

# Enhancing social work and counselling qualifications of Nauruans

Nauru [Ending Violence Against Women](#)

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Project Name: Pacific Community Health and Wellbeing Education

Project Partner: The University of New England

Total Funding: \$553,000

Funding timeframe: 2015-2017

Local counselling and social work capacity in Nauru is being enhanced through the Pacific Community Health and Wellbeing Education project. Five women and one man undertaking a Diploma in Community Health and Wellbeing say the course is 'vital' and 'supportive' in the way they work with their clients.



Community Health and Wellbeing Diploma graduates Mrs Anastasia Eobob (right), Mrs Lucinta Seymour (second from right) and Mrs Cynthia Dekarube (left) having a discussion with DFAT Program Manager, Ms Veronica Halstead (second from left) about enhancing local counselling and social work capacity in Nauru. Photo: DFAT

With only 10,000 people, speaking out about violence can be extremely challenging due to the lack of anonymity. The diploma course has been designed in response to these recurring issues of violence against women and gender inequality issues. The University of New England worked with local stakeholders to develop a Pacific-focused diploma program to build skills and strengthen services in counselling.

Mr Horasio Cook, Mrs Anastasia Eobob, Mrs Lucinta Seymour and Mrs Cynthia Dekarube are four government employees who completed the diploma. In their work, they deal with families, children and young people on issues including child protection and family health. They reflect on what they learned during the course:

**‘We have learned great new things. For example, we see communicating with clients and work colleagues and families through a different lens. It opened up a completely new level or dimension of understanding and patience.’**

A sample of the units of study include professional communication practice, children and young people at risk, managing clients with complex needs, health promotion in practice, Pacific recovery: issues around family violence and Pacific child and adolescent counselling.

**‘After taking the course, we approach things differently’, the graduates say. ‘More reasonable and more thoughtful towards other people and to other different race, cultural ways, we get to know why they react to such. But it has taught us to be mindful and understanding on their needs and issues.’**

**‘Yes it has changed a lot of things in our lives, mostly our norms have shifted and we are making changes, which helps our day-to-day lives and especially at work. We also learned during the course on leadership and this course really helped us in our decision making at work and home.’**

The course is delivered through a combination of intensive face-to-face on-island academic support and online classes. This means that students can stay in Nauru and continue to perform their jobs, while they complete the diploma.

\*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](#).