



ENGAGE NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2024



THE YEAR OF BREAKTHROUGH

We Support. We Help. We Care. We Are Your Family

Talofa and Greetings to the SVSG Growing Family

I trust that the January edition of the SVSG Newsletter reaches you and your families in good health and prosperity.

It's 2024, and this year marks the 19th anniversary of SVSG as the provider of essential support services to the people of Samoa, especially the most vulnerable and the marginalized.

I am therefore delighted to usher in "The Year of Breakthrough" with each one of you.

The commencement of a new year for SVSG and its growing family, signifies an opportunity for fresh beginnings, renewed aspirations, and transformative journeys.

This commitment to breakthroughs not only aligns with SVSG's journey towards its 20th anniversary in 2025, but also, with its strategic direction set for 2023—2025.

We envision unparalleled positive changes in every facet of our work, both in the response services we provide, and the prevention programs we implement in the community. It is SVSG's holistic and human rights based approaches to service delivery.

It is therefore our pleasure to share the impact stories, the significant change stories and the ripple effect these changes have had in our families, communities and Samoa as a whole.

Here's to new beginnings, shared victories, and an extraordinary year ahead!

Warm regards,

Siliniu Lina Chang
PRESIDENT

BACK TO THE ROOTS: The Humble Beginnings

As we start our journey for 2024, and heading towards SVSG's 20th anniversary in 2025, we take a moment to pause and look back to the humble beginnings, and how SVSG's cause, has saved thousands of lives, through the organization's tautua (service).

SVSG is the voice of the voiceless and a recognized human rights defender. SVSG protects and promotes the rights of women, children and vulnerable populations, specifically their right to be free from abuse.



Vision & Mission

VISION: Caring for Children, Supporting the Victims Of Crime and Uplifting the Vulnerable

MISSION: To be recognised in Samoa as the main community organisation:

SVSG President Siliniu Lina Chang

- 1 providing access to an integrated, personalised and professional services to all survivors of crime and those in need
- 2 advocating for the rights and interests of survivors of crimes and those in need
- 3 supporting those at risk of becoming victims
- 4 advocating for violence-free families and communities
- 5 providing safe and secured shelters for survivors
- 6 championing the interests and rights of persons with disabilities.

Through the years, SVSG's work was extended to embrace survivors of gender-based violence, and worked towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 for Gender Equality.

And with societal challenges, global health pandemics and the reality of climate change for a small island state as Samoa, SVSG remains resolute in its commitment to creating a safer, enabling and empowerment environment for the most vulnerable, and the marginalized members of the community.

In this year of breakthrough, we invite you to journey together with us. This involves embracing our roots and the humble beginnings, for the valuable lessons learnt. It includes navigating opportunities to improve our service delivery, scale up on the prevention programs, and engage genuine and durable partnerships along the way.

1. OUR SERVICES

SVSG's services include, but not limited to:

1. Case Management including Welfare and Helpline
2. Court Support and Access to Justice
3. Psychosocial Support (counselling and mediation)
4. Community Engagement
5. Shelter Care & Rehabilitation

The services are delivered inclusive of people with disabilities.



SVSG's Human Rights based approach to service delivery

CASE MANAGEMENT
Interface with the public on requests for assistance and referrals to the relevant agencies. This is specifically for GBV cases.

COURT SUPPORT
Supporting victims in court and offenders of violence referred from Court to attend SVSG's rehabilitative program.

PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT
Offering a safe space for clients who seek comfort or assistance for matters relating to their mental, emotional and spiritual wellbeing.

RESIDENTIAL CARE
SVSG is the sole provider of temporary residential care for abused women and children in Samoa. There are shelters for women, teenage girls, children, and for pregnant girls as well as a school and extension building for training.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
Prevention programs engages the community to take ownership of their role as care takers of their respective communities. SVSG has a network of community leaders volunteering as SVSG village representatives.

6

The content of the 2024 Newsletter will detail SVSG's human rights based approach to service delivery under the headings:

1. Case Management
2. Court Support & Access to Justice
3. Psychosocial Support
4. Community Engagement
5. Residential (Shelter Care) & Rehabilitation

All the prevention and educational projects implemented by SVSG, the contributions by the SVSG village representatives and the SVSG youth, form part of Community Engagement.

1.1 CASE MANAGEMENT

The requests for assistance received by SVSG from the public, private or government Ministries are referred to as a ‘Case’

A case can trigger other available services. For instance, a domestic violence case would require the Response Team to provide Psychosocial (counselling), application for Interim Protection Order, a referral to the hospital (if needed), Court and /or Shelter care support. Criminal matters are immediately referred to the Police.

Over the last two years (2021—2022 & 2022—2023), SVSG has been monitoring the trends in the cases on family matters, with the Recognized Seasonal Employer (RSE) Scheme as the major contributing factor.

