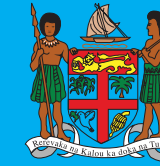




Australian Government  
AusAID



unicef  
unite for children

#### Q. How aware are children of their protection rights and protection services available to them?

A. While highly aware of formal protection services available to them (the police and healthcare professionals), 50% of child survey respondents indicate that the police are the service they trust the least. The majority would instead seek 'informal' assistance (i.e. from their parents) if badly hurt by someone. Plans have been made to address this with the development of a Communication for Social Change Strategy that would actively involve children in child protection advocacy and encourage the empowerment of children about their own protection at home and school, which are recommendations the survey makes.

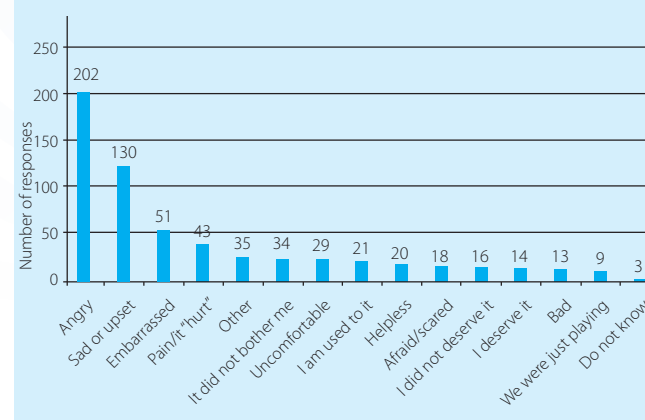
#### Q. How do adults feel about the risks of sending their children to live away from home?

A. According to the survey, 11% of respondents had biological children of their own between the ages of 16-18 currently living outside their households. These children live with other relatives and are mostly away from home for the purpose of going to school. 15% of relevant respondents do not know if their children are safe or not and no reasons were given for why this might be. 85% feel that their children are safe in their alternative places of residence, but this is based largely on assumptions, trust in the hosts (particularly when the hosts are family members) and feedback from the hosts rather than from the children themselves. The survey recommends educating parents about the risks involved in sending children to live in alternative places of residence. It also states to monitor the situation of children living in alternative places of residence. Furthermore the report recommends that more education is needed for those who host children about their responsibilities in protecting the child.

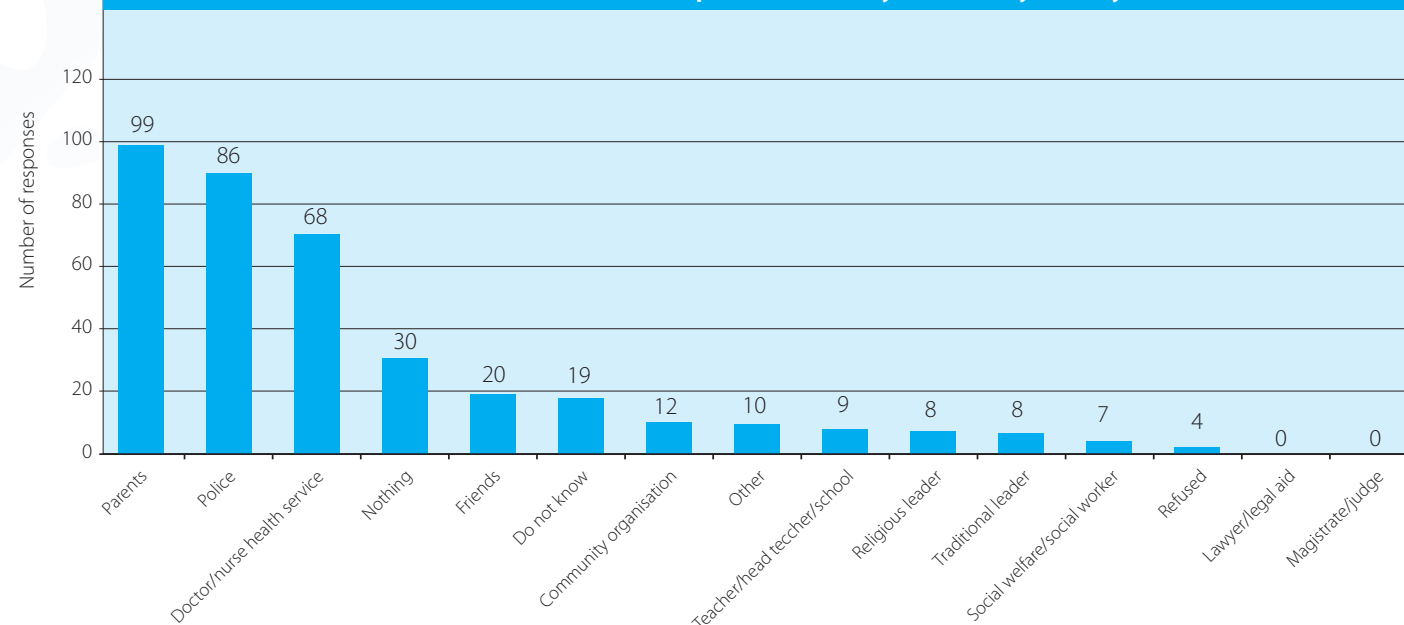
#### Q. How do children feel about experiencing violence?

