

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **SVSG Three-Day Workshop highlights key lessons for Stronger, Safer Communities**

*29 January 2025*

*Solosolo, Samoa*

The Samoa Victim Support Group (SVSG), in partnership with the Anoamaa 2 District, successfully conducted a three-day community awareness and empowerment workshop in Solosolo from 26<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> January 2026, under the UN Trust Fund Project to End Violence against Women and Children.

The workshop brought together Alii ma Faipule, women, youth, aumaga, tamaitai, and nofotane, united by a shared commitment to strengthening families, challenging harmful social norms, and preventing violence within communities.

Day One reinforced the powerful lesson that violence prevention begins at home and within the village. Through Samoan cultural values and Christian teachings, participants were reminded that violence is not a private family matter, but a community responsibility that requires leadership, courage, and collective action.

Day Two highlighted the importance of knowing where to go and not suffering in silence. Participants were reminded that support services are available through SVSG, the Samoa Police Service, and the Ministry of Justice and Courts Administration, and that seeking help is a right, not a weakness.

Day Three strongly focused on empowerment, independence, and breaking discriminatory social norms, particularly for *tina ma tamaitai (nofotane)*. SVSG Nofotane trainers delivered practical, hands-on livelihood skills training, including printing *eleis*, flower bouquet (*keu*) making, producing *seis* and *ula* from recycled shopping bags, baking *kekepuaa* (pork buns), weaving table mats, and braiding *kiki fulumoa*.

These skills are intended to be passed on to other nofotane women, enabling them to generate income for their families and strengthen their economic independence. The training emphasised that empowerment through skills and income generation plays a critical role in preventing violence and addressing long-standing discrimination faced by nofotane women within families and communities.

Trainers shared their personal success stories to inspire participants, encouraging women to develop a fighting spirit and recognise that they do not need to rely solely on their husbands for income, but can contribute meaningfully to their households through learned skills.

Open and meaningful discussions followed, one of the facilitators Papalii Ene Hosea highlighted a message that *nofotane* and *faiava* carry equal roles and responsibilities, stating that *nofotane* women are a blessing within families, the “*pae ma le auli*” that uphold stability and unity.

A *nofotane* woman of more than 15 years shared her personal reflection, highlighting the Samoan proverb “*O le ala i le pule o le tautua*”, emphasising that service, carried out with love and commitment, is central to maintaining peace and harmony within families.

Speaking on the programme, SVSG President Siliniu Lina Chang said:

*“This workshop reminded us that safe families are built when communities uphold their values, know where to seek support, and empower women to stand strong. When culture, faith, law, and skills come together, violence has no place in our homes or villages.”*

SVSG acknowledged the strong leadership of the Anoamaa 2 District Member of Parliament and Committee, the active participation of community members, and the continued support of partner agencies whose collaboration made the programme impactful and meaningful.

The three-day workshop reaffirmed that safe families are built through values, supported by systems, and sustained through empowerment. SVSG also noted the positive feedback from Solosolo village, with community members expressing strong appreciation for the training and requesting that more practical and empowering workshops like these should be conducted in their village in the future, recognising the value of skills-based learning in strengthening families, livelihoods, and community wellbeing.

SVSG remains committed to working alongside communities and partners to prevent violence, support survivors, and promote dignity and wellbeing for all.

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Ensuring that victims of crime and those in need are well supported to be safe and in control to restore their lives

*2016: With and for Girls Award – Star Foundation of London*

*2017: Innovation & Excellence Team Award – Samoa Public Service*

*2018: Finalist, International Children’s Peace Prize 2018 – Kids Right Foundation of Amsterdam, Netherlands*

*2018: Human Rights Champion in Samoa – UNESCO*

*2019: Innovation for Sustainable Development Award – Commonwealth Secretary-General*

*2020: Nominated Person(s) of the Year – Samoa Observer*

*2021: Outstanding Contributions to Human Rights Promotion & Protection – Samoa Office of the Ombudsman/NHRI*

*2023: Healthy Islands Best Proposal Award – World Health Organization*

*2026 Noble Peace Prize Nomination*