



STATE OF HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT 2020



OMBUDSMAN
— NHRI SAMOA

PILOT PROJECT:

RECOMMENDATION 20 OF THE NATIONAL
PUBLIC INQUIRY INTO FAMILY VIOLENCE
REPORT 2018

ESTABLISHING VILLAGE FAMILY
SAFETY COMMITTEES: PHASES I & II





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Apia, Samoa*

4 December 2020

Hon. Leaupepe Toleafoa Fa'afisi
Speaker of the House
Legislative Assembly
MULINU'U

STATE OF HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT 2020

I submit the "State of Human Rights Report for 2020" as required by Section 40 of the *Ombudsman Act 2013*.

The 2020 Report gives a summary of the findings and recommendations of the Village Family Safety Committee Pilot Project - ESTABLISHING VILLAGE FAMILY SAFETY COMMITTEES PHASE I & II. The Project was born out of Recommendation 20 of the National Inquiry into Family Violence in Samoa conducted in 2018. Recommendation 20 focused on the establishment of Family Safety Committees in Villages to act as a preventive measure in communities.

As has been the practise in the past, for human rights reports to be useful to local and international entities who are interested in them, the Office released them once they are submitted to Parliament.

Tuila'epa Sa'ilele Malielegaoi
PRIME MINISTER

Attached.

FAMILY SAFETY COMMITTEES

TAGA, SAVAII



SALEI'A, SAVAII



FAMILY SAFETY COMMITTEES

ASAU, SAVAII



VAIE'E, UPOLO



FAMILY SAFETY COMMITTEES

LALOVI, MULIFANUA



LOTOPU'E, UPOLU



PARTICIPANTS PERSPECTIVES

Question: causes of family violence

75%

responses were able to correctly define domestic violence as caused by the exertion of power and control

25%

responses still listed 'marital differences' or 'hardened hearts' as the 'cause' of domestic violence which are contributing factors

56%

success rate in knowledge transfer - where participants post-workshop no longer listed triggers and myths such as alcohol, anger, jealousy, finances or even mothers attending bingo as a cause of family violence

Question: types of abuse that exist

90%

of participants were able to name other types of abuse and forms of violence such as grooming, throwing rocks, harassment

80%

of participants were able to identify an appropriate intervention to make in the event of villagers reporting incidents to the committee

Question: the don'ts or inappropriate ways of responding

83%

of participants were able to identify an example of an inappropriate response towards victims

Question: myths/norm that reinforces family violence

82%

of participants were able to correctly describe a common 'myth' or 'societal norm' that exists with regards to gender inequality and family violence

3 IMPORTANT ELEMENTS FOR THE OVERALL SUCCESS OF PHASE II OF THE PILOT PROJECT

First, the acknowledgement that family violence is preventable and not an inevitable social problem.



Second, that complex factors known to drive and reinforce family violence can be addressed through continuous strategic interventions and community strength based approach.



Thirdly, that gendered drivers consistently associated with higher levels of violence against women can be addressed through well facilitated lessons about ‘myths and facts’.



CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS OF WORKING WITH VILLAGES

1

Access: it is important that the access point for a village project is based on an identified need of the village members and community.

Genuineness of motivation: it is important that village members see the genuine heart to help and assist them in achieving their goals.

2

3

Continuity : it is important for village projects that there is a plan for continued middle to long term support to the work expected to be undertaken by villagers especially this type of issue.

Value of the Project for the Village: it was important to stress the non-monetary value of the project from the outset.

4

5

Support of Members of Parliament: as Phase II progressed, it was important for the Office to engage and gain support of Members of Parliament of the 6 pilot villages.

Village Ownership - Motivation and Commitment: ownership of the project by villages is crucial in this space, because ultimately, the project's overarching objective requires a change of mindset, a change of heart and a change of behavior

6

LESSONS LEARNT

Lesson 1: Deeply Rooted Mindsets and Behavioral Norms

Deeply Rooted Mindsets and Behavioral Norms continue to exist which is a grave concern.

1.1. Women's clothing

At least one or two male participant asserted, that the act of women wearing what they would define as inappropriate clothing around them, is a form of violence or abuse towards them, as men.

Some claimed that - “My eyes are being abused” - “Ua sauaina o’u mata”.

This mindset reinforces the attitude of victim-blaming and the myth that a woman’s clothing provokes sexual abuse and violence toward her. It further reinforces the notion that women must monitor their clothing and what they are wearing, to ensure they are not provoking or ‘causing’ the abuse toward them (men).

1.2 Sex between spouses and misheld belief of men to be entitled to sex

Attitudes amongst both men and women participants reaffirmed the myth that “Women are obliged to have sex with their husbands once they are married” (Myth 8 Inquiry Report refers - page 86).

However, it was observed that men took this wrong mindset even further, and felt that an intimate partner or spouse who did not agree to sexual intercourse when he so desired it, was perpetrating a form of abuse against him.

“My needs (sexual) are being abused” - “Ua sauaina ou mana’oga”.

This deeply rooted mindset, is based on the mistaken belief that a man has a ‘basic right or entitlement’ to have sex with his spouse, whenever he so desired, and if it is not given to him, then it is a breach of his fundamental right as a married man.

The majority of male participants did not know that to force your spouse to have sex, is considered rape under the Crimes Act 2013 (section 49(4)).

LESSONS LEARNT

Deeply Rooted Mindsets and Behavioral Norms (cntd')

1.3. VICTIM BLAMING

Women are blaming themselves for men seeking satisfaction elsewhere by having inappropriate sex with other women and raping young girls. This confirms that victim blaming exists within the mindsets of victims themselves reinforcing the notion of entitlement for men and further complicates interventions and approaches to eliminate violence.

1.4. PHYSICAL ABUSE OF CHILDREN

There was overwhelming evidence of child abuse.

One father shared, “I use a fagaau (hose) to beat my children and I believe it is the best way to bring them up, they listen to me and stay out of trouble”.

Another participant shared, “I don’t have children of my own, but I beat my nephews all the time. Last week, I beat him until I ran out of breath, and he could not walk. I rested, caught my breath and beat him again”.

These attitudes of parents in beating their children reaffirmed that “Being smacked as a child made me into the good person I am today” and “it didn’t do me any harm” (Myth 10 Inquiry Report refers - page 119).

Many parents shared that beating was the only way known to them to discipline their children “Pau a lea o le auala...e faakogu ai kamaiki gei”. They justified this by arguing that they have exhausted all other options including talking to their children.

Physical and emotional abuse of children contributed to a cycle of rebellious behavior amongst youth that parents commonly complain about.

PARENTING APPROACHES CONTINUES TO BE A CHALLENGING ISSUE THAT NEEDS TO BE FURTHER RESEARCHED AND EXPLORED IN RELATION TO FAMILY VIOLENCE.

LESSONS LEARNT

Lesson 2: Creating a Safe-Space Environment

It is crucial that a safe space is created where there is trust to allow people to share their thoughts and ideas without being judged about them.

LESSON 3: ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP AND GOOD GOVERNANCE

The importance of having good and effective leaders with commitment and dedication in resolving the problem.

LESSON 4: APPROACHING VILLAGES IN SAMOA: ACCESS, GENUINENESS OF MOTIVATION, CONTINUITY, VALUE OF PROJECT FOR THE VILLAGE AND SUPPORT OF MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

It is crucial that villages are approached with respect and with good, clear and honest intentions. This will help build lasting relations and facilitate cooperation.

Lesson 5: Village Ownership: Motivation and Commitment

Villages need to have the dedication and commitment to resolve and address the problem. Being able to take ownership of project allows for greater results and guarantees effectiveness.

Lesson 6: Education and Capacity Building can Change Attitudes

Educating and building the capacity of individuals can have a positive impact in transforming and changing negative attitudes and behaviour.

LESSON 7: SUPPORT FOR CHAMPIONS FROM WITHIN

It is important that those who take part on addressing the problem are supported by their peers, families and the wider community. This can help build motivation and would make the work easier.

PILOT PROGRAM SUSTAINABILITY: CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

Mindsets and Societal Norms – interventions must continue to address deeply rooted mindsets on gendered drivers such as:

1. Condoning violence towards women and children;
2. Rigid gender roles and stereotyped views of what it means to be a man or a woman;
3. Sense of entitlement by men who act with aggression or disrespect towards women when they are ‘disobedient’;
4. Attitudes of victim-blaming and re-victimization that excuses the behavior and actions of perpetrators.

Support to Village Family Safety Committees – it is critical to provide relevant and adequate support to VFSCs as they embark on the implementation of activities. Support to VFSCs should be holistic in terms of:

1. Strategic partnerships for funding and resourcing activities;
2. Mentoring support to members who themselves are at risk of behaving violently;
3. Support for ‘champions from within’ who can drive activities and initiate change;
4. Support towards educational programs for all other members of the village.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Addressing Norms/Practices driving Family Violence

BEHAVIORAL CHANGE PROGRAMS

- 1. It is recommended that behavioral change programs to address the deeply rooted mindsets on gendered drivers identified in this report be developed and delivered as part of the implementation phase.
- 2. It is recommended that a national Behavior Change Campaign with clear standards of behavior is pioneered through the 6 pilot villages.

CONTINUED EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

- 3. It is recommended that strategic interventions to specifically address identified norms and practices that drives violent behavior be incorporated to the next phase of the pilot program.
- 4. It is recommended that educational programs be extended to all other members of the pilot villages.
- 5. It is recommended that strategic interventions to address family violence (in the community and any setting) must be constant and continuous over a longer period of time (at least 3-4 years) to ensure change of mindset in the long run.

PHYSICAL ABUSE OF CHILDREN

- 6. It is recommended that a special educational program is developed within the Samoan cultural context, to raise understanding of the root causes of violence against children.
- 7. It is recommended that Understanding Violence against Children is incorporated to future workshop sessions of the Office and the Pilot Program.
- 8. It is recommended that village pilot activities during the implementation stage include learning's to "Reduce harsh parenting practices and create positive parent-child relationships".

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. Support to Village Family Safety Committees



9. It is recommended that VFSCs receive funding support to implement all work plan activities efficiently and effectively.



10. It is recommended that each VFSCs be assigned a mentor that can offer help and support on the personal level, to committee members identified as high risk of committing violence.

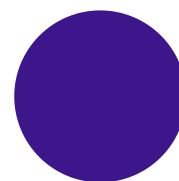
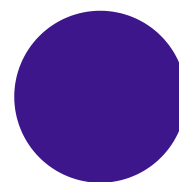


11. It is recommended that identified champions from each village are further supported to attend national programs against family violence, or participate in national committees and taskforces.

3. The Need for Whole of Village Approach

12. It is recommended that VFSC members are taken through a Training of Trainers, so that they are able to effectively run educational programs within their villages.

13. It is recommended that the implementation stage includes workshops for other groups of village members such as youth, women, untitled men, matai and faletua & tausi.



Foreword

In 2018, my Office launched its first National Public Inquiry Report on Family Violence. It was an important moment for my Office and for Samoa as her people for the first time came together to publicly break the silence about violence in our Samoan homes and discuss ways on how we can together better address and prevent family violence.

The Report contains 49 Findings and 39 Recommendations. The Inquiry recognized that our Village Fono has a critical role to play both ongoing and in the early prevention of family violence in the village, as they are expressly responsible for "promoting social cohesion and harmony" within the villages.¹ A common suggestion from the participants to the Inquiry was the establishment of Village Family Safety Committees within each village, solely responsible for all matters relating to family violence prevention. Consequently, Recommendation 20 of the Report recommends the 'Establishment of Village Family Safety Committees'. I believe that while appropriate services and responsive institutions provided by Government, NGOs etc are important mechanisms in the effort to address family violence, they on their own cannot address the problem. Addressing family violence requires a collective approach by the whole nation to generate and sustain change. Families and village members play a crucial role in such an approach. This project is intended to be a whole village initiative that aims to prevent and address family violence through village led initiatives and awareness.

Following the launch of the Report, the Office began piloting the implementation of Recommendation 20. This year's State of Human Rights Report continues to focus on gender based violence, family violence, violence against women and girls. This Report gives an account of implementing Phase II of the Pilot Project on Establishing of Village Family Safety Committee conducted by my Office within the selected pilot villages of Lotopue, Vaiee and Lalovi Mulifanua in Upolu; and Asau, Saleia and Taga in Savaii.

I welcome our Parliament, Government and community to read and ponder on the findings of the Report. The Report confirms that the prevention of family violence requires a change in mindset, attitudes and behavior – and this requires adaptive lifestyle changes in the whole environment. It is also important that interventions continue to address deeply rooted mindsets on gendered drivers through the establishment of sustainable mechanisms in our villages. Phase II of this Pilot has shown that the key to addressing violence in families is in the hands of our own people, families and villages.

