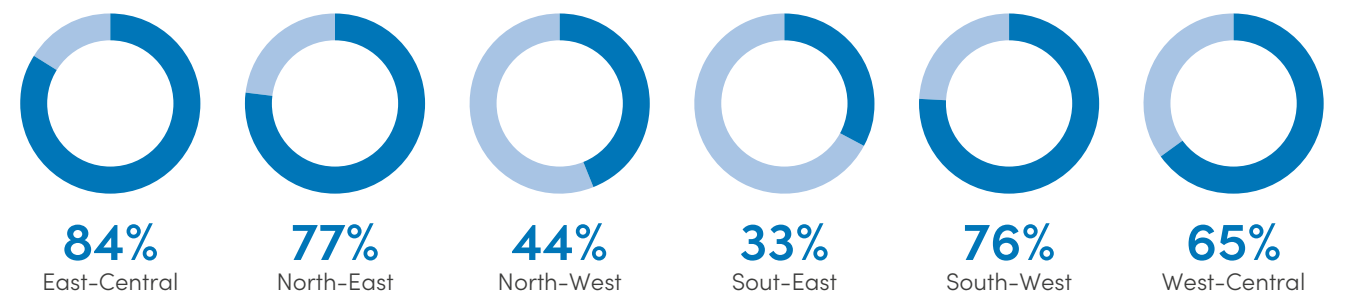
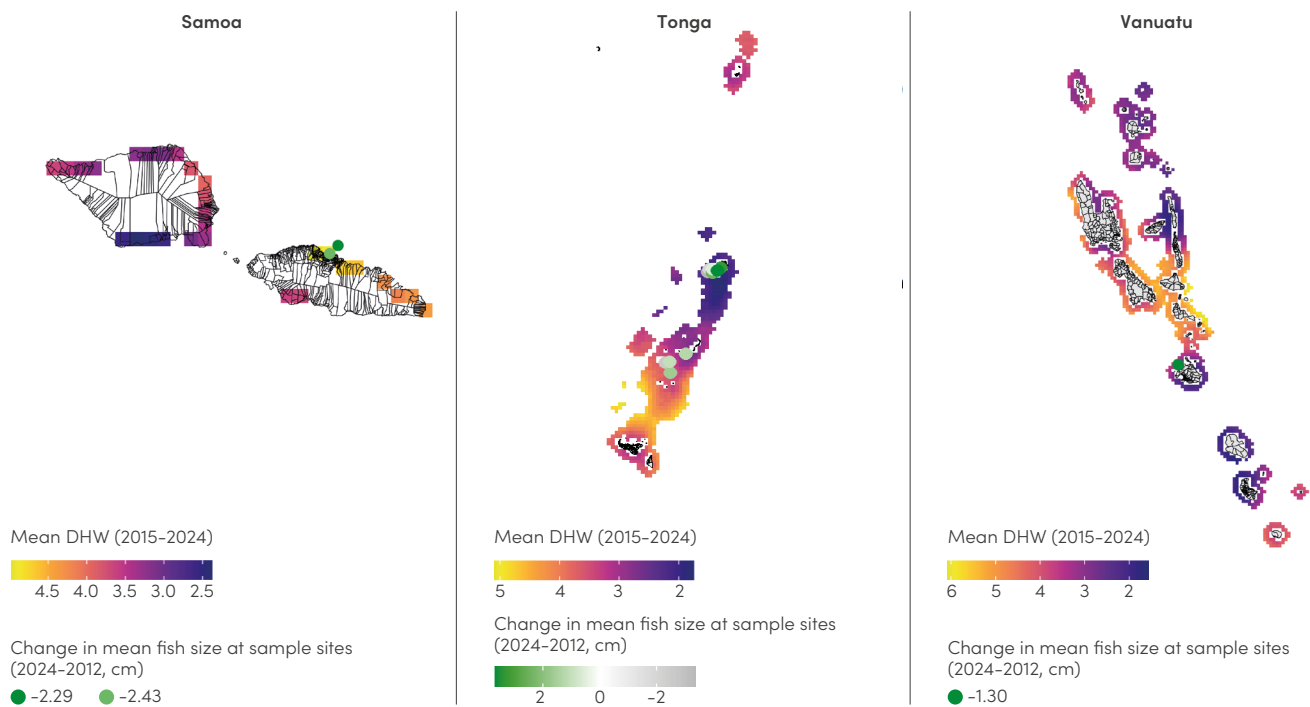


FIGURE 57

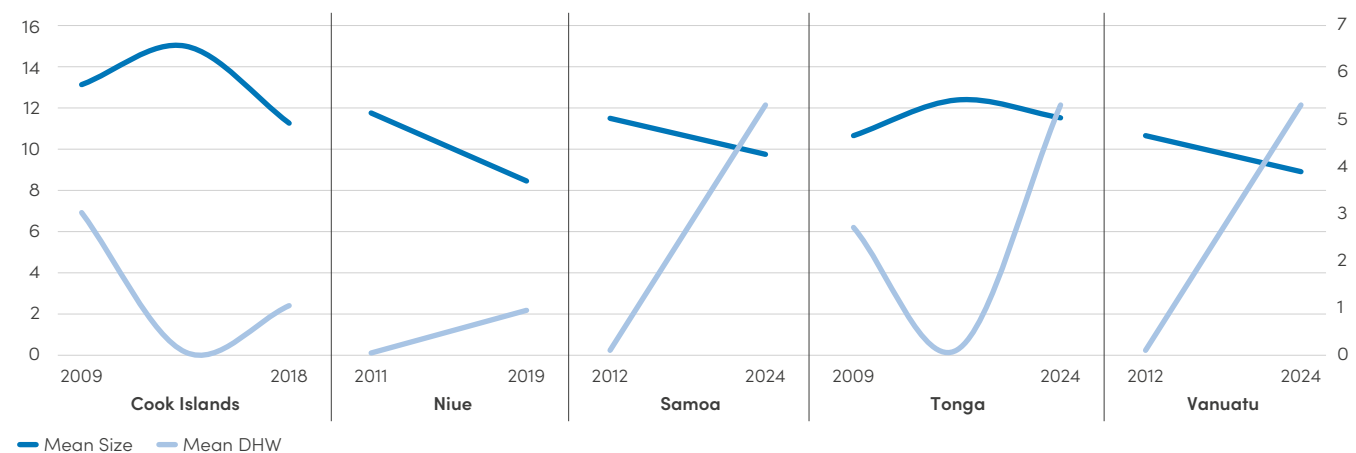
Mean Degree Heating Week (DHW, degree Celcius per week) and change in mean fish size (cm) associated with coral bleaching in Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu



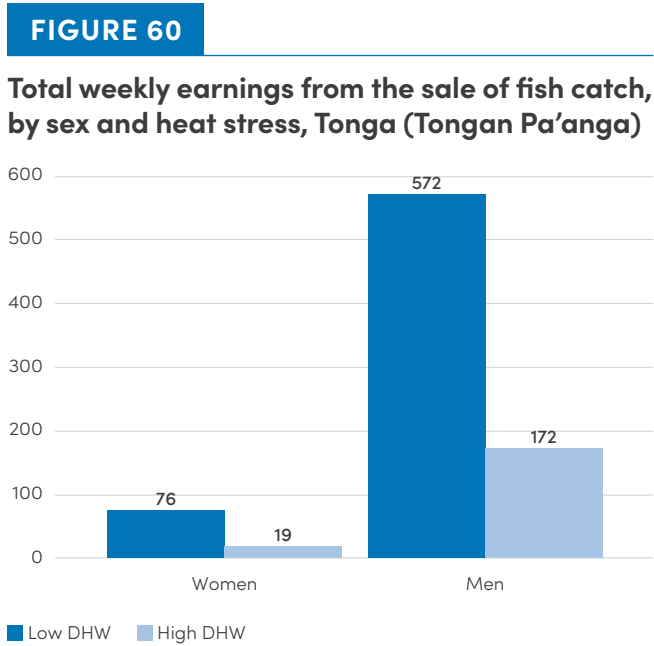
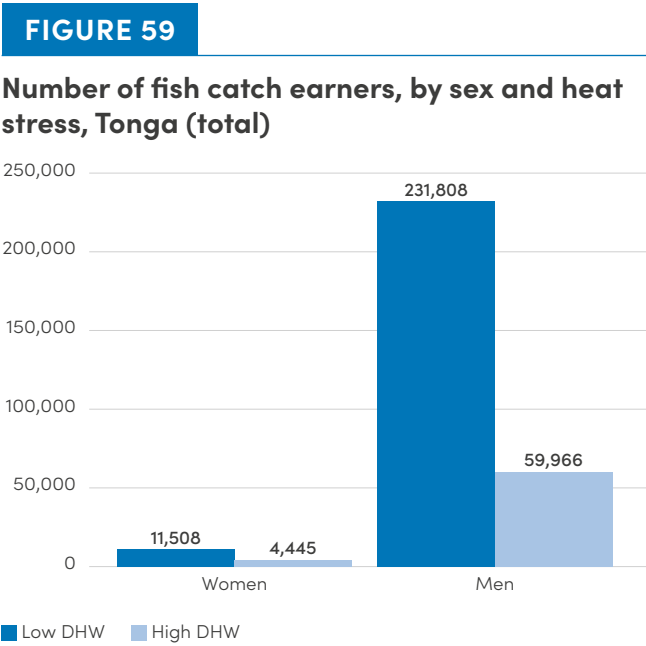
Note: The mean DHW (degree heating week) is a measure of cumulative heat stress experienced by coral reefs. A value above 4 indicates a significant risk of coral bleaching. (1 DHW represents one week of water being 1°C higher than the usual maximum monthly average). The mean DHW for Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu covers the period from 2015 to 2024. Changes in mean fish size were observed at two sample sites in Samoa (2012 and 2024), at eleven sample sites in Tonga (2009 and 2024) and on a single site in Vanuatu. Source: NOAA (2025), IMOS (2025).

FIGURE 58

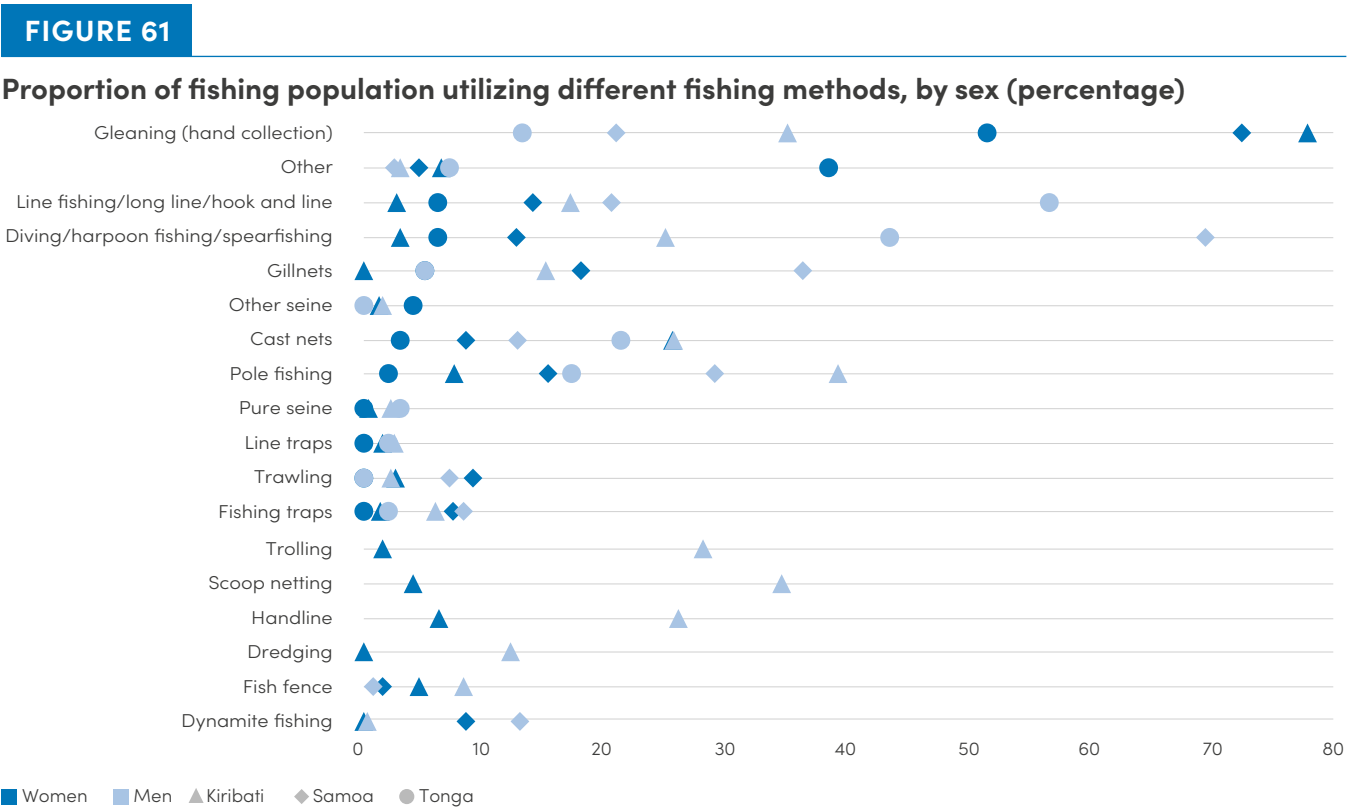
Trends in mean reef fish size (cm, left) and ocean heat stress (mean DHW, right, degree Celcius per week)



Source: NOAA (2025), IMOS (2025). Note: Data was not available for the remaining countries and territories across the region at the time of publication of this report.



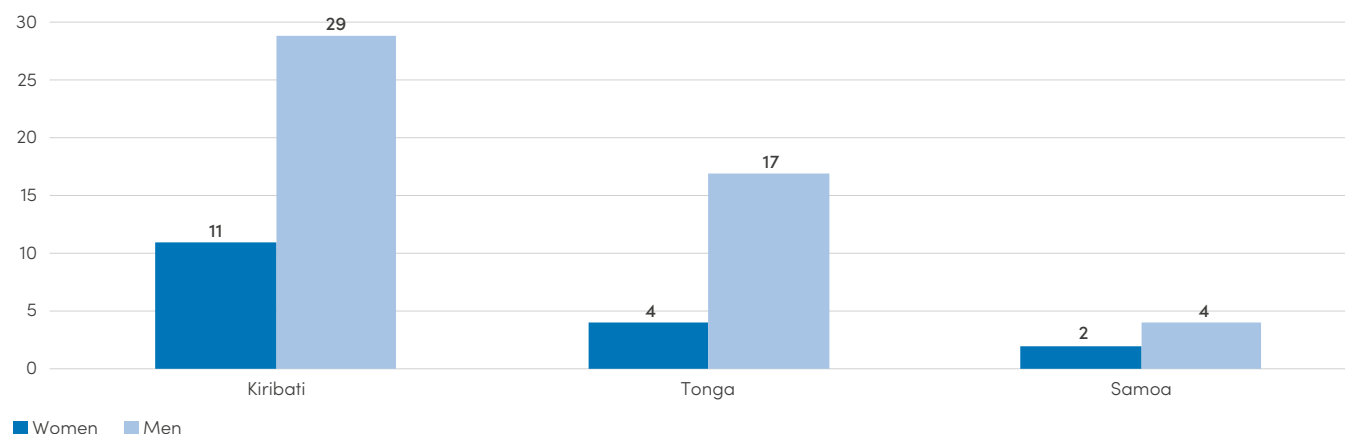
Note: DHW (Degree Heating Weeks) measures cumulative thermal stress on reefs; values above 4 DHW indicate elevated bleaching risk. Household heat stress was assigned by linking each surveyed household's GPS (latitude/longitude) to NOAA Coral Reef Watch Annual Maximum DHW (v3.6) rasters (digital images representing temperature data). The annual-max layers for 2015–2024 were averaged, the surface was cropped to Tonga (EPSG:4326), and the nearest ocean grid cell value was extracted for each household point. Households were then grouped into DHW bands: High DHW = top tercile (≥ 66.7 th percentile) of household DHW; Low DHW = bottom two terciles. Weekly fishing earnings are taken from the HIES Fisheries module (sum of reported sales in the past seven days). Totals are survey-weighted and reported among earners only. Source: Tonga HIES (2021), NOAA (2025), IMOS (2025).