A. The overwhelming majority of respondents expressed negative feelings about experiencing violence. 87% of responses revealed negative feelings about experiencing violence. Only 13% of responses included said 'It did not bother me', 'I am used to it', 'I deserve it', 'We were just playing' and 'Do not know'. This is a reminder of the overwhelmingly negative impact of violence on children. The majority do not seem to accept it as normal (only 3% of responses said 'I am used to it'). The baseline report recommends the empowerment of children about their own protection at home and school and emphasizes that children (child and youth groups) to be actively involved in child protection advocacy so adults are aware of their feelings.

How respondents felt about experiencing violence (physical, sexual, emotional and neglect)



What services are there in the area that could help children if they were badly hurt by someone?



## Key Findings

### Protect me with love and care

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



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

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

### Q. What is the Fiji Child Protection Baseline Report?

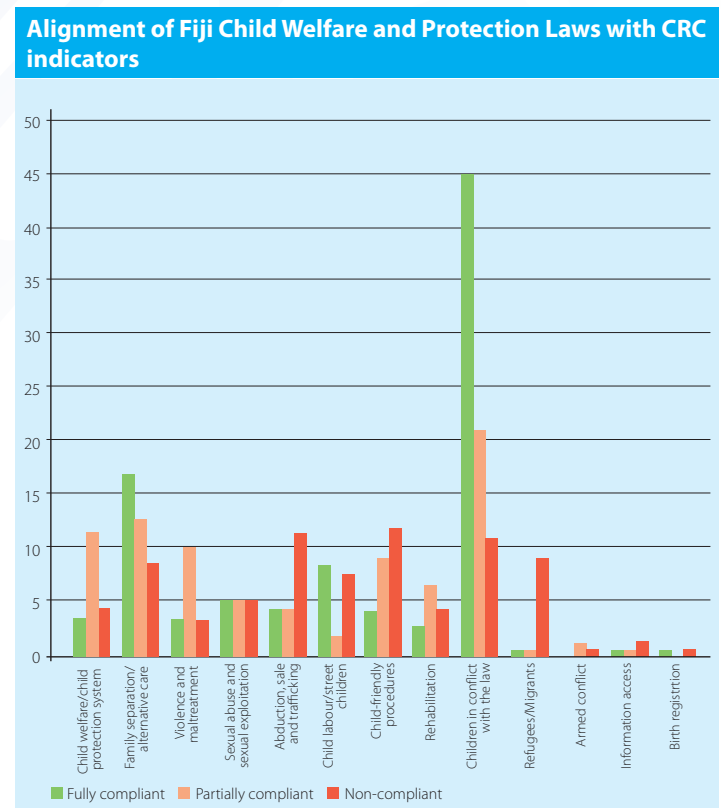
**A.** The Fiji Child Protection Baseline Report reviews legal provisions, social services and community involvement in child protection in 2008, develops recommendations, and aims to promote capacity-building, networking and inter-agency collaboration.

### Q. What factors make children particularly vulnerable in Fiji?

**A.** Active substance abuse and economic difficulties exacerbate children's vulnerability to violence, abuse and exploitation.

### Q. Are current national laws aligned with good Child Protection principles such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)?

