

**CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEM
GOVERNANCE INDICATORS FRAMEWORK
ASSESSMENT FIJI**



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ACRONYMS

ACME	Automatic Classification of Medical Entry
ACP	Child protection Annual Corporate Plan
ACR	Annual Confidential Reporting
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AG	Auditor General
AIDS	Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
APA	Annual Performance Assessment
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
BACC	Budget and Aid Coordinating Committee
CandP	Care and Protection
CARE	Community Action for the Rehabilitation of Ex Offenders
CBA	Cost-benefit analysis
CCF	Citizen's Constitutional Forum
CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CEDAW	Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
CERD	Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
CHIPSR	Centre for Health Information, Policy and Systems Research
COFOG	Classification of the Functions of Government
CP	Child protection
CPA	Child protection Allowance
CPO	Child protection Officer
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRIN	Child Rights Information Network
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CRVS	Civil Registration and Vital Statistics
CSEC	Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children
CTD	Centre for Training and Development
DCFD	Development Cooperation and Facilitation Division
DHS	Demographic household survey
DISMAC	National Disaster Management Council, NDMC
DoSW	Director of Social Welfare
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DSLOs	Disaster Service Liaison Officers
DSW	Department of Social Welfare
EAP	East Asia and Pacific
EDP	Electronic Data Processing Number
ERP	Employment Relations Promulgation
EU	European Unions
FAP	Family Assistance Programme
FASW	Fiji Association of Social Workers
FBC	Fiji Broadcasting Corporation
FIBOS	Fiji Bureau of Statistics
FCOSS	Fiji Council of Social Services
FCS	Fiji Corrections Service
FESP	Fiji Education Sector Program
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FIBOS	Fiji Bureau of Statistics
FIT	Fiji Institute of Technology
FMIS	Financial Management Information System
FMR	Financial Management Reform
FNCDP	Fiji National Council for Disabled Persons
FNPF	Fiji National Pension Fund
FPF	Fiji Police Force
FTRB	Fiji Teacher Registration Board
FVP	Food Voucher Programme
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GFS	Governance Finance Statistics
GIF	Governance Indicators Framework
GNI	Gross national income
GoF	Government of Fiji
GPO	Government Procurement Office
HART	Housing Assistance and Relief Trust
HIES	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
HIRS	Human Information Resources System
HIS	Health Information System

HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
HRM	Human Resource Management
IAC	Inter-Agency Committee
ICCPR	UN Covenants on the Civil and Political Rights
ICDE	Informational Council for Open and Distance Education
ICERD	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
ICESCR	International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
IDSS	International Development Support Services
IHRDP	Integrated Human Resource Development Programme
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPEC	International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour
IPS	Institute of Pacific Studies
IPSAB	International Public Sector Accounting Board
IPSAS	International Public Sector Accounting Standards
IRs	Intermediate Results
IT	Information Technology
JNAP	Joint National Action Plan
KAP	Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practice
LK	Legally Kidnapped
LPOs	Local Purchase Orders
MandE	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDAs	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MES	Monitoring and Evaluation System
MICs	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MIS	Management Information System
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoENHCA	Ministry of Education at the time of this report is Ministry of Education, National Heritage, Culture and Arts
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoHo	Ministry of Housing
MoLGUDH	Ministry of Local Government, Urban Development and Housing
MoSPNDS	Ministry of Strategic Planning, National Development and Statistics
MoSWWPA	Ministry of Social Welfare, Women and Poverty Alleviation
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MoYo	Ministry of Youth and Sports
MQR	Minimum Qualification Requirement
MRT	Migration Review Tribunal
MSC	Most Significant Change
MoYS	Ministry of Youth and Sports
NCCC	National Coordinating Committee on Children
NDMO	National Disaster Management Office
NDRM	Natural Disaster Risk Management
NDRMA	Natural Disaster Management Act
NEOC	National Emergency Operations Centre
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NZODA	New Zealand Official Development Assistance
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
PAP	Poverty Alleviation Programme
PAU	Policy Analysis Unit
PBS	Poverty Benefit Scheme
PCAN	Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect
P-CBA	Pacific Cost-Benefit Analysis Initiative
PCCPP	People's Charter for Change, Peace and Progress
PCP	Pacific Children's Program
PCRs	Programme Component Results
PDBs	Provincial Development Boards
PEFA	Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability
PFIP	Pacific Financial Inclusion Program
PFM	Public Financial Management
PFTAC	Pacific Financial Technical Assistance Centre
PHC	Primary Health Care
PHT	Pacific Humanitarian Team
PIAS-DG	Pacific Institute for Advanced Studies in Development and Governance
PIC	Pacific Island Countries
PIFS	Pacific Islands Forum Secretariate
PM	Prime Minister
PMS	Performance Management System
PPS	Portfolio Performance Statements

PRHP	Pacific Regional HIV/AIDS Project
PS	Permanent Secretary
PSC	Public Service Commission
PSOPM	Permanent Secretary at the Office of the Prime Minister
PSs	Permanent Secretaries
RDSSED	The Roadmap for Democracy and Sustainable Socio-Economic Development
RNZI	Radio New Zealand International
RRF	Results and Resources Framework
SCEC	Stop Commercial Exploitation of Children
SDPs	Strategic Development Plans
SFCCO	Strategic Framework for Change Coordinating Office
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
SOP	Standard Operations Procedure
SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
TLTB	iTaukei Land Trust Board
TMA	Trading and Manufacturing Activities
ToR	Terms of Reference
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework for the Pacific Sub-Region
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNGEI	United Nations Girls' Education Initiative
UN-HABITAT	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNICEF	The United Nations Children's Fund
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USP	University of South Pacific
UWS	University of Western Sydney
WB	World Bank
WFCL	Worst Forms of Child Labour
WHO	World Health Organization
WO	Welfare Officer
ZTVFC	Zero Tolerance Violence Free Community

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

RESULTS MATRIX

	Predictive learning	Navigational leadership	Strategic anticipation	Agility	Resilience	Open Collaboration
Policy process	1.1 Clarity and consistency of Child protection priorities	1.2 Coherent specification of key Child protection	1.3 Preparedness to volatile environment	1.4 Policy coordination structures	1.5 Policy monitoring and evaluation	1.6 Synergies across sectors
Public financial management	2.1 Multi-year budgeting based on realistic costing	2.2 Transparency and credibility of budget allocations	2.3 Spending flexibility	2.4 Neutrality of financial incentives	2.5 Value for money	2.6 Effective structures for decentralized funding
Human resource management	3.1 Standards for Child protection professionals	3.2 Personnel accounting and payroll control	3.3 Continuity across electoral cycles	3.4 Training to maintain up-to-date expertise	3.5 Performance evaluation	3.6 Attracting and retaining qualified staff
Information management	4.1 Use of evidence in policy process	4.2 Quality of Child protection databases	4.3 Responsiveness to changing policy demands	4.4 Data consolidation and exchange	4.5 Links between data users and producers	4.6 Links to national Child protection research agenda
Quality assurance	5.1 Quality guidance and standards	5.2 Credibility and regularity of inspections	5.3 Encouragement of innovation	5.4 Effective gate-keeping and referrals	5.5 Enforcement and follow-up	5.6 Integration with communities
Comms and influencing	6.1 Clarity of Child protection Communication Strategy	6.2 Availability of evidence on values and attitudes	6.3 Alertness to changing risks	6.4 Interactive engagement with key audiences	6.5 Building on existing positive values	6.6 Involvement of opinion leaders into behaviour change agenda

Four criteria for each indicator	Assessment: "Was the benchmark achieved?"
Benchmark 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Yes" = 1 • "Yes, restricted" = 0.75 • "No, extended" = 0.25 • "No" = 0
Benchmark 2	
Benchmark 3	
Benchmark 4	



Total points received for each indicator	Resulting score
[3 to 4]	Score A
[2 to 3]	Score B
[1 to 2]	Score C
[0 to 1]	Score D



KEY STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

The system of child protection in Fiji is going through a period of adjustment with a growing volume of legislative policy commitments, gradual fiscal tightening, rapidly evolving political and governmental structures, and a strategic transition to political stability and social cohesion.

Strong dimensions:

- Open collaboration. Robust communal traditions and cooperative values, combined with relatively small and lean institutional structures, helped Fiji to build foundations for a child protection system which is open and collaborative. The bulk of current programmes are closely integrated with communities, and most opinion leaders are involved in the government's awareness raising and behaviour change effort. Key ministries maintain informal links with academia and civil society. Co-operation within the Government, across the implementing agencies, is often hindered by lack of technical capacity (including, e.g., capacities for internal communications), but is still vigorous, especially at the local level and in times of emergencies.
- Strategic anticipation. Current regulations and institutional setup for child protection provide the government with considerable room for manoeuvre in policy design and implementation. Budgeting rules are based on an "envelope approach," providing administrative heads with high flexibility as to how they choose to allocate funds; regulations on data collection allow agencies to quickly change templates and request new evidence; and work is on-going to capture emerging and intermittent child protection risks such as natural disasters or negative externalities of technological progress, growing volumes of international tourism and climate change.
- Agility. Child protection structures have considerable integrity to swiftly respond to the changing context. Financial allocation principles are neutral with regard to types of provided services; the National Coordinating Committee on Children (NCCC) is well positioned to steer concerted inter-agency responses to changing contexts (provided that it receives some still needed strengthening); the Ministry of Social Welfare, Women and Poverty Alleviation is clearly defined as the core gate-keeper to address child protection alerts; and arrangements were set-up to ensure that professional skills of child protection staff are kept up-to-date.

Weaker dimensions:

- Navigational leadership. A range of features in the current organization of the child protection system makes it difficult for stakeholders to share a collective sense of the current situation, which is critical for developing joint confidence in moving forward. The quality of child protection databases suffers from weak coordination: field officers across ministries and departments collect a vast amount of child protection data, but it is not standardized and not sufficiently disaggregated. In addition, surveys by the Fiji Bureau of Statistics (FIBOS) do not provide statistical evidence on attitudes to child rights and upbringing, which voids awareness campaigns of a factual ground for planning and monitoring. Budget allocations on child protection are not sufficiently transparent and credible: actual spending of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Women and Poverty Alleviation (MoSWWPA) differs very considerably from its approved budget; internal spending controls within key ministries were criticized by international assessments as not timely and accurate (new rules to improve commitment controls were introduced but their impact requires verification).
- Predictive learning. Although Fiji's government has set up clear objectives and priorities in child protection, it lacks capacity for evidence-based policy analysis to ensure that chosen goals are relevant and realistic. This includes a lack of in-house expertise in diagnostic studies to design strategies for behaviour change. Objective-setting is also weak in the social work profession: standards and expectations to organizations and specialists working with children are not well defined, not mandatory and cover a small share of providers.



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- Resilience. Few current tools equip the Fijian government to embrace and positively build on setbacks. Policy monitoring through the Strategic Framework for Change Coordinating Office (SFCCO) is highly numerical and contains no evaluation of policy impact, which could be incorporated into future programming. There is no established practice to monitor performance from the angle of increasing value for money: independent performance audits through the Auditor General (AG) are not utilized in child protection, programmes are not analysed in terms of their comparative costs and benefits and awareness of fiscal constraints (and, in particular, the mid-term prospect of fiscal consolidation) is weak. In the process of service provision, the government uses a limited arsenal of to react to poor performance: sanctions against standard-breaking organizations (beyond government grantees) essentially do not exist; malpractice by individual professionals is said to often go unregistered and unhandled.

DOMAIN 1. POLICY PROCESS

Current progress

- Fiji is the absolute regional leader in legal recognition of international commitments related to child protection. It joined 18 of the 29 relevant treaties, including the two Hague Conventions protecting children from the risks of abuse in international adoption (with only six other countries in the EAP: Japan, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand, Australia, and New Zealand. Remaining issues on which Fiji is still outside international agreements include protection of civil and political rights, human trafficking, and prevention of torture, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment.
- Nine cross-cutting priorities in child protection are clearly incorporated into the government's key multi-annual strategic plan – the Roadmap for Democracy and Sustainable Socio-Economic Development (RDSSED) 2010-2014 "A Better Fiji for All". The government uses a coherent strategic planning system, which translates these national objectives into annual corporate plans for implementation by Ministries along with their quarterly cost implications.
- The current arrangement for multi-layer public administration is complex, unique and constantly evolving, combining elements of highly decentralized traditional leadership hierarchies with centralized administrative structures led by the national government. At this moment, devolved functions overseen by elected local councils are limited and have little impact on child protection (most activities are implemented by local offices of national ministries); local by-laws rarely deal with these issues and risks of inconsistencies are low. However, provincial and municipal councils increasingly integrate child protection objectives into their strategic plans and allocate funding to awareness raising. **RECOMMENDATION: In the future, this trend is likely to bring out the need to significantly enhance capacities of local administrations for strategic planning, budgeting and coordination with central authorities.**

Open challenges

Despite good progress, issues remain in the following areas:

- Arrangements were established for inter-agency responses to natural disasters via the National Disaster Management Council (DISMAC) and a high-level executive umbrella of key ministers in the cabinet, as well as through the National Coordinating Committee on Children (NCCC) and a newly formed government-donor protection cluster. However, apart from the National Disaster Management Act 1998 and the National Disaster Management Plan 1995 (which do not address-child specific risks), there is no specific policy or action plan on children in emergencies. Moreover, preventative multi-hazard risk mapping is usually project-based and ad-hoc and does not include regular assessment of child protection risks. **RECOMMENDATION: The currently on-going review of the National Disaster Management Act 1998 and the National Disaster Management Plan 1995 present an opportunity to incorporate child-specific concerns into these documents. In addition, a separate policy may be developed by the NCCC within the Protection Cluster. The NCCC could more actively join DISMAC efforts on preventative risk mapping to incorporate child specific issues.**
- The National Coordinating Committee on Children (NCCC) is a mixture of opportunities and problems. It meets regularly, helps to develop key regulations, and could be quickly mobilized in case of emergencies, and is well positioned to undertake supreme policy oversight in child protection. However, this is currently difficult. The key obstacle is an almost complete lack of communication of NCCC decisions to the decision-makers in the member ministries. This hinders implementation, including the NCCC influencing powers over the field-level structures such as district level inter-agency committees. Moreover, excessive focus on operational issues and a lack of proactive communication of strategic messages from the NCCC keeps ministerial leaders complacent over child protection agenda. **RECOMMENDATION: A practical mechanism must be developed to feed key action points to senior ministerial executives. Capacity building in strategic internal communications could be of significant help.**



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- Policy monitoring processes coordinated through the Strategic Framework for Change Coordinating Office (SFCCO) are well organized, integrated into the planning cycle, and provide ministries with practical feedback. However, this reporting is highly numerical and contains no evaluation of policy impact. Moreover, in the absence of a separate child protection policy, there is no integrated monitoring mechanism which would be specific for child protection, led by a single agency and clearly outlining gaps and bottlenecks by individual sectors.

RECOMMENDATION: *SFCCO could benefit from awareness raising on child protection issues and encouraged to extend their analytical feedback.*
- Fiji's health sector is advanced in data management and primary health care tradition, with significant coverage of remote areas with nursing stations. At the same time, child protection objectives are not incorporated in the Child Health Policy and Strategy 2012-2015 and the Ministry of Health (MoH) strategic and annual corporate plans (despite recommendation of the 2008 Baseline Report "Protect me with Love and Care"). Health workers lack practical skills to deal with child abuse (focusing on physical abuse rather than other types of maltreatment and referral guidelines).

RECOMMENDATION: *The current health sector reform is a window of opportunity for specific child protection up-skill. The reform is focused on large investment into capacity building at the primary level and public health strengthening. These programmes should include modules on child protection (including in the currently developed on-line training packages). Child welfare commitments should also be reflected in the Public Health Act which is currently under review, led by the Health Policy Commission. The MoSWWPA (e.g. through the NCCC) could consider submitting a respective proposal to the review process.*
- A major weakness of the child protection policy process is a lack of coherent specification of key concepts. The new Constitution has fundamentally expanded guarantees of child rights. However, there is no practical mechanism to reconcile controversial issues and colliding concepts across sectors prior to drafting bills. While there is no major disagreement on policy issues across the sectors so far, current cross-cutting legislation contains inconsistencies (e.g. definition of the child; age of criminal responsibility; marriage age). Critically, implementing regulations for the current laws is sometimes lacking or inconsistent.

RECOMMENDATION: *Activate support to whole-of-government policy development for child protection. Install cooperation with the new legislative structures that will be developed within the new Parliament so that child protection issues are integrated into parliamentary legislative scrutiny.*



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DOMAIN 2. PUBLIC FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Current progress

In the last decades, Fiji implemented major budgeting reforms, which were analysed through two rounds of Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) Framework Assessments (2005 and 2013). These reports are not yet publically available, which limits the scope of sources for this study and may result in the underestimation of progress achieved by the government.

From the standpoint of child protection, Fiji's public financial management system currently benefits from two major valuable features:

- Centralization of child protection functions at the national level and the small size of sub-national spending allows the government to instil policies without the risks of any vertical imbalances between responsibilities and funding at the local level. Again, this may start to change as local spending is growing (creating needs for much stronger transparency in local financial reporting and new intergovernmental fiscal arrangements). **RECOMMENDATION: NCCC needs to start monitoring the size of spending (total and child protection-related) from provincial and municipal budgets.**
- Budget allocation rules are highly flexible, providing line ministries with significant opportunities for results-oriented financial management. Preparation of the national budget follows an envelope-based principle, with broad ceilings for administrative heads and minimum restrictions on their chosen inputs. Permanent Secretaries can also switch appropriations across budget lines in the process of implementation by making virements. In fact, in the past years, this flexibility exceeded the capacities of the Ministry of Finance (MoF) to control the quality of such re-allocations, service delivery and financial planning, resulting in new regulations to streamline the virement process. One reason for the recent trend to limit the use of virements is poor compliance of the agencies with financial management rules. **RECOMMENDATION: To counteract the shift of policy away from the currently flexible system, the line ministries**

should consider diligent financial reporting as their utmost priority. They should also focus on demonstrating a clear link between their budget decisions and strategic objectives, as a matter of advocacy in favour of retaining the current level of flexibility.

Open challenges

Financial management approaches could be strengthened in several key ways:

- Budget allocations on child protection are not sufficiently transparent and credible. Actual spending by the Ministry of Social Welfare, Women and Poverty Alleviation (MoSWWPA) differs very considerably from its approved budget (unlike most other ministries) (variance in the composition of expenditure outturns for the MoSWWPA compared to original budgets in 2012 was 26.2 per cent compared to the 7.6 per cent average for other key agencies – MoH, MoSWWPA, MoYS and Fiji Police). Moreover, actual expenditures of the MoSWWPA are not only further away from approved budgets but also differ in a negative way (decreased or underspent) – unlike the budgets for MoE and MoH which were increased when compared to their initial amounts. **RECOMMENDATION:** *The MoSWWPA should invest into mastering newly introduced tools for cash flow and commitment management, such as the MoF Proforma Finance Manual 2011 which outlines new requirements for cash flow forecasting for all spending units. The Audit Committee of the MoSWWPA could be strengthened and encouraged to look into the high variation of spending with the view to help policy-makers achieve more stable projections.*
- Fiji has a rolling multi-year Macro-Fiscal Framework, which outlines how macroeconomic assumptions for the upcoming three-year projections would affect fiscal totals and expenditure envelopes by administrative heads. For example, the 2014 strategy was to continue gradual consolidation of finances in the medium term, but aim to increase operating savings (to prevent borrowing for recurrent expenses) and reallocate spending towards capital projects and repayment of debt. But while each ministry projects its spending two years ahead, there is no costed cross-sector child protection strategy. As a result, there is no pro-active bottom-up communication of the expenditure requests which would serve an agreed child protection policy – either generally or within individual inter-agency action plans. **RECOMMENDATION:** *MoSWWPA and other agencies would benefit from more pro-active communication of their long-term costing at the stage of submitting their budget requests. A joint expenditure prioritization and negotiation policy may be discussed under the NCCC umbrella.*
- The government of Fiji has managed to keep its deficit under control despite sluggish economic growth and yet invest in new infrastructure and social initiatives in education and social protection. However, it admits that fiscal consolidation will be required for the medium term, along with further redirection of spending away from operational activities towards capital projects. Yet, strategies for such cuts are not widely discussed and elaborated (not mentioned in any of the corporate plans); child protection professionals are generally uncertain about trends in child protection spending and oblivious to the prospect of consolidation in the next years. **RECOMMENDATION:** *Gradual preparation should start to take place. Ministries which were traditionally resistant to engaging into performance audits offered by the Auditor General office might consider starting such co-operation (e.g. based on the currently specified benefit targets for all programmes). The NCCC may consider inviting partners from agencies experienced in implementing cost-benefit analysis (CBA) to share their lessons and design ways to implement this tool for child protection initiatives. Successful cases of CBA in other sectors include disaster risk management (DRM) and climate change; health sector and education sector reforms; and transfer to electronic payments of Family Assistance grants. Importantly, the government has just begun receiving support from the Pacific Cost-Benefit Analysis Initiative (P-CBA) including training in CBA for natural resource management. It is a window of opportunity to request P-CBA to include modules on child protection so that disaster preparedness initiatives could be assessed from the perspective of ensuring safety for vulnerable children.*

DOMAIN 3.

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Current progress

Fiji continues to improve its management of the public service force, which directly benefits child protection, as most current specialists are employed by the government.

This helped to develop a range of strong elements in the current personnel management systems, although further enhancement is still warranted.

- Performance evaluation of public servants follows a clear cycle linked to job objectives and reward levels. All posts have approved duty statements along with the Minimum Qualification Requirements (MQRs), even though they are often generic and do not clearly specify child protection tasks. In reality, while field officers overwhelmingly agree that their core objective is awareness raising and better coordination, actual duties are often focused on administrative functions. Operational planning, financial management and administrative routine consumes most of the staff's time, although preparation and participation in community-based training is also a significant priority. A clear Annual Performance Appraisal system led by the Public Service Commission (PSC) is based on confidential reporting and includes discussion of feedback with line managers. In principle, it is also linked to levels of compensation by affecting percentage rating salary increments or bonus payments, and an additional system of reward for outstanding performance was introduced in 2014. At the same time, professionals do not feel that their outstanding contributions are always acknowledged. Even more alarmingly, the system of disciplinary action described in the General Orders 2011 does not ensure that poor performance results in any sanctions. **RECOMMENDATION: The use of a new reward system should be encouraged and concrete cases made visible to all staff; in the meantime, managers may intensify the use of non-financial rewards which are currently underutilized. The impact of lacking sanctions should be further investigated, to strengthen both formal and informal influencing tools.**
- Fiji is an academic centre of the Pacific and offers a wide range of training opportunities to child protection professionals. This includes the new degree programme in social work at the University of South Pacific and a formal system of continued professional development for public servants. The latter includes training provided and funded by the line ministries, as well as a range of relevant courses offered through the government's Centre for Training and Development (CTD), including a specific child protection training programme. Nevertheless, 67 per cent of the surveyed professionals admitted that they had not attended any child-specific training in the last three years. The interest in training also seems weak and is not encouraged: the majority of the respondents (83 per cent) said that situations where they lack knowledge and skills happen rarely or never, and in such situations they prefer to consult their peers or search for information on their own (48 per cent) rather than discuss their knowledge gaps with line managers and request training (38 per cent). **RECOMMENDATION: Staff could be strongly encouraged to seek training through the CTD and to share their knowledge gaps.**
- Although staff turnover is generally high for the Fijian civil service, the out-flow of talent to the private sector is mostly in non-social welfare professions. Staff remuneration compares favourably to other jobs (59 per cent of respondents thought that their financial terms were relatively more attractive, and the other 41 per cent felt that it was about the same). Existing problems with turnover are often prompted by loose transfer policies leading to instances where the Permanent Secretaries or Heads of Departments only became aware of the transfer of staff upon receiving confirmation on offer of promotion to the Officers from other Agencies. Child protection posts are associated with poorer career opportunities, often because they are not defined as technically specialized (e.g. child abuse legal cases are perceived as low-key) and graded equally to low-skill health workers. **RECOMMENDATION: Although upgrading social welfare posts to a higher rank would lead to extra costs, this should be strategically considered. Heads of departments and permanent secretaries (PSs) should also promote stronger compliance with PSC transfer regulations and consider more active discussion of the transfer plans with the staff.**



UNICEF Pacific/2010/Hing

Open challenges

- One of the key weaknesses of the current human resource management (HRM) system is the vague definition of professional standards for officers working on child protection issues. Although all public servants, including social workers employed by the government, are subject to Minimum Qualification Requirements (MQRs) approved by the PS, they do not seem to include specific social work and child protection qualifications. From the mini-survey, 38 per cent of respondents admitted that they have not received any specialized education. Moreover, aside from the MQR, there are no standards applicable to social workers employed by non-state organizations. The Fiji Association of Social Workers (FASW) and the USP are working on developing such standards and a respective paper was submitted to the Cabinet, but this work is still on-going. **RECOMMENDATION: Support the current momentum for development of standards, making sure that they clearly define the profession of social work, and set up a way to recognize not only academic qualifications and diplomas but also the practical experience of many social workers in Fiji.**
- Few policy papers or similar documents have been developed in child protection so far to transport institutional memory to further generations of politicians and professional staff. This lack of documentation of previous experience is a significant barrier to reforms in child protection. In particular, current efforts to implement the Child Welfare Act 2010 could have benefited from the lessons of previous pilot projects which attempted to introduce integrated child protection services through setting up a child abuse centre under the joint responsibility of several relevant agencies. **RECOMMENDATION: The NCCC could launch and maintain a database of brief summaries of key lessons, experiences, contacts and products generated from previous projects. Much of this information could be requested from the funding agencies as a matter of formal obligation, especially for the future initiatives. Individual ministries would also benefit from specific investment into the better documentation of their on-going work. A library of annual reports and relevant documents could be created under the NCCC and, ideally, made open as a web-based resource.**

DOMAIN 4.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Current progress

The strongest elements of Fiji's child protection data system are its flexibility and responsiveness to the changing policy demands. Currently, the flexible approach to the development of templates in the key ministries is an opportunity for responsive collaboration in data collection. The Fiji Bureau of Statistics (FIBOS) is bound by the legislation to incorporate demands for data from the policy makers and data collection plans are subject to approval of the Ministerial Senior Management but are otherwise flexible (even though this opportunity is not yet fully utilized by child protection stakeholders).

Open challenges

Effective data management is one of the biggest challenges for child protection in Fiji. The three biggest areas which need improvement are related to the quality of the databases, analytical capacities and communication between data users and data producers.

- Collection of data related to child abuse and maltreatment in Fiji is undertaken at the local level through several relevant ministries and departments, and is limited to recorded cases.
 - Headquarters of every ministry or department develop their individual templates for data collection and aggregation, without coordination with other agencies. Although FIBOS the MoSWWPA and NCCC brings some of this data together, this consolidation covers a small and variable range of indicators and is not regularly updated. As a result, evidence on child protection lacks consistent definitions and is not readily available for cross-cutting policy analysis or operational planning.
 - No data is collected on the incidence and prevalence of child abuse to identify risk groups for surveillance purposes.
 - The timeliness of data collected through individual agencies is highly variable. While the Fiji Police Force has an advanced daily data collection system, other ministries may lag several years behind in aggregating their field reports.

RECOMMENDATION: (1) Streamline, simplify and standardize internal data sharing protocols. Useful lessons could be drawn from the previous work on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) systems. (2) Explore ways to speed up data consolidation by headquarters, either by enhancing respective posts or by strengthening data processing skills. (3) Develop a practical model for child protection surveillance including protocols for analysis and sharing of relevant administrative records. This should be a joint effort with (a) the Ministry of Health, so that surveillance indicators for child abuse are included into the currently reformed Health Information System, and (b) FIBOS, so that the system includes data collected through population surveys.

- Most government agencies involved in child protection suffer from lack of analytical skills for evidence-based policy making. All key ministries and departments have minimum human capacities dedicated to data processing; and this personnel receives no training in statistical analysis. Relevant courses are offered by the CTD, although they are generic, and cover either very basic concepts or advanced skills, without a mid-range option. As a result, although policy makers have acute research questions, they are not able to address them properly.
RECOMMENDATION: Data officers should be directed to relevant CTD courses. In the meantime, it would be useful to develop a practical toolkit, manual and interactive training in data analysis for child protection. This toolkit could be used regionally and could be incorporated into the regular CTD curriculum.

- FIBOS and child protection agencies operate almost without any practical interaction. Child protection issues do not feature in any of the current surveys, and the only relevant type of administrative data consolidated by the FIBOS is on child abuse reported to the police. Although FIBOS is a transparent, user-friendly and open institution, they do not reach out to line ministries. From their side, child protection stakeholders do not involve FIBOS into their joint activities (including NCCC) and have not attempted incorporating child protection questions into the household surveys, even though legislation provides FIBOS with a mandate and a flexible procedure to survey coverage. **RECOMMENDATION: Consider inviting FIBOS to the NCCC (either as a member or as invitee); consider using their surveys; and consider using FIBOS as a hub for consolidating more information on child protection as is currently done with the data from Fiji police – perhaps as a lead agency in developing the integrated surveillance system.**
- Although Fiji has established a Protection Cluster to address child protection risks of natural disasters and relies on NCCC and the National Disaster Management Council (DISMAC) for orchestrating child-sensitive response efforts, less work was done on risk mapping and respective data management. FIBOS jointly with DISMAC began advanced projects for risk mapping and assessment, including Geographical Information Systems (GIS) for spatial risk analysis, but NCCC members do not seem involved in this initiative. **RECOMMENDATION: Consider linking the child protection agencies (individually or through the NCCC) with the geo-spatial planning champions (DISMAC and FIBOS) so that child protection issues are included in the risk assessment model.**
- There are significant opportunities to engage academia and civil society into a joint research agenda and data collection, but they are not yet proactively utilized. Much of the current external research – including studies by international organizations – is driven by internal and poorly coordinated priorities. Apart from informal communication, there is no regular mechanism for the academia to supply evidence to policy makers in child protection. Notably, such a mechanism has already been established for the Health sector: The Fiji School of Medicine, within the Fiji National University, runs a Centre for Health Information, Policy and Systems Research (CHIPSR) specifically to facilitate the use of evidence-based research in national policies (helping academic staff to liaise with the government, donors and regional agencies, and driving student research towards topical policy areas). **RECOMMENDATION: Consider partnering with the CHIPSR to either include a child protection module in its current operations or to replicate their experience to create a similar unit under the USP School of Social Sciences.**



UNICEF Pacific/2014/Alcock

DOMAIN 5. QUALITY ASSURANCE

Current progress

Fiji has developed strong building blocks to secure quality in the provision of services to children.

- Child protection programmes across ministries capitalize on the tradition of community participation in addressing child risks (successful models for community integration include community policing; child labour prevention, and the positive parenting package “Children are a Gift from God”). The Family Law Act 2003 and the Juveniles Act 2003 specify requirements for using residential placements as an option of last resort and for non-custodial sentencing of young offenders. The MoSWWPA supports a community corrections programme for the reintegration of children in conflict with the law.
- The MoSWWPA Corporate Plan contains a clear goal to encourage innovation in child welfare service provision (Sub-Output 5.1); and a lenient registration procedure along with flexible financing rules does not discourage creative solutions.
- The Department of Social Welfare (DoSW) is clearly defined as the core gatekeeper and receives continuous reinforcement to its capacity in exercising this function (including 23 additional officers on recommendation of a functional review in 2013). The Child Welfare Decree 2010 mandates all other agencies to report all instances and risks of child abuse to the DoSW. Compliance is not yet universal, but ideas have been developed to address this by setting up integrated child protection teams at the local level.

Open challenges

At the same time, significant barriers to quality still remain.

- Although Fiji has led the region in developing Minimum Standards of Care for Children in Residential Placement, and clearly identified the role of the DoSW in the supervision of the organizations working with children, in reality the Standards (and respective certification) are not mandatory and their application is currently limited to several organizations (including residential homes) which receive funding from the government's budget. Although the DoSW conducts physical inspections of these organizations at least once a year and collects written performance reports, the oversight is limited to a small range of providers. This, in turn, is linked to the current arsenal of sanctions for violations of standards: the tools in the hands of the DoSW include the removal of rule-breakers. **RECOMMENDATION: The DoSW may consider ways to extend the current Standards to the rest of the service providers. At the very minimum, the current set of Standards should become more transparent (openly published and promoted across all NGOs, rather than just the government grantees and approved institutions). Ideally, the Standards should become law. In addition, a mandatory certification procedure based on these Standards, along with a feasible mechanism to sanction violations, would be an important next step. One possible option to consider as an enforcement tool could be a joint policy with the chief registrar,¹ whose office currently bears responsibility for the legal incorporation of all NGOs in Fiji and has the power to cancel incorporation, although the current plausible reasons are limited to fraud and unlawful actions. At the very least, the registrar should provide working-level access to the list of currently incorporated NGOs involved in social welfare activities to the DoSW for the purposes of designing a supervision system.**
- The government's approach to child protection does not yet include a robust system of surveillance. Apart from the dedication of extra staff and training to high-risk communities, identified based on case management data by the Fiji police and the DoSW, there is no system or activities to analyse broader ranges of data, including epidemiological evidence, to establish abuse risk factors and provide targeted prevention and protection to the identified groups of vulnerable children and families. **RECOMMENDATION: The current practice of risk analysis for identifying vulnerable communities could become a cornerstone for the gradual development of a full-scale surveillance system. Key agencies to lead in this initiative (MoSWWPA, in cooperation with the MoH, Fiji police and FIBOS) would benefit from respective training and technical support.**

¹ Operations of the civil society organizations in Fiji are regulated by the Charitable Trusts Act (Cap. 67) amended by two additional Decrees in 2011 and 2013. Under the Charitable Trusts Act (Cap. 67), incorporation of NGOs is the duty of the Registrar of Titles. It remains to be verified whether the Office of the Chief Registrar had taken over the functions of this authority.

DOMAIN 6.

PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS AND INFLUENCING

Current progress

During 2000-2008, international organizations helped Fiji undertake a range of in-depth diagnostic studies of attitudes and values related to child rights and upbringing, including the UNICEF Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices (KAP) survey, a range of further qualitative surveys, such as the 2008 Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) assessment, and, finally, the 2008 UNICEF/AusAID Baseline Report “Protect Me with Love and Care”. Discoveries from these studies enabled the government, jointly with the donors, to formulate clear objectives for influencing and behaviour change, which were used for strategic programming and reflected in the government’s community-based awareness raising programmes.

Resulting public communications approach has a range of particular strengths:

- All behaviour change efforts are permeated with attempts to build on existing positive values. The 2008 Baseline Report had specifically highlighted positive, rather than negative attitudes to children and their upbringing. The subsequent community-based awareness raising agenda was structured around a positive parenting concept and titled “Children are a Gift from God”, referring to one of the most positive and widely shared values related to children. The explicit tactics of positive parenting is to use existing positive attitudes to develop appreciation of currently unfamiliar child protection concepts and objectives. This is done through constant creative interaction with the audience (parents, teachers and children themselves).
- The current approach to communications actively involves key opinion shapers such as religious authorities and community leaders. At the same time, there is no practice of engaging other prominent figures, such as celebrities, although some authors in celebrity studies believe that the dynamics of fame in small Pacific country contexts can provide celebrities and stars with a very strong influence. **RECOMMENDATION: Consider involving influential public figures and celebrities to delivering value-changing messages for child protection.**
- Existing awareness raising programmes cover a broad range of emerging and intermittent child protection risks, such as adverse externalities of new digital technologies, thriving tourism, transformation of family structures and growing peer pressure on children resulting from monetization of the economy. The community policing initiative also explicitly includes influencing measures to promote social cohesion and restore the delicate balance of attitudes within the multi-cultural society of Fiji (to prevent discrimination and minimize the prospect of the reoccurrence of political turbulence and social unrest which was shown to have devastating child protection consequences).

Open challenges

- The biggest weakness of the government's current approach to communication is lack of a systemic investment in its own human and financial resources into diagnostic analysis of the cultural context to support communication policy design. Although the current communication agenda is explicit and linked to concrete awareness raising programmes, it remains externally driven and based on the studies led and funded by the donors. FIBOS surveys do not include any variables which would generate evidence on current attitudes or help to track their change in order to evaluate the impact of influencing effort and adjust communications policies.

RECOMMENDATION: *Future internationally led attitudinal studies should clearly link to the government's own programmatic agendas (such as those formulated in the RDSSED and ministerial corporate plans) and, ideally, engage at least a symbolic co-funding from the national budget so that diagnostic attitudinal research is recognized as a practical investment. This should also help to extend communication objectives to cover a comprehensive range of child protection concerns rather than the currently selective areas such as positive parenting, child labour or school-based abuse. The government-owned communication strategy should also involve clear specification of audiences and methods, perhaps with a stronger involvement of media campaigns, social advertising, socially responsible investments by the private sector and other state-of-the-art techniques.*

- The University of the South Pacific (USP) fosters a wide range of world-class research focusing on the culture, customs and traditions in the South Pacific. However, none of the publicly listed papers and research topics seem to address the links between cultural context and child protection. Given the visible interest of the social sciences academics in Fiji to research cultural systems, attracting their attention to child protection concerns is an opportunity on which the government could capitalize. **RECOMMENDATION:** *Consider forging stronger working-level cooperation with the USP student and research communities to draw attention to child protection concerns, make the government's attitudinal questions known to the academia, and request research on the issue. The government could initiate specific joint events with the students to present key policy concerns and use teasers in the form of access to data, access to field-level experience and honorary recognition of any contributing work.*





DOMAIN 1. POLICY PROCESS

INDICATOR 1.1.

CLARITY AND CONSISTENCY OF CHILD PROTECTION POLICY PRIORITIES

	ASSESSMENT	SCORE
Regulatory framework is capable of instilling a collective sense of direction in child protection reforms:	A	3.5
Four criteria for indicators		
• The country has ratified UN conventions relevant to children's rights to protection; ²	Yes, restricted	0.75
• The government has a national child protection policy statement or national framework document, supported with respective plans of action with clear mid-term priorities;	Yes, restricted	0.75
• National programmatic documents for child protection are supported with coherent sub-national legislation or consistent guidelines for implementation at relevant sub-national levels;	Yes	1.00
• Child protection priorities are known and understood by the majority of stakeholders throughout the system.	Yes	1.00

Ratification of international conventions

Among most Pacific countries (excluding Australia and New Zealand), Fiji is the absolute leader in the legal recognition of civil and political rights. This is reflected both in the amount of respective international treaties signed by the country and in the content of national legislation (OHCHR; PIFS, 2009). In particular, unlike most other Pacific island countries (PICs), Fiji has joined a large number of international treaties relevant to child protection (18 out of 29, or 62 per cent, as listed in Table 1).

A significant share of these treaties were ratified immediately after Independence, covering key issues in child labour as well as early and servile marriage. This included the UN Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration

of Marriages and ILO treaties related to the abolition of forced labour (see Figure 1). Importantly, already by that time, Fiji has joined two UN conventions on the abolition of slavery which are even now ratified by very few countries in East Asia and Pacific region. These conventions include commitment to protect children from forced labour, including through servile marriage (by specifying the marriageable age) (UNGA, 1926) (UNGA, 1956).

In 1993, Fiji ratified the CRC and in 1995 it ratified the CEDAW, after which almost every other year it has accepted new international commitments related to child protection. In these last two decades, this included the two optional protocols to the CRC and ILO conventions on WFCL and minimum age. In 2010 Fiji signed the UN Convention on the Rights of the Persons with Disabilities (and is still one of the few PICs which explicitly protects disabled persons within the national legislation) (OHCHR; PIFS, 2009).

² 76-100 per cent relevant conventions ratified = "Yes"; 51-75 per cent relevant conventions ratified = "Yes, restricted"; 26-50 per cent relevant conventions ratified = "No, extended"; 0-25 per cent relevant conventions ratified = "No."

Fiji also remains one of the few countries in the entire East Asia and Pacific region which had adopted the two Hague Conventions protecting children from the risks of abuse in international adoption. The Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction was signed in 1999 (as of early 2014, the list of other countries in the region which signed this Convention include Japan, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand, Australia, and New Zealand). Most recently – in 2012 – Fiji also ratified the Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption, which is not ratified by any other country in the Pacific apart from Australia and New Zealand.

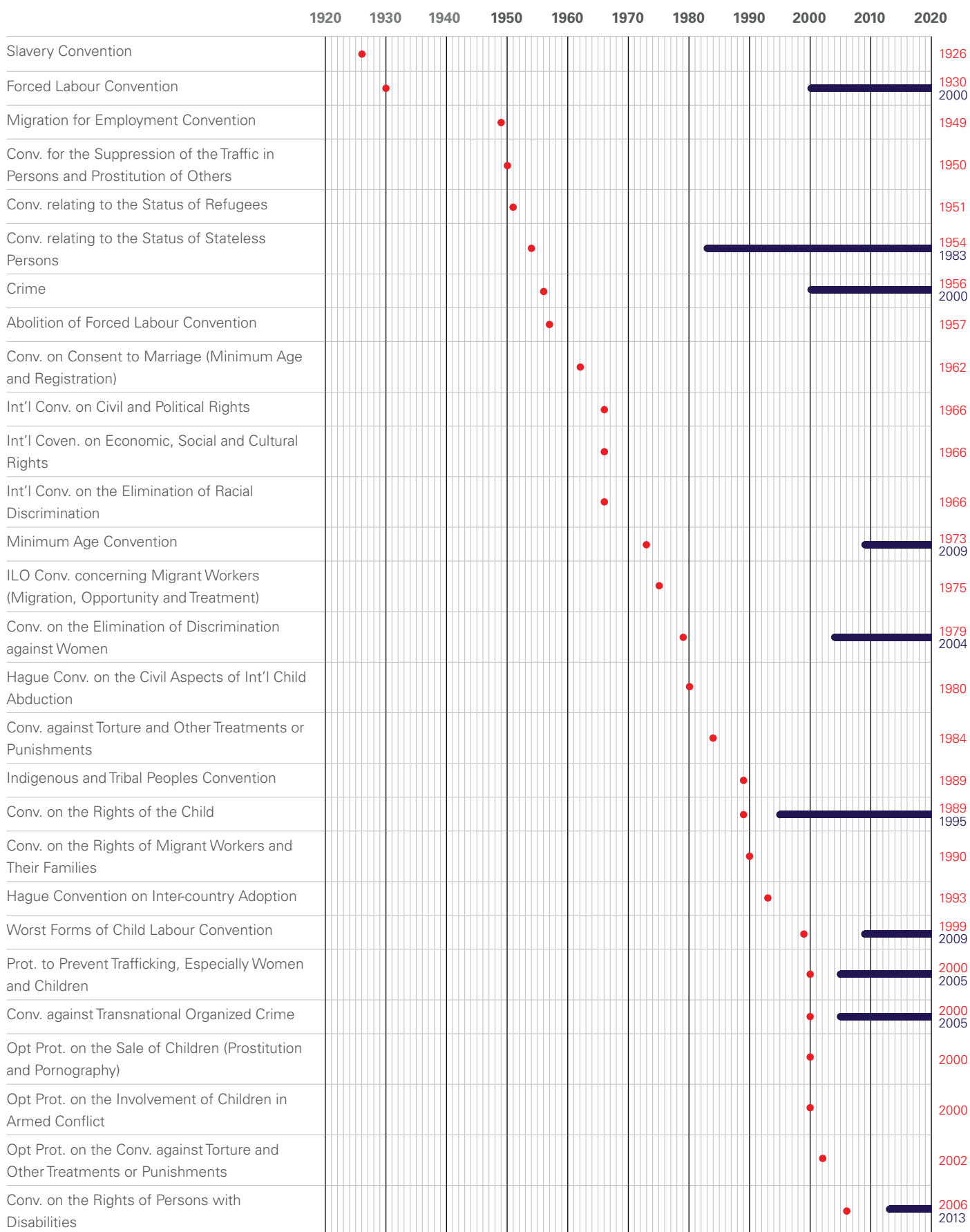
At the same time, Fiji still remains outside some of the other important international commitments which are critical for the protection of children from abuse, maltreatment and exploitation:

- While the government accepted the recommendation to join major international human rights treaties, this remains an open and challenging task. Political turbulence of the recent decade has created numerous challenges to protection of human rights in Fiji. Only in September 2013, the country has succeeded in introducing a new Constitution, filling the vacuum which was created by abrogation of the previous (1997) Constitution in 2009. As will be discussed in next sections, the new Constitution became an important step in proclaiming the rights critical for child protection, although it was still criticised by human rights watch groups including for continued limitation of key rights such as the right for expression (Amnesty International, 2013). Throughout these years, Fiji was criticized for restriction on civil liberties and for the “reluctance to become party to major human right treaties coupled with poor reporting practices” (Svoboda, 2009). In particular, as most other PICs, Fiji has not signed the two UN Covenants on the Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) as well as Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). However, by 2010 Fiji accepted the recommendation to sign and ratify these treaties, which remains work in progress (CRIN, 2010).
- Numerous reservations to ICERD and ambiguities around the ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention reflect the difficulty in reaching racial unity and building a nation-state. Ethnic tensions in Fiji are deeply rooted in the country’s complex history and prevalent fears “affecting people’s daily lives” (Narayan, 2008). While Fiji has been a party to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) since 1973, it has made numerous reservations to this treaty. By 1996, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination stated that these reservations have become “so broad that they were suggested completely incompatible with the object and purpose of the convention” (CERD, 1996) (Svoboda, 2009). Importantly, in 1998, Fiji became the only country in the region which ratified the ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention. However, as noted by Kelly and Kaplan, this ratification illustrated a “failure of the world’s meta-legislators to envision the predicaments Fiji’s new lawmakers faced: a state in which the allegedly vulnerable indigenous people were half the

population and a state in which the claimants to special treatment were precisely the political dominant group” (Kell and Kapla, 2001). In this ambiguity, Fiji became a case where international human rights guidance was not readily translatable into national state-building and required considerable additional discussion and new solutions, which are still being shaped.

- Fiji is staying outside the two key UN conventions on trafficking, but their provisions are gradually mainstreamed into national regulations. The two UN treaties not yet signed by Fiji are the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. The trafficking of children for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation and forced labour is a significant problem for Fiji, which is a source country of trafficked children especially given the growing tourist popularity of the South Pacific (The Protectin Project, 2010). The latest CRC report by Fiji stated that while the government has not signed the respective international treaties, it had addressed the issue in a way consistent with both conventions within the countries Crimes Decree (Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2011).
- While almost no international migration treaties were ratified, reversing migration trends mean that Fiji’s immigrant population is shrinking. Fiji is not party to any of the key international treaties protecting the rights of international migrants (the UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, the ILO Migration for Employment Convention and the ILO Convention concerning Migration in Abusive Conditions and the Promotion of Equality of Opportunity and Treatment of Migrant Workers). Fiji’s latest CRC report does not acknowledge that the protection of migrant children is a significant problem for the country. It states that “Fiji has not experienced a circumstance in which children from outside Fiji reach Fiji and claim asylum” (Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2011). Since Independence, net migration rates in Fiji were negative, with many more people (about 90 per cent of them Indo-Fijians) leaving the country than coming in (UNICEF, 2013) (Lal, 2003).
- One other international treaty which is not supported by Fiji is the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. Another treaty which was not supported by any country in the Pacific (except Australia, New Zealand, and Nauru), the UN Convention against Torture is an important ingredient to child protection agenda. Children are at particular risk given the widespread practice of corporal punishment but also reported instances of police brutality which may affect juvenile offenders. Again, by 2010 Fiji accepted the recommendation to sign and ratify this Convention (CRIN, 2010).

Figure 1. Fiji participation in international conventions related to child protection in 1926-2013



● Year of international treaty adoption ■ Date of signing by Fiji

Table 1. International treaties: current status for Fiji

	Treaty adopted	Year of joining
UN treaties		
Slavery convention	1926	1972
Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others	1950	-
Convention relating to the Status of Refugees	1951	-
Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons	1954	1962
Crime	1956	1957
Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages	1962	1971
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights	1966	-
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights	1966	-
International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination	1966	1973
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women	1979	1995
Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment	1984	-
Convention on the Rights of the Child	1989	1993
Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families	1990	-
Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transitional Organized Crime	2000	-
Convention against Transnational Organized Crime	2000	-
Optional protocol to the CRC on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography	2000	2005
Optional protocol to the CRC on the involvement of children in armed conflict	2000	2005
Optional protocol to the convention against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment	2002	-
Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	2006	2010
ILO Conventions		
Forced Labour Convention	1930	1974
Migration for Employment Convention	1949	-
Abolition of Forced Labour Convention	1957	1974
Minimum Age Convention	1973	2003
ILO Convention concerning Migration in Abusive Conditions and the Promotion of Equality of Opportunity and Treatment of Migrant Workers	1975	-
Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention	1989	1998
Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention	1999	2002
Other		
Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction	1980	1999
Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption	1993	2012

National child protection priorities

There are several key programmatic frameworks which, jointly, define priorities in child protection for Fiji. These three frameworks are listed below and described further in more detail. They include:

- **Framework Child protection regulations.** The country has introduced a set of framework regulations (most importantly, the 2010 Child Welfare Decree, the 2009 Crimes Decree, the 2009 Domestic Violence Decree, and 2007 Employment Relations Promulgation) which outline key principles and expectations to a protective environment for children; however, these regulations do not contain action points and achievement targets as such.
- **Multi-year national strategic planning documents.** Fiji government operates a coherent system for national development planning which includes cross-cutting child protection objectives. This national planning system is based on the country's core strategic document – the 2008 People's Charter for Change, Peace and Progress (PCCPP) and the Roadmap for Democracy and Sustainable Socio-Economic Development (RDSSSED) and feeds into the annual corporate plans of all ministries, ultimately defining their programmes and budgets.
- **Joint strategic planning with key donors.** Finally, the third key framework for prioritization of actions in child protection is the government's joint programming agenda with key donors. With active participation of UNICEF, the current child protection programme builds on the UNDAF Results Matrix for 2013-2017. This is a multi-country programme covering the Pacific region, with some expectations being similar across the PICs, but most outputs formulated specifically for individual contexts including Fiji. It outlines key UNICEF programme components and indicative annual resource allocations, along with expected output targets and indicators. UNICEF works on the implementation of this programme in partnership with the NCCC, although the government's 2010 CRC periodic report stated that implementation of the child protection programme is the primary responsibility of the Ministry of Social Welfare.

Priorities within the framework decrees

Evolution of framework laws in itself dictates priorities and directions for change. A range of new decrees introduced in Fiji in 2007-2010 establishes an extended set of requirements to how children should be protected from the risks of abuse and exploitation. Complying with these new requirements is a challenge which, by itself, translates into respective policy priorities.

- **The 2010 Child Welfare Decree: raised standards for identifying, reporting and responding to cases of abuse.** The new decree established explicit duties and principles for professionals of all fields to report any discovered cases of child maltreatment to the Permanent

Secretary of Social Welfare. The decree outlined the details of the reporting and referral process and requirements for follow-up. It also requested that all reporting would be done with due protection of private information and described sanctions for any breach of confidentiality. Clear rules were also established for the provision of medical help, temporary shelter and further support to child victims, including the principle of acting in the child's best interest.

Ensuring compliance with these new principles assumes at least some of the immediate priorities, such as building the capacity of professionals in related fields including health and education to identify abuse cases and use the new referral procedures and establishing capacities to respond to the reported cases (as was also noted in the latest CRC periodic report) (Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2011).

- **The 2009 Crimes Decree; 2009 Domestic Violence Decree: criminalization of neglect, domestic violence, and child trafficking.** Some of the grave types of abuse were explicitly criminalized with the new decrees issued in 2009, declaring it an offence to smuggle and traffic in persons and specifically children; to commit violent acts against a person who is in a family or domestic relationship with the offender (including specific provisions against allowing children to witness domestic violence); and to neglect children under 14 years of age by failing to "provide them with necessities of life".
- **The 2009 Penalties and Sentencing Decree: growing focus on community-based programmes and child protection skills in Justice Sector.** Fiji endorsed a Juvenile Act in 2003, which requested that custodial sentence should be used as a last resort for juvenile offenders and obliged the Ministry of Social Welfare to provide safe placements for children in conflict with the law. However, further regulations (the 2009 Crimes Decree and the 2009 Penalties and Sentencing Decree) specified these rules and set out a range of additional requirements. The decrees have clarified definitions (including the age of criminal responsibility established at 10 and 14, if the child did not know the act was wrong), re-enforced the requirement for imprisonment to be used only as a last resort for children, and encouraged community-based rehabilitation and reintegration programmes for young offenders. These strengthened policies have created additional demands for training and awareness raising with justice sector professionals, as well as for designing and implementing community-based rehabilitation programmes.
- **2007 Employment Relations Promulgation: need for new monitoring mechanisms and support to victims of WFCL, as well as livelihood programmes for vulnerable families.** This new law brought considerable changes to Fiji labour regulations, replacing a number of previous laws which were described as "old and having political nature of control that existed in the colonial era". The new law aimed to establish new standards of employment with equal opportunities, eliminating a mindset in which "employer can do whatever he wants just to maximize profits and treat the workers like



objects”³ (Singh, 2008). An important part of the new approach was protection of the rights of children (Part 10 of the Promulgation), which introduced a range of provisions to protect children from labour which could “harm their health, safety or morals”. At the same time, as of 2010, ILO found that the scale of child labour in Fiji was very high and growing, including children employed in hazardous work and commercial sexual exploitation. The ILO study found that enforcing the new law required the government to create new monitoring mechanisms, invest into education and training, particularly for the out-of-school youth, and install targeted programmes for families to increase their income earning capacities (ILO, 2010). The government was also recommended to clarify the list and definitions of hazardous occupations and to design specific programmes to support victims of the worst forms of child labour (US Department of Labor, 2012).

Annual and multi-annual planning

The People’s Charter (PCCPP) is a broad document which defines core development objectives, or “Pillars”. The PCCPP does not address child issues as a particular. It defines ‘Eleven Pillars for Rebuilding Fiji,’ but none of these pillars deals specifically with children or child protection (see Figure 2). At the same time, the document contains an important statement which inspires further elaboration of child protection policies in other strategic documents. It says that within the PCCPP the People of Fiji affirm “that the ultimate test to our civility as a people is what we do, individually and collectively, to empower and uplift the lives of all citizens in our country, including what we do to protect and enhance the interests and aspirations of women, youth and the vulnerable and disadvantaged sections of our communities”.

³ Quote from Mr. Taito Waqa, Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Productivity as cited in (Singh, 2008)

Figure 2. Child protection priorities in key programmatic documents

2008 People’s Charter (PCCPP) [eleven pillars]	Road Map 2010-2014 (RDSSED) [goals and objectives]	Individual Agency Annual Corporate Working Plan (e.g. Fiji Correction Service) [outputs] [targets]	
1. Good Governance			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable democracy and good governance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law and Justice (improve responses to crimes against children; upgrade facilities to deal with these crimes) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved rehabilitation services 	per
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountable Leadership 	Effective service delivery? (Human resource management, information systems, accountability)		per
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public sector efficiency 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated structure at divisional level 			
2. Economic Development			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable economic growth 	Labour markets? Small-medium enterprises in community-based rehabilitation?		per
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land availability 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global/international integration 			
3. Socio-Cultural Development			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social cohesion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equal opportunities for all (disabilities; children in alternative care) • Children and youth (legal compl. with CRC; child participation; combat child abuse; parenting skill; counselling; livelihood training and development programmes for youth; stronger policy process) • Gender equality (protection from crimes against women and children) • Protect poorest children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poverty reduction with MoSW 	per
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poverty reduction 	Disaster? Health?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge-based society 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved health services 			

PCCPP Pillars are operationalized into five-year targets within the RDSSED, which contain specific child protection components. The Roadmap for Democracy and Sustainable Socio-Economic Development (RDSSED),

“A Better Fiji for All” covers a specific period of 2010-2014 and elaborates PCCPP pillars into a range of goals and policy objectives.