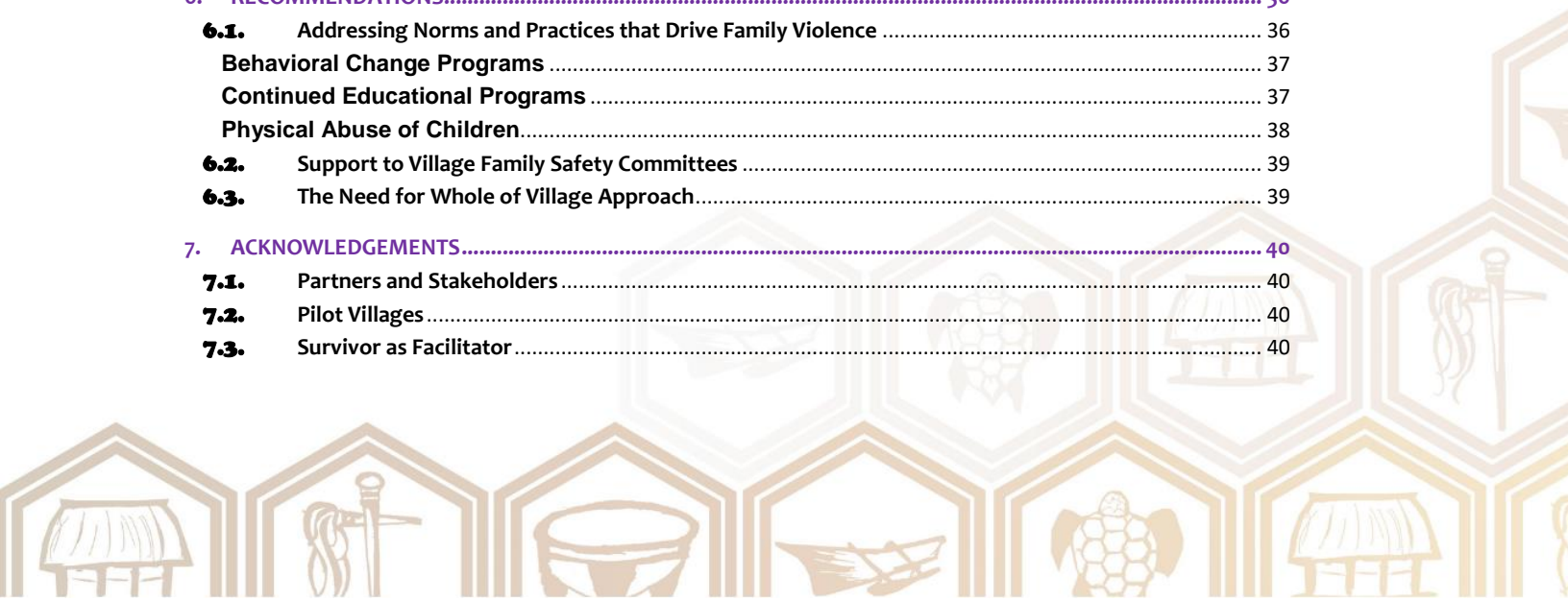


Maiava Iulai Toma
OMBUDSMAN

¹ See *Village Fono Act 1990*, section 5(2)(g).

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1. Executive Summary

1.1. Background

Violence against women and girls remains widespread and under-reported in Samoa where the level of family violence² against women is one of the highest in the Pacific, posing a pervasive violation of human rights for women and girls. This in turn presents a central barrier to gender equality and the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals 2030 (SDGs). Samoa's Second National Review Report³ on the Implementation of the SDGs released in July 2020, confirms increased levels of violence against women and children from 46% to 60% for two Samoa Family Safety Studies (2000 and 2017).⁴

Increasing trends and prevalence of family violence in Samoa was confirmed by the 2018 National Inquiry into Family Violence (NIFV) conducted by the Office of the Ombudsman (Office),⁵ in which 86% of women declared that they had been punched, kicked, slapped or assaulted with an object by a family member, while 87% were subjected to emotional and verbal abuse, as well as threats of violence. A further 20% of participants said they had been raped by a non-family member, while an alarming 10% said they had been raped by someone closely related to them.

Samoa has seen an increase in reported cases of domestic and sexual violence towards young girls coming through the Courts, with new cases featuring every week during criminal mentions.⁶ Sexual offending in our community has been topical recently. Justice Tafaoimalo Leilani Tuala-Warren in the case of *Police v Lualua* in 2018 stated that – “Unfortunately this is yet another case which will continue to highlight the prevalence of sexual offending in our community and sadly within families.”⁷ Samoa Observer's Editor

² “**Family violence**” for the purposes of this report refers to violence that covers all forms of violence against women, girls and children and that take place within the family setting. Such violence includes emotional/physiological, physical, sexual and financial. In addition, it includes any other controlling or abusive behaviour where such conduct harms or may cause imminent harm to the safety, health or wellbeing of a person. Unless the context says otherwise the term ‘domestic violence’ (also used in some parts of this report) is to be used interchangeably with the term ‘family violence’.

³ Government of Samoa, *Samoa's Second Voluntary National Review on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals Report*, https://samoa.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-07/Samos2ndVNR2020_LowRes.pdf

⁴ Refer to paragraph 171 at p. 69 of *Samoa's Second Voluntary National Review on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals Report* – https://samoa.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-07/Samos2ndVNR2020_LowRes.pdf

⁵ See Office of the Ombudsman, *State of Human Rights Report 2018*, <https://ombudsman.gov.ws/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/2018-SHRR-2018-National-Public-Inquiry-into-Family-Violence-English.pdf>

⁶ Samoa Global News, Over 10 Cases relating to Sexual Assault of Young Girls in Criminal Mentions, 17 August 2020, <https://samoaglobalnews.com/more-than-10-appeared-for-sexual-violation-toward-young-girls-in-criminal-mentions/>; Samoa Observer, Convicted rapist gets 4-year jail sentence, 20 July 2020, <https://www.samoobserver.ws/category/article/66979>

⁷ *Police v Lualua* [2018] WSSC 91 (22 June 2018) <http://www.pacii.org/cgi-bin/sinodisp/ws/cases/WSSC/2018/91.html?stem=&synonyms=&query=Justice%20Tafaoimalo%20Leilani%20Tuala-Warren>



Mata'afa Keni Lesa wrote in an editorial agreeing with Justice Tuala-Warren noting that, "The sad reality is that many sexual offence cases are surfacing often in Samoa (emphasis added)."⁸ Recent public debates about victim-blaming on social media has highlighted that there is still a large number of Samoans both local and abroad, who support gendered drivers associated with higher levels of violence against women.⁹

The NIFV recognized that the Village Fono has a critical role to play in the early prevention of family violence, as they are expressly responsible for "promoting social cohesion and harmony" within Samoan villages.¹⁰

The Inquiry further found, however, that a significant barrier to this is the prevalence of matai being perpetrators of violence themselves. The Village Fono cannot, therefore, be solely relied upon to drive the prevention of family violence within homes. Furthermore, many participants in the Inquiry shared that while ongoing awareness does reach their villages, they are not regular, and often only once or twice a year. The Inquiry found that key messages on family violence are often forgotten once the intervention program is done, and not discussed again until another program comes around.

In order to meet its responsibility to maintain social cohesion and harmony in villages, **Recommendation 20** of the 2018 Inquiry Report advises *Village Fono to establish a credible mechanism for preventing family violence that ensures regular and ongoing programs are conducted*. A common suggestion made to the Inquiry by participants, was the establishment of 'Village Family Safety Committees' (VFSC) *within each village, solely responsible for all matters relating to family violence prevention*.

The Family Safety Study 2017 conducted by the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development (MWCSD) also highlighted the role of the Village Fono, reporting that 84% of male respondents and 76% of female respondents felt that the Village Fono should be leading advocacy efforts to stop family violence. As such, Recommendation 4 (iii) of the Study also recommended the establishment of Family Safety Committees in the village.

1.2. Objectives

The Overall Objective of the Village Family Safety Committee Pilot Project is **to empower village members and the Village Council to take a leading and proactive role in the prevention of family violence within their respective villages**.

⁸ Mata'afa Keni Lesa, 'Rape, incest and rise of vile crimes' (20 June 2018) <https://www.samoobserver.ws/category/editorial/8492>

⁹ Samoa Global News, 'There is sin and there is Occasion of Sin- Priest stands by his example' (7 July 2020) <https://samoaglobalnews.com/there-is-sin-and-thereis-the-occassion-of-sin-priest-stands-by-his-example/>

¹⁰ *Village Fono Act 1990*, section 5(2)(g).

The Pilot Project has 4 Phases being: I) Mapping and Development Stage, II) Capacity Building and Development of Work plans, III) Implementation Stage and IV) Follow-Up and Reporting.

The Objectives of Phase I are to develop an overall Project Plan and identify possible villages to pilot the project. The Objectives of Phase II are:

- i. ***To build VFSC capacity to actively initiate and conduct family violence prevention initiatives and assist Village Councils to address family violence matters within the village as they arise;***
- ii. ***To develop VFSC work plans to reflect their chosen initiatives to promote family safety; and***
- iii. ***To desensitize VFSC members.***

1.3. Work Accomplished

Phase I: Mapping and Development Stage

Phase I has been completed. During Phase I, the Office developed an overall Project Plan which looked at the beginning to the end of the Project. It also did a mapping exercise to determine which villages should trial the project.

The villages were selected with the assistance of MWCSD based on the following criteria:

- size and population of the village (small compared to a big village);
- villages with and without existing bylaws (written or verbal) which addresses family violence

Further to the above criteria these villages also participated in the NIFV community consultations.

It was important for the Office to engage the support and assistance of MWCSD at the outset because not only are they the main focal point of community engagement but it was to also to ensure that this project is mainstreamed with MWCSD existing work including the District Development Plan programme.

Based on the above criteria, six (6) villages were selected- Lalovi Mulifanua, Lotopue and Vaiee in Upolu, and the villages of Asau, Saleia and Taga in Savaii. Soon after the selection, the Office met with Village Councils of these villages to raise awareness of the project and what it entails and to seek their agreement to participate. All of the 6 six villages agreed and straight away established their Village Family Safety Committees (VFSC). Village Family Safety Committees have been established within the villages of Lalovi Mulifanua, Lotopue and Vaiee in Upolu, and the villages of Asau, Saleia and Taga in Savaii.

All VFSC's have been endorsed by their respective Village Fono and together with the Office entered into a Memorandum of Understanding confirming their commitment and agreement to pilot this project.



Phase II: Capacity Building and Development of Workplans Stage

Phase II was recently completed. During this Phase, the 6 selected VFSCs went through capacity building workshops and developing of their Work Plans.

All VFSC's during the workshops have adopted Governing Principles to guide their work. Qualitative data from Pre and Post Tests confirms a transfer of knowledge through the capacity building training workshop, where committee members have not only increased their understanding of family violence, but are better informed with preventative measures, to take appropriate action as first respondents to incidents as they arise in the village.

- ***Good Governance Principles for VFSCs Developed and Adopted***

VFSCs were supported to develop their own *Good Governance Principles* by setting *Committee Rules* decided by the members themselves. Committee members were introduced to, and taken through Good Governance Principles of:

- Participation,
- Transparency,
- Responsiveness,
- Equity and Inclusiveness,
- Effectiveness, Efficiency,
- Accountability, and
- being Consensus-Orientated.

Additionally, all six VFSCs were supported to appoint and/or select office bearers to lead their committees throughout the year. This was conducted strategically by the facilitators to ensure boundaries with traditional village protocols were not overstepped, while still presenting best practice governance principles for the information of committee members.

- ***Village Mapping, SWOTs (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) and Individual Self-Assessments***

VFSCs were supported to take an in-depth look within their respective villages, and map out where they are now, in order to determine a baseline for comparisons against the work to be done over the next 12 months. Participants were taken through a SWOT analysis of their village, and a personal self-reflective look into their individual values; to assess what is important versus what is being prioritized in their everyday lives. This process allowed committee members to plan annual activities unique to their own village, to capitalize on strengths, address weaknesses and consider external opportunities and threats that exist.



- **Strategic Plans and Annual Work plans Developed**

Following comprehensive mapping and self-reflective analysis, all six VFSCs developed Strategic Plans - outlining their own unique vision, mission, values, goals and activities. All Strategic Plans include an Annual Work plan of specific activities to be carried out by each committee, over the next 12 months. A highly interactive facilitative approach was taken in the development of VFSC Strategic Plans, to ensure a high level of ownership and commitment from committee members.

