

## The outcomes

The aim is to see women and marginalised groups playing a bigger role in decision-making through the Village Disaster Committees, gaining better access to information and services, and becoming less vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and natural disasters. What's more, participants will learn practical skills for managing their own—and their neighbours'—mental health before, during, and after disasters.

**Specifically we are proposing MWF raise funds to support the mental health component of this work.**

Critically, this programme will provide psychological first aid training. This is training offered formally *for the first time in Tonga* where there is much stigma associated with mental health.

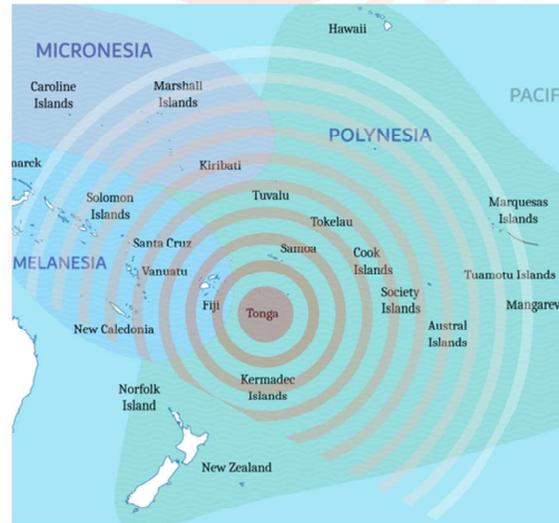
From the experience of the devastating Hunga-Tonga-Hunga-Ha'apai volcano eruption on 15 January 2022, it was realised how important it is to provide psycho-social support training to empower local women's groups to better support the mental health of those in their respective communities across the islands.

Our aim at CWS and TCDT is that locally trained female leaders will be able to offer counselling and support that will become a new norm within Tongan communities - including care for the elderly.



## Learning impact beyond Tonga

The learnings around all aspects of this programme can be shared with other Island nations in the Pacific. Each of them also face many similar issues in terms of natural disasters but also a myriad of other unique issues that intrude on Pacifica families ability to be freed from poverty and injustice. Our intent with the learnings is to share them for the blessing of all our Pacific neighbours.



# Special Project 2026

This year Christian World Service is focusing on maintaining our **momentum of compassion** with our partners working with those caught in poverty and injustice.

By "momentum" we mean staying the course with specific work that is bearing good fruit. This enables our partners to gain the necessary long term and sustainable traction they need to bring the desired life improvement to those they serve without being concerned about funding drying up after only one year.

With this in mind, our special project request of the **Methodist Women's Fellowship** this year is to raise funds for a partner who you will be familiar with - the **Tonga Community Development Trust**.



## Our CWS/MWF Proposed Project Overview

This project is part of a larger programme facilitated by Christian World Service. It is a collaboration between CWS, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Tonga Community Development Trust and with support from the Red Cross. The goal is centered around building community resilience and strengthening disaster preparedness in Tongan communities.

Central to this initiative is empowering the Amatakiloa 'a Fafine Tonga women's group network across the Kingdom to actively participate in decision-making and to help build disaster and climate resilience in their local communities.

### Focus Areas

- Women's Empowerment
- Disaster Risk Reduction
- Livelihood and income diversification
- Financial, business and marketing education
- Mental Health



The MWF mission at work:  
**To Grow in Christ and be a life giver.**



**Methodist Women's Fellowship**

## Why Resilience Matters in Development

Resilience was once about building a community's capability to withstand the onslaught of a crisis. Today resilience is being redefined in a new way in aid and development because:

- Crises are more frequent and interconnected (climate, economic, political).
- Traditional disaster response alone was insufficient for long term beneficial outcomes.
- Development programmes increasingly aim to reduce vulnerability and strengthen long-term capabilities, not just respond to emergencies.

This new way of defining resilience is a strategic shift from reacting to crises toward building systems and communities that can thrive despite the setbacks.



A God's eye view of the  
beautiful Tonga Tapu Island

## About the Project

Tonga is the second most vulnerable island state in the world prone to natural disaster,<sup>1</sup> putting its communities directly in harm's way. Women, children, the elderly, and people with disabilities are especially at risk, often because of their physical or mental health, age, home conditions, and limited access to social services.

All too often, these groups are left out of important decisions and processes that shape their lives, leaving them uncertain and anxious about how they will be supported during and after disasters. CWS and the TCDT believes it is crucial for decision-makers to truly understand the lives of those most vulnerable.

By engaging directly with women, children, the elderly and marginalised groups, listening to their concerns, and including them in community-level decision-making, we can reduce vulnerability and foster greater resilience. Plus, by increasing access to psychosocial services in the aftermath of natural disasters, the ongoing mental health and wellbeing of Tongan citizens is better addressed.

### Your CWS point of contact

As you undertake your fundraising, if you have any questions, your point of contact at any time is:

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<sup>1</sup>. World Risk Index (WRI)