

Survey in Tonga to provide new insights into people's social, economic and environmental circumstances

The COVID-19 pandemic and responses to it, and the eruption of the Hunga Tonga–Hunga Ha'apai volcano, have disrupted Tonga's economy and communities in many different ways. The Tonga Statistics Department (TSD) will shortly undertake a new survey, *Equality Insights Rapid*, in collaboration with the International Women's Development Agency (IWDA), to understand more about the situation of individuals at this moment. IWDA is an Australian-based organisation focused on rights-based development, gender justice, research, and systemic change that addresses root causes of inequality.

Equality Insights Rapid is a survey designed to be conducted by phone rather than face-to-face. It collects information from individuals about 15 social, economic and environmental aspects of life. It also collects information about household assets, as an indicator of financial circumstances. Tonga and the Solomon Islands will be the first countries in the world to use this new survey.

Equality Insights Rapid will provide new information about who has been most affected by disruptions linked to COVID-19 and the volcanic eruption, in what ways, to inform priorities and targeting, for government and civil society. It will show similarities and differences associated with factors such as gender, age and disability, to support recovery efforts, helping to identify where needs are greatest.

The survey is being undertaken with funding from the Australian Government through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, as part of its support for COVID-19 response in the Pacific, to strengthen the evidence base available to inform inclusive action.

The survey is planned to take about eight weeks, commencing on 16 May 2022 and finishing by the end of June. Data will then be analysed by IWDA and TSD and insights from the survey published in a series of briefs developed together.

About Equality Insights Rapid

Equality Insights Rapid was developed to provide individual-level measurement of multidimensional poverty, to complement and extend existing data about the circumstances of households. The data can show how factors such as gender, age and disability influence people's situation, and how these factors interact.

Tonga's collaboration on this new survey reflects its interest in measuring multidimensional poverty, and commitments in the region and around the world to increase disaggregated data, and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, in ways that leave no one behind.

Equality Insights Rapid is a variant of an existing survey, adapted for the COVID context to provide a much shorter survey that can be administered by phone rather than face-to-face. It is part of the broader *Equality Insights* program, a gender data program delivered by IWDA that aims to redefine how poverty and inequality are understood and measured, to improve the lives of all people, particularly those who have traditionally been excluded in data.

The *Equality Insights* program, and its associated measures and surveys, are underpinned by more than 14 years of research, testing and refinement, including a **phase of participatory research** with over 3000 people who experience poverty and inequality, in six countries.

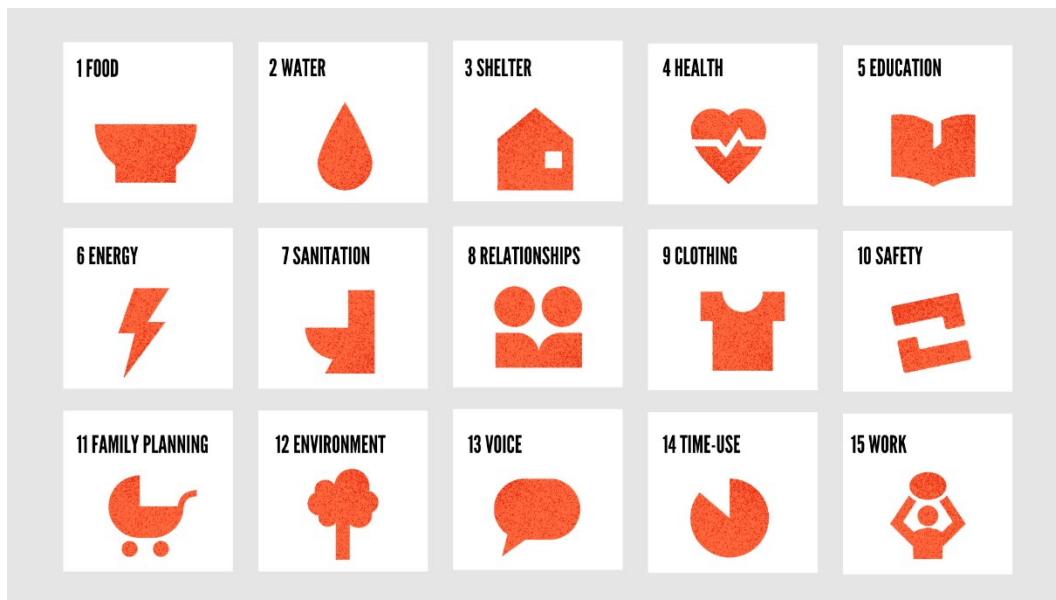
The *Equality Insights Rapid* survey is the latest step forward in efforts to measure poverty and inequality in a way that makes the circumstances of individuals visible. It provides a tool to collect brief, multidimensional data quickly and remotely, using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI).

What will the survey and data provide to Tonga?

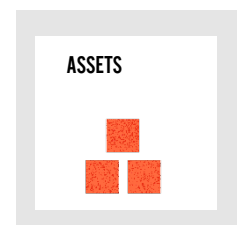
Equality Insights Rapid data and the broader collaboration between TSD and IWDA will provide:

- visibility of Tonga’s leadership and interest in measurement innovation;
- opportunity to implement a new individual-level measure of multidimensional poverty and inequality that reflects the latest thinking regarding the significance of individual-level measurement for understanding poverty and inequality;
- individual-level data to complement insights from multi-topic household surveys and estimates of multidimensional poverty from existing household-level data;
- additional insight into populations and areas of life where the human impacts of the pandemic, and natural disasters, have been particularly severe, to support policy makers to target efforts;
- quantitative evidence about differences in circumstances by gender, age and disability;
- opportunity to strengthen availability of disaggregated data and progress the [Pacific Roadmap on Gender Statistics](#) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; and
- training for policy makers and advocates on using quantitative data for gender-responsive policy and advocacy.

Multidimensional insights



Financial insights



Research and data collection contexts informing *Equality Insights Rapid*