- **Improved Understanding of Domestic Violence**

Qualitative data established by an analysis of Pre and Post Tests confirms a transfer of knowledge through the capacity building training workshop, where committee members have not only improved their holistic understanding of family violence, but are better informed with preventative measures, and take appropriate action as first respondents to incidents as they arise in the village. Post Test responses demonstrate improved participant knowledge and understanding of:

1. The cause of violence being the exertion of power and control by abusers on the abused, and an understanding of the vast differences between 'causes', 'triggers' and 'contributing factors' of violence,
2. The different forms of abuse and types of violent behavior used by perpetrators to exert this power and control on their victims,
3. The common 'myths' and 'facts' about domestic and sexual violence that society must continue to address,
4. The appropriate interventions for the committee to consider, and
5. The 'dos' and 'don'ts' in responding appropriately to victims or survivors, with a focus on the commonly inappropriate ways Samoan society tends to respond that re-victimizes those abused.

2. Summary of Phase II: Capacity Building & Work Plans

This Report aims to provide a detail account of Phase II. Phase II of the pilot project set out to:

- i. conduct a comprehensive capacity building training session for the participants of each committee; and
- ii. facilitate the development of detailed work plans to guide the work of each VFSC over an initial 12 month period.

2.1. Facilitators

The Office of the Ombudsman Team - Loukinikini Vili, Tracey Mikaele and Tuala Victor Vaauli together with Consultant Tuiloma Sina Retzlaff were the facilitators of the workshops.

The facilitation of the 14 sessions over 3 days was evenly distributed amongst the Facilitators as a strategic approach to ensure participants remain actively engaged and interested with different types of facilitation approaches. This strategy proved effective from the perspective of the facilitators to sustain energy and remain motivated throughout the 3 days.

2.2. Workshop Objectives

The Capacity Building Workshops were designed with specific Learning Outcomes for participants. By the end of the Workshops, VFSC members would:

1. Identify the *Causes* of family violence and distinguish this from *Triggers* and *Contributing Factors*.
2. Understand the different *Forms of Violence* and *Types of Abuse* that exist.
3. Understand the *Cycle of Violence* in Abusive Relationships.
4. Identify and understand some of the common *Myths and Facts* about Domestic Violence that exist as deeply rooted mindsets in Samoan society.
5. Understand and be able to apply the different types of *Prevention, Intervention and Responses* to common scenarios being: i) Intimate Partner Violence, ii) Sexual Assault on Children, iii) Violent Discipline of Children.
6. Develop their own unique *Appropriate Response Guidelines* for the common incidents of i) Intimate Partner Violence, ii) Sexual Assault on Children, and iii) Violent Discipline of Children.

The Capacity Building Workshops also sought to ensure that each VFSC understood its *key roles and responsibilities*, and develop an *annual work plan* to guide its work over the next 12 months of the pilot Project.

By the end of the Workshops, each VFSC would:

1. Have a 12-month *Strategic Plan* that sets out its *Vision, Mission, Values, Goals and Activities*.
2. *Establish Good Governance structures* and decide on *Guiding Rules* similar to a Board Charter, to support the work of the Committee.
3. Hold Elections to *Select Office Bearers* of the Committee.
4. *Understand the Key Roles and Responsibilities* of the Committee.
5. Know *who their Key Stakeholders and Partners* are, for Referrals.

2.3. Summary of Workshop Sessions

Fourteen (14) carefully designed sessions were delivered over the 3-day agenda. Each session had its own Key Objectives and Learning Outcomes. The Consultant and all three members of the NHRI team each took turns to lead various sessions as presenters and facilitators. The facilitation team took a highly



interactive approach to all sessions, thus the lead presenter was always assisted by other team members, to maximize participation and engagement of the group.

Session 1: Introductions

In addition to breaking the ice between participants and presenters, the introductory session was used to explain the goals and objectives of the 3 days, and identify participants' expectations of the Workshop. The introductory session was designed to set the tone of open, frank conversations and a 'safe space' environment so that participants feel comfortable about sharing especially their personal experiences of violence, whether they had been a perpetrator or victim.

Session 2: Self-Assessment and Values Exercise

Participants were taken through a self-assessment *values exercise*, in order to establish what individuals valued most, before deciding on which core values would be adopted as a foundation of their VFSC Strategic Plan. Participants were taken through the importance of having *shared values* as a team, so that they can together, achieve their common vision and goals.

Session 3: Visioning Exercise

Committee members were taken through a visioning exercise, to spirit-storm (as opposed to brainstorm) and decide on their 'WHY'. Why are they part of the Village Family Safety Committee? What do they want to achieve (individually and as part of the Committee) through the VFSC? This session was designed for participants to set their own vision, and word it appropriately to suit their unique circumstance and environment.

Session 4: Family Violence in Samoa

To set the foundation of teaching about Domestic, Family, Sexual and Intimate Partner Violence in Samoa, participants were taken through various statistics and research findings to establish the prevalence of violence within families of Samoa. A summary of findings from the NIFV, 2018 as well as the Family Safety Study by the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development 2017 was presented to participants. Due to the common question of "but men are also victims" - comparative data to show that perpetrators were mostly men while victims were mostly women; became an important point to stress during this session.

Session 5: Understanding the Types of Violence

Participants were taken through the different forms of violence and types of abuse: Physical, Emotional, Sexual, Psychological, and Economical or Financial. This session was interactive, with participants sharing specific examples of how they understood each type of abuse, commonly seen or experienced in families. Many 'light-bulb moments' were observed during this session, as committee members came to the realization that words spoken (*upu lafo*) is a form of abuse. Much interest was also shown in the introduction of financial abuse, which again, was new to the participants.



Session 6: Understanding Domestic Violence

Participants were taken through the definition of domestic violence, with a focus on the ‘cause’ of violence being various acts of abuse used by one person *to gain and maintain power and control* over the other. This session addressed the misconception about the ‘causes’ of family violence being alcohol, anger, lack of finance, mothers going to bingo, personal differences between couples, and other such common myths. To further understand domestic or family violence, committee members were introduced to the *Power and Control Wheel*, and the 3 stages of the *Cycle of Violence*. A positive approach was taken in the delivery of this session, to incorporate – “Healthy Relationships” by giving participants an opportunity to reflect on what a happy, healthy relationship would look like, for them.

Session 7: Village Mapping

This session helped to establish basic demographics for each village, with participants taking stock to list important information about their village¹¹, and physically draw a map that locates family homes, Village Fono houses, churches, schools, women’s committee fales and other important historical landmarks in each village. The information assisted the Committee and facilitators to form relevant and appropriate activities in the Strategic Plans.

Session 8: Myths and Facts

Participants were taken through some of the existing behavioral norms and deeply rooted mindsets in Samoa that reinforced or justified violent behavior. Myths and Facts identified through the NIFV formed the basis of this session. The myths include:

- Alcohol and Drugs cause family violence
- Children invite sexual abuse by acting or dressing seductively
- Women invite violence when men’s sexual needs are not met
- Men rape young girls because their wives or intimate partners did not satisfy their sexual needs
- Jealousy causes men to beat their wives
- Violence only happens to poor families
- Violence happens because women don’t listen and go to Bingo all the time
- Domestic violence is a private matter, therefore it is no one’s business

The approach was reflective, however, due to the fact that participants themselves believed in some of the myths to be true, facilitators had to firmly introduce the facts early in this session, in order to mitigate participants’ own beliefs in the myths.

¹¹ Including identifying the total population of the village and further disaggregating this number to identify number of persons with disabilities, matai men and women, children, youth etc.

Session 9: Prevention, Intervention and Response

Participants were taken through the difference between prevention, intervention and appropriate responses to various types of family violence. In this session, committee members were encouraged to develop their own Response Criteria to three common types of family violence being: i) Intimate Partner Violence, ii) Sexual Violence or Incest towards Children, and iii) Violence used to *Discipline* Children. Real life scenarios of these three situations were given to participants, to discuss, debate and develop their own practical and appropriate *prevention, intervention and response* measures.

Session 10: Do's and Don'ts

Following an increased understanding of family violence issues, participants were supported to develop their own list of “Dos” and “Don'ts” to guide their work as Village Family Safety Committees. The list of Dos and Don'ts included actions, behaviors, mindsets, reactions and responses to committee members should either adopt, or avoid as they move forward with their work.

Session 11: Annual Work plans

On Day 3, participants were taken through the work plan process, to determine their over-arching Strategic Goals, and identify relevant activities for each goal. The committee's Vision Statement which had been developed on Day 1 of the workshop, was reinforced and reiterated throughout and on Day 3 - members were encouraged to identify their Strategic Objectives, and relevant activities for implementation over the next 12 months. Participants were taken back to their SWOT analysis from Day 1, to ensure work plan activities were well linked to their identified *strengths* and *opportunities*, with due consideration for actions that can adequately address *weaknesses* and *threats*.

Session 12: Referrals

Participants were introduced to a list of all NGOs, Government Ministries, and stakeholders who work in the space of family violence prevention. Participants were told about the different services offered, and where to go to for first respondent assistance for victims of domestic violence or anyone that needs information relating to family violence. Calendars were distributed to all participants, with logos and contact details of each NGO, Ministry or Development Agency.

Session 13: Principles of Good Governance

Participants were taken through a capacity building session to introduce the Good Governance Principles of Participation, Transparency, Responsiveness, Equity and Inclusiveness, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Accountability, and being Consensus-Orientated. Committee members were asked to address areas pertaining to the election/selection of office bearers, meetings and quorums, financial policies, budgets and bank accounts, as well as roles and responsibilities of members.

Session 14: Election of Officers

All 6 Village Family Safety Committees agreed for facilitators to lead their inaugural general meeting as a committee, and assist with the election of office bearers. The Principles of Good Governance adopted in Session 13, therefore, were put to immediate practical use. Five out of the six pilot villages decided on the process of free and fair elections, by casting secret ballots into ballot boxes that were collected and counted by facilitators.

2.4. Knowledge Transfer of Participants

The Pre-Post Test monitoring tool was used to quantify participants' transfer of knowledge. The same questions given on Day 1 as a Pre-test, were again given as a Post-test on Day 3. A total of 93 participants from the six villages participated in the pre-post test monitoring.

The test comprised of five simply worded questions, to test 5 learning outcomes of the training:

- Question 1 – What is the '*cause*' of family violence?
- Question 2 – What are the '*types of abuse*' that exist?
- Question 3 – What *appropriate interventions* can be taken?
- Question 4 – When responding, what are some of the *don'ts* or inappropriate ways of responding?
- Question 5 – Name a '*myth*' or '*societal norm*' that reinforces family violence and abuse.

An analysis of results showed a marked improvement in skills, knowledge and understanding of Family Violence. Results showed that at the end of the workshops, participants had gained a better understanding and learned:

1. That power and control is the root cause of domestic violence and abuse;
2. That there are various types of violence and forms of abuse, other than physical abuse;
3. That there are appropriate interventions the committee may engage when incidents of violence arise;
4. That there are Do's and Don'ts in responding to victims and/or survivors, to ensure the committee does not re-victimize or cause more harm to the abused and his/her situation; and
5. That there are certain unsubstantiated but commonly accepted myths about family violence, abuse and gender equality that must be addressed.

Pre-Tests

The Pre-Test average amongst all participants was a low 2.4/10 (rounded figure). Responses to questions 1 and 5 demonstrated that participants came with many common misconceptions and deeply rooted mindsets about the *cause* of family violence. Responses to the Pre-test confirmed that many of the deeply rooted mindsets and existing societal norms, were also shared and believed by participants.

It was evident from pre-test responses that participants had very little knowledge about the different types of abuse. Interesting to note from Question 2 is that 18/93 or 19% identified mental abuse (sauaga o le mafau) and 21% or 20 participants identified threatening words (upu taufa'amata'u) as a form of abuse. Only 7/93 participants listed sexual abuse as a type of violence. More than half responded with the widely known physical abuse. When responding to Question 3 on 'Appropriate Interventions' 75% of participants believed that a reconciliatory approach should be taken. These responses referred to the customary practice of face-to-face consultations or 'soalau' and the biblical practice of 'forgiveness' to ensure that the abused and abuser were reconciled. The rest responded with "having patience" (onosa'i) as an appropriate intervention in situations of violence alongside committing our problems to God who has the answer.

Post Tests

The average score of the Post-Test across all 93 participants from 6 villages was 8.2/10 or 82%. The change of knowledge, therefore, is 58% on average across all participants from the 6 pilot villages.

Percentage Change by Village

A comparison of pre and post test results shows that the average transfer of knowledge by all participants across the six pilot villages was 58% as a result of the workshop sessions. The range was less than 8% with Vaiee registering 52.7% and Saleia 60.7% transfer of knowledge. This is evidence that the workshops had a similar impact on all villages. The results align with the workshop delivery approach, where each pilot village was taken *through all 14 workshop sessions* and facilitators were careful to *maintain the same session objectives, and apply consistent delivery approaches* for all six villages.