- As illustrated in Figure 2, the RDSSED breaks all its goals and objectives into three broad groups: Good Governance; Economic Development; and Socio-Cultural Development. Most of the child protection priorities are listed within “Socio-Cultural Development” as linked to “(Protection and development of) Children and Youth”. These include:

- Review, implement and monitor legislation with the principles and provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and other relevant international instruments;
- Promotion of children and youth issues and their increased participation in decision-making processes, at all levels;
- Promote a protective environment for children and combat all forms of child abuse and pornography in partnership with community and faith-based organizations and NGOs;
- Ensure greater understanding of parenting skills and strengthen family counselling services for children and youth on sexual, drug and substance abuse, suicide and infanticide, reproductive health education and family life issues;
- Increase number of youths trained for livelihood activities and lifelong skills and values to be responsible citizens;
- Support the establishment of small and micro-enterprise projects for youth in rural and urban centres;
- Re-structure all youth development programmes towards a more client oriented and market driven approach;
- Encourage National Volunteer Services in all Govt. Ministries, and Statutory Bodies;

- Strengthen policy formulation, programme implementation and monitoring.

- Goals related to child protection are mentioned as part of strategies for Social Cohesion and Gender Equality (Ensuring appropriate sentencing penalties and counselling for violent crimes against children; promotion of the rights of children with disabilities and children in alternative care) and Social Protection (access to basic services and protection for the poorest children).
- In addition, the RDSSED outlines child protection goals related to law and justice as part of the broader good governance agenda. These include: improved response to violent crimes against children and upgrade of the facilities which deal with such crimes.

The RDSSED is based on the brief diagnostic analysis of many child protection issues. It states explicitly that “Fiji’s future prosperity depends on nurturing and developing children who are well prepared to take their place in tomorrow’s society.” Most of the diagnostics is focused on violent crimes against children, observing that even though absolute amounts of crimes are falling, detection rates “need much improvement”. The analysis also notes a growing complexity of child protection risks including transnational crimes and sex trade. The strategy also notes that “policy cannot cope with these tasks on its own” without better engagement of communities; but community-based initiatives and innovative correction approaches are not explicitly raising specific issues of child protection and juvenile justice.

“There has been some improvements in the management of child abuse, but there is still urgent need for legal reform to impose severer penalties on offenders, to make the collection of evidence easier, offer additional protection to the survivor of abuse through the legislative process, provide specialized counselling services to children and their families, and to organize community awareness programmes to help change attitudes and stigma associated with child abuse.” - RDSSED

Some areas with significant child protection risks are not listed in the RDSSED as priorities. For example, it does not contain any child-specific expectations to labour market regulations (which may include child labour issues) or disaster preparedness.

While the RDSSED outlines a strategic multi-year development plan, its objectives are further elaborated in the individual strategic plans and annual corporate plans by each government ministry and agency. The annual corporate plans are clearly linked to the PCCPP pillars as well as the RDSSED objectives, breaking them down into sub-priorities and programmes at the level of respective ministries. For example, as illustrated in Figure 2 for the Fiji Corrections Service (FCS), the annual corporate

plan of this agency (for 2013) contained a range of more specific child protection outputs, such as child protection and gender training for the officers involved in dealing with women and children, as well as the improvement of rehabilitation services. A more detailed illustration of how RDSEED goals are translated into individual ministerial activities is provided in Table 2. This table brings together only two corporate plans: for MoSWWPA and Fiji Correction Service (FCS). However, it shows that, in principle, the current planning structure is functional and does translate multi-year and cross-cutting goals into a list of operational ministerial outputs and targets.

Table 2. Illustration of links between PCCPP , RDSSSED and annual corporate plans for two agencies

PCCPP Pillars for Rebuilding Fiji	RDSSSED goals / policy Objectives (Ministerial Targeted Outcomes)	RDSSSED key Performance Indicators (Ministerial Outcome Performance Indicators)	Ministerial outputs
Ensuring sustainable democracy and good and just governance	Gender equality and women in Development	Output 3 (MoSWWPA): Gender equity, equality and empowerment of women.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elimination of violence against women and children • Access to basic services
	Children and youth	Output4 (MoSWWPA): Child protection services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption and foster care • Adoption decree • HAGUE protocol • Community based corrections decree • Protocols on adoption and foster care.
		Output 5 (MoSWWPA): Licensing, compliance and monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Court reports • Child welfare cases • CRC report • Care plans • Audit of residential homes for minimum standards compliance
		Output 6 (MoSWWPA): Supervision of non-custodial Sentences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trained community and probation supervisors
	Social justice	Output 7 (MoSWWPA): Service to people with disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of Fiji national council for disabled persons (FNCDP) ACT and ratification of CRPD
	Law and justice	Output 1 (FCS): Safety and security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in complaints and disciplinary against [FCS] disciplined service officers by 50 per cent
		Output 2 (FCS): Improved rehabilitation services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in correction facilities breakouts by 50 per cent
Output 5 (FCS): Improved corporate services		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce recidivism by 50 per cent • FCS yearly expenditure remain within budgetary allocations 	
Enhancing public sector efficiency, performance effectiveness and service delivery	Public sector reform	PSC and Financial Deliverables (MoSWWPA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service excellence award • Customer charter
		Output 5 (FCS). Improved corporate services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate FCS Human Resources Management [HRM] framework, Human information Resources System, [HIRS] and review FCS remuneration • Capacity building and Institutional strengthening • Policy development and Implementation • Develop future Leadership programs for FCS
	Gender and equality	Output 5 (FCS). Improved corporate services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide equal opportunities within FCS based on equal gender base • Provide code of conduct for the FCS enhance staff training and development programs for all corrections officers – inclusion of Female officers in all trainings
Achieving higher economic growth while ensuring sustainability	Micro, small and medium enterprise development	Output 1 (FCS). Safety and security Output 2 (FCS). Improved rehabilitation Output 3 (FCS). Improved infrastructure Output 4 (FCS). Improved correction enterprise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of FCS Enterprise to commercialisation • Establishment of community action for the rehabilitation of Ex Offenders [CARE] • Upgrade and maintain FCS infrastructure • Increase food security

Table 2. Illustration of links between PCCPP , RDSSSED and annual corporate plans for two agencies (continued)

PCCPP Pillars for Rebuilding Fiji	RDSSSED Goals / policy objectives (Ministerial Targeted Outcomes)	RDSSSED key Performance Indicators (Ministerial Outcome Performance Indicators)	Ministerial outputs
Reducing poverty to a negligible level by 2015	Poverty reduction	Output 2 (MoSWWPA): Poverty alleviation –assistance to disadvantaged persons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of grants under the Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP), including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Working together with the prisons and correctional services for prisoners Rehabilitation - Disbursements of grants to NGOs that assist the ministry’s role in the protection and care of children and the disadvantaged in the community. - Housing assistance to PAP and CandP beneficiaries • Provision of poverty benefit allowance to poor and disadvantaged families using new poverty targeting approach • Provision of care and protection allowance to poor households with children who will need care and protection
		Output 2 (FCS). Improved rehabilitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of rehabilitation and reintegration programmes for offenders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assess and evaluate the effective of the programme; - Facilitate and increase poverty alleviation programmes through the support of the Ministry of Social Welfare. - Increase partnership between government, the civil society and private sector

There does not seem to be a single child protection policy paper or strategy at the moment of this report.

While child protection objectives are rather clearly outlined in the RDSSSED, there is no single child protection policy paper or strategy (e.g. of the kind which exists, for instance, for National Youth Policy) (Ministry of Youth and Sports, 2012). In other words, there is no document which comprehensively outlines the inputs of various agencies into the overall child protection reform (summarizing respective elements of their corporate plans), reinforces timelines and financing commitments. A child protection policy was mentioned in some of the government documents (such as, e.g., the MoENHCA 2010 Policy on Child protection in Schools), but it could not be found, and other sources noted that it has been in development since 2011 (FijiLive, 2011) (Moceica, 2012). At the time of this report, development of a Child protection Strategy was also discussed at the NCCC but as such that had not yet materialized.

Joint government-donor planning

Joint government-donor priorities in child protection are outlined in the 2013-2017 UNDAF/UNICEF results matrix. As was noted earlier, in addition to the in-house planning tools, the government engages in joint strategizing for child protection with the key donors led by UNICEF. This dimension of the child protection policy process, led by the NCCC, is specifically mentioned in the RDSSSED. The RDSSSED refers to a joint planning document (Resources and Results-Based Framework) which existed at the time and covered 2008-2012; by the time of this report it was superseded by the 2013-2017 UNDAF including the Child protection Component. The current set of objectives is described in Table 2. As shown in that table, the matrix is rather flexible and focuses on joint work on child protection legislation reforms, developing implementation capacities (including budgeting and monitoring), inter-agency cooperation protocols, and mainstreaming child protection into local planning and the education sector. The UNDAF matrix also specifically highlights the need to address child protection aspects of emergency preparedness – an important specification of the RDSSSED generic description of disaster preparedness objectives.

Table 3. UNICEF/UNDAF results matrix for child protection 2013-2017 (Fiji)

Expected outcomes (Programme Component Results) (PCRs)	Expected outputs (Intermediate Results) (IRs)	Output targets and indicators (IR indicators and targets)
<p>PCR 7: Child protection systems (including justice and police, child and family social services, health and education and communities) provide improved quality of and access to services for the prevention of and response to violence, abuse and exploitation of children at all times.</p>	<p>7.5. By 2017, Fiji strengthens implementation of legal, regulatory and policy frameworks at national, provincial and district levels for the protection of children, including in emergencies.</p>	<p>7.5.11 Existence of policy and legislation for child protection incorporating international norms and standards. 7.5.2 Child protection related legislation and policies with implementation plans, budgets and monitoring frameworks in place.</p>
	<p>7.10 By 2017, the Fijian government and civil society have strengthened capacity to provide children and families with improved access to child and family welfare and child justice services to prevent and respond to violence, abuse and exploitation, including in emergencies.</p>	<p>7.10.1 Established inter-agency protocols and procedures for case management.</p>
<p>PCR 8 Parents, caregivers, and children demonstrate skills, knowledge and behaviour, enabling children to grow up in caring homes and communities, including schools that are free from violence, abuse and exploitation</p>	<p>IR 8.5 By 2017, Fijian parents, families and communities demonstrate strengthened knowledge, attitude and practices creating an environment that protects children from violence, abuse and exploitation</p>	<p>8.5.1 Proportion of divisions in target areas that have and are implementing a child protection plan including in emergencies 8.3.2 Proportion of schools with a child protection policy and non-violent disciplinary procedures in place.</p>

Consistency of policy priorities across government tiers

Child protection policies in Fiji are delivered through a complex, rather unique and constantly evolving multi-layer governance structure. This structure combines elements of highly decentralized traditional leadership hierarchies (which take their roots in pre-colonial times) with centralized administrative structures led by the national government. The uniqueness of Fiji is in the high degree of autonomy which prevailed between these two governance arrangements throughout the last century despite the fundamental political changes which were happening during that period. The current political agenda established within the 2008 People’s Charter intends to address any duplications and inefficiencies arising from this exceptional arrangement. As a result, Fiji is currently going through significant institutional restructuring at all levels of government, with considerable potential impact on the provision of child protection services.

Approximate organization of Fiji multi-layer governance is illustrated in Figure 3:

- **A fundamental part of Fiji governance is the long-established hierarchy of elected local councils, which (until recently) focused on the needs of iTaukei population.** In the traditional iTaukei communities, heads are chosen for the villages, their groupings (*tikinas*) and, ultimately, provincial councils which include representatives of *tikinas*. Provincial councils are influential bodies with power to introduce their own by-laws and rates (local taxes) albeit in coordination with the iTaukei Affairs Board – a central government department. Importantly, until recently, the iTaukei administration focused primarily at issues and needs of the iTaukei communities (Rahman and Singh, 2009).
- **Other (non-iTaukei) rural communities have stayed under direct supervision of the central Ministry of Provincial (Rural) Development.** For this purpose, the Ministry has established advisory rural authorities to ensure that these communities access basic amenities (Rahman and Singh, 2009).

- **In the urban areas, both iTaukei and other ethnic groups jointly elect municipal councils.** As provincial councils, these municipal councils also have the power to establish rates and by-laws, which are co-ordinated with another central body: the Ministry of Local Government, Urban Development, Housing and Environment.
- **In addition to devolved local administration (municipal and rural), the central government runs a centralized administrative service throughout the country which delivers most of the existing social policies and services.** This is achieved through deconcentrated representatives of central ministries in the four administrative divisions and their sub-units (districts and sub-districts). Each division is headed by a Divisional Commissioner, while district level authorities are headed by District Officers (Assistant District Officers in the sub-districts). All staff working in the division and district authorities are civil servants appointed by the central government (Rahman and Singh, 2009).

The scope of devolved functions overseen by the elected local councils is limited and, until recently, had had relatively little impact in child protection. While rural and municipal councils have the power to issue by-laws and impose rates, their own resources are rather limited, and so is the scope of public services which they offer to their constituencies. Although the Local Government Act (Cap. 125) authorizes any council “to do all things as it lawfully may and as it considers expedient to promote health, welfare and convenience of the inhabitants,” most councils limit their services to basic sanitation and city engineering (garbage collection, street lightening, food safety control, pollution control, dog control etc.).⁴ Councils also support local libraries, but do not seem to fund many other social services. Most services related to child protection – including activities of the social workers, police, teachers and health professionals – are funded through the central ministries, and respective staff are civil service employees working at division or district level (WHO, 2011). At the same time, as discussed in further sections, the role of the provincial structures in child protection is growing.

People’s Charter has launched significant reforms to integrate iTaukei administration with the programmes for social and economic development run through the central government hierarchy. One of the biggest and most sensitive areas of the recent political reforms has been the role, status and degree of autonomy of the iTaukei administration and its co-operation with the deconcentrated central government authorities. In particular, the 2008 People’s Charter explicitly noted that the iTaukei administration has been successful in promotion of culture in heritage, “but failed in areas of economic and social development.” It also noted that coordination of activities for social and economic programmes was “fragmented and ineffective.” Respectively, “establishment of integrated

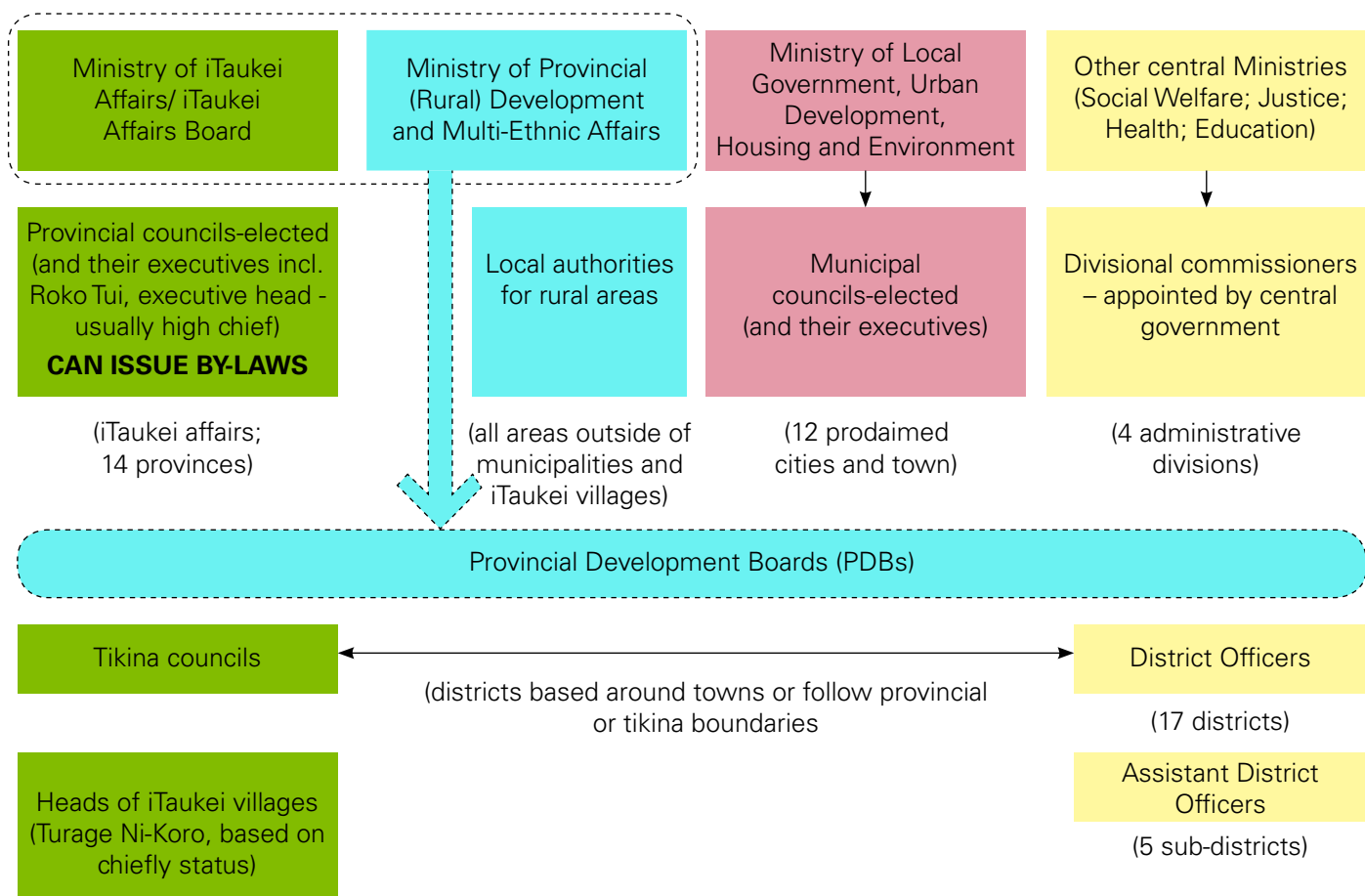
development structure at the divisional level” was chosen as one of the 11 Pillars of the People’s Charter. In particular, the Charter called for creation of Provincial Development Boards (PDBs) to coordinate programmes at local level, and by 2010 the Ministry of Rural Development has successfully created 14 such bodies. Moreover, a separate budget was allocated to development projects to be administered through the PDBs under supervision of Divisional Commissioners (RNZI, 2010). At the same time, based on the information published at the Fijian Government website, the Ministries of iTaukei Affairs and of Provincial Development were integrated, and the provincial councils began to expand their services in rural areas to all ethnic groups (Fijian Government Media Center, 2013).

Provincial councils increasingly integrate child protection objectives into their strategic plans and even allocate some funding to awareness raising. In line with the guidance of the People’s Charter, Provincial and Municipal Councils develop their strategic corporate plans. The corporate plans are supposed to be funded from local budgets, but activities could be proposed to be taken forward through the Development Boards which receive central funding. It is not clear whether local strategic plans are properly linked to respective budgets. At the same time, Provincial Strategic Plans seem to actively take up child protection objectives, and at least in some instances child protection activities were funded directly from local revenue.

- The Survey for this Assessment interviewed 11 child protection professionals working at district/province level, of which nine (or 82 per cent) have confirmed that their communities have a Strategic Development Plan with specific child protection objectives. These included:
 - Child protection (as a generic goal);
 - Facilitating awareness of child protection (especially at village level);
 - Ensuring protection of vulnerable children in the villages according to the national child protection programme.
- At least in one case, a respondent mentioned that his/her Provincial Council funded an awareness programme on child protection at Tikina and village level out of the local proceeds of provincial rates. In another case, a respondent stated that a child protection objective was mentioned in the plan, but no funding was ever allocated

⁴ See, for example, the list of services provided in 2013-2014 by the Suva City Council (<http://suvacity.org/our-services/>).

Figure 3. Multi-layer governance structure in Fiji



Local by-laws seem to rarely deal with child protection and risks of inconsistencies are low. The local by-laws do not seem to address any issues related to child protection, but that would require verification (as should be possible given that all by-laws established locally need to be approved by the central ministries (Local Government Act, Cap. 125). In principle, introduction of local regulation may open both opportunities and risks for protection of children’s rights. For example, by-laws introduced by some villages establish rules for the public flogging of offenders if traditional reconciliation fails to resolve matters and if the accused refuses to have his or her case to be referred to criminal court. Given that other village by-laws cover matters such as dress code and curfew hours for children, it is important to ensure that no children suffer corporal punishment and humiliation under these new regulations (Nadore, 2010).

Awareness of policy priorities by key partners and staff

Child protection professionals interviewed for this assessment through the focus group discussions (FGDs) and field mini-survey were mostly knowledgeable and confident about current priorities in the field. As illustrated in Figure 4, of the 17 surveyed staff, only two were not able to list any priorities for child protection. The majority of

surveyed professionals (59 per cent) answered the question on priorities with a list of specific action points for implementing government policies. Another 30 per cent of respondents understood policy priorities as child protection rights which should be addressed most urgently. These included:

- The right for protection from sexual abuse;
- The right for protection from physical abuse;
- The right for protection from child labour;
- The right not to be taken advantage of;
- The right not to be a victim of domestic violence;
- The right to be brought up in a good family and nurtured in a healthy environment;
- The right of education; adequate food and water.

Quoted priorities overwhelmingly focus on awareness raising, training and capacity building. Figure 4 also shows that an overwhelming majority of responses indicated that the key priority in child protection for the country was related to raising awareness and behaviour change. This included a range of programmes such as education at village and grassroots level, but also at the level of provinces and national stakeholders; raising the level of knowledge and understanding of the Child Welfare Decree; educating parents to change their attitudes to children and educating children to strengthen their resilience, as well as an overall change of culture. The second most popular response focused on various types of trainings, including training for trainers and training for officials such as committee members.

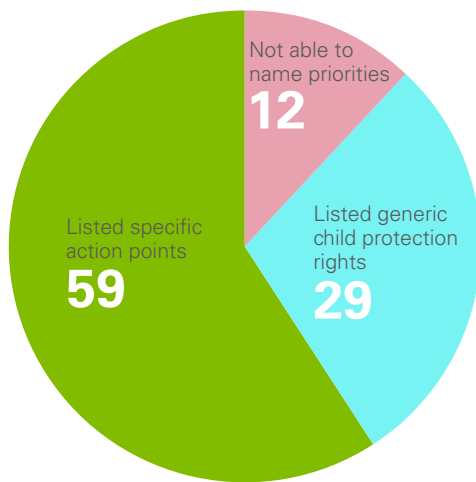
These responses strongly coincide with priorities declared in the government’s programmatic documents.

As discussed earlier, while each ministry focuses on its individual inputs to the child protection system, awareness of child protection issues as well as of new policies and decrees is a priority in all of these strategies, combined with programmes for community-based protection responses and youth participation. This approach is reflected within the 2010-2014 Roadmap for Democracy and Sustainable Socio-Economic Development (RDSSED)

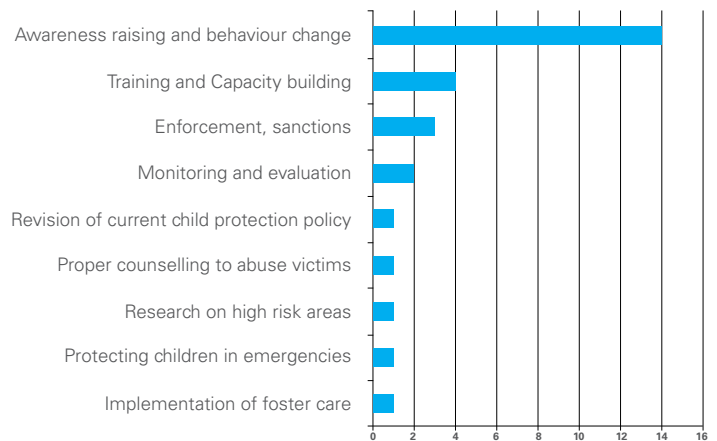
and also features ministerial and regional corporate plans. Both the RDSSED and ministerial plans contain outputs related to better enforcement of new legislation including sanctions and monitoring, revision of current legislation, to ensure compliance with the CRC, and stronger responses to crimes against children. Interestingly, some respondents believed that the top priorities in child protection in Fiji included risks for children in emergencies and development of foster care – which are not explicitly mentioned in the major national strategies.

Figure 4. Awareness of child protection priorities by survey respondents

Question: “Off the top of your head, what are the three top-priorities in child protection in Fiji?”



Specific priorities mentioned (number of times mentioned):



INDICATOR 1.2. COHERENT LEGAL SPECIFICATION OF KEY CONCEPTS

	ASSESSMENT	SCORE
The country’s legislative environment is characterized by the following:	C	1.25
Four criteria for indicators		
• The country’s Constitution contains provisions on child rights, consistent with the CRC, allowing application of all its provisions and principles.	Yes, restricted	0.75
• Legislation is drafted and regularly revised based on ex ante whole-of-government consultations on key controversial issues to reach political consensus and bridge sector-specific regulatory agendas. There is a clear mechanism to administer such policy dialogue.	No, extended	0.25
• National legislature has sufficient analytical support and capacity to follow child protection policy initiatives and to ensure approval of appropriate national laws.	No	0
• The country’s legislation contain child protection definitions and provisions on child rights, which are sufficiently specified, precise, and consistent with CRC, allowing application of all its provisions and principles.	No, extended	0.25

.....

“Will our strategies be implemented? I have an air of confidence. One of the first moves for the government was recognizing the children in the Constitution – to me it’s.... it gives me enough authority to start working on things which could improve things for children. The CRC is just a document from UN and when it’s not our Government document we are just referring to it as a universal right of children. But now it is in the document as a Constitution of Fiji, and I have enough authority to go out and do something.”

.....

Constitutional provisions

The current, 2013 Constitution is the product of turbulent recent political history of Fijian society and its struggle to build a harmonious and coherent governance structure despite deep-rooted divisions. The current 2013 Constitution of Fiji is the country’s fourth Constitution since it gained Independence from the United Kingdom in 1970. The previous (1997) Constitution was abrogated in 2009, following which the new government committed to design a new basic law based on the guidelines outlined in the 2008 People’s Charter. The Charter criticized the previous Constitution as racially discriminatory and undemocratic and called for a new approach which would be in “accord with the pledge to rebuild a Better Fiji for All: one nation, one people with a common identity and shared destiny”. The process of designing the new Constitution was itself politically tense, but it finally resulted in the production of a draft which was assented on 6 September 2013 and is effective at the time of this report.

The new Constitution has fundamentally expanded guarantees of child rights, covering key protection risks:

- The previous version 1997, of the basic law addressed a minimum set of child protection aspects, limited to the right of citizenship; the right of detained children to be kept, so far as practicable, apart from adults unless that is not in the child’s best interest; and the right of age-respectful arrangements for taking criminal evidence from child witnesses.
- The 2013 Constitution brought several extensions to this minimum set. First, it has explicitly defined children as individuals who have not reached the age of 18 years. Secondly, it included a Bill of Rights with a separate section dedicated to the Rights of Children. These constitutional provisions (Article 41) have established that every child has the right:
 - (a) to be registered at or soon after birth, and to have a name and nationality;
 - (b) to basic nutrition, clothing, shelter, sanitation and health care;
 - (c) to family care, protection and guidance, which includes the equal responsibility of the child’s parents to provide for the child:
 - (i) whether or not the parents are, or have ever been, married to each other; and
 - (ii) whether or not the parents are living together, have lived together, or are separated;
 - (d) to be protected from abuse, neglect, harmful cultural practices, any form of violence, inhumane treatment and punishment, and hazardous or exploitative labour; and

- (e) not to be detained, except as a measure of last resort, and when detained, to be held:
 - (i) only for such period of time as is necessary; and
 - (ii) separate from adults, and in conditions that take account of the child’s sex and age.

- In addition, the Constitution states that the best interest of a child are the primary consideration in every matter concerning the child.
- Provisions related to children and justice were expanded by installing additional possibilities of closed court hearings for laws relating to the trials of children or to the determination of family or domestic disputes.

At the same time, declared constitutional rights are subject to a broad range of permissive limitations.

There were several aspects of the new Constitution which raised concerns among human rights watch groups and other observers. One of the biggest concerns referred to extensive permissive limitations to the provisions proclaimed within the Bill of Rights. For example, according to Article 6, the Bill of Rights may be limited by limitations “which are necessary and are prescribed by law or provided under a law or authorised or permitted by a law of by actions taken under the authority of a law”.

In view of some watch groups, current Constitutional mechanisms to verify the necessity of human rights limitations are not sufficiently robust. Observers have noted that while it is usual for any Constitution to limit its provisions for some circumstances, the Constitutions also need to contain a robust mechanism to determine whether any particular limitation is justifiable. However, in their view, the mechanisms for such tests contained in the current claw-back provisions and referring to the concept of “necessity” of a limitation represent a very low threshold which creates a potential for abuse of rights (CCF, 2013).

Positively for child protection, the new Constitution confirmed that all previously approved Decrees relevant to protection of children would remain in force. While the new Constitution was also criticised for its provisions related to immunity of political decisions taken before the Constitution was enacted (Amnesty International, 2013), a positive development for child protection was the confirmation that all decrees promulgated by the government during 2006-2013 would be preserved as law “and shall continue in force as if they had been made under or pursuant to this Constitution” (Article 173). As discussed earlier, most of the key Decrees related to protection of child rights were introduced precisely during this period and their continuous implementation will be an asset in the forthcoming years.

Ex-ante policy dialogue on conflicting child protection policy issues

Political and legal system of Fiji went through major transformations during 2006-2014. Since Parliament was dissolved in 2006 and to the date of this report, new laws continued to be developed and introduced through decrees and promulgations of the government. The new Constitution was established in 2013 which significantly changes the rules for the exercise of legislative powers compared to the previous (1997) constitution (which was abrogated in 2009). For example, the new Parliament will no longer have an upper house with a right to veto or amend new legislation. While the Constitution and the new rules are already effective, the new Parliament will only be formed after elections scheduled for 17 September 2014.

Despite the changes, policy development and legislative drafting seem to follow a relatively stable routine. In 2010, Fiji's Minister for Social Welfare, Women and Poverty Alleviation noted in an address to the UN CEDAW Committee that "Changes that have resulted as a consequence of the abrogation of the (1997) Constitution (were) more apparent than real"; referring to continued legislative effort by the government to protect the rights of vulnerable population groups including through the pivotal Decrees that were introduced in this area (MoSWWPA, 2010). Indeed, many of the formal and informal institutional arrangements for policy development seem to remain constant throughout political reforms. Legislative initiatives originating from the line ministries have to be agreed through the Cabinet with support and clearance from the Attorney General office (LK, 2009).

It is not clear whether any specific mechanism is used prior to drafting bills to reconcile controversial issues across sectors. At least some of the relevant bills have followed a highly consultative approach, e.g. based on joint workshops such as the one held for development of the Domestic Violence Bill in 2005 (UNICEF; AusAID, 2009). Other parts of the law seem to have gone through a faster track. In particular, when the Child Welfare Decree was analysed by the Constitutional Commission – before it lost its mandate to review the existing decrees – it alleged that the Decree was "drawn up overnight" before it was submitted to the Cabinet by the Minister of Health, as a response to a single child abuse case (Constitution Commission, 2012). In view of the Constitution Commission, the primary point of the Decree was to protect children from situations when the strong religious beliefs of their parents obstruct life-saving medical treatment – a problem of a relatively small scale for Fiji. At the same time, the actual scope of the Decree is significantly wider and very important for the protection of children from abuse and exploitation by setting up a robust reporting mechanism through the healthcare system. This assessment did not verify whether this wider focus was based on prior consultations across sectors and whether the mechanism for such consultations is institutionally established.

The sectors compete for resources but there is no major disagreement on policy issues so far. At the FGDs for this assessment no complaints were voiced regarding the lack of agreement between the sectors on the core policy issues. Any rivalry between the line ministries is usually focused on resource sharing during budget negotiations.

Some child protection issues are covered by a range of policy papers, but the instrument does not seem to be used systemically to agree on controversial issues. Many ministries in Fiji rely on the practice of issuing policy papers or white papers outlining whole-of-government intent in various policy areas. Only a few of them address child protection, and there is no comprehensive policy on child protection as such.

- As an example of utilization of policy papers as a tool, at the time of this report, the Ministry of Education, National Heritage, Culture and Arts (MoENHCA) publicised 35 current policies on its website, with 28 more policies listed as outdated. At the same time, the Policies issued by the MoENHCA primarily aim to express a framework for policy implementation at a ministerial level rather than inter-agency consensus, as explained in the Ministry's "Policy on Policies" (MoENHCA, 2013). Still, a lot of these documents address concerns of other Ministries and are a valuable tool. For example, as will be discussed further, one of the MoENHCA policies covers child protection for schools; this policy establishes a referral process to health, police and social welfare authorities but it does not list respective ministries as stakeholders in policy development.
- Similarly, the National Youth Policy developed by the Ministry of Youth and Sports describes its intent to create an enabling environment for the youth, which includes plans for the creation of the National Employment Centre, protection of vulnerable youths, encouragement of contribution to climate change initiatives etc.
- Wider policy documents – such as full scale White Papers also exist, albeit in smaller numbers. One example is a White Paper issued in 2007 by the Fiji Local Government Association which described ideas for revision of legal framework to address challenges faced by local governments (Hassall and Tipu, 2008).
- At the same time, it is not clear what effective Policy Papers are currently in place under the Ministry of Women, Social Welfare and Policy Alleviation and whether this instrument is used to achieve pre-drafting agreement on controversial issues. As was discussed earlier (see page 32), development of a single child protection policy has been in pipeline for some time but has not yet materialized.
- Equally there does not seem to be any regulatory requirement for policy consultations prior to development of bills.

Capacity of national legislature

There is no Parliament at the moment and new capacities are in preparation to commence after General Elections in September 2014. According to the 2013 Constitution, once the new Parliament is elected in 2014, it will exercise full legislative authority and power to consider and enact bills. The Constitution demands sufficient scrutiny of the bills, including the allocation of sufficient time and due structured process which should be described in the Parliament's Standing Orders. Preparations for the new Parliament have only started and, in particular, new positions in the Parliament Secretariat were planned for advertisement as of March 2014 (Fijian Government Media Center, 2014). The outlook of these new structures and their capacities is therefore unclear at the moment.

Several units under the Prime Minister's (PM) office have supported legislative work in the previous years. During 2006-2013, in the absence of Parliamentary scrutiny, analytical and technical support to legislature was vested with the Attorney General office and, to a small extent, with the policy coordination units under the office of the Prime Minister (the Legislature Department of the Strategic Framework for Change Coordinating Office (SFCCO) under the office of the Prime Minister and the Policy Advisory Unit responsible for advice on agreement of sector-level policies and Cabinet papers by line ministries).

It was not verified whether legislative drafting capacities were strengthened compared to their weak status in 2008. At the time of the 2008 Baseline Report "Protect me with Love and Care" funded by the UNICEF and AusAID (further in text: 2008 Baseline Report), one of the biggest concerns regarding policy development focused on weak capacities for legislative drafting, which is prevalent across Pacific states. The 2008 Baseline Report, in particular, regretted that drafting capacity in the office of the Attorney General was restricted to just one junior position in a team of four drafters, and that the backlog of legislative drafting work was very significant (UNICEF; AusAID, 2009). This study has not assessed whether these capacities have since been expanded.

Consistency of child protection legal definitions

Current legislation for child protection contains several inconsistencies. The latest legislative analysis of child protection definitions was undertaken within the 2011 CRC Periodic Report. The report noted that several key terms are used inconsistently across various pieces of Fijian written laws.

- Definition of the child. In most current legislative acts, the child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (the Domestic Violence Decree 2009; Employment Regulations Promulgation 2007; Family Law Act 2003; Prisons and Corrections Act 2006). But at the same time, the Juveniles Act 2003 defines the child as a person below 14 years, a "young person" as one aged 14-17, and a "juvenile" as a person below 17 years (including a "child" and a "young person"). The National Employment Centre Decree 2009 defines a child age threshold as 15 years of age, and the Media Industry Development Decree 2010 – 14 years of age. Moreover, the Crimes Decree 2009 criminalizes the failure of caregivers to provide children with necessities of life only for children below 14 and 16 years (depending on whether the carer is a person who has charge of a child or has contracted to provide the necessities).
- Age of criminal responsibility. The two pieces of legislation which define this age are the Crimes Decree 2009 and the Juvenile Act 2003. Both set this age at 10 years. However, the Crimes Decree provides an excuse for criminal responsibility for children who did not know that the act was wrong if they are younger than 14 years, while in the 2003 Juveniles Act such excuse is only for children under 12 years old.
- The marriage age. Minimum marriageable age is defined as 18 years and is the same for boys and girls (Marriage Act (Amendment) Decree 2009). This represents an increase compared to previously existing law which was praised by the CRC. However, the Crimes Decree 2009 criminalizes carnal knowledge of persons under 18 who "are unmarried" and which is "against the will of their parents", implying that intercourse with a child below 18 and/or with consent of the child's parents would not fall under this provision. The age of consent is set at 13 years.

Existing laws are also insufficient: while new Decrees establish new child protection approaches, the staff lack guidelines to implement them since their operations are based in pre-CRC frameworks. Child protection stakeholders also complained in the FGDs that in addition to sometimes being inconsistent, the current legal definitions are also not sufficient. While the new Decrees approved during the 2000s establish new responsibilities and principles of service provision, the operational routines of key ministries are still governed by older legislation, sometimes existing before the CRC was ratified. The gap is not so much in any inconsistencies but rather in the lack of clear operational guidelines for how the new responsibilities should be practically taken forward. Precise examples of such gaps were not identified by this assessment and need to be further explored.

"Responsibilities of the social welfare and the police have increased beyond what the current legislation provides for... It is a challenge to reconcile legislation that is pre-CRC ratification and the roles and responsibilities post-CRC. The new Decrees are very helpful, but they still need to be rolled out and translated into every day work. This is a challenge for the Director and the staff, that they have legislation which is pre-CRC and they have roles and responsibilities which are post-CRC, and how to deal with it is not spelled out quite clearly."

INDICATOR 1.3. STRATEGIC PREPAREDNESS TO POTENTIALLY VOLATILE ENVIRONMENT

	ASSESSMENT	SCORE
Systems for crisis prevention and recovery include the following:	B	2.0
Four criteria for indicators		
• The government has developed disaster and emergency preparedness strategies and action plans for management of multiple risks that have significant impacts on children in times of natural hazard or conflict situations	No, extended	0.25
• Inter-agency mechanisms are established for addressing child protection risks in case of emergencies and disasters (coordination and data exchange systems, joint guidelines, response plans and training for staff across relevant sectors)	Yes	1
• Preventive measures are based on risk assessments to identify and build capacities of the most vulnerable areas and population groups.	No	1
• Capacities of the response systems focusing specifically on child protection were built through trainings, awareness raising, information sharing, establishment of focal points and appropriate services, safe spaces and community-based structures.	Yes, restricted	0.75

Emergency preparedness plans

Fiji's location makes it highly vulnerable to a range of natural disasters (cyclones, floods, landslides, earthquakes, tsunamis, forest fires and droughts). Fiji is located within the Southern Pacific cyclone belt and the Pacific Ring of Fire, making it highly vulnerable to a range of natural disasters including cyclones, floods, landslides, earthquakes and tsunamis. Tropical cyclones are the most frequent and destructive disasters, triggering landslides and excessive flooding, damaging infrastructure, crops and communications. While Fiji suffers relatively fewer earthquakes compared to many other Pacific Rim island countries, the risks are still very high by world standards (NDMO, 2008). As a result of the El-Nino Southern Oscillation phenomena, Fiji also suffers from severe droughts occurring at a 4-5 year cycle. Prolonged rainfall deficiency is problematic for small islands with small and expensive water supply systems. Droughts damage water supply and food security, significantly impairing livelihoods of affected communities (Government of Fiji, 1995).

Disaster risk reduction (DDR) in Fiji is led by the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO)⁵ under the Ministry for Provincial Development and Disaster Management. In addition, the National Disaster Management Council (NDMC or DISMAC), chaired by the

minister responsible for National Disaster Management, is the forum for formulation of disaster management policies. During emergencies, the NDMO sets up a National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) with Disaster Service Liaison Officers (DSLOs) from all relevant agencies.⁶

In addition to national efforts, Fiji also participates in several regional and international Disaster Management Frameworks:

- The Hyogo Framework for Action 2005;
- Pacific Plan 2005;
- Regional Framework for Action 2005-2015;
- Pacific Islands Framework for Action on Climate Change;
- World Bank Policy "Not if but when"

Key strategic instruments for DRM are the Natural Disaster Management Act 1998 and the National Disaster Management Plan 1995, both currently under review. The current framework law which guides Natural Disaster Management in Fiji is the Natural Disaster Management Act 1998 (NDRMA) (Government of Fiji, 1998). In 1995, the government also endorsed the Fiji National Disaster Management Plan. The Hyogo report mentioned that the 1995 Action plan was replaced in 2006 by a new National Disaster Risk Management Arrangements (NDMO, 2012); however, at the point of this report, the 2006 action plan was not quoted at the GoF websites and recent

⁵ <http://www.ndmo.gov.fj/>

⁶ <http://www.provdev.gov.fj/index.php/roles-and-functions/ndmo>

officials documents referred instead to the previous 1995 Action Plan (see, for example, (NDMO, 2013)). In 2013, both the NDRMA and the 2006 NDRM Arrangements were under revision. One major reason for the revision was the intention of the GoF to merge DRR strategies with climate change action within a Joint National Action Plan (JNAP) approach (Fijian Government Media Center, 2013).

There does not seem to be any specific policy on child protection in emergencies. The Ministry for Provincial Development and Disaster Management explains that the NDRM Act and the 1995 NDRM Action Plan are complemented by additional plans of individual agencies. Indeed, the 2011-2013 Hyogo Progress Report notes significant progress over the last two years in mainstreaming disaster preparedness into various sector strategies, and acknowledged that while individual sectors do not have specific DRR strategies, respective activities are taking place and are reflected in various sector-level regulations. However, the Hyogo report does not mention any agencies relevant to child protection as examples of such sector-level mainstreaming (NDMO, 2012). During the FGDs, stakeholders noted the very high importance currently attached by the government to disaster preparedness, but did not mention any specific policies or strategies related to particular disaster-related child protection policies.

Child protection concerns are not addressed by the 1995 Action Plan. The 1995 National Disaster Management Plan establishes that at the time of disasters, relief food supply strategies should “give adequate priority to vulnerable groups like children under age five, pregnant women and elderly people”, but is otherwise entirely silent on the specific risks faced by children in emergency situations.

Protection cluster, covering child protection, was created under the MOSWWPA in 2013. Following the Global Cluster Coordination System, in cooperation with the Pacific Humanitarian Team (PHT), Fiji also established eight clusters to facilitate potential assistance, training and funding. One of these is the protection cluster led by the MoSWWPA. The goal of the protection cluster is “to preserve the well-being and dignity of families and children affected by the disaster with effective protection from violence, abuse and exploitation (and extended trauma).” The cluster aims to ensure effective coordination to assess and monitor child protection needs, carry out awareness raising and prevention activities to protect affected families and children from violence, abuse, and exploitation, and initiate family tracing mechanisms and provide (as needed) psycho-social support and protection services through the establishment of child friendly spaces (Pacific Humanitarian Team, 2007). According to the PHT, the first meeting of the newly formed protection cluster was hosted by the MoSWWPA on 2 January 2013, to discuss roles, responsibilities and objectives of the future operations (including then-immediate priorities related to the impact of the cyclone Evan).⁷

Dealing with the impact of cyclone Evan highlighted the need to review institutional arrangements for child protection in emergencies. Protection cluster was active in addressing the consequences of the cyclone Evan, facilitating three activities with direct reference to child protection risks (dissemination of protection messages through the Ministry of Health; providing necessity kits for protection of dignity through the MoSWWPA; and mobilizing and training personnel for psychological support through the Ministry of Education and MoSWWPA). The Cluster also agreed on the need for a review of SOPs and institutional arrangements for protection of vulnerable population groups to prepare for future emergencies. In particular, it was agreed to strengthen the capacities of the protection cluster and to enhance integration of protection issues into the work of other clusters; to prepare an institutional review for better understanding of protection issues faced by affected populations before, during and after disasters; and to develop an agreed Standard Operations Procedure (SOP) with the evacuation cluster which would ensure appropriate protection to vulnerable groups including children (Government of Fiji, 2013).

Inter-agency joint response mechanisms

The 2006 NDRM arrangements established a practical model for cooperation across all agencies at national and local level. As discussed earlier, disaster-related coordination is led by the NDMO and the National Disaster Management Council (DISMAC). The NDMO ensures liaison with key ministries at the times of emergencies (through a National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC)) and leads whole-of-government coordination at all other times. The DISMAC is the core national platform for broader cooperation, open to participation from civil society, private sector, academia and other relevant stakeholders. The 2011-2013 Hyogo report praised the current DRM coordination platform as an effective model which could also be a good basis for future elaboration to incorporate climate change action (NDMO, 2012).

Particularly strong elements of the current cooperation structure include high-level executive umbrella and detailed mechanisms for linking to community-level committees. The 2006 NDRM Arrangements provide a key decision-making function to an executive structure of key ministers in the Cabinet and give a central role to the NDRM Council with three separate committees for Disaster Mitigation and Prevention, Preparedness and Emergency. The Arrangements include structures at Divisional, District and Village levels, with local units of the NDMO and divisional units of the NDRM Council. At the village/community/settlement level, specific DRM Committees are set up including local emergency response agencies, private sector and community-based organizations (NDMO, 2007). According to the FGD members, current DRM response structures also proved to effectively engage NCCC ensuring quick mobilization and effective coordination.

⁷ <http://www.phtpacific.org/content/fiji-protection-cluster-meeting-1-wed-02-jan-2013-1130-1230-ministry-women-social-welfare>

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“The NCCC is a platform which can be mobilized when something happens, like in the times of crisis... For example, currently for Fiji the big thing is disasters, they happen every year, especially floods. That particular sector, disasters, that’s very well coordinating: donor, government, district level.”

.....

The newly formed protection cluster is an additional framework to ensure cooperation involving external partners. As was also discussed earlier, the newly formed protection cluster worked effectively during the 2013 cyclone Evan, even though important lessons were learned on improving child protection arrangements for future emergencies.

Preventative risk mapping and assessment for natural disasters

Despite strong DRM commitment, preventative multi-hazard risk mapping is not systemic, usually project-based, and does not include regular assessment of child protection risks. The 2011-2013 Hyogo report noted that Fiji had a very strong institutional commitment to DRM, but it was behind in terms of installing a structured approach to preventative multi-hazard risk assessment and using it to organize DRM activities. Existing risk assessments in Fiji has been so far project-based and ad hoc, without a robust and systemic platform for collecting evidence, exchanging data and incorporating the analysis into action plans. Risk assessments conducted by individual agencies in the most vulnerable communities were described as often of high quality but rather isolated. The risk assessment within the 1995 Action Plan was called “rudimentary”. Assessment at the school level is based on internal school-based

customized procedures. Gender disaggregated data on disaster risks is available but used on ad-hoc basis without a systemic approach (NDMO, 2012).

Capacities for response and recovery

Safe spaces are installed and regularly inspected, but more work is needed to strengthen school-based awareness raising. Fiji has only started to work on establishing robust mechanisms for raising awareness and preparedness to child protection risks in disasters. DRM is not yet formally included into school curricula as a subject, but elements of DRM are incorporated into other subjects and work is on-going to develop specific courses. Importantly, this work is conducted in close cooperation with the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs through “cultural mapping” to ensure that modern concepts and practices are integrated with traditional DRR approaches. It remains to be verified whether these new materials cover knowledge and skills related to the risks of abuse and exploitation which increase in emergency situations. At the same time, as a rule, schools in Fiji have developed their internal disaster management plans and regularly conduct evacuation drills; retrofit programmes were also duly undertaken. Specific schools are designated as shelters; such schools undergo regular inspections. Moreover, health centres throughout the country were secured as disaster emergency services (NDMO, 2012).

INDICATOR 1.4. POLICY COORDINATION FOR CHILD PROTECTION

	ASSESSMENT	SCORE
Availability and effectiveness of policy coordination structures:	B	2.75
Four criteria for indicators		
• There is a Parliamentary or other oversight body on child protection which has a clearly defined mandate, authority and resources to implement it, and meets regularly;	No, extended	0.25
• There is an inter-ministerial mechanism that coordinates child protection activities, which has a clearly defined mandate and institutional leverage, meets regularly and is attended or followed up by senior officials;	Yes, restricted	0.75
• There is a mechanism at the national level for the government and civil society to coordinate on child protection policy, legislation and programming;	Yes, restricted	0.75
• There is a coordination mechanism to effectively engage international development agencies into child protection, which has a clear set of objectives related to child protection and meets regularly.	Yes	1

“I think one of the strengths of the NCCC is actually bringing agencies together to come and solve problems, and work together for children. I enjoy coming to it, because it means coming to a room filled with people that champion child protection.”

“To me, the NCCC seems to at least be a platform that can be mobilized when something happens, like in times of crisis, they can always be mobilized. Whenever there is a good purpose – the NCCC is very active... they kind of wake up from the dead. Things start happening and they are reacting; everybody gets together and bring in the information... That is achievable, manageable and realistic for us. Because everyone’s committed, and the NCCC kind of tries to bring it together somehow or the other.”

Supreme policy oversight

Upon ratification of the CRC in 1993, Fiji has established a National Coordinating Committee on Children (NCCC). The body is a Cabinet sub-Committee and includes Permanent Secretaries for six core ministries dealing with issues related to children⁸ as well as representatives of relevant civil society groups and service providers (Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2011). At the moment of this report, the NCCC was chaired by the Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Social Welfare, Women and Poverty Alleviation. This ministry also hosts the NCCC Secretariat but there is no separate budget allocation for this function.

The NCCC consists of a range of sub-committees. As of 2011, the NCCC had seven sub-committees: Education, Health, Family and Social Welfare, Legal, Media, Interagency Committee on Child Abuse, Neglect and Abandonment and the Child Labour TACKLE Subcommittee (NCCC, 2011). The Child Labour Sub-committee was established in 2008-2009 and, given the relatively small size of the country, assumed the function of the national committee on child labour and cooperation with the ILO on respective conventions (ILO, 2009).

At the district level, there is a network of inter-agency committees created to support the NCCC. As of December 2013, there were 16 inter-agency committees set up at the district level specifically to deliver child protection programmes. The local inter-agency committees include local representatives of relevant agencies (Social Welfare, Health, Education, Police) and civil society organizations (Ahmed, Guidelines in Progress for Child Rights, 2013).

The nature and vision of the NCCC has evolved since 1993 and is still changing. The initial intent of the Committee was focused on implementation of the CRC including organization of due reporting process. In the early years of this work, suggestions were made for increasing statutory powers of the Committee by linking it closer to the Prime Minister’s Office, but these recommendations were not implemented. The 2011 Periodic CRC report acknowledged that “the effectiveness of the NCCC was

waning” and that the leading MoSWWPA often found it difficult to use the NCCC for orchestrating cooperation and commitment from the participating agencies (Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2011). At the time of this report, the NCCC has been in the process of designing a new ToR for its activities. It is intended that the new ToR would reshuffle the current membership of the committee and improve linkages between the NCCC, its subcommittees and the community groups.

The NCCC meets regularly on a quarterly basis, and additional meetings are called upon request if specific issues need to be addressed. This was confirmed by members of the FGD for this assessment and through personal participation in a quarterly NCCC meeting by the authors of this report. In between the quarterly NCCC, sub-committees convene to discuss issues which relate to their respective domains.

Most stakeholders agree that the NCCC is a mixture of opportunities and problems. The Committee has been instrumental to the recent achievements in child protection, such as development of new policies and legislation, implementation of new initiatives such as numerous inter-agency guidelines, compilation of the periodic CRC report and production of the 2008 Baseline Report. The FGD members also described the NCCC as especially useful as a way of quick coordination for specific or emergency issues.

Despite some achievements, the Committee found it difficult to become a systemic platform for policy coordination. All interviewees agreed that the strategic influence of the NCCC on the participating agencies is weak, which is reflected in poor participation of senior level officials in the NCCC meetings (junior representatives are usually sent instead), inability to influence core legislation and to design truly cross-cutting solutions at the national level. The only regular PS-level participant of the NCCC is the representative of the MoSWWPA who happens to chair the group.

⁸ Ministry of Social Welfare, Women and Poverty Alleviation; Ministry of Justice, Electoral Reform and Anti-Corruption; Ministry for Education, National Heritage, Culture and Arts, Youth and Sports; Ministry of Indigenous Affairs; Ministry for Defense, National Security, Disaster Management and Immigration; and Ministry for Provincial Development and Multi Ethnic Affairs.

“We (the NCCC) are a group of people who cannot work together... I wish the executives who sit on NCCC could just come together and forget the different silos they come from, forget about being police, being social aware, forget all those things at one time in three months and come together for children, that would be ideal. But people in NCCC are not actually... they do not actually hold the right to decide something important. We have our legislation, our resources. If [those who have such right, senior leaders] knew that the right of children were important they would have done something about it a long time ago. That’s our problem.”

This current weakness seems to be rooted in a range of operational gaps revealed during the FGDs:

- Complete lack of communication of NCCC decisions to decision-makers in the ministries. The NCCC meetings are described in minutes which are circulated among participants. However, there is no mechanism whatsoever to feed back key decisions and action points up to the decision makers in the ministries. Given that the agencies are usually represented by junior officials rather than PS level staff, this means that senior policy makers usually remain unaware of the NCCC efforts and are not prompted to follow up.
- Poor awareness of child protection issues among senior leadership in key ministries. The NCCC members admit that their respective agencies continue to operate in administrative siloes with episodic interest in child protection issues. However, they also admitted that lack of structured, concise and actionable reports to senior officials is probably one reason why their interest and awareness is so weak.
- Lack of strategic focus in NCCC deliberations. The NCCC agenda is dominated by operational concerns and is poorly connected to field-level structures such as the district level inter-agency committees. Again, one reason for this is that NCCC does not have strong leverage over ministerial policies and, respectively, their community level operations. The new ToR hopes to address this weakness but it is not clear whether a new ToR as such would be sufficient to bring in the change. Also at the time of this report, the NCCC was in the process of designing a new Inter-Agency Guideline to map roles and responsibilities of stakeholders in child protection at all levels but it remains to be seen whether this new instrument as such would be sufficient to influence district-level work (Ahmed, Guidelines in Progress for Child Rights, 2013).

In principle, the NCCC is well positioned to undertake supreme policy oversight in child protection, but current structural weaknesses make it difficult for the Committee to effectively play this role. While the Committee is operational and committed, it still lacks a clear mandate and institutional leverage to oversee policy development and implementation in child related areas including child protection. Participants of the FGDs

explained that the bulk of the NCCC activities are focused on information sharing (rather than, e.g., analysis, debate or decision making). The gap was also visible, for example, in the discussion on assuring quality of child care services: at the moment, inspections of service providers are undertaken by the MoSWWPA but this mechanism lacks an additional independent high-level clout. Representatives of MoSWWPA expect that NCCC is the body which would take up this role of an independent oversight but this plan is still in consideration.

Working-level coordination across ministries

There are several mechanisms which were set up to ensure coordination across agencies for working-level decisions in child protection, but they do not always deliver practical results. At the national level, coordination of national development efforts is primary responsibility of the Ministry of Strategic Planning, National Development and Statistics⁹. In addition, at least two units under the Prime Minister’s Office were created to harmonize policy making. One is a Strategic Framework for Coordinating Change Office (SFCCO), whose mission is to coordinate and monitor the inputs of various agencies into implementation of the countries core development strategies (most importantly – the Roadmap for Democracy and Sustainable Socio-Economic Development). The other is the Policy Analysis Unit (PAU) which works to advise the Prime Minister on sector level policies and also on effective coordination and formulation of coherent initiatives in line with national objectives. In addition, ministries specifically involved in child protection are represented at the NCCC as discussed above. Finally, child protection policy delivery by agencies in the field is coordinated through a network of district level inter-agency committees and protocols developed by the headquarters.