Source: Gender and Environment Survey: Kiribati (2024), Samoa (2023), Tonga (2022).

FIGURE 62

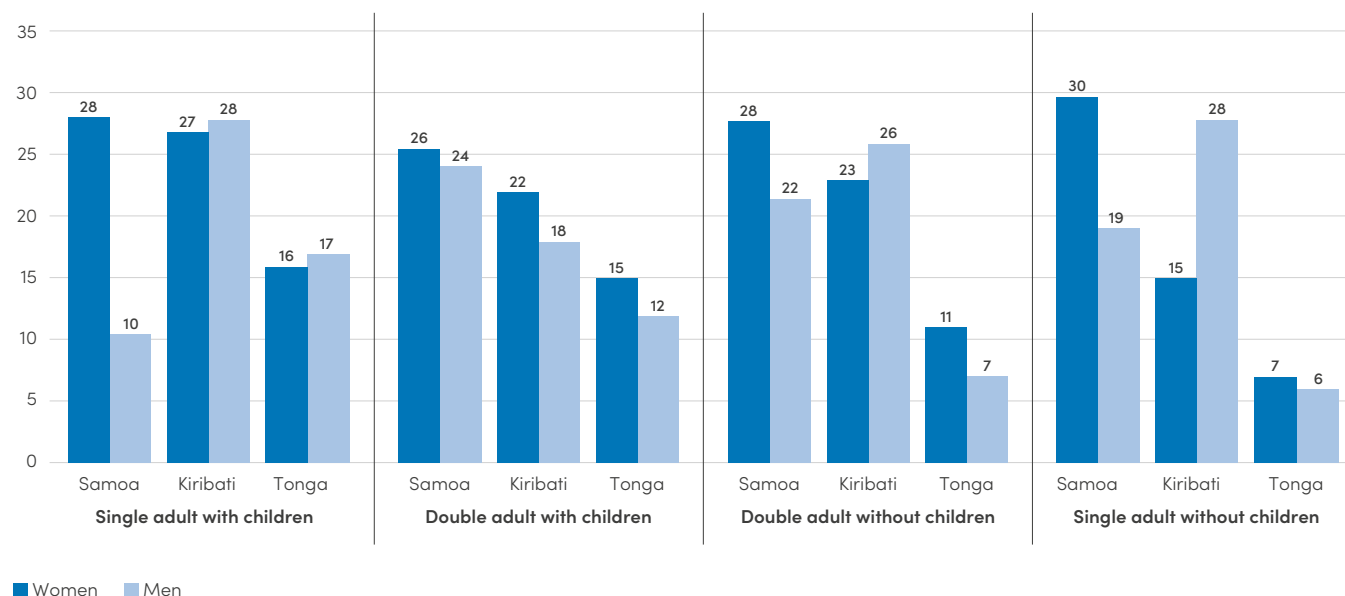
Proportion of fishing population that changed fishing locations as a result of climate change, by sex (percentage)



Source: Gender and Environment Survey: Kiribati (2024, forthcoming), Samoa (2023), Tonga (2022).

FIGURE 63

Proportion of fishing population that had to eat less as a result of climate change, by sex (percentage)



Source: Gender and Environment Survey: Kiribati (2024), Samoa (2023), Tonga (2022).

WHO IS LAGGING BEHIND?
Women in warming coastal areas



WOMEN'S LAND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES ARE MORE SUSTAINABLE THAN MEN'S, BUT MANY REMAIN OUTSIDE RELATED DECISION-MAKING

Globally, the share of degraded land continues to increase. In the Pacific, key drivers of land degradation include deforestation, unsustainable agricultural practices, mining, climate change (including salinization from rising sea levels), and population-related pressures (e.g. urbanization, encroachment in forest areas, etc.). The compounded effects of all these activities lead to soil erosion, loss of soil fertility and soil contamination, among others. Although comprehensive and reliable data on soil degradation is scant in many countries across the region, survey data, where available, indicates that soil degradation is a widespread problem: more than three quarters of the population who practice agriculture or raise livestock in Kiribati noticed soil degradation in the land they use for these activities. In Samoa and Tonga, about half of the population did (figure 64). The share of those who notice degradation is much higher among people who applied pesticides or fertilizers in the land where they practice agriculture (e.g. among farmers in Tonga, as many as 71 per cent of women and 69 per cent of men who use fertilizers noticed markers of degradation, such as soil erosion, loss of fertility, waterlogging, salinization or pollution, compared to 36 per cent of women and 44 per cent of men farmers who do not use pesticides nor fertilizers), indicating a strong connection between damaging agricultural practices and soil degradation.

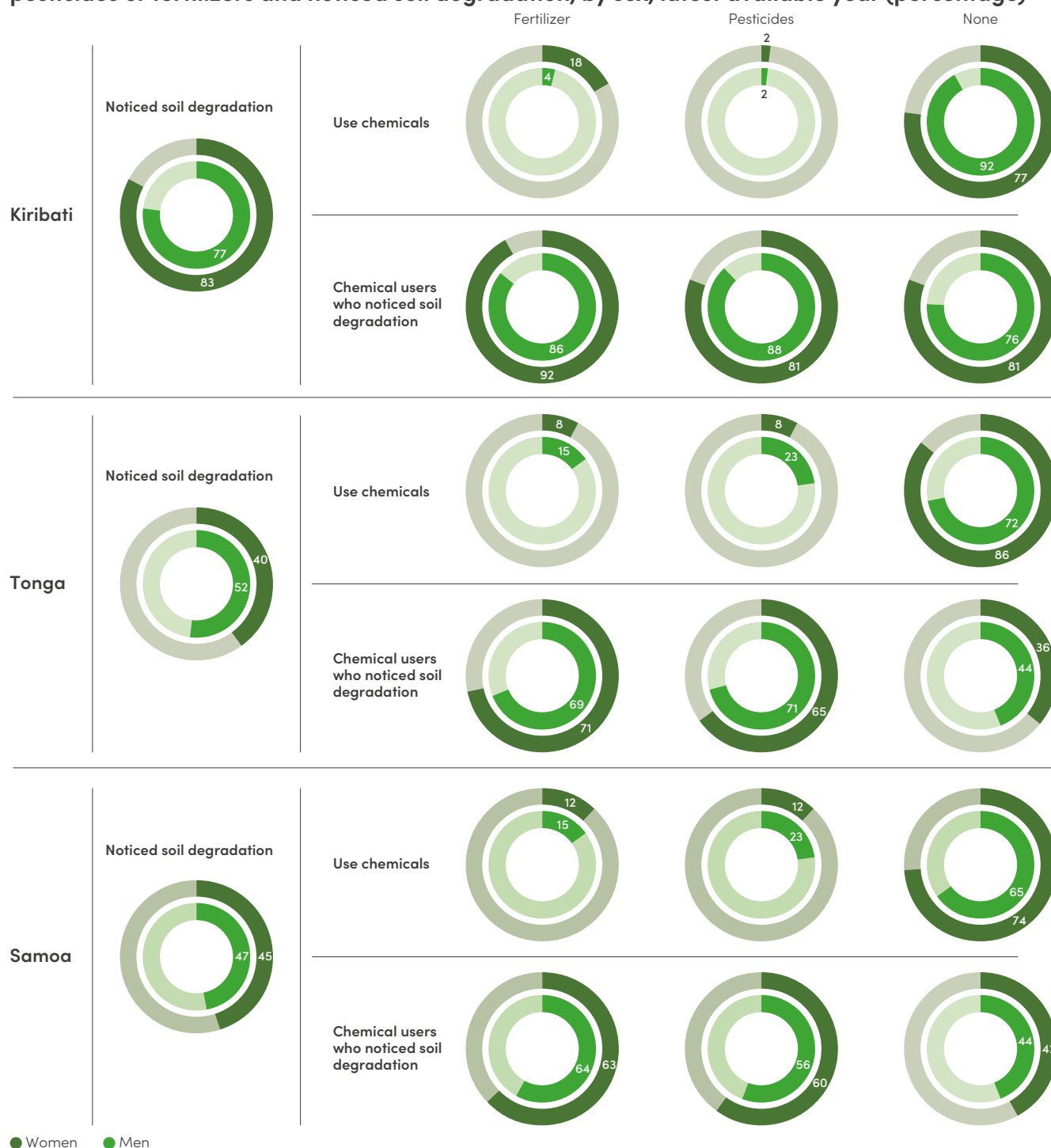
Gender differences exist in the use of these chemical products for agriculture, as well as in women's and men's engagement in agricultural activities overall: in Tonga and Samoa, men who practice agriculture are more likely than women to use synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, or growth promoters, while in Kiribati, women are more likely to use fertilizers (figure 64). This is likely, in part due to affordability of pesticides, and partly because men are more likely than women to practice agriculture for economic purposes (e.g. as a form of employment) (figure 65). These differences also dictate women's and men's differentiated impacts on soil degradation overall, as the scale of impact of commercial agriculture on the environment is much larger overall.

