

# Evaluating Family Support Centres in Papua New Guinea

Papua New Guinea

SHARE

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In Papua New Guinea, Family Support Centres have offered survivors of violence a range of health care and referral services since the first one opened in Lae in 2013. An estimated two-thirds of women in Papua New Guinea experience violence and the number of Family Support Centres has grown.

In 2016 UNICEF undertook a formative evaluation of the Family Support Centre approach. It was the first formal independent assessment of Family Support Centres in Papua New Guinea. UNICEF's interest in the Family Support Centres comes from the funding it has provided to nine of the 15 Family Support Centres. The evaluation assessed relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and equity of the Family Support Centres.

The evaluation notes that Family Support Centres in Papua New Guinea were introduced to address referral gaps by providing facilities in health centres that are dedicated safe spaces for women and children to seek treatment, counselling, and legal advice. Creating specialised units was also intended to make the facilities more visible to generate greater awareness and uptake of the services by the community.

With referral services at the core of its mandate, Family Support Services need strong relationships with Child Protection Officers, crisis accommodation providers, police (including the Family and Sexual Violence Unit, the Sexual Offences Squad and Criminal Investigations Unit), District Courts and the Office of Public Prosecution.

The Government of Papua New Guinea's commitment to supporting Family Support Centres was demonstrated in 2006 when the Secretary for Health required all Provincial Hospitals to integrate Family Support Centres into their operations.

The evaluation found that, overall, the Family Support Centre approach provides a unique and critical service to survivors of family and sexual violence. It was found to be closely aligned with national priorities and there was a high level of political commitment, particularly at national level.

The evaluation noted that specialised training protocols, codes of conduct and practice directions are in place that stress the need for safe, respectful environments, confidentiality, and protection of clients' rights to choose how and whether to seek justice after an assault.

The main constraint to replication of the Family Support Centre model was identified as the lack of clear leadership and management structures to ensure that the services provided by Family Support Centres are implemented and operated. The report highlighted this and other challenges, along with recommendations for future improvements for on-going implementation of the model.

The evaluation report is available here: [https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/index\\_93779.html](https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/index_93779.html).

As part of the Papua New Guinea-Australia Partnership, through Pacific Women three new Family Support Centres have been built in Port Moresby, Arawa and Daru. Support has included recruitment and training of hospital staff to respond to the psycho-social and medical needs of survivors of family and sexual violence using a quality and client-centred approach. The Family Support Centres in Daru and Arawa are expected to be opened in 2018.