While each of these structures had contributed to the goal of overall coordination, the joint result is not always leading to practical success. As discussed below, the biggest gap seems to be in the disconnect between central and local structures, which would, on the one hand, translate broad strategic decisions into field-level activities and, on the other hand, provide local actors with institutional authority to implement bottom-up coordination activities.

⁹ <http://www.planning.gov.fj/>

“I must say, by and large, in terms of coordination in Fiji, national level is the worst. No, I will say it with a lot of confidence! At the district and divisional level it’s more coordinated; they are under one commissioner and normally there is a lot of synergy because they are all out there in the community, they share their goal and have one overall supervisor. But at the national level, it’s like everybody is doing their own thing, and this is why I said, sorry, when we all come to NCCC that’s what happens.”

The Ministry of Strategic Planning, National Development and Statistics

The Planning Ministry is strongly focused on evidence-based formulation of strategic plans, rather than working level coordination. The role of this Ministry has been gradually expanding since 2009 (when it was upgraded into a full-fledged ministry) and currently covers overall coordination and monitoring of national strategic development efforts. This includes capital development projects, human resource initiatives and manpower planning, and sector reform agendas. The Ministry also includes a national statistics function, hosting the Fiji Bureau of Statistics (FBOS). The Ministry uses evidence accumulated through the FBOS to compile the country’s economic forecasts, core plans including the budgets, MDG and other human rights and development reports (e.g. this included a Children’s Atlas of Social Indicators Report launched in 2012). The focus of the Ministry is very much on evidence-based policy formulation for socio-economic development, rather than working level coordination across the ministries.

Units under PM Office

The SFCCO was established in 2009 to orchestrate the implementation of the Roadmap. It assumed a range of functions, including provision of a Secretariat for the Public Accounts Committee in the absence of Parliament until it is elected in 2014 and public relations. But one of the main functions of the SFCCO from 2009-2014 has been monitoring and evaluation of ministries and departments, ensuring coordination across their annual corporate plans, eliminating duplication and overlap in responsibilities and ensuring compliance to the Roadmap (SFCCO, 2013). Every quarter, all ministries report to the SFCCO on their performance, upon which the information is consolidated and analysed by the SFCCO Monitoring and Evaluation Unit and feedback provided through consultations on compliance with the RDSSSED and budgetary allocations.

The SFCCO was shown to be generally effective for broad agreement of strategies across sectors. This assessment did not have access to reports and analysis which were particular for child protection, however overall the SFCCO was described as an effective mechanism for broad programmatic alignment. It was also shown to work well for other adjacent sectors and programmes. For example, in 2011, the WHO described SFCCO activities as a manifestation of the “government’s policy of a strong intersectoral approach” which proved useful in overseeing

partnerships for joint implementation of projects, e.g. for reducing childhood obesity which was run by the MoH together with the Ministry of Education and the Fiji School of Medicine (WHO, 2011). In other words, the SFCCO seems to be a useful way to align broad ministerial policies but does not cover working-level arrangements at the local level.

The Policy Advisory Unit (PAU) supports coordination by providing respective advice to the PM. The PAU is staffed by six public administration professionals who generate on-going advice to the Prime Minister and Permanent Secretary on the ways to ensure that all ministries and departments work jointly and coherently to achieve national goals.

Coordination through the NCCC

The NCCC generates valuable recommendations for joint action but has no institutional muscle to support their implementation at the district level. The NCCC is generally perceived as ineffective for meaningful working-level coordination. As was discussed previously, one of the biggest current weaknesses of the NCCC reported at the FGDs is its lack of influence over programme implementation at the field level. The disconnect between the NCCC recommendations and the decision making process at the ministerial level makes it difficult to use this forum for effective working-level coordination. Most participants agreed that the NCCC focus remains limited to information sharing and consultations rather than actual joint decisions which affect service delivery.

District inter-agency committees

Child protection activities at the local level are coordinated through district inter-agency committees which work under the auspices of the NCCC. The district inter-agency committees include representatives of key ministries (social welfare, health, education, police), civil society and faith-based organizations active in child protection. District level inter-agency committees are primary recipients of various types of capacity building support in child protection, such as training on specific protection issues, data management and community development skills (Malo, 2013).

Existing cooperation protocols are numerous, perhaps excessive, which called for recent strategic review by the NCCC. Some of this cooperation at the local level is organized through protocols, memoranda of understanding

“If we go out there in the community, there is more coordination, sharing of resources, because of accessibility, of the logistics... I remember my days in the field: when I go for a child abuse case, in the remote areas, whether it’s the commissioner or a district officer’s office, they come around and say: which ministry has any work to do? Even in the police, if there is a case in the bush, we all are asked: who wants to go? This is where we all address our cases together. There is a better rapport, this is my experience.”

and inter-agency guidelines issued at headquarter level. In 2008, the Baseline Report “Protect me with Love and Care” identified three active inter-agency protocols; four internal operating procedures, and additional cooperation agreements in the justice sector. Notably, the degree of compliance with these protocols at the time was described as unknown (UNICEF; AusAID, 2009). The 2008 Baseline Report noted that at least some of the inter-agency Memoranda of Understanding which existed at that time have not functioned as hoped, e.g. not ensuring timely and appropriate referrals of child victims to other services or even tolerating discouragement of victims from further charges. In the FGDs for this assessment, participants noted that the amount of various inter-agency guidelines, including legislation, was “already so big” that it required some grouping and review with the aim of making it more useful and strategic. One response to that is the current work of the NCCC to develop a National Strategy for Child protection which would try to locate previous guidelines along the continuum of child protection services with a clearer division of roles for participating agencies.

Relatively straightforward local governance structures, physical proximity and community spirit help districts to coordinate better compared to the national level.

Consultations with national stakeholders as well as at the community-level within this assessment indicated that coordination in the districts is often rather successful. Compared to the practices at headquarter level, linking to colleagues from other sectors is easier for child protection staff in the districts because of joint supervision by a single commissioner, closer physical proximity and a sense of common goal. The members of FGDs noted that in many divisions this made coordination “more workable,” even though many issues still remain and inter-agency rivalry could also be present because even at the local level “they also have their own agendas”

In practice, co-ordination frequently suffers from low appreciation of the need to engage social welfare authorities and excessively complex protocols.

Participants of the FGD explained that in spite of the requirements of the Child Welfare Decree 2009 for any frontline worker discovering child abuse to report it to the Social Welfare authorities, this requirement is often ignored by other sector specialists – such as police. While extensive trainings were conducted on the Child Welfare Decree among the staff, reporting to Social Welfare is still often perceived as “not important.” Participants also described existing protocols for the joint handling of abuse cases as rather complex, which sometimes makes them difficult to

implement in practice and leaves the child forgotten for hours or exposed to excessive publicity (e.g. if she or he has to spend long hours waiting in the police station).

Several ideas were proposed during the FGD to resolve this, including establishing integrated Child protection Teams, but they are stalled because of a lack of leadership.

One idea was to run joint trainings so that representatives of different agencies can pragmatically face the barriers to their cooperation and develop practical decisions for the future. Another idea which was favoured by the group assumed establishing an integrated Child protection Team which would collect representatives of various agencies to sit together in one premise, avoiding the need for the child to be transferred repetitively between the police, the health centre and the social welfare, and ensuring due cooperation. Although the group agreed that the Fiji police currently plays the key role as a primary point of contact, not least because of its extensive physical representation and the tendency to report very severe abuse, placing the integrated team in the police itself was agreed to be a suboptimal and highly risky choice. Again, while all participants agreed on the usefulness of the proposal, the barrier to implementation was said to be a lack of clear leadership from any of the ministries. One solution was sought in the experience of a past initiative to establish a pilot child abuse centre for integrated service provision. At the time, cooperation was prompted by appealing to the equality of legal and moral obligations of all agencies in the face of requirements of the Juvenile Act 1972. However, as will be discussed further, no clear record of the lessons from that experience was documented to be used in the future.

Policy coordination with civil society

The key vehicle for policy co ordination with the civil society is the NCCC which formally includes a range of civil society organizations but is not always capable to enable joint ideas.

Specifically, the NCCO Interagency Committee on Child Abuse, Neglect and Abandonment includes as members the Fiji National Council for Disabled Persons, the Fiji Council of Social Services (FCOSS),¹⁰ Fiji Women’s Crisis Center and Save the Children. Participants of the FGDs explained that other organizations and service providers in child protection also contribute to the work of the NCCC and its relevant subcommittees. The latest periodic CRC report concluded that while civil society organizations are welcome at the NCCC, their influence in the policy process is essentially limited by the NCCC own

¹⁰ FCOSS is an NGO that strives to eliminate disadvantage and poverty from Fijian individuals and communities.

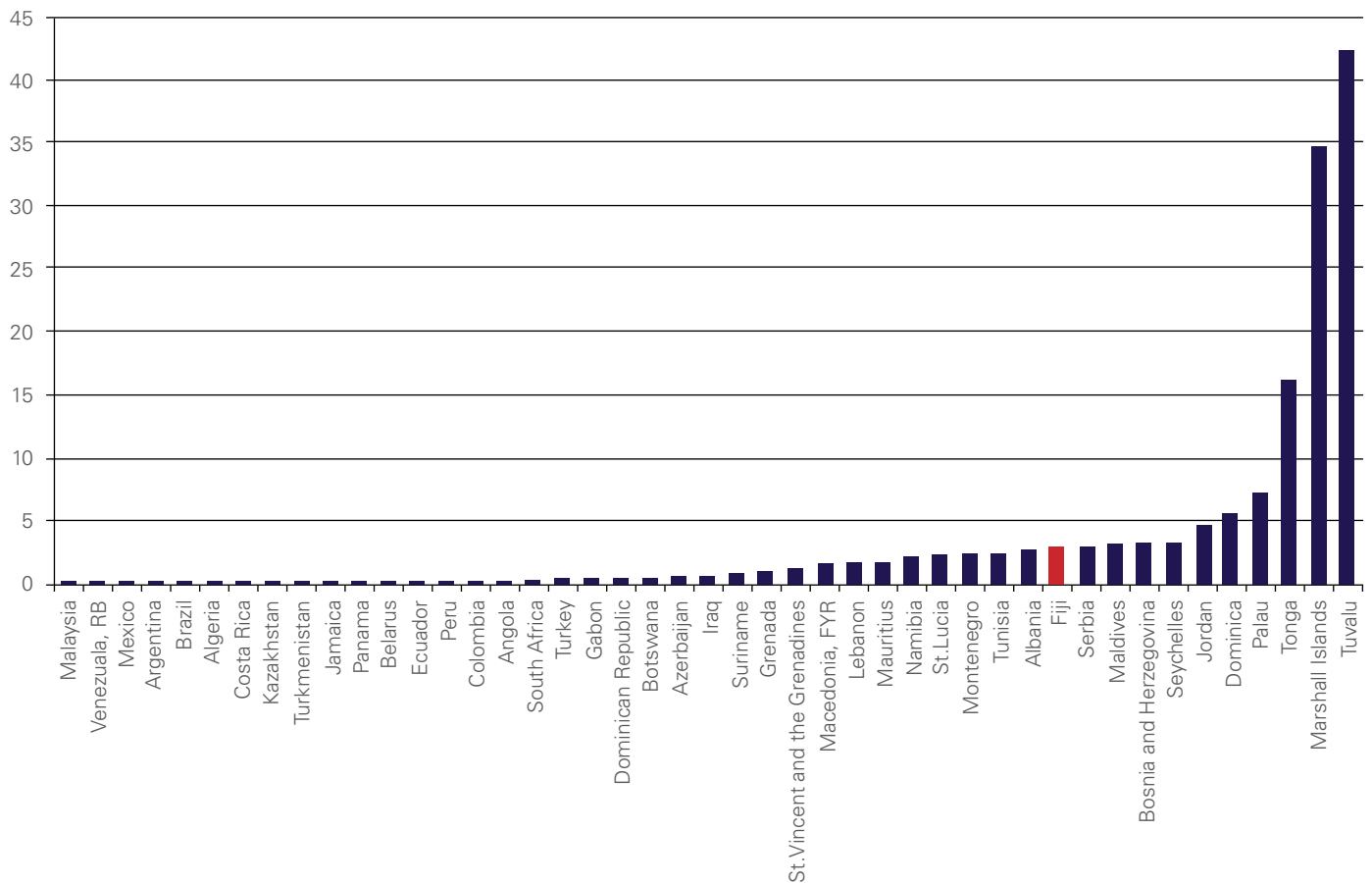
dysfunctionalities and inability to translate joint decisions into practical policy steps.

Policy coordination with key donors

Although Fiji is the least aid-dependent PIC, the role of ODA is still significant and, recently, growing. Fiji is the least aid-dependent of all Pacific Island Countries (excluding New Zealand), with net ODA flows in 2012 representing 2.86 per cent of the country's GNI (compared to, for example, to 13.6 per cent in Vanuatu, 25 per cent in Kiribati, or 43.6 per

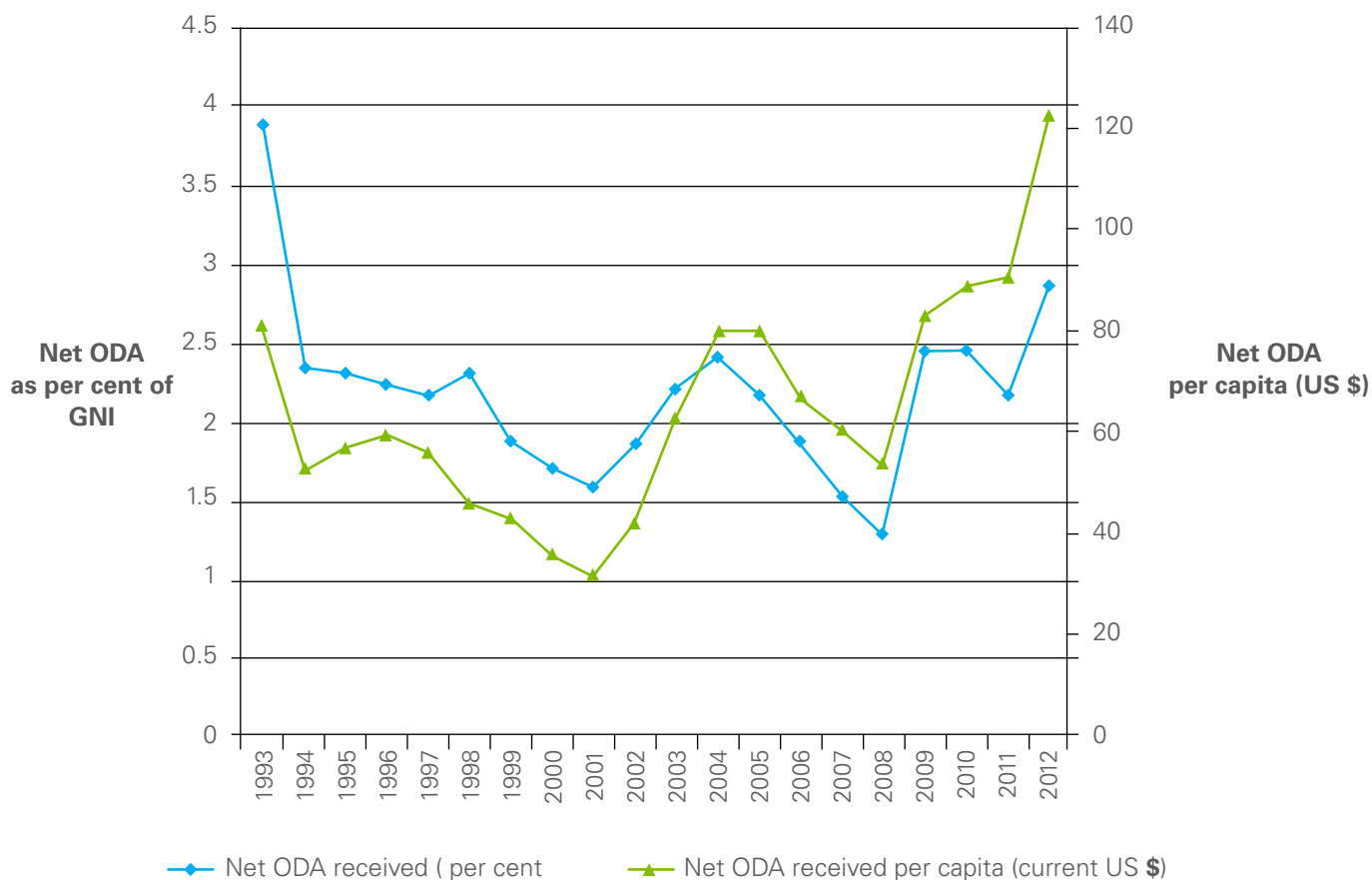
cent in Solomon Islands). Unlike most PICs, which found it difficult to mobilize local resources for developing domestic systems, Fiji managed to continuously increase the share of development spending out of its own budget (ODA as a share of government expenditure declined from 13.6 per cent in 1993 to 6.8 per cent in 2006). Still, development assistance remains a very important factor in funding and designing reforms. While Fiji compares positively to its Pacific neighbours, it still has one of the highest aid-to-GNI ratios in its income group of upper-middle-income countries (see Figure 5). Moreover, since 2008, the role of aid began to gradually increase again, as shown in Figure 6.

Figure 5. Net ODA flows to upper-middle income country recipients in 2012 (as per cent of GNI)



Source: World Bank DataBank (<http://databank.worldbank.org/data/home.aspx>)

Figure 6. Net ODA flows to Fiji in 1993-2012



Source: World Bank DataBank (<http://databank.worldbank.org/data/home.aspx>).

Although the bulk of support is through bilateral programmes (especially AusAID), most of specific programmes in child protection are funded by UNICEF.

Most of the development aid received by Fiji (about 90 per cent through the years since 2006) is provided in-kind in the form of infrastructure development, health services, training and technical assistance. The rest is provided in a form of direct cash grants.¹¹ The biggest source of funding is bilateral assistance from Australia, European Union (EU), New Zealand, Japan, and China (Figure 7). Support by UN agencies including UNICEF is relatively small compared to the biggest bilateral programmes. However, UNICEF remains the biggest donor working directly on child protection, albeit in critical partnerships with other agencies, including AusAID especially in the area of mainstreaming protection issues into health and education sectors, as well as livelihoods and community programmes (Commonwealth of Australia; AusAID, 2013).

Coordination and monitoring of various ODA flows is fully integrated into the government’s overall strategic decision making machinery and budget process, and is

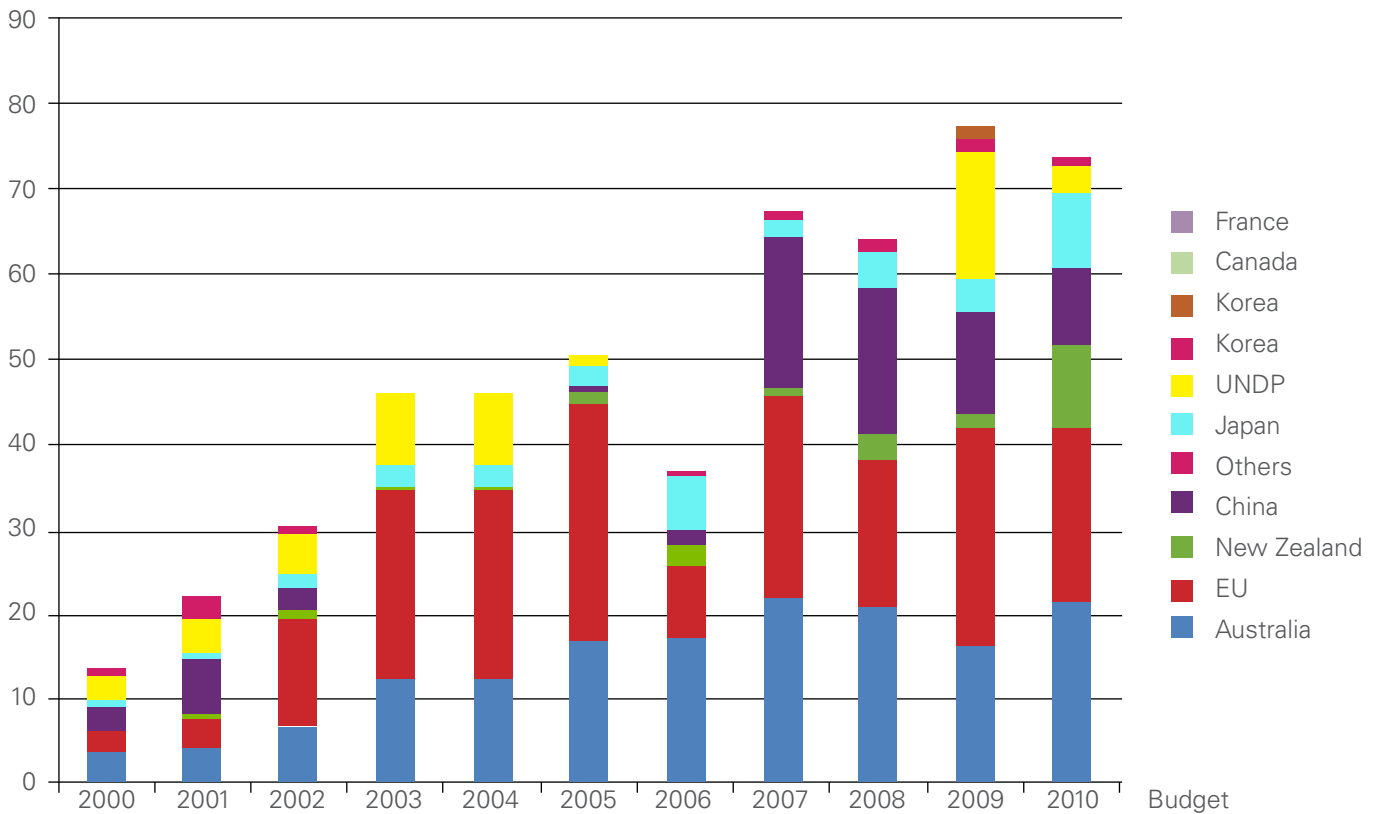
generally effective. ODA coordination is the responsibility of the Budget and Aid Coordinating Committee (BACC) under the Ministry of Finance.¹² The government’s broad priorities for using the ODA follow the agenda of The Roadmap for Democracy and Sustainable Socio-Economic Development 2010-2014. More specific programmes are defined on an annual basis within the joint programming effort with the donors orchestrated through the BACC. Every year in September-November it runs several rounds of consultations with the donors “with the main objective to ensure that all ODA funds are reflected in the national budget.”¹³ The Committee then assists the Ministry of Finance to disburse the funds by acting as focal point for donors and line ministries, evaluating project proposals, and, finally, ensuring joint evaluation and reporting. The latest detailed assessment of donor coordination effectiveness in Fiji was completed considerable time ago (2004), but at that stage it concluded that given the relatively small amount of active donors and government’s constructive approach to cooperation, BACC has not faced any major issues with donor coordination (OECD, 2004).

¹¹ <http://www.foreignaffairs.gov.fj/trade-policy/international-cooperation/oda-trend>

¹² Coordination of projects implemented through Chinese cash grants and loans is facilitated by a specific agency – Development Cooperation and Facilitation Division (DCFD) established in 2007 which works in partnership with BACC (<http://www.pmooffice.gov.fj/index.php/divisions/development-co-operation>).

¹³ <http://www.foreignaffairs.gov.fj/trade-policy/international-cooperation/oda-to-fiji>

Figure 7. Aid Statistics for Fiji (millions \$)



Source: The Republic of Fiji Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation; <http://www.foreignaffairs.gov.fj/trade-policy/international-cooperation/oda-trend>

UNICEF child protection initiatives are closely aligned with government within a joint Child protection Programme and coordinated through the NCCC.

Traditionally, the programme is based on the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for the Pacific Sub-Region (UNDAF), as was described in previous sections (page 27). From the government’s side, responsibility for implementing the programme rests with the Ministry of Social Welfare (Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2011). Working-level coordination is through NCCC, where UNICEF is a formal member of the NCCO Interagency Committee on Child Abuse, Neglect and Abandonment. Notably, one of the key recent joint initiatives – the 2008 Baseline Report “Protect me with Love and Care” – was structured against the Outcomes of the Results and Resources Framework (RRF) of the previous (2008-2012) UNICEF Country Programme Action Plan and the UNICEF/GoF child protection Programme.

INDICATOR 1.5. POLICY MONITORING

	ASSESSMENT	SCORE
Policy monitoring framework for child protection includes the following:	B	2.5
Four criteria for indicators		
• National programmatic documents for child protection are supported by monitoring and evaluation framework which is integrated into the policy cycle	Yes, restricted	0.75
• Monitoring and evaluations undertaken to assess child protection policies generate practical feedback to policy makers	Yes, restricted	0.75
• Analysis undertaken to review policies contains evaluation of policy impact	No	0
• There are clear processes and responsibilities for collecting data required for monitoring and evaluation, making sure that analysis covers sufficient scope of issues and produces reliable results	Yes	1

Monitoring frameworks within the policy cycle

The core role in strategic policy monitoring belongs to the SFCCO under the PM office. The core monitoring and evaluation cycle in public administration in Fiji is led by the MandE Unit of the Strategic Framework for Change Coordinating Office (SFCCO) in partnership with the Ministry of Strategic Planning, National Development and Statistics (MoSPNDS).

The SFCCO-led monitoring cycle includes quarterly reports by all agencies linked to the RDSSSED 2010-2014 objectives. The SFCCO works with all ministries and agencies throughout the planning cycle, monitoring their efforts to implement annual corporate plans (ACPs) on a quarterly basis and feeding back to improve the quality of the plans and programmes. This annual cycle includes the following steps:¹⁴

- Facilitate ACP formulation with ministries/departments;
- Preparation of monitoring matrix;
- Finalizing the monitoring matrix with ministries/departments;
- Entering of the monitoring matrix onto the Monitoring and Evaluation System (MES);
- Quarterly ACP implementation verification;
- Site visit process to verify projects;
- Entering of audited progress onto the MES;
- Preparation of the quarterly performance reports of ministries/departments;

- Submission of brief and quarterly progress reports and updates to Permanent Secretary at the Office of the Prime Minister and the Prime Minister;
- Quarterly brief and feedback to ministries/departments;
- Brief and updates to key stakeholders (as per request).

As was discussed earlier (see page 29), the RDSSSED 2010-2014 includes specific objectives related to child protection which are further translated into precise indicators in the annual corporate plans of all participating ministries and agencies.

The Ministry of Strategic Planning oversees the development components of this process, including any capital projects and staffing policies. For example, in 2013 it was leading in planning and monitoring of Fiji's Integrated Human Resource Development Programme (IHRDP) which worked to activate rural population and integrate them into the labour markets and development programmes for rural areas and Outer Islands (Ministry of Strategic Planning, National Development and Statistics, 2013). At the moment, these strategic programmes do not seem to have child protection elements but such links are theoretically possible.

While child protection monitoring is well integrated into the national planning cycle, it is not separated as a specific child protection-focused exercise with a clear leadership and integrated analytical output. On the one hand, consolidated quarterly monitoring of ministerial achievements in child protection is fully integrated into the government's current policy cycle as discussed above. On

¹⁴ <http://www.sfcco.gov.fj/quarterly-monitoring-process/>

the other hand, in the absence of a separate child protection policy, there is no integrated monitoring mechanism which would be specific for child protection, led by a single agency and clearly outlining gaps and bottlenecks by individual contributing sectors. Theoretically, such analysis could be conducted through the NCCC and its periodic reporting; but the NCCC has so far lacked institutional leverage to effectively undertake this monitoring role and feed back to the implementing agencies with sufficient authority and impact.

Practicality of the feedback

Once the SFCCO has collected quarterly reports from all ministries, it provides them with at least two types of feedback:

- Percentage ratings. Each ministry is rated every quarter based on how closely it managed to achieve the output and performance targets defined in its Annual

Corporate Plan. Comparison between actual and planned achievement is purely numerical and objective: the achieved result is assessed as a percentage of the target. An example of such feedback is provided in Table 4, which shows performance results for the Ministry of Youth and Sports in 2013. The overall score, in this case, is a combination of results for six separate outcomes, each of which has a different weight. Overall performance rating for this ministry varied during the year, starting with only 58.15 per cent in the first quarter and reaching 97.15 per cent in the fourth quarter. The rating is calculated with the help of specific software introduced in 2011.

- Briefings to discuss assessment results. Every quarter, all ministries are briefed by the SFCCO on the results of their performance assessment. According to the SFCCO, these briefings cover performance trends, budget utilisation, and recommendations for improvement. The briefing sessions also include lessons learning and experience exchange (SFCCO, 2013).

Table 4. Sample of quarterly performance ratings by SFCCO (Ministry of Youth and Sports, 2013)

Ministry of Youth and Sports						
2014 Outcome Ratings						
MYS RDSSED Outcomes	No. of Indicator	Ratings [100 per cent]	2013 Q-1	2013 Q-2	2013 Q-3	2013 Q-4
Outcome 6. Public Sector Reform	7	13	2	2	2	2
Outcome 25. National Identity and Social Cohesion	2	4	1.98	3.31	6.99	7
Outcome 26. Poverty Reduction	3	5	5	5	5	5
Outcome 31. Gender Equality and Women in Development	2	4	4.2	4.8	6.99	7
Outcome 32. Children and Youth	34	62	39.29	51.7	52.41	60.35
Outcome 33. Sports Development	4	7	3.7	5.39	6.26	8.8
Financial Services	3	5	1.98	6.99	6.99	7
Total	55	100	58.15	79.19	86.64	97.15

Most ministries use their SFCCO ratings for the general assessment of their performance. For example, the Ministry of Lands and Mineral Resources, which was rated at 86 per cent of target in 2011 (equivalent of “very good” in the SFCCO system), quoted this result as a “milestone achievement” and a “significant boost of confidence of the entire ministry” (Fiji Sun, 2011). The Ministry of Finance referred to its SFCCO ratings in the 2012 Annual Report (growing from 76 per cent in 2010 to 95 per cent in 2012) to demonstrate overall progress in the work of the Ministry (Ministry of Finance, 2012). Outstanding performance within the SFCCO rating system also seems to be a success factor for the agencies competing for the annual Service Excellence Award.

Quantitative ratings are a practical tool albeit with a limited focus. In 2013, the current system for performance monitoring led by the SFCCO was praised by the World Bank as an effective tool for monitoring whole-of-the-government policy process (SFCCO, 2013). The tool helps individual ministries quickly assess their progress against measurable targets, as well as compare their overall work to progress by other ministries. Quarterly consultations and discussions with the SFCCO add an opportunity to clarify details and raise practical issues. At the same time, the focus of this instrument is, by design, limited to the particular set of quantitative indicators selected to represent progress on particular areas. For example, as was discussed earlier, one of the Outputs under the responsibility of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Women and Poverty Alleviation (MoSWWPA) is “Output 5. Managing Children at Risk,” for which one of the performance indicators is “Recording and case work on reported child abuse cases under the Child Welfare Decree.” For 2014, the ACP established an annual target of 300 cases to be addressed throughout the year.¹⁵ However, such quantitative indicator does not fully capture the complexity of the risk management task and might even stimulate excessive filing of cases. Numerical data on the per centage of achievement for quantitative targets offers little insight either on the quality of processes for handling the cases or any bottlenecks to improvement, which would have required additional qualitative assessment and feedback.

Analysis of policy impact

Policy impact is analysed in ministerial reports, but not in the independent assessments by the SFCCO, creating a significant gap in policy monitoring. Apart from accurate recording of progress against a range of output targets, there seems to be essentially no analysis by the SFCCO of the policy impact of activities undertaken by the ministries. However, self-assessment by the ministries undertaken for the purpose of annual reporting does contain analysis of achievement by policy outcomes. For example, the 2012 Annual Report by the Ministry of Health provides detailed discussion of how various highlighted activities and achievements impacted ministerial planned outcomes; one of the areas within the Public Health outcome in this analysis is adolescent health. The report explains how an adolescent reproductive health project implemented by the ministry helped to promote family planning services. In particular, it praises a peer-to-peer approach which proved to be the most effective tool to disseminate sexual reproductive health information (MoH, 2013). This assessment was not able to locate annual corporate reports by other key ministries involved in child protection (especially the MoSWWPA) and the quality of their policy impact analysis still needs to be explored.

Reliability of assessments

Numerical focus, automated software and independent verification ensure significant reliability of SFCCO analysis. Quarterly performance analysis is based on ministerial reports with independent verification by the SFCCO. All data is channelled through automated software, which helps to improve the accuracy and objectivity of the quantitative analysis. Annual corporate plans clearly specify ministerial units responsible for delivering every target and, respectively, reporting on the results by providing respective data.

¹⁵A planned decrease compared to 2013 actual, which was 405 for the three quarters of the year

INDICATOR 1.6. SYNERGIES ACROSS SECTORS

	ASSESSMENT	SCORE
The following arrangements have been achieved:	B	2.5
Four criteria for indicators		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing social protection and employment measures are designed in ways which incorporate and reinforce child protection impact and are sustainable in the long-run 	Yes	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the ministry with lead justice role and the ministry with lead interior role, adequately resourced structural units are dedicated to issues related to specific vulnerabilities faced by children within the justice system and policies have been developed to provide a range of preventative, promotional and protective services for children in conflict with the law 	Yes, restricted	0.75
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health sector strategies and programmes explicitly recognize roles and responsibilities of health professionals in safeguarding children, helping to ensure appropriate and timely interventions, awareness raising and data collection 	No	0
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education sector policies include guidance and support to teachers, school governors and volunteers to support child protection within education settings (codes of conduct, procedures for dealing with protection concerns etc.) 	Yes, restricted	0.75

Reinforcement of child protection in social protection programmes

Poverty as a child protection risk factor in Fiji

Poverty is a considerable contributing factor to child abuse and maltreatment in Fiji. The ways in which economic hardship and poverty contribute to the occurrence of child abuse, globally and in the context of Pacific countries, only begin to be properly investigated. Some initial studies show that across the Pacific island countries material destitution and lack of livelihood opportunities may exacerbate risks of maltreatment through at least two major channels:

- **First, economic hardship increases the pressure on children to engage in hard and dangerous labour** – especially given the widespread expectation across the region that children are to contribute to the household welfare. It also prompts parents to engage in labour opportunities which may jeopardize their parental duties and lead to neglect, especially where traditional social structures are changing (e.g. in the context of urbanization) (Pacific Regional Rights Resource Team, 2008).
- **Secondly, poverty often limits a child's educational opportunities, which, in turn, greatly increases vulnerability to abuse.** Even if there is no formal fee, the price of books, uniform and transportation may be unaffordable: it was reported that in 2009 that annual cost

of primary school in Fiji was around US\$ 50-80 per child per year, and much higher for secondary school. While there are different reasons behind children dropping out, research on the Pacific increasingly shows that poverty is a major factor as high costs prompt parents to take children out of schools (AusAID, 2010). It was also shown that children dropping out of schools often remain unsupervised, drawn to dangerous activities and become more vulnerable to abuse, particularly to sexual exploitation (Pacific Regional Rights Resource Team, 2008).

In Fiji, households with children tend to be the poorest and most vulnerable. In 2008-2009, almost half of families with two or more children were poor; and these families represented 30-34 per cent of the overall amount of people living in poverty in the country. While poverty affected the chances of children to receive proper education, the lack of education itself increased the risk of poverty in adult life: frequency of economic deprivation was much higher among household heads with low education compared to those who completed secondary school and especially those who had post-secondary education (World Bank, 2011).

Key features the social protection system

Since 2008-2009, Fiji's social security system went through considerable modification. A lot of these changes explicitly responded to recommendations of the 2011 World Bank Assessment of the Social Protection System in Fiji, with many policy options described in that report being taken into practice during 2011-2014. Reforms are on-going; in

particular, further significant change is expected throughout 2014 (Swami, 2014).

The system of social security operated in Fiji consists of several major blocks:

- **The Poverty Benefit Scheme (PBS).** The PBS was introduced in 2013, replacing two previous instruments: the Family Assistance Programme (FAP) and the Food Voucher Programme (FVP) (see Table 5 and Figure 8). The FAP was traditionally used by the Fiji government as the core instrument to support poor families with members who were elderly, disabled or chronically ill. While the programme was praised for being well targeted,¹⁶ the World Bank criticized it for leaving many vulnerable people outside the scheme. The FAP was based on a combined criteria of poverty status as well as belonging to particular population groups such as elderly. On recommendation of the World Bank, the approach was revised: the government introduced a new social pension scheme to focus on support of vulnerable elderly¹⁷ and united FAP and FVP under the new Poverty Benefit Scheme (PBS) with reformed eligibility criteria to make it more poverty-oriented. In 2014, selection was based purely on proxy means testing, without any limitation by age and health status. At the time of the World Bank Assessment FAP/FVP was the biggest social assistance programme, but as the government began to reform its social protection system to increase other types of interventions (see Figure 8). The PBS provides a monthly cash grant up to \$120 supplemented with \$30 food voucher¹⁸. Assistance under PBS maybe used for no longer than three years, after which a selected individual from the household should transit to a Welfare Graduation Program (Bola-Bari, 2014). The size of the transfer was increased compared to \$60-100 in 2011 (World Bank, 2011). Since 2012, the grants were transited to an e-payment system facilitated by the Westpac Banking Corporation (MoF, 2011).
- **Transportation assistance to school students.**¹⁹ The free bus fare scheme covers all children going to school. Administration of this scheme is being reformed with the plan to introduce e-ticketing during 2013-2014 (MoF, 2012).
- **Child protection Allowance.** The Child protection Allowance (CPA) was previously called "Care and Protection Allowance" (C&P). Throughout the last decade it was gradually expanded and went through a range of important modifications. The allowance is a monthly cash benefit paid to the guardians of vulnerable children. Given the key importance of the CPA for child protection, it is described in more detail below.

- **Graduation and temporary support programmes.** The World Bank was concerned in 2011 about the approaches used to making decisions on "graduation" of recipients from key social assistance programmes, especially FAP and CandP. At the time, removing people from the schemes was based mostly on desk reviews of their files without due consideration of individual circumstances, creating a high risk of throwing such individuals into poverty. Since 2011, the government gradually reformed its graduation methods, expanding the special Welfare Graduation Program was expanded, e.g. to include ex-prisoners and youth, a separate scheme was introduced for fire victims, and spending was re-oriented away from pure monetary support towards wider assistance including training and activation methods to help individual become more self-sustainable (MoF, 2011). It also introduced a rule for annual revision of all files, and an appeals mechanism (Fijian Government Media Center, 2012).
- **Housing, livelihoods, employment and other programmes.** One of the key observations in the 2011 World Bank assessment was the bias of Fijian social security system towards protection and almost complete lack of programmes aimed at prevention and promotion. Throughout 2011-2014 budgets, the government has almost doubled social security spending, mostly expanding programmes to promote income-generating activities and strengthen resilience of vulnerable citizens through social housing and regional development initiatives (as illustrated in Figure 8). In particular, in 2011, it introduced a National Housing Policy and Social Housing Policy which help poor families to secure home ownership.²⁰ Several new programmes aim to create livelihood opportunities for squatter dwellers, including trainings in farming and home construction, assisting in linkages to relevant agencies etc. The Government also opened a National Employment Centre to assist the unemployed in finding job opportunities and acquiring relevant skills (MoF, 2012). For example, the National Employment Centre cooperates with MoSWWPA and the garment industry to train women graduating from Child protection Allowance after their children reach 18 years in marketable skills such as sewing (Anshoo Mala, 2011).

¹⁶ According to the World Bank, 70 per cent of the FAP recipients in 2009 were citizens from the two poorest population quintiles (World Bank, 2011).

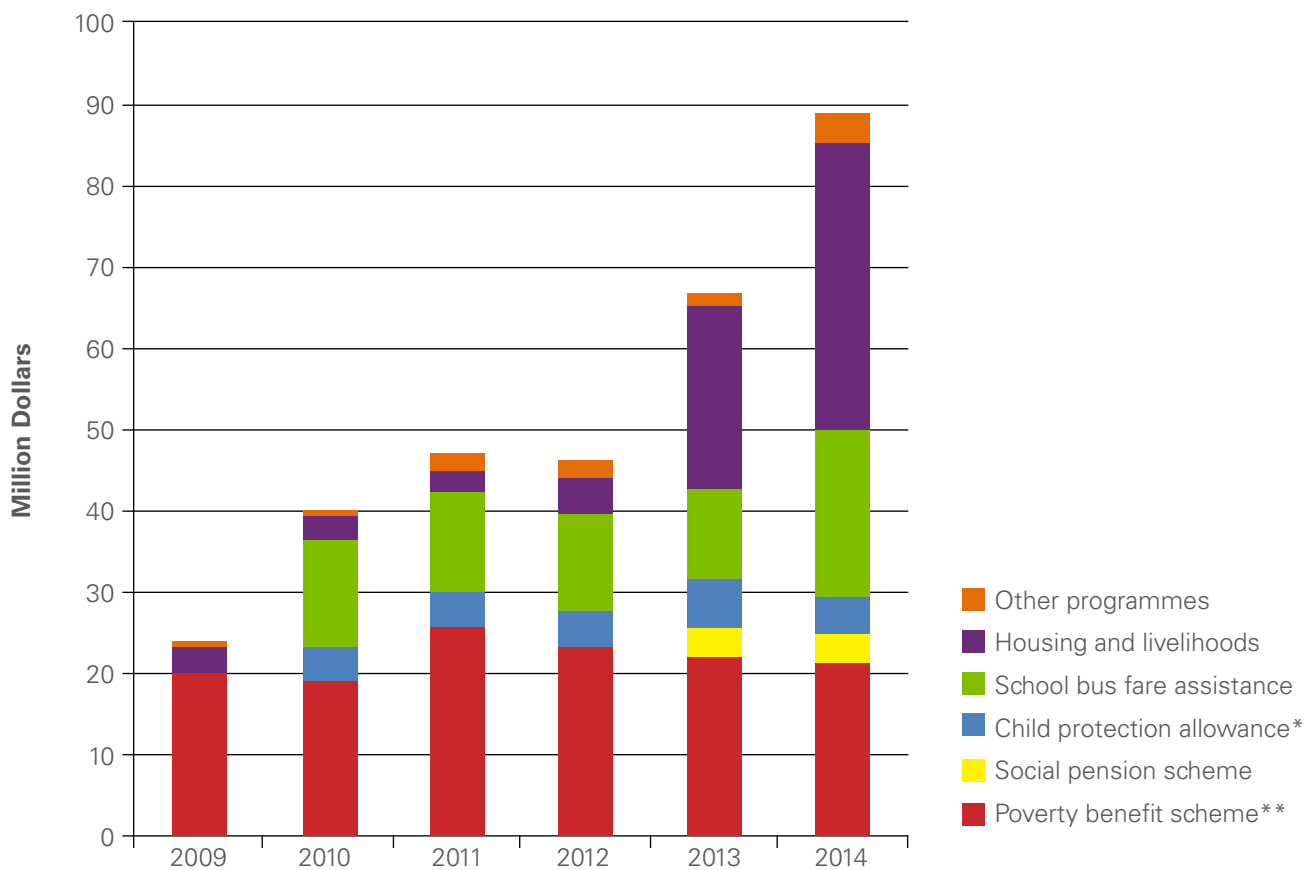
¹⁷ The Social Pension Scheme introduced in 2013 covers citizens above 70 years of age with allowance of 30 dollars per month. Eligibility is limited to those who do not receive any other pension (Fiji National Pension Fund - FNPF, Civil Service, After Care) or royalties from the TLTB – the iTaukei Land Trust Board (MoF, 2013).

¹⁸ This food voucher program is different from an additional initiative started in 2014 to provide extra food vouchers to pregnant women (\$30 for up to 10 months) (Bola-Bari, 2014).

¹⁹ In addition to free transportation for school students, there are also smaller schemes of bus fare subsidies for disabled and elderly.

²⁰ The National Housing Policy aims for general development of affordable housing; the Social Housing Policy allows families which are able to prove financial difficulties to have their home loans written off (MoF, 2012).

Figure 8. Social protection spending in Fiji in 2009-2014



Source: (World Bank, 2011), MoF Budget Supplements for 2010-2014.



Table 5. Social Protection Spending in Fiji in 2009-2014**Fiji dollars (millions)**

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Child protection allowance*	0.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	6.0	4.5
Poverty benefit scheme**	20.0	19.4	26.0	23.5	22.6	22.0
Family assistance scheme	20.0	12.0	15.0	-	-	-
Food voucher programme	-	7.4	11.0	-	-	-
School bus fare assistance	-	13.0	12.0	12.0	11.0	20.8
Housing and livelihoods	3.0	2.5	2.5	4.1	22.2	34.9
Squatter upgrading and resettlement programme	2.0	1.5	1.5	2.0	1.0	2.0
HART	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.6	0.6	1.0
National Housing Policy	-	-	-	0.2	0.2	0.2
Sustainable Income Generating Project	-	-	-	0.3	0.4	0.7
Social Housing Policy	-	-	-	2.0	1.0	1.0
Low Cost Housing Policy	-	-	-	-	13.0	12.0
Public Rental Housing Project	-	-	-	-	6.0	10.0
Other new housing development projects	-	-	-	-	-	8.0
Social Pension Scheme	-	-	-	-	3.2	3.0
Other programmes	0.4	0.9	2.0	2.3	2.0	3.5
Welfare Graduation Program	-	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.5
Women's Plan of Action	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.6	0.6	0.8
Assistance to fire victims	-	-	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
National employment centre	-	-	1.0	1.1	0.8	0.8
Food vouchers for pregnant women	-	-	-	-	-	1.3
TOTAL	23.8	40.2	46.9	46.2	67.0	88.7
GDP at current market prices***	5,772.0	6,187.0	6,731.0	7,203.0	7,740.0	8,262.0
Social assistance as per cent of GDP	0.4 per cent	0.6 per cent	0.7 per cent	0.6 per cent	0.9 per cent	1.1 per cent

* *previously Care and Protection (CandP) Allowance*** *previously Family Assistance Programme (FAP) and Food Voucher Program**** *GDP data is based on IMF press release describing the result of the 2013 Article IV Consultation with the*

Source: (World Bank, 2011), MoF Budget Supplements for 2010-2014.

Child protection Allowance: detailed features

The Child protection Allowance (Child protectionA) is a well-designed programme which does not seem to create any negative financial incentives. Allocation of the grant to vulnerable children regardless of the type of care (parental, foster, or residential) does not stimulate residential services; simple categorical eligibility criteria should lead to accurate targeting.

Coverage: Initially, the coverage was limited to children living in several residential homes and in foster care (comprising about 500 children). However, around 2011, the CandP was extended to cover all children under 18 years of age living either in residential homes and foster parents, or in families which are deemed “vulnerable” based on a changing range of criteria. In 2011, this included single parents, parents with deserted spouses, deceased breadwinners and prisoner’s dependents (World Bank, 2011). The 2013 Budget Supplement described the Scheme as covering “orphans and neglected children” (MoF, 2012). As of early 2014, overall amount of children benefiting from the Child protectionA was 4608²¹ (Bola-Bari, 2014).

Conditions: According to the World Bank (World Bank, 2011), in 2011 the allowance was conditional on the child’s school enrolment and a range of other criteria (e.g. higher payments were provided to disabled children). Whether this is still the case remains to be verified given that neither the Budget Supplements during 2010-2014 nor the latest CRC report mention any conditions attached to this benefit scheme.

Size: The CPA (former CandP) is a monthly cash grant paid to the guardian of the child (parent, foster or institution). In 2011 the size of the allowance was \$25-60 per child. However, in 2013 the size of the monthly allowance was increased from \$60 to \$100 per child, but only for those children who live in nine residential institutions throughout the country (Gopal, 2013).

Remaining issues

From the perspective of ensuring that social protection helps, directly and indirectly, to protect children from maltreatment, several issues within the on-going reform in Fiji remain open:

- Social assistance schemes do not yet take into account composition of the households and vulnerable status of families with many children. As discussed earlier, families with many children tend to be the poorest. However, the current system of social assistance does not directly recognize this tendency. The Child protection Allowance is targeted directly at children but is limited to orphans or those living with vulnerable parents (single mothers, widows or prisoner dependents). The 2011 World Bank assessment recommended to restructure the general poverty benefit scheme to take into account the number of dependents and the overall size and composition of the household (World Bank, 2011).
- While Fiji’s system of social protection is well targeted, diversified and changing in the right direction, it still remains relatively small in size. The 2011 World Bank assessment that overall social assistance envelope at the time represented only 0.6 per cent of the country’s GDP (even though it grew by about 70 per cent between 2009 and 2010). Since 2010, this amount has again more than doubled, but in the 2014 budget it still represents only 1.1 per cent of the projected GDP for this year. For comparison, the average level of social protection spending among upper-middle income countries of the East Asia and the Pacific (to which Fiji belongs) was 4.0 per cent of GDP in 2013; moreover it was considerably higher even among the low-income countries (2.5 per cent) (see Table 6).

Table 6. Average social protection spending across the EAP region

Income group	Average social protection spending across income group (35 countries in EAP region)
High income countries	10.2 per cent
Upper middle income countries	4.0 per cent
Lower middle income countries	3.4 per cent
Low income countries	2.6 per cent

Source: ADB Social Protection Index (ADB, 2013).

²¹ The reported amount of children living in residential institutions in Fiji in 2012 was 92 (Lina, 2012).

Capacities dedicated to child protection within justice sector

Strategic and legal commitments

- **Several laws approved during 2003-2009 have installed significant commitments to protect children within the justice system.**
- Non-custodial sentencing and rehabilitation. As discussed earlier (page 28), the Juvenile Act 2003 made custodial sentence to be last resort for juvenile offenders and obliged the Ministry of Social Welfare to provide safe placements for children in conflict with the law; later decrees (the 2009 Crimes Decree and the 2009 Penalties and Sentencing Decree) further required children to be provided with opportunities for community-based rehabilitation and reintegration.
- Establishment of juvenile courts. The Juveniles Act 2003 installed rules for establishment and procedures of juvenile courts, which were mandated to take over all cases related to juveniles other than murder or attempted murder.
- Operationalization of care orders. The Juveniles Act 2003 also specified the concept of care orders in respect of juveniles, including the process of application for such orders and their issuance through the juvenile courts, as well as the process of handling care orders.²² The care of a juvenile under a care order is placed on the Director of Social Welfare, and the Act specified his powers whilst having care of a juvenile to have same rights and liabilities in respect of the maintenance as if he were the parent of the juvenile.²³

Dedicating special capacities within the justice sector was also prompted by Fiji's signing of the UN Global "Commit" Campaign in 2013. The new campaign calls governments to take concrete steps to end violence towards women and girls. In particular, Fiji committed to reviving an Inter-Agency Taskforce on Elimination of Violence against Women and Children, tasked, among other things, to develop protocols for integrated services for women and children at risk. Fiji also committed to provide 24-hour turn-around time on serious cases of violence against women and children and to increase the percentage of female police officers from 5 to 20 per cent, including in frontline service positions. The commitment also included a new requirement for the police to share data on women and child abuse with Ministry of Social Welfare on a quarterly basis (UN Women, 2013).

Implementation measures

Increased commitments in juvenile justice still lack operationalization to ensure full compliance. Increased protection by legislation and better services by justice systems to protect children as victims, offenders and witnesses was one of the three key Outcomes assessed by the 2008 Baseline Report. While this study found Fijian legislation to be broadly in line with the CRC with regard to protection of children within the justice sector, it also observed numerous difficulties with actual implementation of legal commitments. Without sufficient operationalization and clarification, the study found that many stakeholders were unaware of the rules or did not comply with them (UNICEF; AusAID, 2009). While consistent verification of the current level of knowledge and compliance would require a repeated survey which was beyond the scope of this assessment, the FGDs held in 2013 showed that the degree of operationalization of juvenile justice laws is still problematic. As was discussed earlier (page 42), stakeholders complained not so much about the inconsistency of the current laws as about the lack of detailed guidance on implementation of the reformed rules for juvenile justice.

At the same time, the government consistently increases the range of implementation measures. The latest CRC report which assessed the situation as of 2011 concluded that "a variety of measures have been adopted by the police to directly address the problems of crimes committed against and by children" (Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2011). These measures are listed below with reference to earlier concerns voiced by the 2008 Baseline Report "Protect me with Love and Care" and any available recent evidence:

- **The Juvenile Justice Bureau within the Fiji Police Force (FPF).** The Bureau was re-established with the major task to ensure uniform approach to handling juvenile offenders. According to the 2008 Baseline Report, the Juvenile Justice Bureau was significantly under-resourced, including in terms of human capacities. This study did not assess the current capacities of the Bureau and whether it had expanded since 2008. However, a range of reports indicated that the Bureau went through capacity building activities (Fiji Police Force, 2012) and has been active itself in organizing child protection measures such as trainings for police officers (Valemei, Police train to protect, 2012); awareness programmes for children in schools, including through cooperation with private schools (Fiji Police Force, 2010). At the FGD, the Bureau was very active and described extensive programmes and plans in child protection training, awareness raising and service provision.

²² "Care order" is defined as an order by a court committing a juvenile to the care of the Director. Detailed procedures related to the care orders are described in Part X of the Juveniles Act 2003.

²³ Excluding provision of consent to the marriage of a juvenile, authorization of change of religion, and dealing with the property of the juvenile.

- **Provision of legal counselling for all young offenders by their welfare officers.** According to the CRC periodic report, “Legal Aid Commission has made juvenile cases a priority and as such there is always a legal officer present during Juvenile Court sittings. They have also allocated one legal officer to visit juveniles in detention as part of their prison visit obligations.” (Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2011). The 2008 Baseline Report noted that despite the presence of procedures on dealing with young offenders, compliance at the time of that report was low. First, children were not always tried in the juvenile court; legal aid was not always present, and no written guidelines existed on dealing with child witnesses and victims. Moreover, “in spite of inter-agency Memoranda of Understanding, victims were not routinely referred to other services such as social welfare or health” (UNICEF; AusAID, 2009). Again, verifying how situation changed in this respect would require an equivalent survey which was beyond the scope of this assessment.

- **High rate of pre-trial diversion.** A provision in the FPF Standing Orders gives police officers authority to use their discretion to work with children at risk of conflict with the law to encourage rehabilitation and to caution them without resorting to judicial proceedings. Specific Standard Operating Procedures for treatment of children in conflict with the law were supposed to be developed by the Juvenile Justice Bureau (it remains to be verified whether this task was completed) (Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2011). The 2008 Baseline Report confirmed that it was very typical for police to informally divert child offenders and avoid charging young offenders. It also showed that almost half of the child offences were not reported to the police at all but were referred instead to traditional or religious leaders (UNICEF; AusAID, 2009).

- **A range of community correction mechanisms.** A community-based correction programme for young offenders for their rehabilitation outside custodial sentences; the programme is led by the Ministry of Social Welfare with assistance from AusAID. There is also a Community Work Scheme for children (since 1994) which gives young offenders unable to pay fines a chance to do community work as a non-custodial alternative to sentencing. This programme is led by the Ministry of Social Welfare in partnership with a range of organizations which provide placements for such community works (Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2011). The 2008 Baseline Report acknowledged successes of the community corrections system, but warned against instances of using physical punishment as one of the disciplining measures (UNICEF; AusAID, 2009).

Reportedly, activities have begun to expand child protection capacities within the Fiji Police Force.

According to the MoSWWPA, they began to implement these commitments already in early 2013: a memorandum of understanding was signed with the police listing particular plans such as the provision of the 24-hour turn-around time on violence cases and the increase of the per centage of

female officers (Ewart, 2013).