Other key drivers of land degradation, such as deforestation, also affect the Pacific. The region, overall, has seen declining shares of total land area covered by forests between 2000 and 2019²⁷, although countries such as Fiji, Guam and Palau, have shown important progress in reforestation (figure 66). In Kiribati, where forest area accounts for only 1.5 per cent of land, women were slightly more likely than men to notice forest degradation: 79 per cent of women and 75 per cent of men reported signs of decline in 2022, such as overall reduction of forest area, reduced variety or quantity of animals and plants, pollution, or other factors. A similar gap exists in Tonga. In some instances, but not all, women are also more likely than men to put measures in place to mitigate their impact on forests, such as replanting (in Tonga and in Samoa), fallowing (in Samoa) and others such as practicing specimen selection, practicing intermittent collection, or alternating grazing periods (in Kiribati and Samoa) (figure 67).

Given women's lower contributions to soil degradation overall, it is important to promote women's participation and agency in land and forest management related decision-making across the Pacific, as this could promote more sustainable policies in the long term. However, data from the latest United Nations Conference of Parties to Combat Land Degradation and Desertification (Riyadh) indicates that in about half of the Pacific countries and territories, there were more men than women delegates (figure 68). At the grassroots level, their engagement in environmental decision-making is also essential. At present, there are wide differences across the Pacific in this regard: while in Samoa as many as 20 per cent of women and men using wild forests participate in communal land governance groups, in Kiribati, 15 per cent of women and 11 per cent of men do, while in Tonga only 2 per cent of them do²⁸.

FIGURE 64

Proportion of the population in Kiribati, Samoa and Tonga practicing agriculture or raising livestock who (a) noticed soil degradation; (b) use pesticides or fertilizers; and (c) was using pesticides or fertilizers and noticed soil degradation, by sex, latest available year (percentage)

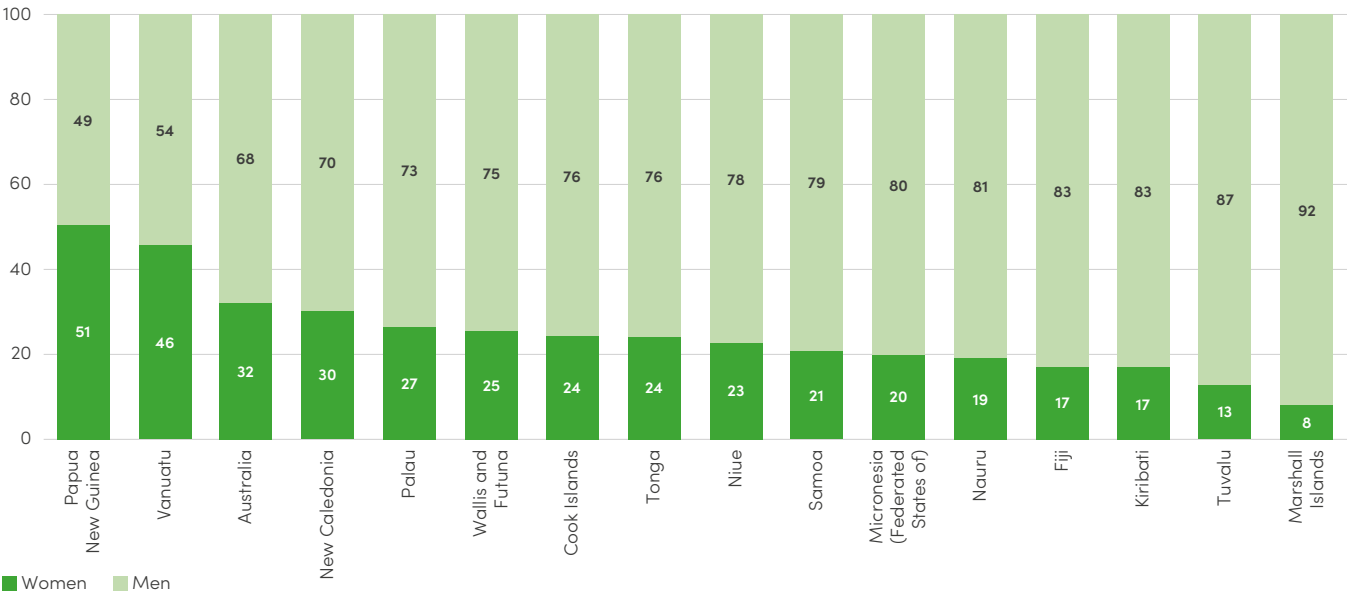


Note: The analysis included population engaged in agriculture, livestock raising and aquaculture on land plots

Source: Gender and Environment Survey: Kiribati (2024), Samoa (2023), Tonga (2022).

FIGURE 65

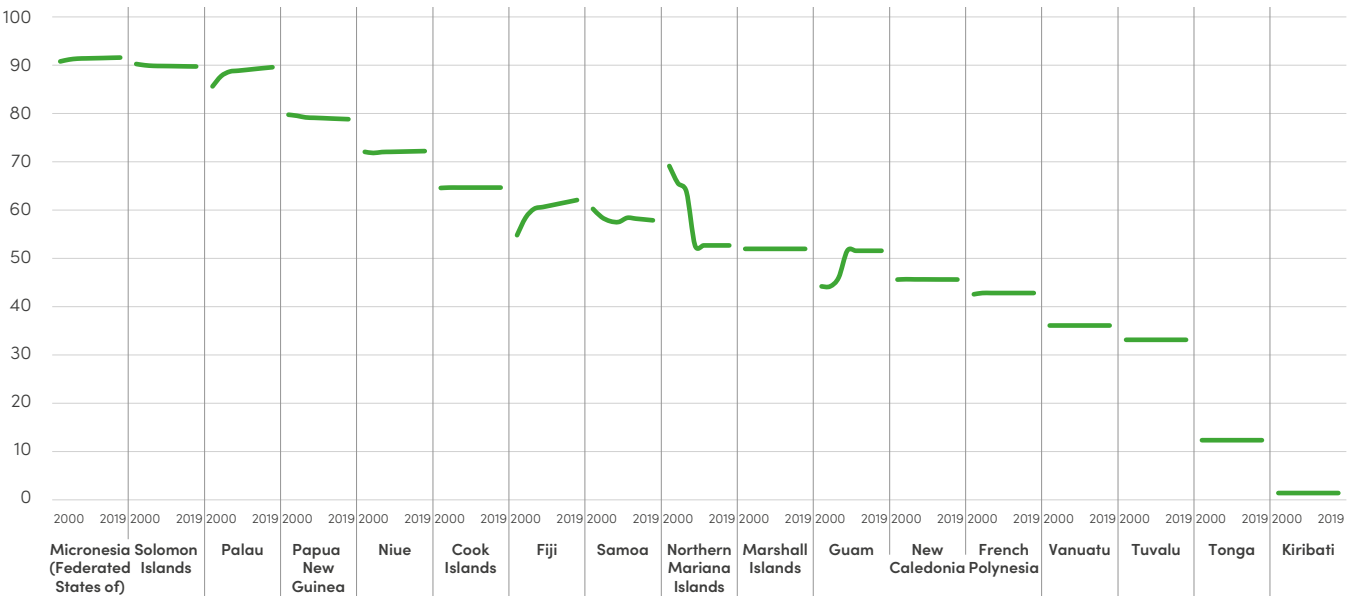
Proportion of population ages 15 and above that are employed in agriculture, forestry and fishing, by sex, latest available year (percentage)



Source: ILOSTAT Database (accessed 18 August 2025).