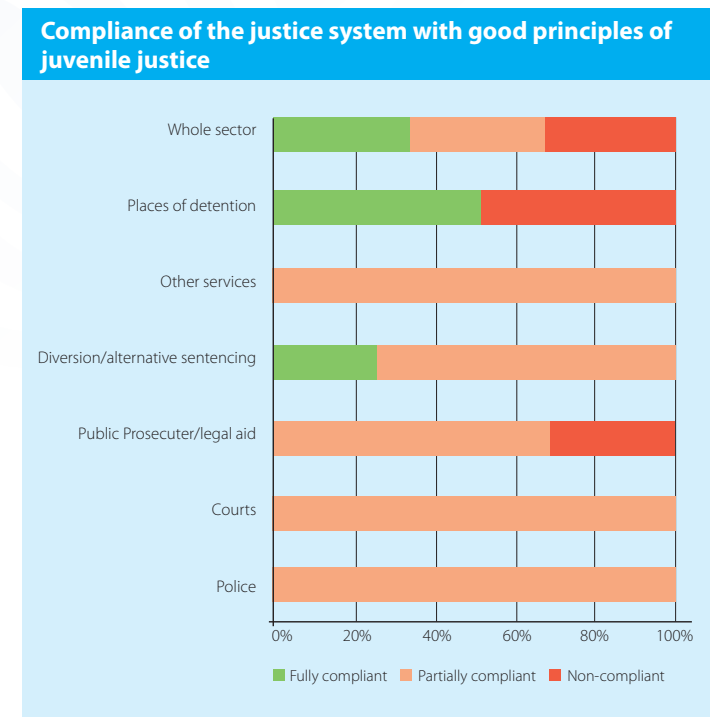
**A.** Of the CRC indicators assessed, the baseline survey found Fiji's legal provisions were fully compliant with 95 indicators, partially compliant



with 86, and non-compliant on 77 indicators. While the necessary powers for effective child protection measures exist in law, these could be further strengthened and supported through clarifying definitions, criteria and processes, and reviewing and amending existing policies, such as the Juveniles Act 1973.

### Q. How well -placed is the Fiji Justice System to apply good principles of juvenile justice?

**A.** The Juvenile Act Cap 56 provides for prosecution of children in conflict with the law including guidelines for dealing with child witnesses but is silent on treatment of child victims and survivors. The baseline report recommends standardised practices for referrals, training on juvenile justice and child rights, and enforcing existing laws.

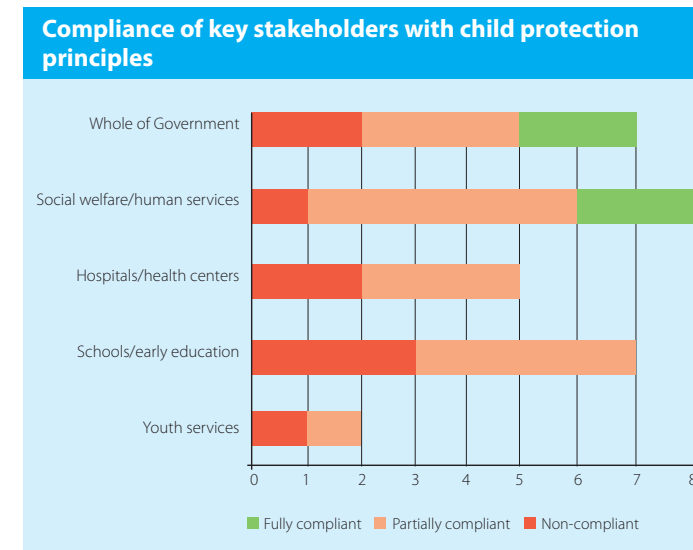


### Q. How do communities handle children in conflict with the law

**A.** Police informally (i.e. only giving a warning to) and formally (i.e. giving a formal caution instead of charging an offender) divert child offenders back to communities at a high rate, preferring to sort the problem out with parents and the victim/survivor directly rather than going through the courts. Even for cases that make it to court, imprisonment is rarely considered for children. Instead, community corrections measures are applied, which include counselling, community work, supervision and, in a small number of cases, physical punishment. The Department of Social Welfare is working with partners to improve the Community Corrections system. The survey recommends that each location of the community corrections service a community corrections management committee, with training provided to staff, volunteers and service providers.

