

**PACIFIC PREVENTION OF DOMESTIC  
VIOLENCE PROGRAMME**

**VANUATU REPORT**

PREPARED FOR NEW ZEALAND POLICE

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This review is part of the *Pacific Prevention of Domestic Violence Programme* (PPDVP) and sets the baseline for on-the-ground sustained support for the development of the Vanuatu Police domestic violence policy, strategy, action plans, systems and training programmes. The PPDVP is an initiative of the New Zealand Agency for International Development (NZAID), New Zealand Police (NZPOL) and the Pacific Islands Chiefs of Police (PICP). The long-term goal of the PPDVP is “a safer Pacific free from domestic violence”. The PPDVP focus is on building the capacity of Pacific Police services to prevent and respond effectively to domestic violence and involves components at both the regional and national level. At the national level, the PPDVP has been working intensively with 4 countries - Samoa, Tonga, Cook Islands and Kiribati and Vanuatu is the fifth national project.

The PPDVP specific objectives are:

- i) To increase Pacific Police capacity across the region to prevent/respond effectively to domestic violence and to develop and maintain effective partnerships through regionally coordinated programmes.
- ii) To increase Police capacity in Samoa, Tonga, Cook Islands, Kiribati and Vanuatu to prevent/respond effectively to domestic violence through national level programmes.
- iii) To develop and maintain effective partnerships between Police and relevant government agencies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), churches, community leaders/organisations to prevent/respond effectively to domestic violence in Samoa, Tonga, Cook Islands, Kiribati and Vanuatu
- iv) To support the development of appropriate legislation on domestic violence and training for the judiciary/legal profession in Samoa, Tonga, Cook Islands, Kiribati and Vanuatu
- v) To support development of appropriate national policy on domestic violence and incorporation of appropriate actions in national development plans, in Samoa, Tonga, Cook Islands Kiribati and Vanuatu.

As well as providing the baseline for the PPDVP national programme, this review was also regarded as an education and advocacy exercise for domestic violence related issues. The research aims for this study were:

- to document what data on domestic violence were available in each country;
- review the Police systems for working with domestic violence cases,
- try to assess the extent of domestic violence and people’s responses to this; and
- to engage agencies and communities in reflection on domestic violence.

As with the other four PPDVP national studies, this research was carried out in partnership with a local NGO, in this case, the Vanuatu Women’s Centre (VWC). The VWC has been Vanuatu’s national regional and global face of research, training and advocacy in domestic violence for over 15 years. Much of data for this report was from the VWC databases for the Port Vila Centre, the two Provincial Centres (Sanma and Tafea) and the over 35 rural based Committees Against Violence Against Women (CAVAWS). The Department of Women’s Affairs (DWA), which has responsibility for coordinating the national CEDAW and PPA responses was also a partner in this research as was the Women Against Violence (WAC). I was not able to time my in-country field work to coincide with the visit of Vanuatu’s PPDVP Police mentor, but PPDVP reports provided were a valuable source of information.

Care was taken to ensure this PPDVP study was a good ‘fit’ with the national study of “Women’s Lives and Family Relations’ being coordinated by the VWC and the domestic violence related programmes of other regional agencies such as the SPC. The “Women’s Lives and Family Relations” study will set a comprehensive database on the nature and extent of domestic violence in Vanuatu and the strategies women and families use to address this.

## The study

The field work was carried out in Port Vila during the week of June 22-June 26 2009<sup>1</sup> and I was based at Port Vila. Field work was supported by on-line correspondence. A mixed method strategy was used comprising the collection of statistical data along with in-depth interviews aimed at gaining an understanding of the cultural and social underpinnings of domestic violence today. Research methods included:

- Literature review of published and unpublished research.
- Collection and analysis of data recorded by Police, NGOs and other agencies.
- Overview of government legislation, policies and practices.
- Qualitative methods such as a community focus group at Ohlin and in-depth interviews with key informants.

The research was facilitated by the fact that Vanuatu has in place already a number of significant milestones aimed at addressing address domestic violence for example: the Family Protection Bill now awaiting legislation; the Police establishment of a Family Protection Unit (FPU) and, an extensive number of national reports, policy papers, strategic intervention documents and research papers on domestic violence and related issues dating back to the early 1990s. Each is a resource not only for the Police domestic violence strategy but also a national policy.

## Vanuatu –the country background

In the kastom systems, Chiefs and elders are responsible for ensuring family well being and harmony, including the settlement of family disputes. While there are differences by island Vanuatu culture and society is male dominated and features a separation of male and female in many daily life events as well as ceremonials. The practise of bride price, which has been limited by the Malvatumauri in recent years, saw women come to be regarded as ‘chattels’ of their husbands, gave males license to assault or ‘do what they will with their wives,’ and ‘taught young males and females a bad mentality to women.’ Ideas of women’s ‘lesser’ status have been reinforced in legislation such as the Matrimonial Act, whereby women in Vanuatu cannot accumulate personal wealth because it is considered that anything that she has is taken over by the husband on marriage. The reason some women gave for staying in a bad relationship was the fear of losing their children.

The spread of population over Vanuatu’s 68 inhabited islands also influences perceptions of male / female roles and the way domestic violence is perceived and dealt with. The over 75% of the population living in rural areas today are not only physically distant from Port Vila (the seat of government, administration and commerce), they lack ready access to up to information as well as chances to participate in robust discussion about the development issues Vanuatu faces in these rapidly changing times. Government services to rural areas (including Police and justice systems) are severely limited due to resource constraints; this situation reinforces the place of kastom and the role of the chiefs and elders in dealing with domestic violence.

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<sup>1</sup> The field work in the Cook Islands, Kiribati, Samoa and Tonga were of 2 weeks’ duration.

Vanuatu has experienced great social and economic changes in recent times. Increasingly the kastom ways are at odds with the global human rights conventions Vanuatu is now party to, including CEDAW. The fact that custom ways are recognised in the Vanuatu Constitution was listed in Vanuatu's CEDAW feedback report as a major constraint to the elimination of discrimination against women and the achievement of gender equity.

A tremendous uncertainty as to what the rules on domestic violence are at this time was found. Participants wanted to discuss the *Family Protection Bill*, which is awaiting legislation and there was fierce debate also as to whether domestic violence was a criminal action to be dealt with within the legal systems or a family issue to be dealt with by the family. This uncertainty must be taken into account in PPDVP interventions. While robust Police systems for dealing with domestic violence are required, the implementation of these protocols will undoubtedly be influenced by Police (and women and community) understandings of and attitudes to domestic violence.

### **Section 1: Police attitudes, policy and practise**

Police commitment to domestic violence is seen in the setting up of the Family Protection Unit (FPU) and Police engagement with the PPDVP. However, this high level commitment has yet to be translated into policies and practises to ensure victims reporting to the Police receive a professional response to their concerns.

Police Officers were asked to describe the procedures they followed for dealing with domestic violence. It was apparent that these were not clearly understood and not always followed. Incidents were entered into an Occurrence Book and from then on much seemed to depend on the judgement of the Police Officers. Data for 2007 shows that of 3078 cases reported, 1998 proceeded to investigation and 1154 of this 1998 were detected – or, one in three of the initial complaints laid. A significant number of complaints are settled by 'Police Assistance' (including counselling and praying) and a recent manual review of Occurrence Book entries carried out by PPDVP staff found that many cases which should proceed to criminal investigation did not. Vanuatu does not have a no-drop policy.

That aside, Police are starting to identify domestic violence cases albeit not in a uniform, transparent, or timely fashion. Putting in place robust procedures, protocols and case management systems for domestic violence is a priority, as is rigorous training until these systems become a matter of routine. IT support would facilitate more effective Police record keeping and tracking and also enable Police to increase their knowledge and understanding about domestic violence by linking into regional and global information networks. Significant small pockets of change in Police attitudes and practises to domestic violence found (e.g. Police Officers being members of the Male Advocates network and working with the CAVAWS) sets a sound springboard for further actions.

The FPU has developed into a quality programme in the few years it has been operating and staff are building their knowledge base and skills through participation in activities such as the VWC Male Advocate training. The FPU is well placed to become the Police flagship for sexual and domestic violence and abuse. Growing the FPU into a high calibre flagship will require an increase in the number and level of staff and on-going and systematic training in domestic violence, within a development framework. The FPU can play an important and proactive role in ensuring domestic violence is taken into account in all Police policies and programmes, in guiding forward planning for the development of a basket of Police domestic violence interventions and, by taking responsibility for ensuring that Police input in national forums – such as the CEDAW partnership – is knowledgeable, accurate and salient to the business of the day. Care is needed to make sure that all Police Officers understand that domestic violence is not 'a FPU issue' but a personal and a professional issue for all Police Officers.

Working in the area of violence against women requires specialised knowledge and skills. The finding that the first group of Police graduates ‘*in ten years*’ graduated in 2008 and that a *first* in-service Police training was held only recently is a real concern. The CBP is addressing the need for a robust, comprehensive and scaffolding programme of Police training. A unit on domestic violence is included in the new training package. The adaptation of this generic unit to the Vanuatu situation is a potential intervention for the PPDVP, supported by local agencies such as the VWC and the Won Smol Bag community education programme. Such a training package should include awareness raising of the multiple effects of domestic violence on women and children and families, a review of male/ female roles, and ways the cycle of domestic violence can be broken. Theory should be supported by practical activities such as Police internships with NGOs which have experience in this field. Ensuring that Police based in rural areas also have access to domestic violence training is vital, as is the tying of this training to promotions and career pathways. Firmer relations with the Vanuatu Military Police (VMP) will add to the pool of Police resources for preventing and responding to domestic violence.

Domestic violence has multiple causes and requires multiple solutions. The review highlights quite compellingly the value Police are gaining by partnering agencies such as: the multi-sectoral Legal and Justice Sector Review team, the National Steering Committee on Crime and the CEDAW partnership; as Male Advocates and membership of the CAVAWS and, in the WAC neighbourhood watch initiatives. Assisting Police understand and prepare for their role in these and other partnerships will strengthen the Police domestic violence knowledge and skills base as will the sharing of resources, information and best practises at these meetings. More solid relationships with Health Department and Medical staff and with Chiefs and religious leaders is also essential with a view to establishing agreed to ways for working together to understand and to reduce domestic violence. The example provided by the Shefa chiefs in incorporating CEDAW principles into the Shefa Provincial plans could be a useful model.

Overarching all and pivotal, is the need for Police communication systems which will ensure a steady two-way flow of information between the Police Commander and Police Commissioners through all levels of front line Police and to the public. This information exchange will keep people informed, challenge people to reflect on their own views and ensure that domestic violence policies and programmes are not built on hearsay. As noted, the Police Officers I talked to knew little about the Family Planning Bill or about the Legal and Justice Sector review meetings that were being held. Yet both could be considered to be Police core business.

It is time to ground the high level Police commitment to domestic violence into actions across every sphere of Police activity.

## **Section 2 NGOs and other agencies.**

Review findings point to more a tolerance than an acceptance of domestic violence today. Domestic violence was seen to be more widespread than in the past and, influenced by factors such as economic pressures, changes in male female roles, increases in inter- marriage by couples from different Island groups (each with its own customs) couples living outside the extended family systems, sexual jealousy and alcohol, kava and drug abuse. The use of cell phones and texting were described as spurring male jealousy as did women ‘dressing’ in new ways.

Estimates are difficult to make due to different reporting periods and procedures. However, VWC data shows the numbers reporting domestic violence increased from 179 in 1993 to 853 in 2000 – an increase of almost 400%. VWC data also shows that in the years 2002-2008, an average of 800 women per year (and some males) accessed VWC provided counselling and information services (face to face, telephone and mobile services) at the Port Vila, Shefa and



Tafea counselling centres and through the rural based CAVAWs. This was in addition to for example - the numbers VWC assist apply for DVPOs, those participating in the VWC training programmes and those housed in the VWC safe houses. This and other data indicates that a greater number of ni-Vanuatu women in rural as well as urban areas are no longer *content to remain silent*.

Reports show that many victims still prefer to take their complaints to a chief, religious leader or teacher in the first instance. However, dissatisfaction is being expressed with the way chiefs deal with these concerns. For example: chiefs are usually males (who do not understand the effects of domestic violence on women and children); chiefs have no training in counselling or development issues and, they will always given priority to maintaining the sanctity of the family 'they will always advise women to go back to the family: they do not think about the quality of life of women or their children who may witness violence'. It is noteworthy that the Vanuatu Christian Council has petitioned the President of Vanuatu to not gazette the Family Protection Bill on the grounds that it contravenes the Christian Principles stated in the preamble of the Constitution.

For the main part, victims have little confidence in reporting to the Police either, although this is changing. The sense of extreme helplessness in the face of domestic violence, conveyed by the Ohlin women, is a feeling probably shared by countless other ni-Vanuatu women and families today. Members of this group said they had sought the help of Police, the VWC and other NGOs and Church Leaders and 'nothing happens'. Further, they said there was no leading chief in their settlement who could (or would) take a stand on domestic violence. These women have built their lives *around* domestic violence – 'we live with this and get on with our lives'. The comments of other women were that it didn't matter what they did 'we are always at fault'.

All told, Vanuatu has a strong resource base of knowledge, research information and experience in domestic violence which the PPDVP can draw on in its Vanuatu programme of action. NGOs especially have considerable expertise and experience developed over almost 15 years and through networking into agencies such as the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre and the UN Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT) and CEDAW trainings. NGO programmes range from the direct rights based strategies of the VNW, aimed at empowering through transforming male/ female roles, to the more community based programmes of the WAC, the Won Smol Bag and USP's Community Legal Services and, the actions taken by the Chiefs of the Shefa Provincial Council. A lawyer described the task with these words:

*(we must) get the message across to chiefs, elders and community leaders that respect women and not assaulting/ abusing them is not going to break the family or reduce the standing of the male/ men in the family / clan*

The Violence Against Women Policy Paper (2002) notes that 'beliefs about what is custom practice regarding women's role and men's rights in enforcing these are widely and strongly held by both men and women in all sectors and communities'. Changing male and female attitudes to domestic violence will be a long time process and one requiring a sustained awareness raising programmes across many fields of action including the media (newspaper, radio television) the school curriculum, posters, pamphlets and drama.



## PART 1: PACIFIC PREVENTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAMME

This research is part of the wider *Pacific Prevention of Domestic Violence Programme* (PPDVP). The PPDVP is an initiative of the New Zealand Agency for International Development (NZAID), New Zealand Police (NZPOL) and the Pacific Islands Chiefs of Police (PICP). The PPDVP builds on earlier NZAID and NZPOL support for domestic violence prevention in the Pacific which indicated that while the assistance was well received, there was a need for more consistent and on-going support. The initial programme duration is five years.

The long-term goal of the PPDVP is “a safer Pacific free from domestic violence”. Its primary focus is building the capacity of Pacific Police services to prevent and respond effectively to domestic violence. The programme involves components at both the regional and national level. At the regional level, all Pacific countries are invited to participate in a range of training, networking and information sharing activities. At the national level, the programme has been working more intensively with four Pacific countries - Samoa, Tonga, Cook Islands and Kiribati – and now Vanuatu has become the fifth national project country.

This review sets the baseline for the PPDVP national programme of on-the-ground sustained support for the development of Police domestic violence policy, strategy, action plans, systems and training programmes in Vanuatu.

The PPDVP specific objectives are:

- vi) To increase Pacific Police capacity across the region to prevent/respond effectively to domestic violence and to develop and maintain effective partnerships through regionally coordinated programmes.
- vii) To increase Police capacity in Samoa, Tonga, Cook Islands, Kiribati and Vanuatu to prevent/respond effectively to domestic violence through national level programmes.
- viii) To develop and maintain effective partnerships between Police and relevant government agencies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), churches, community leaders/organisations to prevent/respond effectively to domestic violence in Samoa, Tonga, Cook Islands, Kiribati and Vanuatu
- ix) To support the development of appropriate legislation on domestic violence and training for the judiciary/legal profession in Samoa, Tonga, Cook Islands, Kiribati and Vanuatu
- x) To support development of appropriate national policy on domestic violence and incorporation of appropriate actions in national development plans, in Samoa, Tonga, Cook Islands Kiribati and Vanuatu.

To a large extent, national level PPDVP programme aims are addressed through the work of part-time country mentors. These are appointed from within NZ Police, are assigned to one country and are deployed twice-yearly. A PPDVP mentor has been assigned and is working with the Family Protection Unit (FPU) of the Vanuatu Police.

### Research aims and terms of reference

This research adopts the definition of domestic violence used by the PPDVP that is, “violence against women by a partner or spouse”. The study had two main components. The first centred broadly on Police understandings of and responses to domestic violence. The second component has multiple strands, covering government, NGO and community

understandings and responses. The terms of reference (TORs) for each component are set out in Table 1.