Some programmes are also in place for specific training of police officers in child protection issues, but it is not clear whether such trainings are comprehensive and consistent. An example is the ILO-supported capacity building programme for community policing officers undertaken in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Labour. In 2012, a sample of police officers participated in a training programme on child labour issues and ways to work with the communities for promoting and preventing related risks (ILO, 2012). There is no immediate evidence on whether such capacity building activities are regular and systemic.

Synergies with the health sector

Fiji is struggling to capitalize on its strong tradition of primary health care (PHC), which needs considerable reformation to face modern health and population risks.

Fiji is known as one of the most successful enthusiasts of a primary care model which was promoted by the WHO since the 1970s. Even before Fiji signed up to the 1978 Alma-Ata Declaration on Primary Healthcare (PHC), the country was already implementing innovative approaches with island medical officers undertaking community outreach, holding village clinics, building partnerships with chiefs and providing training for traditional practitioners (Negin, Roberts, and Lingam, 2010). The 2011 Health System Review by the WHO recognized that strong foundation in a primary health care model is still one of the core strengths of the Fiji health system. However, the review also showed that the model had been exposed to growing risks, mostly related to stagnant and excessively centralized funding of the sector, as well as human resource challenges, including emigration. Several waves of reforms failed to address these risks, which resulted in decreasing health outcomes, growing scale of out-of-pocket spending and falling rates of PHC utilization. Since 2009, Fiji is engaged into a new wave of major healthcare reform focused on decentralization (WHO, 2011).

While there is a reasonable coverage with nursing stations, quality of services is often lacking and community outreach is often stalling.

A combination of strong PHC traditions and growing capacity stress at the level of primary service provision resulted in a situation where proximity of a health professional increasingly failed to guarantee quality service (Negin, Roberts, and Lingam, 2010). At least for some time, dealing with child abuse has been one of the relatively innovative skills on which many health professionals were falling behind. The 2008 Baseline Report identified health professionals as being the third most prevalent source of services for the victims of child abuse (when asked what services were available for help, nurses and doctors were the third most popular answer after parents and police). At the same time, respondents were less likely to report abuse cases to health workers compared to teachers. Moreover, while health professionals were the most confident about their ability to recognize signs of physical abuse, they showed a much poorer understanding of the indicators of sexual abuse and almost complete lack of understanding of the signs of neglect (UNICEF;

AusAID, 2009).

Plans to reform the sector in areas related to child health are outlined in 2012-2015 Child Health Policy and Strategy. On-going healthcare reform is described in the 5-year Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Health (2011-2014). This document did not address child protection, but called to develop a specific strategy on child health (MoH, 2011). The Child Health Policy and Strategy 2012-2015 was introduced the following year. This document follows the general direction of healthcare decentralization and outlines plans for strengthening preventative and curative services for children at sub-divisional level. This includes new programmes for continued professional development and supportive supervision of the staff, establishment of new managerial structures and patient referral systems to improve coordination.

The 2012-2015 strategy does not specifically address child protection concerns and has no practical guidelines on implementing child protection commitments. The new Child Health Policy and Strategy for 2012-2015 includes a statement on child protection, acknowledging respective CRC commitments and establishing that “when children are abused or neglected there should be guidelines in place to minimize the social, emotional and psychological implications and effects on the child”. However, the document is silent on any practical ways to achieve this and it is not clear whether the actual guidelines were further developed to support this requirement. The 2014 MoH Annual Corporate Plan and the latest available annual report (for 2012) also have no specific activities related to child protection (MoH, 2013). Notably, incorporation of child protection measures into MoH Annual Corporate Plans and Strategic Plans (including training activities) was one of the recommendations of the 2008 Baseline Report which does not seem to have materialized.

Pressure on local health workers to effectively deal with child abuse is growing and current strategic documents do not spell out how these needs would be covered. The Child Welfare Decree 2010 reinforced the role of health professionals in dealing with child abuse, mandating all health workers to report cases of child abuse. The Ministry of Social Welfare, Women and Poverty Alleviation stated in February 2013 that “Fiji will prioritize building capacity for front-line health care workers to respond to violence against women and children holistically with medical management, referrals, counselling and appropriate treatment. Medical officers will be on call so that services are provided 24/7”. To achieve this, the health sector was reported to plan an expansion of its services to sexual and reproductive health clinics, matching similar efforts in the Police (Valemei, Ministry Steps Up Fight, 2013). Again, none of these measures are explicitly mentioned in the current planning documents of the MoH. Moreover, the MoH acknowledged in 2011-2012 that the current “myriad” of various regulations which have implications for delivery of medical services call

for a review of the Public Health Act, and a special Health Policy Commission was established to lead this process (WHO; Ministry of Health, Fiji, 2012). At the time of this report, this work is still in progress.²⁴

Generic plans for major capacity building at local level within the current wave of reform could be used to install new child protection skills. As discussed earlier, capacity building at the primary level and public health strengthening are core principles behind the on-going health reform. The fundamental call of the reform is to respond to the RDSSED objective of ensuring access to “good quality health-services”. This includes investment into continued professional development of staff, including through introduction of on-line courses across the region (funded by the WHO) (Mohammed, 2012). These generic plans to invest into capacity expansion at sub-divisional level open a window of opportunity for specific child protection up-skill.

Additional exploration is needed to assess the scope and quality of inter-agency cooperation agreements currently supported by the MoH. The MoH supports at least some agreements with other agencies on joint child protection activities. The 2008 Baseline Report mentioned, in particular, a protocol between the MoH and Fiji police on provision of medical services dating 2004. It was not yet verified whether additional agreements had been signed since that time and whether they provide sufficient practical platform for cooperation.

Synergies with the education sector

Since 2010, the Fijian Ministry of Education (MoENHCA)²⁵ operates and constantly updates a Policy on Child protection. The Policy was first introduced in 2010 (MoENHCA, 2010) but since that time it has been updated on yearly basis. The latest version of the policy is dated October 2012 (MoENHCA, 2012). The core objective of the Policy is development of a practical framework to achieve “zero-tolerance of abuse, neglect and exploitation of children” in schools. The policy explicitly refers to obligations of Fiji under the CRC and to a range of domestic laws and policies relevant to child protection in educational settings (such as Education Act 1978 and Family Law Act 2003, a range of more recent Decrees and the MoENHCA other own policies such as Early Childhood Education Policy, Behaviour Management in Schools Policy and Customer Service Policy).

The MoENHCA policy introduces the following rules to keep schools safe for the children:

- Provides explicit definitions to key child protection issues in school settings (bullying; abuse by adults via omission or indifference, bodily or emotionally; emotional abuse; physical abuse; sexual abuse; neglect). Since the initial introduction in 2010, the policy was expanded to cover additional concepts such as, e.g., cyber bullying and verbal abuse;

²⁴ Recommendation: reflect child welfare commitments in the Public Health Act (consider a respective submission for the review).

²⁵ Full name of the Ministry of Education at the time of this report is Ministry of Education, National Heritage, Culture and Arts (MoENHCA).

- Establishes the key rules of child protection in schools, including a requirement for all schools to develop and implement their own school-specific policy for identification, reporting and management of child abuse cases; the requirement to seek inputs from children in the development of such policies; and a mandatory principle for any officers in the ministry and schools to identify, manage and report instances of abuse;
- Establishes lines of responsibility, including a requirement for every school to appoint a Child protection Officer as a focal point; a commitment for the HR Management unit of the MoENHCA to monitor compliance with the policy; and a commitment for the Permanent Secretary for Education and school heads to intervene where abuse was identified. Ultimate responsibility for any cases of child abuse in schools is placed at the school heads;
- Outlines procedures for ensuring child protection in schools. These include the immediate termination of staff who have violated child protection policies; monitoring of instances where students take undue sick leaves or recurrent days off for injuries; and precise steps to be taken by all parties to prevent and manage cases of abuse (trainings on recognizing factors and signs of abuse, prevention programmes, responding to suspicions and allegations, recording information, reporting the concern, running internal inquiries and investigations etc.).
- Spells out privacy rules to keep personal data in strict confidentiality;
- Introduces rules for recruitment of personnel to work with children, including mandatory registration with the Fiji Teacher Registration Board (FTRB), mandatory checks including collection of confidential references, specific interviews and induction focused on child protection;
- Provides good practice guidelines, indicators of abuse, appropriate use of child images and appropriate use of communication systems (e.g. never using video or digital cameras to exploit children).

Recent expansions of the policy include management of new risks; more detailed templates and procedures.

The 2011-2012 revisions to the policy have expanded it, including through specification of financing sources to be used to cover the costs of implementation of the policy (MoENHCA jointly with donors). The current version also includes several additional annexes which contain: a sample student information file (including family history and records of abuse cases); an outline of an instructional programme for educators and students on ways to recognize, prevent and address abuse; examples of professional development activities to up-skill teachers and school heads on child rights; list of specific child protection duties of school heads and child protection officers; procedures for receiving evidence on child abuse; template of a child protection officer information sheet (describing any incidents of abuse); procedures for recruiting and selecting personnel working with children;

Verifying whether the policy is actually applied in practice would require a facility-level or household survey and is therefore uncertain. In 2008, the Baseline Report on child protection recorded that at least 31 per cent of children in Fiji were hurt physically by their teachers in the last month and 75 per cent of education informants stated that teachers relied on corporal punishment (UNICEF; AusAID, 2009). Other research on the prevalence of child abuse in schools is even less recent (e.g. the large-scale comprehensive survey by Save the Children in 2005) (Global Initiative to End All Corporate Punishment of Children, 2013). No similar surveys have been run more recently to check whether the situation had improved, including as a response to the 2010 Child protection Policy of the Ministry of Education. Already in 2011, there were some reports of schools that stated that all their staff were fully aware of the Policy and episodes when those teachers who failed to comply with the policies were fired and charged by the police (Taylor-Newton, 2011).

While the MoENHCA policy represents a big step forward in mainstreaming child protection into education sector, there are still some gaps noted by the observers:

- **The legality of corporal punishment in schools is still questionable.** Analysis by the Global Initiative to End All Corporate Punishment of Children for its 2013 Global Report states that while corporal punishment in Fiji is prohibited in schools under a High Court ruling, the Education Act of 1978 is actually silent on the issue; moreover, the Juveniles Act 1974 (Article 57) provides legal justification for corporal punishment by establishing “the right of any parent, teacher or other person having the lawful control or charge of a juvenile to administer reasonable punishment to him”. The report recommended that Article 57 of the Juveniles Act 1974 be repealed and the High Court prohibition confirmed in legislation (Global Initiative to End All Corporate Punishment of Children, 2013). The latest periodic CRC report confirmed that there is no provision on corporal punishment in any of the new Decrees related to Juvenile Justice²⁶ (Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2011).
- **There is no explicit policy to cover alternative educational settings.** While the MoENHCA policy addresses child abuse in schools, it does not explicitly cover other educational settings, such as alternative care and day care (including nurseries, pre-schools, family centres as well as day care for older children). This weakness was noted by the 2013 Global Corporal Punishment Report as well as the 2014 Report on Gender-Based Violence in Schools in the Asia-Pacific Region (Global Initiative to End All Corporate Punishment of Children, 2013) (UNESCO; UNGEI, 2014).

²⁶ The Crimes Decree 2009; the Criminal Procedures Decree 2009; and the Sentencing and Penalties Decree 2009.



DOMAIN 2.

PUBLIC FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Methodological note:

In the last decade, Fiji went through two rounds of PEFA (Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability) Framework Assessments. The first assessment was undertaken in 2005 (report completed by June 2005), led by the World Bank Group with participation of AusAid. The second assessment took place during 2012-2013, with the draft report issued in May 2013. Unfortunately, none of these reports are publicly available at the moment. The two only references to the results of the PEFA analysis for Fiji are

available in the 2010 PFTAC PFM Roadmap for Forum Island Countries, which contains a brief list of final scores from the 2005 PEFA Assessment (PFTAC, 2010), and, generically, in the 2013 World Bank study of the PEFA results across the PICs (World Bank, 2013). For this pilot study which strongly relies on secondary sources, PEFA assessments represent an important source of information on the country's cross-cutting PFM processes. In the absence of these reports, this report is limited to brief analysis by our team of other publicly available materials and should be refined once full-scale PEFA conclusions become public.

INDICATOR 2.1.

STRATEGIC BUDGETING BASED ON REALISTIC COSTING

	ASSESSMENT	SCORE
The country's budgeting system includes the following:	B	2.25
Four criteria for indicators		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The government operates under a multi-year financial forecast, on a rolling annual basis, which includes expenditure estimates for child protection-related programmes; 	Yes	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Links between multi-year estimates and subsequent setting of annual budget ceilings for child protection are clear and differences explained; 	Yes, restricted	0.75
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The government's child protection strategy is costed, these costs are explicitly considered during the budget process and feed into agreed priorities in resource allocation; 	No, extended	0.25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy-makers in child protection have regular supply of data which allows them to track utilization of assets, expenditure and budget execution by child protection programmes and facilities. 	No, extended	0.25

Multi-year financial planning

Strategic financial planning in Fiji is closely linked to the key programmatic documents: the People's Charter and the Roadmap for Democracy and Sustainable Socio-Economic Development 2010-2014. As discussed earlier, Fiji's current strategic planning system is based on the 2008 People's Charter for Change, Peace and Progress (PCCPP) which translates into the Roadmap for Democracy and Sustainable Socio-Economic Development (RDSSSED) for 2010-2014. Essentially, the Roadmap (RDSSSED) is the country's current strategic development plan and a platform for multi-annual planning and budgeting.

Planning is based on a rolling Medium-Term Macro-Fiscal Framework which feeds in to the annual budget cycle led by the MoF. Budgeting rules are defined in Fiji's Financial Management Act 2004, complemented by additional Finance Instructions issued by the Ministry of Finance and Finance Manuals issued at the sector/agency level (Ministry of Finance and Financial Planning, 2004). The Act requires that the budgeting process is governed by a rolling macro-fiscal framework led by the Ministry of Finance (MoF). Every year, the annual budgeting cycle begins with the MoF issuing a Strategic Policy Statement which defines macro-fiscal projections for the budget year and the next two years, with explanations of key objectives and assumptions. For the 2014 budget, this statement was issued in July 2013 in the form of a Finance Circular containing the MoF 2014 Budget Strategy and Baseline Budget for the upcoming year (MoF, 2013).

Macroeconomic and fiscal projections provided by the MoF in the Annual Budget Strategy are multi-year, detailed and clearly explained. The Annual Budget Strategy informs administrative heads (Permanent Secretaries and Heads of Departments) of the broad guidelines for the preparation of the next year's budget. It describes the Macroeconomic Outlook and key macroeconomic assumptions for the budget year and next two years, as well as the government's mid-term Fiscal Policy and multi-year projections of key fiscal totals.²⁷ It also contains key fiscal policy objectives. For example, the 2014 strategy was to continue the gradual consolidation of finances in the medium term, but aim to increase operating savings (to prevent borrowing for recurrent expenses) and reallocate spending towards capital projects and repayment of debt (MoF, 2013). These macro-fiscal plans are linked to another document – the Medium Term Fiscal Framework which was approved by the Cabinet for 2013-2017. This document is not available publicly and it has to be verified whether it is updated on a rolling basis (see, e.g., (IMF, 2013)).

Expenditure estimates provided by the MoF are based on broad sector envelopes and do not seem to be multi-year. Since at least 2013, the expenditure allocation follows an "Expenditure Envelope" method. According

to this method, at the stage of broad policy agreement in the beginning of the budgeting cycle, the MoF Annual Budget Strategy contains only broad envelopes for five broad expenditure categories: General Administration; Social Services; Economic Services; Infrastructure; and Unallocable. These expenditure envelopes are provided for the upcoming budget year, with reference to the previous year sector weightings. Further, the MoF issues individual expenditure envelopes for each agency, endorsed by the Cabinet. The agencies are then encouraged to prioritize their programmes and activities within their expenditure envelopes. These decisions must be guided by a set of broad principles:

- Keep priorities linked to the Roadmap (RDSSSED);
- Invest into activities with quick and sustainable returns;
- Maintain essential services;
- Invest in knowledge base and human capital;
- Support critical public sector and structural reform initiatives;
- Continue key infrastructural projects;
- Strengthen initiatives for self-help, income generation; SME development;
- Prioritize activities with direct impact on promoting private sector growth and employment;
- Continue existing social nets and other programmes to assist poor and disadvantaged;
- Continue key initiatives for rural, remote and maritime regions;
- Reserve enough for contingencies such as natural disasters;
- Provide funds for the 2014 General Elections and set up a new Parliament;
- Take into account recommendations from 2013 MoF monitoring and evaluation;
- Aim to reduce operating budgets and re-allocate towards productive investment.

Individual agencies prioritize their spending within budget envelopes and based on RDSSSED objectives, feeding into their Corporate Plans subject to MoF and Cabinet endorsement. Based on these directions and resource envelopes, individual ministries and departments update their Strategic Plans (which cover three years) and prepare Annual Corporate Plans which contain detailed description of planned programmes and activities along with the cost estimates. Proposed expenditure allocations are reflected in the budget submissions by individual agencies to the Ministry of Finance, which scrutinizes them to feed in to the national budget. As discussed previously, all cost estimates in the Annual Corporate Plans are clearly linked to the RDSSSED outputs and outcomes, as well as the PCCPP Pillars.

The "Expenditure Envelope" approach to budgeting follows a recommendation formulated in 2013 by the World Bank Guidelines for designing PFM systems in the Pacific island countries. These guidelines noted that governments in the PICs often lack flexibility to allocate

²⁷ Total revenue, total expenditure, public debt, operating and capital expenditure.

funds in line with their priorities, given that traditional PFM approaches often commit the bulk of funds to already on-going activities and to meeting payroll increases. Instead, the guidelines recommended providing the agencies with more liberty to define their own allocations within broad but realistic expenditure envelopes (World Bank, 2013). The move towards increasing allocative flexibility within realistic expenditure envelopes is a critical step towards credible medium-term planning. The key objective of multi-year forecasting is to provide all stakeholders with a reliable picture of financial commitments, enabling them to make decisions with implications which span beyond an annual horizon.

Within their envelopes, individual agencies make three-year rolling expenditure projections which are consolidated in the annual budget estimates. Strategic plans maintained by the ministries and departments include three-year forward estimates of their spending by individual programmes (see, e.g. (Public Service Commission, 2011)). These estimates are consolidated into the national framework within the annual budget estimates which contain forward projections for key spending items under every administrative head.

Links between multi-annual plans and annual ceilings

Annual budget supplements contain detailed discussions of key expenditure decisions by each administrative head. Annual budgets are supported by annual budget supplements with the economic and fiscal update. The budget supplements contain an analysis of the country's financial and economic performance through the past year and a detailed discussion of the mid-term outlook. This includes a macroeconomic forecast for the next three years, an update on the government's policy objectives including any major reforms, and its mid-term revenue, expenditure and debt strategies. In addition, budget supplements offer detailed discussion of future plans for individual administrative heads with an explanation of how these translate into the annual spending estimates.

However, these discussions are not always complete and comprehensive explanations of important decisions in child protection are often lacking. For example, the Child protection Allowance – one of the key instruments for protecting vulnerable children – is mentioned in the narratives of every budget supplement during 2010-2014, with some important details on the objectives and the payment scale. However, the decision to reduce the allocation for this subsidy from \$6.0 million in 2013 to \$4.5 million in 2014 is not at all explained in these documents.

Costing of the child protection strategies

On the one hand, the three-year Strategic Plans and the Annual Corporate Plans of all agencies and ministries contain detailed cost estimates of planned programmes and activities. Given that ministries and departments are supposed to have a considerable degree of flexibility in prioritising their expenditures within the ministerial ceilings, these estimates, at least theoretically, must be playing an important role in the budget negotiations and the resulting decisions on resource allocation at the national level.

At the same time, there is no costed cross-sector strategy for child protection which would influence budget submissions. As was discussed earlier, cross-sector priorities in child protection in Fiji are currently not covered by a comprehensive inter-agency strategy for child protection (which was under development at the time of this report). Respectively, there is no pro-active bottom-up communication of the expenditure requests which would serve an agreed child protection policy – either generally or within individual inter-agency action plans.

Access to budget statistics by child protection policy-makers

In the last available PEFA assessment (2005), Fiji scored very low on the quality of financial reporting and budget transparency. For the purposes of child protection policy making, access to budget data covers a range of dimensions, including comprehensiveness and transparency of the budget, as well as the quality of fiscal reporting which describes child protection programmes. Table 7 summarizes the scores which were given to Fiji in the 2005 PEFA assessment for the indicators which contribute to this goal (as was discussed previously, while the Assessment Report is not publicly available, the summary of the final scores can be found in the PFTAC PFM Roadmap for the Forum Island Countries (PFTAC, 2010)). The Table shows that at the national level, without specific sector considerations, in 2005 Fiji's PFM system demonstrated the weakest results in the extent of unreported government operations, quality and timeliness of financial statements, and in the availability of information on resources received by service delivery units (all scored at the lowest level D). Somewhat more positive, but still low, a score of C was achieved for timeliness and regularity of account reconciliation and quality and timeliness of in-year budget reports. Public access to fiscal data was scored at B.

Table 7. Summary of scores for PEFA Indicators related to budget data access in Fiji (2005)

PEFA indicator		2005 PEFA assessment
Comprehensiveness and transparency		
PI-7	Extent of unreported government operations	D+
PI-10	Public access to key fiscal information	B
Accounting, recording and reporting		
PI-22	Timeliness and regularity of accounts reconciliation	C
PI-23	Availability of information on resources received by service delivery units	D
PI-24	Quality and timeliness on in-year budget reports	C
PI-25	Quality and timeliness of annual financial statements	D

Source: (PFTAC, 2010).

Limited information on the current situation shows signs of progress but with significant gaps remaining.

At the stage of this assessment, the 2005 scores represent the decade-old state of things, with the very high probability of improvement given the active PFM reforms which continued in Fiji during this time. Estimating the current situation in areas such as comprehensiveness of budget reporting, accounts reconciliation and timeliness of submission of budget reports is not possible within this study as it requires in-depth consultations with the MoF staff. However, the following limited observations could be made:

- MoF requires comprehensive monthly financial reporting by all agencies; whether compliance is good was not verified by this assessment. The currently effective MoF Proforma Financial Manual 2011 outlines a clear process for monthly and annual financial reporting within the government. Reporting is the responsibility of the accounting heads under coordination of deputy Permanent Secretaries. Monthly management reports should be submitted by each agency, covering service delivery performance, financial performance, trading and manufacturing activities (TMA), and internal controls. In particular, monthly reports describe actual expenditure to date against the budget for every activity and output, as well as expenditure commitments to date. The internal controls report shows whether all reconciliations are up to date, whether all information required by MoF was submitted in time, whether stocktakes of physical assets were carried out as and when required, status of unresolved audit issues and improvement in internal control such as rotation of duties between staff. Annual financial statements are submitted against detailed specified formats and are supposed to include Auditor General's opinion (MoF, 2011). It was not possible within this assessment to check whether the agencies comply with these requirements and how timely reporting was.

- Budget statistics available to stakeholders outside individual ministries is limited and not up-to-date. Reports on actual budget expenditures are available to the general public via the MoF website only with a two-year lag within the government's annual Budget Address (the estimates for the next year are compared to the actuals of the previous year, e.g. the 2014 estimates contain information on actual expenditures in 2012). Moreover, budget estimates do not seem to be published on the government's websites.
- Important government websites are going through reconstruction and are not active at the moment. The government's web-based communications are in the process of considerable reforms, which results in the temporary de-activation of some important portals. Importantly, this includes the webpage of MoSWWPA.
- Fiji scored low in the 2012 Budget Transparency Index given how little information is available to wider circles of stakeholders. The 2012 Open Budget Survey of the global International Budget Partnership Initiative has given Fiji a very low rating on budget transparency and accountability (6 out of 100). Such a low score was explained by the fact that the government of Fiji "does not publish executive budget estimates and the Auditor General's report in a timely manner". The report recommended "simple and cost-effective steps" to improve the situation such as the regular publication of annual and in-year budget reports and re-activation of all government's websites which are critical for ensuring public access to key information on financial and administrative decisions made within the policy process (Cerelala, 2013).

INDICATOR 2.2. TRANSPARENCY AND CREDIBILITY OF BUDGET ALLOCATIONS

	ASSESSMENT	SCORE
Financial planning system allows spending agencies to be certain that budgeted allocations would be actually available during the year. This is reflected in the following:	C	1.5
Four criteria for indicators		
• Variance in composition of expenditure out-turn compared to original approved budgets (excluding contingency items) across budget heads (PEFA PI-2);	No, extended	0.25
• The stock of expenditure arrears in child-related spending is low and decreasing;	Yes, restricted	0.75
• Budget formulation and execution is based on classification which complies with GFS/COFOG standards and has sufficient detail to produce consistent documentation for child-protection expenditure analysis;	No, extended	0.25
• Spending units (MDAs – ministries, departments and agencies) operate under reliable cash flow forecasts, effective system of expenditure commitment controls and are regularly audited.	No, extended	0.25

Expenditure outturns compared to budgets

In 2004-2005, the variation in expenditure composition in Fiji (across all agencies) was substantial. In 2004, IMF noted that government spending in Fiji suffered from very significant variances between budgeted and actual outturns and that annual budgets were therefore not a reliable indication of policy intent. At the time, the problem was explained by the widespread practice of ex-post virements (approved after actual spending had occurred “contrary to legal requirements”), consistent overestimation of salary requirements given the difficulties in accurate forecasting of vacancies, and the increasing use of appropriations subject to requisition control by the MoF (IMF, 2004). In the 2005 PEFA assessment, indicator (PI-2) which reflects composition of expenditure out-turn compared to original approved budget, was scored at C.

In 2012, variation across seven key ministries was estimated at 7.6 per cent, which is relatively stable by PEFA standards. This assessment analysed the variance of actual spending compared to approved budgets based on the data for 2012 budget year obtained from the 2012 budget estimates and the 2013 budget supplement – the most recent available period.²⁸ The analysis did not aim to fully replicate PEFA methodology, but looked selectively at the budget statistics for the seven agencies of strongest relevance to child protection (MoSWWPA; Ministry of Youth and Sports MoH; MoE, National Heritage, Culture and Arts; Fiji Police Force; Department of Housing; and the Higher Education Institutions). For each of these spending units, we have identified the absolute difference between the approved initial budgets and actual outturns

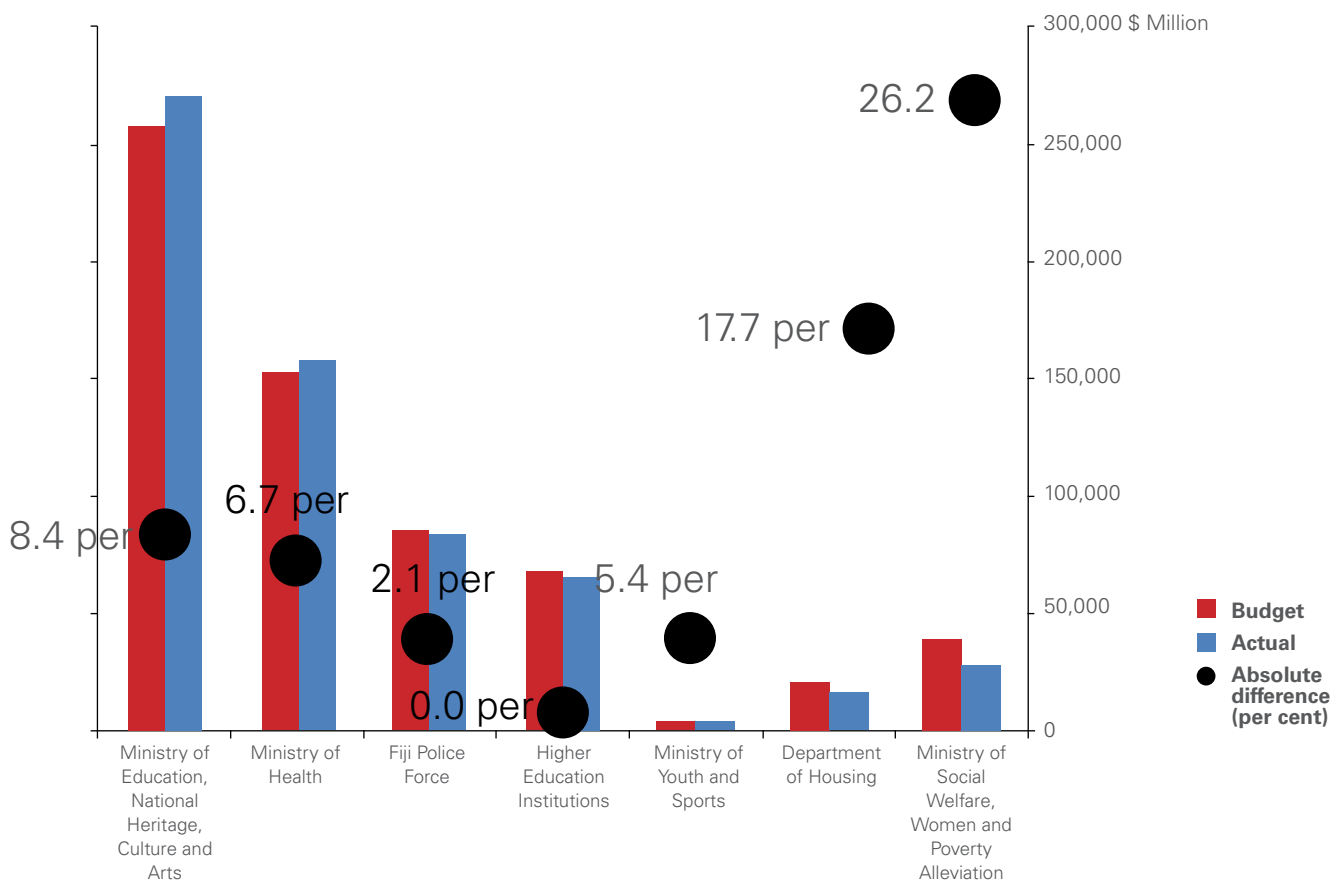
adjusted for the overall change in the expenditure totals. Based on these numbers, the overall variance in expenditure composition over these seven ministries equalled 7.6 per cent. In the PEFA scale, this would have corresponded to Score B (variance larger than 10 per cent but no less than 5 per cent).

However, disaggregated by agencies, variation is excessively high for MoSWWPA (26.2 per cent) compared to more stable forecasts for MoH, MoE, MoYS and Fiji Police. While 7.6 per cent variance represents a relatively positive overall achievement, this average figure masks considerable differences across the seven agencies, as illustrated in Figure 9. This Figure shows that the absolute per cent difference between actual and planned spending was rather small for the biggest ministries such as the MoE and MoH, and almost zero for the police and Higher Education Institution. However, for the key child protection agency – MoSWWPA – the difference was 26.2 per cent, and for the Department of Housing it was 17.7 per cent. Most importantly, this shows that for the MoSWWPA – at least in the 2012 – the approved budget was not at all a reliable prediction of policy intent and would have scored less than D in the PEFA scale.

Actual expenditures for MoSWWPA are not only further away from the original budgets, but they also differ in a negative way (decreased or underspent). Moreover, Figure 9 also illustrates that not only the actual spending for the MoSWWPA and MoH deviated widely from original estimates, they have also differed negatively since both allocations were decreased or underspent. On the contrary, expenditures of the MoE and MoH were actually increased.

²⁸ Analysing similar indicator for the previous three years – as would be required by the PEFA methodology – would have required access to budget estimates for the respective years, which were not available.

Figure 9. Expenditure outturns compared to budgets for child protection-related agencies in Fiji, 2012



Source: Government of Fiji, Ministry of Finance. 2012 Budget Estimates; 2013 Budget Supplement.

Expenditure arrears

While arrears are almost non-existent (at least for salaries) there is not enough data to systemically track this indicator. The 2004 IMF report noted that while there was no systemic generation of information on expenditure arrears (because of lacking records on commitments and outstanding accounts), they were “not in practice a problem in Fiji” (IMF, 2004). Despite the effective lack of arrears, Fiji therefore scored a low D in the 2005 PEFA assessment on the relate Indicator PI-4. In the mini-survey conducted by this Assessment, 85 per cent of surveyed child protection staff stated that their salaries are always paid on time, and the other 15 per cent said that it is usually paid on time with rare delays of less than a week. However, information on the stock of arrears is still lacking, therefore assessing the situation in non-salary expenditures is not possible.

A barrier to systemic monitoring of arrears is a difficulty in implementing accrual budget accounting. One major reason for why it remains essentially impossible to accurately track expenditure arrears in Fiji is that it was not yet possible for the government to introduce accrual-based method of budget accounting.

- Accrual accounting records expenditure commitments rather than actual disbursement of cash.** Under the accrual-based method, expenditures are recorded at the time when they are incurred, regardless of whether the actual cash was transferred or not. An alternative, cash-based, method records expenditures only at the time when they are actually paid in cash. When cash-based accounting is applied, payable arrears – that is, expenditure commitments which were not paid out – are not technically possible. This is one of the many reasons why countries around the globe have been moving in the last three decades toward accrual-based budget accounting (Tickell, 2010).
- Initial attempts to introduce accrual accounting in Fiji failed because of capacity constraints.** Fiji had attempted to introduce full-scale accrual accounting in the late 1990s – an ambitious plan to this goal was outlined in the draft Public Financial Management Act 1999 which was suspended (IMF, 2004). Several reviews since that time concluded that for Fiji, as for most PICs, rapid transition to accrual accounting is not feasible given that it requires very different types of technical skills, information management systems and institutional arrangements (Tickell, 2010). Moreover, as of 2009-2010, the budget accounting used in Fiji was neither accrual,

nor cash-based: most financial statements were prepared on cash basis, but some items were reported on accrual basis, creating inconsistencies and inaccuracies.

- **The current strategy is to move towards a new method gradually, through first establishing cash-based accounting compliant with international standards.** In consultation with PFTAC and the ADB, the government had therefore chosen a new reform pathway: as a transitory stage, Fiji would first modify its existing accounting so that it is fully compatible with international standards for the cash-based method (as described in the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS), promulgated by the International Public Sector Accounting Board (IPSAB)). Once this stage is successfully achieved, the country would be ready to move further towards accrual accounting, although the timeframe for this would be beyond the mid-term perspective (FMR, 2010). According to the current MoF Proforma Financial Manual 2011, financial reports of all agencies should contain information on both cash expenditures and commitments to date (MoF, 2011), but it was not verified how accurately the spending units comply with these requirements.

Budget classification

Latest available formal assessment of Fiji's budget classification is a decade old and critical. Fiji began to gradually introduce the 2001 Governance Finance Statistics (GFS) standards to its budget reporting since 2005 (IMF, 2005). Analysis by IMF in 2004-2005 noted that at the time reporting was not timely and was not complete, excluding the budgets of many separate agencies (such as councils and trusts) and local spending, albeit of relatively small size (IMF, 2004). The 2004 IMF analysis also noted that at the time public expenditures were presented in the budget reports by four functions which did not conform to the internationally recognized standards or the UN COFOG (IMF, 2004).

At least some effort is being applied to implement international standards for functional expenditure classification, but these do not yet seem to be systemic.

While it is impossible for this assessment to verify whether the situation has improved with the timeliness and comprehensiveness of reporting, the progress with introducing GFS and COFOG standards for functional classification seems to be mixed. The UN survey on budget classifications conducted in 2013 reports that, as of that year, the Fiji Bureau of Statistics has fully adopted the UN COFOG classification fully based on international standards. Indeed, the website of the Fiji Bureau of Statistics contains publicly available figures for the Central Government Final Consumption Expenditure reclassified by the COFOG standards, covering the period of 2008-2012;²⁹ similar statistics was also provided for 2005-2007 in another publicly available report. However, these figures cover only central government expenditure (which, admittedly, represents the bulk of public spending). Moreover, the regular annual budget estimates issued by the Ministry of Finance in support of the annual Budget Address continue to classify expenditures only into four groups (General Administration; Social Services; Economic Services; and Infrastructure) (see, e.g. (MoF, 2013)).

Cash flow management and commitment controls

Ineffective internal spending controls were specifically noted by the 2004 IMF report as a considerable weakness. The report concluded that recording of spending transactions at the time was not timely and accurate; records of commitments "were maintained manually outside the General Ledger and were incomplete." Especially problematic were Local Purchase Orders (LPOs) which were undertaken outside of the general accounting system and were therefore impossible to effectively control (IMF, 2004). This assessment was also reflected in the 2005 PEFA assessment which gave Fiji the lowest scores on indicators related to controls of payroll and non-salary expenditure, as well as internal audit, as summarized in Table 8.

Table 8. Summary of scores for PEFA Indicators related to cash flow management and commitment controls in Fiji (2005)

PEFA indicator	2005
PI-16 Predictability in the availability of funds for commitment of expenditure	n/a
PI-18 Effectiveness of payroll control	D
PI-20 Effectiveness of internal controls for non-salary expenditure	D
PI-21 Effectiveness of internal audit	D

²⁹ <http://www.statsfiji.gov.fj/index.php/economic/45-economic-statistics/national-accounts/107-central-government-final-consumption-expenditure-fjd000>

New rules and tools were introduced in 2006-2010, but their effectiveness was not verified by this assessment.

PFM reforms of 2006-2010 introduced a range of new tools to improve cash flow and commitment management. While these rules represent significant progress, it is impossible within this assessment to verify how closely the new procedures are followed and how strong the actual impact is.

- **Streamlined budget accounting.** As discussed earlier, a gradual shift to accrual accounting through streamlining current mixed accounts was launched in 2010.
- **Reforms in Internal Audit.** The internal audit function was also significantly modified. The current vision of the internal audit was outlined in the Financial Management Act 2004; the government has adopted an Audit Charter and an Audit Toolbox; set up Audit Committees in all ministries and departments; created a database for all recommendations of internal audits to control improvements and coordinate further trainings; and established a Finance Control Unit, Internal Audit and Compliance Division in the Ministry of Finance. In addition, the government has upgraded a Financial Management Information System (FMIS) for integrated expenditure management and control (FMR, 2010).

- **Specification of payroll controls.** The MoF Proforma Finance Manual 2011 established detailed rules for payroll controls. To avoid fraudulent and unauthorized payments, these rules outlined mandatory steps to be undertaken in engagement of new employees, salary payments and resignations. All employees are required to have a unique identification number (Electronic Data Processing Number, or EDP) and be registered through a Letter of Appointment with their agency Head of Salaries, whose responsibility is to maintain a separate salary file for each member of staff. The payroll system is automated, with the rules for input forms, reconciling of reports, issuance of salary cheques clearly spelled out.
- **Broad rules for cash flow forecasting.** The MoF Proforma Finance Manual 2011 also outlined broad requirements for cash flow forecasting for all spending units. At least one month before the start of the financial year, all Section Heads submit their expenditure forecasts to the Accounting Heads, who collate this information, break it down into monthly projections, and liaises with Section Heads to ensure that this information is reliable. The Accounting Heads should undertake regular analysis of actual figures against forecasts, checking whether funds are available to meet outstanding commitments. Any revisions to the forecasts must be reported to the MoF at least two working days before the start of the following week (MoF, 2011).

INDICATOR 2.3. SPENDING FLEXIBILITY

	ASSESSMENT	SCORE
The following rules help spending agents to use funds flexibly to ensure most efficient delivery of services:	A	3.0
Four criteria for indicators		
• Child protection budgets represent a balanced mix of line items and lump sum (discretionary) appropriations, and key spending agents have sufficient flexibility to re-allocate funds between budget lines to ensure effective child protection responses at their level, including in cases of unforeseen events and contingent financial need;	Yes, restrictive	0.75
• There are clear, transparent and practical rules for in-year budget adjustment and revision, and key spending units are able to carry over unused funds from one fiscal year to another, subject to due checks;	Yes	1
• There are provisions in the PFM system which allow spending units to keep efficiency gains and use them for other purposes;	Yes	1
• The budget includes sufficient contingency funds which could be quickly mobilized in cases of emergencies with child protection risks.	No, extended	0.25

Discretionary funds and re-allocation across budget lines

Envelope-based budgeting provides Ministries with very significant flexibility in budget preparation. As was discussed previously, the Fiji uses an “Expenditure Envelope” method of budgeting, which begins with establishing broad envelopes, or expenditure ceilings, for key sectors and individual agencies, which then develop their budgets by prioritizing within the ceilings (subject to MoF endorsement). Restrictions imposed by the MoF on these prioritizing decisions are very broad, as listed on page 70. None of these criteria seems to be excessively restricting, and jointly they provide spending units with very substantial flexibility over their chosen input mix.

In implementing budgets, Ministries can use “virements” to switch appropriations across budget lines and categories. During implementation of the budget, where the agency heads see the need for changing the approved line item appropriations to shift budget provisions from one line to another, they are given the right to undertake such switches – defined as virements. The Finance Instructions 2010 delegate the right to make virements to Permanent Secretaries (PSs) of agencies (and to designated persons in associated entities). There are a few limitations: for example, it is allowed to shift funds out, but not in to “Established and Unestablished Staff category”; and it is allowed to shift funds out of operating expenditures into capital to operating (or from capital to capital).

Virement mechanism is regulated through a range of recent documents issued in 2011. The procedure of undertaking virements is regulated by at least two additional documents: MoF Proforma Finance Manual 2011 (MoF, 2011), and a separate MoF Guide to Preparing Virements (MoF, 2011). A virement authority must be in writing and signed by the PS. A virement form should have clear details and explanations of such decision.³⁰ Once approved by the PS, every virement receives a serial number and is entered into a Virement Register; a copy of each virement form is sent to the Ministry of Finance. Additionally, the Guide to Preparing Virements contains detailed instructions on the grounds and reasons for considering virements, the steps in the process, templates and samples.

In past years, flexibility provided through virements exceeded the capacity of the MoF to control quality of reallocations, service delivery and financial planning. The possibility of budget virements at the level of PSs existed in Fiji for a long time. In 2004, the IMF noted that, in fact, utilization of virements by the agencies at the time was popular beyond the capacity of the MoF to control the quality of these decisions and negatively impacted

the quality of expenditure planning. Some virements were approved after the spending had already occurred (even though it was not allowed by the legislation), which distorted the quality and credibility of financial reporting. The possibility of virements led to overforecasting of expenditures (IMF, 2004).

It is not yet clear whether the new regulations ensure sufficient compliance to protect against the risks of excessive flexibility. Generally, this illustrated a dilemma which was discussed in 2013 in the World Bank regional paper on PFM reforms: while it is very important to ensure sufficient flexibility of administrative heads in using their budgets, spending managers also need to remain accountable for the resource use and service delivery. According to the World Bank, “in most PICs, granting some discretion to line ministries over the use of inputs may be appropriate, but few countries have the accountability systems in place to grant full discretion over inputs” (World Bank, 2013). Since the 2004 IMF assessment, Fiji has approved important new regulations to streamline the virement process, but whether these are effectively implemented was not verified by this study. In 2004, IMF noted that one of the central problems in Fiji even at that time was not so much the quality of the regulations but lack of compliance with the rule of law in financial management (IMF, 2004).

Adjustment across periods

Budget virements essentially eliminate the need for in-year budget adjustments, and therefore supplementary budgets are not frequently used. Given the considerable flexibility available to budget heads through the mechanism of virements, supplementary budgets for in-year adjustment of appropriations have been used “moderately” in Fiji (IMF, 2004). Procedures for amending approved annual budgets do not seem to be described either in the Financial Management Act 2004 or further supporting regulations by the MoF.

Carrying-over unused funds is possible and described in detailed and explicit way. The Financial Management Act 2004 gives all agencies an opportunity to carry over unused funds to the next financial year. If the appropriated amount is not used or is unlikely to be used in the financial year, the Ministry may authorize the carry-over of the full or partial amount. If the authorisation is made before the end of financial year and some of the amount is subsequently used in that financial year, the carried-over amount is reduced accordingly (Article 19). The Finance Instructions 2010 further require that any carry-overs must be authorized in written with specification of details of the liabilities carried over and by the second week of the December for that year.

³⁰ The virement form must clearly identify: the amount of the proposed virement and the output/activity and category from which it will be transferred and the activity/output and category to which it will be transferred; the purpose for the virement and how it would contribute to the delivery of that output; the amount provided in the Estimates and the expenditure to date against the budget allocation to which funds are to be transferred; the amount provided in the Estimates and the expenditure to date of the budget allocation from which savings are to be transferred; and the revised totals for both budgetary allocations (MoF, 2011).

Options for keeping efficiency gains

Flexibility to re-allocate funds means that any efficiency gains could be used in the ministry. The opportunity to vire initial appropriations across budget lines and categories through authorisation of the PS opens wide opportunities for the budget heads to re-allocate any gains achieved through efficient utilization of resources towards other ministerial purposes. No provision in the current PFM system in Fiji penalizes budget heads for effective use of funds.

Contingency funds

Although there is a mechanism to include contingencies in the budget, the actual budget estimates do not seem to allocate funds to this purpose. Classification of Budget

Heads in Fiji contains Head 50 (“Miscellaneous services”) which includes appropriations not specifically allocated under any Ministry or Department budget. These amounts include contingency funding but also other unplanned activities directly monitored by the MoF. Allocations from Head 50 are disbursed under the authority of the Permanent Secretary for Finance (MoF, 2013). While various contingencies are theoretically falling under this category, it is also used to cover travel costs of ministries and public servants, expenses of overseas recruitment, costs of consultants etc. In the 2004 Assessment, the IMF noted that in the recent years – at the time – no provisions were made in the budgets for contingency funds. In the 2014 budget estimates, contingencies are not mentioned directly, with the personnel expenses listed above representing the entire Head 50 total.

INDICATOR 2.4. LACK OF FINANCIAL INCENTIVES TO PARTICULAR SERVICE TYPES

	ASSESSMENT	SCORE
Spending units have tools and right incentives to invest in those services which serve best interest of the child in any given context:	A	3.0
Four criteria for indicators		
• Child protection financing framework is neutral with regard to types of child protection services and contains no financial incentives that have detrimental effects on children, for example, capitation payments that provide incentives to place children in residential care;	Yes	1
• There are no regulatory obstacles or financial penalization for spending units to engage in alternative cost-beneficial solutions in child protection such as contracting out services;	Yes	1
• There is a clear institutional division between purchases and providers in supplying publicly funded child protection services;	No, extended	0.25
• Arrangements are in place to support competitive procurement of front line child protection services to serve best interest of the child rather than particular service providers.	Yes, restricted	0.75

Harmful financial incentives

There are no particular financial instruments in Fiji's PFM which would contain financial incentives to stimulate detrimental impact on children such as preferential financing of residential care. The only capitation payment which is used in child protection is the Child protection Allowance (Child protectionA) – a grant to the parents or guardians of vulnerable children. The Child protectionA is provided to vulnerable children regardless of the type of care in which they live (parental, foster, or residential), which means that it does not stimulate residential services over other types of care. In 2013, the size of the grant was increased for children who live in residential homes (from \$60 to \$100 per child), however this relatively small indexation to take into account the costs of providing institutional care does not seem to represent an incentive for residential homes to recruit additional children.

Penalization of alternative child protection solutions

PFM legislation gives spending agencies considerable flexibility to engage cost-effective solutions.

Considerable flexibility provided to administrative heads in the budget preparation and execution process implies that they can use it to implement new and cost-efficient solutions to delivery of services in child protection without financial penalties or significant restrictions. Additionally, the current PFM legislation provides a straightforward framework for contracting out the delivery of public services if this would be required.

Division of purchasers and providers

Gatekeeping, referral and funding mechanisms in Fiji are still developing, with gaps and overlaps still widespread.

A rough summary of the current division of responsibilities in this process, along with the allocation of the role of purchaser and provider of services, is provided in Table 9.

The Ministry of Social Welfare (MoSWWPA) consolidates all reports on child abuse and bears the core responsibility for ensuring further support. The key gatekeeping role is assigned to the Department of Social Welfare of the MoSWWPA. In 2008, the Baseline Report "Protect me with Love and Care" showed that while the MoSWWPA was not the most popular point of contact for the victims of abuse and exploitation, it was regarded by other agencies to keep the role of referring children to other services (UNICEF; AusAID, 2009). With the introduction of the Child Welfare Decree 2010, Permanent Secretary for MoSWWPA received formal responsibility to consolidate all reports of identified cases of child abuse from other ministries and departments. Other regulations also require MoSWWPA to make key decisions on the placement of children into various types of care, including non-custodial services for children in conflict with the law, provide safe shelter for young offenders, and lead in defining vulnerable children eligible to benefit from the CPA.

While MoSWWPA's case-management role is clearly separated, there does not seem to be any competitive elements in the procurement of services from residential providers. Child protection services in Fiji are provided by a mix of public and non-state actors. Non-state organizations deliver all of the available out-of-home care, including through seven residential children's homes which cater for children without parental care but also for children awaiting adoption and children in conflict with the law. For these children, MoSWWPA officers provide case-management support and planning (Baker, 2010). However, the bulk of protective services are delivered by the front-line staff of the key ministries as well as through community-based mechanisms. Moreover, the allocation of funding to residential providers of services does not seem to follow competitive procurement process or contain any elements of a competition which would prompt the providers to improve cost-efficiency of their services.

Prevention and promotion services are provided directly by key ministries. The local offices of the ministries are also running publicly funded promotion and prevention programmes such as the child protection trainings, awareness campaigns and community-based initiatives. The same is true of other ministries involved in child protection promotion and prevention activities, such as, e.g., Juvenile Justice Bureau, Ministry of Youth and Sports and Ministry of Labour.

Table 9. Roles and responsibilities in child protection delivery

	Gatekeeping	Service purchasing	Service provision
Min. of Social Welfare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All cases must be reported to PS for Women and Social Welfare under Child Welfare Decree 2009; Other agencies tend to think that “referral to other services is the role of DSW” (UNICEF; AusAID, 2009); Evaluation of eligibility of vulnerable children / families for Child protectionA and subsequent graduation programmes; Decisions on placing children in foster or alternative care; Have to provide safe places for children in conflict with the law (Juvenile Act 2003); Administering non-custodial sentencing for children in conflict with the law. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oversight of service provision in out-of-home care including seven residential homes; long-term case management of children staying in these facilities; Case management and case planning by Social Welfare Officers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion and prevention programmes in the communities (awareness raising; trainings; parenting trainings etc.).
Min. of Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have to report all cases of abuse to MoSWWPA 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medical aid to victims of abuse
Min. of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have to report all cases of abuse to MoSWWPA 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion, prevention and protection to keep educational setting safe for the children
Fiji Police Force	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have to report all cases of abuse to MoSWWPA 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 24-hour protective services to children and women who became victims of violence; Provision of counsellors to large schools.
Judicial Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Juvenile Justice Bureau working with the MoSSWPA to place children into education programmes for reintegration 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Juvenile Justice Bureau “handing issues related to juvenile offenders”; Juvenile Justice Bureau running promotion and prevention campaigns in schools; Juvenile Justice Bureau providing informal counselling for parents and children in conflict with the law; Legal counselling to young offenders.
Min. of Youth and Sports			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion and prevention of abuse and exploitation through trainings, awareness raising, building resilience
Min. of Labour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inspections to identify violations related to child labour 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion and prevention to prevent worst forms of child labour
Certified residential homes			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alternative residential care, care for children in conflict with the law, children awaiting adoption
“Formal family-based care in lieu of residential care”			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alternative family-based care
Faith-based organizations and NGOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May report abuse to MoSWWPA 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alternative care; shelter; emotional and psychological support; prevention, awareness raising
Shelters and hostels not certified as “children’s homes”			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residential services, sometimes to most vulnerable children “excluded from admission to certified homes” (e.g. having complex needs including disabilities and behavioural challenges) (UNICEF; AusAID, 2009)

Arrangement for competitive procurement of services

Public purchasing rules were modified in 2010-2012, with Permanent Secretaries now having an authority for procurement of up to \$50,000. Government purchasing is regulated by the Finance Instructions 2010, the MoF Proforma Finance Manual 2011, and Procurement Regulations 2012 (which amended Procurement Regulations 2010). Under the rules introduced in 2012, Permanent Secretaries are delegated an approval limit for procurement of goods, services and works below \$50,000 (in previous years the limit was \$30,000). All bigger procurement must go through a public competitive tender considered by the Government Tender Board. Administration of government-wide procurement was amalgamated under the newly established Government Procurement Office (GPO)³¹ under the MoF.

Rules for ministry-level procurement include evaluation of competitive quotes and contain some provisions against conflict of interest. Procurement under \$50,000 is regulated by a special MoF/GPO policy developed as a procedural guide for all ministries and departments (MoF, 2012). The guide requires that most purchases of works and services invite a minimum of three competitive quotes. A simpler process is allowed for contracts below \$1,000 – competitive quotes should still be invited but they could be verbal (and subsequently recorded). Otherwise, all quotes must be written, with all documentation retained for audit,

evaluated by a special evaluation team comprising the deputy PS, Procuring Officer, Accounting Head, technical and field officers. The PS can waive the requirement for competitive quotes if there is only one capable supplier in Fiji; there is a binding contract with the supplier; the supplier has been nominated by an aid agency which is funding at least 50 per cent of the procurement; or it is for expeditious supply of specialized technical services from a supplier who has previously provided services to the government and has created appropriate working knowledge. The MoF guidance states that in this procurement process “conflict of interest should be avoided at all times”, although there is no further specification on how conflict of interest should be avoided.

It is not clear whether the practice of competitive procurement of services in child protection would be duly and appropriately utilized. The current, recently modified, procurement regulation theoretically opens a solid platform for the ministries to consider contracting-out child protection services and initiatives to ensure that the best interest of the child is attended by the best available providers. It remains to be verified whether these opportunities would be utilized and whether they would be utilized effectively. In 2004, with regard to the pre-reform procurement regulations, the IMF noted that legal requirements for public purchasing were “implemented unevenly”, and the Auditor General pointed to various violations such as exceeding delegated purchase limits, failing to obtain competitive quotes or making entirely unauthorized purchases.

INDICATOR 2.5. VALUE FOR MONEY AWARENESS

	ASSESSMENT	SCORE
Arrangements are in place to ensure that the government procures services which bring maximum benefit to children for any amount spent within the available resource envelope:	C	1.5
Four criteria for indicators		
• Child protection strategies are supported by analysis of fiscal constraints and response scenarios related to the risks of fiscal consolidation;	No	0
• Programme implementation plans in child protection include measurable benefit targets;	Yes	1
• Child protection strategies are supported with cost-benefit analysis of alternative policy options;	No, extended	0.25
• The government undertakes performance audit to assess child protection impact of programme implementation.	No, extended	0.25

Awareness of fiscal constraints

Sluggish economic growth and the need to boost it through investment has been a difficult challenge for Fiji.

In the last few years, Fijian government struggled with two conflicting challenges. On the one hand, sluggish economic growth amid political turbulence required strict control of expenditures to maintain a realistic fiscal position. On the other hand, boosting economic growth and reducing poverty required additional public investment and structural reforms.

The government has managed to balance the two needs, but admits that fiscal consolidation will be required in the medium term.

In 2013, IMF praised the government for managing to effectively balance these needs. Budget deficit during these last years remained under control, and yet important new investments were made towards infrastructure, including through the redirection of priorities away from operational activities towards capital projects (IMF, 2013). The government also considerably expanded funding for education through expansion of grants and loans to tertiary education (Dornan, 2013).

Strategies for fiscal consolidation and future fiscal constraints are not widely discussed and elaborated.