This is in reference to broken families from either one of the parents taking up employment opportunities offered by the RSE. Some of the children been caught in the middle of custody battles ended up at the Campus of Hope shelter facility, while the parents sought out their differences.

Due to the RSE, there has been a noted increase in the number of requests for assistance in processing custody and maintenance cases through to Court.

While SVSG has provided relevant counselling support, shelter care and our mediation support for the families affected by the RSE, at the same time, SVSG has been lobbying to government for review of the seasonal work scheme, weighing in the benefits and the costs, not only to the families, but also to the social protection of our people.

Cases have also been referred from informers, who are concerned members of the public, which highlighted the increased knowledge by our community, that violence is not a public concern.

And while we are still in the post COVID-19 recovery period, we have seen crimes of hunger, crimes of distress, crimes been committed merely for survival, in the trend of cases lodged with SVSG.

Statistics on case management therefore provides SVSG with valuable insights into trends of social issues on the rise in Samoa, the accessibility of the support services to the people requiring assistance, and how such trends inform further improvement in SVSG’s response work and/or scale up SVSG’s community engagement for prevention.

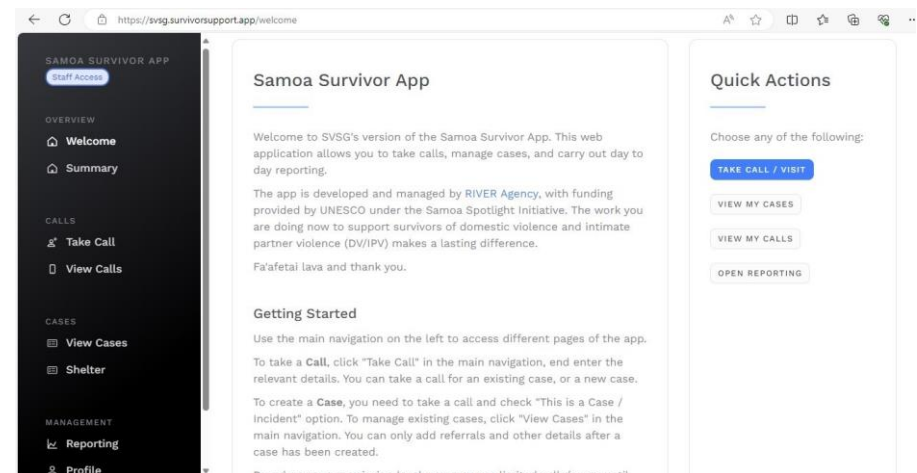
Just before Christmas on 21 December 2023, SVSG with funding support from UNESCO Spotlight Initiative and in partnership with RIVER, a digital company in New Zealand, launched new updates to the SVSG Samoa Survivor App. <https://svsg.survivorsupport.app/admin>

The SVSG Samoa Survivor App is a web application which allows Case Officers to take calls, manage cases, and carry out day to day reporting.

The app takes SVSG’s case management to the next level, with efficient and timely case input and processing, Helpline calls input, case report retrieval and analysis, to inform further prevention programs by SVSG in addressing violence.

Most importantly, the SVSG Samoa Survivor App ensures the integrity of the case statistics is maintained as well as the timely retrieval of statistics at any one time.

It is a milestone achievement by SVSG and development partners, marking a breakthrough initiative in SVSG’s work on addressing family violence and gender based violence.



Case Highlights:

A total of 43 new cases were lodged with SVSG during January 2024; 37 at the main office in Apia, and 6 to the SVSG Office at Tuasivi, Savaii. Some of these cases are highlighted herein:

Welfare Assistance:



SVSG's Social Work Team conducted a thorough assessment of a case involving an elderly, paralyzed mother referred to SVSG via the Helpline. SVSG provided essential welfare assistance, supplying adult diapers and boxes of canned fish to assist with the family's immediate need for food supplies.

Fracture Ties:



Swift response to a child abuse case revealed a heartbreaking situation where a child had been assaulted by her older sisters.

Our response team acted promptly, providing immediate shelter for the child, who is currently undergoing medical checkups and healing at the Campus of Hope.

Timely Response and Ongoing Support: A young girl admitted to the Campus of Hope due to a case of sexual abuse experienced severe abdominal discomfort late at night. SVSG's Response Team facilitated her prompt transportation to the hospital, demonstrating the interconnected efforts of SVSG, the Fire Emergency Services Authority, and the Samoa Police Service in ensuring the victim's well-being.

Most notable during January was how Samoan people living overseas have become the voices of their relatives locally, emailing through to seek case management assistances for them.

SVSG had learnt that the stigma associated with speaking up and reporting violence, is very much alive in some of the village communities. As such, SVSG's community engagement programs will continue to raise awareness on violence, encouraging people to report and seek help.

Custody: RSE

A 23-year-old mother visited SVSG's office in January, seeking help in seeking custody of their 2 children. Her husband left for Australia as a seasonal worker and haven't heard from him over a year. His family advised the distressed woman that her husband has another partner in Australia. SVSG is providing ongoing counselling support for the young mother while the Courts is dealing with the custody case for her children.