**Table 1. Terms of reference for the research**

<b>POLICE ATTITUDES, POLICY, PRACTICE</b>	<b>GOVERNMENT, NGO AND COMMUNITY ATTITUDES AND RESPONSES</b>
Current specific levels of domestic violence reported to police	Current and historical levels of domestic violence reported to the key non-government agencies (women's crisis/refuge organisations)
Current policy, protocols and general processes and procedures (including record keeping) for dealing with domestic violence	Some assessment of the prevalence of domestic violence using the available Police and non-government agency data, and data available from other agencies, including the United Nations
The current state of Police prosecution of Domestic Violence including levels of case withdrawal, levels of prosecution against reporting and the overall number of offenders being held accountable for their actions	Broad trends in victim attitudes towards domestic violence and reporting to the Police
Any history of change around Police domestic violence practice	The policy and other contribution of key non-government agencies to dealing with and reducing domestic violence
Current Police leadership practice around domestic violence	A general assessment of levels of social acceptance and cultural tolerance towards domestic violence
Police attitudes and perceptions of domestic violence, including attitudes to dealing with complaints, prosecutions, offenders, and holding offenders to account. Police views on traditional cultural attitudes towards domestic violence and views of Officers regarding traditional local or village approaches towards dealing with domestic violence.	Current government policy and practice arrangements directed or associated with domestic violence
Police attitudes and perceptions towards Police Officers as domestic violence offenders	The current state of legislative arrangements in relation to domestic violence, including compliance with international covenants and conventions (CEDAW)
Current policy and practice arrangements for dealing with Police Officers as domestic violence offenders	The current state of any alternative approaches (village justice) to domestic violence
The current state of Police domestic violence training	Provide brief overview of nature and extent of systems in place for (a) reporting and (b) sharing information on medical and death records relating to domestic violence
The state and recent history of Police partner relations	The attitudes of key religious organisations towards domestic violence

The broad aims of this research were to:

- establish what data were available in each country;
- try to assess the extent of domestic violence and people's responses to it; and
- engage agencies and communities in reflection on domestic violence.

This research was also expected to provide a key awareness-raising tool for politicians, community leaders and communities. Because it has been conducted in the first year of the programme, research findings will serve as a benchmark to measure the performance and effectiveness of the PPDVP in Vanuatu.

## Approach and methodological framework

This research employed a Pacific research framework (see Anae, et al 2003; Health Research Council, 2005) which gives priority to relationships and informed community participation so as to ensure ‘meaningful engagement’, relevance, validity and ownership of the research process and outcomes.

The first feature of the research approach was an emphasis on partnerships. To achieve maximum involvement and sharing of ideas, the researcher partnered a national NGO throughout the planning and implementation of research activities. This had the dual aims of community empowerment by fostering enquiry and debate on domestic violence and consolidating on-going partnerships for future PPDVP activities. Partner NGOs were given an honorarium in acknowledgement of their support.

- The Vanuatu Women’s Centre (VWC) was the partner for this study. Working with the VWC not only ‘opened many doors’, this also ensured relevance and ownership of the study as well as downstream sustainability gains.

Care was taken to ensure this research was a good fit with the national ground-breaking study the VWC is coordinating - “Women’s Lives and Family Relations” - which is funded by the Australian Government. Data from this first national survey will add considerably to understandings about the nature and extent of domestic violence in Vanuatu and how the cycle of violence can be broken.

- I also worked closely with PPDVP staff and the PPDVP Vanuatu mentor to develop the research approach and timeframes. It was not possible to coincide the fieldwork with the mentor’s time in-country. However, the mentor and PPDVP staff provided key documents and on-line support.

Secondly, the research approach was based on the understanding that no single research strategy would fit every Pacific country that what worked in the Samoa or Tonga study for example might not be appropriate in Vanuatu. So, while there might be commonalities of experience between Pacific countries, local domestic violence-related perceptions and practices would be influenced by factors such as physical, economic, social and cultural norms, and the nature of colonial and post-colonial influences, including access to education, IT, increasing aspirations and new recreations, poverty related factors and integration into global networks. There were likely to be differences by country in:

- customary views of domestic violence and ways this should be addressed and historical circumstances - such as Vanuatu’s experience as a Condomium and the influence of French and English systems of justice
- the strength and capacity of local domestic violence local movements, such as NGOs;
- police capacity and policing, law and justice systems;
- physical constraints, including the way in which the spread and distance between the islands which make up Vanuatu influences people’s knowledge of laws and access to policing systems and/or justice; and
- national commitments and understandings of regional and international agreements such as CEDAW and the Pacific Platform of Action.

Thirdly, it was important to keep in mind that findings were set against a context of rapidly changing times. Clearly, the interplay of different views on domestic violence – both traditional and legal, for the police and the community – would feature strongly in this review.

Finally, this review was regarded as both a data collection and an education and advocacy exercise for domestic violence and related issues and this proved accurate. Each interview was almost an awareness raising exercise on domestic violence, CEDAW and related issues and the recently introduced Family Protection Bill.

### **Field work**

A mixed method strategy was used. Although aims were to collect statistical data wherever possible, it was anticipated that information on domestic violence would vary greatly in accessibility, coverage and quality. This proved correct. Qualitative methods were also important, given that a major research focus was to identify attitudes to domestic violence. Because the topic of domestic violence has only recently been acknowledged as a Pacific development issue, discussions with a wide a group of actors was necessary so as to gain an understanding of the cultural and social underpinnings of domestic violence in Vanuatu.

General guidelines were established for the research process used in Vanuatu, based on learnings from the first four national studies. The actual methods were finalised after I arrived in the country and based on the advice of local Police and NGO partners. Tables 1 and 2 in Annex A set out the general framework. Briefly, the main methods were:

- Literature review of published and unpublished research.
- Collection and analysis of data recorded by Police, NGOs and other agencies.
- Overview of government legislation, policies and practices.
- Qualitative methods such as a community focus group at Ohlin and in-depth interviews with key informants.

Fieldwork was carried out between June 22- 26 2009. I was not able to engage with Police Officers in the first days, as planned, due to the Police Commissioner being called away on unexpected duties. So for the first two days I was based at the Vanuatu Women's Centre (VWC) and the Women's Affairs Department (DWA) and worked mainly with NGOs and donor agencies. The WDA agreed to Mrs Jenny Ligo (Child Rights Officer) organising and facilitating the focus group meeting with Ohlin women for which I am very appreciative. On the final day of the fieldwork (Friday) I was able to attend some of the Police Open Day sessions held at the Bandstand in the seaside park. Hundreds of people, including school students, attended this all day event. The programme included information sessions by the FPU and other police sections, NGO presentations and a barbecue lunch.

Support to this study by the Director General of the Department of Women's Affairs, the Police Commissioner, Police Commander (Southern) Police staff and members of the Vanuatu Police Capacity Building Project (VPCBP) the CEO of the Vanuatu Women's Centre and the New Zealand High Commissioner is acknowledged with much appreciation.

The list of daily activities and people consulted is in Annex B 1 and 2. Efforts were made to consult with as many government and non-government agencies as possible during the five days. Where agencies were not covered, secondary source materials have been used. Interviews were tailored to the specific expertise of the interviewees and so covered somewhat different topics. Key themes from these discussions are presented rather than a

count of how many people endorsed a particular view. Quotes from interviews are used to illustrate key themes.

As a result of the short time in country, the primary data has been supported by the use of reports such as the PPDVP scoping visit reports. Stakeholder feedback meetings could not be held at the conclusion of the field work. However, these were held with the CEO DWA, the VWC and the NZ High Commissioner.

### **This report**

This report comprises two parts with the second part covering two sections. Part 1 sets out the background to the study. Part 2 discusses relevant contextual factors in the specific country. This covers information such as local understandings of gender, family, and community, to the political context at the time of the research.

Section 1 of Part 2 covers Police attitudes, policy and practice in relation to domestic violence. The section is organised around the 10 Terms of Reference (TORs) in Table 1. The sub-sections raise points for discussion or further consideration. The information in this section is mainly derived from interviews with Police Officers. Section 2 follows the same format. It covers the second set of 10 TORs, relating to government, NGO, and community attitudes and responses to domestic violence. The information is mainly drawn from interviews with community stakeholders

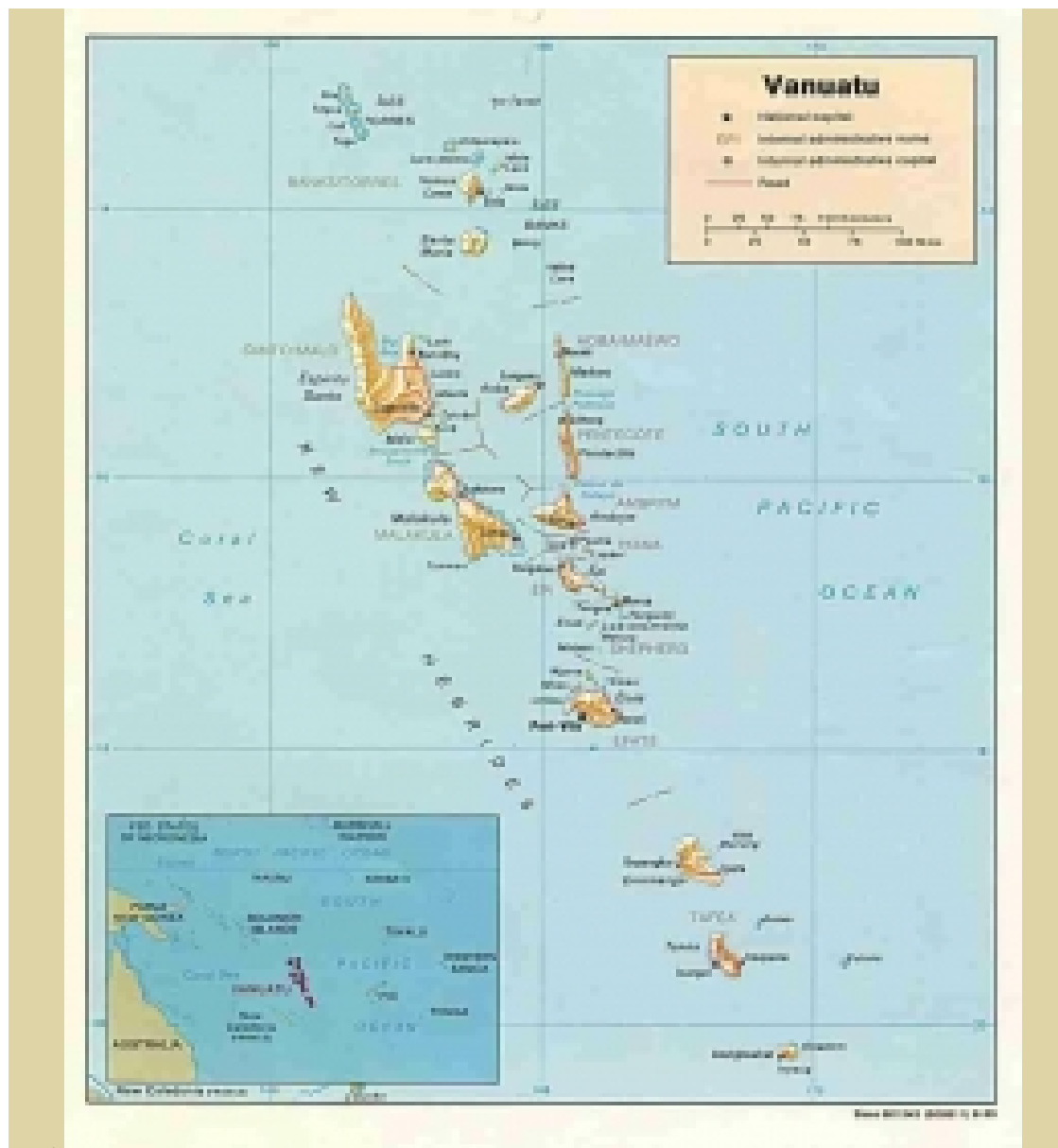
Preliminary findings are that Vanuatu has a strong resource base of knowledge, research information and experience in domestic violence, developed over almost 15 years and, through networking into agencies such as the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre and the UN Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT) as well as CEDAW and PPA trainings. This means that domestic violence has been framed within a 'human rights framework' in addition to the 'Safer Pacific Free from Domestic Violence' framework of the PPDVP. There is considerable controversy about the Family Protection Bill and, whether domestic violence should be addressed within a family focussed or a rights based framework at this point in time. The recognition of Custom in the Constitution of Vanuatu adds another complexity to the Police task of preventing and responding to domestic violence.





## INTRODUCTION

Vanuatu is a Y – shaped archipelago consisting of over 80 islands with its population of just over 215,000 spread over the 68 inhabited islands and speaking over 80 indigenous languages. Estimates are that over 75% of the population live in rural, and often very isolated, areas. Vanuatu is a Republic, and has a President and an elected Parliament which is based at the capital Port Vila (Efate). The elected councils from the six provinces share responsibility for local government with the national government. The Malvatumauri – the elected national council of chiefs - advises Parliament on land tenure and customs issues.



The five days' field work for this review was carried out in Port Vila and included a half day community meeting in the urban settlement of Ohlin. The extent to which these results can be generalised to the outer islands is unclear.

## SOCIO-CULTURAL CONTEXT

From 1906 until Independence in 1980 Vanuatu<sup>1</sup> was a condominium colony ruled jointly by Great Britain and France each of whom was responsible for its own citizens. Not only was this dual arrangement costly, it also saw the introduction of different expectations of the legal and justice systems, which continue today. On independence Bislama was introduced as the official language with English and French and alongside the over 80 indigenous languages. Vanuatu joined the UN in 1981. Vanuatu is classified as a Least Developed Country (LDC).

The Constitution of Vanuatu grants equal rights to women. However, political and social life including gender roles and power relations between male and female are greatly influenced by traditional cultural attitudes and practices – *kastom* (Vanuatu Country Supplement 2008). A consideration for *kastom* influences every aspect of social and daily life events.

While Port Vila is Vanuatu's administrative, commerce and educational centre, over 75%<sup>2</sup> of the population live in rural areas, where cash earning options are limited. Most rural families depend on semi-subsistence farming and fishing to meet their cash needs with tourism an emerging enterprise. In the United Nations (UN) Human Development Index, Vanuatu was ranked 12 out of 14 Pacific countries in 1999. Hardship, for Vanuatu, has been characterised as poor living conditions; inability to get jobs; inability to afford prices of goods, school fees and materials; struggling to provide for family needs; difficulty in accessing health services and, worrying about lack of money all the time (ADB 2003).

Vanuatu is most often described as a highly patriarchal society, where women are accorded a lower status than males. However there are marked differences by island group - some islands follow matrilineal descent rules, while on other islands a patrilineal system is followed. Chiefly status and leadership in the north rests largely on a man's success in graded societies which enable individuals to work their way up a ladder of status grades by killing and exchanging circle tusked pigs. In central regions, the chiefly titles also depend on individual effort and ability. Generally, men have greater management rights to land than do women, although woman may control land particularly in matrilineal areas. Women's access to education has improved in recent years and is almost equal with males (gross primary enrolment ratios 0.97; secondary enrolments 0.86 and tertiary 0.58. However, despite excelling in schooling, women's participation in decision-making positions is increasing but still minimal – women hold 15 percent of senior government positions and in 2006, there were two female parliamentarians out of a total of 51 – which is slightly less than 4%.

Rapid urban drift to the capital of Port Vila (Efate) and to Santo has seen the growth of heavily crowded settlements where people from different islands may be living together many for the first time. These settlements are marked by overcrowding, a lack of land for gardens, and inadequate services such as water, electricity and rubbish disposal. While a sense of community is growing, leadership is often quite fragile. At the Ohlin meeting for example, women said 'there are so many chiefs here from different islands, but no one that has real authority over all and there is no one everyone will listen to.' A dependence on the legal justice and policing systems is emerging.

### Family and social systems

The family is the main unit of organisation in Vanuatu's village based systems. Land is held in customary tenure and kin groups usually pool their labour on big ventures such as planting or building a new house. Land can be leased but not purchased by foreigners. While the extended family and community systems have a central place in *kastom*, what happens *within* the family is seen to be a family matter: other family / community members will not intervene to protect a woman from her husband if he is beating her: *mi no wantem save* (I don't want to know) and *ino bisni blo me* (it's not my business)

<sup>1</sup> Former New Hebrides

<sup>2</sup> UNDP Human Development Report latest figures are for 2005.

The differences by island group in the way chiefly status is achieved has been noted: the majority of chiefs are male and in islands where there are female chiefs, women tend not to participate in the chiefly councils. Reports highlight the separation of male/ female in most spheres of activity in traditional times, seen in the traditional nakamal (men's house or meeting ground) and men and initiated boys living together in separate men's houses – which differs from today where families typically live together as a unit. Reports also highlight women's lesser status than males:

*In many traditions in Vanuatu, parents treat female children as if inferior to male children, perhaps because of the belief that is the male child that ensures the continuation of the family line and that the female child is raised to benefit another family upon marriage. In this context, as adults, men and women thus come to accept as normal violence against women.*

A preference for gender separate action (and communication) is seen in comments to the PPDVP scoping mission (2007) that it would be better for PPDVP to appoint a male mentor in the first instance because people would not listen to a woman and, the chiefs would not be forthcoming to a female mentor. This was referred to as 'the stark reality' of Vanuatu life.

