



services available and exactly what they can offer in relation to child protection. Greater awareness is also needed on the significant negative impact of verbal and emotional abuse and neglect on children. Siblings and other members of households need to be involved in awareness-raising, not just primary caregivers.

Q. Do schools provide a safe environment for children?

A. According to both child survey respondents and education key informants, the role of teachers is paramount in making children feel safe in schools, but this is also the area least regulated by formal rules. 36% of education key informants admit teachers administer corporal punishment; 27% of school-going child respondents stated they had been physically hurt by a teacher in the past month; and 38% of adult respondents stated that a child in their household had told them about being hit by a teacher at school within the past month. 30% of school-going child respondents stated that they had been physically hurt by another child in school and 21% reported experiencing inappropriate touching at school within the past month, all perpetrated by other children. Bullying, poor physical environment, lack of effective rules or policies and lack of understanding about child abuse also feature as things which make children not feel safe in schools. To address the problems in schools, a National School Child Protection Policy (CPP) should be put in place for all schools in Vanuatu. Teachers need to be trained in positive discipline techniques, and teachers', communities' and children's awareness need to be increased, both about national laws and about child protection and rights.

Q. How well-equipped are children to prevent violence, abuse and exploitation against themselves?

A. Consistently, across all types of violence, children are experiencing more violence than they are reporting. Some children do not fully understand what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable touching and when they should speak out, which renders them vulnerable to sexual abuse. The majority of responses indicate that children would seek 'informal' assistance when badly hurt by someone (overwhelmingly child survey respondents stated they would talk to their parents. Only 11% of responses included 'formal' services such as the police, a medical practitioner or teacher. The reliance on informal contacts emphasises the need to make sure that these key groups, including peers, are empowered to best help children in need of protection. Children also need to be further empowered to know about the full range of services available in their area. The fact that 40% of inappropriate touching and physical abuse was perpetrated by other children raises importance of directly engaging with children themselves and further awareness-raising regarding child protection issues. Children also need to be included in awareness-raising programmes about child rights and of reporting procedures in schools and communities. They should also be encouraged to tell someone they trust and to talk about violence they experience. Related to this, the lack of understanding and perceived

inapproachability of formal service providers, such as the police, needs to be addressed through targeted awareness-raising and training of providers.

Q. Do caregivers and community leaders practice behaviour that protects children from violence, abuse and exploitation?

A. Despite demonstrating a high level of awareness of positive discipline techniques, 78% of adult survey respondents admit to physically hurting children in their household; 21% of them say this is for 'discipline' or 'education'. Community awareness on the rights of the child can be raised through activities at schools, church functions, gatherings etc, using drama and other community means of communication.

Q. How do adults feel about the risks of sending their children to live away from home?

A. According to the survey, 6% of respondents had biological children of their own currently living outside their households. These children live with other relatives and are mostly away from home for the purpose of going to school. 14% of relevant respondents seem to think that their children are not safe but no reasons were given for why this might be. 86% feel that their children are safe in their alternative places of residence, but this is based largely on assumptions, trust in the hosts (particularly when the hosts are family members) and feedback from the hosts rather than from the children themselves. The survey recommends to increase awareness about child safety while living away from home. It also advocates for the establishment of a separate Ministry of Social Welfare to coordinate affairs of children, women, young people and general family issues /affairs.



Key Findings

Protect me with love and care

A Question & Answer on the Baseline Report for creating a future free from violence, abuse and exploitation of girls and boys in Vanuatu



Q. What is the Government of Vanuatu/UNICEF Pacific Child Protection Programme?

A. The Child Protection Programme provides strategic direction for child protection interventions in the country. It takes a child-centred, holistic and long-term approach to keeping children from harmful situations, preventing child abuse and exploitation, and addressing the social reintegration and recovery of those who have been abused. It runs from 2008-2012.