FIGURE 66

Proportion of total land area covered by forest, year 2000–2019 (percentage)



Source: SDG Global database (Accessed 17 September 2025).

FIGURE 67

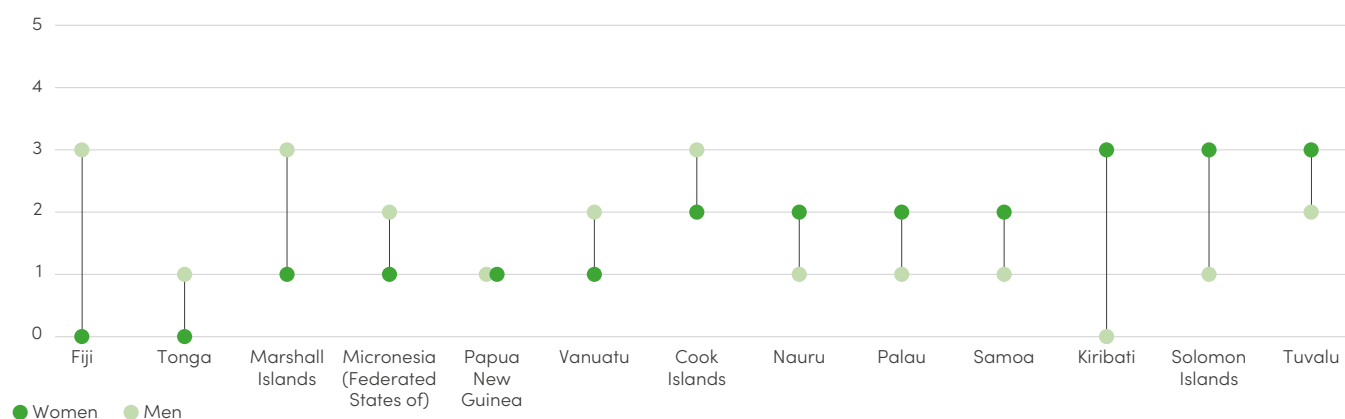
Proportion of wild forest users in Kiribati, Samoa and Tonga who saw degradation of the forest area used (left) and took action to prevent it (right), by sex (percentage)



Source: Gender and Environment Survey: [Tonga](#) (2022), [Samoa](#) (2023), [Kiribati](#) (2024).

FIGURE 68

Number of delegates to the Conference of the Parties (COP) of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), 2024, by sex (total)



Note: Based on provisional list of registered participants for the 16th session of the Conference of the Parties to UNCCD

Source: [United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification \(UNCCD\)](#).

WHO IS LAGGING BEHIND?

Women land users



PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT AFFECTS MORE BOYS THAN GIRLS, EXCEPT FOR THOSE WITH DISABILITIES, AND HAS HARMFUL REPERCUSSIONS LATER IN LIFE.

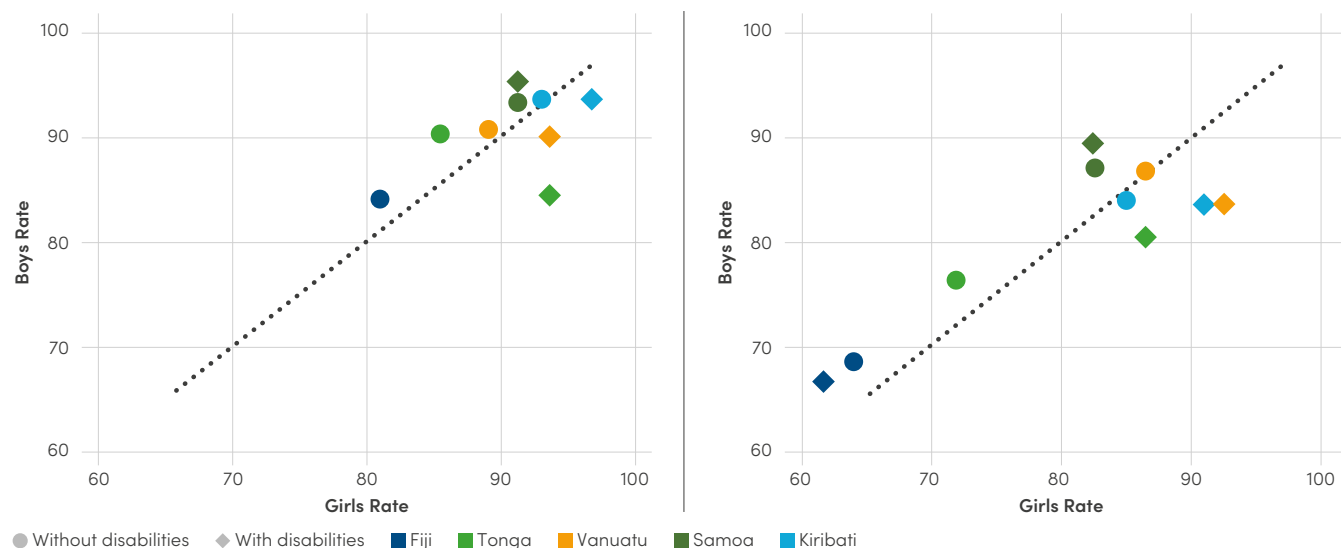
Physical punishment towards children is widespread in the Pacific, with more than 80 per cent of children in all countries receiving physical or psychological punishment from their parents or caregivers in the past month. Overall, boys are more likely than girls to be disciplined in this regard (figures 69 and 70). These dynamics, however, change substantially for children with disabilities: in almost all countries with available data, girls with disabilities are more likely than boys with disabilities to be disciplined through violent methods. Social norms are key contributors to violent behaviours across the region: many people believe that corporal punishment may be the best way to encourage children to behave, and gaps in understanding children's needs are particularly pronounced in the case of girls with disabilities and developmental delays, which renders them particularly vulnerable. In schools, educators often also employ corporal punishment, even though this is prohibited by law in 10 countries across the region.²⁹ Girls with disabilities are at disproportionate risk as they may be perceived as vulnerable and encounter enhanced difficulties for escaping or reporting abuse³⁰.

People who experience violence at a young age are at risk of long-term physical injuries, as well as mental health impacts later in life. Violent discipline has proven particularly harmful, especially due to children's inability to understand the motivation behind the act or to adopt coping strategies to alleviate their distress. As a result, evidence shows that people who experienced violent discipline at a young age are more likely to have negative educational outcomes, to perpetrate violence to others in their adult life, and to engage in substance abuse throughout their lifetimes³¹.

This aligns with statistics available on educational attainment, which indicate that girls without disabilities are more likely than boys without disabilities to attain higher levels of education in general (see Goal 4), and statistics on violence against women, which indicate that rates of physical or sexual violence against women perpetrated by a partner are higher in the Pacific than in many other world regions (see Goal 5). Substance abuse patterns are also significant in the region. For instance, 1.02 per cent of the population use amphetamines (compared to 0.58 globally), 1.55 per cent use opioids (compared to 1.17 globally), 1.89 per cent use ecstasy (compared to 1.19 globally) and 3.02 per cent use cocaine (compared to 0.47 globally). Cannabis use is far more widespread, with more than 12 per cent of people using it, compared to less than 5 per cent of people globally.³² Substance abuse remains largely an issue among men, but has significant consequences for the health and safety of women, as is a key enabler for further violent behaviours inside and outside the household.