Challenges to the view that in traditional times women had lesser status than males are becoming more common and are evidenced in the differences by island group. Views are that the now common practise of couples from different island groups getting married (each of which may have different views about women's' place) is a significant factor in domestic violence today:

*I have three children. My husband belongs to the John Frum movement and they have a lot of kastom ways of doing things. However, my children and I never see him, he goes to the nakamal straight away after work and never spends time with the kids. I bring them up in the SHEFA culture. When he talks to them and they answer him back, he beats me up saying that I have taught my children to be disrespectful. That is not the TAFEFA way. But how can they know the TAFEFA way when he is never there to teach it to them? I am from SHEFA that is what I teach them! We eventually left him (Tor and Toka 2005)*

## **Marriage**

Three types of marriage are recognised in Vanuatu – religious, civil and customary. Traditionally marriages were arranged by the leaders of the kin groups and did not involve individual choice. Marriage was a bringing together of families, and the exchange of goods such as money, pigs, kava, food and cloth goods cemented these relationships between families. It was common for newly weds to live within the extended family groups. Usually women moved to live with their husbands who themselves lived with their families. This was seen to be a protective factor for women and as ensuring village harmony as well.

Bride price, which has a central place in the marriage process, has been described as discriminatory; 'putting women in the same class as chattels'; giving licence to men to physically assault their wives; as placing women in the control of men and, a barrier to the advancement of women (CEDAW report)

*... most cultures in Vanuatu demand that bride price be paid to the relatives of the woman, where women are exchanged for cattle, pigs, money traditional mats etc. Although these gifts are supposed to be tokens of appreciation to the women's parents, often they have been regarded as a price for the woman. So bride price compounds the problems as it is often interpreted as wife purchase, which gives males unlimited power to do what they wish...We.. need to challenge cultural*

*practises that dehumanize people against the true customs and beliefs that each island of Vanuatu has (such as) sexual violence, bride price and polygamy*

*It is common to feel that bride-price gives husband the right to treat their wives as property and beat them when they disobey. If a woman seeks refuge within her own family, they are unlikely to support her for more than a few days, for fear of being required to return her bride price*

Some of those interviewed said that late marriages and non marriages (just living together with our children) had become common because the bride price was so expensive. This is supported by the 1999 data that 11% of census sample of 65,871 people who reported that they were either married or living in a defacto relationship reported living in a defacto relationship.

The bride price of VT80,000 was recently eliminated by the Malvatumauri although it is still permitted for families to exchange goods. While this ruling by the Council of Chiefs was seen by many to be a good thing, others saw this as an acknowledgement of the ‘rightness’ of the bride price. (see CEDAW report)

### **Children**

Under the Matrimonial Act, married women in Vanuatu cannot accumulate personal wealth because it is considered that anything she has is to be jointly owned with her husband. In fact, what she owned prior to marriage is taken over by the husband upon marriage and he is in charge of all their properties (see Matrimonial Causes Act CAP 192). Males also have better rights than women to the children of a marriage. This was a reason some victims said they stayed in an unhealthy relationship.

The Vanuatu Women’s Domestic Violence Policy (2002) describes the influence on children of witnessing domestic violence as ‘very traumatic’. Not only that, witnessing domestic violence, perpetuates a cycle of violence against women:

*Bride price teaches young males and females wrong teachings and bad mentality to women. Often it is in the home that boys learn to be violent and girls learn to be victims. This pattern of behaviour becomes accepted as the norm. It is a cycle very difficult to break*

In their rulings, Vanuatu Magistrates now take account of the impact of domestic violence on children and, the best interest of children.

### **Sexual jealousy and violence**

In most instances domestic violence appears to stems from feelings of sexual jealousy:

*...I feel that I have had enough share of beatings from him. It’s not the first time he’s hit me and I am tired of him always doing that. He is a very jealous man and he would beat me every time he gets jealous over me.*

*Don’t seem to talk to each other ... (to be able to) talk through things. Yes there is a strong element of jealousy and physical violence. Gang rapes and physical violence...sometimes, a male (who is angry with his girl friend, or jealous that she is*

*playing up on him) will actually call his girl friend to meet him at x spot. When she comes his friends will abuse her... Seems to be an element of pay back in this ... can't say.*

New technologies such as texting and 'uncheckable' cell phone calls were mentioned as additional spurs to male jealousy today along with alcohol, kava drinking, and the way women dress 'she dresses up (trousers) to lure other males.' Comments were also made that some males resented women's increasing prominence in education and employment today and were 'jealous that women are usurping their status'.

### **Conflict resolution**

Conflicts were traditionally resolved by agreement on both sides of the dispute and the exchange of goods, such as mats, pigs, cash and kava and goods. The aims of the traditional justice systems was to achieve community and family harmony and reconciliation rather than individual rights. In some parts of Malekula, the traditional penalty for adultery incest or other misbehaviour for male or female was a fine, exile, to be given to another tribe to be married, be a slave or eaten, be killed. Similar penalties for these offences, including wife beating, have been reported in traditional Penama and some parts of Sanma (Tor and Toka 2005)

In the old days, and today, chiefs rarely found fault with only one side of the dispute and seldom supported the separation of the couple. Going through a *kastom* ceremony did not mean there would be no criminal charges but compensation could mitigate any punishment.

Today, the traditional courts are empowered to hear cases dealing with land disputes, robbery, and family disputes and more recently matters relating to child maintenance, custody and domestic violence. The Family Protection Bill (gazetted 2009) recognises the power of the Island Courts to make protection orders and temporary orders. Reports are that in cases of abuse women usually go to their local chief for support before they will go to the police or other institutions:

*Even in Vila, she'll go (to the chief). The chief will try to reconcile them and make them pay the fines and then send them home. The women will have to pay a lot of money if she's the one who asks for the meeting, so her family will have to help here. The chief will maybe also give a fine to the husband and then make them shake hands and go home. This will not solve her problem, because he will hit her again anyway. He will say he's paid bride-price so that gives him the right to hit her. The chief and the family will agree with this. They will say that 'You are his property.*

Women say they are disadvantaged in traditional court hearings because most of the chiefs are male. Furthermore, that because the majority of chiefs have not been exposed to/ and are not literate in modern and human rights ideals, that women and children are at the mercy of discriminatory traditional decisions being made by the chiefs.

## THE INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

### Legal and customary systems

An uneasy relationship between traditional and legal systems of conflict resolution continues to influence the way domestic violence is perceived, defined and addressed. First, Police say ‘domestic violence is not a law and, we deal with laws’. Second, the customary systems of conflict resolution are the only systems many people know about and, the Constitution recognises the legitimacy of customary law. The Vanuatu CEDAW feedback reports notes that in the absence of comprehensive anti-discrimination provisions in the Constitution, traditional practices that discriminate against women may be lawful in some circumstances (see Box 1). Police capacity and scarce resources are a third influence on national level domestic violence action. Simply put, Police do not have sufficient resources to provide a nation wide coverage of services. In many rural communities especially, women have no choice but to rely on the traditional leaders for arbitration, reconciliation and restorative justice (Section 2.7)

Box 2 excerpts are from Vanuatu’s CEDAW Legislative Compliance Report, which is referred to throughout this report.

#### Box 1: CEDAW REPORT BACK (2007)

Although General Recommendation 19 (which concerns violence against women) identified domestic violence as a form of discrimination that inhibits women’s ability to enjoy rights and freedoms on a basis of equality with men, Vanuatu has not yet incorporated domestic violence offences into its criminal laws. This is required for compliance with CEDAW (CEDAW Legislative Compliance Review n.d)

Article 5 requires States Parties to abolish or modify customary practices that discriminate against women. The Constitution of Vanuatu recognises the legitimacy of customary law provided that it is not contrary to justice, morality and good order. Despite these provisos, the absence of a guarantee that equality between men and women takes precedence over custom, coupled with the absence of comprehensive anti-discrimination provisions in the Constitutions, means that traditional practices that discriminate against women may be lawful in some circumstances (11)

#### *The Family Protection Act (2009)*

The aims of the Family Protection Act are to preserve and promote harmonious relationships, eliminate domestic violence at all levels of society and ensure effective legal protection to victims of domestic violence. The Bill provides for the issue of Family Protection Orders and temporary protection orders and makes it a criminal offence for a family member to commit an act of domestic violence. Magistrates Court or an Island Court have the power to issue protection orders and temporary protection orders so improving access to these protective measures for rural communities

The lengthy journey to the passing of the Family Protection Act highlights a fierce ambivalence as to whether domestic violence is a family or a legal issue. Under the FPA, the Police must investigate domestic violence and must charge or arrest the defendant if there are reasonable grounds for believing there has been domestic violence. First discussed in the 1990s, the delays in the FPA were reportedly due to:

*the customary attitudes regarding traditional familial roles in Melanesian society... and to the misconception and misunderstandings of the Bill by the general public who think that the Bill is another one of the Womens’ Rights Movement charade designed*

*to grant women more power to destabilise the status quo in Melanesian society (The Ni Vanuatu, 26/8/04)*

Even when hailed throughout the Pacific as a bold initiative, there is still considerable opposition to the Bill:

*The chiefs had made a unanimous decision that the Bill should not go ahead in its current format and that it needed further discussion – that the Bill was a western Bill and did not suite Vanuatu Society...The influence of the Malvatumauri and the more conservative parliamentarians are behind the slowness, but also the National Council of Churches who say that they were not consulted adequately on the Bill.*

#### *The Domestic Violence Protection Order (DVPO) 1992*

As reported, the slow progress of the Family Protection Bill was a factor in the Chief Justice making provisions for Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPO). The DVPO provides legal protection for women for a short period (14 days) after which both the victim and the accused must appear in court. The DVPO processes are very clearly outlined. Application is made by the victim or a person on behalf of the victim, including a lawyer, friend or family members if the victim has given his or her consent. Applications may be made orally, in writing or by other means such as telephone or radio or other means – for example, the VWC obtains orders for rural women by fax. Orders are processed by the Public Solicitors Office. Data about the DVPOs issued is not kept as matter of routine but was available on request.

#### **Vanuatu Police Force**

The Vanuatu Police Force (VPF) and the Vanuatu Mobile Force (VMF) (paramilitary) together with the Police Maritime Wing (PMW) are headed by the civilian Police Commissioner, Lt Col Patu Lui, and a former VMF member. The VMP are trained by the Australia government under a defence cooperation pact and focus on international activities such as peace keeping missions. The VMF role in the national policing strategy is to carry out remote area patrols with general duty police in accordance with the Remote Area Policy and the Community Policing Policy and to develop good relations with Chiefs, Church Leaders, Community and business leaders (Vanuatu Police Force Business Plan 2008) Reports were that a significant number of posts in the VPF, VMP and the Maritime Wing were not filled.

The primary focus of this review was on the VPF. There are five police stations -Vila, Santo, Lakatoro, Tanna and Saratamata on Ambae – and eight Police Posts at Lamap on Malekula, Ambore on Ambae, Morua on Tongoa, Sola in the Banks Islands, Lero on Paama Anietyum North Efate. Recording officers at each post are responsible for sending data to the CRO. The CRO collects data from dockets or Police files in crime reports and progress report forms. Police services, operations and coverage to rural areas especially are hampered by a serious lack of resources. This situation reinforces the important role the VWCs' 35 volunteer community committees (CAVAWS) play in providing information, support and counselling services on domestic violence and human rights and legal literacy training.

#### *Family Protection Unit (FPU) (established 1998)*

The Family Protection Unit (FPU) was established as the Police Sexual and Child Abuse Unit and sits within the Criminal Investigation Department (CID). The FPU was to deal with sexual offences, child abuse and domestic violence issues and to be staffed by 5 officers (an inspector, senior sergeant, sergeant, corporal and a constable). At the time of this review the unit was staffed by Sergeant J Thomas and Corporal Davis, who has extensive domestic violence / rights training under the Male Advocate Programme of the VWC. Aims are that

under the PPDVP the role of the FPU be expanded to include domestic violence, there be an increase in the number of FPU staff so as to be able to deal with the increasing number of domestic violence complaints lodged and to develop a robust preventative focussed programme as well; and the relocation of the FPU to larger, more private rooms presently being renovated. A PPDVP mentor is working with the FPU and, reinforcing linkages with the VPCBP.

#### *Vanuatu Police Force Capacity Building Project (VPCBP)*

The CPB was commenced in Feb 2006, and is financed by the Australian Government for a 5 year term. The project has 10 long term staff and 8 short term advisers which are utilised as required. The CPB includes a focus on training and leadership (executive and operational level) the strengthening of training programmes and facilities and IT systems development. Whilst the CPB and the PPDVP each have their own focus, there are benefits in working together as appropriate.

### **Gender equity and domestic violence benchmarks**

National domestic violence benchmarks and the regional and global commitments Vanuatu is party to are set out in Table 2 and set the context for this report. Since the mid 1990s, the Women's Affairs Department (WDA) and NGOs, such as the Vanuatu Women's Centre (VWC) and the National Council of Women (NCW), have taken the lead in advocacy, policy making and research on domestic violence within a gender equity and human rights framework. Table 2 shows there have been periods of considerable gains in getting domestic violence on to national agenda and periods of much slower progress. In fact as described to me 'it's almost like two steps forward and one step back!'

**Table 2: Vanuatu Domestic Violence related national benchmarks**

<b>GLOBAL</b>	CEDAW	CEDAW Report back 2005 (WDA) CEDAW partnership (multisectoral)
<b>REGIONAL</b>	Pacific Platform of Action for Women (PPA) SPC	1994 and update 2006 WDA
	Forum Sec, 2009 Communiqué	Vanuatu Government
<b>NATIONAL</b>	Vanuatu Women's Centre, Port Vila TAFEA and SANMA services CAVAWs in rural areas	VWC (NGO) NZ Government and AusAid
<b>1993</b>		
<b>1997</b>	Comprehensive Reform Program (CRP) National Gender Equity Policy and 9 Benchmarks to improve situation of women	Vanuatu Government National Gender Equity Policy Domestic Violence a priority
<b>2001</b>	Domestic Violence Protection Orders	
<b>2002-06</b>	Violence Against Women Policy Paper 2002-2006	DWA. Key stakeholders: VWC, Wan Smolbag, VFHA, VNCW, Malvatumauri, Police, UNICEF, Churches, Lawyers, donors, Health Services, Govt Dept e.g State Law office, Education, DESD
	Domestic Violence Task Force	DWA Multisectoral strategy
<b>2005</b>	Research (Tor and Toka) Gender, Custom and Domestic Violence	DWA
<b>2008</b>	Research (Bolenga)	Australia Government Violence against women in Melanesia and East Timor (2008)
<b>2009</b>	Family Protection Act	Legislation in progress
<b>2009-2010</b>	Research: Women's Lives and Family Relationships	VWC & Statistics Office Australia Government



## SECTION 1: POLICE ATTITUDES, POLICY AND PRACTICE

### 1.1 Current specific levels of domestic violence reported to Police

Crime statistics are not well collected in Vanuatu. Table 3 data was compiled by the UIB from crime reports sent by recording officers to the CRO. A total of 375 domestic violence or assault cases was recorded for the 17 month period (2007 and the five months of 2008). In presenting this data the UIB noted that poor communications, late submission of statistics from rural areas especially and a shortage of crime report forms impacted on the compilation of statistics.

**Table 3: Domestic Violence or Assault cases by month 2007/8**

2007		2008	
Jan	27	Jan	25
Feb	21	Feb	21
March	15	March	11
April	26	April	21
May	39	May	1
June	12	TOTAL	79
July	24		
August	33		
Sept	18		
Oct	47		
Nov	33		
Dec	41		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>296</b>		

*Source: Uniform Investigation Branch (2009) unpublished data*

Data in Table 4 was compiled by a manual search of the occurrence logs at the Port Vila Station. (PPDVP 2009). It covers a 6 month period from February to July 2007. The total of 475 cases identified in this manual search is significantly higher than the 137 for the same period listed in Table 2 above and supports the widely held view that all cases reported to the Police are not automatically recorded in the registers.

**Table 4: Statistics of DV related incidents and Offences, Feb -July 2007 Port Vila**

Month	Total
Feb	76
March	90
April	90
May	64
June	75
July	80
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>475</b>

Police Officers also have a role in the issuing of Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPO). The number of DVPOs registered at the domestic violence court provides further insight into the reporting behaviours of victims of domestic violence (Table 5).