Average Pre-Post Test Marks / 10			
Village	Pre	Post	%Change
Taga	2.21	7.84	5.63
Asau	2.17	8.12	5.95
Lotopue	2.08	7.94	5.86
Vaiee	3.65	8.94	5.27
Lalovi	2.13	7.82	5.69
Saleia	2.38	8.45	6.08
TOTAL	14.6	49.1	
AVG	2.4	8.2	5.8
%	24%	82%	58%

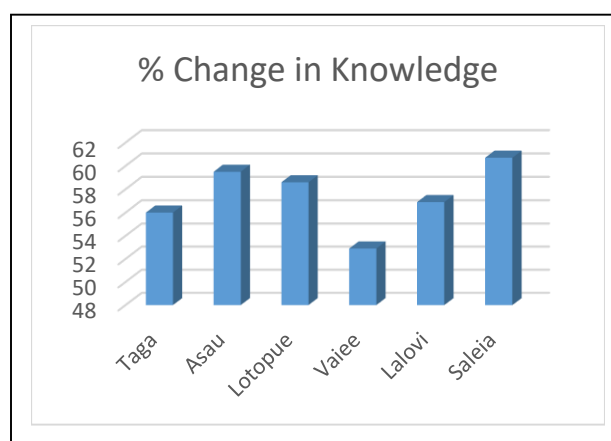


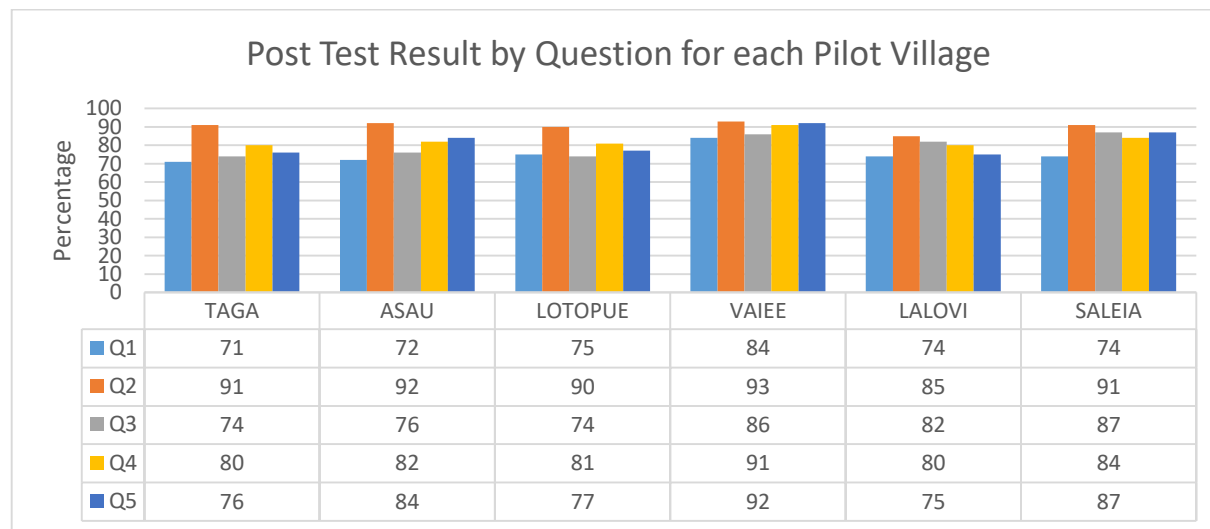
Table 1: Pre and Post Test Results by Village

Graph 1: Percentage Change in Knowledge by Village

It should be noted that the village of Vaiee scored less in percentage change of knowledge, because as a group, they registered the highest pre-test scores, indicating that participants had a better understanding of family violence issues, at the beginning of the workshop sessions.

Analysis of Post Test Results

On average, the overall shift in knowledge transfer is 58%, however, further analysis of the Post-Test results can tell us more about the group's level of understanding at the end of the training.



Graph 2: Post Test Results by Question for each Village

POST TEST RESULTS BY QUESTION FOR EACH VILLAGE							
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Total	Avg %
TAGA	71	91	74	80	76	392	78.4
ASAU	72	92	76	82	84	406	81.2
LOTOPIUE	75	90	74	81	77	397	79.4
VAIEE	84	93	86	91	92	446	89.2
LALLOVI	74	85	82	80	75	396	79.2
SALEIA	74	91	87	84	87	423	84.6
Total	450	542	479	498	491		
Average %	75	90	80	83	82		

Table 2: Post Test Results by Question for each Village

An analysis of the post-test results by Question gives us an indication of the areas that need continued work. Question 1 on the 'cause' of family and domestic violence registered the least score on the post-test results. The concept of power and control being the core issue and cause of domestic violence proved to be the most difficult to address in terms of existing beliefs, and the human nature of needing to find someone

or something to blame for why violence has become so prevalent in the homes of Samoa. Question 1 on 'causes' however, still registered a 56% success rate in knowledge transfer. It should be noted that participants no longer listed triggers and myths such as alcohol, anger, jealousy, finances or even mothers attending bingo as a *cause* of family violence. These myths had therefore been well addressed by the training, however, after the capacity building workshop, 23 participants or 25% still responded with contributing factors such as 'marital differences' or 'hardened hearts' as the 'cause' of domestic violence while 75% of responses were able to correctly define domestic violence as caused by the exertion of power and control.

90% of participants were able to name other types of abuse and forms of violence.

80% of participants were able to identify an appropriate intervention to make in the event of villagers reporting incidents to the committee.

83% of participants were able to identify an example of an inappropriate response towards victims.

82% of participants were able to correctly describe a common 'myth' or 'societal norm' that exists with regards to gender inequality and family violence.

2.5. Development of Strategic Plans

All six VSFCs developed Strategic Plans through a process of *spirit and brain-storming* from scratch. **Vision statements** were aligned to what committee members felt was most important to them and the context of their respective villages. **Values statements** were aligned with individual and collective priorities for each group after reflecting on, *What is Important to Us?* and *What do we Prioritize?*. Each Strategic Plan includes a comprehensive **SWOT analysis** to identify existing strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that should be considered in mapping future activities. All Strategic Plans list specific **Activities and Timeframes** to guide the work of committee members throughout the first 12 months being October 2020 – October 2021.

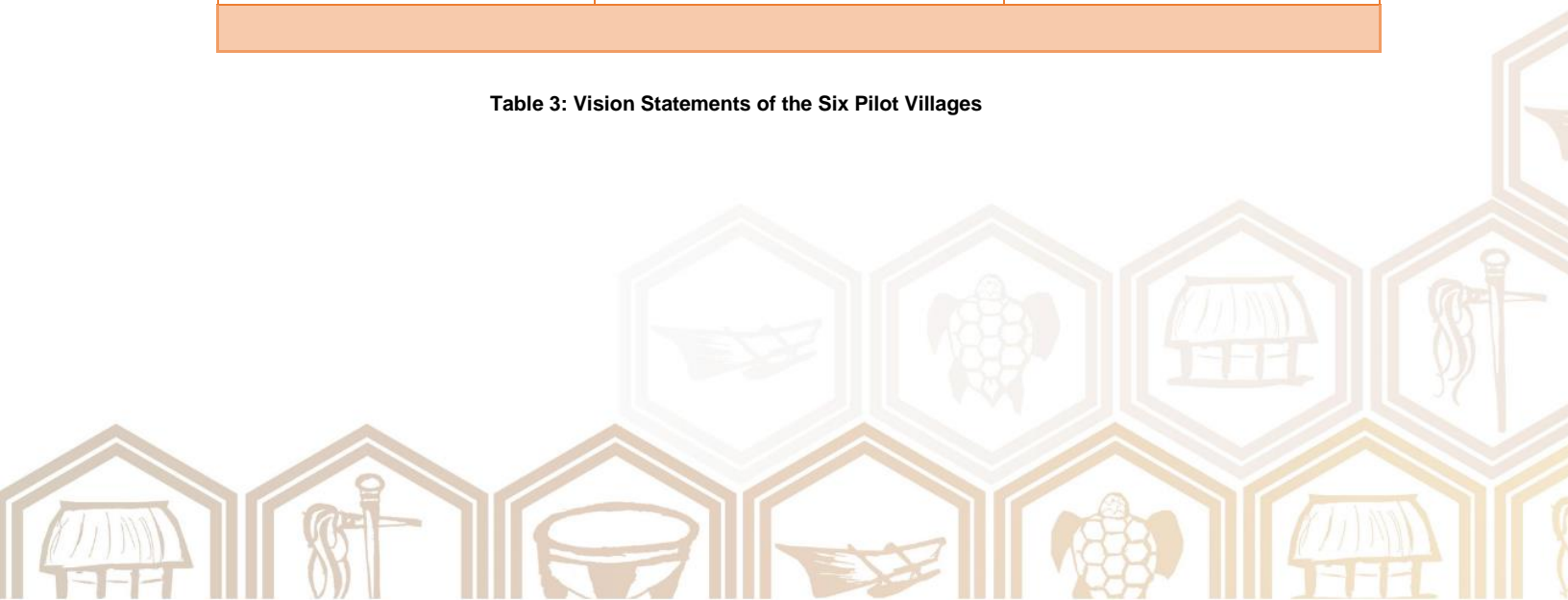
All plans were further consulted with each village after the workshops to ensure complete ownership and full endorsement of activities to be carried out.¹² The Office of the Ombudsman's National Human Rights Institute will offer support to facilitate potential partnerships with relevant stakeholders and funding agencies with shared values and common goals in combating violence against women and children to assist villages in implementing their proposed activities in their work plans.

¹² The draft strategic plans were further reviewed by the Office after the workshops to ensure they reflected what was raised in the Workshops as well as ensuring they are practical and manageable. These revised draft plans were taken back to the 6 villages on 12, 13, 14, 17 and 18 of August 2020 for their final changes before the Office proceeded to finalize the Strategic Plans.

All Strategic Plans were developed and written in the Samoan language, however, translations of the Vision Statements are listed in Table 2, and the Strategic Objectives that will guide VFSC activities, are summarized in Table 3 below.

Vision Statements		
<p>Asau: Work together to Stop Violence, Ensure a safe and happy environment for all families of Asau. (Ia galulue fa'atasi e tete'e ma taofi sauaga, ia saogalemu ma ola fiafia aiga uma o Asau)</p>	<p>Taga: Build a Safer Environment and Enable quality of life for all people of Taga especially women and girls. (Tapena ma atia'e se siosiomaga saogalemu, ina ia soifua ma ola manuia tagata uma o Taga aemaise tina ma tama'ita'i)</p>	<p>Lotopue: Work as one to eliminate violence and enable a safer environment for our families to ensure a better future for all. (Ia galulue fa'atasi Lotopu'e e fa'aitiitia sauaga mo le saogalemu o ona aiga aua se lumana'i manuia)</p>
<p>Vaiee: To Lead a New Dawn that Eliminates Violence for the Safety of Vaie'e. (Ia ulufatu le Nu'u o Vaiee e fuata'i se taeao fou e tafiesea ai sauaga, aua le saogalemu o aiga uma o Vaie'e)</p>	<p>Lalovi, Mulifanua: Lalovi Mulifanua to Drive Positive Change, Eliminate Violence and Ensure Safety and the Well Being of all Families of the village. (Ia taulamua Lalovi Mulifanua mo suiga lelei, ia faaitiitia sauaga ma unaia aiga saogalemu o le Afioga)</p>	<p>Saleia: To prepare a future for Saleia that ensures the safety and security of all its people from violence. (Tapena se lumanai manuia o Saleia mo a taeao, ia soifua maloloina ma malupuipua ona Tagata mai sauaga)</p>

Table 3: Vision Statements of the Six Pilot Villages



Taga	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •1. Raise Awareness of Family Safety •2. Build up Good Governance of the Village •3. Conduct Educational Programs on Impacts of Violence
Asau	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •1. Raise Awareness of Family Safety •2. Conduct Educational Programs on Impacts of Violence •3. Churches Working Together •4. Build up Good Governance of the Village
Lotopue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •1. Raise Awareness of Family Safety •2. Conduct Educational Programs on Impacts of Violence •3. Build up Good Governance of the Village •4. Youth Economic Empowerment
Vaiee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •1. Raise Awareness of Family Safety •2. Build up Good Governance of the Village •3. Conduct Educational Programs on Impacts of Violence •4. Improve the Economic Development of the Village
Lalovi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •1. Raise Awareness of Family Safety •2. Build up Good Governance of the Village •3. Conduct Educational Programs on Impacts of Violence
Saleia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •1. Raise Awareness of Family Safety •2. Conduct Educational Programs on Impacts of Violence •3. Improve the Economic Development of Village •4. Build up Good Governance of the Village

Table 4: Strategic Objectives of Each Village

3. Overall Lessons Learned

Phase II of the Pilot Project of 6 villages has allowed for the opportunity to make observations, interpretations and comparisons between attitudes, behaviors, responses and reactions of participants to multiple scenarios and situations relating to family violence. The three days approach allowed for reflective recap sessions each morning, during which time the facilitators were able to observe and interpret invaluable sharing by committee members about their reflections on the workshop sessions which had been delivered and their experiences with violence.