FIGURE 69

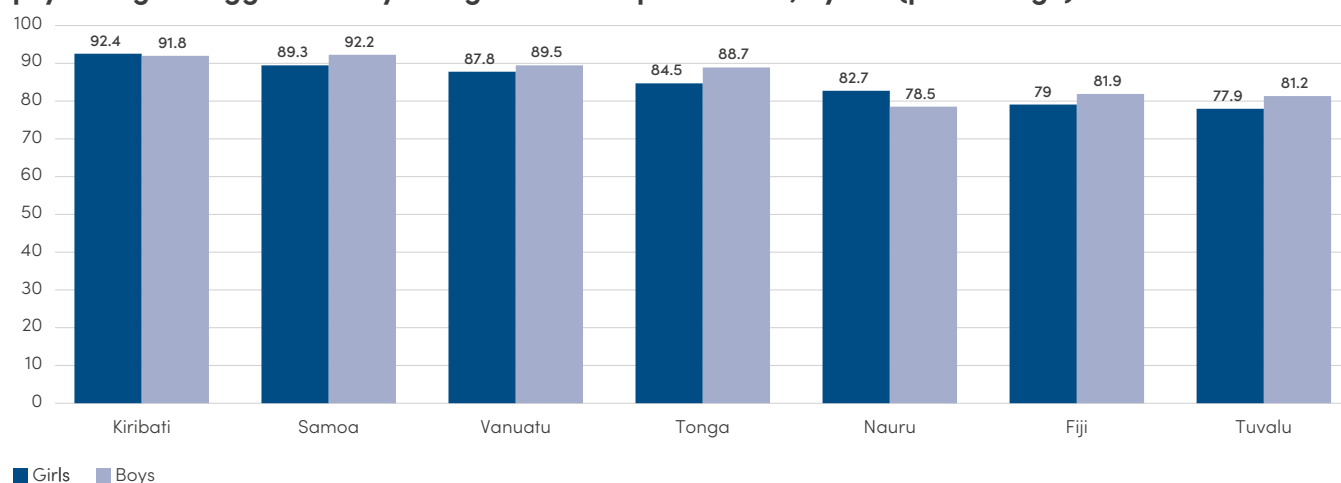
Gender differences in child discipline methods (boys to girls ratio) ages 2–14 years, latest available year, by disability status (percentage)



Source: Fiji MICS (2021), Kiribati MICS (2019), Samoa MICS (2020), Tonga MICS (2019), Vanuatu MICS (2023)

FIGURE 70

Proportion of children aged 1–14 years who experienced any physical punishment and/or psychological aggression by caregivers in the past month, by sex (percentage)



Source: Fiji MICS (2021), Kiribati MICS (2019), Nauru MICS (2023), Samoa MICS (2020), Tonga MICS (2019), Tuvalu MICS (2020), Vanuatu MICS (2023)

WHO IS LAGGING BEHIND?

Girls with disabilities



DESPITE LIMITED GENDER AID ALLOCATIONS, THE PACIFIC IS MAKING GOOD PROGRESS IN FILLING GENDER DATA GAPS.

In 2023, an estimated \$7.62 billion in official development assistance (ODA) was allocated from members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)-Development Assistance Committee (DAC) members to small island developing states. Of these, only some \$800 million (less than 10 per cent) included markers for advancing gender equality, whether as the main focus of the investment (principal) or as one angle of the investment, but not the main objective (significant). Over the past 20 years, the total amount of ODA allocated to the Pacific marked as having gender equality as a principal or significant objective has roughly doubled, but the share of these investments that target gender equality as their main purpose remains low (figure 71). While in places such as Palau, Papua New Guinea and Wallis and Futuna, 20 per cent or more of the total aid targets gender substantially, in most others these rates are much lower (figure 72).

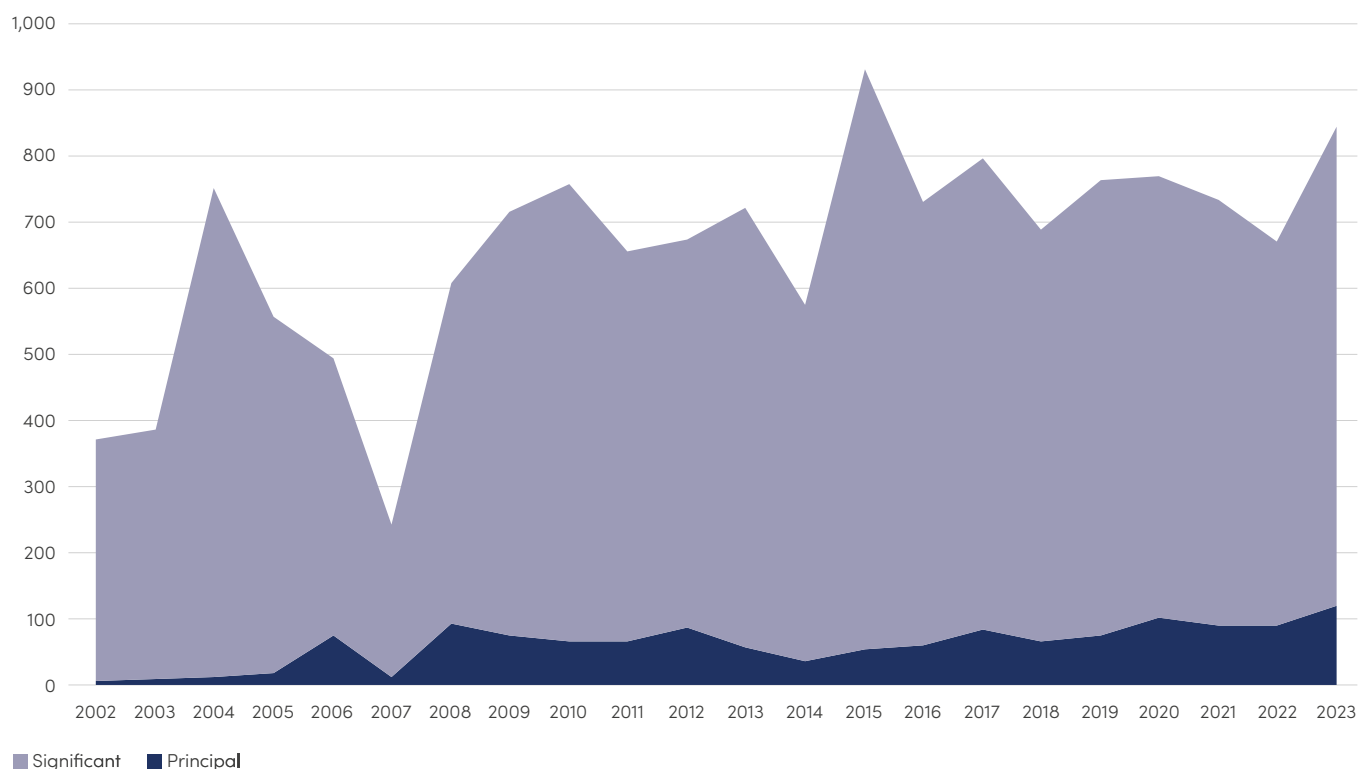
Sectors such as environmental protection and humanitarian and food aid receive substantial amounts of gender-focused ODA, but only a small fraction of the gender-focused aid is dedicated to supporting the production and use of gender data across the region. Despite this, investments in recent years, both domestic and international, have been catalytic. The [Pacific Roadmap on Gender Statistics](#), which was established in 2020, has helped guide the prioritization of gender data production across the region, driving both national and international investments and support initiatives. All of these efforts resulted in substantial gains: as of 2025, the majority of countries and territories in the region report more data to the global SDG database than the global average. Most have at least one data point for 60 per cent or more of the gender-specific SDG indicators (figure 73). Gender indicators in Goal 3 (health), Goal 4 (education) and Goal 8 (employment) are overall the most likely to see gender data available in the Pacific (figure 74). This is partially because these issues have been a global priority for decades, and several of these indicators were included in monitoring frameworks that preceded the SDGs, thus allowing Governments in the region ample time to generate and report related data. Specialized health and employment surveys have also been rolled out in many countries across the region regularly, facilitating the availability of these data. Other SDG targets, such as many in Goal 1 (poverty), Goal 11 (sustainable cities) and Goal 13 (climate) have low to no gender data availability, either because they have been traditionally only measured at the household rather than the individual level (in the case of poverty) or because some of the SDG topics included within these goals are relatively new and do not necessarily appear in traditional data collection instruments used widely across the region. Goal 5, the stand-alone goal on gender equality and women's empowerment, shows a mixed picture regarding data availability: while indicators such as those on women's representation in parliaments, women holding managerial positions, and women survivors of intimate partner violence have data available in more than 90 per cent of the region, others indicators such as those focusing on land ownership and unpaid care and domestic work still show data gaps across the region. Again, the number of years for which countries have been reporting data for these issues, along with the level of prioritization and political will to tackle them in countries, condition this tally. Support from development partners towards the production of data on violence, for instance, has also contributed.