However, all stakeholders agree that some fiscal consolidation will be needed in the mid-term. Current investments will take time to translate into sufficient revenues to continue funding current levels of spending without any change. The 2014 budget supplement mentions that the government will gradually consolidate its finance in the medium term, including through “prudent management in the growth of operational expenditures”. However, the current programmatic documents do not provide a clear outline of the strategies on such consolidation. Moreover, some observers are concerned over the fact that the

reduction of the deficit in 2014 (from 2.5 per cent to 1.9 per cent of GDP) was achieved to a large extent through major one-off sale of public assets in the previous year (privatisation of the Fiji Electricity Authority, divestment of shares in Airports Fiji Limited and Fiji Ports Corporation Limited, sale of foreign mission priorities and privatization of the government printery). This analysis questions whether the current level of the deficit is sustainable in the mid-term perspective or large reductions in expenditure would be needed, regretting that there is no wide discussion at the moment on the plans for such cuts (Dornan, 2013).

Description of plans for child protection in the corporate plans of key ministries does not contain any discussion of current or future fiscal constraints.

Strategic plan of the MoSWWPA was not available, but its annual corporate plan did not discuss any financial constraints. Similarly, fiscal considerations do not feature in the programmatic documents of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, and the Ministry of Labour.

Child protection professionals seem generally uncertain about trends in child protection spending and oblivious to the prospect of fiscal consolidation in the mid-term.

The mini-survey conducted by this assessment asked child protection professionals whose jobs had senior ranks and involved dealing with policy planning and/or finance a range of questions related to their anticipation of financial envelopes for the next three years. Responses to these questions are summarized in Table 10 below. It shows that most of the respondents found it difficult to estimate whether the actual spending on child protection in their area had increased, decreased or remained the about the same. Still, most of them felt certain that allocations in the future years will grow: 78 per cent anticipated an increase and no one expected cuts. The views were based equally frequently on personal intuition and forecasts by the headquarters.

Table 10. Mini-survey to child protection professionals: perception of fiscal envelopes for child protection

	They have increased	They remained about the same	They decreased	Difficult to say
When you compare the amounts spent on child protection in your community in the last three years, have they decreased or increased?	11 %	11 %	11 %	67 %
	They will increase	They will remain about the same	They will decrease	Difficult to say
In your expectation, how will the spending on child protection in your area change in the next three years?	78 %	22 %	0 %	0 %
	Personal experience	Forecasts made by the Ministry	Forecasts made at the local level	Other
In the previous question, what us the basis for your intuition?	40 %	40 %	20 %	0 %



Benefit targets

Performance-based budgeting in Fiji was considerably strengthened through the 2006-2010 reforms. Already in 1998, Fiji was praised by the World Bank as a regional champion in implementing performance-based budgeting, with tangible first reforms and a “clear agenda for further change” (World Bank, 1998). Throughout the past decade, Fiji made several steps to improve the links between its public expenditures and programme performance:

- **The concept of portfolio performance introduced in 2006.** In 2006, the government attempted to introduce Portfolio Performance Statements (PPS) – a document prepared by every ministry to explain its expected outcomes, outputs and performance measures and the way they link to the country’s strategic development plans (SDPs), so that the annual corporate plans then outline concrete activities on how these intended benchmarks would be achieved (MoF, 2005).
- **Results-based planning reviewed and reformed via piloting projects in 2006-2010.** This reform was reviewed in 2007, revealing a range of “technical and institutional weaknesses.” The review found that the ministries did not own the idea and lacked experience, capacity and motivation to implement it. In 2008-2009, performance-based budgeting was taken forward through pilots with ministries identifying only selected programmes and output measures as a way of capacity building, followed by additional training rounds in 2010 (FMR, 2010).
- **Current programmes fully covered by benefit targets linked to the RDSSSED 2010-2014.** Since 2010, with the approval of the Roadmap for Democracy and Sustainable Socio-Economic Development 2010-2014 (RDSSSED), the portfolio performance statements of individual ministries were essentially replaced by the description of outputs, outcomes and their links to RDSSSED objectives. As was discussed earlier, this information, along with numerical monitoring benchmarks is included into each agency’s annual corporate plan. Every quarter, all spending agencies (ministries and departments) report on their achievement against numerical benchmarks to the MandE Unit of the Strategic Framework for Change Coordinating Office (SFCCO).

Progress and achievement indicators for child protection activities are measurable and linked to outcomes and strategic objectives. Table 11 provides an example of the result indicators for programmes relevant to child protection which are currently included in the 2014 Annual Corporate Plan of the MoSWWPA. It shows that all planned activities for this budget year are supported with measurable progress benchmarks and comparisons to achievement in the previous year. The coverage of current operations with performance-based targets is now comprehensive. Moreover, as was discussed earlier, quarterly progress against benefit targets monitored by the SFCCO was now linked to the additional rewards provided to the agencies through the provision of service excellence awards, which strengthens motivation and ownership of the new reporting system.

Table 11. Selected result indicators in the 2014 Annual Corporate Plan of the MoSWWPA

Output	Key performance indicators	2013 Achievement	2014 Target
Output 1: Portfolio leadership policy advice and secretariat support. sub-output 1.1 policy advice	Cabinet Papers Tabulated in Cabinet	4 (Jan-Nov)	6 cabinet papers
	Output 2: Poverty alleviation to disadvantaged persons	Distribution of C&P vouchers - Timely and efficient release of vouchers / Electronic Cards to CandP recipients	4253 (Q1-Q3)
	C&P Approvals - Financial Assistance to poor households (under the 3 identified categories) with children who will need care and protection	894 (Q1-Q3)	1,000 new cases
	C&P Review - Review of cases in order to determine continuous eligibility status	620 (Q1-Q3)	2,000 reviewed cases
	Impact Assessment on Care and Protection Program	N/A	1 report
	Bus/Taxi Fare Programme – Provision of identification cards and bus vouchers	7801 (Jan-Nov)	5,000 new assisted cases
	Income generating projects – Provision of training and seed funds to wean off/graduate identified FAP and C&P recipients	22 (Q1-Q3)	120 cases/6 divisions
	Housing - Identification, assessment and submission of housing applications from PBS and C&P recipients to Ministry of Rural Maritime Development and Natural Disaster Management for housing assistance	89 (Q1-Q3)	15 cases processed for referrals for housing assistance
Output 5. Managing children's at risk	Ensuring child protection through institutional or foster care placements	44 (Q1-Q3)	15 placements
	Recording and case work on reported child abuse cases under the Child Welfare Decree	405 (Q1-Q3)	300 cases (25 cases x 12months)
Sub Output 5.1. Innovative child welfare services	Child protection in emergencies and natural disasters	N/A	- Trainings with divisions (5)
	Identification, processing, matching and endorsement of potential adoption and foster care applications (local and inter country adoptions)	NIL (Q1-Q3)	30 (5/division)
	Training and up skilling of welfare officers on new child protection issues and policies.	1 (Q1-Q3)	6 trainings
	Facilitation of relevant consultation towards establishing a National Child Help Line	NIL (Q1-Q3)	1 Help Line
	Mentoring and counselling of children C&P beneficiaries	Not captured in 2013 matrix	300 cases / 6 divisions

Table 11. Selected result indicators in the 2014 Annual Corporate Plan of the MoSWWPA (continued)

Output	Key performance indicators	2013 Achievement	2014 Target
Sub Output 5.2 Innovative child welfare services	Training and awareness programmes on child protection issues with the communities	159 (Q1-Q3)	100 awareness: 64 Child protection 36 WO
	Training of trainers (Community Leaders) on child protection Package.	NIL (Q1-Q3)	16 trainings
	NCCC meetings and Inter-Agency Committee (IAC) meetings. Conducted	29 (Q1-Q3)	1 quarterly report
	Highlighting the importance of the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (PCAN) in the divisions.	Achieved	6 Reports
Output 6: Licensing, compliance and monitoring Sub Output 6.2 Residential care	Audit of residential homes (7) to ensure compliance to the minimum standards for Residential Care.	1 (Q1-Q3)	2 reports
	Institutional forum meetings		4 meetings (1 per quarter)
	Review and amend current SOP in line with new policies and programmes.	N/A	1 SOP
	Timely payment of monthly allowances to residential homes	Achieved	Payment of allowance (6 homes)
	Implement and review care plans of children currently in the institutions, and develop new ones for all new admissions.	Achieved	124 care plans
	Provision of conducive environment for juvenile offenders	N/A	Renovation of Samabula Depot as the new centre
Output 7. Supervision of non-custodial sentences	Submission of quarterly reports to court.	Achieved	40 court reports
	Consultation with magistrates on alternative sentencing.	NIL	2 reports
Output 8. Formal sector employment and livelihoods grants Sub Output 8.2. Elimination of violence against women and children	Gender-based violence male advocacy project officer established in the DoSW	NA	1 project officer
	Number of ZTVFC (Zero Tolerance Violence Free) declared communities	11 (3 Qtr)	16 Communities
	Gender-based violence training provided to new recruits at the Fiji Police Academy	-	1 training manual and publishing
	Gender advocacy training provided for ZTVFC Gatekeepers committees	NA	10 trainings
	Number of gender-based violence and violence against children legal literacy training held in newly identified ZTVFC	11	15 trainings
	Children and Women's Summit	NA	1 summit outcome report

Cost-benefit analysis

Cost-benefit analysis (CBA) is not a new concept for Fijian policy-makers, but much of the CBA undertaken in Fiji has so far not directly addressed child protection issues. Initial steps to mainstream CBA into government's decision-making process have recently begun in the area of Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change. At least one of these studies raised child-specific concerns but not yet risks related to protection of children from abuse and maltreatment. There have also been examples of applying CBA in social sectors, albeit usually within donor-funded projects. None of these studies has looked specifically into child protection issues.

- Growing interest of CBA in disaster risk management and climate change: Given the increasing realization of the burden of natural disasters and limited financial resources, the government has started to introduce CBA into preparation of capital projects such as measures for flood mitigation. First training and capacity building programmes have begun with key ministries in 2014 (MoF; MoLGUDH; MoFA, 2014). These efforts are facilitated through the Pacific Cost-Benefit Analysis Initiative (P-CBA) which supports governments across the region to improve their economic assessment of policies and interventions in the area of natural resource management (P-CBA, 2013).
- Child-related disaster risks noted but not yet explored: In 2013, the UNEP Ecosystem-based Adaptation Flagship Program and UN-HABITAT Cities and Climate Change Initiative have completed an economic analysis of ecosystem-based adaptation and engineering options for climate change adaptation in Lami Town. This in-depth study including multiple comparisons of the costs and benefits of various scenarios has directly acknowledged the specific vulnerability of women and children during disasters. While the study was not able to consider these vulnerabilities in detail, it did take into account the relatively greater vulnerability of these marginalized groups in a comprehensive adaptation plan. In particular, it contained some analysis of losses resulting from children missing school and losing continuity of instruction during the flooding (Rao, et al., 2013).
- CBA for reforming health sector financing: The widest use is observed in the health sector, where numerous international aid projects assisted the government to develop cost-effective financing reforms (including the costing of such options as partial cost recovery or health insurance). Additionally, cost-benefit analyses were undertaken for particular healthcare initiatives such as, e.g., a screening programme for diabetes (AusAID, 2010).
- CBA in selecting education sector policies: In the education sector, one of the AusAid projects (Fiji Education Sector Program, FESP) attempted to undertake a cost-benefit analysis of MoE programmes, given the

concerns that existing interventions were too dispersed and did not allow the MoE to sufficiently focus its limited resources and to dedicate sufficient personnel to achieve sufficient quality. However, a later independent assessment reported that it failed to receive a copy of this CBA report (AusAID, 2010).

- CBA to design Fiji's transfer to electronic payments of Family Assistance grants: In social protection, the government cooperated with the Pacific Financial Inclusion Program (PFIP) to assess comparative costs and benefits of transferring Fiji's Family Assistance Program away from costly manual printing and distribution of vouchers to electronic card system (PFIP, 2011).

Performance audit

The office of an independent Auditor General is established in the 2013 Constitution. Fiji has a strong tradition of independent audits, which was reinforced by the 2013 Constitution. The new Constitution establishes the Office of the Auditor General (AG), and requires the AG "to provide independent assurance to Parliament and the public at large that public sector agencies have used public funds for the purposes they have been appropriated and in accordance with legislations, financial management and regulations."³² With this goal, the Constitution requires the AG to inspect, audit and report to Parliament on all public accounts and transactions.

Current law provides the AG with an opportunity to conduct performance audit. The Audit (Amendment) Act 2006 defines the types of audit which may be conducted by the AG, one of which is performance audit. It states that the AG "may conduct any audit that the AG considers necessary to determine whether an entity is achieving its objectives effectively and doing so economically and efficiently." The Act requires that any performance audit by the AG must be preceded by a clear specification of audit objectives and issues to be addressed; and that the AG is not entitled to question the merit of policy objectives of the government. The AG report on performance audit must be submitted to the Parliament no later than six months after the year when the audit was completed.

Attempts to introduce performance audit in Fiji in earlier years have not been successful. Studies on the history of performance audit in Fiji in 1970-2000 show that while there have been several attempts previously to introduce the practice (including with active prompting from ADB and other donors), it proved to be challenging and – as of 2000 – "never fully took root and was gradually discontinued." For example, after the Public Enterprise Act 1996 introduced the opportunity for the AG to offer performance audits (but not to require them), between 1995-1997 only two such audits were carried out (Customs Department and Colonial War Memorial). Even though these reports were well-received and discovered good practice,

³² <http://www.oag.gov.fj/>

other agencies resisted participation in performance audits (Nath and Peurseem, 2013).

Around 2004, audits still focused on compliance and lacked capacity for performance analysis; whether reforms since that time would change the trend remains to be seen. The 2004 IMF Assessment of Fiji’s PFM system noted that at the time audits in Fiji tended to focus on financial compliance, and that further institutional

strengthening would be required “to prepare for any move towards introduction of performance audits”. At that time, overall capacity of the financial audit in Fiji was rather weak. One specific problem was that political turbulence of the last decade made it difficult for the Public Accounts Committee (which traditionally considered AG reports) to follow up on the findings of the AG (IMF, 2004). In 2014, the PAC was dissolved in preparation to the new Parliament which will be elected in September 2014.

INDICATOR 2.6. EFFECTIVE STRUCTURES FOR DECENTRALIZED FUNDING

	ASSESSMENT	SCORE
Financial relations between tiers of spending units/levels of government engaged in child protection are based on the following:	A	3.0
Four criteria for indicators		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multi-level financing structure, regardless of the specific decentralization model, is supported by functional tools to ensure that decentralized funding of child protection is effective, equitable and sustainable (“central oversight/intervention and local autonomy/accountability are in functional balance”) 	Yes, restricted	0.75
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The central government accurately reimburses financial costs imposed on sub-national budgets by central child protection policies (“realistic funding, vertical gap coverage”) 	Yes	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Horizontal allocation of transfers linked to child protection expenditures among sub-national governments is determined by transparent and rules-based system (“fair funding, horizontal gap coverage”) 	Yes	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public financial management capacities at sub-national level are sufficient for ensuring effective implementation of any delegated functions related to child protection 	No, extended	0.25

Balance between accountability and oversight

The structure of child protection financing in Fiji has so far remained centralized, with very limited role of sub-national spending. As was discussed previously (page 32), while rural and municipal councils in Fiji have power to issue by-laws and impose rates, their own resources are rather limited, and so is the scope of public services which they offer to their constituencies. Although the Local Government Act (Cap. 125) authorizes any council “to do all things as it lawfully may and as it considers expedient to promote health, welfare and convenience of the inhabitants”, most councils limit their services to basic sanitation and city engineering (garbage collection, street lightening, food safety control, pollution control, dog control etc.). Councils also support local libraries, but do not seem to fund many other social services. Most services related to child protection – including activities of the social workers, police, teachers and health professionals – are funded

through the central ministries, and respective staff are civil service employees working at division or district level (WHO, 2011).

Anecdotal evidence suggest that local spending on child protection may be growing, which calls for stronger transparency in local financial reporting. At the same time, in recent years, the role of provincial structures in child protection began to expand. Provincial councils have started to integrate child protection priorities into their development plans and, at least on one instance known to this assessment, to fund activities for child protection awareness raising from the local revenues. While the Fijian Bureau of Statistics compiles information on local government accounts, it is not included in the documents supporting central government’s annual budget process and is not available on the Fijian Bureau of Statistics website. It is therefore impossible to assess the current size of provincial budgets and their spending on child protection related programmes. The latest available estimate of local spending in Fiji is for 1997 as quoted in the 2004 IMF

report, at which time it represented only 5 per cent of the general government spending. Given the anecdotal evidence of its growing size, it would be useful to increase transparency of these financial statements to enable future productive fiscal relations between the levels of government around provision of local social services.

Realistic funding and vertical gap coverage

The current centralized funding model does not create a vertical gap to be covered. All policies developed by the central governments are effectively implemented by centrally hired staff out of the national revenue. Given that most public functions are centralized at the national level, grants from the central budgets to the councils are rare. In 2004, IMF estimated that only around 10 per cent of sub-national expenditures was financed from central government transfers. The 2014 budget estimates list a very limited range of grants to local councils, e.g. payment of municipal council rates for land leased to state.

Fair equalisation and horizontal gap coverage

Complete centralization of child protection funding and lack of intergovernmental fiscal transfers removes the issue of fair horizontal fiscal equalisation Fiji. Fiscal capacities of various provinces do not impact the access of children to protection services given that local governments essentially do not engage into this function.

Local PFM capacities

Local offices of central ministries have faced capacity constraints in the financial administration of central programmes, but have since gone through extensive trainings by the MoF. Divisional and district offices of central ministries are responsible for a range of financial management functions in administering centrally funded programmes. In 2004, IMF noted significant capacity constraints at the local level related to financial reporting, the use of local purchase orders which were not properly accounted for. Local offices also lacked skills for internal financial control. Since that time, the Ministry of Finance has implemented extensive training programmes for public accountants at all levels. The effectiveness of these activities was not verified by this assessment.

Jack and Jill
Jack and Jill went up
the hill
to fetch a pail of water.
Jack fell down and broke his
crown.
And Jill came tumbling after.

They danced
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14/10

Monday

TERM 3

Week 8

Yesterday

Tuesday

Today

Wednesday

Tomorrow

Thursday





DOMAIN 3. HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

INDICATOR 3.1. STANDARDS FOR CHILD PROTECTION PROFESSIONALS

	ASSESSMENT	SCORE
Regulatory framework for child protection includes:	C	1.0
Four criteria for indicators		
• A definition (in training or other institutions or in policy) on the professional responsibilities, skills and required training and standards to which social workers will be held accountable;	No, extended	0.25
• Within the above: specific requirements and standards for social workers working with children;	No	0
• A certification, accreditation or licensing process for social workers and other professionals who work within child protection;	No	0
• An independent and active professional association of social work professionals.	Yes, restricted	0.75

Professional standards for social workers

Social workers employed by the government are subject to the Minimum Qualification Requirements (MQR) approved by the Permanent Secretary. Appointment procedures for all civil servants in Fiji requires the prior formulation of Minimum Qualification Requirements (MQR) which include formal academic qualifications, relevant experience and exposure. Additionally, in 2013, the PSC has issued a circular which introduced generic MQR for all technical and professional positions in the civil service, including a rise in educational qualifications required for all posts (e.g. introducing the requirement of a diploma for all base-grade positions, and a degree for all positions above administration officer). Specific qualifications for appointing staff to particular ministries shall be determined by the respective Permanent Secretary with the agreement of the minister responsible.

Majority of surveyed professionals confirmed existence of professional standards for their field. In the mini-survey conducted by this assessment, 65 per cent of respondents stated that there is a set of standard professional requirements for specialists in their area, and 17 per cent more believed that there were such standards even though they weren't sure. Only 12 per cent thought that specific standards do not exist.

Figure 10. Mini-survey: "Have you heard of any formal professional requirements or standards for specialists in your area who work with children?"

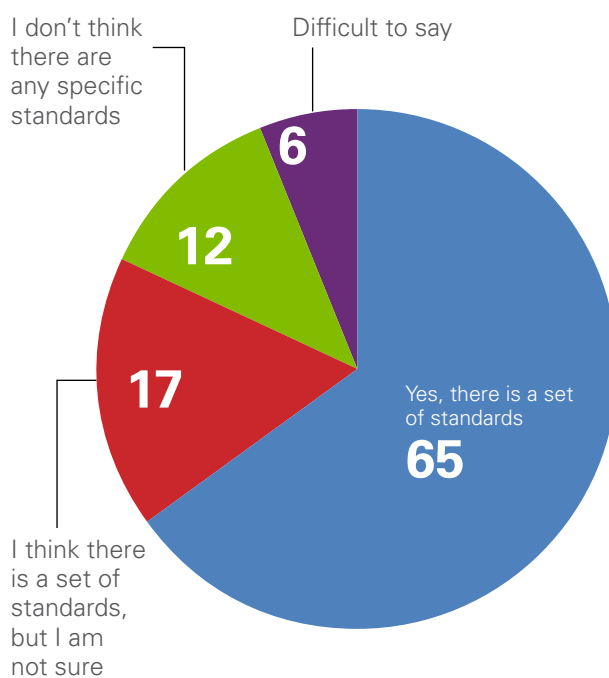
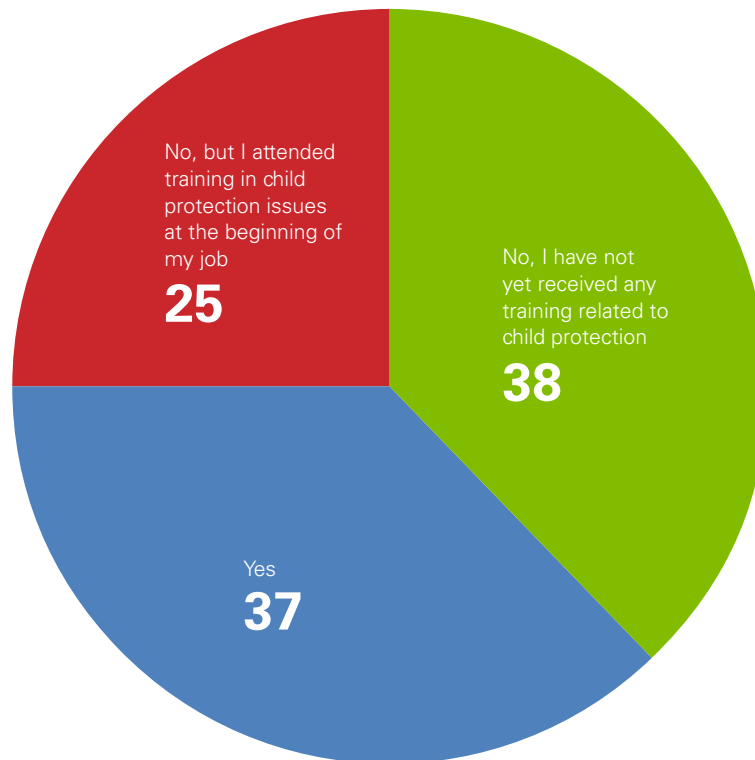


Figure 11. Mini-survey: “Do you have any degree or diploma in a field related to child protection (social work, child development, therapeutic Interventions, counselling etc.)?”



“At the moment, while the new standards are not yet approved, the definition is very loose... Even a pastor in the village or a chief of the village can call themselves a social worker.”

A large share of staff do not have any relevant qualifications. Notwithstanding the universal requirement of job-specific minimum qualification standards, the mini-survey revealed that a big share of the officers dealing with child protection issues have not received either diplomas or any training in a field related to child protection (social work, child development, therapeutic interventions, counselling etc.). As illustrated in Figure 11, only 37 per cent of the respondents confirmed that they have such qualifications, while 38 per cent admitted that they have not received any relevant training.

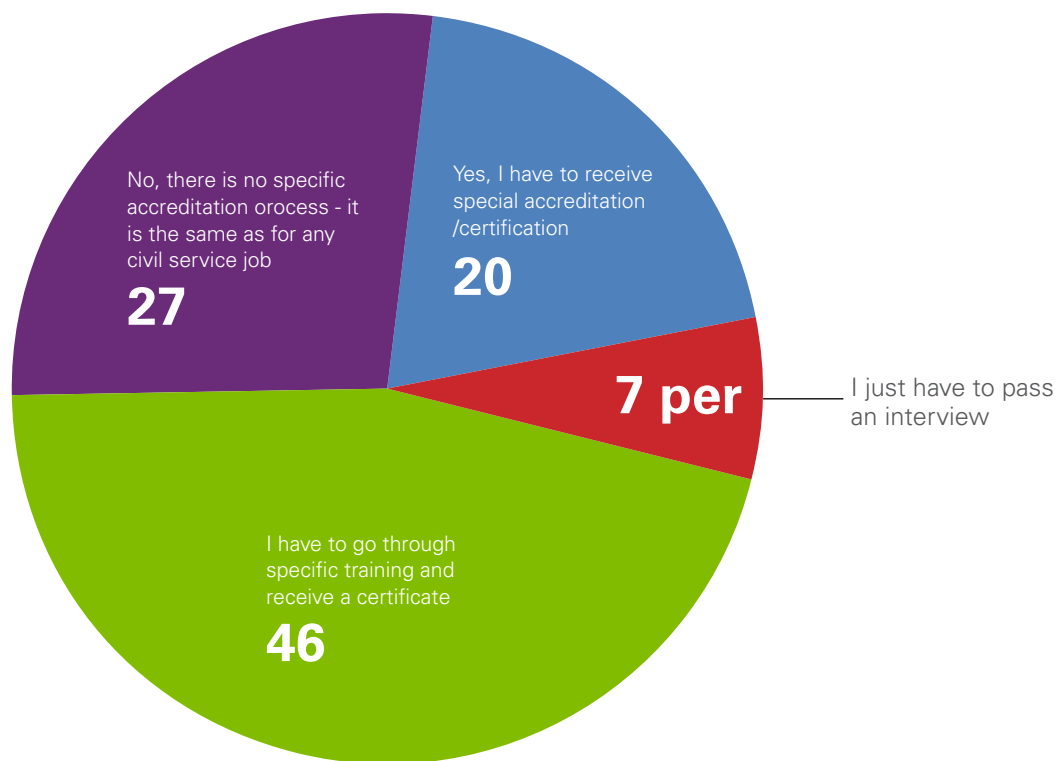
As yet, there are no specific standards which would be specific for social work, applicable for professionals working in the government as well as in non-state organizations. Apart from the qualification requirements for civil servants, there are no sector-specific standards for professional social workers which could be used for certification, licensing and training. Many donor-funded NGOs are guided by internal standards and/or requirements imposed by the funding agencies. For example, AusAID currently demands that all organizations funded through their programmes would have a child protection policy and procedures in place, and that any of their staff is knowledgeable about these procedures before they can begin to work with children using Australian funds. As was discussed during the FGD, these external requirements are partially acting as a driver to development and the recognition of domestic social work standards.

New standards, accreditation and licencing mechanisms are being currently developed under the leadership of Fiji Association of Social Workers (FASW) and the University of South Pacific (USP). The Fiji Association of Social Workers (FASW) and the USP School of Social Sciences, together with their government partners, have been working on developing training programmes and materials to establish professional accreditation for social workers and counsellors. Participants of the FGD mentioned that a respective paper had been recently submitted to the Cabinet. The new standards should clearly define the profession of social work, and set up a way to recognize not only academic qualifications and diplomas but also the practical experience of many social workers in Fiji. This work was still on-going at the time of this assessment.

Specific requirements for social workers working with children

There does not seem to be any specific standards for professionals working with children either in the civil service or outside of it. This assessment was not able to locate a copy of the MQR for government’s officers in ministries related to child protection to verify whether these contain specification of standards which relate to working with children. Members of the FGDs explained that the MQR is very much focused on the need to have a relevant degree or diploma, and it does not have to be specifically in

Figure 12. Mini-survey: “Before you begin working with children, do you have to go through any specific accreditation or certification?”



social work (sociology, psychology). For specialists working outside the governments, minimum professional do not formally exist. It is not certain whether the draft professional standards currently being developed by the FASW and USP contain a child-specific component.

Certification and licencing of social work professionals

At the moment, social workers in Fiji do not require professional accreditation, but civil servants often go through specific training before they start working with children. Based on the responses to the mini-survey, civil servants who work with children are often required to have sufficient work experience and to go through specific training (one example was the Training for Trainers in Child protection organized by the DSW and the Ministry of iTaukei with support from UNICEF). However, only 20 per cent said that there is a formal accreditation process (without giving any details), and 27 per cent acknowledged that there is no such requirement. As was discussed earlier, a mechanism for professional accreditation and licencing is being currently developed through the FASW and the USP.

Social workers may get accredited through the FASW which tests all applicants against the new standards it currently develops. Participants of the FGD explained that all social workers – regardless of whether they are civil servants or not – can associate with the FASW, which is conditional on meeting FASW professional criteria. These criteria became the platform for the proposed new licencing system which was described in the new Cabinet paper.

Professional associations

FASW has been in operation since 1995 and has been instrumental in developing key trainings and capacity building. Since 1995, Fiji has established a professional Association of Social Workers (FASW). Initially (1997-2003) it was funded by the NZODA, upon which it received support from the Ministry of Social Welfare, Ministry of Health, and the and the Pacific Regional HIV/AIDS Project (PRHP) (FASW). As of 2004, FASW had 150 members and a pipeline of activities to 2008. At the time of the 2008 Baseline Report, the association was offering training and capacity building for social workers, but the assessment was concerned over the prospects for the take up of these skills and reimbursement for the training provided, given that allocating government finance to procure such training was difficult (UNICEF; AusAID, 2009).

Despite some difficulties in attracting financial support in previous years, the FASW is reported to be active again. In 2012, FASW reported that it had “laid dormant for many years” but began to revive itself and invite new members (Saxton, Fiji Association of Social Workers is not open for membership, 2012). Members of the FGD explained that the Association is active, cooperates extensively with the USP School of Social Studies, and leads a range of current initiatives in partnership with the government and key donors. At the time of this assessment, the association did not have an active website and any publicly available information on its current activities.

INDICATOR 3.2. PERSONNEL ACCOUNTING AND PAYROLL CONTROL

	ASSESSMENT	SCORE
The government is equipped with the following tools to oversee activities of the child protection work force:	B	2.75
Four criteria for indicators		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agencies involved in child protection support personnel databases of child protection staff which are directly linked to payroll, which are regularly updated and reconciliated; 	Yes, restricted	0.75
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a system of payroll audits to identify control weaknesses and ghost workers; 	No, extended	0.25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Average absenteeism rates in representative samples of different cadres of staff working in child protection are low and decreasing; 	Yes, restricted	0.75
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a robust system of support and oversight of the child protection activities undertaken by the paraprofessionals (such as community volunteers). 	Yes	1

Staff databases linked to payroll

Since 2011, Fiji has used an automated system of payroll control to link salary payments to individual civil service employees. As was discussed earlier, in 2011 Fiji began to modify its payroll control systems by introducing a system for the electronic registration of all employees with unique Electronic Data Processing Numbers (EDPs). All employees are required to have a unique identification number (Electronic Data Processing Number, or EDP) and be registered through a Letter of Appointment with their Head of Salaries, whose responsibility is to maintain a separate salary file for each member of staff. The payroll system is automated, with the rules for input forms, reconciling of reports, issuance of salary cheques clearly spelled out (MoF, 2011). It was not possible within this assessment to verify whether these databases are accurately compiled, in particular, to account for the staff working in the ministries related to child protection.

Control of ghost workers

It is not clear from the available legislation and interviews whether there is any current provision which calls for a periodic payroll audit with the view to identify violations, ghost workers and other control weaknesses. The 2013 Constitution placed responsibility over all matters pertaining to public service staff on the Public Service Commission (including on setting and reviewing employment policies). In addition, the Constitution authorizes Permanent Secretaries with the agreement of the minister responsible to determine all matters pertaining to the employment of all staff in

the ministry, including endorsement of their numbers, qualifications, salaries, transparent management and correspondence with the budgeted payroll. What exact mechanisms are employed to check and ensure compliance with payroll accounting rules is a subject for further exploration.

Absenteeism

Legislation requires daily monitoring of absence from duty through Attendance Register, but verifying actual absenteeism rates would require an in-depth separate study. The Human Resource Management Manual 2014 requires that work attendance by all public service employees would be tracked in an attendance register and time sheets. All officers except the PS and deputy PS are supposed to sign an attendance register daily when arriving and leaving work, indicating precise time of arrival and departure. Any late arrival and early departure must be stated with a reason. Control over the accuracy of the attendance register and any required disciplinary action is the responsibility of office supervisors. Any absence from duty except with respect of sickness is deducted from the employee's salary. The Supervisors must also complete weekly timesheets for the government wage earners (Public Service Commission, 2014). Verifying actual absenteeism rates requires a specific study which was beyond the scope of this assessment. No current literature contains any estimates of such figures for child protection sectors.

Support and oversight of paraprofessionals

Training and community-outreach provided by the social welfare officers at local level represent a significant source of support to local volunteers. Community-based child protection programmes in Fiji actively rely on the help of village volunteers. The government is using a Staff and Volunteer Training Manual to develop capacities of the community partners. Participation of village cadres in the child protection programmes is sometimes compensated through symbolic payments. In 2008, the Baseline Report “Protect me with Love and Care” made a

specific observation that the skills of community volunteers required further upgrade, recommending further trainings and partial translation of the manual into Fijian and Hindi. The study also recommended considering a possibility of disbursing compensatory payments such as bus fare directly from local offices without having to wait for lengthy periods. Since the time of the Baseline Report, training materials were developed and specific trainings undertaken at the community level. As discussed in other sections, community outreach is one of the key child protection activities of social welfare and education professionals at the divisional and district level, including trainings and capacity building.

INDICATOR 3.3. CONTINUITY OF POLICY COMMITMENT, KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS ACROSS ELECTORAL CYCLES

	ASSESSMENT	SCORE
Governments at all levels developed mechanisms to ensure continuity in policy implementation and institutional memory between electoral cycles, including:	C	1.25
Four criteria for indicators		
• Civil service regulations which ensure against excessive staff turnover following elections;	Yes	1
• Arrangements for provision of non-partisan child protection policy advice and guidance to elected officials at all levels;	No, extended	0.25
• Capacity building covering key child protection issues and policy updates for newly elected officials and newly recruited staff (including manuals and other written materials);	No	0
• Documentation of experience and working practice of elected officials at the end of their term which could be used as guidance for the future.	No	0

Regulations to support staff stability

The office of non-political Permanent Secretaries is a regulatory barrier against excessive rotation of ministerial staff. Organization of public service in Fiji provides a central role in policy implementation to the posts of Permanent Secretaries (PSs). Permanent Secretaries act as the most senior officers in their ministries or departments, responsible for supervising its routine operations and reporting to the ministers. According to the 2013 Constitution, ministers are members of Parliament and are appointed and removed from office by the country's Prime Minister. Unlike the ministers, who are political figures, Permanent Secretaries are non-political executives, appointed and removed from office by the public service commission. The lack of political affiliation of the Permanent Secretaries and their significant authority in administration

of the line ministries serves as a regulatory barrier against excessive rotation of staff in the times of changing political agendas.

Non-partisan advice to legislature

The current institutional arrangement does not assume non-partisan technical support at the central level, but new structures should be established once the Parliament is elected in September 2014. As was discussed earlier (page 41), the new Parliament will commence after General Elections in September 2014, upon which new parliamentary support structures would be established. The current arrangements for technical support of the legislative drafting do not include non-partisan elements. By design, legislative authority is currently concentrated with the Prime Minister's office.

“The experience of that pilot reminds us to stay on track, follow a clear rationale, but we forget sometimes, because no one is documenting or capturing what works and what doesn’t, where we are going, how we are doing it.”

At the provincial level, technical advice to local councils and community structures by ministerial staff provides a source of independent opinion and championing for child protection.

While local elected councils do not currently play a significant role in administering and funding child protection policies, this may be changing as an increasing share of councils consider child protection objectives in their strategic planning. This trend in itself seems to owe to the technical advice and awareness raising provided to the provincial partners by child protection specialists working in core line ministries, thereby constituting a source of independent technical expertise.

Induction for new elected officials and new recruited staff

A considerable share of new recruits goes through some induction, but the practice is still not universal. As will be discussed further, induction training in child protection is an important element of the professional development of social workers in Fiji: 46 per cent of child protection specialists surveyed by this assessment believed that some sort of initial training was compulsory for any official to work with children. It is not certain whether the coverage by such training is universal; however, funds are being allocated by the MoSWWPA to some of these programmes, such as the trainings in child protection for new Police Academy recruits planned for 2014. (MoSWWPA, 2013).

There is no mentioning in any documents or interviews of any training or awareness raising materials being prepared for the newly elected officials. On 17 September, Fiji will elect 50 members of Parliament through a multi-member open list system of proportional representation. Unless dissolved, this new Parliament will continue for four years, playing the key role in endorsing new policies and financial allocations. At the moment, no plans seem to have been made to establish a support facility to raise awareness of the politicians on child protection issues.

Documentation of institutional memory

Few policy papers or similar documents have been developed in child protection to transport institutional memory to further generations of politicians and professional staff. More evidence on availability of such documents may emerge once the MoSWWPA website is re-activated. In particular, without access to ministerial performance reports, it is difficult to assess whether these could be used as an institutional memory bank. At the moment, training materials developed for community-level work represent the strongest source of information on previous experience.

In the FGD, it was discussed that lack of documentation of previous experience is a significant barrier to reforms in child protection. Participants described an example of past initiatives such as the pilot project to establish an integrated service for child victims of abuse. The programme built on the idea of joint responsibility of several line ministries to cooperate for the provision of support to children under the Juvenile Act 1972, which, in particular, clearly outlined the role of police (Section 3) and the Department of Social Welfare and in handling such cases. To avoid taking children to various agencies, a child abuse centre was set up, with inputs from the police, Department of Social Welfare and Ministry of Health. This initiative has stalled. However, many of the lessons from that pilot are topical today with the need to arrange coordination around the Child Welfare Act 2009, which is difficult because of poor attention to documentation of results, achievements and difficulties.

INDICATOR 3.4. PROFESSIONAL TRAINING FOR PERSONNEL WORKING ON CHILD PROTECTION SERVICE DELIVERY

	ASSESSMENT	SCORE
Education and continued development system contains:	B	2.25
Four criteria for indicators		
• University degree programmes in social work, with sufficient intake capacity, whose curricula include courses related to work with children in adversities.	Yes, restricted	0.75
• Vocational qualification programmes in social work or child development whose curricula are approved by relevant authorities;	No	0
• A system for continued education and development for social work professionals;	Yes, restricted	0.75
• Specific training on child protection for education workers (such as teachers), health professionals, and for staff within the ministries with lead Interior and Home Affairs role and lead justice roles on children and justice.	Yes, restricted	0.75

University degree programmes

Tertiary education in Fiji

Fiji is an academic centre of the Pacific, providing higher education across the Forum Island Countries.

In particular, the University of the South Pacific (USP), established in 1968, provides tertiary education to twelve small island countries in the region and receive funding from all these countries, reflecting the growing need for the small Pacific nations to establish regional co-operation structures to overcome the limitations imposed by their small geographical and economic size (Chandra, 2009).

However, in addition to this regional university, Fiji also established a range of national tertiary educational institutions. The most important establishment is the Fiji National University, recently created through amalgamation of six previously separate departments.³³ Since 2004-2008, a private University of Fiji began to operate with some support from the Government. Additionally, other countries from the region such as Australia actively participate in provision of higher education in Fiji, and the University of Southern Queensland has its campuses in Suva and Nadi. Tertiary institutions in Fiji provide two-year Diploma programmes and 4 to 5-year professional degree programmes in specific fields.

Fiji actively employs various technologies for distance education. The USP in particular leads in providing distance and flexible learning opportunities to the rest of the PICs, but also to students from other parts of Fiji. Distance learning programmes are provided from the two centres located in USP Lautoka Campus and Fiji Centre Northern in Labasa (ICDE, 2014).

Social work programmes and courses

Attempts to establish tertiary education in social work date to late 1970s but they remained unsuccessful until late 2000s. The first attempt to establish social work education in Fiji dates 1978-1978, when the Government introduced a university diploma of social services offered to ministerial staff. In two years, this programme was replaced by a diploma in community development which contained no subjects related to social work and no field placements. Upon creation of the FASW in 1996, the Sociology Department of the USP, which also taught courses in psychology and counselling, opened a postgraduate diploma in social policy. Finally, in 2005/2006, Fiji became the first country in the region to launch a three-year bachelor degree course in social work (Saxton, Field Education in Fiji: Practice Challenges and Opportunities, 2013). At the time of the 2008 Baseline Report, fears emerged over discontinuation of the Decree after 2009.

³³ Fiji Institute of Technology (FIT), Fiji School of Medicine, Fiji College of Advanced Education, Fiji College of Agriculture, Lautoka Teachers College, and Fiji School of Nursing.

A full-scale degree programmes in social work and related fields are currently offered by the USP, but it is unclear whether they contain child protection specific subjects. Currently, the USP School of Social Sciences offers certificate and diploma level programmes in: Community Development; Counselling; Social and Community Work; and Youth and Development Work. The Social Work programme is complemented with a programme for Field Education through the joint initiative of the USP and the University of Western Sydney (UWS) which provides courses in fieldwork practice and placements throughout Pacific. The USP also offers degree programmes in Psychology and Sociology. However, it is not clear whether any of the current courses deal specifically with child protection.

Vocational qualification programmes

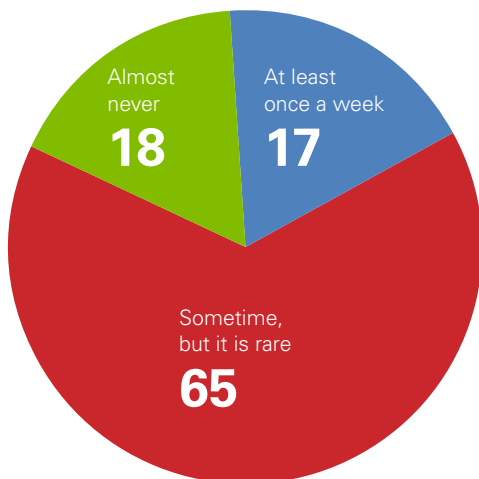
Relevant approved vocational programme does not seem to exist. While there are dozens of educational institutions in Fiji which provide further education, and vocational programmes in the key tertiary institutions, there does not seem to be a separate vocational course either on social work or on any related discipline.

Continued professional development

Short-term training plays an important role as professional induction to staff working with children. As was discussed earlier, short-term training in child protection – including within the diverse donor-sponsored programmes – is one of the key mechanisms to ensure the sufficient qualification of staff to perform their professional duties in Fiji (in particular, 46 per cent of mini-survey respondents believed that going through a kind of induction training is the key prerequisite to be allowed into posts related to working with children).

In addition, some of the donor-funded programmes also provide opportunities for professional growth. For example, the recent UNICEF-led community facilitation programme is a large-scale initiative which provides highly

Figure 13. Mini-survey: “How often do you feel that you don’t know how to deal with a difficult situation at work?”



interactive training involving village representatives as well as officers from various agencies into joint up-skilling in preventative and promotional activities in child protection, such as positive parenting. Additionally, outside of the civil service, the social workers engaged with the NGOs funded by donor agencies have access to extensive professional development programmes led by other countries. The FGD had discussed how teams of the AusAID funded organizations work under supervision of colleagues from Australia and are trained in line with internal professional standards, which takes them to the “forefront of service delivery.” Albeit not spread throughout the core system, this exposure is an important factor driving general expectations to the quality of social work throughout the country.

However, aside from initial induction and selected donor-funded programmes, in recent years there have been few opportunities for regular and continuous professional growth. Majority of civil service professionals surveyed by this study (67 per cent) admitted that they have not attended any specific child protection training in the last three years, and only 8 per cent responded positively. In the FGDs, government representatives also accepted that systemic, regular procurement of continuous training, including in areas such as case management, was not part of their routine.

Child protection specialists are not encouraged to seek new skills and training. The mini-survey – whilst it is not representative or highly explorative in nature – also pointed at a lack of a strong demand for training in the current setup of professional duties and responsibilities. As illustrated in Figure 13, the majority of surveyed professionals said that situations where they feel that they lack knowledge and skills happen rarely (65 per cent) or never (18 per cent). Respectively, when asked where child protection professionals seek new skills and knowledge, 14 per cent said that they don’t usually have such situations (see Figure 14). When this does happen and new qualifications are needed, 38 per cent said that they learn about the problem themselves and 10 per cent ask peers and colleagues. Only 38 per cent felt confident to ask their line manager about the problem and seek formal training.

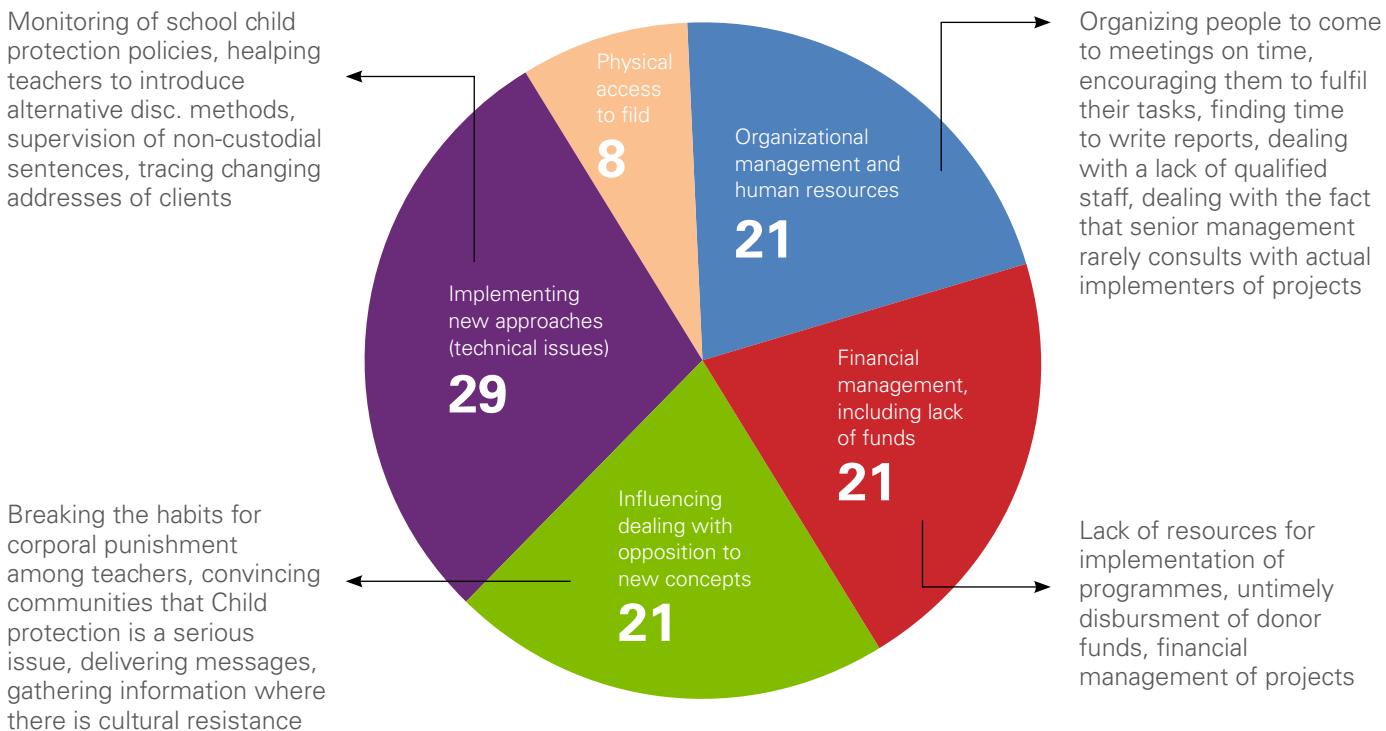
Figure 14. Mini-Survey: “When you feel that you lack some skills or knowledge for your job, what do you do?”



At the same time, there is a diverse range of issues where useful training could be offered to support already on-going programmes. Figure 15 summarizes the results of an inquiry through the mini-survey into what are the most problematic tasks the child protection professionals are facing at the moment. As this figure shows, some of these areas reflect technical problems which could be easier addressed with enhanced knowledge

and skills. For example, 29 per cent of the named issues related to difficulties in implementing particular concepts and approaches related to new child protection policies. Another 21 per cent were strongly linked to influencing and communications. The same share of concerns was voiced about organizational management: supervising staff, time management, and internal communications.

Figure 15. Mini-survey: “What are the three tasks that you find most difficult in your work?”



There is some indication that situation may be improving, with allocation of MoSWWPA funds to training for staff. One of the challenges to continuous professional development of social workers in Fiji is lack of sustainable allocation of public funds into procurement of such services. In 2008, the Baseline Report “Protect me with Love and Care” noted that high quality training programmes were available from the FASW, but were not utilized to the full extent, mostly for financial reasons (UNICEF; AusAID, 2009). The 2014 Annual Corporate Plan of MoSWWPA allocates \$10,000 specifically to training and up skilling of welfare officers on new child protection issues and policies (MoSWWPA, 2013). In the mini-survey, 25 per cent of the respondents indicated that training is being planned for them in the near future.

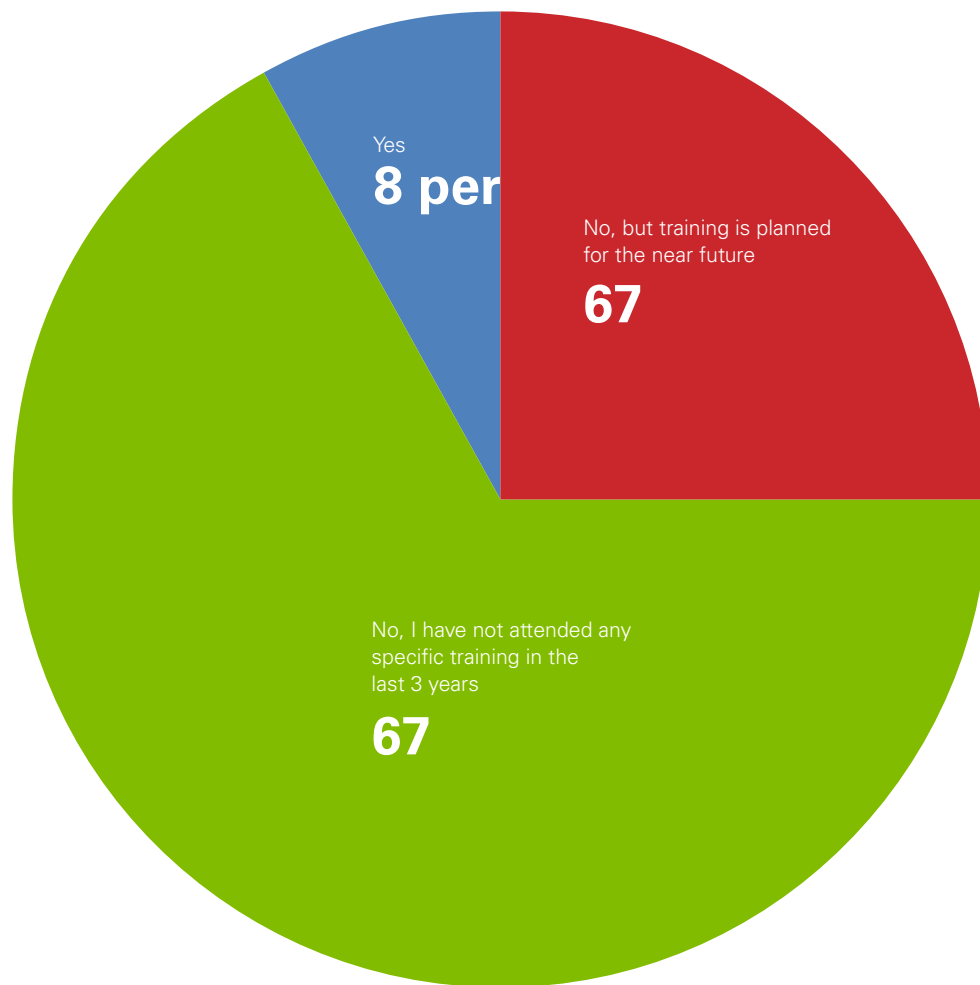
In 2014, government’s Centre for Training and Development (CTD) will offer targeted training in child protection (Course No. CTD 33/14).

- The Public Service Commission (PSC) includes a Training Division which is responsible for providing training opportunities to all cadres of civil servants through the Centre for Training and Development (CTD). The CTD runs courses which are based on the estimated needs

of the ministries and departments, which can nominate their participants to take CTD courses. The 2014 Training Handbook of the CTD contains a clear plan to run child protection training programme for Family Court Officers/ Social Welfare, Officers/Correction Services Officers, Teachers, Police Officers in July. This special course (No. CTD 33/14 Child protection) is open for 30-35 participants and will provide them with special knowledge and skills to act as Child protection Focal Point Officers and “to be strong advocates for children”.

- In addition, the PSC may sponsor studies for some officers in the non-CTD programmes (undergraduate, postgraduate and technical studies at the USP and FIT), for which they can apply through their heads of department. It also sponsors overseas trainings (including staff exchanges and attachments), again through nomination by individual agencies.
- By request of the ministries, the CTD can also assist by running in-house professional development courses. Albeit these seem to be limited to generic areas such as Problem Solving, Report Writing, Team Building, etc.

Figure 16. Mini-survey: “In the last three years, have you had any additional training related to dealing with child protection issues (abuse, violence, exploitation)?”



Training for professionals in other sectors

Induction and continued up-skilling in child protection is provided to professionals from the most relevant sectors, but there seems to be a poorer coverage of health professionals. In 2008, the Baseline Report estimated that training on preventing and responding to child abuse and neglect had been provided to 41 per cent of police and 67 per cent of justice representatives surveyed by their study (UNICEF; AusAID, 2009). The FGD confirmed that periodic training and awareness raising

activities were regularly conducted by the Juvenile Bureau for various professionals in the justice system, including police and prosecutors. As was discussed earlier, the regular CTD training was established specifically for child protection to cover specialists from Family Courts, Correction Services Officers, teachers, and police officers. In 2014, MoSWWPA plans to allocate \$5,000 for training on gender-based violence to new recruits of the Fiji Police Academy. However, professionals in the health sector do not seem to be involved in systemic introduction to child protection issues. Unfortunately, it was not possible to verify this through the mini-survey as about half of the respondents chose to not indicate their particular ministry.

INDICATOR 3.5. PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

	ASSESSMENT	SCORE
Human resource management rules include the following:	B	2.5
Four criteria for indicators		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff working in child protection have written, sufficiently detailed and regularly revised job descriptions which accurately reflect their duties and responsibilities; 	Yes, restricted	0.75
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a formal system for assessment of staff performance, which is clearly linked to job objectives and to reward levels received by staff (salaries, promotion chances, training opportunities or other benefits); 	Yes	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are transparent rules to encourage extra effort with financial or non-monetary rewards; 	Yes, restricted	0.75
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a robust system to sanction poor performance. 	No	0

Job descriptions

Most staff working in child protection in Fiji are public servants employed through the headquarters of respective line ministries. Employment relations of civil servants are regulated by the Public Service Act 1999, amended in 2011 through the Public Service Amendment Decree 2011. Prior to the 2011 Amendment, civil service contracts were subject to regular labour legislation outlined in the Employment Relations Promulgation 2007 (ERP). The change in 2011 was to remove all civil servants from the coverage of the ERP and to create a separate set of labour rules for civil servants by amending the Public Service Act 1999. The government has indicated that under the changed system, “civil servants would enjoy similar safeguard mechanisms as those foreseen in the ERP for the private sector” (Fiji Trade Union Congress, 2013).