A comparison could also be made across the 6 villages, with similarities and differences observed in relation to their respective governance structures, leadership styles, accepted 'norms and cultures', size and economic status.

3.1. Deeply Rooted Mindsets and Behavioral Norms

Certain mindsets were observed across the pilot villages, which must be noted to better inform future interventions and programs.

Types of Violence and Abuse – Women’s Clothing

During Session 5 on the various forms of violence and types of abuse that a victim can be subjected to, it was observed that in 5 out of 6 villages, at least one or two male participant asserted, that the act of women wearing what they would define as *inappropriate clothing* around them, is a form of violence or abuse towards them, as men.

“My eyes are being abused” – “Ua sauaina o’u mata”

This mindset reinforces the attitude of victim-blaming and the myth that a woman’s clothing provokes sexual abuse and violence toward her. It further reinforces the notion that women must monitor their clothing and what they are wearing, to ensure they are not provoking or ‘causing’ the abuse toward them (men).

Types of Violence and Abuse – Sex Between Spouses

Attitudes amongst both men and women in all six villages reaffirmed Myth No 8 of the NIFV - “Women are obliged to have sex with their husbands once they are married”¹³. However, it was observed that men took this wrong mindset even further, and felt that an intimate partner or spouse who did not agree to sexual intercourse when he so desired it, was perpetrating a form of abuse against him.

“My needs (sexual) are being abused” – “Ua sauaina ou mana’oga”

This deeply rooted mindset, observed in all six villages, is based on the mistaken belief that a man has a ‘basic right or entitlement’ to sex with his spouse, whenever he so desired, and if it is not *given* to him, then it is a breach of his fundamental right as a married man. The majority of male participants did not know that to force your spouse to have sex, is considered rape under the Crimes Act 2013.¹⁴ This idea shocked many of the male participants, who believed his wife was ‘his property’, and sexual intercourse should never be denied to men. Women participants themselves also agreed with this mindset saying it is a woman’s responsibility to ensure that their husbands are sexually satisfied; and if they are not conforming to ‘this responsibility’ then beatings are justified. Following that, it was found that women are blaming themselves for men seeking satisfaction elsewhere by having inappropriate sex with other women and raping young girls. This confirms that victim blaming exists within the mindsets of victims themselves. This further reinforces the notion of entitlement for men and further complicates interventions and approaches to eliminate violence.

¹³ See National Public Inquiry Report 2018, page 86.

¹⁴ Refer to section 49 (4) of the *Crimes Act 2013*.

During discussions on this topic, women shared about how they are often physically abused in silence by deep tissue pinching of their inner thighs, or pulling of hair - inside the mosquito net (tainamu) if they do not participate in sex.

Physical Abuse of Children

There was overwhelming evidence of child abuse amongst participants in all six villages. In each of the six villages, more than one participant would confess to violent beatings towards their children. It was further observed that more women than men admitted to beating their children, but unlike men, the women tended not to share the details of objects used as weapons.

One father shares, *“I use a fagaau (hose) to beat my children and I believe it is the best way to bring them up, they listen to me and stay out of trouble”*.

A Fa’afafine shared, *“I don’t have children of my own, but I beat my nephews all the time. Last week, I beat him until I ran out of breath, and he could not walk. I rested, caught my breath and beat him again”*.

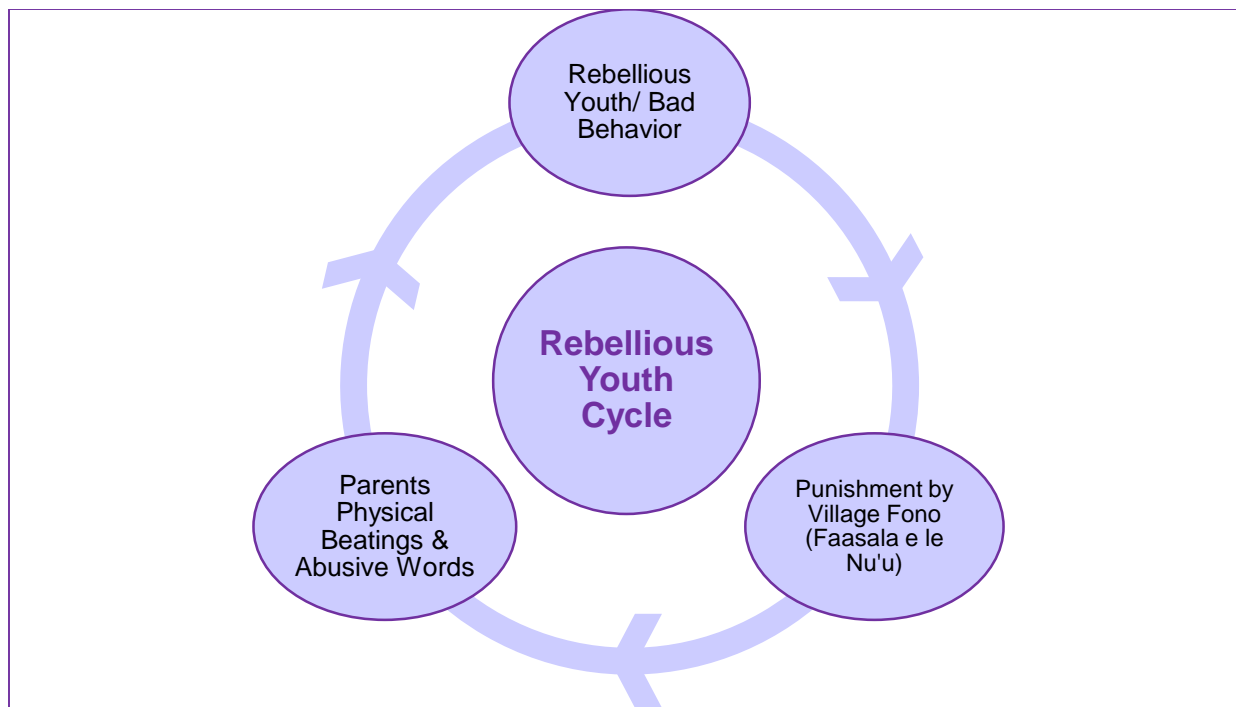
NIFV Myth 10 was reaffirmed through the attitudes of parents in the pilot villages that “Being smacked as a child made me into the good person I am today” and “it didn’t do me any harm”¹⁵.

Another common observation across all 6 villages, was that many of the parents shared that beating was the only way known to them to discipline their children *“Pau a lea o le auala...e faakogu ai kamaiki ge”*. They justified this by arguing that they have exhausted all other options including talking to their children. For example they stated *“Ua uma upu...Ua ou leiloa poo le a se isi kala o la fai iai” (I have run out of words and I don’t know what else to say to them)*. However, when unpacking this issue further, it was found that the approach, tone and words used by parents were threatening, discouraging, abusive. *“Ua leaga a kamiki ge vaikaimi....ua leaga kupulaga. Fiu e faakogu”*. The words used every day within the homes of the 6 villages were found to be negative with the potential to hinder growth and mental wellbeing of young people.

Physical and emotional abuse of children contributed to a cycle of behavior amongst youth that parents commonly complain about.

¹⁵ See National Public Inquiry Report 2018, page 116.





From our observations, this abusive approach discouraged and fueled more anger amongst the youth, resulting in continued rebellious behavior *“Ua akili ai a kamaiki i le kuufau”*. PARENTING APPROACHES CONTINUES TO BE A CHALLENGING ISSUE THAT NEEDS TO BE FURTHER RESEARCHED AND EXPLORED IN RELATION TO FAMILY VIOLENCE. Belief in the necessity and effectiveness of physicality in the disciplining of children is deep. Concentrated work over time is required to develop and promote understanding and appreciation of proven alternative disciplining paths.

3.2. Creating a Safe –Space Environment

Video recordings will provide evidence of quality, open and honest self-reflective sharing by participants throughout the 3-day workshop, for all six villages. It is a key learning of the VFSC pilot project that creating safe-space environments is both purposeful and strategic.

Three important lessons are learned to inform future interventions with villages when setting out to create a safe-space environment:

1. Creating a safe-space environment for participants allows for open, honest, quality sharing. On the contrary, failing to create a safe-space environment will cause participants to share ‘what they think you want to hear’.
2. Creating a safe-space environment that ensures participants feel comfortable to share openly and honestly, even to the point of vulnerability, has two key elements:

- i. **Trust** was established and maintained throughout the 3-day workshops by all facilitators. It should also be noted that trust between the committee members and the NHRI team was established *pre-workshop*, during the Mapping & Development stage of the pilot program. It was apparent that committee members arrived on Day 1 of Phase II, with a high level of trust in the NHRI team, and particularly with Tuala Victor, who had co-led with Tracey Mikaele the pre-workshop discussions with committee members. Trust was established during those pre-workshop meetings,¹⁶ and the relationships built formed the foundation for safe-spaces to continue into the workshops. Trust was then maintained by facilitators through an approach of mutual sharing within the boundaries of professionalism and ethics. It was observed that trust was further maintained by demonstrating genuine concern for the village and the shared goal of wanting to address family violence in families and villages.
 - ii. The second key element applied by the facilitation approach that resulted in quality sharing by participants, was the notion of **No Judging** upon anyone – victim, survivor or perpetrator. This was established early as a rule of engagement, and maintained with an empathetic approach to all interventions made by participants. In all 6 pilot villages, perpetrators openly admitted to being abusive towards their spouses and children, and felt comfortable during the workshop sessions to share details of their abusive actions. Similarly, victims were able to openly share that they had or were currently in abusive relationships.
3. Further research on the complex factors of family violence can be captured and further analyzed through more in-depth discussions with committee members in a safe-space environment. The VFSC pilot program has recorded evidence of the type of open and honest sharing by participants made in a safe-space environment, which can inform an *action research study*, on contributing factors and the complex reasons behind existing mindsets and attitudes towards family violence.

3.3. Adaptive Leadership and Good Governance

The leadership culture of a village was observed to have direct impacts on the ability of its VFSC to freely adopt good governance structures. There was a strong correlation between adaptive leadership and the ability of participants to interact and engage freely and openly during the workshop sessions.

¹⁶ The NHRI Team carried out 2 pre-workshop meetings. The first meeting was in November – December 2019 where the Office met with the Village Councils of the selected 6 villages to discuss the Pilot project and see whether it was something that their village would want to participate in. The Second meeting took place on January – February 2020 to confirm the establishment of the Committees and brief the Committees on the next phase of the Pilot which was the Capacity Building Workshops.

For example, in the case of Asau, where there was an obvious top-down approach to leadership by village matai, women participants did not engage as freely. The reluctance was evident compared with other villages where leaders demonstrated a more adaptive approach. It is also noted that Asau was the only village that opted to *appoint* committee office bearers, rather than elect them through a process of membership votes. The top-down leadership approach saw one matai appoint committee members to the various positions of office.

On the contrary, where high ranking matai title holders demonstrated an adaptive leadership approach; committees adopted more of the good governance principles introduced during workshop sessions.

Where high ranking matai were relatable and adaptive in their approach, there was a higher level of engagement between and amongst all participants. It was also observed during the election of office bearers, that members felt free to put forward nominations without fear of others' opinion.

Other than Asau, all other VFSCs welcomed the election process by secret ballot.

3.4. Approaching Villages in Samoa: Access, Genuineness of motivation, Continuity, Value of the Project for the village and Support of Members of Parliament

Four critical success factors of working within villages in Samoa was observed through Phase II which should be considered when moving into Phase III: the implementation stage:

- i. **Access** – it is important that the access point for a village project is based on an identified need of the village members and community. In the case of the pilot project, the access was based on recommendations to establish Village Family Safety Committees which had come from village members themselves as noted in the NIFV Report 2018 and Family Safety Study 2017 by the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development. So *Recommendation 20 of NIFV* and *Recommendation 4 (iii) of the Family Safety Study* were the basis of accessing village communities, based on an identified need. Access point was also through initial engagement with Village Fono for their endorsement and support as key driver for the success of this project.
- ii. **Genuineness of motivation** – it is important that village members see the genuine heart to help and assist them in achieving their goals. Trust is established when facilitators are able to show that the goal of ending all forms of violence in Samoa is a genuine shared interest, not only by the organization that is leading the village project, but also by the individuals. The credibility of the NHRI team, led by a lawyer who is able to clarify issues with authority, does make a difference in village environments. Lawyers are given a special 'fa'alupega' in the Samoan cultural context, of 'tama'ita'i or ali'i loia'.