Gender, however, is unevenly distributed across the SDG framework, with goals such as Goal 4 (education) and Goal 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions) being quite gender sensitive; others such as Goal 2 (hunger) or Goal 10 (inequalities) being gender-sparse, and a total of six goals being completely gender blind. These include

Goal 6 (water and sanitation), Goal 7 (energy), Goal 9 (infrastructure), Goal 12 (responsible production and consumption), Goal 14 (life below water) and Goal 15 (life on land). Many of the issues portrayed in the gender-blind SDGs are of outmost importance in the Pacific, and governments are making efforts to measure them from a gender perspective even though they are not currently part of the global SDG monitoring framework. Gender data exists, for instance, regarding water, sanitation and energy in multiple countries; it can be generated utilizing specialized standardized surveys popular across the region (such as MICS) where data is collected at the individual level. Similarly, an increasing number of countries in the Pacific are rolling out Gender and Environment Surveys, facilitating the production of gender indicators in areas such as climate change, life below water and life on land, among others. These efforts are offering a more holistic picture of the gender dimensions across a broader range of areas, and providing better opportunities for national governments to make informed and gender sensitive decisions in areas of relevance for the Pacific. Beyond SDG reporting, many of these efforts also offer chances for countries to report towards other global commitments, including the Sendai Framework or the Paris Agreement.

FIGURE 71

Official development assistance commitments for activities targeting gender equality and women's empowerment, by whether or not gender equality is the principal objective of the commitment, 2023 (millions of United States dollars)

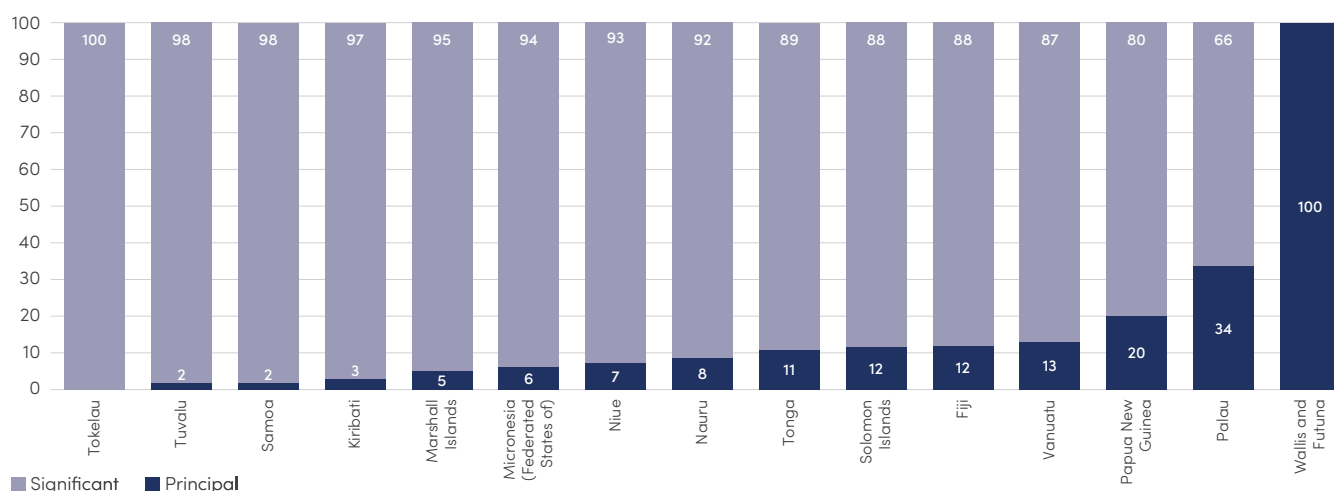


Source: OECD, Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Creditor Reporting System (CRS) - [OECD Data Explorer](#) • GenderMarkers: Aid (ODA) activities targeting gender equality and women's empowerment

Note: In their reporting to the DAC CRS, providers are requested to indicate for each activity whether or not it targets gender equality as one of its policy objectives. To qualify as "gender equality focused," an activity must explicitly promote gender equality and women's empowerment. An activity can target gender equality as its "principal" or "significant" objective, or not at all.

FIGURE 72

Share of official development assistance activities targeting gender equality and women's empowerment, by type of objective (percentage)

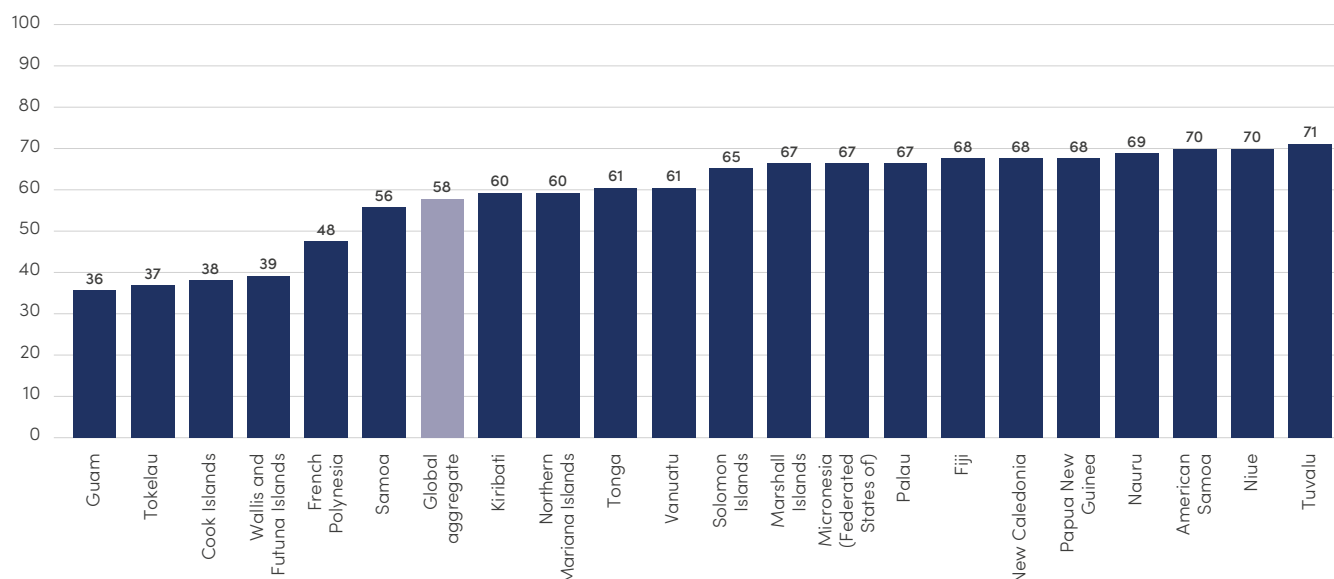


Note: In their reporting to the DAC CRS, providers are requested to indicate for each activity whether or not it targets gender equality as one of its policy objectives. To qualify as “gender equality focused,” an activity must explicitly promote gender equality and women's empowerment. An activity can target gender equality as its “principal” or “significant” objective, or not at all.

Source: OECD, Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Creditor Reporting System (CRS) - [OECD Data Explorer](#) • GenderMarkers: Aid (ODA) activities targeting gender equality and women's empowerment