Counselling: RSE

A 47 year old father who was on seasonal work returned home to find his wife eloping with another man, leaving their three children to be cared for by his parents. Angry and disappointed, the father was suicidal, even contemplating doing harm to his wife. Through counselling, the father showed signs of improvement, and eventually sought assistance for a marriage counselling for him and his wife. SVSG is continuing to work with the father and his family, supporting him throughout the healing process.

To address the need for settling in support, counselling and advocacy for our people on the RSE scheme, SVSG has secured partnerships with support service organisations in New Zealand.

For the family members of the seasonal workers remaining in Samoa, SVSG's support services are always available, including through the Helpline.

24 Hour Helpline

SVSG received close to 100 calls through the Helpline during the Christmas and new years holiday period, from 23 December 2023 to 3 January 2024.

An analysis of the calls identified 30% were for domestic violence incidents, either from victims of violence themselves, of referred from the National Health Services, SVSG village representatives in the community and concerned neighbors.

70% were calls from the community, seeking counselling assistance and advice on general matters, such as broken families due to separation because of the Recognized Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme, village matters pertaining to title bestowment, spouses anticipating violence as their partners were out partying during the holidays and many others.

Helpline Call: Safety

A mother, fearing for her safety and that of her children, contacted SVSG's helpline. The Case Officer swiftly intervened, obtained an Interim Protection Order, and collaborated with the Police DVU to relocate her and her children to a secure environment.

Helpline Call: Medical Assistance and Domestic Violence

SVSG responded to a village representative's report of an elderly man needing medical help. Another case involved a woman seeking aid to escape domestic abuse; SVSG, in collaboration with the DVU, ensured her prompt relocation to a safe environment with her family.

The sponsorship of the free 24 hour Helpline service has been made possible and continues to be accessible to the community in times of need, thanks to the partnership with the Digicel Samoa and the Vodafone Samoa since

Welfare Support

In recent years SVSG has expanded its operations to fight against the root causes of violence and social problems in our community i.e. poverty and lack of education.



SVSG's welfare assistance includes immediate relief such as accommodation, food and clothing on a temporary basis.

SVSG is particularly concerned with the link between poverty and crime, domestic violence and other social problems.

Breaking the cycle of violence and of poverty cycle are the goals behind SVSG's economic empowerment program.

For families requesting welfare assistance as a case, SVSG's social workers carried out home assessments to determine the relevant support, on a case by case basis.

During the festive season December 2023 and January 2024, SVSG has to provide not only case management service to some of the survivors of violence, but also welfare for those requiring hospitalization, for severe injuries.

SVSG's welfare assistance included food, clothing, linen etc, while the survivors are being hospitalized. Through your in kind donation, SVSG is able to provide welfare assistance for such urgent cases.

1.2 COURT SUPPORT & ACCESS TO JUSTICE

SVSG's survivor-centred approach to its support services ensures that relevant support for the survivors are available.

Such support includes advocating for them through the legal process. It involves informing clients of general legal information and their rights under the law and providing assistance to familiarise victims with the court process so that they can be prepared when they enter the courtroom.

Under SVSG's casework, SVSG applies for Interim Protection Orders to the Family Court for the protection of men, women and children affected by family violence.

SVSG also walks to court with the children survivors of violence under its shelter care service.

At the same time, SVSG takes a holistic approach to violence, supporting restorative justice for the offenders of violence referred from the Family Court and the Youth Court.

Since 2013 when the Family Court was set up in Samoa, SVSG has been carrying out rehabilitative counselling programs with men, women and young offenders of violence. This comprehensive program includes Anger Management, Drugs and Alcohol Management, Stress Management, Counselling, and Reconciliation through Family Group Conferences (FGC).

SVSG reports back to the Family Court for each referral to the Program, which is estimated to reach close to 4,000 men, women and young offenders for 10 years from 2013—2023. The Program remained self-funded by SVSG until 2022.

With the support of the Governments of Samoa and Australia through the Tautua Partnership of the Samoa Gender Partnership Program, the court support services for offenders of violence have been funded from 2022 to date.

The funding includes the program for the offenders in Upolu, referred to SVSG's main office in Apia, as well as the offenders in Savaii, referred to SVSG's office at Tuasivi.

Men's Advocacy Program



As we usher in the new year, the Men's Advocacy Program returns, delving into powerful scriptures and emphasizing the eternal nature of godly covenants.

The program focuses on commitment and understanding, guiding men towards positive change, facilitated by village and church leaders, as well as Alumni members of the Men's Advocacy Program.

Women's Advocacy Program

After a brief break in December during the festive season, the Women's Advocacy Program for offenders of violence resumed in January.

Over 20 remarkable women continued on with their program from December, with some of them due for sentencing at the Family Court from late January, February to March 2024.