### Q. How well-served are children by child protection social services?

**A.** Fiji's Department of Social Welfare (DSW) leads other nations of the Pacific in service provision. However, while relevant authorities (including the DSW, and the Ministries of Youth and Education) have plans that address child protection there are no fully resourced strategic or forward plans. The baseline report recommends that mandated authorities dealing with children's protection including Ministries of Finance and Planning, Social Welfare, Health, Education, Youth and Justice should have principles and activities incorporated into their forward strategic plans, to ensure that they are well resourced. Further, inter-agency protocols between these services need to be strengthened.



### Q. Do schools provide a safe environment for children?

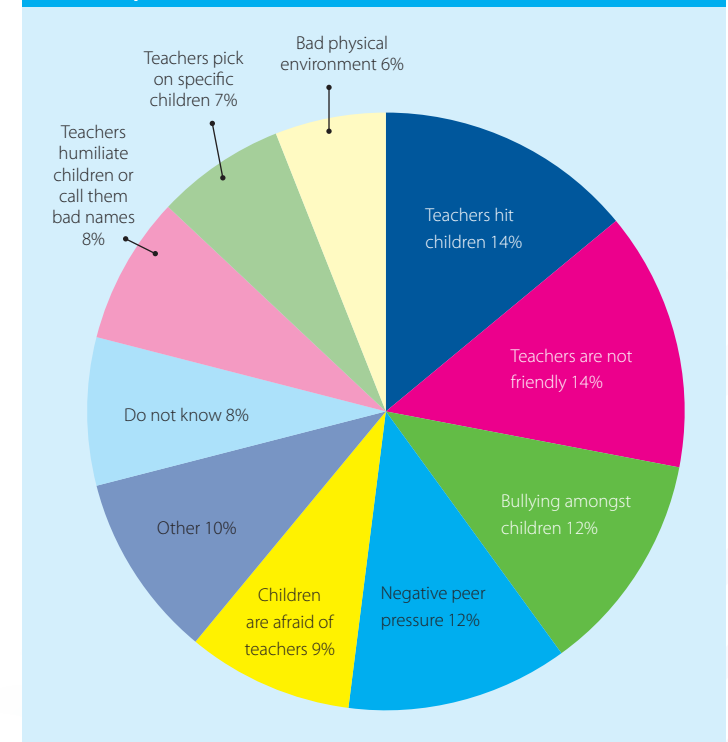
**A.** The majority of relevant respondents agree that rules exist in schools which help keep children safe, but these tend to be 'general school and discipline rules' regulating children's behaviour rather than separate or explicit 'child protection policies'. There is much less emphasis on teachers' roles and responsibilities. In fact, children identified 'teachers hit children' as the number one thing which makes children feel unsafe in schools, while 75% of education informants admit that teachers practice corporal punishment. Developing teacher's awareness about alternative forms of discipline and making children and teachers aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to the school rules are among the baseline report's recommendations.

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

**A.** 72% of respondents admit to physically hurting children in the household. Most communities in the survey do not have plans in place to help keep children safe from violence. The report recommends that



### Main things that make children feel unsafe in schools (child respondents)



the DSW work with communities to strengthen existing child protection plans and advocate for a nationwide development of community child protection plans that reflect views of the community that are inclusive of age and gender. Further, given that children primarily seek assistance from parents and caregivers when they are badly hurt and that the majority of children are hurt in the places where they spend most of their time – school and home, mostly by other children – both adults (i.e. caregivers, community leaders and teachers) and children need to be made aware about child rights, what constitutes inappropriate behaviour, and how to recognise and deal with different forms of abuse.

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

**A.** 72% of adult respondents are confident about what to do if a child in their care were badly hurt. However, 18% are not confident and other evidence shows that their reactions, especially in relation to actual cases of inappropriate touching, may not be appropriate or consistent with good child protection practice. The report recommends that community initiatives with sufficient community input in positive parenting may hold answers to the social reintegration and protection of children in Fijian communities. The report recommends that organisations work with strategic key informants like community and religious leaders and the police, including providing education and training, in order to influence meaningful child protection behaviour, practices and attitudes in communities.