

Relationships for young people that are free from violence

Vanuatu [Ending Violence Against Women](#)

December 4, 2017

Project Name: Gender Equality Together

Project partner: CARE International in Vanuatu

Total funding: \$1,000,000

Funding timeframe: 2016-2019



CARE staff discussing challenges and opportunities with women who are part of CARE's Gender Equality Together program in Dillion's Bay, Erromango Islands. Photo: Mark Chew, CARE.

In Vanuatu, a life skills project working with adolescent girls and boys is showing promising results in changing attitudes towards violence against women. In Vanuatu, CARE's Good Relationships Free from Violence project (part of GET) gives young people the support and information they need to make good choices in their relationships.

On the island of Tanna, 67 per cent of women say they have experienced physical or sexual abuse from an intimate partner in their lifetime. Due to societal norms, both men and women believe that it is acceptable for a man to beat a woman in certain circumstances.

‘Rape, it is not taken particularly seriously’, explains Senior Sergeant Wilfred Nos of the Isangel Police Office in Tanna.

‘They don’t talk heavy—light only. And if a man has whipped his wife and the wife runs, the emphasis is on the wife returning to solve the problem—not on the man’s responsibility to stop beating the wife.’

Funded under the Australian aid program’s [Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development](#) initiative, the project works with young women and men as they are in a strong position to create new and positive norms in their communities for the future. The project teaches adolescents and young men and women that all people have the right to live free from violence and encourages them to take a closer look at their own beliefs and behaviours. This training is helping communities to build a culture where men and women are treated equally.

Chief Chaleson William Koda Ialikawa is a school teacher in Enimahia. He says that young people need to know their rights.

‘Life Skills has been very useful for the youth, especially the young females, as it helps them to build their confidence and to make good decisions, like about pregnancy. Youth were isolated before, but this brings them together and helps them to make good decisions.’

The training challenges young women and men to think about the impact of gender inequality in their relationships and in their communities. It then provides them with the information and support needed to make changes. Ms Juliane Naui explains,

‘Since the training, my husband and I have had good consultation with each other. Now people in the community think that the young couples should follow our example. I think

the training is very good and I'd like my husband and I to work together even more'.

**This Story of Change was originally published in the [Pacific Women Annual Progress Report 2016 – 2017](#). All values are consistent with that reporting period. For the most up-to-date value of activities, visit our [interactive map](#).*