- iii. **Continuity** – it is important for village projects that there is a plan for continued middle to long term support to the work expected to be undertaken by villagers especially this type of issue. The strong messages of support for villages towards the implementation stage kept the motivation levels up within committees. On the contrary, if no support for implementation were offered, the risk of villages discontinuing the work would be high.
- iv. **Value of the Project for the Village:** it was important to stress the non-monetary value of the project from the outset. The risk of villages expecting and asking for allowances (or some form of payment) for their participation must be dealt with at the very beginning. The expectation of allowances from villages seems to have been well established because of previous interventions by other organizations. As such it was important for the Office that villages and participants see and appreciate the value of the project for their own benefit. Therefore, the Office took time to discuss and convince the participants that addressing family violence and establishing healthy families is a benefit for them and a core responsibility of the village itself. A manuia tagata, e manuia Aiga e manuia foi Nu'u ma Ekalesia.
- v. **Support of Members of Parliament:** as Phase II progressed, it was important for the Office to engage and gain support of Members of Parliament of the 6 pilot villages. As such, the NHRI team had courtesy visits with Members of Parliament for the 6 pilot villages to brief them on the pilot project and engage their support of the Pilot.¹⁷ It was important for the Members of Parliament to be clear and well informed of the pilot and how it works alongside with current Government work, most especially the District Development Plans by the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development. The Members of Parliament were happy and supportive of the initiative. It was emphasized by all Members of Parliament the importance for them to be kept informed of any projects due to take place in their respective constituencies so they can also push support of these projects from their end. The NHRI team will continue to work closely with these Members of Parliament to ensure their continued support throughout the whole pilot.

3.5. Village Ownership: Motivation and Commitment

In addition to the critical success factors identified in 3.4 above, ownership of the project by villages is crucial in this space, because ultimately, the project's overarching objective requires a change of mindset, a change of heart and a change of behavior. In this regard, the ability of project facilitators to establish

¹⁷ The NHRI team met with Members of Parliament for the 6 pilot villages on 28, 14 of July and 29 of June 2020. They are Hon Nafotoa Talaimanu Ketu, Deputy Speaker and MP for Saleia; Hon Lopao'o Natanielu Mua, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries and MP for Asau; Hon Afoa Amituanai Mauli, MP for Taga; Hon Mulipola Leiataua Laki, Associate Minister of Finance and MP for Lalovi Mulifanua; Hon Tafua Maluelue Tafua, MP for Lotopue and Hon Leana Ronnie Posini, MP for Vaiee.

genuine motivation and commitment from village members, to take complete ownership and drive the project themselves, should be prioritized and carefully considered when planning their delivery and implementation.

Elements of creating a safe-space environment in section 3.2 and the critical success factors of section 3.4, should help to lay a foundation for villagers to take up ownership of the program activities. Three days was the right amount of time to establish genuine engagement by village members. This period of time is necessary to ensure motivation and commitment are firmly established, as a foundation for the implementation stage. The inherent risk of village members 'coming for the allowance' is mitigated through this approach.

3.6. Education and Capacity Building Can Change Attitudes

Recordings of participants' sharing will provide overwhelming evidence that participants' attitudes and consequent behaviors, changed dramatically during the 3-day capacity building workshops. Additionally, becoming a member of a formalized VFSC tasked to drive anti-violent behavior, placed an immediate sense of responsibility upon committee representatives, to self-review their behavior patterns.

In all six villages, committee members shared how they had never thought of their behavior as being abusive. The normality of violence within families was evident to the point where village participants genuinely believed that there was nothing wrong with threatening words, slapping, kicking, punching, name-calling and put-downs to name a few 'normal' behaviors now prevalent in villages. It was also observed that village participants were genuinely hearing some of the key messages for each session, for the very first time in their lives.

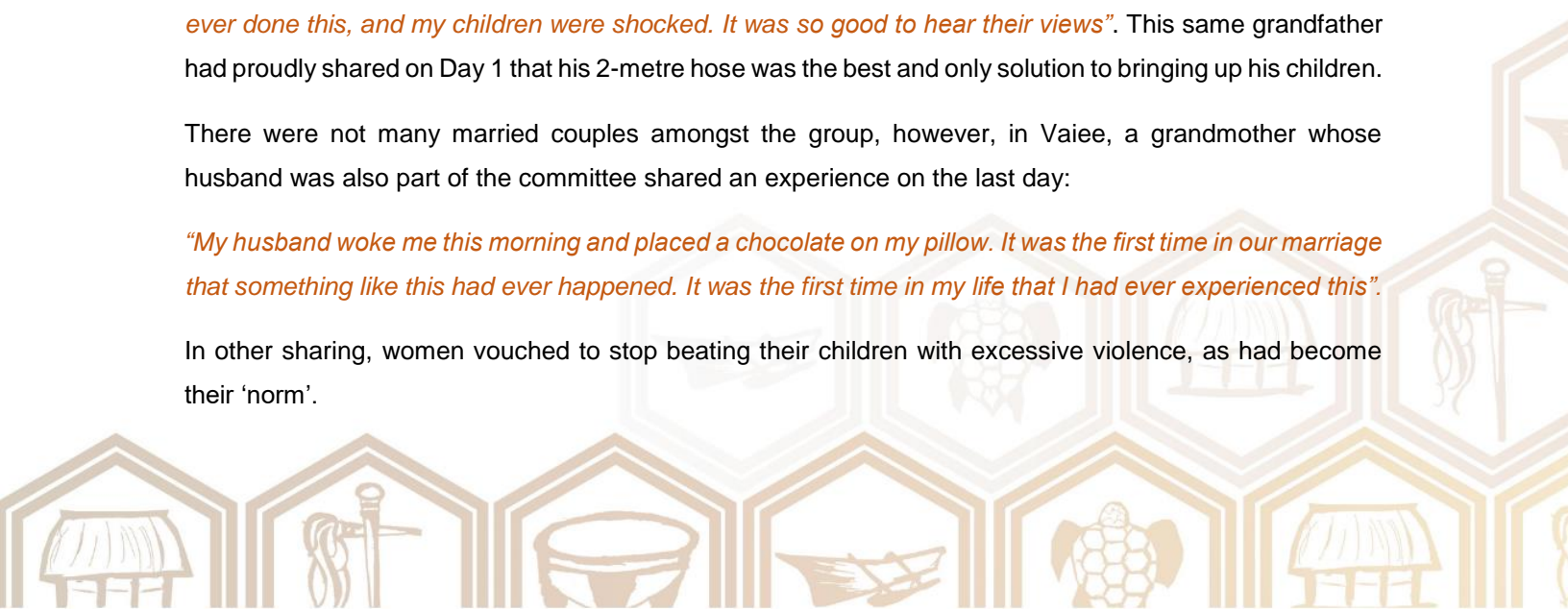
It was emotional to observe adults and elderlies return each day and shed tears as they described a small change in behavior pattern they had been able to apply immediately in their own homes. Before the workshop, such abusive behavior was just a normal part of their everyday lives.

An elderly committee member and grandfather from Vaiee shares on Day 3, *"Last night I asked my adult children to sit around after our evening prayer, and share their thoughts with us. It was the first time I had ever done this, and my children were shocked. It was so good to hear their views"*. This same grandfather had proudly shared on Day 1 that his 2-metre hose was the best and only solution to bringing up his children.

There were not many married couples amongst the group, however, in Vaiee, a grandmother whose husband was also part of the committee shared an experience on the last day:

"My husband woke me this morning and placed a chocolate on my pillow. It was the first time in our marriage that something like this had ever happened. It was the first time in my life that I had ever experienced this".

In other sharing, women vouched to stop beating their children with excessive violence, as had become their 'norm'.



Men vouched to stop beating their wives.

Men shared about their addiction to alcohol, and vouched to 'never drink again'. Although they may be challenged to keep the promises made before the committee and captured on video recordings, there was a genuine desire to want to be better people, as evident in their sharing.¹⁸

In all 6 pilot villages, participants shared how they wished other members of their family could have attended the workshop. *"If only my wife was here to hear this..." "If only my husband had been able to attend and be a part of this..." "My father was listening to me sharing last night, and he regrets not coming to this workshop..."*

It is well established through this pilot project, that strategically planned sessions of capacity building with key messages about family violence, *can* change mindsets, attitudes and behavior of participants. Becoming a member of a formal FVSC places a sense of responsibility on village participants, to change their own views towards family violence and stop abusive behavior.

3.7. Support for Champions from Within

For all six villages of the Pilot Project, champions were identified amongst the group, as influential leaders who could maintain the momentum and continue to motivate the group towards sustainable action to lead positive change. Changing mindsets and behavior is an adaptive challenge; one that is difficult and complex, and takes time to establish and maintain.

To ensure the sustainability of the project and effective implementation of VFSC activities over the next 12 months, village 'champions from within' should be provided with extra support and follow-up for encouragement. These village champions can provide the necessary leadership to drive the changes needed.

4. Summary of Individual Pilots

As outlined in this report, Phase II of the VFSC Pilot Project saw the completion of 3-day Capacity Building and Strategic Planning Workshops for each of the six villages selected. An overview of each village with observations is presented here.

4.1. Taga

Date:	16-18 March 2020
Number of Participants:	17

¹⁸ During the follow up consultations by the NHRI team with the committees to finalise changes on their revised Strategic Plans, it was reported from two villages Lotopue and Lalovi Mulifanua two men that had vouched during the Workshops to stop drinking are in fact keeping their promises.

Sui o le Nuu/Tamaitai is part of the committee:	Yes
Gender balance of committee:	3 Women, 14 Men
Persons with disability:	0
Average age of committee members:	54
Median age of committee members:	56
Strategic Plan Vision:	Build a safer environment and enable quality of life for all the people of Taga especially women and girls. (Tapena ma atia'e se siosiomaga saogalemu, ina ia soifua ma ola manuia tagata uma o Taga aemaise tina ma tama'ita'i)
Strategic Goals:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Raise Awareness of Family Safety 2. Build up Good Governance of the Village 3. Conduct Educational Programs on Impacts of Violence

Observations:

Taga only selected 3 women, all of whom were *nofotane*, or married into the village. According to the men of Taga, it would have been too uncomfortable for them to speak about issues of domestic and sexual violence, if close relationships such as married couples or brothers and sisters, were present in the workshops. They also felt that the representation of these women shows how important *nofotane* are to their committee and the work they are set out to do to ensure all *nofotane* women in their villages are valued and appreciated.

Leadership: The most senior matai or highest ranked chiefs of Taga were part of the committee, but did not stand for office, allowing Taga to select a 'hands-on' leader with great potential to lead anti-violent behavior both in Taga, and nationally. Taga had a few potential champions that the Office can continue to work with throughout the duration of the Project.

4.2. Asau

Date:	19-21 March 2020
Number of Participants:	16
Sui o le Nuu/Tamaitai is part of the committee:	Yes

Gender balance of committee:	8 Women, 8 Men
Persons with disability:	0
Average age of committee members:	54
Median age of committee members:	60.5
Strategic Plan Vision:	Work together to Stop Violence, Ensure a safe and happy environment for all families of Asau. (Ia galulue fa'atasi e tete'e ma taofi sauaga, ia saogalemu ma ola fiafia aiga uma o Asau).
Strategic Goals:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Raise Awareness of Family Safety 2. Conduct Educational Programs on Impacts of Violence 3. Churches Working Together 4. Build up Good Governance of the Village

Observations:

Leadership: There was a high ranking talking chief in the village of Asau, well respected and culturally placed to be the 'lead orator' of the village. However, there was one Orator who dictated most of the discussions and it was observed that by his comments and demeanor – he may have hindered the openness of sharing amongst the group, and more particularly by the women.

Governance: Following on from this top-down leadership approach, when the VFSC for Asau were given the opportunity to discuss office bearers - the said matai appointed the office bearers, by just naming whom he thought were suitable. The interesting point to note, however, is that his selection ensured gender balance amongst the 6 officers. He selected 3 male and 3 female officers. He selected women to the positions of Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary; and selected men to the positions of President, Vice Treasurer and Vice Secretary.