FIGURE 73

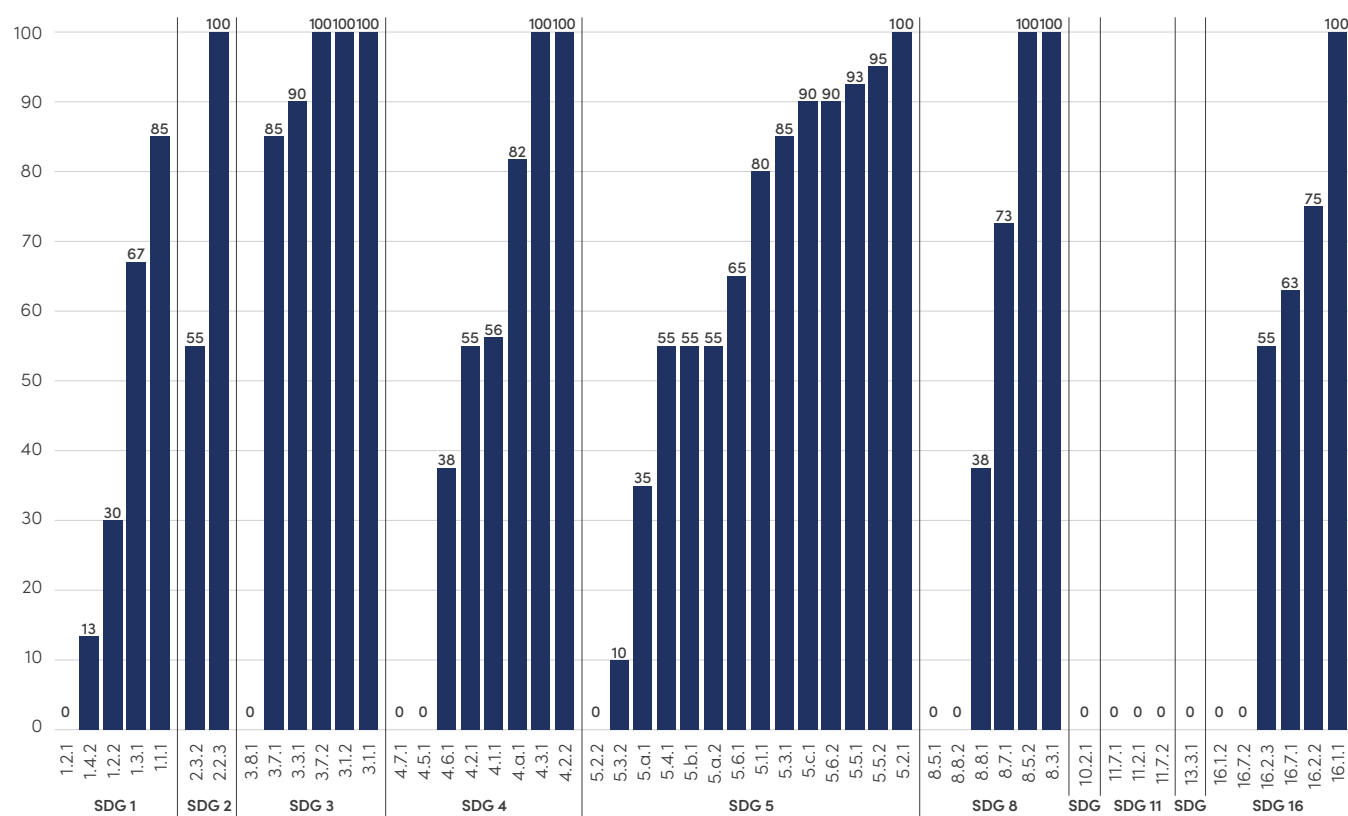
Proportion of gender-specific SDG indicators that have at least one data point as of 2025 (percentage)



Note: Shares are calculated over the 55 unique gender-specific indicators existing in the SDG monitoring framework across the 17 goals. Calculations are based on data available in the Global SDG Indicators Database as of 2025, and are based on the methodology included in the UN Women and UNSD Global Gender Snapshot Report, 2022. Global aggregate figures represent the aggregated values for both UN member states and other non-member territories. Source: UN Women calculations based on data available in the [Global SDG Indicators Database](#) (2025).

FIGURE 74

Proportion of countries and territories in the Pacific that have data available across gender-specific SDG indicators, for at least one year (percentage)



Source: United Nations Global SDG Indicators Database: SDG Analytics (2025)

Note: Calculation is based on the 52 unique gender-specific indicators spread across the 17 goals in the Global SDG Indicators Framework as of 2025. The calculation builds on the methodology explained in UN Women and UNSD's [Gender Snapshot 2022](#). Data reflects availability in 21 countries and territories as follows: American Samoa, Cook Islands, Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, New Caledonia, Niue, Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelua, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and Wallis and Futuna Islands. Indicators marked "NA" are not applicable to the Pacific. These include: indicator 5.3.2. Proportion of girls and women aged 15–49 years who have undergone female genital mutilation, by age; and indicator 16.1.2. Conflict-related deaths per 100,000 population, by sex, age and cause (apart from Papua New Guinea, where indicator 16.1.2 is applicable but no data is available). Within the Global SDG Indicator Framework, a series refers to a disaggregated data set or variable associated with an indicator. Several gender-specific indicators contain multiple series to capture different breakdowns or dimensions. A given indicator is considered to have available data if data on at least one of its series is reported to the global SDG database.

WHO IS LAGGING BEHIND?

Uncounted women and girls

ENDNOTES

- 1 Throughout this publication, references to “the Pacific” will refer to Pacific Island Countries and Territories located in Oceania excluding Australia and New Zealand, unless otherwise indicated.
- 2 UN Women and Pardee Center for International Futures (2023). Gendered analysis of the impact of climate change on poverty, productivity and food insecurity: A technical report. The estimate is based on data from the Pardee Center for International Futures for eight countries in the Pacific: Fiji, Kiribati, Micronesia (Federated States of), Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu.
- 3 Source: Sustainable Development Goals Report 2025, Statistical Annex.
- 4 Regional aggregates include Australia and New Zealand. Insufficient data was available to produce a regional aggregate for the rest of the region alone.
- 5 Women’s Economic Empowerment Brief for 14 Pacific Island Countries and Territories, UN Women (2022).
- 6 Specialized surveys utilized for the calculation of this indicator ask respondents whether they were a victim of violence in the previous 12 months. Because the surveys are conducted at different times in different countries, the 12 month reference period does not necessarily overlap across countries.
- 7 WHO (2024). Violence against women.
- 8 UN Women (2014). The Pacific Regional Ending Violence Against Women Facility Fund.
- 9 UN Women (2023). Disasters, crises and violence against women: Evidence from big data analysis.
- 10 Towards ending child marriage, UNICEF (2022).
- 11 United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2025), The Sustainable Development Goals Report: Statistical Annex.
- 12 UN Women (2016), Towards Gender Equality Through Sanitation Access.
- 13 A notable exception is Papua New Guinea, where men and boys are more likely to die, likely due to the large shares of children deaths associated with diarrhoea and cholera. Due to physiological and genetic factors, young boys are generally more likely than girls to die from disease.
- 14 The official SDG indicator on the use of clean fuels refers to fuels used for cooking, heating or lighting. However, most countries in the Pacific report the data only for cooking.
- 15 Aggregates calculated with data for seven countries. Data was not available for some of the most populous countries in the region, thus these aggregates should be interpreted with caution.
- 16 ILO 2024. Pacific employment and social monitor.
- 17 See a definition of informal jobs [here](#).
- 18 UNICEF (2024), Primary healthcare landscape analysis: East Asia and the Pacific.
- 19 Notable exceptions are Fiji and Tonga, where antenatal care coverage is widespread, including in rural areas.
- 20 Partnership for health system sustainability and Resilience and CAPRI (2024). Sustainability and Resilience in Pacific Island Health Systems.
- 21 UNICEF (2024), Primary healthcare landscape analysis: East Asia and the Pacific.
- 22 According to UN-Habitat, convenient access to public transport (areas served) is measured as a walking distance of 500 m to low-capacity transport systems (such as buses or trams) and/or 1,000 m to high-capacity systems (such as trains and ferries).
- 23 United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2025), The Sustainable Development Goals Report: Statistical Annex.
- 24 According to UN-Habitat, convenient access to open public spaces (areas served) is measured as a walking distance of 400 m to an open public space.
- 25 The regional aggregate for the share of waste collected was not available for the Pacific alone (excluding Australia and New Zealand).
- 26 Coghlan et.al, 2024
- 27 United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2025), The Sustainable Development Goals Report: Statistical Annex.
- 28 Gender and Environment Survey: Kiribati (2024), Samoa (2023), Tonga (2022).
- 29 UNICEF Child protection overview.
- 30 UNICEF, 2021. Seen, Counted, Included: Using data to shed light on the well-being of children with disabilities.
- 31 WHO (2025), Corporal punishment of children and health.
- 32 UNODC Database (Accessed on 1 October 2025). Aggregates on substance abuse refer to Oceania as a whole, including Australia and New Zealand. Insufficient data was available to display aggregates for the Pacific alone. However, where available, country data showcases similar concerns: the Marshall Islands report high annual prevalence rate in the consumption of amphetamines (2.7%); life-time methamphetamine use rates among secondary school students in the region reach extraordinarily high rates in Marshall Islands (13.1%) and Palau (7.1%).



Pacific
Community
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