All posts within the civil service are supposed to have approved written duty statements. The Public Service Commission’s Policy on Appointment of Civil Service notes that all types of posts in Fiji’s civil service have approved duty statements and descriptions of duties and qualifications required for respective posts. The policy requires all appointments to be advertised with clear specification of these job descriptions and appropriate Minimum Qualification Requirements (MQRs), to be approved by the PCS (Public Service Commission, 2012). Assessment of the MoSWWPA undertaken by UNICEF in 2010 confirmed that ministerial staff at headquarters, and divisional and district levels do have detailed job descriptions which clearly identify their functions and responsibilities (Baker, 2010). It was not verified whether these descriptions are accurate and regularly revised.

Responses to a mini-survey indicate child protection often features in the work objectives, but not in a systemic way.

A mini-survey conducted by this assessment asked child protection professionals from social welfare, education, health and the justice sector a range of questions on the specification of their tasks and work objectives. Responses to these questions suggest the following observations:

- Most respondents formulate their work objectives in a generic sense or as related to operational management.** When asked “what were three most important objectives in your work in 2013?” most child protection specialists offered generic objectives such as good governance, improvement of well-being of people, education and empowerment (see Figure 17). The second most popular category of objectives was related to operational management (financial planning; training for staff; meeting deadlines).
- Child protection objectives usually focus on awareness raising and coordination.** However, objectives also included child protection advocacy and Awareness Raising (mentioned in 17 per cent of responses) and diverse objectives related to management and supervision of child protection services (also mentioned in 17 per cent of responses). A separate group of responses (10 per cent) specifically noted coordination and 4 per cent more dealt specifically with provision of child protection services (direct counselling and protection of victims of abuse). None of the respondents mentioned case management or supervision.

- **Only in 17 per cent responses field professionals stated that their work objectives are formulated in their job description.** When asked “who established these objectives for your work”, only 17 per cent of respondents mentioned that these objectives are specified in their job descriptions (see Figure 18). In most cases, objectives were reported as being established by the ministry or agreed directly with the line manager.

Actual duties and responsibilities of filed professionals are a mix of administrative functions and child protection tasks. The survey had then questioned child protection professionals about the three tasks which consume most of their work time, as well as the three biggest tasks they do for child protection. A summary of these responses is provided in Table 12. The Table shows that:

- **Most of the staff’s time is consumed by operations planning, financial management and administrative routine.** The most time-consuming tasks for current child protection staff are related to operational planning and financial management, including coordination of funds, financial reporting and planning of resource utilization. A related group of time-consuming tasks included administrative routine such as writing emails, internal minutes, “chasing people for work”, liaising with supervisors, verifying work done by others – “especially on financial matters”, and monthly reporting. The field staff

also report spending a lot of time on policy development and dissemination.

- **Social welfare officers also spend significant amount of time on social assistance activities.** In the case of social welfare officers, the biggest amount of time is often consumed by tasks related to administering social assistance programmes such as the poverty benefit scheme, issuing food vouchers, as well issuance of birth certificates, and responding to various requests and settling disputes.
- **In child protection, the biggest amount of time is spent on preparation and undertaking of training, awareness raising and outreach activities.** At the same time, a considerable amount of time is spent by divisional staff on preparing and undertaking field visits to the communities, mostly for the purposes of awareness raising, advocacy and training, which corresponds to being the biggest task in child protection. The various types of such activities include training and awareness raising on child protection policies in educational districts, trainings on parenthood concepts, child protection trainings for youth and traditional leaders.
- **Additionally, at least some of the officers directly engage in counselling with parents and victims of child abuse (social welfare), which may take up a lot of their time.**

Figure 17. Mini-survey results: “What were three most important objectives for your work in 2013?”

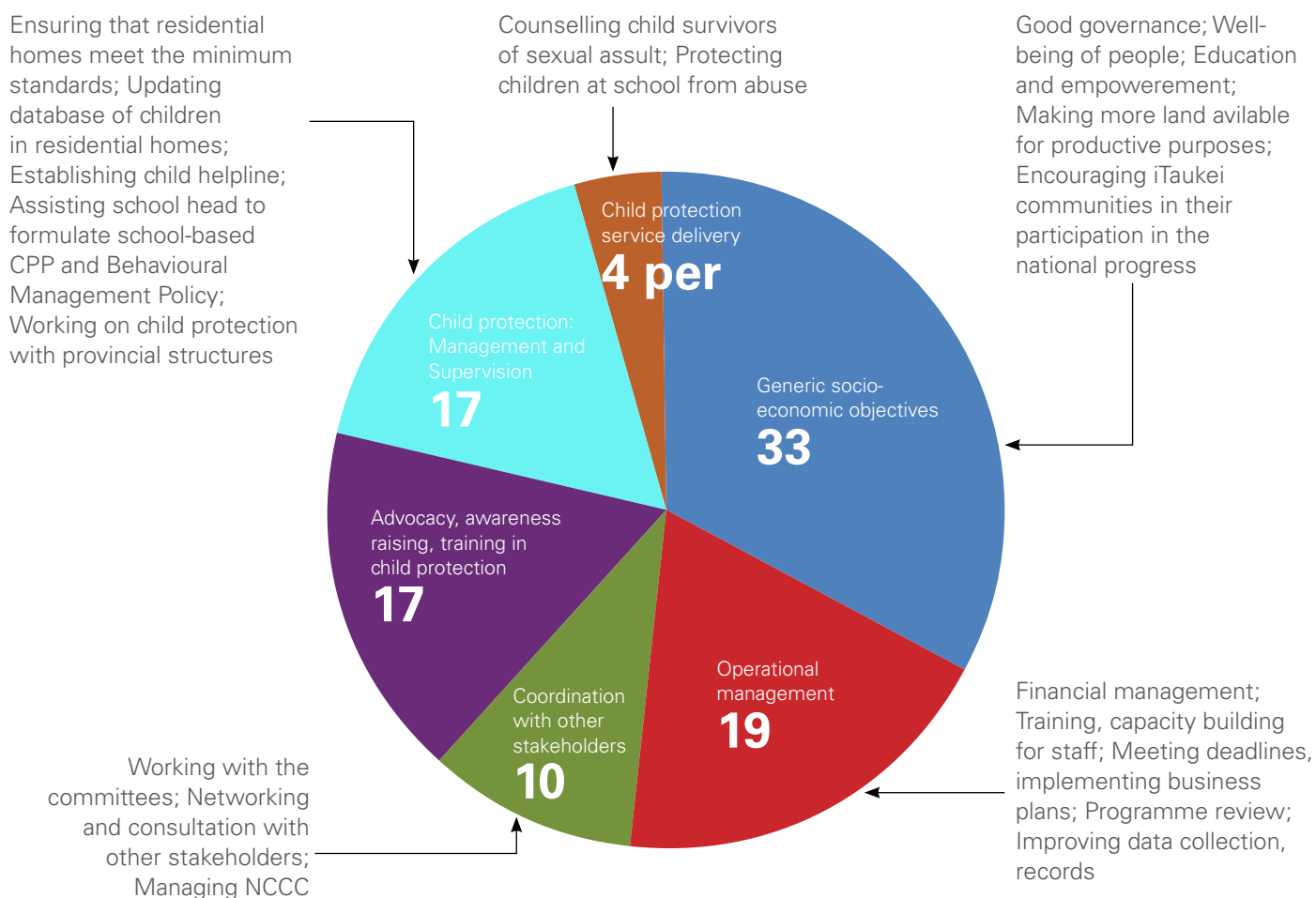


Figure 18. Mini-survey results: “Who established key objectives for your work in 2013?”

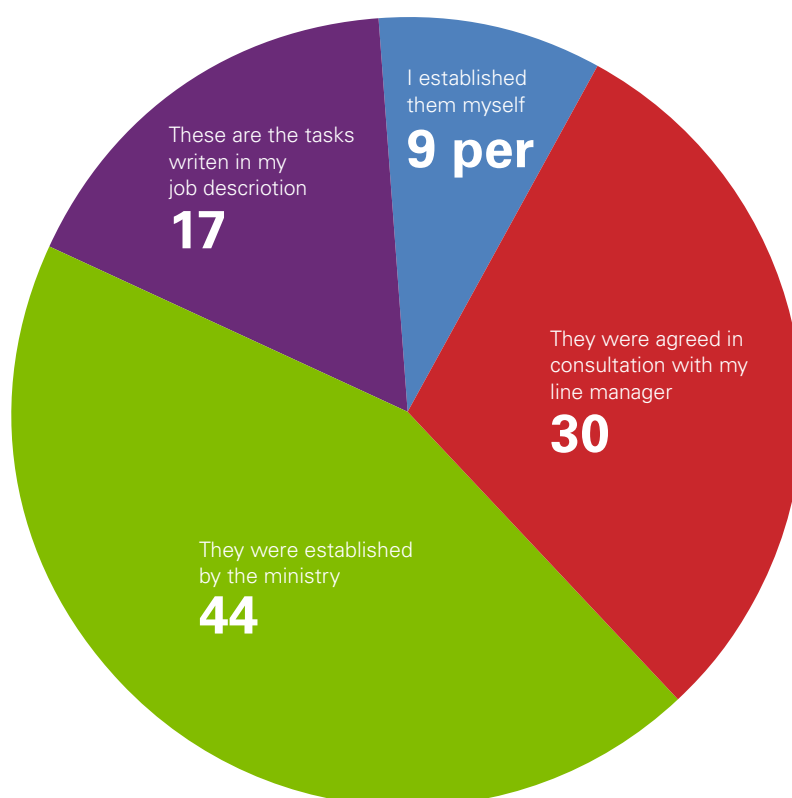


Table 12. Mini-survey results: “What are the tasks which consume most of your time and what are the tasks

When you think about the kinds of tasks you have to do in your everyday job, what are three things you spend most of your time on?	Task mentioned (No.)	What are the biggest tasks you usually have to do related specifically to child protection?	Task mentioned (No.)
Operational planning and fin. management	7	Training and awareness raising	7
Development of policies	6	Counselling (parents, victims of child abuse)	2
Field visits (preparing, participating)	5	Daily work to benefit children	2
Responding to requests, referring to relevant authorities, setting disputes	5	Arranging foster and adoption placements	1
Other administrative tasks, including: Emails, chasing people for work Writing internal minutes Liaising with supervisor Verification of work submitted by other staff, especially financial matters Monthly reporting	5	Attending child protection committee meeting (quarterly)	1
Organizing, supervizing people, assessing performance;	4	Negotiating for support from SWD on child protection awareness	1
Outreach planning and management	2	Convincing church leaders to include child protection programme	1
Monitoring and evaluation	2	Verifying the presence of school-based CPP	1
Dissemination of policies	1	Meeting w. school counsellors to discuss child abuse	1
Workshops and meetings	1	Disseminating parenthood concept	1
Support letters for birth certificates	1	Facilitating programme for child protection	1
Poverty benefit scheme	1	Out of 13 respondents, 3 (23 per cent) said that in their actual work they do not have any tasks related to child protection	
Issuing of food vouchers	1		
Doing reviews upon home visits	1		
Counselling	1		

“Annual performance evaluation system has been there for years, but they (the PSC) are changing it all the time, trying to develop something that really works.”

Performance evaluation cycle

The system of Annual Performance Appraisal regulated by the PSC General Orders 2011 is clear and strongly linked to reward levels. All appointments into Fiji public service are on the fixed contractual agreement for a duration of three years, subject to extension. Renewal of contracts and merit increase resulting in receiving salary increments are determined through the process of annual performance assessment. The system of performance assessment has evolved in recent years. Its name was modified several times (first known as The performance Management System (PMS); then Annual Confidential Reporting (ACR) system, and – lately – the Annual Performance Assessment (APA) system). Performance of the officers is assessed based on their annual reports and is described in the PSC General Orders 2011 (Public Service Commission, 2011). The Performance Management System is clearly linked to the system of remuneration and promotion.

Performance assessment is based on individual annual reports, endorsed by the Permanent Secretaries. All officers are assessed by their reporting officers in the annual reports. Previously known as “Annual Confidential Reports (ACRs)”, the reports are still confidential, but with the new reforms their content shall now be discussed by the line manager with the rated employee so that he or she can provide feedback to the results of the assessment. Regulations require the reports to be “full and candid”. The report includes special forms for performance rating, scored and signed by the reporting officer. The ACR is shared with the civil servant who was evaluated and submitted to the countersigning officer for comments and endorsement. Once the process is complete, the reporting officer fills in a Performance Assessment Report, submits it to the countersigning officer for endorsement. Performance assessment forms for teachers, health workers, general civil service and Government Wage Employees are submitted for endorsement to their respective Permanent Secretaries. The Annual Performance Assessment Form was revised in 2014 (Public Service Commission, 2014).

Templates and content of the performance appraisal are clearly outlined in the General Orders 2011. For each employee, the Performance Assessment and Development Form must contain the following:

- the grading of performance of duties during the period covered;
- whether performance objectives and targets are met;
- the competency rating;
- individual comments;
- remuneration linkages recommended by the respective Permanent Secretaries;
- recommendation for increment payment are done by the respective Permanent Secretary;

- fitness for promotion, and
- endorsement.

The orders also specify the process of reflecting performance assessment in the merit increase. The General Orders 2011 additionally contain exact criteria to be applied in the consideration of recommendations for merit increase; limitations to eligibility for a merit increase (e.g. if the officer was continuously absent from official duties for a period of six months); and provides the authority for a merit increase to the Permanent Secretary.

Rewards

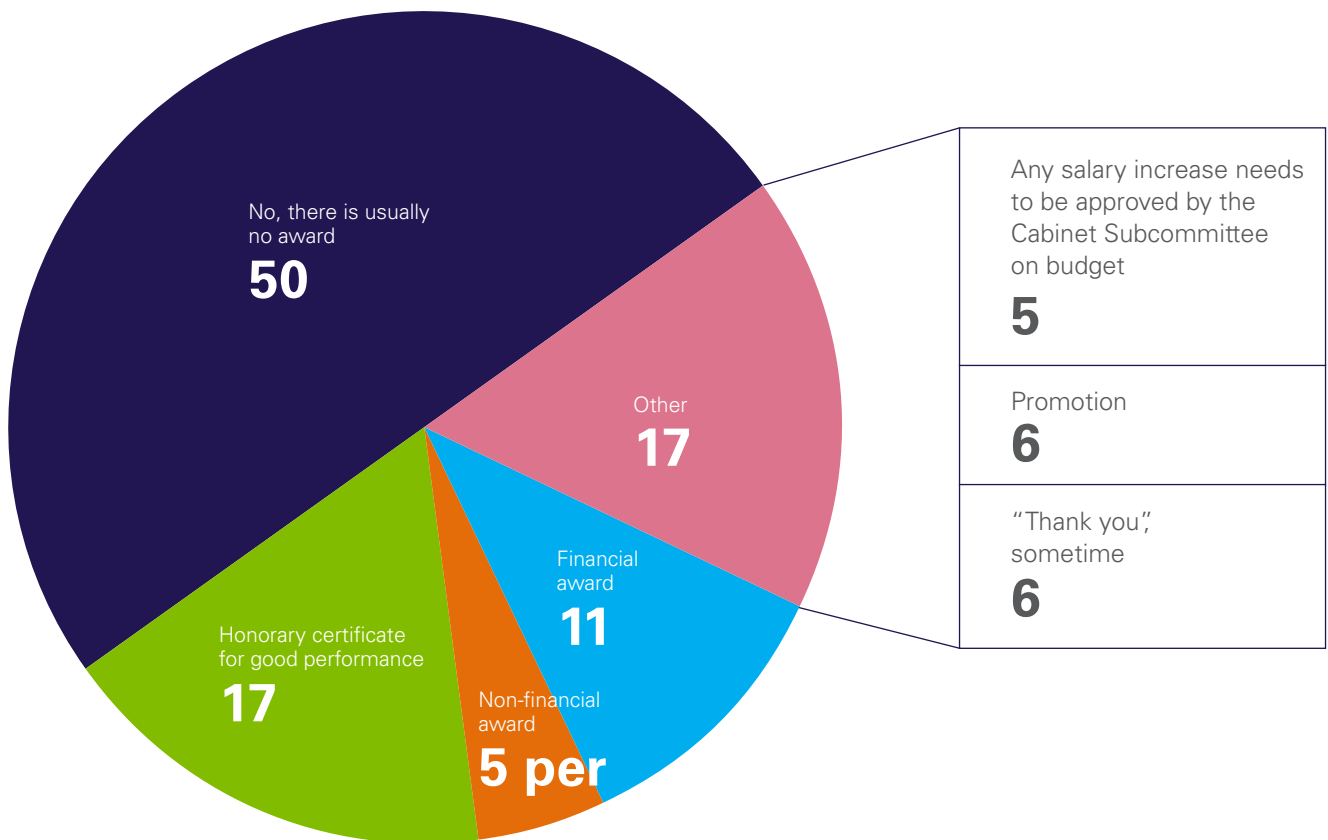
Regular system for measuring and rewarding performance is embodied within the Annual Performance Assessment (APA). The Public Service Commission clearly states that the current Annual Performance Assessment (APA) is “designed specifically to measure and reward performance”. As was discussed earlier, annual assessment may result in a percentage rating salary increment or bonus payment at the discretion of the Permanent Secretary after consultations with Executive Management (Public Service Commission, 2014).

An additional system to reward outstanding performance was introduced in 2014. On top of this regular assessment system, Fiji applies an additional policy “to serve as a management tool to gauge and assess potential employees for consideration for increments or bonus payments that is outside the ambits of the APA Form” (Public Service Commission, 2014). Applications for these additional rewards may be initiated by the relevant officer or any superior officer, and submitted to relevant directors along with relevant justifying documents. The application should receive comments from the deputy secretary and be submitted to the staff board, which makes the final decision. This policy can be used in five cases (or options):

- Option 1: Outstanding contributions;
- Option 2: Positions that manage or work within units/ sections that are understaffed;
- Option 3: Tertiary qualifications and experience;
- Option 4: Multi-skilled;
- Option 5: Retention.

At the time of this assessment, surveyed child protection professionals did not feel that in the case of exceptional performance their effort would be rewarded. To the question of the survey “If you do on a outstanding job, could you receive any award?,” 50 per cent of staff responded negatively. Only 11 per cent believed that there could be a financial award, with the rest thinking that the reward could represent a promotion, a non-financial stimulus such as additional leave or training opportunity, a honorary certificate or, “sometimes – a thank you” (see Figure 19).

Figure 19. Mini-survey: “If you do an outstanding job and perform better than expected, could you receive any

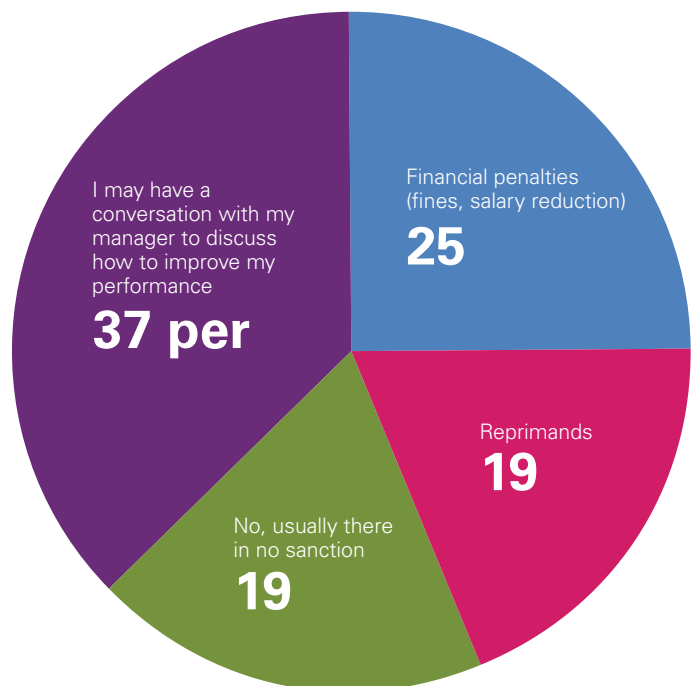


Sanctions

General Orders 2011 outline Disciplinary Action, Charges and Proceedings (Chapter 3 – Discipline). It obliges all civil servants to “display a standard of discipline and conduct that upholds the Public Service Values and Public Service Code of Conduct.” This includes respect to office hours, attendance register and register of absences, outside employment, political and outside influence, pecuniary embarrassment etc. Non-compliance with these requirements may lead to disciplinary charges, suspension from duties and non-eligibility to merit increase.

Surveyed child protection professionals believe that in most cases poor performance leads to discussions with line managers or does not result in any action. Respondents to the mini-survey conducted by this assessment felt that underperformance at work (albeit not necessarily understood as disciplinary offence) would rarely lead to financial penalties (25 per cent) or formal reprimands (19 per cent). In most cases, episodes of poor performance are resolved through discussion with the line manager (37 per cent) or not at all leading to any action (19 per cent) (see Figure 20).

Figure 20. Mini-survey: “If you perform worse than expected, could there be any consequences?”



INDICATOR 3.6. ABILITY TO ATTRACT AND RETAIN QUALIFIED STAFF FOR CHILD PROTECTION

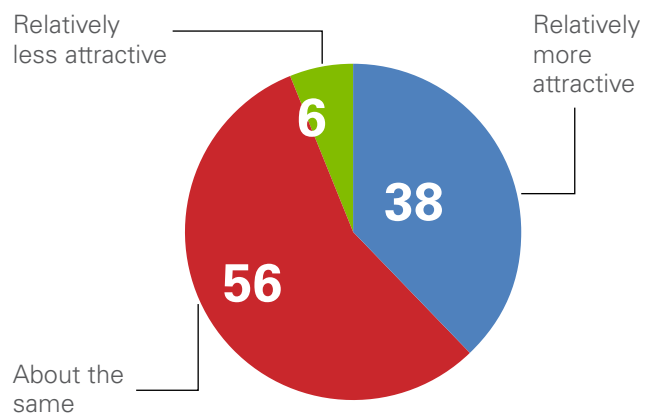
	ASSESSMENT	SCORE
The government attracts and retains qualified child protection professionals through ensuring the following:	B	2.75
Four criteria for indicators		
• Child protection duties and posts provide a level of financial compensation and career opportunities which are comparable to other posts in same sectors;	No, extended	0.25
• Average remuneration of staff working on child protection (across all ministries/ sectors) is generally comparable to average national wages;	Yes	1
• The public considers social work to be a relatively well respected, prestigious and desirable profession;	Yes, restricted	0.75
• There is a reasonable level of personnel stability on frontline and managerial posts in child protection, resulting from low non-retirement turnover and balanced transfer policies.	Yes, restricted	0.75

Non-discrimination of child protection duties

Participants of the mini-survey conducted for this assessment felt mostly content with the relative professional opportunities they have compared to colleagues working in other posts in same sector. As shown in Figure 21, just over a half of respondents (56 per cent) stated that their salary and job conditions are about the same as elsewhere in the ministry, and as much as 38 per cent thought that their positions are relatively more attractive. No concerns were voiced over missing in any professional opportunities because of the choice to stay on a post that deals with child protection.

At the same time, during the FGD, a range of concerns were raised on the current comparative standing of child protection posts. Some attending professionals admitted that generally child-specific posts are not considered as placements which lead to professional recognition and development opportunities. Some of them ended up in these posts because transfers between agencies were decided by senior management without much consultation. Subsequently, “it was not until they started working with children that they began to really love their job.” While the participants felt very passionate about their child protection duties, they admitted that child protection needs higher recognition, both in terms of financial compensation but also in terms of clearly defining the highly specialized profile of respective posts. It was also stated that in the judicial system, child cases are perceived as low-key and not serious, without appreciation that professionals who deal with such cases require specialization and additional expertise.

Figure 21. Mini-survey: “How does your salary and job conditions compare to other staff of same level in the same ministry?”



“It is a matter of perception. It is believed that issues like children are the domain for mothers, women. So, in the justice system, all child abuse cases tend to be thrown at female colleagues. The perception is “oh, this is children – throw it to others”. I think this is because they do not understand enough. It is not recognized as a specialist field that we need training on, that we are actually not all experts in. But in reality it is a special field, it requires specialist training, it requires focus, it’s actually quite hard profile. And the long-term negative impact of the children if they are not dealt with timely intervention is a social cost to the government and community. But we have not given this evidence to this people, and this is not understood and appreciated.”

The current grading system equates social workers to low-profile health workers, which diminishes their salaries. During the focus groups it also transpired that the current system of salary grades and scales in Fiji treats social workers as health workers. Moreover, within the health care ladder of grades, the equivalent is rather basic, which results in comparatively lower salaries. This assessment was not able to obtain a copy of the exact document describing the grade system to analyse this issue in more detail.

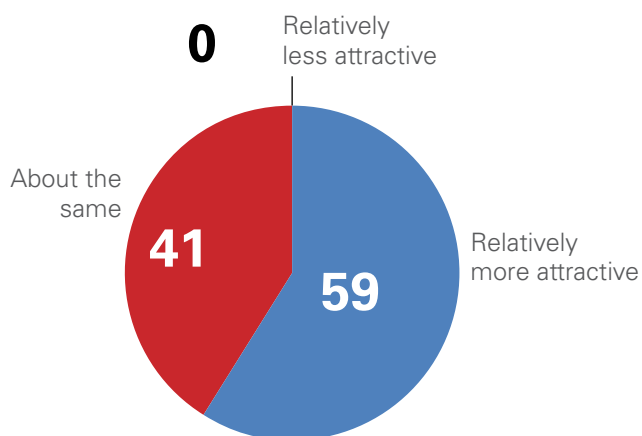
Remuneration comparable to other jobs

On average, civil servants in Fiji have a considerably higher level of income compared to private sector.

According to the Fiji's Public Service Association, in September 2013, the annual salary of the lowest-paid civil servants in the country equalled \$10,292, while the average annual salary for the country in general was at about \$4,000 (RNZI, 2013). In late 2013, this level of compensation was still criticized by the association for low rises and insufficient compensation for the inflationary pressures.

Respondents of the mini-survey felt that their salaries are relatively better compared to other jobs. In the mini-survey conducted by this assessment, not a single child protection professional thought that their salaries compared negatively to other jobs in their communities (see Figure 22). Most respondents (59 per cent) thought that their financial terms were relatively more attractive, and the other 41 per cent felt that it was about the same.

Figure 22. Mini-survey: "How does your salary and job conditions compare to other jobs in your community?"



"In terms of the prestige and respect to social work as professionals, I think we have to take into account the context of traditional community. Because we have a communal set up, really. So, within a village, the child is not just a parental responsibility, but it is the whole community involved in the upbringing of the child. The child can be smacked or disciplined by an uncle or an aunt – that's all part of the growing up or upbringing. So, social workers, they are not really... special. They are not special in how they relate to the child. The child is everyone's responsibility."

Prestige and respect to profession

Social work closely resonates with traditional values of social justice but may sometimes conflict with beliefs that problems should be resolved through kinship and community rather than strangers. Social work as a profession is a relatively new phenomenon for Fiji. Conceptually, it resonates with many traditional values. In her analysis of the history of social work education in Fiji, K. Saxton notes that for iTaukei peoples social work often links to the traditional idea of community-based work and helping each other, and in the Indo-Fijian context it is rather linked to volunteering in retirement (Saxton, *Field Education in Fiji: Practice Challenges and Opportunities*, 2013). This close conceptual linkage can be both helpful and problematic for professional social workers: while social justice is widely respected, it is also often believed to be a matter for resolution through traditional structures of family, kinship and community. Moreover, given the tradition of shared responsibility, it becomes difficult to separate the special role of professional providers of social work services for vulnerable children.

Personnel stability

Staff turnover is a considerable problem for the Fijian civil service, but out-flow of talent to private sector is mostly in non-social welfare professions. Overall in the public sector in Fiji, high staff turnover has been a significant problem in recent years as skilled professionals tended to migrate away into the private sector. The Public Service Commission (PSC) had openly acknowledged the problem, stating that it faced systemic difficulty in retaining qualified professionals. The most problematic types of skill most exposed to the risk of losing talent included statisticians, accountants, doctors, administrators, engineers, town planners and IT experts. In 2011, the PSC announced a new strategy for talent management to retain "the best and brightest" and those with scarce skills. This included additional training opportunities – both through the internal training unit and provided through donor-funded programmes and introducing new benefit schemes to compensate for exceptional performance. (Baselala, 2011).

Throughout the civil service, staff turnover was prompted by weak control over inter-agency transfers.

Transfer policies have until recently been rather loose, leading to "instances where the Permanent Secretaries or Heads of Departments only became aware of the transfer of staff upon receiving confirmation on offer of promotion to the Officers from other Agencies and/or to facilitate the expression of interest of Officers" (PSC, 2013). In 2013, the PSC attempted to address this issue by endorsing the due procedures for seeking transfer, which, according to the regulations, could be done solely by the Permanent Secretaries or Heads of Departments. It remains to be seen whether the endorsement would be implemented effectively.



DOMAIN 4.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

INDICATOR 4.1. USE OF EVIDENCE IN THE POLICY PROCESS

	ASSESSMENT	SCORE
Analysis of major trends in child protection contexts to identify key vulnerabilities and priorities for action manifests in the following:	D	0.25
Four criteria for indicators		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key child protection programmatic documents (strategies, policies, white papers, laws) utilize data from key national surveys (CDC, MICs, DHS, ILO-IPEC etc.); 	No	0
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key child protection programmatic documents contain analysis of trends in administrative data (service types and coverage, profile of key risk groups); 	No, extended	0.25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of trends in child protection data is referenced in budget proposals and medium-term expenditure plans; 	No	0
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key ministries with responsibilities for child protection receive training and capacity building in data management, statistical analysis and evidence-based policy-making. 	No	0

Use of surveys

The current programmatic documents related to child protection have essentially no reference to statistical data, including relevant surveys. The child protection objectives in the Roadmap for Democracy and Sustainable Socio-Economic Development 2010-2014 (RSSD) are formulated without any analysis of evidence (with an exception of crime statistics from Fiji police). The annual corporate plan of the MoSWWPA does not contain any diagnostic background of the current situation and historical developments, apart from the introductory statement of the minister and the PS. The two current policies which directly relate to child protection (the policy for child protection in Schools of the Ministry of Education and the National Youth Policy of the Ministry of Youth and Sports) refer to developments in respective areas but without providing any evidence (e.g. the child protection in School Policy states that “child abuse has risen rapidly in Fiji, not only in homes and on the streets but also in schools” without any reference either to the respective figures or the sources of this information).

Use of administrative data

The only type of administrative data visibly utilized in strategic policy planning for child protection in Fiji is the data generated by the Fiji police. The child protection objectives contained in the country’s key programmatic documents are strongly based on the crime statistics involving children. For example, the RSSD refers to growing concerns over sexual violence against children by quoting the rising numbers of child rape and defilement in 2004-2008. However, RSSD objectives set up for children and youth (led by other ministries), including the reference to continued concerns over poor access of the victims to legal aid, lack of specialized counselling, discrimination of children with disabilities and harmful stereotypes, are provided without any statistical background.

“I think the issue here is that we do not realize the opportunities and how to do it, both. We are collecting a lot of data, but we don’t have the analysis. We are also paying a lot of money for this data collection, but... We don’t know the purposes or if we did, we tend to forget it, and then we don’t analyse it too. People just don’t know how to use it.”

Most agencies use their administrative records for internal operational purposes, and rarely for more strategic planning.

- Fiji police also actively uses its administrative data on child protection issues for identifying and fortifying high-risk areas. Several participants of the FGD confirmed that it is a regular practice for the Fiji police to analyse trends in cases of violence against children as well as episodes of children violating laws in order to identify high-risk areas and adjust its field operations accordingly. Communities where violence is on the increase receive additional support, training or attention. As will be discussed further, data for such internal analysis is generated through daily briefs by all field posts, consolidated at the headquarter level.
- Where possible, MoSWWPA attempts to apply a similar practice. MoSWWPA explained that they try to utilize, to the extent possible, information on child abuse cases to map the prevalence of abuse across communities and to focus their capacity-building efforts.
- Generally, the lack of utilization of data for planning was noted by other studies on the CRVS system. This observation corresponds to conclusions from other assessments on the general weakness of evidence-based diagnostics in the planning process in Fiji. For example, the 2013 Working Paper on the CRVS noted that the Ministry of Health – one of the most advanced agencies in terms of MIS development – used its mortality statistics “primarily for legal and administrative purposes with minimal use of information for planning” (Naidu, Buttsworth, and Aumua, 2013).

Data analysis in budget negotiations

Child protection data analysis is not actively used in budget negotiations, despite the opportunity for relatively flexible resource allocation and advocating these with evidence. As was discussed earlier (page 70), administrative heads in Fiji enjoy considerable flexibility at

the stage of preparing their budgets. The annual budget submissions (which correspond to the Strategic and Annual Corporate Plans) are supposed to reflect priorities which are in line with the RDSSED, but which are costed within a broad expenditure envelope formulated for each agency (subject to agreement over all key parameters such as staff numbers). This assessment did not have access to the actual budget submissions prepared by the key ministries in child protection. However, the weakness of analytical background within the Annual Corporate Plan of MoSWWPA strongly suggests that the programmes and cost estimates it contains were not developed with significant use of statistical analysis of trends and issues in child protection.

Statistical training for policy-makers

Processing and analysis of the already available data is weak across most agencies dealing with child protection issues. During the FGDs on data management, all stakeholders without exception admitted that while there are significant opportunities for child protection data collection in Fiji, most agencies suffer from weak capacities to process, analyse and utilize the potential of statistical information. Requests for data analysis usually originate either from external agencies (e.g. in the course of preparation or evaluation of aid projects) or from discussions at the NCCC. However, there is no internal demand for proactive utilization of available data, usually linked to a lack of knowledge on the possibilities of how the data could be used. Participants of the FGD described several attempts to initiate a stronger database which failed because of lacking hands and appreciation of data analysis as a priority.

All key ministries and departments working with child protection have minimum human capacities dedicated to data processing and analysis. For example, the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs currently has only one specialist working on consolidation of field data (the ministry has requested that three more additional posts would be created for this function in 2014). As a result the ministry lags several years behind in basic consolidation of the already available field data.

“The only person who works on consolidation of data is overloaded; he has just finished inputting and analysing data for 2008 and 2009. When that came out, the other government agencies were stunned, because this was the information they were after – for example, the Ministry of Health – they jumped! Because they tried to get this information for so long, e.g. how many children don’t have electricity, water access etc., how many children of different ages live in remote areas. We capture all of these things.”

“Do we have enough training in stats? No, there is no training, no specific training on data analysis or data management. Secondly, we do not have enough people to do that. We are given standard templates to fill in, like book keeping, and this is what officers use. And yes, data is very important, we recognize that it is a gap. For example when we have to go through evaluation, we are asked for various statistics, and we don’t have it, so sometimes we just have to do physical counting.”

“We have research officers whose task is just to get necessary data when we need it, e.g. like the child welfare decree register or looking at hot spot areas. That’s basically what we are doing. But this data analyst, she is not a statistician, she is just a regular post – she didn’t have any particular training”

Existing personnel does not receive any statistical training, even though opportunities for such up-skilling are offered within the government’s continued education facilities. Most importantly, the already existing personnel working with data have essentially no relevant prior qualifications or further training. Given that non-statisticians are currently employed as research officers implies that respective skills are probably not part of the relevant MQR. It is notable that Fiji Government’s Centre for Training and Development (CTD) which runs regular professional development courses for public servants also runs a range of courses dealing with data processing and analysis. These do not seem to be utilized as an opportunity by the ministries working on child protection. For example, the current courses which could upgrade the current skills of the ministerial statisticians include:

- CTD 19/14: MICROSOFT APPLICATIONS: this course took place in Suva in May 2014, and was open to all officers. The course helps participants master the basic software for data management (MS Access and Excel) as well as the basic tools for data presentation (such as MS PowerPoint and MS Visio).
- CTD 48/14: STATISTICS AND DATA MANAGEMENT: this course will take place in Suva in September 2014 and is open to all officers (applications must be submitted two weeks prior to the commencement of the course). The is a relatively advanced course in the methods of statistical analysis, and yet it is targeted at beginners, to develop an interest and basic understanding of key concepts.
- CTD 29/14: RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES: this course is targeted at senior and middle managers. The curriculum includes general skills in planning and organizing research and development, and also includes a section on data and analytical methods, as well as on profiling research results. In 2014, the course took place in June.

Current trainings still lack a more practical toolkit for data processing and analysis which would be tailored to child protection. At the same time, the currently available in-house CTD courses are rather generic, and cover either rather basic or relatively advanced data analysis skills (such as probability mathematics and regression analysis). A practical and basic toolkit on key policy questions that could be quickly addressed through better data crunching, tailored specifically to child protection or even broader social policy issues, is not currently available but would be a considerable asset. Development of such a toolkit could be preceded by a rapid assessment of key current practical policy issues which could be effectively handled through improved data processing, so that these are incorporated into the toolkit as cases and templates. For example, as will be discussed further, the FGDs have repeatedly addressed the currently open debate on the growing numbers of reported child abuse cases and lack of clarity on whether this is explained by a growing prevalence or improved reporting and detection rates. Practical knowledge on how these questions might be addressed through representative surveys is one example of a more tailored approach to developing analytical expertise in the core ministries.

INDICATOR 4.2. QUALITY OF CHILD PROTECTION DATABASES

	ASSESSMENT	SCORE
Data on child protection recorded by national information systems:	D	0.5
Four criteria for indicators		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses consistent and standardized definitions and concepts which are appropriate for statistical purposes, allow tracking performance of existing child protection programmes and facilities (within and across sectors), and include sufficient disaggregation by age, ethnicity, gender, and disability status; 	No	0
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covers variables sufficient to support decisions on most of the specific national child protection policy priorities (e.g. migration-related risks, HIV, domestic violence, etc.); 	No, extended	0.25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follows a practical model for child maltreatment surveillance which links diverse sources of outcome-specific data and information on risk factors (population studies, hospital records, emergency department records, police and homicide reports etc.) to analysis and interpretation, helping to detect children at risk of abuse, neglect and violence and prevent it before it occurs; 	No, extended	0.25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is verified and monitored to ensure that data is consistent and robust. 	No	0

Concepts and definitions

Field officers across ministries and departments collect a vast amount of child protection data, but it is not standardized and not sufficiently disaggregated.

Collection of data related to child abuse and maltreatment in Fiji is undertaken at the local level through several relevant ministries and departments³⁴ (see Figure 23). The headquarters of every ministry and department develop their individual templates for data collection and aggregation. The templates are used by the ministerial staff working on the ground in the local officers to collect respective statistics, consolidate it, and send back to their headquarters. A single ministry can develop a range of templates: this is typically done by individual line managers to gather data for the programmes under their responsibility. Although the field officers observe and collect a wide range of information on the children and situations which they encounter, there is neither a unified and transparent set of agreed concepts that need to be monitored, nor systemic disaggregation by key variables.

.....

“The police already provide statistics on major offences but it needs to be taken a layer down to see whether these children are boys or girls, what specific offences they are involved in – e.g. trafficking etc. – so that it could be captured for better planning and targeting of resources. (...) The work the police is already doing with the complains of the victims is really significant, they are doing a lot of great work, but it is not captured in their data and in their analysis.”

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³⁴ Ministry of Social Welfare, Fiji Police, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of iTaukei Affairs.

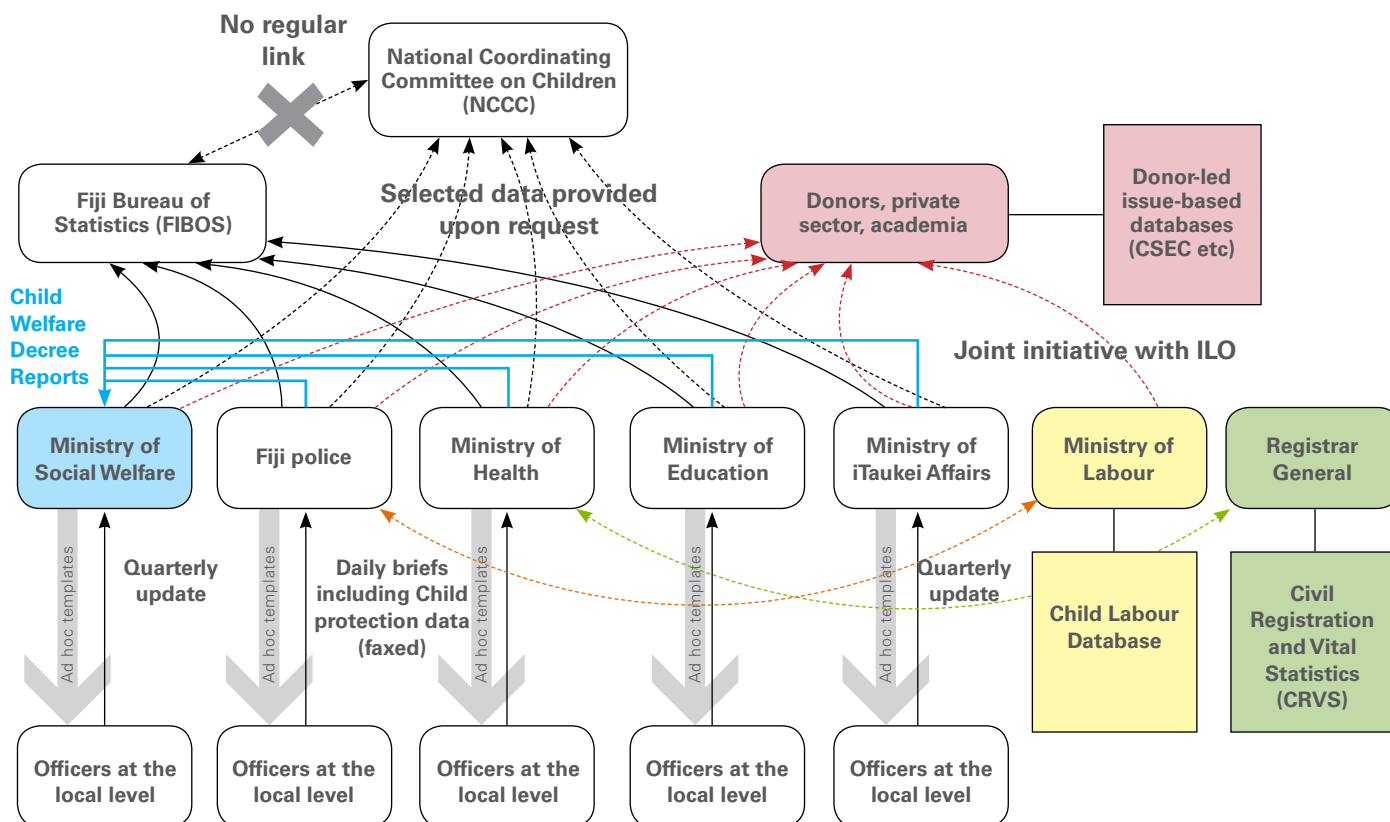
Each of the agencies currently involved in this process have their unique positions and comparative strengths in the data management system, but their data systems are entirely separate:

- The Fiji police. All stakeholders agree that Fiji police maintains the most dynamic and reliable database of information related to children who faced the justice system, either as victims or as offenders. Police are the most popular point of contact for the cases of violence, which may be explained both by its vast physical presence (coverage of diverse locations with the police posts) and by the tendency to report most severe cases of abuse. Police officers working in the field accumulate specific statistics on child-related cases and fax it to the headquarters every day as part of their daily briefing. The headquarters consolidate these numbers within their internal information system, which is actively used for a variety of in-house purposes. Primarily, this includes risk analysis for identification of “hot-spot” areas which require reinforcement (through extra vigilance, staff or training).
- The Ministry of Social Welfare. In response to the requirement of the Child Welfare Decree 2010, all agencies which discover cases of child abuse, or likelihood of abuse, submit reports to the Ministry of Social Welfare. Notably, the notification could be either written or oral, but any oral notification must be followed up with a written notice within seven days after the oral report. MoSWWPA is thus supposed to accumulate data from all agencies regarding child abuse cases, covering the following information:
 - the child’s name;
 - the child’s date of birth;
 - the place of child’s residence;
 - the names of the parents and their contact information;
 - details of the harm or likely harm;
 - professional’s name, address and contact number.
- The MoE and the MoH. Both of these ministries have their internal reporting systems which contain relevant child protection data. On top of this, both ministries report to MoSWWPA under the Child Welfare Decree – if and when abuse cases come up.
- The Ministry of iTaukei Affairs is very active in compiling a vast range of data from the iTaukei communities, including from remote areas. As was reported by this ministry at the FGDs, many of the parameters covered by their data collection focus on children. Again, this data is consolidated at the headquarter level and shared based on request.
- The Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment cooperates with the ILO to establish a centralized Child Labour Database. This database is supposed to include key information for referring abused children to appropriate services as well as the details of convicted child offenders travelling to Fiji to ensure prevention against future abuse (ILO, 2009). To run this system, the ministry has established a child labour monitoring unit (in 2011). The database was committed to launch in 2013 (US Department of Labor, 2012); whether this plan succeeded remains to be verified.
- Registrar General under the Attorney General/Minister of Justice leads in consolidating the country’s system of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS), with significant inputs from the MoH. The system covers cause of death statistics, critical for child protection purposes (Naidu, Buttsworth, and Aumua, 2013).

Participants of the FGDs explained that, despite the legal obligation and significant efforts to raise awareness about reporting requirements under the new Decree, notifications are not done in 100 per cent of cases. Most problematically, oral notices are not always followed up by written information, which makes the MoSWWPA data pool incomplete (by some estimate cited during the FGDs, the MoSWWPA registered 300 cases of abuse in the last year, while Fiji police had an official record of 600).

In addition to these notifications under the Decree, MoSWWPA relies on its own network of social welfare professionals, who report back to the headquarters on a range of parameters for their work with children. These reports are quarterly and follow the templates developed by the line managers for the benefit of individual programmes and initiatives.

Figure 23. Child protection data flows in Fiji (approximate representation)



Completeness: Scope and coverage

The current scope of child protection databases is not clear and requires detailed mapping. Without an integrated database and a whole-of-government strategy for child protection data collection and management, it is difficult to accurately assess the scope of information that is being currently generated through the individual ministries and departments. This study did not look into the details of the databases maintained by MoSWWPA, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Health and the police to see whether they present sufficient detail for meaningful analysis (e.g. whether the child labour database includes information on the numbers of children employed in various occupations; what information is collected by MoSWWPA on children residing in the institutions). However, selected accounts gathered through the FGDs indicate that most of the currently collected data is generated around current case management activities and the requirements of the Child Welfare Decree 2010 (which has a rather limited scope) and ad hoc requests related to particular projects or evaluations.

Available MIS reviews for CRVS and HIS indicate good coverage of respective issues, but these seem to be most advanced compared to other areas and reported progress is recent. The only comprehensive assessments currently available on relevant components of the Fiji MIS are studies on the country's CRVS and Health Information Systems. The 2013 Working Paper on CRVS in Fiji noted very significant progress in establishing CRVS

monitoring systems, including a well-established birth and death registration process, using an up-to-date ICD-10 and Automatic Classification of Medical Entry (ACME) coding for causes of death. At the same time, it registered continued problems of coverage, in particular failure to register unreported deaths (and births outside hospitals). It also noted that palpable progress in ensuring quality data collection began with significant training and coordination activities which were launched during 2012-2013 (Naidu, Buttsworth, and Aumua, 2013).

Collection and coordination of data for surveillance purposes

Developing an effective surveillance system relies on systemic monitoring and analysis of data on incidence and prevalence of child abuse to identify risk groups. Early identification of children who are subjected to higher risks of maltreatment is the key goal of the child protection system and the underlying monitoring and information management efforts. Surveillance mechanisms rely on the systemic collection of evidence on those variables which are conceptually identified as contributing factors to higher risks of abuse. This data can originate from diverse sources including population-based studies but also including public health and safety data, including mortality and morbidity profiles. However, the key task is to link these information sources within coordinated databases which could be used to develop surveillance efforts.

Child protection data collected in Fiji strongly focuses on case management, without any coverage of prevalence and risk factors in the national representative surveys. Most data is collected by the agencies involved in the provision of the respective protective services. To some extent, children potentially at risk are registered through MoSWWPA work on allocation of the Child protection Allowance. However, there is no exchange of administrative data to systemically monitor risk factors for the benefit of child protection programmes (such as data on disabilities, standard of living, emergency risks, migration). In particular, public health monitoring is not systemically used as a basis for child protection surveillance. Beyond administrative data, no child protection issues are covered by the national surveys led by the Fiji Bureau of Statistics (prevalence or risk factor).

One of the promising surveillance initiatives is the launch of a child labour database which was announced in 2013. The database is hosted by the Ministry of Labour but is planned in cooperation with a range of stakeholders

so that information from employers, police and immigration authorities could be integrated to enable joint prevention efforts (Chaudhary, 2013). However, it remains to be verified whether this database is functional and effective.

Consistency and validity of data

Ensuring accuracy of collected data is a significant challenge for Fiji at the moment. In-depth assessments which analysed reliability of data in some of the relevant sectors – such as health – reported that headquarter managers lack data audit systems, although manual checks are done for duplicating records. As a result, a significant share of the information in the Health Information System was assessed as inaccurate including mismatching or duplicating records and falsified identities (Naidu, Buttsworth, and Aumua, 2013). Processes for data collection by other ministries and departments involved in child protection, as they were described during the FGDs, did not include any regular data audits and validation, although this requires verification.

INDICATOR 4.3. RESPONSIVENESS TO CHANGING POLICY DEMANDS

	ASSESSMENT	SCORE
Data collection systems have the following degrees of flexibility:	A	3.5
Four criteria for indicators		
• Legislative framework allow policy makers to request additional data collection where necessary for policy purposes and operational procedures are set up to enable such requests;	Yes	1
• Procedures are set up to enable data producers to respond to changing data requests (flexible budget allocations, authority to update data collection plans);	Yes	1
• New information follows clear structures and standards, and modification resulting from new policy demands do not jeopardize data quality;	Yes, restricted	0.75
• Effective collection of information on children at risk for the purposes of collaboration between public and/or external agencies in emergency contexts.	Yes, restricted	0.75

Opportunities for new data requests

Administrative data collected by the agencies

The current flexible approach to the development of templates is an opportunity for responsive collaboration in data collection. As was discussed

earlier, most ministries and departments use a very flexible arrangement for developing their data collection templates. Theoretically, this opens considerable opportunities for modifying their scope and approach in response to requests from peer agencies.

Survey data collected by FIBOS

Effective legislation provides the FIBOS with a mandate and flexible procedure to collect necessary data on broad range of issues subject to approval by the Minister of Finance. Collection of survey data is the function of the Fiji Bureau of Statistics (FIBOS), which is a Division within the Ministry of Finance, Strategic Planning, National Development and Statistics.³⁵ The FIBOS operates under the mandate given through the Statistics Act and the Census Act. According to the Statistics Act, in particular, FIBOS represented by the Fiji Government Statistician “with approval and on the direction of the Minister, shall collect, in Fiji or any part thereof, statistics, relating to any of the matters set out in the First Schedule,” which includes 27 broad categories including “social, educational, labour and industrial matters;” “health;” “population and housing;” and “vital occurrences and morbidity.” Ministers may additionally amend the First Schedule by issuing respective orders. The Act also mandates FIBOS to collaborate with departments of the government in the collection, compilation, analysis and publication of the statistical records of administration. Notably, the Census Act outlines the matters to be covered by the Censuses in a list which includes not only particular information such as name, sex, age, occupation, nationality, marital status and religion, but also “any other matters with respect to which it is desirable to obtain statistical information with a view to ascertaining the social or civil condition of the population.”

In implementation of this mandate, the FIBOS regularly conducts a range of periodic and ad hoc surveys. This includes major censuses (Population, Housing, Agriculture) which are conducted every 10 years. The surveys include the Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES), Annual Employment and Unemployment Survey, and Poverty and Household Income Survey. Other notable ad hoc surveys include, for example, a survey on Education Services and Survey of Non-Profit organizations.

Given the relatively flexible FIBOS mandate, child protection issues could be integrated into the current surveys. The current legislation, therefore, does not seem to contain any restrictions or significant administrative barriers for ministries and departments dealing with child protection issues to request collection of additional data from FIBOS. In particular, additional questions related to child protection could be introduced to some of the current and future surveys, which seems to be at discretion of the Government Statistician and the Minister of Finance.

Opportunities for quick responses

As discussed earlier, modification of data collection plans is subject to approval of the Ministerial Senior Management and is otherwise flexible.

Modifications do not jeopardize quality

Consistency of standards across periods is high in the work of FIBOS, but not guaranteed in the data collection at the level of individual ministries. The official mission of the FIBOS is to provide statistical services which are “high quality, objective and responsive.” All new products released by the FIBOS follow consistent quality requirements, including methodological background, publication of forms and questionnaires, and development of summary analysis of key figures. Moreover, FIBOS leads at least some of the initiatives to install historical comparability between past and new data sets: in particular, the reclassification of budget expenditure data by the COFOG functional classification for almost a decade of past years is the activity undertaken by the FIBOS and a product available exclusively on its website and reports. Unfortunately, at the level of line ministries, the lack of a consistent approach to data collection and processing is not guaranteed to ensure that new information follows clear standards and is comparable to historic data.

Data collection in emergency contexts

As was discussed earlier, Fiji has established a range of relatively robust cooperation mechanisms to address disaster risks, including for data sharing purposes.

These include coordination through the National Disaster Management Council (DISMAC), but also specific structures dealing with child protection issues including the newly formed protection cluster and the NCCC which also proved effective and responsive as a coordination platform in the context of emergencies. In particular, the field representation of the NCCC member agencies helped to quickly mobilize a substantial amount of necessary data for coordination purposes.

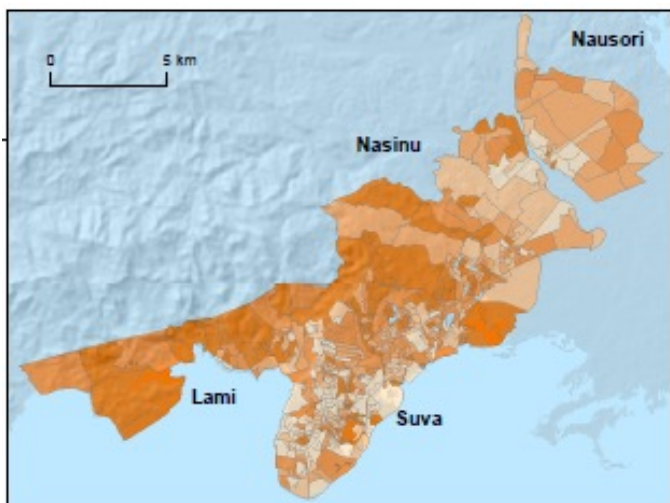
At the same time, there are gaps in mainstreaming child protection concerns into the current work on disaster risk reduction, especially at the stage of risk mapping.

The government has already begun significant work on data processing for risk mapping and assessment, but child protection does not systemically feature in these efforts. For example, the FIBOS jointly with DISMAC are leading an initiative to use geo-spatial statistical analysis to map high-risk areas and to design optimal placement and service areas for potential shelters for cyclone evacuation (based on the statistics currently available to FIBOS (mainly, census data)). Examples of some of the geo-spatial simulation currently performed by FIBOS which could be utilized for child protection policy elaboration are provided in Figure 24. None of the agencies dealing with child protection seem to be involved or cooperating with this exercise.