**Table 5: Number of DV cases registered at the Domestic Violence Court**

Jan-Dec 2008		Jan- May 2009	
MONTH	Number	MONTH	Number
Jan	5	Jan	9
Feb	-	Feb	9
March	7	March	5
April	15	April	5
May	5	May	5
June	8	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>26</b>
July	8		
August	8		
Sept	7		
Oct	5		
Nov	7		
Dec	2		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>77</b>		

Source: Magistrates Registry original copy, 2009

Domestic homicides appear to be rare in Vanuatu. However, the Vanuatu Country Supplement notes that ‘lots of children and women died from bashing by husbands and fathers’ (Vanuatu Country Supplement 2008:179)

## 1.2 Current Police policy, protocols and general processes and procedures (including record keeping) for dealing with domestic violence

I was not able to establish whether there was a written policy on Police processes and procedures for dealing with domestic violence. Police Officers said they would welcome such a set of procedures and noted that the systems for issuing DVPOs were very clearly set. One suggested a template form would be useful. I asked a number of Police Officers to describe the procedures they followed when receiving a complaint. Their responses indicated different understandings of what procedures should be followed as well as a reliance on *officer judgment* as to how complaints should be dealt with:

- Victims come to the main desk at the Police Station. For a phone call complaint, police will go out if transport is available and the call is seen to be serious or, they will ask victims to come to the Police Station.
- Victims report to front line staff. Aims are to have a female officer on duty at the front desk at all times also, officers who are fluent in English, French and/or Bislama. This does not always happen. All incidents attended by Police are recorded manually in the occurrence books which are held in the office behind the public counter of the police stations.
- Frontline staff contact the FPU if the case involves child abuse or sexual abuse. The FPU staff then go downstairs and interview these cases. (This procedure was witnessed by PPDVP staff). In some cases, interviews will be transferred upstairs to a less public room.
- Domestic violence complaints are entered into the occurrence book and victims are advised that once a report is made this will be an official matter. Most often Police will talk with the victim to see if these complaints can be conciliated. They may call in the husband / partner for counselling.
- Incidents not proceeding to investigation are not entered on to any subsequent database and therefore remain only as a manual record. Those *proceeding to criminal investigations* are entered on to the computer database by staff in the records office and assigned a number (Crime Record Number CRN).
- Following the Criminal Investigation preparation of the case, files go to the Prosecution section and then to court. If a conviction is entered the file is sent back to the Prosecutor's office. The file is then entered by the records clerk as being dealt with and closed. These files are not sent back to the Police officer in charge, so the Police officer may not know the outcome of the file unless he/ she is called to give evidence.
- The data base of prosecution files is kept at the State Prosecutors office. (Reports are that average of 2 out of every 5 police files are referred back to the police as 'not well prepared' )

Police described it as the victim's decision as to whether a case proceeds or not. Others described the police influence here as 'paramount':

*... VAW is treated as a domestic affair more than a criminal implication. Thus it is a more serious crime if a man beats another man...The Police because of various reasons, do not always take reports relating to domestic violence serious*

*(she would) talk to police officers from the Uniform Investigation Branch first, who will then refer her to the appropriate officer to hand her problem based on the seriousness of her case ...A case is usually serious? If the victim is hospitalised*

### **Commentary**

There is little evidence that there is a set of protocols and procedures for dealing with domestic violence or that these are followed. Nor are there robust systems to ensure information flows from the front desk ‘right through to the magistrate’s court.’ Many Police officers are using the practices they know – counselling, praying and conciliation. Awareness raising through training, community discussions, radio and other media to help change Police (and community) understanding and attitudes to domestic violence will be an on-going and long time process. Clear protocols for dealing with domestic violence cases are more easily put in place. However, training in these systems will be required until these procedures become a matter of routine. The PPDVP, working with partner agencies, is well placed to support the development of protocols and procedures for dealing with domestic violence, drawing on experiences in the other four project countries.

The very public nature of the front desk was also referred to time and time again. The renovations for a FPU-DV rooms in progress are addressing this need:

*Vila is so small, so if a neighbour or relative comes in (the police officer at the desk) would have to dismiss the case because of the personal connection. Or if it was the wife of another police officer, no one would want to deal with it. But if there was a protocol, it would help a lot.*

The manual recording of incidents presents another constraint to domestic violence reporting and case management. The Capacity Building Project (CBP) is developing generic data collection systems - PPDVP could explore whether these could be adapted to include the collection of domestic violence data. Computer access and IT training for all Police Officers is essential to establish robust data collection processes for domestic violence.

**1.3 The current state of Police prosecution of domestic violence including levels of case withdrawal, levels of prosecution against reporting, and the overall number of offenders being held accountable for their actions**

**1.3.1 Prosecutions**

Table 6, sourced from Police statistics, presents cases proceeding from report (reporting to police) to establish (assessing the Report and deciding there are grounds to investigate<sup>4</sup>) to detected (Offences identified) and persons involved (Offender identified).

This shows that of the total of 3078 cases reported, 2,000 (or 66%) proceeded to investigation and of this 66% just over half proceeded to the detected stage. Shown also is the higher numbers reporting in urban areas of Vila and Santo than rural areas (Malekula, Tanna and Ambae) and the variations in cases detected by area. For Vila, 599 of the 1406 cases established were detected: for rural areas there is less margin of difference between numbers established and detected.

**Table 6: Reported, established detected and persons involved by rural/ urban 2007**

Police Stations	Report	Establish	Detected	Persons involved
Vila	1503	1406	599	544
Santo	1141	438	401	330
Malekula	211	92	92	285
Tanna	201	55	55	224
Ambae	23	7	7	27
TOTAL	3078	1998	1154	1410

Source: Crime Statistics, Port Vila 2007

Table 6 data was compiled by a manual review of the occurrence logs and, builds on Table 4 data. This shows a high number of incidents resolved by police assistance, many of which 'cases should have been coded as a criminal offence and proceeded to a further investigation'

**Table 6: Statistics of DV related incidents and Offences, Feb-July 2007 Port Vila**

Month	Police Assistance Incidents	Criminal Offences	Total
Feb	55	21	76
March	72	18	90
April	61	29	90
May	49	15	64
June	59	16	75
July	60	20	80
TOTAL	356	119	475

Source: PPDVP Business Case 2009

<sup>4</sup> Note the Continental Law "to commence and investigation" has a special context in this regard

### 1.3.2 Withdrawals

Vanuatu does not have a no-drop policy. There has been strong advocacy and lobbying for this measure by women's groups for many years. A senior Police officer, Superintendent Rakau had this to say following his attendance at a Fiji training:

*All it requires is for the Commissioner of Police to issue an instruction that no such case can be dropped even if the families of either victim or complainant request it (Daily Post Sep 24<sup>th</sup> 2003):*

Reports indicate many withdrawals are made at the request of the victim:

*It's x decision how police will deal with the problem. Whether she requests that (husband) is taken in to the station so they can talk everything over or decides to take the problem to court to settle it, then the police will act accordingly (Police officer)*

I was told that if the matter is conciliated before it goes to court the complaint is normally withdrawn by police. However, if the case has gone before the court, the police cannot withdraw and the matter will proceed. If the victim decides to withdraw her complaint while the case is before the court the expectation is that she attend court as a witness and request the withdrawal and present a statement from the chief of the village, which outlines the reconciliation processes which have taken place, alongside her statement of withdrawal. If this is done, the case will normally be dismissed by the magistrate. In the Public Prosecutor's view, domestic violence related cases are often withdrawn for cultural reasons and, instances of bullying by family members or the local chief have been noted<sup>5</sup>:

*There is often pressure from the family or the village chiefs for the victim to withdraw. However (the Public Prosecutor) will ensure that they are kept outside... without the interference of family and village chiefs the victim will often proceed with their complaint.*

Magistrates also prefer to reconcile in the first instance if this is possible. They also take into account the impacts on children of witnessing domestic violence in their court rulings.

### 1.3.3 Held responsible for actions

Based on available data, it is not possible to say how many perpetrators are held responsible for their actions. However some estimates of trends can be made:

A conservative proportion of all Police DV records that would be identified as criminal offences is 50-70%. With this in mind, it is reasonable to infer that of the 475 reports received by the police during the first 6 months of 2007, around 250-300 of these should have been identified as a criminal offence. This is more than twice the number of domestic violence criminal offences currently being identified and investigated

Source PPDVP Business Case, based on Table 7 data

Poor case preparation also impacts on the numbers of domestic violence offenders held responsible for their actions. Estimates are that 40% of Police files are sent back to Police Officers for further investigation; that cases are often adjourned because files are not ready to proceed when called for and that the Police summary of facts are often inadequate to fully inform the court of the seriousness of the offending. A failure to provide evidence of any

<sup>5</sup> See also PPDVP Scoping Report 2007

previous issues (earlier complaints) also means Magistrates may treat a case as a first complaint and ‘let them off lightly.’ This last point reinforces the importance of more robust reporting of incidents and the Police responsibility to make sure incidents are recorded, even if they view a complaint as not serious or likely to be withdrawn.

#### 1.3.4 Victims’ views

Women’s views for not reporting or proceedings with a complaint were a mix of economic reasons “we have nowhere to go,’ not knowing their rights and a fear for their children:

*We are expected to leave our children behind ...because according to kastom, children belong to their fathers -despite custody laws that cases should be decided in the best interests of the children regardless of traditional practises.*

*I wish I had withdrawn. My husband told the children that I ran away because I didn’t want to be with them. ... My relations keep going back to see them and tell them I’m trying to get them back ... but it’s 6 months now.*

*Women don’t know their rights that is true – but police don’t know women’s rights either, or their own rules and procedures*

*It’s hard enough reporting. But there’s so many places to visit, time and cost.*

*Many abused are low income earners or unemployed women and do not have the money to be travelling from one end of town to another, not to mention the medical form which is VT200 and the order which costs VT3,000. Need a one stop shop...*

## 1.4 Any history of change around Police domestic violence practice

The most significant change in Police practice has been the setting up of the FPU at the Vila Station. Police working with agencies with domestic violence expertise, such as the VWC, mark another significant change in police practice: these partnerships are exposing Police to new information and experiences – such as ideals of equity and rights concepts – and provide opportunities for increasing Police understanding of the ways domestic violence impacts on the lives of women and children. Other changes include the inclusion of domestic violence in Police recruit and in-service training and the opening up of Police career pathways for women officers.<sup>6</sup> Each of these measures has the potential to increase Police understanding of the nature and extent of domestic violence and Police responsibilities in making sure perpetrators are brought to justice.

This section focuses on how changes in Police domestic violence practises are taking place as a result of Police participation in the issuing of DVPOs, the VWC Male Advocacy network and the CAVAWs:

### 1.4.1 DVPOs

The Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPO) were introduced to provide legal protection for women for a short period (14 days). The number of DVPOs registered at the Port Vila Court House in the 2001-2003 period was 99, increasing from 4 (2001) to 53 (2002) to 42 (to June 2002). At that date, 23 were pending, 58 had been granted, 3 were refused; 6 withdrawn; 7 stuck out, one was awaiting prosecution and 1 had been transferred to the Supreme Court (VWC unpublished data)

There were mixed views as to whether DVPOS were effective measure in preventing domestic violence and about Police handling of DVPOs:

*...police officers have not been following regulations in carrying out their work professionally. With my case – the police officer who delivered the order to my husband is related to my husband so as soon as he delivered the order, the total opposite of what was written in the order occurred; instead of my husband keeping away from me like it was stated in the order, he made every possible way to be close to me to keep an eye on me because he knew that the police wouldn't do anything to him even though he was breaking the law. I therefore feel that many men, like my husband do not treat these orders seriously and they take it lightly because they know that their friends and families who are police officers will not penalize them for going against what the order says.*

*...the 14-day order is too short for me to really get away from my boyfriend and be free from his control for a while. A 14-day order is also too short to teach and change men. After the 14-day order expires, women go back to their husbands and go through the same problems again.*

*...if a woman would like to have a longer period of order, she cannot afford this as it is very expensive and many women who are victims of violence are either low-income earners or unemployed mothers whose husbands abuse them because of their low economic status which is a main factor making them dependent on their husbands. I feel that security is a need for everyone – we have police officers and Vanuatu Mobile Force there to provide our country with security so we feel safe and secure all the*

<sup>6</sup> Sergeant M George (CID) was formerly the Head of the FPU



*time. Likewise, women should not be paying again for security from them as that is their role in protecting us from harm and danger. Women should not be charged any fees to obtain an order to protect them from their violent partners.*

#### **1.4.2 Changes in Police practice through partnerships**

Police have a longstanding relationship with the Vanuatu Women's Centre (VWC) and participate in many VWC programmes including the Male Advocacy network and the CAVAW community based networks.

##### *Male advocates (MA)*

Several Police officers, including Police Officer Davis Sarafanu (FPU) participated in the VWC Male Advocate training and are now members of the Male Advocates network. Officer Davis Sarafanu also accompanied the CEO of the VWC to the First Global Symposium Engaging Men and Boys in Achieving Gender Equality (April 2009)

##### *CAVAWS*

Police based in rural areas also participate in the network of over 35 CAVAWs established to provide services, information and training for victims of violence. Fig 1 shows the committees which make up this quite remarkable network are spread right through the most isolated villages.

*Where possible in the rural areas especially we try to draw local police into our CAVAWs... training etc when they do their monthly circuits etc. Slow process but we get there with our little ripples of influence (VWC interview)*

There are considerable benefits for Police in these community partnerships:

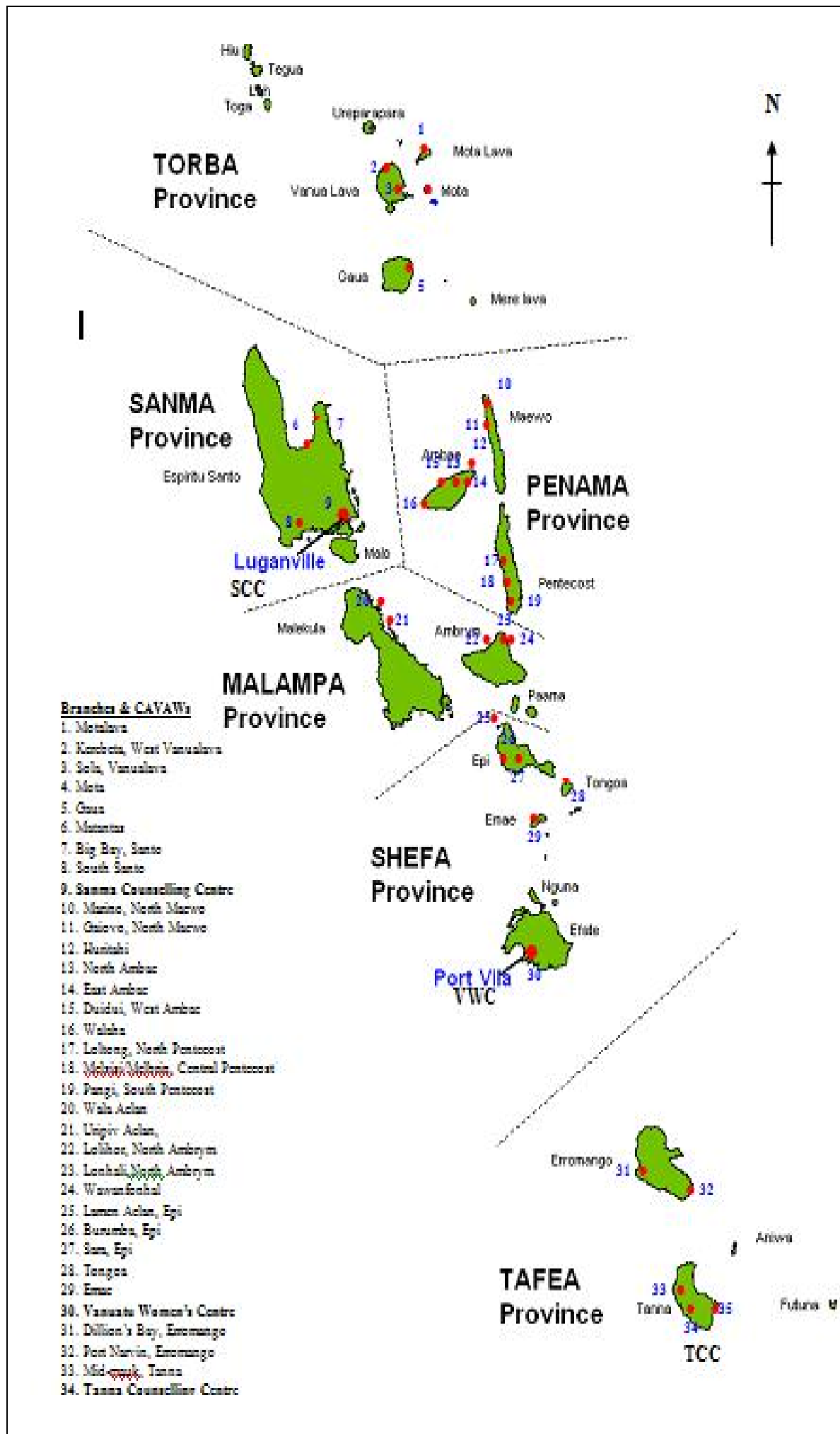
*As a male advocate I work closely with the chiefs in our province to ensure communities are free from any form of violence. Through all the awareness raising that the CAVAWs in this area run and I as a MA have been doing in the communities, chiefs have come to recognise and appreciate the work of the CAVAWs...really helps... earning more respect from the community and the males*

*I believe my role as a MA has really helped my other male colleagues in the police force recognise the CAVAWs and the VWC. This is really good because then it helps build a stronger relationship with all parties ...*

*CAVAWS are my feeders. They feed me information so I know what is happening in communities. If the CAVAWs were not there it would be difficult for me (as a police officer as well as a MA) to know the crimes in the community*

#### **Commentary**

Participation in the DVPO initiative, the Male Advocate programme and the CAVAWs have led to changes in Police practise around domestic violence and present further opportunities for Police capacity building as well as a national multi-levelled programme of action on domestic violence.



## 1.5 Current Police leadership practice around domestic violence

The Police Commissioner's commitment to addressing domestic violence is seen in the support to the setting up of the FPU and the invitation to the PPDVP to work with the Vanuatu Police. I was unable to meet with the Commissioner. While reference was made to the quite serious resource constraints the VPF face, the Police Commander (Southern) reaffirmed Police commitment to the FPU and the PPDVP. He noted also that there was a need for an increase in the number and professional level of staff appointed to FPU - given its pivotal role as the Police flagship for sexual and domestic violence - adding that care must be taken to ensure that these were the 'right' staff so that the FPU was not brought into disrepute.

