

PACIFIC PREVENTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAMME (PPDVP)

ABSTRACT

The Pacific Prevention of Domestic Violence Programme (PPDVP) is an initiative of the New Zealand Police, the New Zealand Agency for International Development (NZAID), and the Pacific Islands Chiefs of Police (PICP). The programme was launched in 2006 with a long-term goal of “a safer Pacific free from domestic violence”. The Programme signed a Declaration of Partnership with the Pacific Islands Chiefs of Police in 2007 which includes 20 Pacific Island Police Services. The Programme's primary focus has been on raising the quality and effectiveness of law enforcement by building the capacity of Pacific Police services to prevent and respond effectively to domestic violence.

PPDVP has been lauded as a primary mechanism for raising awareness of domestic violence and increasing police domestic violence best practice in the South Pacific. This has been achieved with a conjoint focus on raising police capability and capacity whilst simultaneously collaborating with other Government departments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to shift negative cultural conceptualisations that place women in subordinate roles which in turn have provided a rationale for men's abuse of their partners. At the regional level the programme works with UN Woman, the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre, Regional Rights Resource Team, Pacific Islands Forum leaders meeting, the Pacific Judicial Development Programme and the Pacific Islands Law Officers' Network. A multi-tiered focus has been vital as shifts in wider culture are a necessary precursor to positive changes in police behaviour and practice.

The programme involves regional and national level components. 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, PPDVP has worked intensively with the following Pacific countries – the Cook Islands, Kiribati, Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu – providing on-the-ground sustained support for the development of Police domestic violence policy, strategy, action plans, systems and training programmes. A New Zealand Police mentor has been assigned to each of the five countries to support these efforts.

PPDVP has focused on raising the quality and effectiveness of law enforcement. This has been achieved through a mixture of police domestic violence and gender-based training, the development of collaborative partnerships with local NGOs, case management systems to review the quality of police responses, training and mentoring on gender sensitivity, the development and implementation of domestic violence protocols and supervisory interventions to nullify longstanding attitudes and behaviours that relegate women in the Pacific to roles subordinate to men. More recently, the need to work conjointly with the Judiciary has also seen the development of court-related training and mentoring to combat patriarchal attitudes that have historically seen the blaming of victims of domestic violence and/or minimised sentencing.

The programme's inordinate success has been primarily measured, since 2007, by monitoring key police best practice indicators. These include, but are not restricted to, the number of complaints to the police, the number of police prosecutions and the decrease in police counselling of victims and perpetrators. The significant increase in reported domestic violence complaints is a testimony to growing public confidence in the police to effectively respond to reports of domestic violence.