

# JOINT SUBMISSION TO THE UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW OF SAMOA

MARCH 2021

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This submission has been prepared by a joint effort of the following Samoan Non-Government Organisations (“NGOs”):

- **Faataua Le Ola**<sup>1</sup>

"One life lost is one life too many!"

Working towards a suicide free Samoa and to value life.

Fa’ataua Le Ola, which means “value life”, offers a 24-hour free quality mental health support service to people in Samoa and abroad, who may be experiencing psychological issues, which could lead to depression and/or suicidal thoughts.

FLO’s mission typically focuses on men, women, children, and people with special needs, who have mental health issues, simply because they are at their most vulnerable and therefore at great risk of not valuing their rights as human beings to live their lives to the fullest and ultimately to realize their purpose in life.

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- **Le Teine Crisis Center Trust**<sup>2</sup>

Le Teine Crisis Center Trust (LTCCT) is to Eliminate Violence against Women and Girls in Samoa. LTCCT provides private and free counselling, clinical support and referral services and advocacy and community training at both Upolu and Savaii islands.

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- **Logopuialii Samoa Youth Organisation**<sup>3</sup>

In 2019 LOGO PUIALII YOUTH ORGANIZATION was formed by youth, community members in Samoa concerned about social issues in the communities. Because of the organization’s youth leadership

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/FLOsamoalife/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/pages/category/Non-Governmental-Organization--NGO-/Le-Teine-102129231414109/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/taulogologo/>

programs and campaigns, long-term solutions to fight social and community, serving as a model for empowering change in our communities.

Youths were inspired to form LOGO PUIALII in 2018 in response to many social issues within the communities, families and schools.

Our sole focus is to encourage young people to make a change. Together with the Samoa National Youth Council (SNYC), we've invested in ensuring that youth develop the good leadership. Rooted in the belief of youth as problem-solvers, change-makers, and leaders, our initiatives are catalysts for change.

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- **Soul Talk Samoa Trust<sup>4</sup>**

Our mission at **Soul Talk Samoa ("STS") Trust** is to journey alongside our clients, in addressing any personal and social issues affecting the lives of individuals, couples, and families. The three sequential stages of our work are to **Engage, Explore, and Empower** our clients through our services of pastoral counselling and social services. In the work of STS, appropriate intervention care plans towards healing and recovery can be developed for our clients from different backgrounds. Our work also address the following issues:

- Stress Management, Anger Management, Depression, Unresolved grief, Marriage and couple counselling, Theological misunderstandings of God

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- **Talofa Kids<sup>5</sup>**

Our vision is to see children thriving in a safe and progressive Samoa. Talofa Kids develops and pioneers community initiatives and services aimed at allowing children and families to realise their full potential.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://soultalksamoa.ws/index.php/mission/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.talofakids.com/statements>

## 2. METHODOLOGY

This report has been developed through a series of Civil Society Workshops run by the Ombudsman Office National Human Rights Institution Samoa, as well as through a collaborative effort in dialogue with the above-mentioned organisations.

The data collected together with the various government reports and articles reiterate the importance of the issues raised, and the implementation of the recommendations proposed herein.

## 3. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are our collective issues and recommendations:

<u>HUMAN RIGHTS AREA</u>	<u>ISSUE/S</u>	<u>NARRATIVE</u>	<u>RECOMMENDATIONS</u>
1.0 Law Enforcement	1.1 We acknowledge Rehabilitation programmes for offenders are in place and commend the Government for this, but would like to emphasise the program's Effectiveness and Sustainability. <sup>6</sup>	(Government of Samoa Samoa Law and Justice Sector)	1.1.1 Intensify efforts to work on rehabilitation programmes for victims, their families and offenders.  1.1.2 Continue to work on strengthening the comprehensive vision of the preventive measures and rehabilitation. <sup>7</sup>
	1.2 National screening framework for people working with children, including volunteers and faith based organisations to help ensure child-safe working environments.	(Government of Samoa 2015)	1.2.1 State to have in place a screening process for those working with children. This needs to be reflected in national policies concerning child protection, with a clear implementation plan.  1.2.2 A nationally recognised certification/license to be issued to applicants that satisfy the criteria and have it reviewed periodically.  1.2.3 Adequate allocation of funds to support the implementation of this process, this will not discourage organisations from following a new process.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.loopsamoa.com/content/samoan-corrections-complete-rehabilitation-training-program>