There was less evidence that this executive level commitment had been communicated through to operational level staff: many displayed little knowledge about the FPA, the PPDVP or the DVPOs. Few outside of the FPU knew much about the Family Protection Bill, though some expressed disagreement with what they knew. Nor had this high level commitment led to a review of the reporting, tracking and/or case management systems for domestic violence incidents.

Public views were that the Police Commissioner was a little cautious and perhaps reluctant to take stronger actions on domestic violence commitments at this time given the highly controversial nature of the FPA and the fact that he was 'close to retirement'.

Some front line staff saw 'domestic violence as a FPU issue' rather than one which all Police should know about, understand and deal with. Staff changeovers and / or placements 'without consultation and/ or training' were seen to be another constraint to building a strong FPU. Mention was made of a staff member with an excellent record in FPU being transferred to another section. Views that that job was probably associated with a higher career path suggested that the 'FPU' was not considered to be a terribly high status option for officers. Comments that it was not unusual for FPU staff to be pulled out of their office to see to other Police duties reinforced this view. While urgent issues must always take priority, this suggested that the FPU duties were of less importance and perhaps not 'real police work.' Just as important, these outcalls reduced the time available for FPU staff to grow their own core business and organisational procedures. Developing a cadre of FPU staff with proven experience and expertise in dealing with sexual and domestic violence cases and who project a highly professional face to the FPU is vital.

### Commentary

It is timely for a targeted and concentrated branding of domestic violence by Police leaders; support to the strengthening of FPU expertise for its role as lead Police agency in issues of sexual and domestic abuse. Hand in hand, strong Police communication systems are necessary to ensure every member of the Police staff - executive through to operational level - has access to up-to-date data about domestic violence and the information they need to carry out their Policing responsibilities effectively and efficiently:

*(there is) a definite need for training for more of our staff to change quite deeply entrenched attitudes about domestic violence and build a sustained programme of action.*

VMP commitment to playing a more substantive role in the Police domestic violence training programmes would add considerably to the Police strategy and resources.

## 1.6 Police perceptions of domestic violence

Frontline staff interviewed did not see domestic violence as unusual: they described it as widespread and ‘especially in urban areas.’ They were unsure whether domestic violence had increased or whether ‘more women were reporting.’ The role of alcohol and jealousy in domestic violence was mentioned time and time again and, domestic violence was described by many as almost inevitable ‘when women don’t do their wifely duties:

*The main reason for domestic violence in the homes is sex. If a woman fails to satisfy her husbands’ sexual needs it is often the case that they will end up having a fight.*

*...women not having things right for husbands when they get home...like dinner, house, children*

Police Officers had difficulty seeing domestic violence as a criminal act noting that until the recent gazetting of the Family Protection Bill, there had been no law making this a crime:

*...the formal legal systems makes assault a criminal offence, including an assault by a man on his wife or partnership, and no differentiation is made in relationship to assaults which take place within the domestic sphere and practice shows an assault within the domestic sphere is usually treated different from an assault outside it. Generally speaking, domestic assault is treated as a matter less likely to require outside intervention and when intervention is undertaken, the punishment tends to be less severe than if it had not been domestic violence (Mason 2000)*

*I keep thinking of them and then thinking of my family and how we do things. That these things should be done by the family and kept there. (even though I know that this is what I should be doing) It’s very hard to think of this as a ‘crime’ and that it should be dealt with as a crime just like other crimes.*

### 1.6.1 Understanding domestic violence

Police focus group responses to a free listing exercise (Table 8) saw domestic violence rated as a *common occurrence* and in the *very bad* category on a par with threats and domestic disputes and abusive words which they believed ‘defamed a woman’s character’<sup>7</sup>. However, emotional violence was rated *not very bad* and not very common. The separation of domestic abuse (physical) from emotional violence in this way suggests this group did not see the relationship between physical abuse and feelings of emotional security: they did not understand the ‘hidden’ or *psychological effects of hitting on women and children*. Strategies aimed at increasing Police understanding of the multiple impacts of domestic violence on women and children is a potential intervention for the PPDVP.

<sup>7</sup> The penalty for this offence was 3 years in prison. Reports are that so far no-one had gone to prison yet for committing this offence, but may have paid fines.

**Table 8: Police views of what is violence and types seen in Vanuatu (n: 9, 8m 1 fm)**

	COMMON	NOT VERY COMMON
Very bad Inogud tumas	Sexual Offences -Rape -Indecent Assault  Hitting women/ wives -Abusive words to women -Threats -Domestic dispute	Murder
Not very Bad Ino nogud tumas	Emotional violence Degrading women/ children	Emotional violence Harassment to women Sexual harassment

Source: N Bolenga 2007

Women reported that younger police officers had a better understanding of domestic violence than older officers and that ‘even if they (young Police) don’t believe it, they can understand that it’s a person’s right not to be beaten’

### 1.6.2 Police Attitudes to dealing with complaints

A senior police officer estimated that over 80% of police incidents were related to domestic violence or violence within the family. But in his view, fewer cases were reported or investigated. Another said he was not inclined to take cases too seriously when a woman first reported. He believed that other police officers felt the same way he did:

*We give them time, because two-three days later the wife usually comes back and wants to withdraw the statement. I tell the wife we will keep her statement for a few days because we don’t want to waste our time. Usually this is right.*

### 1.6.3 Women’s views

Over-whelmingly, women believed there was a resistance to dealing with DV at the Police front desk. Nor were they sure that Police would act on a woman’s behalf:

*If need be, women will be asked to wait at the police station while the police bring her husband to the station, so they can have a round table discussion together to solve their problem*

*The police sometimes encourage praying with clients, this we feel is not their role. They sometimes pray and let the man leave*

*Police need to be taught to be neutral all the time as they are the law-upholders and peace makers in Vanuatu... there needs to be stricter regulations and penalties imposed on police officers who take sides with an offender and refuse to take complaints against their friends, families and superiors.*

*Police are hesitant to lodge the DV orders immediately. (they) make excuses over fuel, vehicle, manpower. Sometimes the orders stay overnight or the weekend ... this means insecurity (for the women). And if there is a breach of DV orders, no one has*

*been arrested. The offender is supposed to be arrested and held in custody to be taken back to the court.*

#### 1.6.4 Attitudes to dealing with prosecutions, offenders and holding offenders to account

The small number of police I talked to were not at all comfortable dealing with domestic violence incidents. This was partly because domestic violence was a relatively new concept in Vanuatu but was also linked to the absence of transparent processes and/ or best practises to guide their responses. One officer said his yardstick for pursuing a case was 'if the wife is being threatened and it's likely she'll be assaulted again'.

*There are so many cases ... how could we deal with all of these if they all go through? We don't have the staff. Would be impossible. So we do what we can and try to get the more serious*

*Let's be honest...where would you put offenders if you did apprehend them? The jail at xxx ... you couldn't hold prisoners there so, what are police supposed to do?*

*In rural areas, there is no money for the police to deal with reported cases. They cannot travel, cannot phone... and they take their time. Which results in delays of victims to access justice and/ or cases are not dealt with at all. This also makes victims rely on custom courts because they are more accessible. Many a times police will want to work but no finance to finance to support them. For example at the Sola police post, they wait for Luganville police headquarters to pay for their tickets for them to travel to work ...*

#### 1.6.5 Views on traditional cultural attitudes to domestic violence

Police Officers said domestic violence would not be good if this happened to their sister but might be acceptable 'if she has deserved it.' When asked what was 'deserving' views included flirting with other men, not looking after the children and not having things right at the house.

Small pockets of change in Police attitudes were noted which have the power to generate further changes and influence the behaviours of other Officers. For example, four Police Officers said they were comfortable using terms such as 'women's rights not to be hit' They also talked about the effects of domestic violence on children. One recalled a Won Smol Bag production he had seen many years ago which had challenged his attitudes:

*It was about a young mother wanting to go to netball practice and her husband wanting her to stay home. I loved my sport and I kept thinking 'why shouldn't she go and train without her husband getting jealous and beating her?' Wasn't fair.*

Bolenga's study (Box 2) demonstrates how changes in Police attitudes can take place, although, as seen, this officer still prefers to reconcile and counsel couples:

Box 2                    CORPORAL'S STORY

Before I became a male advocate I had violence in my home, despite the fact that I am a police officer and should be upholding the law. I believe part of the reason I was violent stems from the tough police training I had received as we were taught to be tough and strong men and we were always under strict rules and commands which brainwashed me into a monster. I was always violent towards my wife and our life at home was not a happy one. After going through the Male Advocate Training (MAT) provided by the VWC I now treat my wife with more respect than before. The first CAVAW training at Lolowai on Ambae (2004) changed me completely. I began to see things differently. Since 2004 when I became a male advocate, I changed because my perceptions and views towards women have changed. Furthermore, being a male advocate, I am now able to put myself into the women's shoes and speak for them. Our CAVAS around East Ambae Area would refer all women victims to me for counselling and advice. If they choose, I also counsel their husbands and it has really helped so many couples restore peace and unity in their homes.

### 1.6.6 Views on traditional local or village approaches towards dealing with domestic violence

The considerable ambivalence around family and village approaches to domestic violence is not surprising given that these are the systems people are familiar with and, that the Constitution recognises customary law. While generalisations cannot be made, the majority of officers I talked to believed domestic violence should be dealt with within the family, village or church and in the customary way. They also noted that in many rural areas these were the only option:

*Many islands and communities do not have police officers in place to handle criminal problems that arise in communities... the police department depend on the chiefs to enforce laws*

*Chiefs can be a big help. They can arrange for (husband) to have an informal discussion so they can solve the problem themselves without having to call a meeting with the whole community. Usually a chief will expect the wife to be honest about why the violence took place and they will expect the wife to obey the husband at all times. ..*

*Chiefs will always follow the traditional way of solving domestic problems and that would mean reconciliation to get the couple back together as opposed to separation. The pastor is the same*

*(largely as a result of the VWC raising awareness of VAW issues) Many chiefs have now come to realise that custom cannot immunise you from being arrested by the police if you commit a crime of violence. On xxx at one time people were not seriously heeding the laws that we have until the day one of the (leaders of the chiefly council) was arrested for incest....*



**1.7 Police attitudes and perceptions towards Police Officers as domestic violence offenders**

Mason found that a significant numbers of police officers and male members of the Vanuatu Mobile Force (VMF) assaulted their spouses. However, spouses were reluctant to report this:

*Women whose husbands are police or VMF officers state that they are reluctant to report their spouse because they believe that his workmates will not deal with the complaint or deal with it properly (Mason 2000:122)*

Each police officer interviewed from the Police Commander through to front line officers was adamant that police officers charged with domestic violence would be treated no different from other members of the public – that ‘there is not one rule for us and one for others’.

**1.8 Current policy and practice arrangements for dealing with Police Officers as domestic violence offenders**

I was unable to ascertain what the current policy and practise arrangements were for dealing with Police officers as domestic violence offenders. Front line staff interviewed referred to the case of a high ranking Police Officer presently on leave due to a domestic violence offence. While they were not sure what the outcomes of this situation would be they saw this as proving that Police Officers were not above the law. Reports were that a public apology had been made ‘by the victim’ and that this would probably be used as a mitigating factor in this case.

## 1.9 The current state of Police domestic violence training

Reports that the 2007 graduation of Police recruits was the ‘first in over 10 years’ and that in-service training for Police had been introduced for the first time in 2008 reinforce the urgency of a comprehensive plan of action for Police capacity building being put in place quickly and one which targets both urban and rural based officers. Mention was made of the VMF separate training facilities and there was a feeling that the VMP were much better resourced than Police and ‘better trained’. The sharing of expertise and resources between the Police and the VMP staff and training services would strengthen and expand the Police capacity to respond to domestic violence both at the preventative and compliance levels.

### 1.9.1 Training

The Capacity Building Project (CPB) is playing a significant and valued mentoring role in Police training including curriculum revision, leadership development, the upgrading of training facilities, the training of trainers and the delivery of in-service training. Places in the recruit courses are advertised in the local press and ‘the number and quality of applicants has improved’. Females comprise between 25 – 30% of recruits per year.

The PRPI refresher training package is used to teach domestic violence and while the VWC is often called on to help localise these generic materials ‘there is much to be done.’ The Family and Domestic Violence Unit is allocated up to 14 hours teaching time and features a human rights approach. Sessions include defining violence, the cycle of violence, myths about family violence and causes (economic, cultural, legal and political) and the power imbalance within these, the characteristics of offenders, social and cultural issues relating to family violence, how family violence influences the victim and children and Police responsibilities and the role of the law and the Police to protect everyone. Domestic violence and assault cases are used as content in other training as well, such as police reporting procedures.

Police Officers who had attended the in –service training rated this as ‘highly successful’ and ‘long over-due.’ Subject to resources, aims are to schedule a regular programme of in-service training. The proposed week long programme will include a one hour session on the Family Protection Act.

### Commentary

Working in the domestic violence field requires specialised knowledge, skills and attitudes especially when, as in Vanuatu and other Pacific nations, domestic violence is a relatively new concept (Vanuatu CEDAW Report 2005; Domestic Violence Policy 2002). Actions suggested to me which a quality Police domestic training strategy would require include:

- A domestic violence curriculum which draws on best practise (national, regional and global) and combines theory and practical training so that Police gain a better understanding of the effects of domestic violence on women and children and, the Police role in ensuring perpetrators are brought to justice. Short term internships at the VWC or the USP Community Legal Centre are possible activities here.
- Locally appropriate domestic violence training materials. The value of the VWC materials was noted.
- High quality and timetabled in-service training on domestic violence and related issues, linked to promotion and career pathways.

- Training for and recognition of a cadre of Domestic Violence specialists
- Quality control measures, such as peer reviews, to maintain standards, encourage excellence and to avoid the situation described by one officer of ‘once trained, always trained and for every section!’
- Computer access and training to facilitate information sharing within and between Police units and to enable Police to link into global discussions including domestic violence, conflict resolution, justice and professional behaviours.

Working to change Police attitudes to domestic violence and understanding of how Police must deal with this will require a much longer and on-going process of solid planned for and multi-level interventions.

In partnership with the VWC and other agencies, the PPDVP can support the preparation of quality domestic violence training materials and resources, building on the PPDVP experience in Samoa, Tonga, Kiribati and Cook Islands. A small group of Police Officers are already familiar with the PPDVP training package having participated in the regional training. A number of other national training initiatives targeting Police are in the pipeline and could be utilised in a PPDVP intervention. These include:

*Law and Justice Sector Strategy 2009-2014.*

- Objective 1.3. Training programmes to enhance the capacity of all police personnel in achieving a Police Force that is professional, transparent, accountable, proactive, responsive and disciplined that meets legitimate community expectations (Section 1.10)

*UNICEF – Republic of Vanuatu 2009 Child Protection Programme.*

- Expected Output 1.  
A holistic training package will be developed for Police (CID and Family Protection Unit) and the judiciary for handling cases involving children
- A strategy developed for Police and Judiciary Division and No Drop Policies
- Child Friendly Courts

Agencies such as the *USP Community Legal Services* and *Vanuatu’s Rural Training Centres* offer other training support and delivery possibilities.

## 1.10 The state and recent history of Police partner relations

### 1.10.1 National inter-agency partnerships

The Police Department is already playing a lead role in the National Steering Committee on Crime and, the Law and Justice Sector Strategy 2009-2014 (Box 3). While domestic violence is not the primary focus of either of these committees, it is likely to feature prominently in these agendas given the increase in the number of incidents reported and the relationship between domestic violence and other criminal acts such as sexual abuse, drugs, drunkenness and theft.

#### Box 3 LAW AND JUSTICE SECTOR STRATEGY 2009-2014

##### *The Vision*

A professional, competent and accountable law a judicial system that enables equal rights and access to justice for all.

##### *Mission*

For all justice agencies to promote justice and provide fair and equitable services to meet the needs of the community, the rule of law and protection of human rights

The pillars are Police and Community Safety, Access to Justice for all, Correctional Services, Anti Corruption and Good Governance, Harmonious and Safe Society, Service Delivery and Judiciary Administration of Justice and cross cutting themes are; custom and tradition, moral and spiritual values and human rights.

##### *The Police and Community Safety Specific Objectives::*

A Police Force that is professional, transparent accountable, proactive, responsive and disciplined that meets all legitimate community expectations

A Police Force that engages in partnerships with the community

Private Security Companies that are regulated and training

Objective 1.3 of the Law and Justice Sector Strategy outlines training programmes aimed at enhancing the capacity of all police personnel

Department of Women Affairs staff and the VWC hold high hopes for the Law and Justice inter- departmental strategy. By way of contrast, middle and lower level Police Officers had little or no knowledge about these high level deliberations. And yet the focus of both strategies is Police core business.

Participation in these high level discussions provides a channel for advocacy and awareness raising of how domestic violence impacts on individual, community and national quality of life. These discussions are also a chance for agencies to identify their specific responsibilities in a domestic violence and crime prevention strategy and ways agencies can share resources (human and financial) to achieve better strategy implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

### 1.10.2 Department of Women's Affairs (WDA)

The Department of Women's Affairs is the lead government agency in gender equity, domestic violence and other CEDAW related issues. The newly appointed Director of the

WDA, Doresday Kenneth, has considerable management experience, knowledge of government processes and, in her previous role as CEO of the Agriculture Department, considerable success in building strong community networks for information flow and action. Under her leadership, the WDA is re-examining its programme priorities. We discussed the merits of a rights base domestic violence strategy and more family based interventions.