4.3. Lotopu'e

Date:	13-15 May 2020
Number of Participants:	16
Sui o le Nuu/Tamaitai is part of the committee:	Yes
Gender balance of committee:	9 Women, 7 Men

Persons with disability:	37.9
Average age of committee members:	37.5
Median age of committee members:	0
Strategic Plan Vision:	<p>Work as one to eliminate violence and enable a safer environment for our families to ensure a better Future for all.</p> <p>(Ia galulue fa'atasi Lotopu'e e fa'aitiitia sauaga mo le saogalemu o ona aiga aua se lumana'i manuia)</p>
Strategic Goals:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Raise Awareness of Family Safety 2. Conduct Educational Programs on Impacts of Violence 3. Build up Good Governance of the Village 4. Youth Economic Empowerment

Observations:

Size: Lotopue is a small village in comparison to other villages in the pilot project. It is also a small village relative to Samoa. The VFSC of Lotopue were also a much younger group in comparison to other villages, and as such, it was observed that participant interventions were much more free-flowing.

Leadership: The high ranking chiefs of Lotopue, with the title of Faigata, demonstrated an adaptive leadership approach which allowed the group to share thoughts, ideas and opinions openly and honestly. The chiefly title holders seemed to have a much closer relationship with village members, than is usually observed between high chiefs and villagers.

Governance: Lotopue chose to hold elections by secret ballot after nominations were received for each position. There is gender balance amongst the officers of Lotopue, of 3 women and 3 men. The 2 high ranking chiefs of Lotopue took up the President and Vice President positions. A woman holds the position of Treasurer, as well as Secretary and Vice Secretary. It is interesting to note for Lotopue that the President and Vice President are 49 and 39 years of age respectively. In comparison, they are the youngest leaders in the pilot program.

Myths and Facts: The youthfulness of this group did not mean that there was an absence of deeply rooted mindsets, as observed in villages with older members. The sharing by some women in Lotopue aligned with the mindset that 'women are beaten because they don't respect and listen to their husbands'. The myth that men are 'abused' when their spouses refuse sex, and the myth that a man is being 'abused' when a woman wears inappropriate clothes in front of him, were all evident in Lotopue.

Motivation: More so than any other group, the VFSC members of Lotopue requested similar workshops for family members, who were not part of the committee. Many shared - 'if only' my wife, or father, or husband was here. The final day of sharing between participants of Lotopu'e was the deepest of all the workshop re-cap sessions. The group stood in a circle, and held hands as they shared about what they had learned, and how they wanted to make a change for the better.

4.4. Vaiee

Date:	25 – 27 May 2020
Number of Participants:	17
Sui o le Nuu/Tamaitai is part of the committee:	Yes
Gender balance of committee:	7 Women, 10 Men
Persons with disability:	0
Average age of committee members:	56.5
Median age of committee members:	57
Strategic Plan Vision:	To Lead a New Dawn that Eliminates Violence for the Safety of Vaiee. (Ia ulufatu le Nuu o Vaiee e fuata'i se taeao fou e tafieseaa ai sauaga, aua le saogalemu o aiga uma o Vaiee)
Strategic Goals:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Raise Awareness of Family Safety 2. Build up Good Governance of the Village 3. Conduct Educational Programs on Impacts of Violence 4. Improve the Economic Development of the Village

Observations:

Leadership: The leadership of Vaiee is a notable mixture of elderly traditional matai, and the more modern approach to leadership of their elected President. The President is an adaptive leader and his approach was observed to have the effect of mobilizing his community to solve shared problems and achieve shared goals.

Motivation and Commitment: It is observed that Vaiee is a village that is advanced in its work against violence towards women and children. They have publicly announced the village stance against intimate partner violence, and held a nationally televised Mrs Vaiee pageant, to honor their *nofotane*. It is observed

that Vaiee would mobilize themselves towards programs to end violence, despite the pilot program. One of the activities under Strategic Goal 1 for Vaiee – is to make a movie to raise awareness and change mindsets towards family violence.

Action Research: The ‘think big’ approach taken by Vaiee on its planned activities, makes them a good candidate for an in-depth *action research* where they could be observed as they embark on the implementation of its Strategic Plan activities.

4.5. Lalovi, Mulifanua

Date:	26 – 28 May
Number of Participants:	14
Sui o le Nuu/Tamaitai is part of the committee:	Yes
Gender balance of committee:	8 Women, 6 Men
Persons with disability:	1
Average age of committee members:	47
Median age of committee members:	48.5
Strategic Plan Vision:	Lalovi Mulifanua to drive positive change, eliminate violence and ensure safety and the wellbeing of all families of the village. (Ia taulamua Lalovi Mulifanua mo suiga lelei, ia faaitiitia sauaga ma unaia aiga saogalemu o le Afioaga)
Strategic Goals:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Raise Awareness of Family Safety 2. Build up Good Governance of the Village 3. Conduct Educational Programs on Impacts of Violence

Observations:

With 14 members, Lalovi Mulifanua had the smallest number of members, and was also the only village with a person with disability amongst the group. Lalovi Mulifanua also registered the youngest committee member of the pilot program, with a 21 year old male, who contributed important insights and made high level interventions to the discussions.

Leadership: The high ranking chiefs of Lalovi were observed to have a laissez-faire style of leadership that allowed committee members to drive discussions and decisions. Consequently, there was a much higher level of participation from the women in the Lalovi. During group report-back presentations, it was observed that it was mostly women who stood to present. One woman commented that she actually wished one of the men would step up and do one of their group presentations.

Motivation and Commitment: During the development of work plan activities, it was observed that an emphasis was placed on fundraising. Even for activities pertaining to raising awareness of family violence such as a concert or pageant, the details presented by the group had a focus on the fundraising element of the activity.

4.6. Salei'a

Date:	9 – 11 June 2020
Number of Participants:	15
Sui o le Nuu/Tamaitai is part of the committee:	Yes
Gender balance of committee:	9 Women, 5 Men, 1 Fa'afafine
Persons with disability:	0
Average age of committee members:	44.5
Median age of committee members:	44
Strategic Plan Vision:	To prepare a future for Saleia that ensures the safety and security of all its people from violence. (Tapena se lumanai manuia o Saleia mo a taeao, ia soifua maloloina ma malupuipua ona Tagata mai sauaga)
Strategic Goals:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Raise Awareness of Family Safety 2. Conduct Educational Programs on Impacts of Violence 3. Improve the Economic Development of Village 4. Build up Good Governance of the Village

Observations:

Size: Saleia is a small village with a simple structure and a younger group in comparison to other villages. Similar in size to Lotopue, it was observed that participant interventions were much more free-flowing. Despite its size, Saleia has a strong economic foundation of income-earning activities.

Motivation: Saleia ranks highly in terms of economic stability and income earning programs and initiatives amongst villagers, and committee members. There is a village dyna that takes women, men and youth to the village plantation where each individual has a plot of land to work, plant and harvest.

Empowered women: The link between economic empowerment of women and levels of violence towards women is observed in Saleia. One woman committee member runs a restaurant in the village, and during discussions, one of the men conveyed that young female farmers have better plantation plots than the untitled men (taulele'a). The levels of violence against women in Saleia, as noted during sharing and discussions, was much lower in comparison to other pilot villages.

Violence towards Children: Evident during sharing and discussions was a high level of violence used in the discipline of children in Saleia.

5. Overall Pilot Metrics

The VFSC Pilot Project sets out to establish committees within villages that would be responsible for all matters relating to family violence prevention and promote family safety. It was recognized at the outset, however, that the pilot project also sets out to take on the *adaptive challenge* of changing *deeply rooted mindsets, attitudes and commonly accepted behaviors*.

An analysis of overall pilot metrics, therefore, considers the achievement of both the technical and adaptive aspects of the work, and more importantly, to address how it can initiate long term change and ensure the continuity of VFSCs after the pilot period comes to an end.

5.1. Achievement of Objectives

The Objectives of Phase II of the VFSC Pilot Project were to:

- i) ***build VFSC capacity to actively conduct family violence prevention initiatives and assist Village Councils to address family violence matters within the village as they arise***
- ii) ***conduct comprehensive capacity building training sessions for the participants of each committee, and facilitate the development of detailed work plans to guide the work of each VFSC over the next 12 months.***
- iii) ***desensitize VFSC members.***



The VFSC Pilot Project Phase II has achieved its objectives. Evidence of knowledge transfer is outlined in the results of the Pre and Post Test monitoring tool. Participant responses to post-test questions demonstrated that they had gained a deeper understanding of the learning outcomes for each of the workshop sessions. Further evidence is provided by video recordings of participants, as they shared how the workshop sessions had opened their eyes, hearts and minds to the complex issues of family violence not only during the recap sessions every day but throughout the whole 3 days.

At the end of the pilot project, there is evidence:

1. that committee members have gained a deeper understanding of domestic violence,
2. that committee members recognize the importance of leading by example to stop violence in their villages,
3. that committee members are empowered to 'be the change' in their villages,
4. that committee members gain an appreciation of good governance best practices in the way they structure themselves and work together towards common goals,
5. that committee members develop their own work plan of activities, best suited to their unique circumstances and environments, and
6. that committee members are introduced to partners and stakeholders that can support their work going forward.

Learnings from Phase II has informed a minor change to one of the overall objectives of the Project. The change was made to reflect the gaps observed in the capacity and capability of committee members. As such committees will be supported by relevant partners to deliver their proposed activities.

5.2. Capability to Initiate Long Term Change

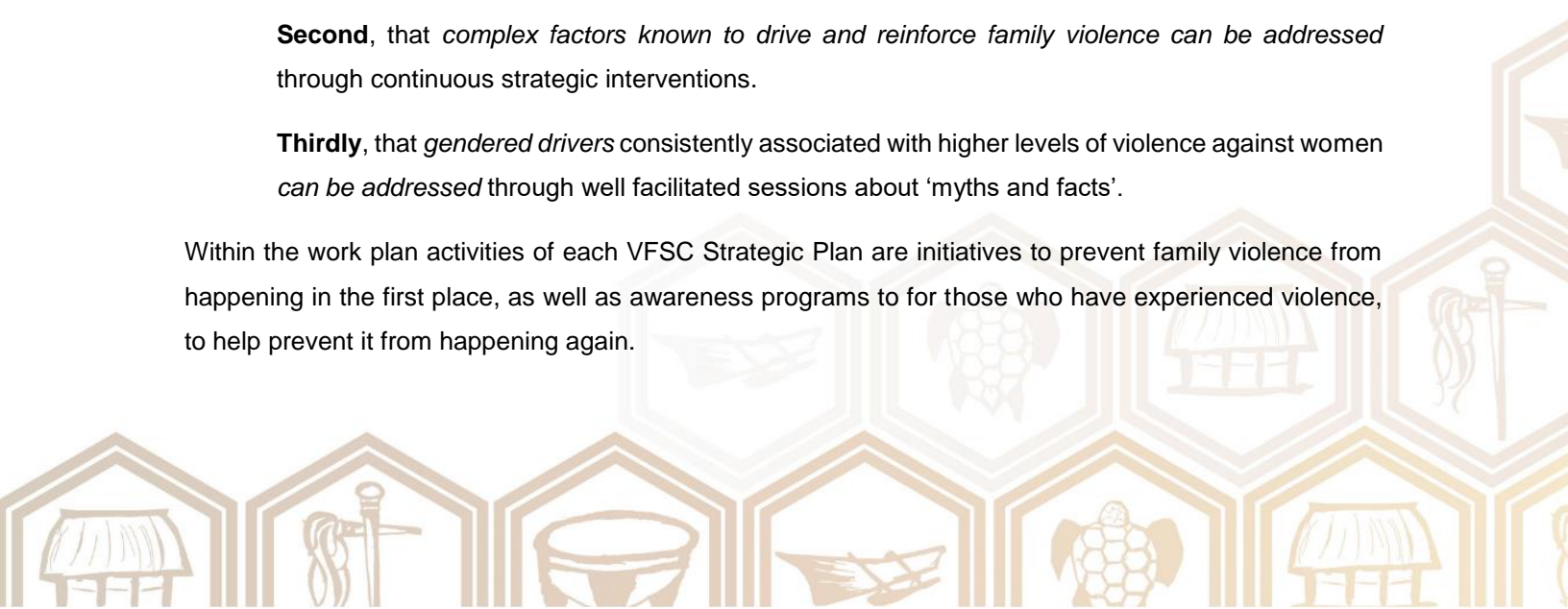
Phase II highlights three important elements for the overall success of the Pilot Program and its ability to initiate and sustain long term change:

First, the acknowledgement that *family violence is preventable* and not an inevitable social problem.

Second, that *complex factors known to drive and reinforce family violence can be addressed* through continuous strategic interventions.

Thirdly, that *gendered drivers* consistently associated with higher levels of violence against women *can be addressed* through well facilitated sessions about 'myths and facts'.

Within the work plan activities of each VFSC Strategic Plan are initiatives to prevent family violence from happening in the first place, as well as awareness programs to for those who have experienced violence, to help prevent it from happening again.