Due to the success of the economic empowerment program for Nofotane Women, the Family Court are also referring some of the women offenders of violence to SVSG's Nofotane Program, in addition to the rehabilitative counselling program offered by the SVSG Advocacy.

1.3 PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT



It has been a challenge for SVSG in the beginning, to provide psychosocial or counselling for our people, as part of its support services.

This is due to the fact that our people used to see counselling as a foreign approach to problem solving, and as such, people hesitated or were too shy to confide their problems to others, more so, a stranger.

Over the years, SVSG continues to build its relationship and managed to gain the trust of the community, through the impact of its work, in saving lives.

Today, our people are more comfortable to open up about their problems. We have seen people walking in seeking counselling support, others are calling in through the Helpline, while others are requesting family counselling within their own homes, and the SVSG Psychosocial Team have attended the requests.

SVSG has a strong team of qualified counsellors forming the Psychosocial Team.

The majority of the Team are volunteers, offering their service to the main office in Apia, Tuasivi, and also on call, for counselling services required by callers to the Helpline.

This service has been sought and utilized not only for the walk in public, but also the Police and the Courts, through referrals to SVSG of clients for counselling.

At the same time, SVSG's Social Workers complement the work of the Psychosocial Team, and vice versa.

In January, a student from the BYU-Hawaii majoring in Social Work and minor in Psychology started her internship with SVSG for 4 months. This is part of the MoU between SVSG and the BYU on Social Work.

Out of the 43 cases lodged with SVSG during January, 95% of the cases required counselling support.

In addition, telephone counselling accounted for 30% of the callers to the Helpline during the Christmas and New Year's holidays.

A total of 54 abused women and children at the Campus of Hope age 5 to 35 have received one-on-one counselling during January.

1.4 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

1.4.1 Economic Empowerment Program to Prevent Violence

In 2015, SVSG's case management database found 85% of women survivors of violence who sought support from SVSG were unemployed Nofotane women.

With a vision to economically empower these women, SVSG successfully applied to the UN Women Fund for Gender Equality (UNFGE) and started the livelihood skills training of 5,170 Nofotane women from 2016—2018. The result saw 646 trained Nofotane women, starting a small business and earning an income.

From 2020—2022, SVSG again was successful in seeking financial assistance from the European Union through the Civil Society Support Program, to sustain the income generation and self-employed of Nofotane women. The result shows 1,410 being supported with financial literacy and product development trainings.

These women, became the breadwinners for their families during COVID-19, reducing the poverty, anxiety and financial distress of the women and their families.

The significant change stories of these women and their families, was one way SVSG was able to assess the impact of the economic empowerment of women, as a preventative approach to violence.

The Creator of Beautiful Floral Seis- Tausala Misiotele Faasisila, a 36-year-old mother of four, is the talented artist behind beautiful floral Sei designs.



After attending the Nofotane Program in 2016 and learning the art of creating floral seis, Tausala has been on a mission to continuously design different patterns.

Her creations are now earning her more than ST1,000 a week, establishing her as the main breadwinner in her family. There are no more violence reported from Tausala's family since taking part in the Nofotane Program with SVSG.



Muia Silipa is the talented artisan responsible for creating these exquisite bags which are very popular in the New Zealand and Australian markets.

As one of our Star Earners of the Nofotane Program, Muia continues to build her capacity in weaving by attending relevant trainings conducted locally. In addition, through her economic empowerment, Muia has built the confidence to take up community courses offered by local institutions in office management.

This is a story of breakthrough for a Nofotane woman, who was once very shy, with low self-esteem.

Contribution to Economic Growth

SVSG is proud to note that the Nofotane Women are now contributing to the economy of the country through their earnings.

This is particularly important during the post COVID-19 recovery period as the small businesses set up by the Nofotane women, resulted in employment opportunities, especially for many working in the tourism industry through their hand-craft products.

Families of the Nofotane women have increased their buying powers through their income. There will be an overall improvement in the standard of living as the economy recovers.

For SVSG, this is a very positive outcome. There has been a noted improvement in the relationship between the Nofotane women and their in laws. There were no more violence reported from the families of the empowered Nofotane women. What we have seen instead, is the husband, supporting the small business developed by the wife, hence, a very positive family empowerment outcome.

January saw the continuous efforts by SVSG to strengthen the business skills of nofotane women entrepreneurs through a project funded by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia (UN ESCAP).

Titled: The SVSG/ESCAP Nofotane Business Development Training, the Project's goal is to economically empower 100 current or aspiring Nofotane woman entrepreneurs from remote or rural areas of Samoa, by providing them with critical skills for business sustainability.

The Project is supported by ESCAP's Catalysing Women's Entrepreneurship



(CWE) programme, funded by Global Affairs Canada, as part of the programme's efforts to enhance the economic empowerment of rural and remote indigenous women entrepreneurs.

The progress of SVSG's work with the nofotane women highlights the organization's commitment to the prevention of violence through economic empowerment.