The Police Department and Police Officers have a longstanding relationship with the WDA. Police are included in many WDA deliberations, recognising the Police central role in working to address domestic violence and related issues. Police were members of the national Task Force on Domestic Violence in the early 2000s. Police also sit on the CEDAW Partnership coordinated by the WDA in its role of ensuring government compliance with CEDAW obligation. Views that Police regarded their membership of the CEDAW partnership rather lightly point to a ‘lost opportunity’:

*In the early days, there used to be some representatives of the police but they were not very committed. There were male and female - till one day at the Club Vanuatu the Commissioner of Police said the Police would not be supporting the FP Bill. The Police then were angry because of reports that Police were also beating their wives. After that only female police attend meetings but were inconsistent, different people come at different times, till in the end (as I recall) they faded out altogether.*

The WDA and members of the CEDAW partnership have considerable expertise and experience in domestic violence and related issues, but less knowledge or understanding of the Police responsibilities or the challenges Police face in the day by day dealing with domestic violence and child abuse cases. The FPU, with support by the PPDVP, can assist Police use their place on the CEDAW and other partnerships to progress the Police as well as national domestic violence efforts.

### 1.10.3 Health

Partnerships with medical professionals also have importance in a Police Domestic Violence strategy. There is little evidence of that Police have a professional relationship with Health or medical professionals. I was not able to interview Health Department or Hospital Staff. FPU staff said they would transport women to the hospital for a medical report ‘if she had no means of getting there.’ The Director General (Health) is reported as welcoming more police involvement in their community awareness programmes. This presents another opportunity for strengthening the Police response to domestic violence.

### Commentary

It is too early to gauge the effectiveness of Police partnerships or how this participation is contributing to Police practices or attitudinal changes either. The FPU, with support by the PPDVP, can use partnership opportunities more effectively to progress the Police and national domestic violence efforts, embed Police core business in the programmes of other partner agencies and increase the pool of knowledge from which creative solutions can be made. The fact that police are participating in these national decision making forums is an achievement in itself and reaffirms that Police are taking responsibility and have a role in ensuring a just and peaceful society.



## SECTION 2: GOVERNMENT, NGO AND COMMUNITY ATTITUDES AND RESPONSES

### 2.1 Current and historical levels of domestic violence reported to the Vanuatu Women's Centre (established 1992)

The Vanuatu Women's Centre (VWC) has always understood the importance of data- to show the nature and extent of domestic violence and, to inform policy and programme planning. The VWC gives priority to staff training in data collection and record keeping and so it is no surprise that the Centre has the most extensive national database on domestic violence.

The data in this section is drawn from the VWC Port Vila office, the two subsidiary offices at Tafea and Sanma provinces and the VWC's network of violence against women committees (CAVAWS). While differences in reporting periods make generalisations difficult, the increases over time in the number of urban and rural women using the VWC services shows quite compellingly that many ni-Vanuatu women are no longer content to remain silent on domestic and sexual violence related issues.

As seen in Table 9 a total of 3600 clients (including children) had contacted the VWC in the seven years since its opening in 1993 through to 2000. By year, the numbers increased from 179 in 1993 to hit a high of 853 in 2000. In addition to these numbers the SANMA Counselling Centre (SCC) was accessed by 1906 in the Aug 1995-Jan 2001 period. VWC notes also that 107 cases of child abuse were reported to them during this period. However, there is no record of stillbirths that may have resulted from violent attacks.

**Table 9: Cases of family violence reported to the VWC, 1993-2000**

Year	Case
1993	179
1994	146
1995	227
1996	549
1997	331
1998	565
1999	750
2000	853

Source; Policy Paper on VAW

More recent available data (Table 10) shows the number of domestic violence and sexual assault cases which went on to report to the Police in a 9 month period (July 07-March 08) and the number of new cases. As seen urban women were more likely than rural women to report. This may reflect the availability of services, population spread, or that other factors at play (20% from Vila, Santo (13%) Tanna (7%). A larger number of domestic violence cases than sexual assaults were reported:

**Table 10: Number and percentage of new Domestic Violence & Sexual assault VWDC clients referred/ reported to Police, Port Vila, Santo and Tanna July 07, March 08**

PORT VILA	Number reported	Total number new cases	% Reported/ referred
Domestic Violence	25	122	20%
Sexual Assault	1	7	14%
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>20%</b>
SANMA			
Domestic Violence	4	55	7%
Sexual Assault	2	5	40%
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>10%</b>
TAFEA			
Domestic Violence	4	32	13%
Sexual Assault	0	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>12%</b>

Source: VWC

### 2.1.2 VWC services

VWC statistics on the use of their counselling and information services adds another perspective to the national picture of domestic violence and the strategies people use to deal with this. Tables 10 and 11 are presented separately to reflect the different reporting periods. Note also that the Information Services at Tafea and Sanma, are used by males as well as females. Providing services for males could be a PPDVP intervention building on the Male Advocates programme.

Tables 11 and 12 show that face to face counselling is the preferred option in urban and rural areas closely followed by phone with lesser use of mobile counselling which is a more recent service. The popularity of phone counselling suggests ready access to phones even in the most rural areas and a valuing of the confidentiality phone discussions imply. But there is also a cost. Staff at the USP Community Legal Centre suggested they would be open to providing a legal advice call-in service during a set time (for example 6-8 pm) if a sponsoring agency could be found. Again, an intervention such as this would increase women's (and males) access to general legal advice and advice and on domestic violence related issues.

**Table 11: Total DV New and Repeat clients % requests for information ,July 2002-2008, VWC and Tafea**

	TYPE OF SERVICE	VWC		TAFEA
JUL 02- JUN 03	Centre-based counselling	598		
	Phone counselling	246		
	Mobile counselling	15		
	Information	146		
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1005</b>		
JUL 03- JUN 04	Centre-based counselling	475		38
	Phone counselling	263		0
	Mobile counselling	16		0
	Information*	151		6
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>905</b>		<b>44</b>
JUL 04- JUN 05	Centre-based counselling	425		22
	Phone counselling	177		0
	Mobile counselling	6		2
	Information*	241		16
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>849</b>		<b>40</b>



JUL 05- JUN 06	Centre-based counselling	257		58
	Phone counselling	108		2
	Mobile counselling	28		18
	Information*	188		57
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>581</b>		<b>135</b>
JUL 06- JUN 07	Centre-based counselling	202		41
	Phone counselling	30		3
	Mobile counselling	19		11
	Information*	109		104
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>354</b>		<b>159</b>
JUL 07- MAR 08	Centre-based counselling	147		37
	Phone counselling	25		2
	Mobile counselling	24		9
	Information*	96		69
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>292</b>		<b>117</b>

\*Tafea information data includes women and men.

**Table 12: Total New and Repeat and Requests for information Jan 2005-Dec 2007  
Sanma**

	TYPE OF SERVICE	Number
JAN-DEC 2005	Centre-based counselling	158
	Phone counselling	56
	Mobile counselling	1
	Information*	161*
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>376</b>
JAN-DEC 2006	Centre-based counselling	181
	Phone counselling	13
	Mobile counselling	20
	Information*	99
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>313</b>
JAN-DEC 2007	Centre-based counselling	179
	Phone counselling	14
	Mobile counselling	0
	Information*	20
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>213</b>

\*Information data includes women and men

### 2.1.2 CAVAWS

CAVAW members also receive systematic training in data keeping and reporting. Whilst the numbers recorded in Table 12 may be modest, these are especially significant given the newness of this concept and service in rural communities and community norms that domestic violence be dealt with within the family systems.

**Table 13: Total CAVAW New and Repeat Clients and Requests for Information**

Year	New and Repeat Clients (women only)	Information (men and women)	TOTAL
April 06- Mar 07 (30 CAVAWS)	186	382	568
April 07_Mar 08 (36 CAVAWS)	208	286	494

Source VWC unpublished data

<b>2.2 Some assessment of the prevalence of domestic violence using the available Police and non-government agency data, and data available from other agencies, including the United Nations</b>
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Gender based violence is an indicator of the status of women in any society. It was not possible to estimate the prevalence of domestic violence in Vanuatu, given the unreliable data and the numbers of incidents dealt with by the customary systems. Interviewees said the incidence of domestic violence had increased compared with when they were young. An increase in the number of group physical and sexual abuse incidents was mentioned more than once (as by groups of males) and there were questions of whether this was a new phenomena.

Views that domestic violence is widespread and unreported emphasises again the importance of Police giving priority to consistent and accurate recording procedures. Cross sectoral systems which link the Police, legal and the justice sector and better case management will also foster a sense of professional satisfaction for Police as they see the results of their work.

The national survey of women's lives in progress (VWC) will provide a more comprehensive set of baseline data on domestic violence.

## 2.3 Broad trends in victim attitudes towards domestic violence and reporting to the Police

As noted, there is considerable debate as to whether domestic violence is a criminal act, justifiable behaviour to be tolerated or, as noted in Vanuatu's CEDAW report, sometimes condoned as a man's right to discipline his wife or partner.

Due to ethical considerations and women's reluctance to discuss private matters, materials in this section are drawn from views expressed in a women's meeting at a settlement just outside the Port Vila township and a published account.

### 2.3.1 Community meeting

This meeting was arranged by the Child Rights Officer (DWA) Mrs Jenny Ligo and hosted by a participant in her back garden. This settlement is less than 5 minutes by car from the Port Vila Police Station. Over 18 women attended this informal meeting accompanied by ten children of varying ages. Participants spanned three generations with a sprinkling of some quite young teenage mothers. The meeting was carried out in Bislama. Jenny Ligo led the discussions and a NCW member who came with us provided an on – going commentary in English for me:

Over 80% of this group nodded yes when asked if they had experienced domestic violence. These women's sense of helplessness on this subject - as expressed in their words, expressions and body language – seemed totally at odds with their presentation as a group of very strong, articulate, forceful and knowledgeable women. These women did not show an acceptance of domestic violence but more an inability to do anything about this.

*There is nothing we can do... nowhere we can go. We call the Police. They don't come. We call the VWC they don't come. The church doesn't do anything, except the Mormon church. We go and sell cooked meals to make money for our teas ... so when he comes in the night he has his meal ready – and then he won't get angry. This is it. Our chiefs here are from different islands – no one of them is strong to help us.*

*We report ... nothing happens... I just plan our lives around it... In the end I left and I just bring up my children myself. He gives us nothing – for food, clothes, school fees and he lives in the house which is ours with his new woman. But, I have my children. They have done well.*

*Cost ... where am I going to get 1,000 Vatu for the letter? (DVPO)*

These women said they would not intervene if a neighbour was being beaten but they would go to help her afterwards or the next day. One said 'my husband says you have no right to trespass ...so we sit' and another 'If I want to report (what is happening to the neighbour) he will hit me and I am frightened'.

This group had reservations about whether a rights strategy was appropriate or would work in Vanuatu today. This highlights again the range of views present about domestic violence:

*If you say Women's Centre, people think that means divorce – (they) going to separate men and women, that is what you want?*

*Have to get rid of the word domestic violence - replace, what kind of word would you use? Violence is not our language... Violence is a big word... We are okay with family protection ... more positive.*

Our meeting ended with the words 'Thank you for coming. No one has been here before to talk to us about this'. The Women's Affairs Department and the WAC are discussing ways of continuing working in this area.

### 2.3.2 A personal account

#### Box 4: VICTIM'S STORY

Our relationship has always been difficult as it is always hard to communicate with him. He beat me up regularly so that I live in fear of him. Whatever he decides to do, I do not question him for fear of being beaten. With eight children to care for, it is not easy to get out or even to leave him. He is a kava and alcohol addict. He drinks daily after work and returns in the early hours of the morning. Whenever I ask where he's been, he would become abusive and beat me. Sometimes he beat me for no reason at all. I approached his family for help but they did not seem to see anything wrong with a man eating his own wife. At times, it would seem they support him. I was always alone with no one to help. I thought of suicide but I kept thinking of how my children would cope without me. I tried going back to my own family but they always send me back. I tried to talk to him but he shouted at me, called me abusive names and beat me.

I went to the church for help. They gave us counselling and prayed with us. He promised to mend his ways and I returned. Two weeks later, he was back to his old ways of drinking all night with his mates. One night I tried to discuss it with him seeing he wasn't too drunk. He shouted at me, called my names I do not wish to repeat and started hitting me. He punched me and kicked me and I fell down. Something snapped within me that seemed to say 'tonight is the night'. I've had enough, so I gathered all my strength and fought back. It was the worst fight we'd ever had.

He knocked me down again, sat on me, pinning my hand down with his knees and started to squeeze my neck. I found it hard to breathe and I knew I had to do something or he'd kill me. With my free hand, I grab hold of his balls and pulled hard. I must have hurt him because he let go of me and went inside. I was trying to restore my breath, he started calling for help. We took him to hospital where he was later operated on and had several stitches.

Everyone was against me for hurting him. Not one talked about him beating me up. It was said that I was wicked and that I cut him with a knife. However, I had not knife and did not cut him.

### 2.3.2 Reporting to the police

Victims showed little confidence in reporting to the Police or that the Police would give them a sympathetic, just or fair hearing:

*...many police men assault their spouses and nothing is done to them. They are the discipline enforcers and it is bad for the community to know that this is happening. There should be a strict disciplinary measures for non violence in their home*

*Many officers have left their wives and got a new woman (even if they are still in a relationship). Vanuatu attitude is this is not OK. But nothing happens to them. Wives who come to us to complain about no maintenance to them and their children and new woman lives in an official residence which was awarded to the many only because he has a legal wife and family.*

Several women said that no matter what women did ‘we are always in the wrong!’ which is in line with reports that responsibility for violent acts often shifts away from the person who has committed the offence to those who have experienced the violence:

*In rural communities victims and or members of their families sometimes approach a chief, pastor or teacher for assistance and in most cases only when they are desperate about the situation. Such cases are dealt within the societal norm that a man has full rights over his wife. This means that often reaching a solution means getting the woman to admit or realise she has done something to deserve violence. The perpetrator is thus often not held accountable for the act of violence (Vanuatu Policy Paper)*

It was also said that (frontline) people really ‘don’t understand our lives at all’

*Our message to women in the big offices ... don’t deny the grass roots women our needs for protection from domestic violence (Community meeting)*

One woman had rung the USP services in desperation because her partner was going to be released early. Views were that the Correctional Services Act should be amended to ensure offenders of domestic violence and sexual abuse were not released from prison earlier than expected but serve their full term in prison. However, there were again signs of change:

*(I also think) before ... female victims do not feel comfortable and easy coming to the police station to make complaints. However, today with much awareness and information provided to the communities, many victims will choose to go to the Police Station because they usually feel safer with the police than with the chiefs or churches.*

## **Commentary**

Taken together:

- women are beginning to look outside the family for support in domestic violence issues – looking beyond the chiefs and the church
- while a growing number of women (and males) are using human rights language to describe domestic violence many have reservations about a rights approach
- women are not yet confident in reporting domestic violence incidents to the police: many women seem to be in a state of limbo about domestic violence reporting:

## 2.4 The policy and other contribution of key non-government agencies to dealing with and reducing domestic violence

NGOs continue to play the lead role in domestic violence advocacy, research and training. There was no evidence of a coordinated NGO response: each NGO has their own expertise, focus, clients and way of working. I was not able to interview VANGO members but was told that umbrella organisations (as VANGO and the NCW) were not so popular these days and that NGOs preferred to work independently.

### 2.4.1 Women's organisations

Although women's NGOs organise separately these usually partner with the DWA when there is a need to present a united and powerful voice on women and gender issues including family violence. The two major women's domestic violence NGOs are the VWC and the newer established Women Against Crime (WAC). The VWC has become the national face of domestic violence and with donor support has grown a remarkable network of services from central through provincial to community level action. A gender transformative framework including the social construction of masculinity and female roles is fundamental to the VWC programme. The WAC targets crime and, espouses the use of a family based and community approach. The NCW, the traditional premier women's NGO, has been weakened by leadership disputes. There is potential for further NCW engagement in a national plan of action for domestic violence in the future.

#### *Vanuatu Women's Centre*

The VWC has considerable practical experience and expertise in domestic violence and continues to strengthen its own programme through networking into regional and global centres of excellence such as the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre (FWCC) and the RRRT. The strong leadership and vision of the CEO Marilyn Tahi and the support by agencies such as NZAID, AusAid has supported the growth of the VWC. The sharing of information and best practises is vital to the health of every organisation.

Fig 2 shows the remarkable expansion of VWC services from the Port Vila Office including the two provincial counselling centres (Sanma and Tafea) each with a staff of five, and the network of 35 rural based CAVAWs - which receive some funding for operational expenses and a modest honorarium.

#### Box 5: VANUATU WOMEN'S CENTRE (VWC)

The VWC provides counselling and support services to women and children who have experienced violence, community education, legal advocacy services and safe house and earlier days through theatre.