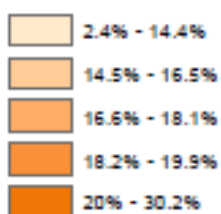
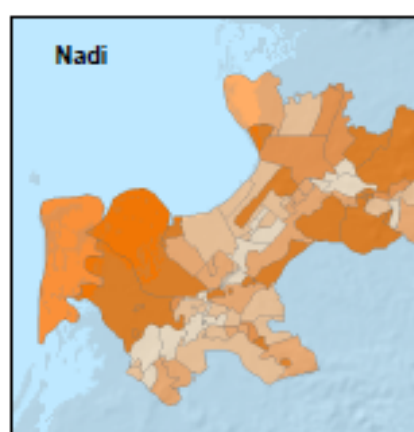
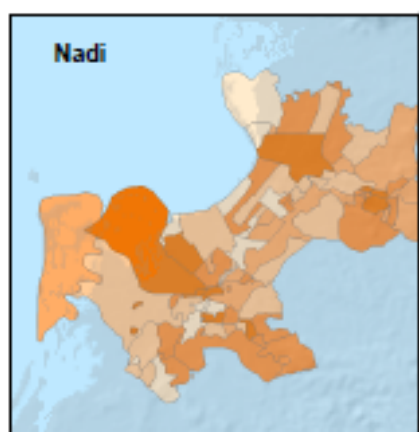
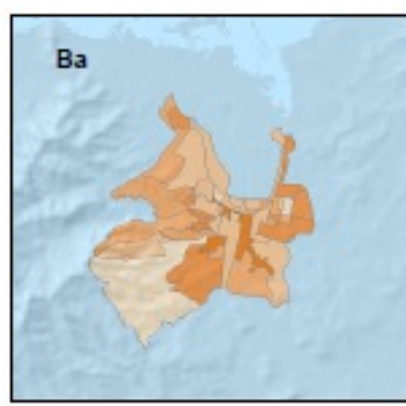
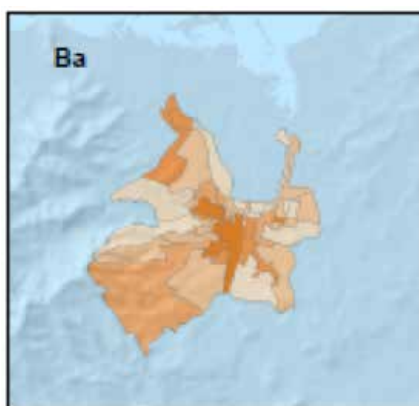
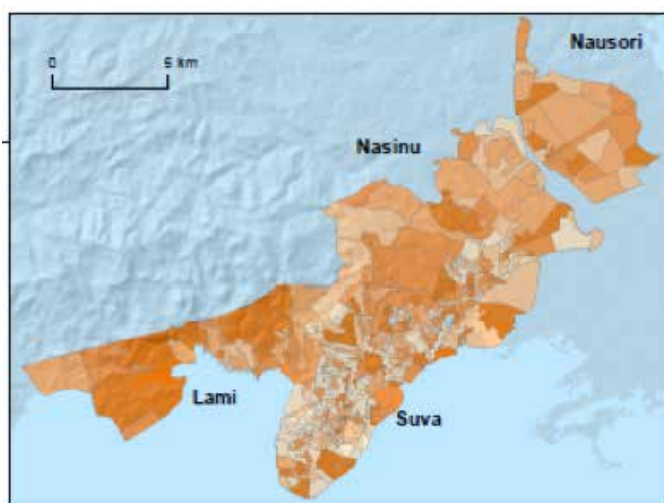
³⁵ www.mfnp.gov.fj

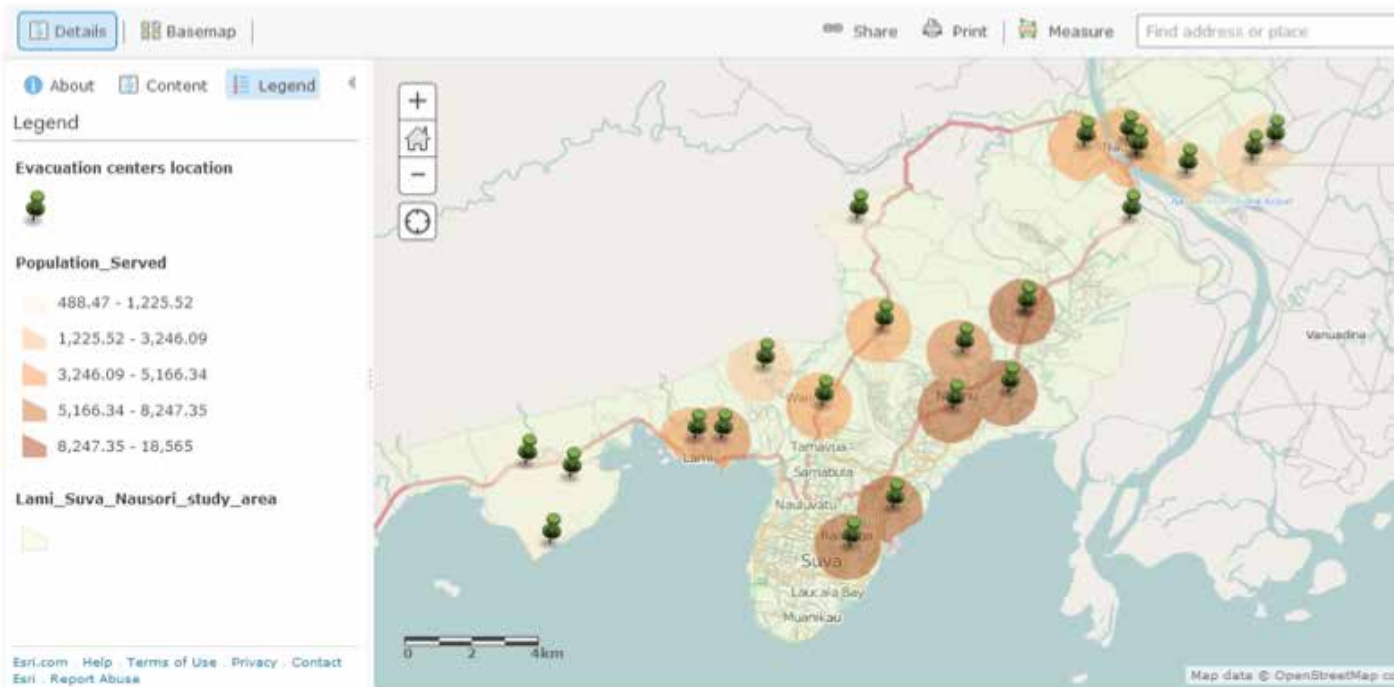
Figure 24. Examples of spatial planning tools developed by FIBOS

Map of population aged 0-4 years old



Map of population aged 5-14 years old





INDICATOR 4.4. DATA CONSOLIDATION AND EXCHANGE

	ASSESSMENT	SCORE
Management of data related to child protection is characterized by the following:	C	1.75
Four criteria for indicators		
• Collection and exchange of data relevant to child protection is coordinated across agencies at the national level sufficiently to enable analysis and policy-making for child protection;	No	0
• Reliable and consistent mechanisms are in place to channel sub-national data to the central level;	Yes	1
• Tasks and responsibilities of actors involved in data collection and management are clearly specified;	Yes, restricted	0.75
• Time intervals between child protection events/trends and their identification and reflection in databases are relatively low.	No	0

Coordination across agencies

Effective coordination and exchange of data across key agencies working on child protection is a major challenge for Fiji. As was discussed in previous sections (see Figure 23 on page 115), administrative data on child protection is collected through case processing by individual ministries and departments, which follows their internal procedures and templates and is not systemically aggregated or exchanged with other stakeholders.

.....

“One of the biggest problems in data on child protection in Fiji is that it comes from different uncoordinated sources. Police have their own, Health – their own, Social Welfare – their own, Education – their own source – they all have these different data. There is no common source of data which would help all these different agencies – health, social, education, police – to solve joint problems.”

.....

Some cross-cutting consolidation is undertaken through the FIBOS, MoSWWPA and the NCCC, but this data is not disaggregated, not complete, and not regularly updated.

There are several hubs where some of the generated data is brought together and could be used for cross-cutting analytical purposes. Some selected data on child protection is gathered by MoSWWPA, FIBOS and, occasionally, by the NCCC and donors. However, all these data sets are not sufficiently disaggregated, not always systemically updated and not always complete.

- MoSWWPA front-line officers from all agencies have to report to the MoSWWPA on discovered or suspected cases of child abuse under the Child Welfare Decree 2010. This information is consolidated in the Child Welfare Decree Registrar maintained by MoSWWPA. However, this database is limited to the very basic information on child abuse and is not sufficiently disaggregated. It is also not necessarily complete, given that oral reports on abuse are not always followed up with written notices, despite the legal obligation. As a result, the number of cases registered through MoSWWPA at the time of this assessment

was reported as twice lower than the amount of cases registered in only one of the peer agencies – the Fiji police.

- FIBOS collects and processes selected information from all ministries and departments. However, collected variables seem to cover a very limited range. For example, the FIBOS consolidates numbers of child abuse from the Fiji Police records, but these are not disaggregated by any dimension apart from the type of abuse (see Table 13).
- The NCCC. Child protection information is periodically requested by the NCCC to equip its policy elaboration or cooperation with key donors. These requests are ad hoc and do not result in any systemic consolidation of the available data. At the time of the 2008 Baseline Report, the NCCC sub-committee on Child Abuse, Neglect and Abandonment was developing terms of reference for setting up a common inter-agency database for reporting child abuse cases which would include disaggregated data, but at the time of this assessment it has not yet materialized (UNICEF; AusAID, 2009).

Table 13. Data on Child Abuse reported by the Fiji Bureau of Statistics

Child Sexual Abuse	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Rape	55	99	85	93	244
Attempted rape	8	13	50	12	26
Defilement of girl under 13 years	31	4	7	31	3
Defilement of girl between 13-16 years	107	96	202	135	172
Unnatural offences	10	7	1	5	1
Indecent exposure	9	3	2	4	3
Incest	3	5	3	0	1
Annoying female	31	15	3	10	62
Abduction	13	0	76	n/a	107
Indecent assault	83	54	113	72	227
Total	350	296	542	362	846
Child Physical Abuse	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Murder	0	1	0	0	3
Attempted murder	0	0	0	0	1
Manslaughter	0	1	0	0	3
Act with intent to cause grievous harm	30	26	4	29	32
Assault occasioning actual bodily harm	178	143	104	142	300
Abduction	21	19	41	0	0
Criminal intimidation	5	1	3	0	18
Common assault	43	36	14	30	52
Others	3	0	4	13	24
Total	280	232	170	214	433

Source: Fiji Bureau of Statistics, <http://www.statsfiji.gov.fj/index.php/other-statistics/53-other-statistics/crime/130-crimes-child-abuse>

“We find [the lack of joint database] especially hard when we need to formulate some convincing argument – e.g. for a donor agency like UNICEF – and then we need to really fight to get this data from all these sources. The reason why exchange is so hard is because each agency has its own data sharing processes and systems, we have to go through a lot of documents. And this really affects what we can do with data.”

Internal data sharing protocols in individual ministries are cumbersome and hinder information exchange.

Not only does the government lack a joint inter-agency database, but it also suffers from poor protocols for data sharing across individual agencies. Participants of the FGDs explained that internal processes and systems for exposing ministerial data to others in the government are not straightforward and differ across agencies. As a result, even where a policy maker faces a need for a cross-cutting evidence-based argument, fetching these figures from other departments is a complex time-consuming process. The difficulty of horizontal data exchange was noted by other assessments such as the 2013 working paper on strengthening Fiji’s CRVS system. This report noted that in the CRVS area, “data sharing procedures, particularly confidentiality practices, are poorly understood and no clear guidelines exist. Data sharing between agencies is therefore slow and untimely, often due to fears of breaching confidentiality or abuse of information.” (Naidu, Buttsworth, and Aumua, 2013)

Consolidation of sub-national data at the central level

All ministries and departments involved in child protection have established routines for collecting requested data from their local offices and the field. Notwithstanding quality control issues and lack of data audit, addressed in other indicators, the flow of data from ground level to headquarters is relatively robust. The most dynamic arrangement is established by the Fiji police, which consolidates daily briefs from all offices and circulates monthly statistics of key totals. Other ministries have a well-functioning system of quarterly reporting.

Specification of tasks and responsibilities

Data processing tasks are clearly specified but only in relation to intra-ministerial databases and not including mechanisms to exchange data with other agencies. All stakeholders interviewed for this assessment had clearly established posts, units and lines of command related to data collection and processing. Even though human resources dedicated to data processing are very limited, their tasks are clearly separated and defined. All ministries have dedicated research units responsible for collecting, inputting and processing the data. Current duties and tasks of the statisticians are linked clearly to ministerial staff involved in policy development and operational planning. However, these specifications included inter-ministerial consolidation and processing of data, and did not seem to cover horizontal data exchange with other agencies.

Timeliness of data management

Lack of staff, skill and motivation often results in dramatic lags even in the basic inputting of data at the headquarter level. As was already discussed, the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs regretted at the FGDs that given the shortage of hands it currently processes already collected data covering 2008 and 2009. Other ministries seem to have smaller delays but have also admitted that data collection is not seen by many specialists as a first priority, which results in delays, procrastination and, sometimes, “forgetting about these tasks” which are often perceived as a formality and a nuisance.

INDICATOR 4.5. LINKAGES BETWEEN DATA PRODUCERS AND DATA USERS

	ASSESSMENT	SCORE
“Fitness to use” of the collected data on child protection, including the following quality components:	D	0.5
Four criteria for indicators		
• Ability of key data users to easily ascertain existence of information and access it via a sustainable medium;	No, extended	0.25
• Explicit reference to documentation on data quality and methodology in all released data;	No, extended	0.25
• Regular meetings with key users and producers of statistics and working in partnership with them;	No	0
• Regular methodological updates to increase relevance and timeliness of released information to incorporate feedback from data users.	No	0

Access to data

The current set up of child protection data management makes it very problematic to ensure operational access of key users to the needed information:

- Most of the collected statistics relevant to child protection is administrative data generated through case management and child abuse reporting against the Child Welfare Decree. Given that there is almost no further processing of these data sets to generate aggregated figures or to impersonate micro-data which could be shared without the breach of confidentiality, respective information is neither ready nor available for sharing (including with external stakeholders for the purposes of policy research and evaluation).
- The MoH as one of the most advanced agencies in data management and an important front line service provider in child protection was described by the FGD participants as hosting a large and important set of relevant data. However, this data does not seem to be readily available for generalized use through the ministry’s website.
- Survey data collected by the FIBOS is accessible via its website but has few relevant variables related to child protection.
- The only information which is publically available covers generalized child abuse statistics reported by the Fiji police, as described in Table 13 on page 121. These figures cover a period over five years but are not up-to-date (2007-2011), and – as discussed earlier – they are not disaggregated beyond the type of abuse.

- Some of the related statistics are available through the FIBOS (some of it for free and others for sale). This includes Population Census, Poverty and Household Income Survey, key demographic and socio-economic indicators, vital statistics, human health and social work activities, annual employment survey, tourism and migration statistics, internal migration, housing, fertility, and the Fiji Social Atlas.

Transparent methodologies

FIBOS is generally highly transparent and user-friendly in its methodologies but this does not extend to its reported child abuse reports which feature as a small portion of “other statistics”. The only publicly available source of child protection data – the child abuse figures reported by the FIBOS based on the data from Fiji police – are provided without any supportive methodological notes, including, for example, basic definitions. At the same time, regular products of the FIBOS are complemented with best-practice compilation guides which contain very detailed and transparent guidelines on how to understand, use and reproduce most of its statistical outputs. For example, the FIBOS Compilation Guide on Statistics on Non-Profit organizations is a thorough well-structured document which contains clear definitions of key concepts, legal basis for data collection, and precise methodology.

Meetings of data users and producers

FIBOS have not organized meetings with data users from the ministries which deal with child protection issues, but shares monthly updates. While it is not clear whether FIBOS practices regular communication with other users, the child protection stakeholders represented at the FGDs reported that they have not heard of particular meetings which would be organized between FIBOS and the data users for the purposes of methodological clarifications and joint planning. At the same time, MoSWWPA reported that the FIBOS circulates monthly updates on the new statistics which becomes available.

On their part, child protection stakeholders have not involved the FIBOS into their joint activities, which is a big gap, in particular in terms of gathering child protection data through FIBOS surveys. Despite the key role and significant capacity of the FIBOS in data management, it has never been a party to the NCCC, either as a regular member or as an invitee to discussions over specific issues (see Figure 23 on page 115). Respectively, the child protection stakeholders have never discussed the possibility of co-operating with FIBOS for the benefit

of including child protection questions into some of the household surveys or involving FIBOS into the on-going efforts to consolidate child protection information flows. Examples of ways to involve household surveys to collect child abuse data generated during the FGDs included questions which enquire over the presence of children in the households and whether any of these children have lived away for a considerable period of time (long-term reallocation of the child to live with distant relatives could be used as a proxy indication of family problems and risks of maltreatment).

Methodological updates

Sluggish exchange of data across stakeholders implies that methodological consultations are equally irregular. The in-house nature of the existing data enclaves inhibits both demand and supply of methodological updates either on behalf of the key ministries as generators of administrative data or on behalf of the FIBOS which is not actively involved in production of child protection data anyway.

INDICATOR 4.6. LINKS TO NATIONAL RESEARCH AGENDA FOR CHILD PROTECTION

	ASSESSMENT	SCORE
Collection and processing of child protection data engages non-state actors through the following arrangements:	B	2.0
Four criteria for indicators		
• There is a national research agenda on child protection issues which identifies priorities for improving data on child protection problems and key risk factors;	No, extended	0.25
• Mechanisms are established for regular provision of research and evidence-based analysis to key decision makers in child protection;	No	0
• There is a mechanism for research institutions to share with the government key source data for their research (in addition to the analytical materials) to ensure better research quality and joint effort in developing child protection evidence base;	Yes, restricted	0.75
• The government helps research institutions to access key child protection data to facilitate their analysis.	Yes	1

Clear national research agenda for child protection

There are several formal and informal mechanisms which are used for communicating government's research priorities to the academic institutions, civil society and international organizations:

- First, the NCCC is open to representatives of non-state stakeholders including international organizations such as Save the Children, which are strong potential providers of research capacities.
- Secondly, at least some of the individual ministries and departments are in a working communication with the University of South Pacific (USP), regularly discussing joint research priorities. An example given during the FGDs was the government's priority to assess whether the registered increase in the reported child abuse reflects actual rise in abuse prevalence or is rather explained by the improved detection rates, or both. Acquiring a real picture of child abuse trends and reporting levels is critical for the police to accurately evaluate the effectiveness of its efforts to improve reporting and detection rates, as well as the results of preventive activities undertaken by a range of stakeholders. The Juvenile Bureau had pro-actively expressed interest in co-operating with the USP for running such study. However, it was not clear at the stage of this assessment whether the request was followed up.

Existing opportunities to engage academia and civil society into joint research and data collection have not been pro-actively realized so far. Assessing the extent of awareness of the academic community over the government's research agenda requires further enquiry with the respective organizations. Participants of the FGDs regretted that much of the current research – especially studies led by the international organizations – is often driven by their internal agendas. At the same time, they also acknowledged that this could be caused by weakly expressed demand: research needs are not discussed pro-actively by the NCCC, and there were no formal communications or events to discuss these needs with the academia.

Access of government to key research findings

Apart from the working level cooperation between individual departments and the USP, there is not yet any regular mechanism for the academia to supply evidence to policy makers in child protection. The strongest regional player in child protection research – the USP School of Social Sciences has just opened a degree programme in social work and does not yet run any additional facilities oriented specifically on promoting its research and channelling it to the government. The school's website does not include any samples of produced papers, description of research areas or events which would be linked to social work or child protection.

Notably, Fiji already has a very strong experience establishing such a mechanism in the health sector, elements of which could be applied to child protection.

Since 2010, the Fiji School of Medicine, which is part of the Fiji National University, opened a Centre for Health Information, Policy and Systems Research (CHIPSR) unit. The specific goal of this unit is to facilitate the use of evidence-based research in national policies (WHO; SPC, 2013). The unit helps academic staff to liaise with the government, donors, regional agencies and general community; as well as drives student research so that it focuses on topical areas and maintains sufficient quality to be mainstreamed into the policy process. The research areas of the CHIPSR cover a wide range of health policy issues, including health financing, human resources and information. At the moment, child protection as such does not feature as a separate subject of interest for the CHIPSR, but options for cooperation or replicating elements of this experience (perhaps through the USP) could be further explored.

Access of government to key research source data

The government strongly benefits from source data collected by international organizations but cooperation with individual researchers has been less structured and proactive. Government representatives at the FGD reported that they strongly benefit in their work from the surveys and databases collected by international organizations. In particular, the 2008 Baseline Report "Protect me with Love and Care," led by the UNICEF and AusAID, was described as highly interactive and inclusive, with government, academia and community representatives having direct and active access to the entire process of the research and full ownership of the results. Similarly, the FGD praised the data collected by the ILO (including through the SCEC (Stop Commercial Exploitation of Children) survey) and the WHO. Cooperation with individual academic researchers working on child protection issues in Fiji (within the national programmes and overseas) has been less structured. There was no reported case when source data was requested or shared with the government. Again, one reason for this is the weak in-house capacity for analysis and further research and lack of proactive requests from any of the ministries.

Access of research institutions to government's data

Existing research cooperation with outside stakeholders is mostly undertaken within donor-funded projects which have significant national ownership and access to key data. As was already discussed, in many cases the internationally driven projects actually drive new data collection efforts by the government. Assessing whether individual researchers and academia have sufficient rapport with the ministries to jointly use available data for the purposes of topical studies require further investigation. However, initiatives undertaken with the USP for the development of social work standards were described by the FGD participants as open and productive.



DOMAIN 5. QUALITY ASSURANCE

INDICATOR 5.1. QUALITY GUIDANCE AND STANDARDS

	ASSESSMENT	SCORE
Regulatory framework for child protection includes the following:	C	1.0
Four criteria for indicators		
• An entity within government which oversees organizations working in child protection and the quality of their services, including non-state organizations;	No, extended	0.25
• A nationally recognized set of essential standards and guidance for various levels of quality in social care services, ensuring their safety, effectiveness and responsiveness to the best interest of the children;	Yes, restricted	0.75
• A mandatory procedure to license organizations that directly care for children (state and non-state);	No	0
• Pre-accreditation testing of competence and experience.	No	0

Oversight structure at the central level

Supervision of the organizations working on child protection is the formal responsibility of the Director of Social Welfare (DoSW) within MoSWWPA. The Juveniles Act 2003 provides the Director of Social Welfare with a range of duties which relate to provision and supervision of care to the juveniles in need of care, protection or control, including the choice of best types of services, development of rules for their work, approval of eligible institutions and their continuous oversight.

In reality, this oversight covers only those institutions which receive government funding, while other providers remain effectively outside any control:

- **Given that registration with DoSW is voluntary, the list of approved institutions is not complete.** In the formulation of the Juveniles Act 2003, oversight duties of the DoSW extend to those providers which were previously approved by the director through a specified certification procedure. However, as will be discussed

further, this certification is voluntary and covers a very limited range of organizations (although most residential facilities seem to fall into this category).

- **Moreover, as was reported during the FGD, the actual scope of the DoSW oversight is limited to those organizations which receive full or partial support from the government budget.** This includes residential homes but also other types of organizations, including faith-based organizations, which benefit from government grants. Overall, the number of such organizations is about 20 and represents only a small share of all NGOs working on child protection (by a rough estimate provided by the DoSW).
- **The NGOs which are not certified and/or funded by the DoSW have to be formally incorporated with the Registrar of Titles but are otherwise outside any governmental oversight.** All NGOs (including those which are approved and supported by the DoSW) have to formally incorporate with the Registrar of Titles by submitting a written application.³⁶ Ten years ago, a study of legal regulation of civil society in Fiji noted that this

³⁶ Operations of the civil society organizations in Fiji are regulated by the Charitable Trusts Act (Cap. 67) amended by two additional Decrees in 2011 and 2013.

process of registration and legal recognition for the NGO was “primarily an administrative matter and largely outside the direct control of other institutions, for instance Courts. (...) The Registrar is the solitary judge and solely determines whether the proposed purposes are, in law, charitable or not” (Lakshman, 2004). Participants of the FGDs under this assessment confirmed that formal incorporation is the only current requirement for the NGOs which do not receive financial support from the budget and that these other NGOs operate outside of any formal supervision from the government.

Service quality standards

There are currently two sets of standards which relate to provision of child protection services in Fiji. As discussed below – and illustrated in Figure 25 – both sets of standards are very progressive but cover a limited range of service providers, with many vulnerable children staying outside of their reach.

- Fiji is a recognized regional leader in having developed and successfully implementing “Minimum Standards of Care for Children in Residential Placement”.** These Standards (also called a “Charter of Minimum Standards”) were developed in 2004 with technical assistance of an AusAID Fiji Law and Justice Sector Programme and were confirmed to be in place at the time of the 2008 Baseline Report (UNICEF; AusAID, 2009). The charter was introduced through a series of workshops held with the managers and senior welfare staff of the residential homes through an interactive learning process, which was also instrumental for uncovering severe cases of malpractice in the prior approaches used in many of these organizations (Evans, 2005). According to the latest CRC periodic report, the Minimum Standards were endorsed by the Cabinet (Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2011).

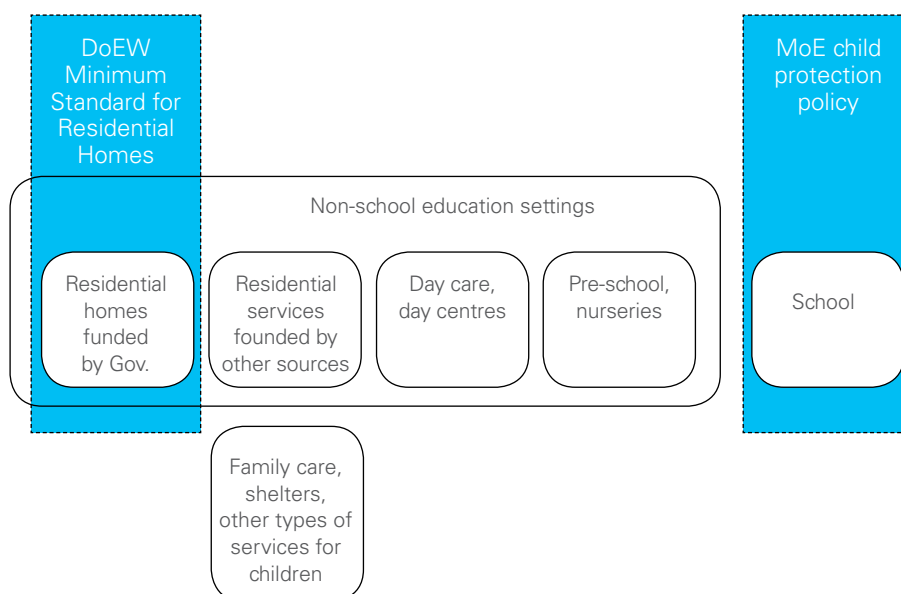
At this moment the charter is not publically available and its text was not analysed in detail by this assessment. Descriptions of these requirements in the previous publications and the explanations provided by the participants of the FGD in December 2013 indicate that the Minimum Standards are currently applied only to those organizations which provide residential services with financial support from MoSWWPA and are supervised by the DoSW.

Notably, the Juveniles Act 2003 also includes a range of provisions on service standards. Section 36 of the Act contains Rules for Approved Institutions (at the time including only two residential homes – the Nasinu Boys Centre and Girls Home). The rules cover duties and responsibilities of the headmaster, requirements to record keeping, disciplinary supervision of staff, procedures for cases of child illness, medical check-ups, accommodation, diet, daily routine, education, religious instruction, recreation, pocket money, employment and after care. Importantly, these rules have a range of provisions on discipline and punishment, but these provisions do not explicitly ban corporate punishment and allow usage of cell, albeit in “exceptional cases” and under a range of conditions.

The rules also provide the minister (for Social Welfare, Women and Poverty Alleviation) with a considerable flexibility to further expand current requirements by stating that “the minister shall satisfy himself that every approved society and approved voluntary institution makes adequate provision for the care, protection and control of juveniles committed to its charge, and may for this purpose make such rules as appear to him to be appropriate.”

- In addition, the MoE supports a policy on child protection which covers school settings, as was discussed in detail in earlier sections (see page 66).**

Figure 25. Coverage of child protection services by current standards



The current set of standards leaves a large share of services uncovered. The child protection policy of the MoE is specific to schools and does not extend to other educational settings, including pre-schools, nurseries or alternative care facilities. The DoSW Minimum Standards are limited in two ways. First, their current reach is focused on residential homes funded by the government, and does not include any other residential services provided in the country. Secondly, by design, these standards cover only residential care, and do not include other types of services, including family care and other out-of-home arrangements. The 2008 Baseline Report noted that, at the time, this was a significant gap, given that (based on 1998 statistics) 53 per cent of children without parental care were placed in formal family-based care rather than in residential homes (UNICEF; AusAID, 2009). Despite a strong recommendation of the report to extend the standards to cover these other services, this does not seem to have happened as yet.

One barrier to introduction of quality standards which was suggested during the FGDs was the fear that the standards would impose expectations about quality which are not affordable by most NGOs. This fear was especially strong given the origin of many quality concepts in international technical assistance, which is sometimes seen as implying the need for international best standards which are often not realistic in the context of less advanced systems and generally poorer organizations. During the discussion, the government and donor representatives agreed that the core principle behind the need for minimum quality standards is that they need to be pragmatic and aim to instil a common understanding of the basic rights and approaches that should be delivered to the children, sometimes nearly at no-cost, rather than being a “Rolls-Royce” version of care (examples of such quality improvements included putting curtains in the showers to secure privacy, introducing rules for communicating with children etc.).

Licensing and accreditation

The Juveniles Act 2003 establishes a certification procedure for service providers which is not compulsory. The Act states that “any society of persons working for the care, protection or control of juveniles, or any voluntary institution, may apply to the minister for the society or voluntary institution to be approved for that purpose, and the minister, after making such enquiries as he may think fit, may approve the society or voluntary institution for that purpose and may issue a certificate of approval accordingly”. The Act also gives the minister an opportunity to establish, by notification in the Gazette, “places of safety”. The places of safety are parts of premises of approved institutions which are identified as such through an agreement between such institution and the minister.

Approval and certification process currently covers only those NGOs which receive state funding; accreditation beyond this category does not seem to exist. The 2008 Baseline Report found that, at that time, “registration and accreditation programme was in full swing for institutions for children”. It explained that all residential homes had agreed to implement the Minimum Standards and were given time until 2010 to ensure full compliance, at which point they would be formally certified (UNICEF; AusAID, 2009). At the time of the FGD, the Department of Social Welfare reported that it used a range of criteria for organizations which apply for government funding, including formal incorporation as an NGO and compliance with the Minimum Standards in the case of residential service providers. Service providers who receive such financial support upon passing the qualification requirements are invited to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the DoSW. However, there is no procedure for certification of other NGOs.

Pre-accreditation tests

Pre-accreditation tests are limited to the DoSW checks of its grantees. The DoSW reports that its checks on the organizations which apply for funding are rigorous and in-depth, given the need to be very selective with the usage of limited grant funds. However, as was discussed above, these tests are not formalized and they do not cover all organizations working with children as a matter of a systemic rule.

INDICATOR 5.2. CREDIBILITY AND REGULARITY OF QUALITY OVERSIGHT

	ASSESSMENT	SCORE
The system of quality oversight is characterized by the following:	C	1.25
Four criteria for indicators		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most entities involved in provision of services directly to children (state and non-state) are regularly inspected by authorized quality experts; 	No	0
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspections include both announced and unannounced visits, and include analysis of the records, examination of incidents, consultations with the children, and observing staff in their day-to-day work; 	No	0
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a clear system to collect and respond to complaints from children on alleged episodes of child protection violations in service provision; 	No, extended	0.25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a clear whistle-blowing policy and guidance for social workers to report malpractice, including adequate protection to whistle-blowers. 	Yes	1

.....

“Then the other challenge that we have is that there are a lot of NGOs who are claimed to be doing good services for children but... in reality it is not the case. This is one of the greatest challenges we are facing.”

.....

Regularity and coverage of inspections

Inspections of child protection service providers are rigorous but limited to those NGOs which receive government funding. All organizations cooperating with the DoSW within the MoU for provision of services to children are subject to a range of periodic checks. First, all NGOs submit regular reports to the DoSW. Secondly, the DoSW physically inspects all approved institutions and places of safety (according to descriptions during the FGDs, this is done twice a year, although the CRC periodic report stated that the audits are annual). Results of this audit are taken back to the management of the homes and discussed with the senior executives and staff to improve performance. In addition, all NGOs are regularly convened for a joined forum where they can learn about new policies, approaches, discuss lessons from the audit and exchange experience. However, the majority of NGOs working with children but funded from other sources remain outside of these checks.

There is a scope to engage independent audit to strengthen current inspections. The audit of the government-funded NGOs is undertaken exclusively by the DoSW staff. The department regrets that this process lacks a layer of independent checks to ensure better quality of the analysis. Their proposal is to engage NCCC into this role of an independent and supreme oversight.

Scope and methodology of inspections

Existing rules for inspections are not clearly spelled out. A general rule for the conduct of facility audits is outlined in the Juvenile Act 2003, although it does not provide exact methodology for how the inspections should be conducted. The Juvenile Act 2003 states that: “the Director or any welfare officer may at all reasonable hours enter upon any premises used by any approved society for the care, protection and control of any juvenile, or upon any approved voluntary institution, in order to satisfy himself as to the adequacy of such premises or institution, and as to the way in which it is managed and conducted.” In principle, this opens an opportunity for unannounced visits, but these are not specifically required.

Current approaches require further investigation. Exact methodology for the inspection of the homes was not discussed in detail during the FGDs for this report, and therefore requires further investigation. The initial

inspection in 2007 when the homes were introduced to the Minimum Standards of care was conducted through the self-assessment (UNICEF; AusAID, 2009). At this point, inspections undertaken by the DoSW for the currently funded homes are reported to take place twice a year and are planned rather than unannounced. Inspection includes a physical examination of the premises and discussions with the staff, but it is not clear whether these visits also systemically cover the examination of records, analysis of problematic episodes and discussions with children.

Mechanisms for handling complaints

During 2013-2014, the Fiji government was actively working on establishing a national Helpline for children.

Installing a helpline service was recommended by the 2008 Baseline Report which noted that Fiji lacked a child-friendly reporting and complaints system (UNICEF; AusAID, 2009). In 2013, the government declared the establishment of the Helpline to be a priority under the responsibility of MoSWWPA. MoSWWPA has allocated \$20,000 in its budget to this purpose (in particular, relevant consultations towards establishing of the service), and the deadline for introduction of the headline was set for June 2014 (Ministry of Information, 2013).

The Helpline is designed as a 24-hour free confidential service for children to call about any issue or difficulty they are facing. The children be provided support and advice immediately and/or referred to additional appropriate help. According to the MoSWWPA Permanent Secretary Dr. Josefa Koroivueta, the line could be also used by adults to report abuse or request advice on child protection matters (Ministry of Information, 2013). The line would be

confidential and would include opportunities to text, email or send regular mail.

The helpline is one of the key priorities for MoSWWPA but its implementation is still in progress. Implementing the Helpline has involved a range of tasks, including liaising with telecommunication companies and supplying a sufficient amount of counsellors to work as helpline operators (RNZI, 2013). This preparation is undertaken in partnership with local NGOs as well as Global Network of Child Helplines. As of April 2014, the government reported that this work was in progress, at the stage of collecting proposals from parties interested in implementing the project (FBC, 2014).

Whistle-blowing policies

The Child Welfare Decree 2010 contains explicit rules both for reporting of malpractice and for protection of whistle-blowers from liability. The decree mandates any professional who becomes aware of a child being harmed or at risk of harm to immediately notify the Permanent Secretary of MoSWWPA. The decree further specifies that if a professional acts honestly and in good faith, reasonably suspecting child abuse or its risks, "this person is not liable civilly, criminally or under an administrative process for giving that information" and is not liable to disciplinary action for giving the information. It is also clearly stated that "any professional who gives the information required to be given under this decree is deemed not to have breached any code of professional etiquette or ethics, or to have departed from accepted standards of professional conduct".

INDICATOR 5.3. ENCOURAGEMENT OF INNOVATION

	ASSESSMENT	SCORE
The following mechanisms are in place to encourage innovation:	B	2.5
Four criteria for indicators		
• Child protection programmatic documents and forums include specific discussion on the balance of risk and innovation in service delivery;	Yes	1
• Registration process for service providers and the system of standards is sufficiently flexible and does not discourage innovation;	Yes	1
• The government has set up specific mechanisms (earmarked transfers, working groups, pilot projects) to stimulate the development of new services and programmes for child protection, addressing new protection risks, challenges and vulnerable groups of finding more effective solutions for existing problems;	No, extended	0.25
• Mechanisms have been established for exchange of good practice and new solutions across service providers and wider child protection stakeholders;	No, extended	0.25

Risk and innovations in programmatic documents and forums

The MoSWWPA Annual Corporate Plan for 2014 contains a specific Sub-Output 5.1. on “Innovative Child Welfare Services”. At the moment, this sub-output includes a range of particular services: support to children at the times of disasters, adoption and foster care, national Child Helpline, mentoring and counselling for children, and the Positive Parenting package. The work under the output also includes broad training on new policies and approaches in child protection.

Flexibility of registration and standards

The current system of standards is very lenient, in particular in terms of allowing almost complete autonomy for NGOs operating without financial support from the government. As was discussed earlier, the Minimum Standards for Service Provision apply only to residential institutions and those organizations which are overseen by the Department of Social Welfare.

Mechanisms to facilitate innovation

There is no mechanism to stimulate innovation, apart from donor-funded pilots. Most innovative initiatives in Fiji originate from donor-funded projects, many of which were listed throughout this report. There is no systemic mechanism in-built within the government’s own operations which would be directed at fostering innovation. MoSWWPA supports a programme of grants to NGOs “that complement the ministry’s role in the protection and care of children and the disadvantaged in the community”. In the 2014, the budget of this programme is \$200,000, covering 10 organizations. However, these grants are not linked to the idea of stimulating innovative service provision and there is no mechanism to promote new ideas from these projects and rolling them over.

Exchange of ideas and good practice

Horizontal links across NGOs seem to be limited to those organizations which receive government funding. There is no association of NGOs working with children and no permanent mechanism for the regular exchange of innovative ideas. For comparison, in the area of violence against women, this function is taken forward through one of the most active NGOs – the Women Crisis Centre, as a leading organization. In the child protection, the DoSW organizes periodic meetings for those residential homes which formally cooperate with the government, but there is no forum beyond these consultations.

INDICATOR 5.4. EFFECTIVE SURVEILLANCE, GATE-KEEPING AND REFERRALS

	ASSESSMENT	SCORE
At each stage of service provision to vulnerable children, the system of child protection includes:	B	2.5
Four criteria for indicators		
• Clear and transparent referral policies and procedures;	Yes, restricted	0.75
• An agency (or inter-agency structure) responsible for coordinated assessment of the child’s situation, with sufficient institutional capacity to ensure that the child receives further support which serves his/her best interest;	Yes	1
• A continuum of services available to respond to diverse child protection situations, preferably from a range of alternative providers;	Yes, restricted	0.75
• Regular surveillance measures which include a systemic practice of analysing and reviewing information on risk factors affecting the incidence and circumstances of maltreatment and using it to target preventive and promotional activities.	No	0

Transparent rules and procedures

Government agencies involved in child protection are subject to a range of cooperation protocols but the level of compliance is questionable. Agencies involved in child protection use a range of MoUs, inter-agency protocols, guidelines and standard operating procedures to organize referrals for vulnerable children. The protocols involve the Fiji police, MoSWWPA Department of Social Welfare, the MoH and the MoE. As was discussed earlier, already in 2008 the Baseline Report identified a wide range of such documents but questioned the degree of compliance with these rules. For example, the study had identified three active inter-agency protocols; four internal operating procedures, and additional cooperation agreements in the justice sector, but it also found that in reality these document did not always ensure timely and appropriate referrals of child victims to other services or even tolerating discouragement of victims from further charges (UNICEF; AusAID, 2009). In the FGDs for this assessment, participants noted that the amount of various inter-agency guidelines, including legislation, was “already so big” that it required some grouping and review with the aim of making it more useful and strategic. One response to that is the current work of the NCCC to develop a National Strategy for Child protection which would try to locate previous guidelines along the continuum of child protection services with a clearer division of roles for participating agencies.

Capable gate-keepers

The Director of Social Welfare acts as the core gate-keeper and has just received considerable reinforcement to its capacity in exercising this function. The core responsibility for all case management in child protection lies with the Department of Social Welfare of the MoSWWPA, with a particular role of the Child Services Unit.³⁷ This role is established within the Juvenile Act 2003 and was reinforced with the introduction of the Child Welfare Decree 2010 which obliged all other agencies to report all instances and risks of child abuse to the DoSW. The DoSW maintains a database for the long-term management of the cases, including children placed in residential and family-based care. In 2013, the DoSW went through a functional review, which resulted in the recruitment of 23 additional officers. It is expected that these additional posts will reinforce field operations and focus specifically on child welfare issues (FBC, 2014).

Continuum of services

While the government has been working on expanding the range of services available to children, gaps still remain. The 2008 Baseline Report noted that at that time Fiji had good progress in delivering promotional programmes such as the community-based facilitation package and maintained a range of protective tertiary measures for the victims of abuse or children requiring long-term alternative care. However, it lagged behind in the middle of the continuum in terms of early intervention, provision of safe shelters and respite care, especially for children with disabilities. The 2013-2014 GIF assessment did not aim at a systemic review of available services; nevertheless, participants of the FGDs described significant shortages of facilities which would be available for sheltering vulnerable children and women, as well as trained staff in these organizations to provide appropriate support.

Programmes and services	2008 Baseline Report	2013-2014 GIF assessment
Primary; promotion	Significant progress, including in remote areas (including with lessons from the PChild protection programme). A directory of services for child protection cases and juvenile justice accessible to all social welfare officers and to the public.	Community awareness programmes expanded further within the Positive Parenting Package.
Secondary; prevention, early intervention	Poor compliance. Lacking daytime care and respite care, especially for children with disabilities or safe home services.	Continued shortages.
Tertiary; protection, rehabilitation	Partial capacities to assign every victim with a trained social worker support, lacking psychological or counselling services for children and families. Some services available from NGOs.	Continued efforts to improve quality and expand supply of social workers

³⁷ At the time of this report, the Unit was headed by Ms. Ela Tukutukulevu.

Good working level cooperation on the ground prompts information exchange, but there are no systemic mechanisms to make information on providers available to the DoSW. On the one hand, the relatively small size of the country and good informal cooperation on the ground helps child protection professionals to remain in good working contact and share information for the purposes of referrals. At the same time, it is not clear whether there are systemic mechanisms for information exchange, and there are signs that the resulting knowledge is often incomplete. For example, the database of all existing NGOs working in the area of child protection is not automatically visible to the DoSW and does not seem to be used as an instrument. Specialists in the DoSW do not seem to be closely aware of the complete picture of the existing non-state service providers, in terms of their quantity and quality.

Surveillance efforts

Apart from the dedication of extra staff and training to high-risk communities identified based on case management data, there is no surveillance system or activities. The DoSW is starting to apply case management databases for the spatial analysis of child abuse incidence in order to identify high-risk communities which require additional oversight by the social welfare staff. A similar effort has been in place for several years in the Fiji police, which analyses its data on abuse reports to strengthen specific police posts and target the training. However, this incipient analysis is fully based on the analysis of reported cases rather than epidemiological data which would link to public health or other data sources which contain information on abuse risk factors. Respectively, there are no specific activities to work in a focused way with high-risk children, families and categories of population.

INDICATOR 5.5. ENFORCEMENT AND FOLLOW-UP

	ASSESSMENT	SCORE
Rules of action for providers working directly with children who fail to meet essential standards of quality are characterized by the following:	D	0.75
Four criteria for indicators		
• A robust system of sanctions for malpractice which is consistently applied;	No	0
• Provisions for tougher actions for cases of serious failure;	No	0
• Mechanisms to check for compliance with recommendations resulting from quality inspections;	Yes, restricted	0.75
• Mechanisms to provide professional supervision for social workers to guide and support the quality of their operations.	No	0

Sanction rules

In principle, the government has considerable leverages to influence those organizations which operate under its supervision (i.e. receiving grants from the budget):

- The Juveniles Act 2003 provides the Director of Social Welfare with a range of powers in his supervision of the approved institutions and places of safety. It states that “If any approved society or approved voluntary institution fails to comply with any rule made by the minister for the conduct of such societies or institutions or if at any time the director is dissatisfied with the management, maintenance or conduct of any approved society or institution he shall give written notice to the controlling body of such society or institution and call upon such body to show cause why such society or institution should not be removed from the register of approved societies and approved voluntary institutions. If within three months after such notice has been given the controlling body does not show cause sufficient to satisfy the director, he may recommend to the minister that such society or institution shall be removed from the register. Upon such a recommendation, the minister may revoke his approval in writing and the society or institution shall then be removed from the register.”
- The Charitable Trusts Act (Cap. 67), which covers operations of any NGO in Fiji, was amended in 2011 and 2013 to substantially increase the power of the Government to influence the organizations it is funding. The 2011 Amendment authorized the government to make managerial decisions in the organizations established with government funding, and in 2013 extended some of these powers to NGOs which receive even partial government assistance. In particular, the Charitable Trusts (Amendment) Decree 2013 allows a minister to revoke the appointments of the boards of trustees, board members, or other office bearers if the minister finds that the charitable trust is not functioning, not able to function properly or is failing to achieve its objects or is acting contrary to its objects (Government of Fiji, 2013).

However, these mechanisms cover only a very selective range of the organizations. There is no systemic procedure to sanction service providers for the violation of standards. The Charitable Trusts Act (Cap. 67) stipulates an opportunity for the registrar to cancel the incorporation of the board of trustees but the reasons for such decisions are mostly related to suspicion of fraud and unlawful actions.

Tougher actions for severe violations

The sanctions outlined by the Juvenile Act 2003 for approved institutions do not distinguish between the types of violations. Sanctions for other providers are not clearly spelled out.

Follow up on recommendations

As was noted above, the Juvenile Act 2003 establishes a deadline of three months for any non-complying approved institution to incorporate recommended changes into its operations. If recommendations were not followed after this term expires, the director receives right to recommend the minister to revoke approval of such organization and its removal from the Ministerial Register.

The DoSW regularly checks whether the recommendations from previous assessments were implemented, but this practice is limited to those NGOs which receive state funding. Reports submitted by the residential homes to the DoSW, as well as the physical inspections, are conducted twice a year, which provides an opportunity for checking whether the recommendations from previous assessments were followed through. The DoSW participants of the FGDs explained that they work specifically on providing feedback to the heads of homes, including through joint workshops. Again, this stream of information exchange is limited to those selected organizations which receive state funding.

Professional supervision for social workers

Supervision is not systemic and is not formally required. In the absence of access to the actual text of the Charter on Minimum Standards, this assessment cannot comment on the way these standards describe mechanisms for professional supervision. The Approved Institutions Rules contained within the Juveniles Act 2003 describe staff supervision in terms of purely disciplinary control. Participants of the FGDs and respondents of the mini-survey did not mention any requirements related to professional supervision of social work tasks performed in the process of caring for children or being consulted on appointment of such professionals. Once again, the application of standards is currently limited to a small subset of organizations. At the same time, it was noted that many NGOs operating in Fiji with support from international donors have access to high-level professional supervision from social work experts from donor countries.

INDICATOR 5.6. INTEGRATION WITH COMMUNITIES

	ASSESSMENT	SCORE
Quality is ensured by maximum integration of communities in service provision, reflected in the following:	A	3.5
Four criteria for indicators		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most services and programmes available to vulnerable children involve community and voluntary sectors in the planning, development and implementation of child protection; 	Yes	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are specific community development and outreach programmes to promote child protection policies with account to local or regional priorities; 	Yes, restricted	0.75
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mechanisms are in place to ensure that vulnerable children remain close to their homes for as long as possible; 	Yes, restricted	0.75
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restorative juvenile justice is done through responsible policies which align the needs of young offenders with social welfare capacities in the communities. 	Yes	1

Involvement of communities into child protection planning

A range of major current programmes directly involves community participation. Community bears a core traditional role in child protection in Fiji. Most existing programmes aim to maximize the potential of building on communal interest in caring for children, to consult and to involve community volunteers.

- Community policing. Fiji maintains a strong community policing initiative, with a renewed community-policing model launched in 2013 known as “Duevata community policing model.” The new aspect reinforced in the current initiative is the focus on cultural tolerance, religious understanding and social growth (Vula, 2013). The new model also has a specific focus on children, including a preventive element, working with parents and in particular the leaders of the families to jointly secure a safe environment for children and to prevent criminal episodes. The model also includes community-based rehabilitation (Ahmed, Duavata Policing Model Helps Reduce Crime, 2013).
- Child labour prevention. The community policing units have also received specific training in child labour issues by the Ministry of Labour in cooperation with the ILO. The idea of the training was to raise awareness and create a network with the community police officers who would assist the ministry in identifying potential cases of child labour and worst forms of child labour. The officers also help to educate the community on the adverse effects of child labour on the child, the family and community as a whole (ILO, 2012).

- Promotion and prevention to eliminate child maltreatment. As will be discussed in detail in the next section (page 140), a significant part of current work in child protection at the field level is the Community-Based Positive Parenting Package “Children are a Gift from God”. This interactive initiative is directly based on joint work with the communities in developing positive approaches to rearing children and ensuring their safety.

Community outreach

The Positive Parenting Package is an initiative with a strong community development element, but is currently restricted only to the participating areas. As will be also discussed further (page 148), one barrier which seems significant to community-based child protection in Fiji is lack of bottom-up communication structures within the traditional village structures. Communicating ideas and individual initiatives to the village leaders is sometimes problematic for the active child protection champions, especially younger people, given that decision-making on communal matters within the village is usually top-down. The Package helps communities to transcend this barrier by offering a neutral workshop-based setting to discuss ideas and by empowering initiatives such as youth clubs so that child protection issues could be addressed further on a sustainable basis.



Keeping children close to home as long as possible

The need to resort to residential care only where any other options were ruled out permeates Fijian child protection system. The Family Law Act 2003 defined the core objective to ensure that children receive adequate and proper parenting to help them achieve their full potential, subject to parents fulfilling their duties and responsibilities concerning the care, welfare and development of their children. Unless it is contrary to the child's best interests, the Act defined the right of children to be cared for by their parents and to have regular contact with their parents. The Juveniles Act 2003 further specifies that the boarding out of juveniles (i.e. to live with a foster parent or an approved institution) should not be permitted or continued if it is no longer in the child's best interest. Placements into alternative care are overseen by a National Adoption and Foster Care Panel.

At the same time, the continued practice of informal adoption does not provide children with a similar level of protection. Most Pacific countries share a tradition of customary and informal adoptions, with children staying with relatives as part of the extended family, sometimes far away from their original home. The reasons could be

pragmatic (such as helping the child to attend school) and/or cultural (strengthening kinship and family ties) (MRT Australia, 2009). Neither customary nor informal adoptions are legalized in Fiji, and the Department of Social Welfare strongly urges all parents to follow formal procedures for adoptions and fosterage, but the amount of informal adoptions is still reported as high (Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2011).

Restorative juvenile justice

MoSWWPA supports a community corrections programme for non-custodial sentencing and rehabilitation of young offenders. Working with Prisons and Correctional Services for Prisoners Rehabilitations is one of the key performance outcomes in the MoSWWPA Annual Corporate Plan for 2014. In particular, the ministry partners with the Fiji Corrections Services to introduce a Community Based Corrections Decree, including through the provision of funds for skill trainings to ex-offenders. Since at least 2007, the programme worked in close cooperation with the community and church leaders, including the implementation of Yellow Ribbon initiative for reintegration of young offenders (Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2011).



DOMAIN 6. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS AND INFLUENCING

INDICATOR 6.1. CLARITY OF CHILD PROTECTION COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

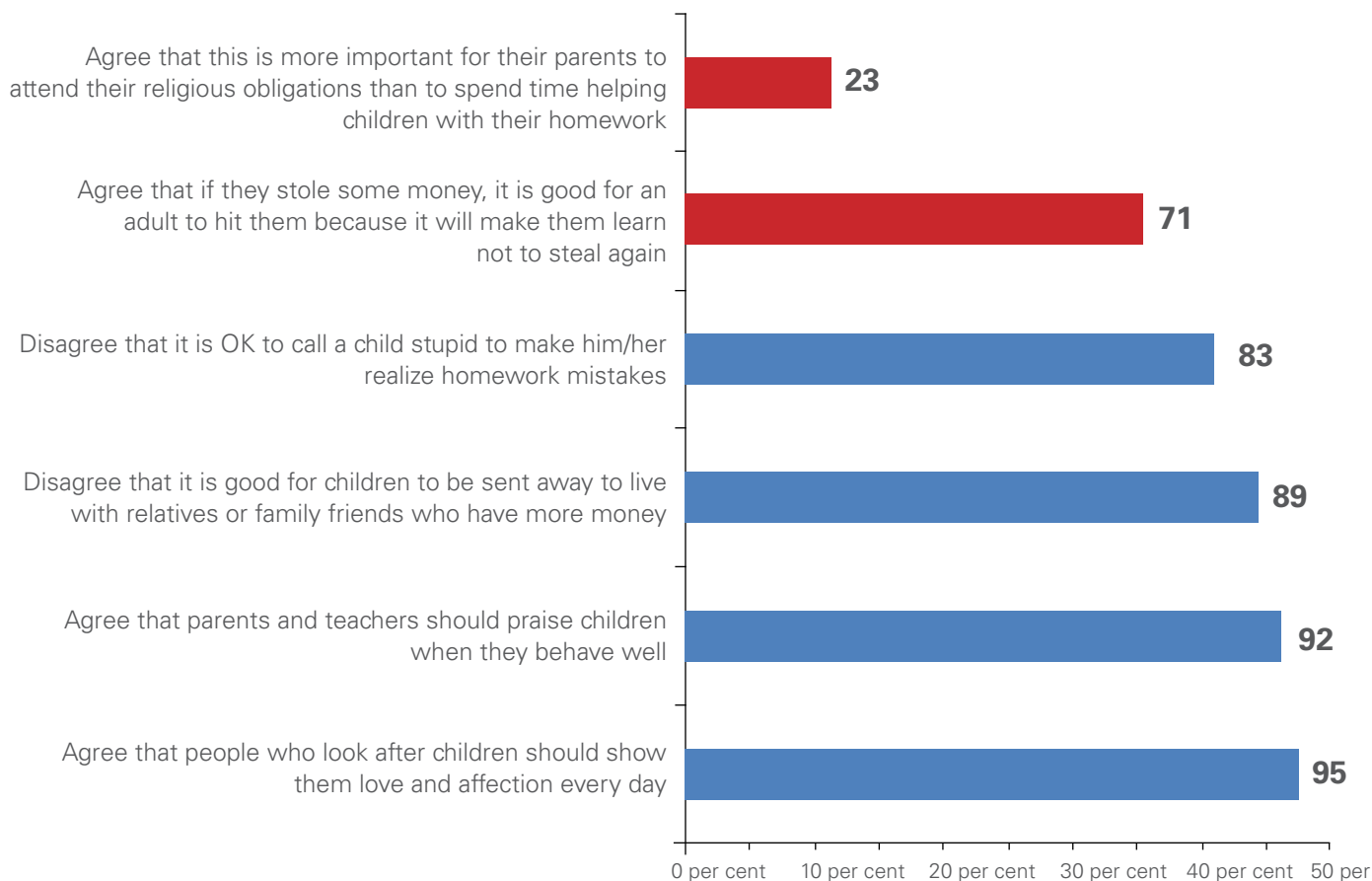
	ASSESSMENT	SCORE
Public communication and influencing plans in child protection are expressed in the following:	B	2.0
Four criteria for indicators		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The government has undertaken evidence-based diagnostic studies of attitudinal factors and risks in child protection; 	Yes, restricted	0.75
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The government has a communication strategy for child protection, which outlines key objectives, messages, target audiences, influencing methods and mechanisms to obtain feedback; 	No, extended	0.25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications objectives in child protection includes measures to assess and bridge any gaps between statute law and religious, customary and traditional law; 	No, extended	0.25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Messages and action points from the agreed communication strategy are incorporated in the on-going programmes and measures in child protection related fields. 	Yes, restricted	0.75

Diagnostic studies

Government's programmatic documents have very brief and generic references to the need to change attitudes in child protection, even though it spends considerable resource on awareness raising. The Roadmap for Democracy and Sustainable Socio-Economic Development (RDSSSED) 2010-2014 explicitly refers to the "urgent need to organize community awareness programmes to help change attitudes and stigma associated with child abuse". Awareness raising programmes duly constitute a very significant share of current preventive activities in child protection, and consume a significant amount of time among the local social welfare officers (see page 101 and 102). At the same time, the government's strategic papers such as the RDSSSED do not contain any evidence-based discussion on the current problems with public values and attitudes to child abuse.