The Project also supports ESCAP's work to break down barriers experienced by women entrepreneurs in establishing, managing and developing an enterprise. Furthermore, the Project is aligned to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals of No Poverty, Gender Equality, Quality Education, Decent Work and Economic Growth, and Reduced Inequalities.

Seeing the economically empowered younger and the older nofotane women together, is the sustainability of the Nofotane Program by SVSG to address violence against women and girls in Samoa.





On 27 December 2023, SVSG President counter-signed with the European Commission's Head of Cooperation a Grant Agreement valued at EUR415,000 for SVSG to implement and set up the Nofotane Samoa Social Enterprise.

The initial pre-financing payment of EUR155,332.76 was received in January to kickstart the implementation of this exciting Nofotane Project.

The Project is noted as one of the major breakthroughs for the Nofotane Program, targeting the empowerment of not just the Nofotane women, but also their families.



1.4.2 EVE Research Project: Evidence for Violence Prevention in the Extreme

The EVE Project is a research study conducted in partnership with local villages to develop an indigenous approach to preventing violence against women, funded by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) and based at University College London (UCL) in the UK. The Research is for 4 years, from March 2020 to 2024.

In Samoa, SVSG is leading The EVE Project, and supported by the Centre for Samoa Studies at the National University of Samoa and the Samoa Bureau of Statistics.

The Research is referred to locally as A Le Saua Le Alofa (Love Shouldn't Hurt). SVSG have selected 30 village representatives from 10 villages to develop an approach for researching violence against women that works within Fa'a Samoa ('the Samoan way').

Since 2020, we have done four main activities:



(1) Our 30 village representatives were trained in interview skills and completed interviews with members of their village.

(2) Based on the interviews and community conversations, we developed a theory of change for how to prevent violence against women.

(3) We conducted a survey with 9 of the 10 villages to understand factors that increase the risk of violence and also that protect women from violence.

(4) We piloted an intervention to assist communities in developing their own strategies for violence prevention.

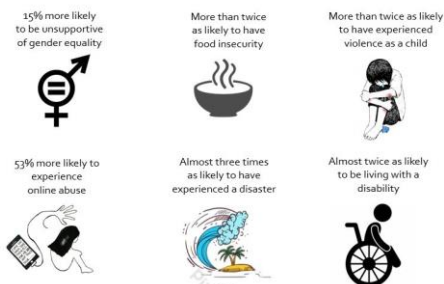
What we did.



During the Spotlight Initiative National Reference Group Symposium in December 2023, SVSG was invited to present on the preliminary findings of the research.

EVE Survey results

Women exposed to domestic violence in the past year are...



What we have learnt from the survey:

- * Domestic violence is caused by many factors, including previous experiences of abuse and natural disasters, which affect our mental health and increase our risk of experiencing violence.
- * Other factors outside of our control also increase our risk of violence, including living with a disability, or experiencing food insecurity. Gender norms also play a role.
- * To prevent violence we need comprehensive community-based programming that addresses multiple risk factors at the same time.

The Research project is expected to complete in March 2024.

1.4.3 Gender Equality Program

Enhancing economic women empowerment, reducing gender-based violence and increasing service access for women victims is the mantra behind a Samoa-Australia Governments Gender Partnership Program (SGPP) that was launched in May 2020.

The Gender Partnership Program has four civil society partners – the Samoa Victim Support Group, the Samoa Family Health Association, Samoa Women Association of Growers and the Women In Business Development Inc .

Through the SGPP, SVSG has scaled built a stronger community approach towards GBV responsiveness through implementing activities to achieve four main outcomes:

1. SVSG village representatives provide high quality support to women experiencing violence.
2. Women experiencing violence have access to services, support and counselling.
3. Perpetrators of GBV have improved GBV knowledge, attitude and behaviours.
4. SVSG has stronger organisational capacity.

The Outcomes 1 and 2 have been achieved through the completion of trainings for 200 SVSG village representative and the operation of the Sakura House for the abused women requiring shelter care. Monitoring these activities are ongoing.



The activities towards achieving Outcomes 3 and 4 are continuing.

In January, management and staff were engaged in capacity building to go over the SVSG Child Safeguarding Policy, which was previously the SVSG Child Protection Policy, being reviewed under the SGPP Program.

1.4.4 Community Prevention Programs to End Violence Against Children

Violence against children remains a major issue in Samoa with nine (9) out of ten (10) children experiencing violence discipline in their homes (National Human Rights Institute, 2017, *National Inquiry into Family Violence*).

Not surprisingly, more children with functional difficulty (sensory impairments) are punished physically. These alarming figures concerning children in Samoa convinced SVSG to propose a holistic preventative and responsive child protection programme with UNICEF Pacific in 2020.

Through social and behavior change communication modalities such as sustained community dialogues, SVSG has completed positive discipline parenting for more than 1,000 parents in 25 villages and lifeskills for adolescent workshops with 985 adolescents in the same villages.