##### *Training Programmes*

DV Awareness programmes, Violence against women, Gender issues within DV, Definitions, Effects and Community responses, Male Advocacy training, Human Rights, Masculinity

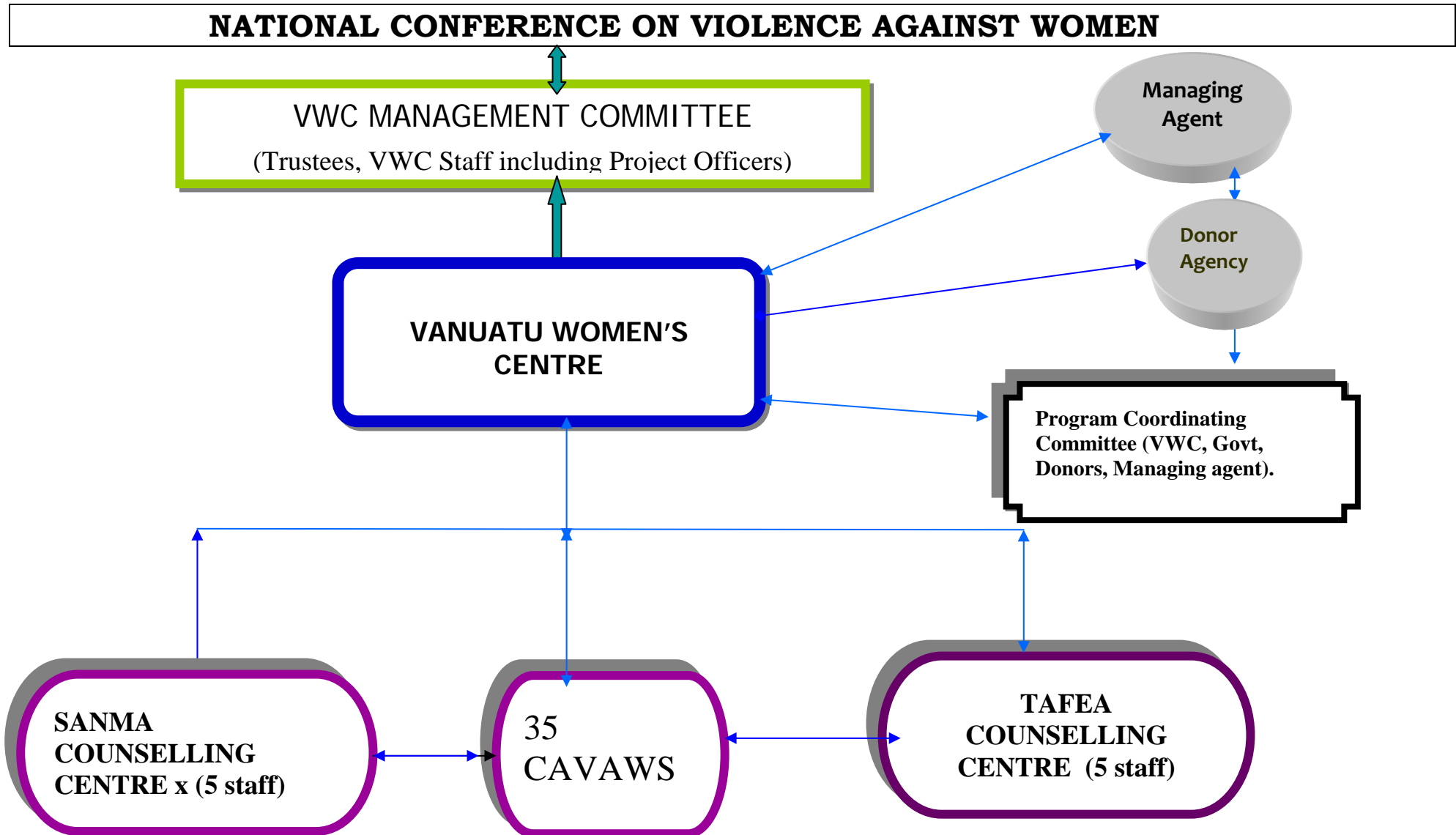
##### *Assistance provided by WVC to families*

Counselling, Safe houses, 24 hour Crisis Line, Victims Need Support, Advice to victims around protection, prosecutions, police processes, updates on case status, Vanuatu Family Health Association support

##### *Training/ Pamphlets and materials*

Training is carried out in English, French and Bislama as appropriate

Fig 2: Vanuatu Women's Centre Organisation



The VWC principles of action include:

- Domestic violence must be addressed within a human rights framework.
- Government accountability to international/ regional commitments for gender equity
- Domestic violence is not ‘a woman’s issue.’ It is a male/ female issue and requires family, community and national actions.
- Addressing domestic violence requires partnerships e.g with chiefs, religious leaders, community, victims, education and training agencies, the media and the Police
- Rural communities are entitled to the same services which urban communities enjoy.
- Data collection is vital to progress discussions and planning.

As part of the VWC national survey on ‘Women’s Lives and Family Relationships’ 52 research assistants have been trained, who carried out interviews in 3,750 households covering eight provinces (Pacific Women Against Violence April-June 2009)

*Women Against Crime (est 2008)*

WAC is a volunteer organisation with a large membership of women activists, government officials, newspaper reporters and a former police officer who has a background in community based policing and neighbourhood watch. The WAC is building firm partnerships with the Vanuatu Police because the WAC community based approach closely aligns with the Police Community Policing Programme (CPP) and the Neighbourhood Watch strategy.

The aims of the Women Against Crime (WAC) are to provide a network of like-minded groups that offer support and resource sharing; promote public awareness of crime prevention in all sections of the community and to provide guidance on effective crime prevention measures and strategies through the help of specialists within the community. Specific aims are:

- to reduce crime and the fear of crime;
- to develop a community spirit amongst the people that live in an area covered by the NHW and
- to achieve this by enhancing the relationship between the public and the Police by working in partnership with the police.

Eventual aims are to set up a network of Group Area and Zone coordinators so that households can be covered by a visible and active NHW programme (WAC brochures)

#### Box 6 FRES WOTA

##### NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH – COMMUNITY SAFE PROGRAMME

Recently WAC representatives met with the DG Joe Ligo, Supt Vake Rakau and Commander John Taleo to present the NHW/ Community Safe pilot programme they are implementing at Fres Wota. As first step in this programme, the WAC carried out a community profiling with the Chiefs of Fres Wota to find issues and needs. Following this the Chiefs and the community formed their own NHW groups (Fres Wota is made up of 6 zone areas and so there are 6 NHW groups). These NHW groups comprise 10 to 20 per group. They meet at the Fres Wota school every second month. A Police Officer also attends these meetings and discusses community issues, crimes and concerns in that area as well as options for addressing these. The Police Commander John Taleo has allocated 6 police officers and granted permission for police to be involved in the CPP

Source: WAC



While domestic violence is not the primary focus of the WAC programme, because activities are ‘based on the needs determined by the chiefs and the communities’ it is likely that NHW groups will come to include domestic violence as a group concern.

#### 2.4.2 Other

*USP Community Legal Centre (est 2002)*

The Community Legal Centre is housed on the USP Law Campus. Services include legal advice (face to face AND phone); legal literacy focussed training and the production and distribution of materials and brochures on legal literacy and other development issues. These brochures are provided in English, Bislama and the French language. Estimates are that over 50% of the Centre business relates in some way to domestic violence:

*We are very careful not to impose our views. We listen and list possible options available to them and they choose. If a woman wants help with applying for a DVPO then we assist her in obtaining an order from the court. Again this is a last option which we do not encourage women to take, especially if there is a possibility that she and her spouse can talk things over and sort things out without having to obtain a court order.. Usually (clients request a court order) where the situation looks hopeless in that the male spouse is violent and is likely to continue with the violence if the women returns home or whenever he finds her*

Centre staff emphasised the need for information/ training ‘for everyone’ on how the law works and services available:

*When we talk to women, many just want to know very basic things such as lists of when the courts are sitting. There is no readily available information on the court timetables’*

They commented also on the ‘sheer volume of training’ which will be necessary in order to implement the Family Protection Bill – for magistrates, court orderliness, lawyers, chiefs and for Police. They also saw the possibility of USP providing legal advice through a call in phone service.

*Won Smol Bag (WSB)*

The WSB strategy is one of community education through theatre/ performance with a view to raising awareness of and identifying solutions to social issues. This involves the preparation of media packages - such as plays and radio serials – aimed at forcing a critical examination of development issues affecting Vanuatu today such as equity and justice, HIV Aids, sustainability issues and poverty, land rights, domestic violence and, now the Family Protection Bill.

Both the WSB materials and the process by these are developed are a resource for Police training and Police – community interventions. This involves a) identification of and research on a current issue of concern b) writing of a draft script and preparation of this for performance by the WSB theatre group c) presentation to community groups for testing and discussion d) the adaptation of scripts to reflect community views and e) the preparation of a high quality DVD on this and an accompanying training package. Actions the PPDVP could support include:

- Domestic violence video. This may benefit from updating to the present times.
- Training materials on the Family Protection Bill. WSB is already using these in community training. These could be useful for Police in-service and recruit training.

There is also value in Police exploring joining the WSB multi-agency community meetings.

**Commentary**

Police establishing relationships with and sharing expertise and resources with these and other NGO programmes will strengthen the Police domestic violence strategy considerably. A mapping of current domestic violence programmes, which has been mooted, could be a start to the development of a national plan of action on domestic violence.

<p>2.5 A general assessment of levels of social acceptance and cultural tolerance towards domestic violence</p>
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Interviews and reports indicate there is more of a tolerance to than an acceptance of domestic violence today. Further, that views of tolerance or acceptance are not confined to any one group as by gender, age or location:

*Men should not hit their wives, but you can't have a fire without smoke...some men have short tempers and women should try not to make smoke. (President of Vanuatu in the Trading Post no 57 April 1999)*

*Many women accept violence to be a natural part of family life. In more recent times, the bride payment has been used as an excuse for men to beat their wives as they believe they 'own' their wife and can therefore treat her in any way they wish. Women seeking help from their families have frequently been sent back into violent situations where they have been either beaten again or murdered*

*A Hotel Operator was reported as saying that he had to hire more staff than he needed because the number of female staff regularly away from work due to domestic violence was so high.*

*A professional woman said on day her work colleague had been assaulted by her husband in her workplace and 'while the husband did this the other (professional) male staff walked over and closed the door'. No one had gone to her help. A number of incidents shared were of young women had been severely beaten by males in nightclubs and other recreational places were also recounted to me where 'no one moves to support the girl... they just keep dancing'.*

National surveys are also providing information about attitudes to violence generally and to domestic violence. The Vanuatu Child Protection Baseline Research (2008) findings were:

78% of adults surveyed (512 households) said that they hit, smack children, pinch children or pull or twist their ear. Further, it was common to use an implement such as a stick, coconut broom, or belt.

27% of school –going children said they had been physically hurt by a teacher within the past month.

The Vanuatu Police Community Perception Study 2008 (Pacific Regional Policing Initiative) found Domestic Violence was ranked as number three common offence by both male and female, after stealing and drunkenness and, has replaced fighting which had been number 3 in the 2006 survey (Table 14). The sample for this study was 500 interviews in Efate (200) Santo (150) Tanna (70) and Malekula (80). There was a 50% male / female sampling and the spread by age approximated that of the Vanuatu population as a whole.

**Table 14 Perceptions of common offences by aggregate scores and rankings (by gender) 2008**

Offence	MALE	Rank	FEMALE	Rank	Total	Rank
Stealing/ burglary	1433	1	1422	1	2855	2
Drunkenness	1134	2	1134	2	2268	1
Domestic Violence	998	3	1003	3	2001	3
Fighting	912	4	925	4	1837	4
Sexual assault	902	5	895	5	1797	5
Driving under influence	848	6	809	6	1657	6
Assault/ wounding	624	7	610	7	1234	7

Source: Vanuatu Police Survey 2009

A small but more vocal group are arguing against domestic violence being described as a cultural norm. This group refer to the differences by island group but also to memories of when they were young:

*When I remember the old days, we never had violence and things like that before. If something was wrong, we did that in our family and then maybe the chief, but we always did that within the family. Looking back, I can never recall violence against women and girls that you see today. It's time to go back to the old ways – to look after our families again.*

In addition, the chiefs from the Shefa Provincial Councils have now adopted CEDAW principles into the provincial development plan and have actively promoted the Family Protection Bill so reinforcing the differences by island group today. The re-examination of the kastom ways taking place- including how these may have been influenced in the colonial and post colonial periods - is another resource to be used in the Police domestic violence prevention strategy.

## 2.6 Current government policy and practice arrangements directed or associated with domestic violence

Vanuatu does not have a domestic violence policy: ‘the Family Protection Bill is the closest we have to one at this time.’ The Department of Women’s Affairs (DWA) is the government agency responsible for the advancement of the status of women through policy formation. The DWA is strategically placed for this task, within the Ministry of Justice and Social Welfare which has responsibility also for the Malvatumauri Council of Chiefs, Office of the Public Sector, Office of the Public Prosecutor and the Department of Correctional Services. The DWA has responsibility and reports on CEDAW and, the Pacific Platform of Action for Women (PPA).

The WDA (and Government) strategy to achieve gender equity goals has been one of gender mainstreaming and partnerships with NGOs. As seen in the list of domestic violence and gender equity milestones noted in Table 2 above this strategy has been very effective in securing:

- Government agreement to global and regional conventions, CEDAW and the PPA.
- the location of domestic violence and gender equity goals are centrally in key national plans to ensure all government agencies are stakeholders in gender equity focussed actions
- a multi-sectoral task force on domestic violence and, a CEDAW partnership
- gender focal points in all Ministries and departments.

Some of these arrangements (as the multi-sectoral task force on violence) have not been sustained. However, there is value in revisiting these and other strategies to explore their usefulness for today. As noted, the strong leadership and combined actions of the DWA and NGOs (such as the NCW, Women in Politics (WIP) and the VWC) backed by considerable political goodwill are factors in this fine list of national achievements.

### 2.6.1 Pacific Platform of Action (SPC)

The DWA is also a key stakeholder in the Regional Pacific Platform of Action for Women (PPA 1996) and the Revised Platform (2005-2015) and reports back to the Pacific Women’s Triennium Conferences organised by SPC. As seen in Box 7, sexual and family violence is the focus of PPA Goal 2.3. In addition, several of the PPA indicators listed require a Police input as Objective 2.3.2 to Collect and publicise data on violence against women.

**Box 7: PACIFIC PLATFORM OF ACTION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY 2005-15**

**Goal 2.3 To eliminate sexual and family violence**

**Objective 2.3. Policies and programmes to prevent sexual and family violence**

**Strategies**

- 1 Analysis of legislation regarding violence
- 2 Seminars for law-makers, the Police and the Judiciary attitudes toward sexual and family violence
- 3 change public attitudes towards sexual and family violence
- 4 Government support for programmes to assist female victims of violence
- 5 Sexual harassment policy and guidelines
- 4 Prevention of trafficking of women and children, and sex and paedophile tourism

**Objective 2.3.2 Collect and publicise data on violence against women**

**Strategy: Measure trends in cases violence against women**

Indicators on violence - Incidents of domestic or family violence, incidents of rape, assaults on women, homicides in which women are the victims, gender difference in crime

**Commentary**

Achieving national gender equity and domestic violence goals requires considerable political will, commitment and support by all government agencies and NGOs. The Police Department and the FDU especially can be supported for their role in addressing domestic violence and advancing the CEDAW and PPA goals.

## 2.7 The current state of legislative arrangements in relation to domestic violence, including compliance with international covenants and conventions (CEDAW)

Table 15 presents Vanuatu's legal protection and justice framework for women. As discussed the recognition of the legitimacy of customary law in the national Constitution means that traditional practises that discriminate against women may be lawful in some circumstances. CEDAW Article 5 requires State parties to abolish or modify customary practises that discriminate against women:

**Table 15: Legal protection and justice for women**

CEDAW	Acceded 1995; Reported 2007
Constitution	Guarantees women's equality before the law, but not equal benefit of outcomes. Does not include anti-discrimination clauses
Customary Law	The Constitution of Vanuatu recognises the legitimacy of customary law, provided it is not contrary to justice, morality and good order. However the absence of a guarantee of equality and anti discriminatory provisions means traditional practises that discriminate against women may be lawful in some circumstances.
Domestic Violence Laws	The Family Protection Act of 2008 provides for victims of domestic violence to apply in court for a family Protection Order (restraining order). It also provides definitions of domestic violence, family and spouses
Family Law	Vanuatu provides no legislative provision for the division of property after separation and divorce and, therefore, any determination is left to custom which may discriminate against women
Mandatory minimum sentences	Vanuatu has introduced minimum sentences but not mandatory prosecution for sexual assault offences. Legislation specifically provides for customary law to affect criminal sentencing, which may reduce a sentence further if there has been forgiveness
Discriminatory common laws rules on sexual assault	Has not legislated against the use of prior sexual conduct, the necessity for corroboration in sexual offence prosecutions or the requirement for proof of resistance

Source: adapted from Annex 1 Situation of women in Melanesia and East Timor

### 2.7.1 CEDAW

Vanuatu lodged its Combined Initial, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Report on CEDAW to UNDAW in 2005 and reported to the CEDAW Committee in May 2007. A Shadow Report was also prepared by the Women's Advocacy Coalition (WAC). In November 2006 the Optional Protocol to CEDAW was ratified. Amongst other requirements, the CEDAW Report back (2007) notes:

- Item 10            Concern that the Constitution gives equal status to cultural and religious norms, some of which have an adverse impact on women's enjoyment of human rights with legal norms... contradictory norms of customary law.
- Item 24            Concern at the prevalence of violence against women and girls, including cultural practices that constitute, or perpetuate, violence against women. The Committee is especially concerned about the use of customary methods of

punishment in cases of rape, which might act as a substitute for or lessen the punishment of offenders provided for in the law.