All 6 village work plans highlights *raising awareness* as a strategic objective as well as *educational programs* to address the complex factors of family violence issues. Two work plans went further to include improving economic development as well as building up Good Governance of the village as part of all the initiatives to address family violence issues.

Phase II of the pilot project indicates that Village Family Safety Committees can initiate long term change, and truly help to prevent family violence in Samoa.

5.3. Continuation of Pilot

Phase II demonstrates that the pilot project *can* initiate long term change towards the ultimate goal of addressing the prevalence of violence in the homes of Samoa. However, it is important to note that the continuation of the pilot project is not without risks.

The following critical success factors identified through Phase II should be considered and closely monitored, as the pilot program moves to Phase III: Implementation Stage.

Critical Success Factors for Continuation of Pilot

Mindsets and Societal Norms – interventions must continue to address deeply rooted mindsets on gendered drivers such as:

- i. Condoning violence towards women and children;
- ii. Rigid gender roles and stereotyped views of what it means to be a man or a woman;
- iii. Sense of entitlement by men who act with aggression or disrespect towards women when they are 'disobedient';
- iv. Attitudes of victim-blaming and re-victimization that excuses the behavior and actions of perpetrators.

Support to Village Family Safety Committees – it is critical to provide relevant and adequate support to VFSCs as they embark on the implementation of activities. Support to VFSCs should be holistic in terms of:

- i. Strategic partnerships for funding and resourcing activities;
- ii. Mentoring support to members who themselves are at risk of behaving violently;
- iii. Support for 'champions from within' who can drive activities and initiate change;
- iv. Support towards educational programs for all other members of the village.



6. Recommendations

The call for a community approach to address the prevalence of family violence was the basis of this pilot. The same call has now been made by the Courts, now inundated with cases of domestic and sexual violence towards women and young girls.

In delivering a recent sentence on sexual assault against a 7-year old girl, Justice Tuala-Warren states,¹⁹

“I have noticed that despite the high imprisonment terms imposed, the prevalence of sexual offending against our young girls has seemed to increase. Community efforts through the churches and through village councils must be amplified. A genuine and active community response is required, otherwise our children will continue to be at risk, particularly within their own homes, families and villages”.

The success of villages driving the prevention of family violence has been well established by this pilot project.

- Family violence *is preventable* and not an inevitable social problem for Samoa.
- The complex factors that drive and reinforce family violence *can be addressed* through strategic interventions.
- Gendered drivers and practices that supports violence against women *can be addressed* through well facilitated sessions about ‘myths and facts’.

The Recommendations are linked to the findings of Phase II and have been categorized into four pillars being:

- i) Addressing Norms and Practices that Drive Family Violence,
- ii) Support to Village Family Safety Committees,
- iii) The Need for Whole of Village Approach,
- iv) Continuation of Trust and Safe-Space Environments.

6.1. Addressing Norms and Practices that Drive Family Violence

Combating family violence in Samoa and within the 6 pilot villages, is to address the deeply rooted mindsets, attitudes and behaviors identified during workshop interventions of Phase II.

¹⁹ See Joyetter Feagaimaali'i, 'Convicted rapist gets 4-year jail sentence', (*Samoa Observer*, 20/07/2020) <https://www.samoobserver.ws/category/samoa/66979>

Behavioral Change Programs

Behavior change campaigns have played an important role in communicating more broadly, the clear standards for expected behavior towards family violence. All pilot villages have identified Raising Awareness as a strategic objective, and such campaigns can complement committee activities in this area.

Some examples of national campaigns with catchy slogans include the change of behavior to put on seatbelts – with the “make it click” campaign. There was also the “slip-slop-slap” campaign in Australia to combat skin cancer and encourage people to put on sunscreen. For family violence, there has been a “Its NOT OK” campaign out of Wellington. A similar slogan in Samoan, linked to specific standards of behavior, could complement the awareness activities of the 6 pilot villages.

- 1. It is recommended that behavioral change programs to address the deeply rooted mindsets on gendered drivers identified in this report be developed and delivered as part of the implementation phase.***
- 2. It is recommended that a national Behavior Change Campaign with clear standards of behavior is pioneered through the 6 pilot villages.***

Continued Educational Programs

Although Phase II has established that capacity building workshops can change mindsets and attitudes amongst participants, behavioral change requires continued education and reinforcement of new habits to be truly sustainable.

The Pre and Post Test results identified the need for more emphasis to be placed on the myths around ‘causes’ of family violence as well as the need to address interventions based on reconciling the abused with their abuser.

Feedback from participants of Phase II placed a huge emphasis on the need to educate all members of their respective villages.

It was also observed that although the 3 days’ workshop made some changes in the mindsets of participants. The Office believes that in order to make complete change, there needs to be constant and continuous interventions with these villages over a space of at least 3-5 years. A onetime intervention will not ensure change in the long run.

- 3. It is recommended that strategic interventions to specifically address identified norms and practices that drives violent behavior be incorporated to the next phase of the pilot program.***
- 4. It is recommended that educational programs be extended to all other members of the pilot villages.***

- 5. It is recommended that strategic interventions to address family violence (in the community and any setting) must be constant and continuous over a longer period of time (at least 3-4 years) to ensure change of mindset in the long run.**

Physical Abuse of Children

Phase II identified the high rates of physical and mental abuse towards children. Findings from Phase II have re-emphasized Myth 10 of the NIFV that, “Being smacked as a child made me into the good person I am today” and “it didn’t do me any harm”.

The workshop sessions did not have a specific emphasis on violence against children.

There are root causes of violence against children that all who work in this space must be educated on such as:

Individual-level risk factors include biological and personal history aspects such as sex, age, education, income, disability, impaired brain and cognitive development, psychological disorders, harmful use of alcohol, drug abuse, and a history of aggression or maltreatment.

Close-relationship level risk factors include a lack of emotional bonding, poor parenting practices, family dysfunction and separation, associating with delinquent peers, children witnessing violence against their mother or stepmother, and early or forced marriage.

Community-level risk factors include how the characteristics of settings such as schools, workplaces and neighborhoods increase the risk of violence. These include poverty, high population density, transient populations, low social cohesion, unsafe physical environments, high crime rates and the existence of a local drug trade.

Society-level risk factors include legal and social norms that create a climate in which violence is encouraged or normalized. These also include health, economic, educational and social policies that maintain economic, gender or social inequalities; absent or inadequate social protection; social fragility owing to conflict, post-conflict or natural disaster; weak governance and poor law enforcement.

- 6. It is recommended that a special educational program is developed within the Samoan cultural context, to raise understanding of the root causes of violence against children.**

- 7. It is recommended that Understanding Violence against Children is incorporated to future workshop sessions of the Office and the Pilot Program.**

- 8. It is recommended that village pilot activities during the implementation stage include learning’s to “Reduce harsh parenting practices and create positive parent-child relationships”.**

6.2. Support to Village Family Safety Committees

It is crucial that VFSCs receive relevant and adequate support to successfully implement the work plan activities identified. Resourcing of activities can be an issue if funding support is not provided for some of the activities listed in work plans.

Additionally, the risk of committee members behaving violently can be minimized through mentoring and close communication monitoring that allows them to share when they are tempted to go back to past practices and behavior patterns. The work of VFSCs can be discredited if a member of the committee is publicly exposed for committing family violence.

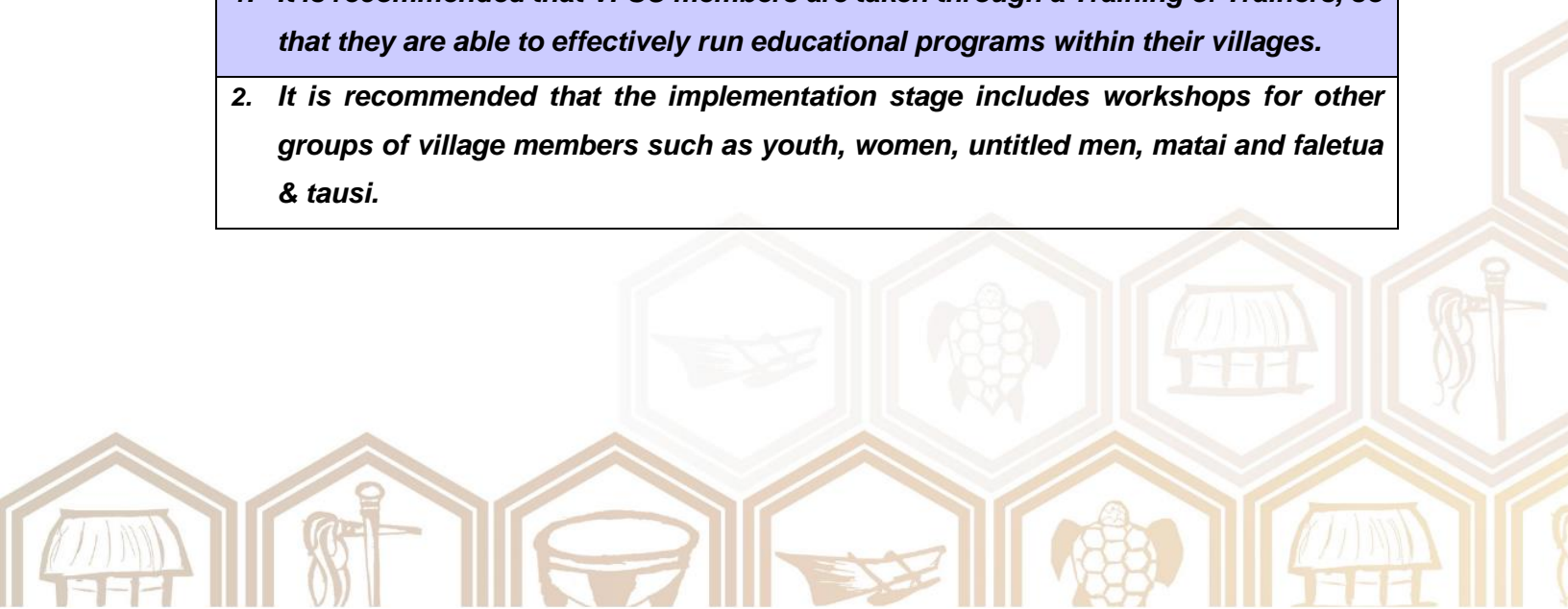
1. ***It is recommended that VFSCs receive funding support to implement all work plan activities efficiently and effectively.***
2. ***It is recommended that each VFSCs be assigned a mentor that can offer help and support on the personal level, to committee members identified as high risk of committing violence.***
3. ***It is recommended that identified champions from each village are further supported to attend national programs against family violence, or participate in national committees and taskforces.***

6.3. The Need for Whole of Village Approach

Ultimately, the pilot project is about the prevention of family violence in villages. In all villages, committee members stressed the need to have *the rest of the village* educated and taken through the various sessions of Phase II.

Prevention of family violence requires a change in mindset, attitudes and behavior – and this requires adaptive lifestyle changes in the whole environment. Committee members have admitted that it would be difficult for them to take the messages of family violence prevention to the rest of the village, without the interventions made by the NHRI team in Phase II.

1. ***It is recommended that VFSC members are taken through a Training of Trainers, so that they are able to effectively run educational programs within their villages.***
2. ***It is recommended that the implementation stage includes workshops for other groups of village members such as youth, women, untitled men, matai and faletua & tausi.***



7. Acknowledgements

7.1. Partners and Stakeholders

The contribution of our partners i.e. Pacific Community (SPC-RRRT), Commonwealth UK Chair in Office 2018-2020, Sisters for Change, Equality & Justice Alliance, Spotlight Initiative, and UNDP, as well as our stakeholders who have helped to support the VFSC Pilot Project through its two phases is acknowledged with gratitude. Partners and stakeholders can be assured that these initial stages of the pilot program have provided strong evidence that behavioral change can be achieved through strategic interventions within villages.

7.2. Pilot Villages

The Village Fono of each village is applauded for their interest and support for the pilot project. The 6 pilot villages were a pleasure to work with. They showed a high level of commitment throughout the workshop days, and showed patience through sessions that delivered complex messages that at times, went against their own beliefs. Village representatives demonstrated their commitment to drive the common goal of ending violence and ensuring a bright future for their children and villages.

7.3. Survivor as Facilitator

I am thankful to the Office of the Ombudsman for the opportunity to work with the NHRI team on this pilot project. It was amazing to experience, first-hand, the mindsets and norms that contribute to violence in families across Samoa. It was challenging at times and my lesson learnt is to ensure that I have a mentor while working on similar projects in future. In my humble opinion, the approach of the Office of Ombudsman to make practical interventions on the ground, are by far the most effective I have witnessed since working in this space, for the past 8 years.