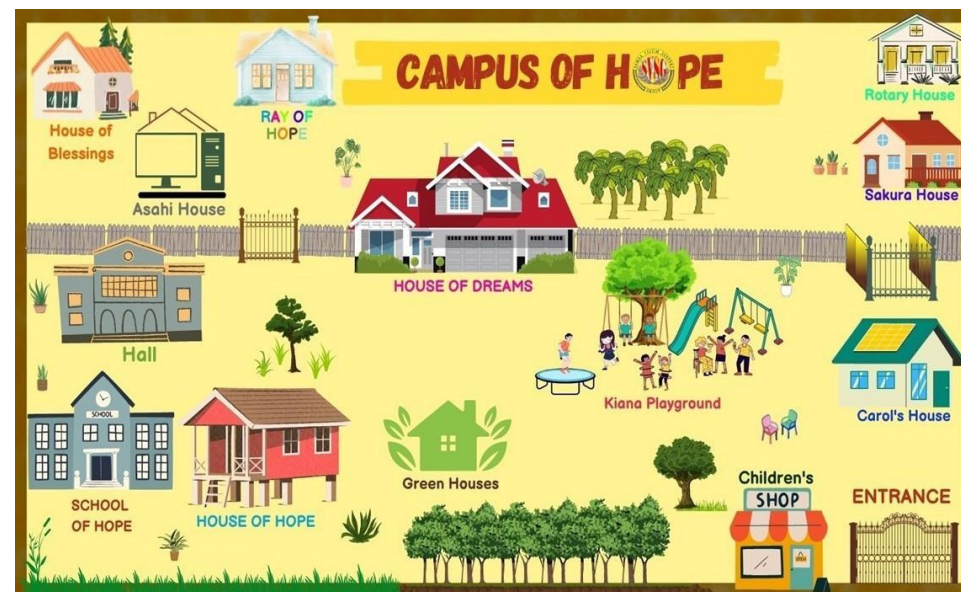
In January, SVSG received ST53,340 as part of the funding arrangements with UNICEF Pacific to scale up SVSG's community prevention programs.

The funding will enable SVSG to carry out prevention programs on violence against children, with 5 more communities (either villages or schools) during the 12 months period up to December 2024.

The completion of reviewing the SVSG Child Safeguarding Policy in November 2023 and the training of its personnel on it in January 2024, are part of SVSG's organizational capacity building, to ensure that its services and programs do no further harm to the children, especially those seeking support under the organization's shelter care service.



1.5 SHELTER CARE & REHABILITATION



SVSG is the sole provider of temporary residential care for abused women and children in Samoa. SVSG operates several shelters and two schooling facilities at the Campus of Hope in Apia. The Campus is located on leased land from the Government of Samoa.

SHELTER FACILITIES

SVSG is sheltering an overwhelmingly increasing number of women and children who are victims of violence. Some victims are exposed to further abuse when they return to their home or no longer have a home to return to. Victims are safe and well cared for at SVSG shelters.

Sakura House

Sakura House is a domestic violence shelter for women. Sakura is a name for the Japanese cherry blossom season and means a 'better life'. It also represents a time of renewal and optimism.

Asahi House

Asahi House is a training centre for the children that includes a computer lab. Asahi means the 'rising sun'. The Government of Japan built and donated Sakura House and Asahi House as part of its Grass-Roots Human Security Programme and were officially opened in June 2021.

House of Blessings

House of Blessings was built in 2015 with funding support from an Australian donor. The nursery functions as a place where young mothers can raise their children when they need a safe environment. The majority of the children who are raised in the nursery (until 3+ years old) are born from children who are survivors of rape.

House of Hope

House of Hope was the first shelter to be built in Samoa (in 2012) to provide a temporary home for children aged 3 to 12 years old. Through the donation of the Rotary Club of Surfers Sunrise in Queensland, Australia, the house safely cares for children who are victims of crime.

House of Dreams

House of Dreams was built in 2015 with funding support from an Australian donor. It provides a temporary home for female survivors of crimes who are 13 years old or above and under the care of SVSG.

Ray of Hope Shelter

Ray of Hope was specifically built in 2016 by the Ray of Hope Foundation and Digicel Group to shelter pregnant survivors of rape who are under the care of SVSG. The house offers private clinical rooms for regular check-ups, which protects them from being exposed in public hospitals.



SCHOOLING FACILITIES

The two schooling facilities at the Campus are for children who are survivors of gender-based violence and neglect as well as for children with disabilities. SVSG recognizes the child's right to education and the need for children to maintain a stable routine as they await their court case.

School of Hope

School of Hope follows the curriculum of mainstream schooling. It also offers ongoing counselling as well as opportunities for growth and development to traumatized victims of sexual abuse. It is important that the school remains private to protect the children from public scrutiny.

The School of Hope has been financially supported by the Government of Samoa under the One Government Grant, since 2015.