Q. What is Vanuatu Child Protection Baseline Report?

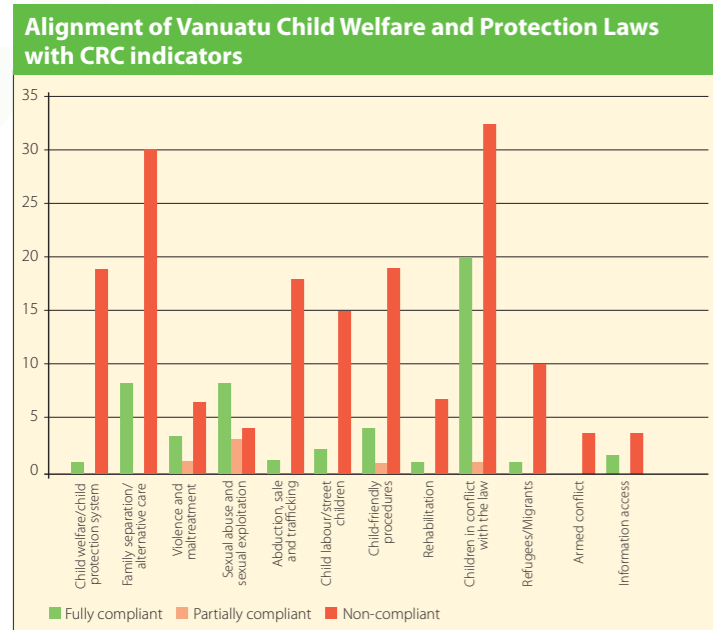
A. The Vanuatu Child Protection Baseline Report reviews legal provisions, social services and community involvement in child protection in 2008, develops recommendations, and aims to promote capacity-building, networking and inter-agency collaboration.

Q. What factors make children particularly vulnerable in Vanuatu?

A. In addition to vulnerability to violence, abuse and exploitation, children in Vanuatu also need protection from the consequences of natural disasters, given that the country is rated the most disaster-prone in the South Pacific.

Q. Is current legislation aligned with good Child Protection principles such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)?

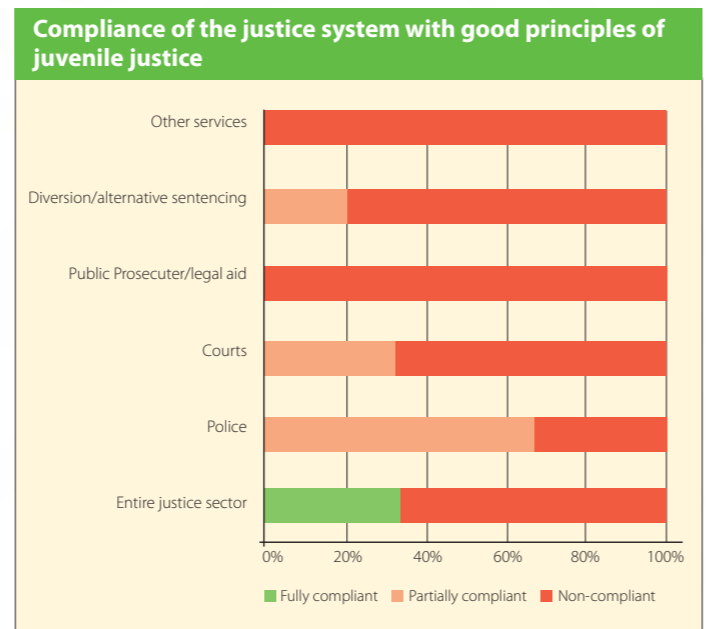
A. Of the CRC indicators assessed, the review found Vanuatu's legal provisions were fully compliant with 53 indicators, partially compliant with 6, and non-compliant on 168. There is no legislative provision or policy framework for child welfare/protection, specifying rights, powers and responsibilities of government services, the courts, traditional



authorities, parents and children, although provisions against domestic violence, child sexual assault and abuse are very comprehensive. Provisions could be strengthened through the reform of existing legislation, the creation of specific legislation for young offenders, and the development of supporting policies and procedures for the existing powers and discretions.

Q. How well placed is Vanuatu Justice System to apply good principles of juvenile justice?

A. Police training for handling victims/survivors is nearly non-existent but child witnesses report a positive experience with police regardless. However, while in custody, children in conflict with the law report being held in unsanitary conditions and that police use threats and violence to extract a confession. Also, courts and public prosecutors lack child-friendly procedures. Among the many opportunities highlighted by the survey for improving juvenile justice, is that for the Law and Justice Agency Communication Performance Coordination Group (an initiative for promoting interagency coordination) to provide clear structure and roles and information management for child offenders and victims / survivors.