<sup>7</sup> <https://samoaglobalnews.com/historical-opening-tanumalala-prision/>

	<p>1.3 Child Sexual Abuse at epidemic levels.</p> <p>Lack of prevention awareness programs to address child abuse.</p> <p>Lack of inclusion of Child Personal safety programmes.</p>	<p>(United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) Pacific Office, 2017)</p> <p>(National Public Inquiry into Family Violence, Office of the Ombudsman, 2018)</p>	<p>1.3.1 Need to strengthen NGOs to implement their own child protection and safeguarding policies to be in line with Government national policy.</p> <p>1.3.2 Government National Policy to be enforced with a clear implementation plan and in effect raises national awareness of its existence and necessity.</p> <p>1.3.3 Provide sufficient funds to NGO’s and NHRI committed to running awareness and abuse prevention education programs for adults and children.</p> <p>1.3.4 Include child personal safety programs in the school curriculum, especially for Early Childhood and Lower Primary School age groups.</p>
	<p>1.4 Child vendors need greater Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA).</p>	<p>(UNICEF, 2020)</p>	<p>1.4.1 The State needs to urgently develop a long-term strategy to keep child vendors in school and have an employment pathway for their parents.<sup>8</sup></p> <p>1.4.2 The State to provide resources and support to NGO’s efforts to provide a safe space for child vendors and education.</p>
	<p>1.5 Sex Offenders Registry and community awareness of processes lacking.</p>	<p>(Government of Samoa 2015)</p>	<p>1.5.1 State Police to provide transparency to communities/villages that may have a sex offender living within their vicinity.</p> <p>1.5.2 Sex offenders not to be released on parole.<sup>9</sup></p>
<p>2.0 Health</p>	<p>2.1 Measles recovery response inadequate and the work of Non-Government Originations not acknowledged. No</p>	<p>(Government of Samoa, 2019)</p>	<p>2.1.1 Strengthen the response and recovery system for epidemics and pandemics.</p> <p>2.1.2 Take the appropriate measures to give response to the concerns raised by the civil</p>
	<p>properly proposed mechanism.</p>		
	<p><sup>8</sup> <a href="https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/programmes/datelinepacific/audio/2018/36195/samoa-launches-no-report-on-child-street-vendors">https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/programmes/datelinepacific/audio/2018/36195/samoa-launches-no-report-on-child-street-vendors</a></p>		
	<p><sup>9</sup> <a href="https://www.samoaoobserver.ws/category/samoa/57657">https://www.samoaoobserver.ws/category/samoa/57657</a></p>		

			society. <sup>10</sup>  2.1.3 To further strengthen partnerships with Non-government organisations, civil society organisations. <sup>11</sup>
	2.2 Need for more staff in the area of counselling, social work and psychology. <sup>12</sup>  A Chaplain is needed at the National hospital as well as a Chapel.		2.2.1 Allocate more funds for training of health care staff, including doctors, midwives, nurses, and social workers. <sup>13</sup>  2.2.2 To distinguish the difference between Mental Health services, , faith-based counsellors, community counsellors (basic counsellors), and registered counsellors (counsellors who belong to a counselling registration body overseas either in NZ, Australia, USA, or International body, as there is no counselling registration body on island). <sup>14</sup>
	2.3 Child Personal safety programmes. <sup>15</sup>	(United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) Pacific Office, 2017)	2.3.1 Need to strengthen NGOs to implement their own child protection policies to be in line with Government national policy. <sup>16</sup>  2.3.2 Continue to earmark sufficient funds for all child protection programs.
	2.4 Suicide is a major health risk as numbers continue to rise.  Youth, ages 12-35, are the most high at risk.  Relationships, family violence, drugs and alcohol are some of the major causes.	(Faataua Le Ola, 2015) Refer to Annex A	2.4.1 Government support for suicide awareness and prevention programs, advocacy for educational and mental health resources, and proper training for qualified counsellors.
	<sup>10</sup> Government of Samoa. (2019). <i>National Measles Response and Recovery Appeal</i> . Retrieved from Apia: <a href="https://reliefweb.int/report/samoa/national-measles-response-and-recovery-appeal-6-december-2019">https://reliefweb.int/report/samoa/national-measles-response-and-recovery-appeal-6-december-2019</a>		
	<sup>11</sup> <a href="https://www.samoobserver.ws/category/article/55306">https://www.samoobserver.ws/category/article/55306</a>		
	<sup>12</sup> <a href="https://www.cwmission.org/solidarity-in-crisis-a-spiritual-contribution-to-the-mental-health-psycho-social-services-at-the-frontline-of-samoas-measles-epidemic/">https://www.cwmission.org/solidarity-in-crisis-a-spiritual-contribution-to-the-mental-health-psycho-social-services-at-the-frontline-of-samoas-measles-epidemic/</a>		
	<sup>13</sup> <a href="https://inyourcommunity.org.uk/2014/01/31/what-is-the-difference-between-a-counsellor-and-counselling-skills/">https://inyourcommunity.org.uk/2014/01/31/what-is-the-difference-between-a-counsellor-and-counselling-skills/</a>		
	<sup>14</sup> <a href="https://www.doorwaysarizona.com/about/faith-based-counseling/">https://www.doorwaysarizona.com/about/faith-based-counseling/</a>		
	<sup>15</sup> <a href="https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2021/02/samoa-inter-agency-essential-services-guide-responding-to-gender-based-violence-and-child">https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2021/02/samoa-inter-agency-essential-services-guide-responding-to-gender-based-violence-and-child</a>		
	<sup>16</sup> <a href="https://www.samoobserver.ws/category/samoa/78100">https://www.samoobserver.ws/category/samoa/78100</a>		
	<sup>17</sup> <a href="https://www.samoobserver.ws/category/article/43263">https://www.samoobserver.ws/category/article/43263</a>		
	3.0 Education	Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture, (2018)	3.1.1 Intensify efforts to up skill existing teachers to become skilled in the area of counselling.  3.1.2 To further strengthen government organisations, civil society organisations, to be



			Empowerment Project. 5.1.3 Enforce network with employers and schools AND empower easy access for youth to employment opportunities. <sup>20</sup>
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#### 4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, our collective group of NGOs applaud the Government of Samoa for continuing to uphold, implement, promote, and protect the basic human rights of its people with the continuation of religious beliefs, culture, and context. Samoa has recognised the challenges that our nation has encountered over the past five years, especially with the Measles Epidemic in 2019, and the on-going COVID-19 pandemic. Our collective group of NGOs recognises the value of partnerships, advocacy, awareness, engagement, and interventions for the maximum impact of the above-mentioned recommendations.

Everyone in Samoa need to work together so that the issues and recommendations raised through this joint effort, are actioned and realised for the betterment of our people. Let us all work together in unity and harmony so that the vulnerable and marginalised people on island are empowered to live in dignity and honour.

*E faavae i le Atua Samoa*—Samoa is founded on God means that our work shows our love for God and for our people in serving our Lord and Samoa, by giving our time, effort, and energy to help all those in need.

*Fa’amanuia tele le Atua! God bless!*

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<sup>20</sup> Enoka, I. (2009). *Youth and Mental Health in Samoa: A Situational Analysis*. Retrieved from Suva, Fiji: <https://fspiblog.files.wordpress.com/2011/08/samoa-youth-and-mental-health-situational-analysis-09.pdf>

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