The Cabinet's decision on 17 January 2014 [FK (14) 02], which approved the recruitment of suitable teachers for the School attest to the importance of the continuation of the children's education while awaiting their court cases.

The continued financial support from the Government to date for the abused children's education contributes to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 4: Quality Education.



Extension School Building 2017

Built by youth for youth, the School of Hope has a separate classroom that caters for activities like home economics and livelihood training workshops. When young people are equipped with a livelihood skill they are equipped to contribute to society.

Having a skill empowers them to contribute to their own livelihood. This project was initiated by students from Helensvale State High School. The school has since partnered with four other high schools in Queensland to raise further funds for the building.

Hope Gift Shop

The souvenir shop sells goods produced from the children's livelihood rehabilitation, such as printed lava lava, jewellery and handicrafts.

The gift shop extension was kindly financed through a donation from the Swire Shipping in December 2023. Included in the donation was WST500 every month for 12 months, to finance the materials for the children's livelihood rehabilitation programs.

Printed lavalava, t-shirts, children's dresses are just some of the children's creations made possible through the donation from the Swire Shipping. The products are being sold to the visitors to the Campus at the Hope Gift Shop, to assist with the sustainability of the shelter programs.



A total of 87 children ages 3 months to 18 years were cared for at the Campus of Hope shelter facility from 1—31 January 2024.

Out of the 87 children:

69 are female

18 are male

Of the 69 female, 65% or 44 girls are survivors of sexual abuse (inclusive of female babies born of the girl survivors).

Of the 18 male, 9 are survivors of physical abuse, 8 are children from broken families as a result of the Recognized Seasonal Employer Scheme (RSE) and 1 abandoned child with physical disabilities.

90% of the children are traumatized due to the physical, sexual and emotional abuse they have suffered, especially those who have been abuse within their own homes.

As such, SVSG's shelter care service provides both a secured shelter, attention to the children's well-being, but most importantly, rehabilitation programs to support them through healing.

SVSG is the only provider of shelter care services and rehabilitation for abused women and children in Samoa, and demand for the service is high.



The service continues to be self-funded by SVSG through financial donation, financial, in kind and volunteer support of the community, both here and abroad.

In January, boxing champion Joseph Parker joins the Stunzner family tradition of charitable giving to children, sharing stories and encouraging positivity during a recent visit. Donations included bulk food, supplies, and a monetary contribution to support the cause



There was also a visit, volunteer and donation from Joan Eneliko and her family from Brisbane Australia.



Mikaele & Isabel Maiava, together with the management and staff of Bella's Kitchen visited the children and presented in kind and financial donation to assist with the children's daily needs.

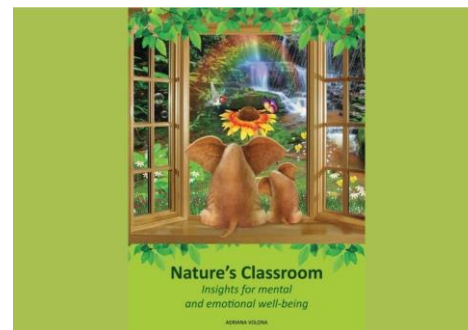


Before the outgoing Australian High Commissioner, Her Excellency Ms. Emily Luck left Samoa in January, she visited SVSG to bid her farewell, and to present miscellaneous supplies donated for the Campus of Hope.

Her Excellency has been donating to the Campus during her time in Samoa as the Australian High Commissioner.

Thank you Your Excellency for your support.

Thank you Adriana Volona for this useful donation to assist with SVSG's rehabilitation programs for the children.



Dear SVSG Community

I am sending this e-book: Nature's Classroom to be used freely with the children that you/your organization serves. This book promotes mental and emotional well-being of children from about 5 years old to teenage years. It can also be used for parents/adults as well. Nature is a great teacher and healer that people from all cultures understand and appreciate.

I am making this book available for free to all children, teachers, and carers of children, as a tool to help guide them, build their confidence, and reduce their levels of stress, anxiety and depression.

I hope the children find this book helpful



The saving lives nature of SVSG's support services is very much evidence at the Campus of Hope.

It has not only provided a safe refuge for the abused women and children, but it has been a place where new lives are born into, despite the circumstances of the sexual abuse, endured by the girl survivors.

The shelter care and rehabilitation services provided by SVSG have been carried out with love, and without prejudice. We stretched whatever donation we received, to ensure that children's daily needs are accommodated.

At any one time, about 90% of the food, clothes, toiletries, stationeries and all the necessities for the children's well-being are donated from the community.

Rehabilitation programs catered for the children's trauma, to assist with their healing process while on Campus.



Furniture for Schools (FFS) Charitable Trust NZ

In January, SVSG President met with the Chief Executive Officer of the Ministry of Education, Aea Chris Hazelman seeking an exemption from import duty support for the donated furniture for the School of Hope.