Q. How do traditional authorities handle children in conflict with the law

A. The majority of matters concerning child offenders are addressed at community level, using traditional mechanisms. Police divert 95% of the cases they deal with back to the community. The needs of child victims/survivors are also addressed at community level (mostly with counselling). Given the extent of informal diversion back to the community, a greater focus is needed on traditional and non-formal justice mechanisms, with an emphasis on the need for these traditional and community actors to be fully informed on child protection, in order

to appropriately assist children at risk. Communities could be assisted to set up their own Child Protection Committees at community level, and provided with appropriate training on child protection procedures.

Q. How well-positioned are relevant services to respond to child protection issues?

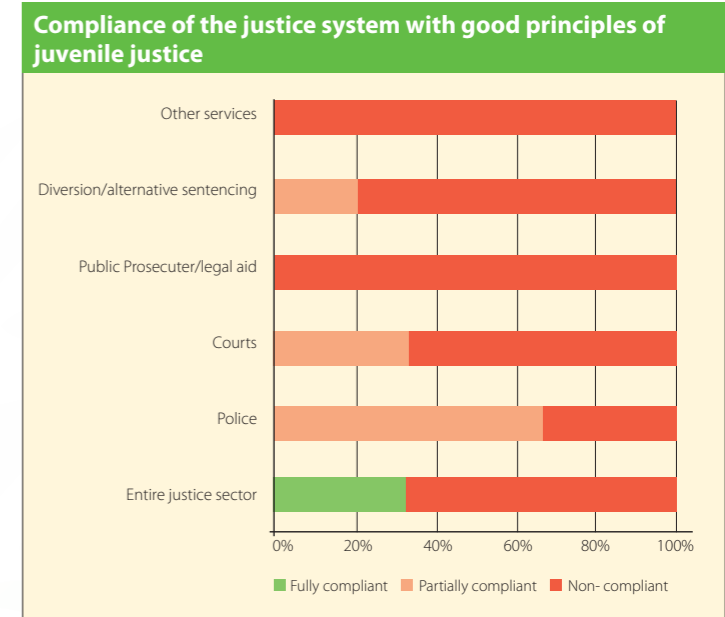
A. At the time of the research, the Social Welfare Division within the Ministry of Justice and Social Welfare was in name only. Documents including policies and laws are yet to be developed for this division. Social welfare assistance does not exist for families in need of assistance in Vanuatu, and qualified counsellors are lacking. Faith-based counselling bridges this gap, to some extent, as does the extended family and land (the wantok) system, which provides much of the security for families. Apart from the justice sector, other relevant parties include the Department for Women's Affairs, the health and education sectors, the Vanuatu Women's Crisis Centre, and NGOs. Training for these groups on how to identify and respond to child protection problems and issues is imperative. Awareness-raising and capacity building with all groups, including children, could open up important avenues for promoting child protection in the community: For example, for health representatives to talk about the negative impact of violence on children's health and development; teachers about the negative impact on education and learning; police and justice representatives to clarify the legal situation on child protection; community and women's group leaders to promote positive discipline etc.



Q. How well-served are children by the judiciary in child protection cases?

A. On the part of formal/state service providers, national, formalised systems need to be put in place. These include a child protection reporting and response system; a clearly devised system for reporting

child abuse; and the enactment and operationalisation of child protection laws and policies. Service providers and officials within the judiciary system require training in child-friendly procedures, and inter-agency cooperation needs to be formalised and improved.



Q. How widespread is birth registration?

A. The Government/UNICEF Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey data from 2007 indicates that 25.6% of children under 5 were registered. 31% of adult survey respondents with children under 5 living in or outside the household stated that these children had been registered. 71% of them said they had to pay to register children, and 80% of key informants thought that people had to pay to register children. An effective, user-friendly, centralised system of birth registration is needed at all levels, with mass registration campaigns. Greater departmental collaboration is required and awareness raising among government, NGO and CBO stakeholders, maternity units about the importance of birth registration.

Q. Do caregivers and community leaders know what to do if a child is badly hurt by someone

A. 81% of adult survey respondents report being confident or very confident about knowing what to do if a child in their household was badly hurt by someone. Both they and key informants interviewed are more likely to take 'informal' actions than refer the issue to state actors and they list more 'informal' than 'formal' services as being available in the local area. While adult respondents demonstrate a relatively high level of awareness of positive discipline techniques and proactive ways to show children that they are loved and cared for, this is undermined in practice by some degree of inappropriate name-calling and making children feel unwanted and 78% of respondents admit to physically hurting children. Communities would benefit from awareness-raising on the range of