- Item 25 Priority attention to combating violence against women and to adopt comprehensive measures to address all forms of violence against women and girls in accordance with general recommendation 19.

### **2.7.2 The Family Protection Bill**

The Family Protection Bill is the major legislation relating to violence against women. This has been signed by President and awaits gazetting for it to become fixed in legislation. The Bill provides for the issue of Family Protection Orders and temporary protection orders and makes it a criminal offence for a family member to commit an act of domestic violence. The Police must investigate domestic violence and must charge or arrest the defendant if there are grounds for believing there has been domestic violence. Just as importantly, the Bill provides protection for women in rural areas where there are no courts. It authorises an alternate agency, such as a chief, church leaders or any 'notable community leader male or female' appointed by the DWA as a registered person, to intervene in cases of violence (AusAid 2008)

While the FP Bill has been widely lauded as a landmark achievement, there is still considerable opposition to the Bill most notably from the Malvatamauri (Council of Chiefs) and the Vanuatu Christian Council (VCC) which argues that the Bill promotes the breakdown of families. Due to a challenge by the VCC, the Bill has not been gazetted but remains on hold while the Supreme Court determines its constitutionality.

### **2.7.3 Correctional Services Act**

There were concerns that the application of the Correctional Service Act defeated the purpose of the Police arresting and imprisoning offenders and, that often husbands were released too soon.

*...their act is different and gives the offender the benefit of being released into the community only several months or even weeks after they are put in jail*

Views are that the CSA should be reviewed to ensure that probation and parole periods are changed accordingly to ensure that offenders of domestic and sexual abuse are not released from prison earlier than expected but serve their full time in prison. Corrections noted that they do not have access to the full Police file and only receive a copy of the Summary of Facts (Prosecution Brief) from the Public Prosecutor

### **2.7.4 Matrimonial Causes CAP 192**

Married women in Vanuatu cannot accumulate personal wealth because it is considered that anything she has is to be jointly owned with her husband. In fact, what she owned prior to marriage is taken over by the husband upon marriage and he is in charge of all their properties. In the Matrimonial Causes Act CAP 192 there is provision for divorce but no provision is made for the distribution of property if a couple decides to end the marriage. If and when there is a divorce and matrimonial property required distribution, Vanuatu will resort to Common Law.

*That is not always satisfactory because the judges are always men. In some cases women leave the marital home empty handed. They lose access to the husband's land and use of their paternal family land as well.*



### 2.7.5 Domestic Violence Protection Order (DVPO)

The DVPO has been discussed elsewhere in this report. Briefly Division 4 of the civil Procedure Rules Note 49 (200) provides that a person (victim) may file a claim claiming a Domestic Violence Protection Order against another member of that person's family. The Victim comes to the Court with his/ her application. An available Judicial Officer hears the applicant and where it is satisfied that a person needs a protection order then one is granted. If there is a breach of the order, the Magistrate will deal with this and the Court has the power to punish the accused for the breach. Where the respondent does not appear on the return date and the applicant appears then the Magistrate will make Directions for the Sheriff to arrest the Respondent and bring him to the Court. Magistrates only have the power to grant protection orders but not to separate the parties: this is an issue for the higher court to deal with:

*(the) short term period of protection orders works well. Some respondents may retaliate when they see the order, thus short term process is better. This allows ample time for the respondent and the applicant to consider their actions and behaviours and maybe reconcile before the return date. The Protection Orders does not prevent the parties to reconcile (Magistrate)*

## 2.8 The current state of any alternative approaches (village justice) to domestic violence

Reports varied, but in most cases victims of violence approach a chief, pastor or teacher to assist 'when they are desperate'. Views about the current state of village justice measures included:

*Dealing with DV in a cultural way is not effective. There is no equality in the custom systems (Magistrate)*

*(domestic violence) cases are dealt within the society norm that a man has full rights over this wife. this means that often reaching a solution means getting the women to admit or realise she has done something to derive the violence The perpetrator is thus often not held accountable for the act of violence.*

*It is a difficult situation. Family ties are very close Family will take in a woman who is beaten and look after her. Chief conciliation is not effective because they have no vision or control over what happens when the couple goes home. The authority of the Chiefs to deal with such situation sits outside the legislative framework but is accepted because of the strong cultural background.*

*My ex-husband was a chief and he knew everything about the DVPO so when I threatened him that I was going to apply for an order to keep him away from me and the children, he didn't retaliate because he knew that this would damage his name and reputation. Immediately he stopped harassing me and the children as he knew what the consequences for this order meant for him as a chief. He also stopped threatening me and the children.*

Women say that the village systems do not ensure women a fair hearing because most of the chiefs are male and it is unlikely that this group have been exposed to human rights laws or discussion. As a result, women and children continue to be 'at the mercy of discriminatory decisions made by the chiefs'

At the same time, growing numbers are saying that domestic violence can only be addressed by legal means: that relying on the customary ways will not assure women a just or fair solution and also has negative impacts on women and children and males. A movement towards legal systems and solutions is seen in: Vanuatu's ratification of CEDAW and the PPA; the increasing numbers of women reporting to the Police; the number of DVPOs issued, the increased use of VWC facilities and services and, the passing of the Family Protection Bill.

As noted elsewhere, the steps the Shefa provincial chiefs have taken in recognising gender equity illustrates that changes are taking place and generalisations cannot be made. As noted, these Shefa leaders have adopted CEDAW principles into their provincial plan of action and in 2003-4 (accompanied by women leaders and with assistance by the DWA) visited all the provinces and some municipalities carrying out advocacy and training on domestic violence. Again, these chiefs are an important flagship for the national campaign against domestic violence and would be an asset in the Police strategy as well.

## 2.9 Overview of nature and extent of systems in place for reporting and sharing information on medical and death records relating to domestic violence

The ready availability of the Table 16 data confirms that the Ministry of Health recognises and is committed to addressing domestic violence. While numbers reporting /or being classified as domestic violence are low and vary by year, women were the victims in 91% of the injuries by spouse recorded in this 2000-2006 period.

**Table 16: Number and percent of injuries caused by spouse or partner, Vila Central Hospital**

Year	Number of injuries caused by spouse or partner			Total number of all injuries	Injuries by spouse as % of total injuries	% of injuries by spouse where women are victims of violence
	F	M	Total			
2000	15	5	20	31	65%	75%
2001	33	2	35	50	70%	94%
2002	54	4	58	136	43%	93%
2003	47	3	51	80	64%	92%
2004	45	4	49	59	83%	92%
2005	36	4	40	42	95%	90%
2006	18	2	20	22	91%	90%
<b>Total</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>273</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>91%</b>

Source: Vanuatu Ministry of Health-Health Information System: cause of injury report, Vila Central Hospital (2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, and 2006).

I was unable to arrange an interview with the Health Ministry staff. However, these comments have been attributed to the Director General of Health Miriam Abel:

*Domestic violence is a major issue but not many are ready to talk about this. It's seen as a community matter and victims only get to hospital if they have severe injuries. The hospital records all incidents of violence but domestic violence may not be differentiated from other violence, so that the hospital monthly stats will not identify the level of domestic violence cases reported*

*...steps are being taken to change the way hospital staff record and distinguish how injuries occurred and the circumstances. All persons treated in hospital are allocated a hospital number, which is then used every time they are treated. All incidents are recorded in the persons' personal file. Privacy rules allow disclosure of serious cases to the police.*

Magistrate Court staff have also noted the value of the new medical report forms being used to their case preparation and the use of digital photos by the CRO:

*The medical report used to be one page and now it is several with diagrams for doctors to indicate the location and nature of victim's injuries*

Informal comments were that even getting a woman to agree to go for a doctor's report is a huge undertaking; that not all doctors or medical staff are understanding sympathetic or sensitive to victims; often victims wait for long times to be seen (which is difficult given their state) and, women experience difficulties meeting the costs involved 'but a private doctor would be worse!

### Commentary

The Police can consider taking up the Director General's invitation for police involvement in community awareness programmes

## 2.10 The attitudes of key religious organisations towards Domestic Violence.

Church leaders generally see domestic violence to be a family matter to be addressed within the family and village systems and with the support of the chiefs and / or church leaders. They noted that they would always counsel women to preserve the sanctity of the family unit and to preserve family and village harmony. In this scenario the ‘family is given priority over any effects domestic violence might have on women or their children. Furthermore, comments were that ‘ if you say VWC, people immediately think you mean divorce’. This linking of a rights based approach with divorce is highly unfortunate and reflects a lack of knowledge. A Lawyer said the task was to:

...get the message across to the chiefs, elders and community leaders that respecting women and not assaulting/ abusing them is not going to break the family or reduce the standing of the male/ men in the family/ clan (Lawyer)

Church opposition to the Family Protection Bill is grounded in this strong family belief. The Vanuatu Christian Council has petitioned the President of Vanuatu to not gazette the Family Protection Bill on the grounds that it contravenes the Christian Principles stated in the preamble of the Constitution. At the time of writing, the Supreme Court had not yet made a ruling (Ausaid 2008)

### **Commentary**

Changing attitudes to domestic violence is a long time process for communities especially given the mixing of kastom and Christian beliefs which has taken place. Police will need to take account of the misconceptions and uncertainties as well as the values and beliefs which underlie these and other similar views. As noted, while robust Police systems preventing and responding domestic violence can be put in place, the implementation of these protocols will be influenced by Police (and women and community) understanding of and attitudes to domestic violence

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## ANNEXES

## ANNEX A1 PROPOSED METHODOLOGY FOR DATA COLLECTION

TABLE A1: POLICE ATTITUDES, POLICY, PRACTICE	
Term of reference	Method
Current specific levels of domestic violence reported to police	Document review (e.g. recorded crime statistics) Consultation with Police
Current policy, protocols and general processes and procedures (including record keeping) for dealing with domestic violence	Document review (e.g. policy documents where available) Interviews/focus groups with Police
The current state of Police prosecution of Domestic Violence including levels of case withdrawal, levels of prosecution against reporting and the overall number of offenders being held accountable for their actions	Document review Consultation with Police, Magistrates, etc.
Any history of change around Police domestic violence practice	Interviews/focus groups with Police
Current Police leadership practice around domestic violence	Interviews/focus groups with Police
Police attitudes and perceptions of domestic violence, Including attitudes to dealing with complaints, prosecutions, offenders, and holding offenders to account. Police views on traditional cultural attitudes towards domestic violence and views of Officers regarding traditional local or village approaches towards dealing with domestic violence.	Interviews/focus groups with Police
Police attitudes and perceptions towards Police Officers as domestic violence offenders	Interviews/focus groups with Police
Current policy and practice arrangements for dealing with Police Officers as domestic violence offenders	Document review (e.g. policy documents where available) Interviews/focus groups with Police
The current state of Police Domestic Violence training	Document review (e.g. training curriculum) Interviews/focus groups with Police, trainers
The state and recent history of Police partner relations	Consultation with Police and partners (NGOs, government agencies)

## ANNEX A2 GOVERNMENT, NGO & VICTIM RESPONSES

ANNEX A2: GOVERNMENT, NGO & VICTIM RESPONSES	
Terms of reference	Method
Current and historical levels of domestic violence reported to the key non-government agencies (women's crisis/refuge organisations)	Document review of NGO records
Some assessment of the prevalence of domestic violence using the available Police and non-government agency data, and data available from other agencies, including the United Nations	Synthesis of available data, including previous research
Broad trends in victim attitudes towards domestic violence and reporting to the Police <sup>1</sup>	Analysis of media coverage (e.g. newspaper) Previous research
The policy and other contribution of key non-government agencies to dealing with and reducing domestic violence	Data from all TORs (1 and 2)
A general assessment of levels of social acceptance and cultural tolerance towards domestic violence	
Current government policy and practice arrangements directed or associated with domestic violence	Consultations with relevant Ministries
The current state of legislative arrangements in relation to domestic violence, including compliance with international covenants and conventions (CEDAW)	Consultations with relevant Ministries Review of legislation
The current state of any alternative approaches (village justice) to domestic violence	Community meetings Discussions with NGOs
Provide brief overview of nature and extent of systems in place for (a) reporting and (b) sharing information on medical and death records relating to domestic violence	Consultation
The attitudes of key religious organisations towards domestic violence	Consultation with National Council of Churches/other church groups

<sup>1</sup> The original brief from NZ Police asked us to interview victims, but our partner NGOs advised us that the women were unlikely to discuss this sensitive matter with us. Additional ethical issues associated with speaking to victims in small communities include confidentiality and participants' safety if their partners suspect they have disclosed the abuse. Given the exploratory nature of the research, we considered that we would gather sufficient information on this through stakeholder consultations.

## ANNEX B1                      DAILY SCHEDULE

Date	Action
SATURDAY 20 JUNE	Depart Palmerston North Overnight Auckland
SUNDAY 21	
10.00am	Arrive Vanuatu 10am
3-5pm	Meeting Merilyn Tahī CEO, Vanuatu Women's Centre
MONDAY 22	
9.00	Meeting Jeff Langley NZ High Commissioner
10.30	Meeting Dorosday Kenneth Director General, Department Women's Affairs
1.00 -1.30	Commissioner of Police Waited, but meeting postpone Tried to schedule alternative
1.30	Graeme Eaton (Aus Aid) Adviser CID, Vanuatu Police Force Capacity Building
1.45	Meeting Brenda Nabiye, Child Advocate, UNICEF
2.30	Meeting Michelle Brazzi Vanuatu Legal Sector Strengthening Programme
TUESDAY 23	
8.00	DWA staff interviews Rofina, (VAW programme) Jenny Ligo (Women against crime)
9.30	Bill Drager CBP Re appointments with Police Commissioner
12.00 -1.30 (lunch)	Roslyn Tor, Former DG, DWA and WAC member
1.30	Hannah Lindley-Jones Country Programme Coordinator, Vanuatu Gender Equality in Political Government programme  Grayleen Lapi National Programme Coordinator, UNIFEM Vanuatu
3.00	Commissioner J Taleo Appointment postponed till 9.30 Wednesday
4.00	VWC Staff discussions and review records
WEDNESDAY 24	
8.00	Department Women's Affairs Review of documents/ reports
9.30	Interview Police Commander (Southern) J Taleo

9.45	First meeting with FPU staff: Davis Saravanu, J. Thomas & David Nambaru
1.30	Interview John Edmauley, Inspector, CID
12.00	Front desk Corporal Alfred Konmani and front desk staff
1.00-3.00	Wilson Bob Cartledge Legal Literacy Adviser, USP Community Legal Centre
3.00	Interview victim Phone
THURSDAY 25	
8.00	FPU staff David Nambaru, Police Statistics
8.20	Detective Inspector Marilyn George
9.00 -10.00	Pastor Shem Tema VCC
11.00	DWA staff Preparation for Ohlin community meeting
1.30 – 4.00	Ohlin Community meeting Community meeting Lucy (NCW) Jenny (DWA) Veronika (leader) 18 mothers and children (10)
4.00-6.00	Data collection Vanuatu Women's Centre Marilyn Tahi and staff
7.00-9.00	Dinner, Dr Juliet Hunt AusAid, Mentor to VWC programme
FRIDAY 26	
8.15 -9.30	Peter Watt (AusAid) Corporal Jefry (Trainer) Police Training School
9.30-10.00	Police Parade
10.00-11.00	DWA D. Kenneth
11.00-12.30	Police day – Park WAC members, Observed
1.00-2.00	Debrief, NZ High Comm
2.00-3.00	Chief Prosecutors Office Collecting data for DVPO
3.00-4.00	DWA
10.40-	Depart for Airport Plane departs Auckland 0.55 Sat

## ANNEX B2 PERSONS CONSULTED

<b>Vanuatu Police Service</b>	
Commander John Taleo	Vanuatu Police Department
Graeme Easton and other CPB staff	Capacity Building Project Australian Government
Davis Saravanu	O/C NPU
J Thomas	FPU
Merilyn George	Detective Inspector, VU Police
Bill Watts, CPB	Police Training Unit
Jefry	Police Training Unit
David Nambaru	Statistics
John Edmauley	Inspector, CID Other front desk staff
Corporal Alfred Konmani	Front Desk
<b>Government agencies</b>	
Dorosday Kenneth-	Director General, Women's Affairs Department
Jennifer Ligo	Women's Affairs, programme officer
Rotina	Women's Affairs, DV programme officer
Michelle Brazel	Vanuatu Legal Sector Strengthening Programme (MOJ)
<b>NGOs and other agencies</b>	
Jeff Langley	NZ High Commissioner
Merilyn Tahia and staff	CEO, Vanuatu Women's Centre
Juliet Hunt	Adviser to the VWC (AusAid)
Michelle Easton	WAC (e correspondence)
Ohlin women (18)	Focus Group.
Lucy	NCW (
Roslyn Tor	Former DG Department Women's Affairs
Wilson	USP Community Legal Service
Ron Cartledge USP	USP Legal Literacy Adviser
Brenda Nabirye	Child Advocate, UNICEF
Patrick	UNICEF NPC
Hannah Lindley-Jones	National Programme Coordinator, UNIFEM Vanuatu
Graeleen Lapi	Country Programme Coordinator, Vanuatu Gender Equality in Political Government programme
Pastor Shem Tema	VCC