Thank you to Mr. Callum Blair, a Trustee of the FFS for coordinating the collection and shipment of the container to Samoa for the Campus.

Trustee
Furniture for Schools

TORCH OF PEACE: NATIONAL CAMPAIGN ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN



Towards the end of 2023, SVSG and its partners and supporters carried out the Torch of Peace Campaign,

The 10-day journey of the Torch reached more than 50,000 Samoans in Upolu, Manono-tai and Savai'i to raise awareness against violence.

The reach of the Campaign highlighted a community much more aware of violence against women, compared to 2012, during the first time that SVSG took the Torch of Peace campaign out in the community.

For SVSG, the Torch of Peace campaign really puts the spotlight on violence and the importance of community engagement.

TORCH OF PEACE CLOSING PROGRAM: CLOSING REMARKS

“When we have done all the things that are commanded of us, the glory remains with the God almighty, as we humble ourselves as unworthy servants. We were simply doing what we have been called to do.”

And for that, we say, Thank you Lord.

On behalf of the Development Partner Agency, the UNDP; the SVSG Board and the extended family of the Samoa Victim Support Group, those who are gathered here today, and those who are with us in spirit, we say Fa’afetai. Fa’afetai. Fa’afetai tele lava.

To the Government of Samoa, for accepting the collective message of the nation, presented to you, the Honorable Minister of the Ministry of Women, Community & Social Development, Mulipola Anarosa Molioo.

To the leaders of the churches who have been with us in prayer, throughout the Torch of Peace journey.

To the village leaders, who have walked the road with us as family, proud of our cultural heritage and Christian beliefs.

To the women and girls, who have boldly carried the peace message with humility

Lastly, to the children who have been at the forefront of spreading the message of hope, peace and light; the children survivors of violence at the Campus of hope; all of this work is for you; for you are the champions of gender equality work in Samoa, now and into the future.

Thank you Samoa for trusting the Samoa Victim Support Group to be of service to you for 18 years now.

The Torch of Peace highlighted the strength of a community in unity.

Together, we are stronger.

Together we can say Enough is Enough to violence in our homes.





FINANCIAL & IN KIND DONATIONS

January 2024		
Donor	Description	Amount
Bellas Kitchen	Campus	\$ 600.00
Stunzner Family	Campus	\$ 1,100.00
Siva Samoa - Stunzner Family	Campus	\$ 480.00
Rhys Webb	Campus	\$ 164.68
Theodor Family	Office Donation	\$ 300.00

A special acknowledgment of the development partners and donor agencies, namely:

- ◇ The University College London for their collaboration on a research project focused on local solutions to combat violence.
- ◇ The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) for their generous funding through the Tautua program. This support has enabled SVSG to implement a stronger community approach to gender equality.
- ◇ The European Commission for their significant contribution to setting up the Nofotane Samoa Social Enterprise.
- ◇ The Global Affairs Canada through the UN United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia (UN ESCAP) for funding the business development training for the Nofotane women, as part of the programme’s efforts to enhance the economic empowerment of rural and remote indigenous women entrepreneurs.
- ◇ UNICEF Pacific for continuing to finance SVSG’s community prevention through social and behaviour change programs on violence against children.

To all our families and friends who have used the ‘**Donation Drop Off**’ at the Campus, thank you for your thoughtfulness. May God bless each and everyone of you, according to His divine will.



IN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF YOUR SPONSORSHIP AND KINDNESS

- Digicel Samoa for the free helpline services + miscellaneous sponsors
- Vodafone Samoa for the free helpline services + miscellaneous sponsors
- Toleafoa Elon Betham and the team at the Le Aute Gas for 2 x monthly gas refills for the House of Blessings;
- Felise Sam Chong and the team at the Origin Energy for gas refill for the House of Hope and your prompt response for our call for assistance
- The Newton Family and the CCK Trading Limited for the supplies of clothing for the children;
- Faimalo Allan & Winonah Stowers and the Pacific Ezy Money Transfer for the monthly donation of \$1,000
- Greg & Maria Meredith for the children's daily supplies of bread;
- Epi Smith for the children's bread supplies twice a week;
- Marion Samoa at Siusega for the daily supplies of the children's bread;
- The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for coordinating the regular donations of food, the ongoing maintenance of the Campus and the volunteer support for the children's rehabilitation programs;
- Robbie & Murtle Rankin of Uncle Johnny for the children's ice cream supply every Sundays;
- Motuipuaa Dr. Aisoli Vaai - Saleufi Medical Clinic & Taulealeausumai Dr. Titi Lamese - Ola Fou Clinic, for the children's free medical consultation;
- Zhenna Chan Mow-Fa'auiga, Niu Pharmacy for free medication supplies;
- Lucky Seumanu and Neal Stephens of the Pure Pacific Water for sponsoring

Last but not the least, SVSG would like to acknowledge the belief, the heart and the support from its established partners. Thank you for supporting SVSG, and thank you for being engaged with our work:

