

Protecting girls and boys from violence in Nauru

Nauru Regional Ending Violence Against Women

January 5, 2020

*This Story of Change was originally published in the [Pacific Women Annual Progress Report 2017–2018](#). All values are consistent with that reporting period.

Project name: Support to the Pacific Community Regional Rights Resource Team (Regional); UNICEF Pacific Child Protection Program (Regional)

Project partner: Pacific Community's Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT); UNICEF

Total funding: \$5,750,000; \$7,000,000

Funding timeframe: 2015–2020; 2014–2018

There is ongoing commitment in Nauru to protect children from violence. The government has enacted the Child Protection and Welfare Act 2016 and the Domestic Violence and Family Protection Act 2017. Efforts are now focused on strengthening the capacity of frontline government personnel to implement the legislation.

According to Government of Nauru statistics, 49.2 per cent of Nauruans are aged under 20. Baseline research from Pacific Island governments and UNICEF indicates that girls and boys in the Pacific region experience high levels of violence in homes and in schools. Issues of concern include neglect, abuse (physical, psychological and sexual) and exploitation (including sexual).

Nauru is one of four Pacific Island countries (along with Kiribati, the Republic of the Marshall Islands and Solomon Islands) that has enacted national child protection laws in support of its ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In addition, with UNICEF support, three countries (Fiji, Samoa and Tuvalu) have developed child protection bills, soon to be submitted to the countries' Parliaments. Vanuatu is starting a similar process.

The introduction of targeted legislation is a first step towards protecting children. Effective measures are then required to implement the laws. The Government of Nauru established a Child Protection Services Division in 2015 and has sought UNICEF assistance to strengthen staff capacity. With Pacific Women regional program funding, UNICEF conducted a workshop in April 2017 on the respective roles of the relevant sectors under the Child Protection and Welfare Act 2016 and on inter-agency coordination and referral pathways. Participants included all Child Protection Services Division staff and personnel from other government ministries and agencies including Home Affairs, Health, Education and Police.

The Child Protection Inter-Agency Group was subsequently formed, chaired by the Director of the Child Protection Services Division. The group met three times in 2017 to discuss the referral system and specific cases and continues to work towards improving responses for children who have experienced violence. The Child Protection Services Division responded to 85 child protection cases in 2017.

Building on the UNICEF workshop, Pacific Women funded the Pacific Community's Regional Rights Resource Team in 2017 to provide training for Child Protection Officers from the Department of Home Affairs. The training helped participants understand their roles and procedures under the Child Protection and Welfare Act 2016. Post-training testing indicated that 80 per cent of the participants had achieved competency in their responsibilities and that case delegation had improved.