A strong source of such evidence and policy conclusions currently used by the government originates from previous attitudinal studies undertaken by the donor community. In particular, in the early 2000s, UNICEF conducted a Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices (KAP) survey; a range of further qualitative surveys, such as the 2008 Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) assessment, and, finally, the 2008 UNICEF/AusAID 2008 Baseline Report "Protect me with love and care". The 2008 Baseline Report, in particular, used questionnaire containing specific questions on attitudes to children's rights and child protection issues, on the side of parents, teachers and the children.

Figure 26. Baseline findings 2008: attitudes to children



The 2008 Baseline Report made three major discoveries which related primarily to the attitudes and values held by adults and children:

- The study found a high prevalence of positive attitudes to children which could be utilized for promoting the importance of child safety. As shown in Figure 26, an overwhelming majority of parents objected in principle to verbally abusing and neglecting their children.
- There was a significant overlap in the definitions of “punishment” and “discipline” given by adults, and lack of support to abolish corporal punishment (15 per cent), even though 90 per cent of respondents preferred alternative discipline methods. As Figure 26 also indicates, as many as 71 per cent of parents believed that hitting children for stealing was reasonable.
- A significant 13 per cent of child victims of abuse who participated in the survey perceived this experience as normal (indicating that they deserved it, were used to it or were not bothered). The report noted the need to empower children and raise their resilience to seek protection at home and in schools.

In addition, the previous qualitative regional 2008 Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) assessment has formulated a range of additional attitudinal observations:

- Considerable gender inequality characteristic of Melanesian societies compared to Polynesian and Micronesian neighbours;
- Stigmatization and discrimination of children with disabilities which increases their vulnerability to abuse, including sexual abuse and commercial sexual exploitation;
- “Culture of silence” regarding sexual abuse because of the fear of shame and judgment (often leading to disruption of legal processes);
- Attitudinal pressures of an increasingly monetized economy, leading to child neglect (when parents chose employment which disrupt their family obligations) and pressure on children to engage in child labour, including sexual commercial exploitation;
- Underestimation of the dangers of child abuse by family members as opposed to strangers;
- Complacency over the risks to children billeted with external families, informal guardianship and adoption;
- Vulnerability of children to peer pressure and treating the sex trade as a “fun” and safe way to earn easy cash.

While these discoveries play an important role in the current multi-lateral work on child protection in Fiji, they are not complete or a systemic part of national planning capacity. The scope of the attitudinal component of the described studies was limited: for example, they did not address social perception related to juvenile justice, child labour or early marriage. Both studies had actively involved government partners and communities into the research process and are strongly owned by the national counterparts. However, they remained an externally driven process, not only financially but also in terms of the research design – for example, the 2008 Baseline Report was structured as an evaluation of the outputs within the Results and Resource Framework which was a joint government-donor planning instrument.

Communications strategy

An innovative Community-Based Positive Parenting Package has been in place since early 2000s for behaviour change at the community level.

- Based on the results of the KAP survey in early 2000s, the Ministry of Social Welfare with support from AusAID had developed an interactive community-based positive parenting influencing package. The project for implementation of the package was conducted within the AusAID Pacific Children’s Program (PChild protection) by the International Development Support Services (IDSS) – a subsidiary of Oxfam Community Aid Abroad (Winterford, 2003). The initiative has been based on a primary prevention approach which works with the parents in the communities through village-based facilitators in partnership with the local social welfare officers and other agencies represented at the local level.
- The package is highly interactive, building communication about positive change around issues and bottlenecks discovered during the facilitation process.
- The initial package was updated upon the completion of the 2008 Baseline Report, to incorporate the new information and recommendations. A revitalized package called “Children are a Gift from God” was re-launched with support from UNICEF in 2012. This was done in consultation with the NCCC and promoted among other agencies, some of which picked up its elements (in particular, the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs). By late 2013, the Package covered 50 communities with 16 conducted workshops (Fijian Government Media Center, 2013).
- The monitoring and evaluation of the intervention is based on a range of tools, including the collection of “Most Significant Change stories” (MSC) which could be used for further influencing and experience exchange. The MSCs stories are also used to amend the facilitation materials which are currently in translation into Fijian and Hindi.

Aside from the highly progressive Community-Based Positive Parenting Package, there is no separate government policy or strategy for system-wide

communications in child protection. The community-based positive parenting package covers a significant set of influencing issues, but it does not aim to address the entire set of system-wide problems. While the government is an active participant of the package and generally enthusiastic about behaviour change interventions, it does not yet have a comprehensive and strategic behaviour influencing plan. As was discussed during the FGDs, scaling up this work to formulate systemic goals for public influencing could open Fiji up to a wider set of modern communication tools, such as the active cooperation with mass media.

Bridging statute, religious and traditional law

Traditional authorities and justice systems are pivotal to how child protection is understood and practiced in Fiji. For example, the 2008 Baseline Report showed that children who commit legal offences are referred to traditional or religious community leaders in 46 per cent of cases (only 27 per cent are referred to the police). The 2008 SCEC study noted that countries throughout the Pacific tend to rely on traditional justice systems for addressing cases of sexual abuse, which often result in social exclusion of the victims and are not adequate for prevention of further exploitation, especially if in the case of rape the perpetrators are prompted to court or engage with the victims (Pacific Regional Rights Resource Team, 2008).

Current awareness raising efforts strongly involve village leaders, but there is no systemic plan for bridging the gaps between the formal and traditional justice systems. The Community-Based Positive Parenting Package and the social welfare officers involved in field-based awareness raising on child protection invest considerable attention into engaging traditional authorities into their communication efforts. Several respondents to the mini-survey described their specific work with the village chiefs to raise awareness of child abuse issues and ask for support on influencing activities. However, this work seems to be mostly done as a prerequisite for successful community influencing rather than a strategic and structured campaign to address the current gaps between traditional and formal justice systems.

Messages incorporated in programmes

The Community-Based Positive Parenting Package is highly interactive and fully integrated into the MoSWWPA fieldwork, but its scope is limited. As was discussed previously, the mini-survey conducted for this assessment showed that working with the communities on awareness raising was indicated by the majority of respondents as one of the most important objectives of their work and one of the things they spend most of their time on. A lot of these responses implied participation in the Community-Based Positive Parenting Package, which is also strongly supported by the DoSW. However, the scope of this programme is limited to pilot communities and to the issues related to positive parenting, not covering other aspects of child protection.

INDICATOR 6.2. AVAILABILITY OF EVIDENCE ON VALUES, ATTITUDES, CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS

	ASSESSMENT	SCORE
Communications are supported by the following:	D	0
Four criteria for indicators		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of barometric or other attitudinal surveys conducted over the last five years to assess and measure public attitudes towards child abuse, exploitation, and violence is positive and growing; 	No	0
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of surveys over the last five years to assess and measure outcomes for children related to key specific child protection priorities in country (e.g. violence against children) are positive and growing; 	No	0
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of national studies related to cultural context, traditional beliefs and attitudes to child protection is positive and growing; 	No	0
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any gaps and collisions between child protection agenda and customary laws are well researched and clearly formulated; research is underway to design ways to bridge existing divergences. 	No	0

Surveys to measure attitudes

The in-house information management system, including the surveys undertaken by the FIBOS, do not contain any attitudinal or behavioural components. The several surveys and qualitative studies previously used by the government to develop its communication activities were strongly led by the donor-funded programmes.

Surveys to measure child protection outcomes

There are no surveyed questions related to prevalence and nature of child abuse and exploitation. All data related to child protection outcomes collected in Fiji originates from administrative heads responsible for respective service provision.

Studies on beliefs and attitudes

The University of the South Pacific fosters a wide range of world-class research focusing on the culture, customs and traditions in the South Pacific. Specific past and current research looks into the changes which

are taking place in the indigenous cultural systems, the impact of cultural development programmes and policies, the traditional perception systems of self and the world, as well as unique traditional ways of acquiring and transmitting knowledge (see, for example, (Nabobo-Baba, 2006)). In addition, a large amount of student research in the area of sociology, psychology and history strongly focuses on Fijian traditional culture and attitudes (see Table 14).

However, none of the publicly listed papers and research topics seems to address the links between cultural context and child protection. The two student dissertations listed by the USP School of Social Sciences on child protection are looking at broad policies rather than particular attitudinal issues. The Institute of Pacific Studies (IPS) Publications³⁸ dedicated to “Youth and Women” are almost exclusively focused on gender issues. Numerous articles on traditional attitudes and children which are published in the USP Journal of Educational Studies are focused on the impact of cultural context on educational process and outcomes, rather than any issues related to child’s safety (see, for example, (Kwalea, 1996), (Veramu, 1986), (Manoa, 1986)). Given the visible interest of the social sciences academics in Fiji to the research of cultural systems, attracting their attention to child protection concerns is an opportunity on which the government could capitalize.

³⁸ IPS Publications, established in 1976, is the publishing arm of what is now the Pacific Studies Program (itself part of PIAS-DG – the Pacific Institute for Advanced Studies in Development and Governance) at the University of the South Pacific. (<http://ipsbooks.usp.ac.fj/>)

Table 14. Student research at the USP School of Social Sciences, 2012 – relevant areas

Asinate Koroiciri	Sociology – The effects of poverty and human development on livelihoods-The Case of Lau and Ra Households in Qauia Settlement
Akanesi Tarabe	Sociology – Women’s roles in Fijian death rituals: A review of Ravuvu’s work on the Fijian society
Shazna Buksh	Psychology – Mapping HIV/AIDS-related Stigma and Discrimination in Fiji
Nicholas Fuata	Psychology – Exploring ‘iTaukei (Indigenous Fijians) Traditional responses to Postpartum Depression in Fiji
Ofa Swan	Psychology – Optimism vs. pessimism - exploring the relationship between optimism and coping mechanisms of Fijians
Nikita Chand	Psychology – Body Image Issues among adolescent girls in Fiji
Sonam Chand	Psychology – Factors influencing career decision making in Fijian and Indo-Fijian adolescence
Arieta Tagivetaua	Social Work – Review of Child Services in the Department of Social Welfare
Ilisapeci Rokotunidau	Sociology – Child protection policy: Global, regional, local, and the community

Source: List of MA/PhD students - School of Social Sciences, <http://www.usp.ac.fj/>

Research on bridging child protection agenda with customary laws

As described above, none of the identified current studies looking into cultural context and traditional systems has so far addressed child protection concerns.

INDICATOR 6.3. ALERTNESS TO CHANGING RISKS AND VULNERABILITIES

	ASSESSMENT	SCORE
Child protection communications include the following:	A	3.0
Four criteria for indicators		
• Communication strategies are regularly updated to incorporate new child protection risks;	Yes, restricted	0.75
• Programmes in child protection communications cover new and emerging vulnerabilities (e.g. related to digital technologies, new trends in tourism, climate change);	Yes, restricted	0.75
• Public communication and awareness raising plans addressing key child protection concerns have been prepared specifically for key relevant intermittent natural emergencies;	Yes, restricted	0.75
• Communication and influencing programmes to prepare for child protection risks resulting from potential social disruptions (conflict, civil disorder).	Yes, restricted	0.75

Regular revision of communication strategies

The Positive Parenting Package was revised in response to the 2008 Baseline Report but without a specific investigation or coverage of new or changing risks. The existing communication strategy used by the government is essentially embodied within the Community-Based Positive Parenting Package. As was discussed earlier, the Package was updated about five years after its initial launch, incorporating new information collected through the 2008 Baseline Report (for example, the focus on the need for alternative disciplining models, the focus on the experience of abuse by children and the need to engage them and raise their awareness and resilience). However, neither the 2008 Baseline Report nor the strategy update has inquired specifically into the nature of change in the child protection risks.

Programmes on new risks

A range of initiatives are noted in the government documents which relate to addressing new and emerging protection risks, for example:

- The Ministry of Tourism and the Fiji police are working jointly to discuss child safety and security given the growing flows of international tourism in the country (Fiji Police Force, 2012).
- The National Youth Policy states that “young people are faced with many challenges in a rapidly changing world, associated to technological, economic, social, cultural and environmental factors, and providing opportunities as well as obstacles.” The broad response offered in the policy is to highlight traditional and spiritual values which help young people to deal with life’s various challenges. The policy does not further specify what implications these obstacles have for the safety of the youth and respective protection and promotion responses (Ministry of Youth and Sports, 2012).

The MoSWWPA Annual Corporate Plan is silent on the needs to address any new child safety concerns.

The MoSWWPA AChild protection is explicitly focused on change management, especially in the context of the New Constitution and growing demands on the excellence of civil service provision. However, new child protection risks as such do not feature as part of the changing context. New training for Protection Cluster team mobilization is planned by MoSWWPA for 2014 but it is not clear whether it includes a public communications component. The 2014 Annual Corporate Plan of MoSWWPA has a significant component dedicated to enhancing its capacities for protecting children’s safety in the wake of natural disasters. As was discussed earlier, the ministry has recently assumed its leadership role in the Protection Cluster, and plans to invest into training for mobilization of protection teams during natural disasters. However, it is not clear whether this preparation includes a communication component which would cover external stakeholders.

Communications to manage risks related to social disruptions

One of the key strategic determinants in Fiji’s programmatic political agenda is to restore political stability. The Peoples Charter for Change, Peace and Progress – as reflected in its name – proclaims the will of the People of Fiji “to live justly and peacefully with one another.” The Peoples Charter acknowledges that since 1987, Fiji went through recurrent surges of political instability, reflected in the stigma of having “a coup culture.” The charter calls for ending this cycle of coups by recognizing the deep-rooted and complex problems which fed the turmoil and establishing institutional fundamentals for trust-based dialogue and peace building towards “A Better Fiji for All”.

The past episodes of political turmoil have been highly traumatic for the children. The 2008 SCEC study identified increased levels of sexual violence against women and children as a result of the political crisis during the 2000 coup (Pacific Regional Rights Resource Team, 2008). This impact, including the physical and emotional damage caused to children, was researched in detail in the 2001 study on the Effects of Coup on Children commissioned by Save the Children Fiji. The indirect impact included increased poverty, malnutrition and school drop outs, growing number of street children and child labour. The turmoil also had a severe direct affect, such as higher violence rates, domestic abuse, aggressive behaviour among adolescent boys and growing numbers of juvenile crime (Shameemat, 2004).

Strategic communication task in relation to political risks requires gradual influencing to strengthen attitudes to protection and safety rights for every child, as is attempted within current reforms. All observers studying the ramifications of the political instability in Fiji over the three decades since 1987, including the current programmatic documents by the government, agree that the root causes of the tension and the reasons for the poor protection of children at times of crisis are spread across society and require gradual and structural reforms to increase efficiency of protection services, legislative action to guarantee equal access to support services, and continuous public communication to shift public attitudes towards realization of the safety rights for every child. The biggest strategic communication task in relation to political risks, therefore, is to make sure that “the patterns of impact on the vulnerable and disadvantaged” should change (Shameemat, 2004). The current awareness raising campaigns supported by the government are working in this direction, although they do not usually have any specific elements targeted at restoring the delicate balance in the attitudes within the multi-cultural society of Fiji. At the same time, the recent revision of the community-policing model has incorporated elements of social cohesion and awareness of the need for cultural tolerance and equal rights.

INDICATOR 6.4. INTERACTIVE AND ON-GOING ENGAGEMENT WITH KEY AUDIENCES

	ASSESSMENT	SCORE
Implementation of the child protection communications strategy includes:	B	2.5
Four criteria for indicators		
• A breakdown of strategic communication objectives into smaller short-term and more manageable tasks (“the sprints”);	Yes, restricted	0.75
• Regular discussions of communications agenda and context by the coordination structures in child protection (“the scrum”) resulting in correction of messages and approaches;	Yes, restricted	0.75
• Activities to keep track of the changing communication context and to involve inputs from key audiences (children, parents, community-leaders, faith-based organizations, etc.);	Yes, restricted	0.75
• The process of approval of fresh communication content is straightforward and transparent.	No, extended	0.25

Breakdown of objectives into smaller tasks

The Community-Based Positive Parenting Package has a highly dynamic design, but this initiative does not cover the full spectrum of strategic communication goals. The Positive Parenting Package is organized through a series of interactive workshops, with the objectives of every session being identified through joint facilitated discussion with the community. However, as was discussed earlier, this campaign covers only some of the communication needs in child protection and is not comprehensive.

Fast-reaction team for regular fine-tuning of messages

Community-based influencing structures are highly mobile but there is less operational coordination at the headquarter level. The Positive Parenting training is led by community facilitators and local social welfare officers who have high mobility and flexibility in adjusting the approach. In particular, the collected MSC stories are discussed by the coordinating organizations and a short list of selected stories is presented to the child protection task force which acts as a child protection inter-agency committee. The role of the Task force is to review and refine the stories, picking on the most important messages. Analysis of the stories is then utilized in the management of the programme (Winterford, 2003). However, these discussions on the content of the messages does not seem to be strongly linked to coordination structures operating at the headquarter level and defining the strategic communication messages.

Keeping track of changing communications context

Collecting the MSC stories and using them to update the training materials is a strong tool for interactive fine-tuning of the communication approach. Originally, the MSC tool was introduced as part of the PChild protection project management, as a complement to the traditional logframe approach which was not seen as sufficient for the interactive design of the primary prevention model. The stories were classified into three broad domains:

- Changes in the awareness of child protection issues at the family, community, and government level;
- Changes in responsibility for child protection at community or government level;
- Changes in participation in child protection related activities at the family, community or government level.

The stories are used not only for the monitoring of impact, but also as a way to incorporate feedback from the target audience. This assessment did not look into concrete examples of how the stories have influenced the communication messages and agenda, or how frequently it happens.

Simple procedures for fresh content

While approving new messages within the Positive Parenting seems easy, the messages and decisions are not documented and the flexibility is mostly at the local level. Decision making within the Positive Parenting initiative is lean and strongly orchestrated with the help of UNICEF in partnership with the MoSWWPA.

However, there does not seem to be a structured and transparent procedure for this; the messages themselves are not documented. Moreover, this initiative remains to be a relatively autonomous project-based activity rather than a reflection of the government's systemic influencing strategy. Approving new joint messages at the national level with inputs from diverse agencies seems to be a much bigger challenge.

INDICATOR 6.5. BUILDING ON EXISTING POSITIVE VALUES

	ASSESSMENT	SCORE
Communications and behaviour change strategies in child protection incorporate existing positive values and achievements:	A	3.0
Four criteria for indicators		
• Messages and behaviour change programmes clearly link to current positive views on children, society, and human rights;	Yes, restricted	0.75
• Communication programmes identify barriers to behaviour change and offer information and user-friendly solutions on how these could be overcome;	Yes, restricted	0.75
• Communications offer a range of positive consequences of stronger protection for children;	Yes, restricted	0.75
• Government agencies use a range of best practice models, cases and positive deviance examples to demonstrate how child protection issues could be positively resolved.	Yes, restricted	0.75

Links to current positive values

Incorporating positive current values has been one of the central objectives of the current Community-Based influencing programme and the 2008 Baseline Report on which it builds. The 2008 Baseline Report had specifically highlighted positive, rather than negative attitudes to children and their upbringing. As shown in Figure 26 on page 25, the study draw attention to the very high per centages of adult respondents who agreed with the need to show love and affection to children (95 per cent), to praise them for good behaviour (92 per cent), and to not send them away to live without parents to the extent possible (89 per cent). The facilitative approach to influencing workshop (attended by this assessment), works with the community to elaborate on these and find ways to express these common shared objectives without resorting to abusive and exploitative action towards the children. Again, this campaign is only one of the programmes implemented by the Government rather than a systemic influencing strategy adapted at the national level.

Information to deal with change barriers

Interactive design of the community-based package specifically focuses on joint identification of barriers to positive parenting. Examples of solutions offered in response to identified barriers include alternative disciplining ideas, provision of information on the negative impacts of abuse (the lack of which sometimes explains complacency and the culture of silence), awareness of the services and support available to prevent and protect children and women.

Explanation of positive consequences

Participants of the community-based training described strong elements of positive motivation, but it is not clear whether it is representative for the country and for other programmes. During a workshop in the community-based parenting package, participants shared that they have learned eye-opening facts about the benefits of positive parenting on children's development. One of the participants – a school teacher – shared that child protection training was offered in schools and that she was recently appointed

as a child protection officer to work with parents on explaining the educational benefits of alternative discipline methods and on taking care of their children (given the wide-spread instances of neglect). A representative of the judicial department reported that his team has access to monthly trainings by training officers, where they explained the benefits of reaching out to parents with the view of changing their attitudes towards raising children. However, this small sample of informants was gathered within a workshop held in one of the villages. It is not certain how representative this experience is of wider Fiji, and whether other awareness raising activities outside the Positive Parenting package follow a similar positive motivation strategy.

Models, cases, best practices

The current communication used within the community-based positive parenting package strongly utilizes the MSC approach, but its implementation

faced a range of challenges. This approach, advocated in 1995-2005, serves a mix of purposes, including the monitoring and evaluation of project implementation, but also collecting useful evidence on the impact of new practices. The collection of stories is structured with the help of specific templates and supported with the provision of training for the interviewers. While Fiji is recognized as a success case of applying this technique, it also faced a range of challenges. One such challenge is management of data: the AusAID, in particular, admitted that at least at the initial stages the lack of a coherent database for the collected stories led to the loss of information, especially after it was used (stories were written as separate files). Overall, documentation of the processes and conclusions, including the results of the panel consideration of the stories, has been a weak spot. It has also been difficult for the programme to maintain the rhythm of the MSC cycle: sometimes the analysis of one MSC round was not yet incorporated before the next round of the MSC already began (Kotvojs and Lasambouw, 2009).

INDICATOR 6.6. INVOLVEMENT OF KEY OPINION LEADERS

	ASSESSMENT	SCORE
The government cooperates with the following stakeholders with the aim of promoting positive attitudes in child protection:	B	2.5
Four criteria for indicators		
• Community leaders;	Yes, restricted	0.75
• Faith-based organizations;	Yes	1
• Other influential organizations and individuals;	No	0
• Children themselves.	Yes, restricted	0.75

“For some people the thinking is like this: I don’t have money, so I will not go, I will just sit at home, because I have no money. In the group, it is always like this – you have to get this, or that, it still requires some money. And people don’t have the money. So, until we have good employment, it would be difficult to run such clubs or joint initiatives.”

Community leaders

By design, the Positive Parenting initiative – and the interactive 2008 Baseline Report on which it is currently based – have given a significant role to the community leaders. The village heads were the first to be approached with the awareness raising effort, with the aim to secure permission and cooperation for unfolding the training package in each community. The respondents to the mini-survey conducted by this assessment also mentioned their regular efforts to reach out to the traditional authorities in order to explain child protection ideas and establish cooperation.

However, the role of community leaders in promoting child protection is sometimes challenged by traditional village structures which do not encourage bottom-up initiatives.

At the same time, participants of the workshop explained that, in their view, the senior villagers do not attend the outreach activities as often as they “should” and often remain outside the grass-root proposals that are being developed in the community. This was explained by the lack of stable structures and channels within the community for voicing ideas to the village heads. Unlike the project-based workshops, the village meetings are not interactive or participative, with rules defined unilaterally by the village heads, which makes it difficult to engage in discussions related to child protection, especially where there is a need to engage children themselves.

Faith-based organizations

The government involves key faith-based organizations into responding to child protection challenges, formally and informally. In 2008, the Baseline Report registered a significant share of religious leaders who regularly speak out to their constituencies on child violence and abuse (up to 68 per cent). The messages sent to the communities included raising awareness on what constitutes abuse (14 per cent) and explanation of why it is against the principles and religious texts supported by the respective churches (39 per cent) (UNICEF; AusAID, 2009).³⁹ The 2012 Study commissioned by UNFPA, World Vision and Breakthrough, undertook specific mapping of faith-based responses to violence against women and girls in the Asia-Pacific region, focusing on a sample of significant faith-based organizations in each country, including Fiji. It confirmed that religious groups in Fiji have a strong voice in preventing and protecting victims of violence, actively cooperate around these issues, and linking to secular partners for joint solutions. For example, in 2011, the Archbishop Winston Halapua of the Diocese of Polynesia used a Suva cathedral service to empathize the impact of violence and reached out to the Fiji police and social welfare departments to join the promotion campaign “because they had made private approaches to him about the issue.” The Dean of the Cathedral had then launched

a training on Elimination of Violence in partnership with the Fiji Women’s Crisis Centre, linking the concepts of power, control and authority to influence the dominant culture of harsh discipline and stereotyped views on masculinity (UNFPA; World Vision; Breakthrough, 2012).

Other influential agents

There is currently no practice of engaging other prominent figures, such as celebrities, into communication campaigns for child protection. At the same time, some authors in celebrity studies believe that dynamics of fame in small Pacific country contexts can provide celebrities and stars with a very strong influencing power. In the view of these authors, one feature of celebrity power is that they may act as totems, creating a sense of unity, imagined community, and provide individuals with an opportunity to express a sense of new collective identity over new shared values (King, Oosterman, and Johnson, 2013). During the field workshop attended by the authors of this report, community members have greeted members of the assessment team with the keen acknowledgement of the celebrities coming from their respective country of origin (Ukraine), showing good knowledge of the names and credentials, and explaining what they had learned from these figures. In this case, the celebrities in question were world heavy weight boxing champions, the Klichko brothers: the community members explained how their village was learning from the Klichko brothers “that brothers should never fight with each other.” While this observation is far from representative, it confirms the potential of involving prominent figures into delivering value-changing messages, which could be explored for the future communication campaigns.

Children

Given the strength of top-down village structures, which do not always give a strong voice to children, the Positive Parenting initiative attempts to empower children through stimulating youth clubs. This approach was described by the participants of field workshop as very important, given that peer groups are also the primary source of trust and confidence for many children from dysfunctional families. At the same time, organizing such clubs or informal communication without strong support from the donors or government has been difficult. One paradoxical reason that was described as a strong barrier is unemployment and the low income of the most vulnerable families. It is understood by many parents or young adults that in order to participate in a joint initiative, they need to contribute at least some resource (cash or in-kind). This expectation is often justified, since many communal discussions about potential initiatives result in plans which require resource contribution and are therefore perceived

³⁹ In 2012, 52 per cent of the Fiji population was reported to be Christians, 30 per cent - Hindu, and 7 per cent - Muslims (UNFPA; World Vision;



ANNEX 1. SUMMARY OF SCORES

DOMAIN 1. POLICY PROCESS

Indicator 1.1. Clarity and consistency of child protection policy priorities

Regulatory framework is capable of instilling a collective sense of direction in child protection reforms:	A (3.5)
The country has ratified UN conventions relevant to children's rights to protection; ⁴⁰	Yes, restricted (0.75)
The government has a national child protection policy statement or national framework document, supported with respective plans of action with clear mid-term priorities;	Yes, restricted (0.75)
National programmatic documents for child protection are supported with coherent sub-national legislation or consistent guidelines for implementation at relevant sub-national levels;	Yes (1)
Child protection priorities are known and understood by the majority of stakeholders throughout the system.	Yes (1)

Indicator 1.2. Coherent legal specification of key concepts

The country's legislative environment is characterized by the following:	C (1.25)
The country's Constitution contains provisions on child rights, consistent with CRC, allowing application of all its provisions and principles;	Yes, restricted (0.75)
Legislation is drafted and regularly revised based on ex ante whole-of-government consultations on key controversial issues to reach political consensus and bridge sector-specific regulatory agendas. There is a clear mechanism to administer such policy dialogue;	No, extended (0.25)
National legislature has sufficient analytical support and capacity to follow child protection policy initiatives and to ensure approval of appropriate national laws;	No (0)
The country's legislation contain child protection definitions and provisions on child rights, which are sufficiently specified, precise, and consistent with CRC, allowing application of all its provisions and principles.	No, extended (0.25)

Indicator 1.3. Strategic preparedness to potentially volatile environment

Systems for crisis prevention and recovery include the following:	B (2.0)
The government has developed disaster and emergency preparedness strategies and action plans for management of multiple risks that have significant impacts on children in times of natural hazard or conflict situations;	No, extended (0.25)
Inter-agency mechanisms are established for addressing child protection risks in case of emergencies and disasters (coordination and data exchange systems, joint guidelines, response plans and training for staff across relevant sectors);	Yes (1)
Preventive measures are based on risk assessments to identify and build capacities of the most vulnerable areas and population groups;	No (0)
Capacities of the response systems focusing specifically on child protection were built through trainings, awareness raising, information sharing, establishment of focal points and appropriate services, safe spaces and community-based structures.	Yes, restricted (0.75)

⁴⁰ 76-100 per cent relevant conventions ratified = "Yes"; 51-75 per cent relevant conventions ratified = "Yes, restricted"; 26-50 per cent relevant conventions ratified = "No, extended"; 0-25 per cent relevant conventions ratified = "No"

Indicator 1.4. Policy coordination for child protection

Availability and effectiveness of policy coordination structures:	B (2.75)
There is a Parliamentary or other oversight body on child protection which has a clearly defined mandate, authority and resources to implement it, and meets regularly;	No, extended (0.25)
There is an inter-ministerial mechanism that coordinates child protection activities, which has a clearly defined mandate and institutional leverage, meets regularly and is attended or followed up by senior officials;	Yes, restricted (0.75)
There is a mechanism at the national level for the government and civil society to coordinate on child protection policy, legislation and programming;	Yes, restricted (0.75)
There is a coordination mechanism to effectively engage international development agencies into child protection, which has a clear set of objectives related to child protection and meets regularly.	Yes (1)

Indicator 1.5. Policy monitoring

Policy monitoring framework for child protection includes the following:	B (2.5)
National programmatic documents for child protection are supported by monitoring and evaluation framework which is integrated into the policy cycle;	Yes, restricted (0.75)
Monitoring and evaluations undertaken to assess child protection policies generate practical feedback to policy makers;	Yes, restricted (0.75)
Analysis undertaken to review policies contains evaluation of policy impact;	No (0)
There are clear processes and responsibilities for collecting data required for monitoring and evaluation, making sure that analysis covers sufficient scope of issues and produces reliable results	Yes (1)

Indicator 1.6. Synergies across sectors

The following arrangements have been achieved:	B (2.5)
Existing social protection and employment measures are designed in ways which incorporate and reinforce child protection impact and are sustainable in the long-run	Yes (1)
In the ministry with lead justice role and the ministry with lead interior role, adequately resourced structural units are specifically dedicated to issues related to specific vulnerabilities faced by children within the justice system and policies have been developed to provide a range of preventative, promotional and protective services for children in conflict with the law;	Yes, restricted (0.75)
Health sector strategies and programmes explicitly recognize roles and responsibilities of health professionals in safeguarding children, helping to ensure appropriate and timely interventions, awareness raising and data collection;	No (0)
Education sector policies include guidance and support to teachers, school governors and volunteers to support child protection within education settings (codes of conduct, procedures for dealing with protection concerns etc.)	Yes, restricted (0.75)

DOMAIN 2. PUBLIC FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Indicator 2.1. Strategic budgeting based on realistic costing

• The country's budgeting system includes the following:	B (2.25)
• The government operates under a multi-year financial forecast, on a rolling annual basis, which includes expenditure estimates for child-protection related programmes;	Yes (1)
• Links between multi-year estimates and subsequent setting of annual budget ceilings for child protection are clear and differences explained;	Yes, restricted (0.75)
• The government's child protection strategy is costed, these costs are explicitly considered during the budget process and feed into agreed priorities in resource allocation;	No, extended (0.25)
• Policy-makers in child protection have regular supply of data which allows them to track utilisation of assets, expenditure and budget execution by child protection programmes and facilities.	No, extended (0.25)

Indicator 2.2. Transparency and credibility of budget allocations

• Financial planning system allows spending agencies to be certain that budgeted allocations would be actually available during the year. This is reflected in the following:	C (1.5)
• Variance in composition of expenditure out-turn compared to original approved budgets (excluding contingency items) across budget heads (PEFA PI-2);	No, extended (0.25)
• The stock of expenditure arrears in child-related spending is low and decreasing;	Yes, restricted (0.75)
• Budget formulation and execution is based on classification which complies with GFS/COFOG standards and has sufficient detail to produce consistent documentation for child-protection expenditure analysis;	No, extended (0.25)
• Spending units (MDAs – ministries, departments and agencies) operate under reliable cash flow forecasts, effective system of expenditure commitment controls and are regularly audited.	No, extended (0.25)

Indicator 2.3. Spending flexibility

• The following rules help spending agents to use funds flexibly to ensure the most efficient delivery of services:	A (3.0)
• Child protection budgets represent a balanced mix of line items and lump sum (discretionary) appropriations, and key spending agents have sufficient flexibility to re-allocate funds between budget lines to ensure effective child protection responses at their level, including in cases of unforeseen events and contingent financial need;	Yes, restricted (0.75)
• There are clear, transparent and practical rules for in-year budget adjustment and revision, and key spending units are able to carry over unused funds from one fiscal year to another, subject to due checks;	Yes (1)
• There are provisions in the PFM system which allow spending units to keep efficiency gains and use them for other purposes;	Yes (1)
• The budget includes sufficient contingency funds which could be quickly mobilized in cases of emergencies with child protection risks	No, extended (0.25)

Indicator 2.4. Lack of financial incentives to particular service types

• Spending units have tools and right incentives to invest in those services which serve best interest of the child in any given context:	A (3.0)
• Child protection financing framework is neutral with regard to types of child protection services and contains no financial incentives that have detrimental effects on children, for example, capitation payments that provide incentives to place children in residential care;	Yes (1)
• There are no regulatory obstacles or financial penalization for spending units to engage in alternative cost-beneficial solutions in child protection such as contracting out services;	Yes (1)
• There is a clear institutional division between purchases and providers in supplying publicly funded child protection services;	No, extended (0.25)
• Arrangements are in place to support competitive procurement of front line child protection services to serve best interest of the child rather than particular service providers.	Yes, restricted (0.75)

Indicator 2.5. Value for money awareness

• Arrangements are in place to ensure that the government procures services which bring maximum benefit to children for any amount spent within the available resource envelope:	C (1.5)
• Child protection strategies are supported by analysis of fiscal constraints and response scenarios related to the risks of fiscal consolidation;	No (0)
• Programme implementation plans in child protection include measurable benefit targets;	Yes (1)
• Child protection strategies are supported with cost-benefit analysis of alternative policy options;	No, extended (0.25)
• The government undertakes performance audit to assess child protection impact of programme implementation.	No, extended (0.25)

Indicator 2.6. Effective structures for decentralized funding

• Financial relations between tiers of spending units/levels of government engaged in child protection are based on the following:	A (3.0)
• Multi-level financing structure, regardless of the specific decentralization model, is supported by functional tools to ensure that decentralized funding of child protection is effective, equitable and sustainable (“central oversight/intervention and local autonomy/accountability are in functional balance”)	Yes, restricted (0.75)
• The central government accurately reimburses financial costs imposed on sub-national budgets by central child protection policies (“realistic funding, vertical gap coverage”)	Yes (1)
• Horizontal allocation of transfers linked to child protection expenditures among sub-national governments is determined by transparent and rules-based system (“fair funding, horizontal gap coverage”)	Yes (1)
• Public financial management capacities at sub-national level are sufficient for ensuring effective implementation of any delegated functions related to child protection	No, extended (0.25)

DOMAIN 3. HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Indicator 3.1. Standards for child protection professionals

• Regulatory framework for child protection includes:	C (1.0)
• A definition (in training or other institutions or in policy) on the professional responsibilities, skills and required training and standards to which social workers will be held accountable;	No, extended (0.25)
• within the above: specific requirements and standards for social workers working with children;	No (0)
• A certification, accreditation or licensing process for social workers and other professionals who work within child protection;	No (0)
• An independent and active professional association of social work professionals.	Yes, restricted (0.75)

Indicator 3.2. Personnel accounting and payroll control

• The Government is equipped with the following tools to oversee activities of the child protection work force:	B (2.75)
• Agencies involved in child protection support personnel databases of child protection staff which are directly linked to payroll, which are regularly updated and reconciliated;	Yes, restricted (0.75)
• There is a system of payroll audits to identify control weaknesses and ghost workers;	No, extended (0.25)
• Average absenteeism rates in representative samples of different cadres of staff working in child protection are low and decreasing;	Yes, restricted (0.75)
• There is a robust system of support and oversight of the child protection activities undertaken by the paraprofessionals (such as community volunteers).	Yes (1)

Indicator 3.3. Continuity of policy commitment, knowledge and skills across electoral cycles

• Governments at all levels developed mechanisms to ensure continuity in policy implementation and institutional memory between electoral cycles, including:	C (1.25)
• Civil service regulations which ensure against excessive staff turnover following elections;	Yes (1)
• Arrangements for provision of non-partisan child protection policy advice and guidance to elected officials at all levels;	No, extended (0.25)
• Capacity building covering key child protection issues and policy updates for newly elected officials and newly recruited staff (including manuals and other written materials);	No (0)
• Documentation of experience and working practice of elected officials at the end of their term which could be used as guidance for the future.	No (0)

Indicator 3.4. Professional training for personnel working on child protection service delivery

• Education and Continued Development system contains:	B (2.25)
• University degree programmes in social work, with sufficient intake capacity, whose curricula include courses related to work with children in adversities;	Yes, restricted (0.75)
• Vocational qualification programmes in social work or child development whose curricula are approved by relevant authorities;	No (0)
• A system for continued education and development for social work professionals;	Yes, restricted (0.75)
• Specific training on child protection for education workers (such as teachers), health professionals, and for staff within the ministries with lead interior and home affairs role and lead justice roles on children and justice.	Yes, restricted (0.75)

Indicator 3.5. Performance evaluation

• Human resource management rules include the following:	B (2.5)
• Staff working in child protection have written, sufficiently detailed and regularly revised job descriptions which accurately reflect their duties and responsibilities;	Yes, restricted (0.75)
• There is a formal system for assessment of staff performance, which is clearly linked to job objectives and to reward levels received by staff (salaries, promotion chances, training opportunities or other benefits);	Yes (1)
• There are transparent rules to encourage extra effort through financial or non-monetary rewards;	Yes, restricted (0.75)
• There is a robust system to sanction poor performance.	No (0)

Indicator 3.6. Ability to attract and retain qualified staff for child protection

• The government attracts and retains qualified child protection professionals through ensuring the following:	B (2.75)
• Child protection duties and posts provide level of financial compensation and career opportunities which are comparable to other posts in same sectors;	No, extended (0.25)
• Average remuneration of staff working on child protection (across all ministries/ sectors) is generally comparable to average national wages;	Yes (1)
• The public considers social work to be a relatively well respected, prestigious and desirable profession;	Yes, restricted (0.75)
• There is a reasonable level of personnel stability on frontline and managerial posts in child protection, resulting from low non-retirement turnover and balanced transfer policies.	Yes, restricted (0.75)

DOMAIN 4. INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Indicator 4.1. Use of evidence in the policy process

• Analysis of major trends in child protection contexts to identify key vulnerabilities and priorities for action manifests in the following:	D (0.25)
• Key child protection programmatic documents (strategies, policies, white papers, laws) utilize data from key national surveys (CDC, MICs, DHS, ILO-IPEC etc.);	No (0)
• Key child protection programmatic documents contain analysis of trends in administrative data (service types and coverage, profile of key risk groups);	No, extended (0.25)
• Analysis of trends in child protection data is referenced in budget proposals and medium-term expenditure plans;	No (0)
• Key ministries with responsibilities for child protection receive training and capacity building in data management, statistical analysis and evidence-based policy-making.	No (0)

Indicator 4.2. Quality of child protection databases

• Data on child protection recorded by national information systems:	D (0.5)
• Uses consistent and standardized definitions and concepts which are appropriate for statistical purposes, allow tracking performance of existing child protection programmes and facilities (within and across sectors), and include sufficient disaggregation by age, ethnicity, gender, and disability status;	No (0)
• Covers variables sufficient to support decisions on most of the specific national child protection policy priorities (e.g. migration-related risks, HIV, domestic violence, etc.);	No, extended (0.25)
• Follows a practical model for child maltreatment surveillance which links diverse sources of outcome-specific data and information on risk factors (population studies, hospital records, emergency department records, police and homicide reports etc.) to analysis and interpretation, helping to detect children at risk of abuse, neglect and violence and prevent it before it occurs;	No, extended (0.25)
• Is verified and monitored to ensure that data is consistent and robust.	No (0)

Indicator 4.3. Responsiveness to changing policy demands

• Data collection systems have the following degrees of flexibility:	A (3.5)
• Legislative framework allow policy makers to request additional data collection where necessary for policy purposes and operational procedures are set up to enable such requests;	Yes (1)
• Procedures are set up to enable data producers to respond to changing data requests (flexible budget allocations, authority to update data collection plans);	Yes (1)
• New information follows clear structures and standards, and modification resulting from new policy demands do not jeopardize data quality;	Yes, restricted (0.75)
• Effective collection of information on children at risk for the purposes of collaboration between public and/or external agencies in emergency contexts.	Yes, restricted (0.75)

Indicator 4.4. Data consolidation and exchange

• Management of data related to child protection is characterized by the following:	C (1.75)
• Collection and exchange of data relevant to child protection is coordinated across agencies at the national level sufficiently to enable analysis and policy-making for child protection;	No (0)
• Reliable and consistent mechanisms are in place to channel sub-national data to the central level;	Yes (1)
• Tasks and responsibilities of actors involved in data collection and management are clearly specified;	Yes, restricted (0.75)
• Time intervals between child protection events/trends and their identification and reflection in databases are relatively low.	No (0)

Indicator 4.5. Linkages between data producers and data users

• “Fitness to use” of the collected data on child protection, including the following quality components:	D (0.5)
• Ability of key data users to easily ascertain existence of information and access it via a sustainable medium;	No, extended (0.25)
• Explicit reference to documentation on data quality and methodology in all released data;	No, extended (0.25)
• Regular meetings with key users and producers of statistics and working in partnership with them;	No (0)
• Regular methodological updates to increase relevance and timeliness of released information to incorporate feedback from data users.	No (0)

Indicator 4.6. Links to national research agenda for child protection

• Collection and processing of child protection data engages non-state actors through the following arrangements:	B (2.0)
• There is a national research agenda on child protection issues which identifies priorities for improving data on child protection problems and key risk factors;	No, extended (0.25)
• Mechanisms are established for regular provision of research and evidence-based analysis to key decision makers in child protection;	No (0)
• There is a mechanism for research institutions to share with the government key source data for their research (in addition to the analytical materials) to ensure better research quality and joint effort in developing child protection evidence base;	Yes, restricted (0.75)
• The government helps research institutions to access key child protection data to facilitate their analysis.	Yes (1)

DOMAIN 5. QUALITY ASSURANCE

Indicator 5.1. Quality guidance and standards

• Regulatory framework for child protection includes the following:	C (1.0)
• An entity within government which oversees organizations working in child protection and the quality of their services, including non-state organizations;	No, extended (0.25)
• A nationally recognized set of essential standards and guidance for various levels of quality in social care services, ensuring their safety, effectiveness and responsiveness to the best interest of the children;	Yes, restricted (0.75)
• A mandatory procedure to license organizations that directly care for children (state and non-state);	No (0)
• Pre-accreditation testing of competence and experience.	No (0)

Indicator 5.2. Credibility and regularity of quality oversight

• The system of quality oversight is characterised by the following:	C (1.25)
• Most entities involved in provision of services directly to children (state and non-state) are regularly inspected by authorized quality experts;	No (0)
• Inspections include both announced and unannounced visits, and include analysis of the records, examination of incidents, consultations with the children, and observing staff in their day-to-day work;	No (0)
• There is a clear system to collect and respond to complaints from children on alleged episodes of child protection violations in service provision;	No, extended (0.25)
• There is a clear whistle-blowing policy and guidance for social workers to report malpractice, including adequate protection to whistle-blowers.	Yes (1)

Indicator 5.3. Encouragement of innovation

• The following mechanisms are in place to encourage innovation:	B (2.5)
• Child protection programmatic documents and forums include specific discussion on the balance of risk and innovation in service delivery;	Yes (1)
• Registration process for service providers and the system of standards is sufficiently flexible and does not discourage innovation;	Yes (1)
• The government has set up specific mechanisms (earmarked transfers, working groups, pilot projects) to stimulate development of new services and programmes for child protection, addressing new protection risks, challenges and vulnerable groups of finding more effective solutions for existing problems;	No, extended (0.25)
• Mechanisms have been established for exchange of good practice and new solutions across service providers and wider child protection stakeholders.	No, extended (0.25)

Indicator 5.4. Effective surveillance, gate keeping and referrals

• At each stage of service provision to vulnerable children, the system of child protection includes:	B (2.5)
• Clear and transparent referral policies and procedures;	Yes, restricted (0.75)
• An agency (or inter-agency structure) responsible for coordinated assessment of the child's situation, with sufficient institutional capacity to ensure that the child receives further support which serves his/her best interest;	Yes (1)
• A continuum of services available to respond to diverse child protection situations, preferably from a range of alternative providers;	Yes, restricted (0.75)
• Regular surveillance measures which include a systemic practice of analysing and reviewing information on risk factors affecting the incidence and circumstances of maltreatment and using it to target preventive and promotional activities.	No (0)

Indicator 5.5. Enforcement and follow up

• Rules of action for providers working directly with children who fail to meet essential standards of quality are characterised by the following:	D (0.75)
• A robust system of sanctions for malpractice which is consistently applied;	No (0)
• Provisions for tougher actions for cases of serious failure;	No (0)
• Mechanisms to check for compliance with recommendations resulting from quality inspections;	Yes, restricted (0.75)
• Mechanisms to provide professional supervision for social workers to guide and support the quality of their operations.	No (0)

Indicator 5.6. Integration with communities

• Quality is ensured by maximum integration of communities in service provision, reflected in the following:	A (3.5)
• Most services and programmes available to vulnerable children involve community and voluntary sectors in the planning, development and implementation of child protection;	Yes (1)
• There are specific community development and outreach programmes to promote child protection policies with account to local or regional priorities;	Yes, restricted (0.75)
• Mechanisms are in place to ensure that vulnerable children remain close to their homes for as long as possible;	Yes, restricted (0.75)
• Restorative juvenile justice is done through responsible policies which align the needs of young offenders with social welfare capacities in the communities.	Yes (1)

DOMAIN 6. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS AND INFLUENCING

Indicator 6.1. Clarity of child protection communication strategy

• Public communication and influencing plans in child protection are expressed in the following:	B (2.00)
• The government has undertaken evidence-based diagnostic studies of attitudinal factors and risks in child protection;	Yes, restricted (0.75)
• The government has a communication strategy for child protection, which outlines key objectives, messages, target audiences, influencing methods and mechanisms to obtain feedback;	No, extended (0.25)
• Communications objectives in child protection includes measures to assess and bridge any gaps between statute law and religious, customary and traditional law;	No, extended (0.25)
• Messages and action points from the agreed communication strategy are incorporated in the on-going programmes and measures in child protection related fields.	Yes, restricted (0.75)

Indicator 6.2. Availability of evidence on values attitudes customs and traditions

• Communications are supported by the following:	D (0)
• Number of barometric or other attitudinal surveys conducted over the last five years to assess and measure public attitudes towards child abuse, exploitation, and violence is positive and growing;	No (0)
• Number of surveys over the last five years to assess and measure outcomes for children related to key specific child protection priorities in country (e.g. violence against children) are positive and growing;	No (0)
• Number of national studies related to cultural context, traditional beliefs and attitudes to child protection is positive and growing;	No (0)
• Any gaps and collisions between child protection agenda and customary laws are well researched and clearly formulated; research is underway to design ways to bridge existing divergences.	No (0)

Indicator 6.3. Alertness to changing risks and vulnerabilities

• Child protection communications include the following:	A (3.0)
• Communication strategies are regularly updated to incorporate new child protection risks;	Yes, restricted (0.75)
• Programmes in child protection communications cover new and emerging vulnerabilities (e.g. related to digital technologies, new trends in tourism, climate change);	Yes, restricted (0.75)
• Public communication and awareness raising plans addressing key child protection concerns have been prepared specifically for key relevant intermittent natural emergencies;	Yes, restricted (0.75)
• Communication and influencing programmes to prepare for child protection risks resulting from potential social disruptions (conflict, civil disorder).	Yes, restricted (0.75)

Indicator 6.4. Interactive and on going engagement with key audiences

• Implementation of the child protection communications strategy includes:	B (2.5)
• A breakdown of strategic communication objectives into smaller short-term and more manageable tasks (“the sprints”);	Yes, restricted (0.75)
• Regular discussions of communications agenda and context by the coordination structures in child protection (“the scrum”) resulting in correction of messages and approaches;	Yes, restricted (0.75)
• Activities to keep track of the changing communication context and to involve inputs from key audiences (children, parents, community-leaders, faith-based organizations, etc.);	Yes, restricted (0.75)
• The process of approval of fresh communication content is straightforward and transparent.	No, extended (0.25)

Indicator 6.5. Building on existing positive values

• Communications and behaviour change strategies in child protection incorporate existing positive values and achievements:	A (3.0)
• Messages and behaviour change programmes clearly link to current positive views on children, society, and human rights;	Yes, restricted (0.75)
• Communication programmes identify barriers to behaviour change and offer information and user-friendly solutions on how these could be overcome;	Yes, restricted (0.75)
• Communications offer a range of positive consequences of stronger protection for children;	Yes, restricted (0.75)
• Government agencies use a range of best practice models, cases and positive deviance examples to demonstrate how child protection issues could be positively resolved.	Yes, restricted (0.75)

Indicator 6.6. Involvement of key opinion leaders

• The government cooperates with the following stakeholders with the aim of promoting positive attitudes in child protection:	B (2.5)
• Community leaders;	Yes, restricted (0.75)
• Faith-based organizations;	Yes (1)
• Other influential organizations and individuals;	No (0)
• Children themselves.	Yes, restricted (0.75)

ANNEX 2. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Domain	Recommendation
Policy process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin long-term preparations to significantly enhance capacities of local administrations for strategic planning, budgeting and coordination with central authorities, given their growing role in child protection policy. • The currently on-going review of the National Disaster Management Act 1998 and the National Disaster Management Plan 1995 present an opportunity to incorporate child-specific concerns into these documents. In addition, a separate policy may be developed by the NCCC within the Protection Cluster. The NCCC could more actively join DISMAC efforts on preventative risk mapping to incorporate child specific issues. • A practical mechanism must be developed to feed key action points agreed on the NCCC to senior ministerial executives from member-agencies. Capacity building in strategic internal communications could be of significant help. • The Strategic Framework for Change Coordinating Office (SFCCO) could benefit from some awareness raising on child protection issues and encouraged to extend their analytical feedback. • Current health sector reform is a window of opportunity for specific child protection up-skill. The reform is focused on large investment into capacity building at the primary level and public health strengthening. These programmes should include modules on child protection (including in the currently developed on-line training packages). Child welfare commitments should also be reflected in the Public Health Act which is currently under review led by the Health Policy Commission. MoSWWPA (e.g. through the NCCC) could consider submitting a respective proposal to the review process. • Activate support to whole-of-government policy development for child protection. Install cooperation with the new legislative structures that will be developed within the new Parliament so that child protection issues are integrated into parliamentary legislative scrutiny.
Public financial management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCCC needs to start monitoring the size of spending (total and child protection related) from provincial and municipal budgets. • To counteract the shift of policy away from the currently flexible system, the line ministries should consider diligent financial reporting as their utmost priority. They should also focus on demonstrating a clear link between their budget decisions and strategic objectives, as a matter of advocacy in favour of retaining the current level of flexibility. • MoSWWPA should invest in mastering newly introduced tools for cash flow and commitment management, such as the MoF Proforma Finance Manual 2011 which outlines new requirements for cash flow forecasting for all spending units. The Audit Committee of the MoSWWPA could be strengthened and encouraged to look into the high variation of spending with the view to help policy-makers achieve more stable projections. • MoSWWPA and other agencies would benefit from more proactive communication of their long-term costing at the stage of submitting their budget requests. A joint expenditure prioritization and negotiation policy may be discussed under the NCCC umbrella. • Gradual preparation should start to take place for the future fiscal consolidation. Ministries which were traditionally resistant to engaging into performance audits offered by the Auditor General office might consider starting such co-operation (e.g. based on the currently specified benefit targets for all programmes). The NCCC may consider inviting partners from agencies experienced in implementing cost-benefit analysis (CBA) to share their lessons and design ways to implement this tool for child protection initiatives. Successful cases of CBA in other sectors include Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change; Health Sector and Education Sector reforms; and transfer to electronic payments of Family Assistance grants. Importantly, the government have just begun receiving support from the Pacific Cost-Benefit Analysis Initiative (P-CBA) including training in CBA for natural resource management. It is a window of opportunity to request P-CBA to include modules on child protection so that disaster preparedness initiatives could be assessed from the perspective of ensuring safety for vulnerable children.

Human resource management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of new reward system should be encouraged and concrete cases made visible to all staff; in the meantime, managers may intensify the use of non-financial rewards which are currently underutilized. The impact of lacking sanctions should be further investigated, to strengthen both formal and informal influencing tools. • Staff could be strongly encouraged to seek training through the CTD and to share their knowledge gaps. • Although upgrading social welfare posts to a higher rank would lead to extra costs, this should be strategically considered. Heads of Departments and PSs should also promote stronger compliance with PSC transfer regulations and consider more active discussion of the transfer plans with the staff. • Support the current momentum for development of Professional Standards for Social Workers, making sure that they clearly define the profession of social work, and set up a way to recognize not only academic qualifications and diplomas but also practical experience of many social workers in Fiji. • The NCCC could launch and maintain a database of brief summaries of key lessons, experiences, contacts and products generated from previous projects. Much of this information could be requested from the funding agencies as a matter of formal obligation, especially for the future initiatives. Individual ministries would also benefit from specific investment into better documentation of their on-going work. A library of annual reports and relevant documents could be created under the NCCC and, ideally, made open through a web-based resource.
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Information management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake a mapping of the Child protection Information Management process. A useful prototype is the mapping already conducted for the Health Information System. This mapping could be used to develop a Child protection Information Management Policy – of the type which already exists for health sector data collection and exchange. • Streamline, simplify and standardise internal data sharing protocols; useful lessons could be drawn from the previous work on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) systems. • Explore ways to speed up data consolidation by the headquarters, either by enhancing respective posts or by strengthening data processing skills. • Develop a practical model for child protection surveillance including protocols for analysis and sharing of relevant administrative records. This should be a joint effort with (a) the Ministry of Health, so that surveillance indicators for child abuse are included into the currently reformed Health Information System, and (b) FIBOS, so that the system includes data collected through population surveys. • Data officers should be directed to relevant CTD courses. In the meantime, it would be useful to develop a practical toolkit, manual and interactive training in data analysis for child protection. This toolkit could be used regionally and could be incorporate into the regular CTD curriculum. • Consider inviting FIBOS to the NCCC (either as a member or as invitee); consider using their surveys; and consider using FIBOS as a hub for consolidating more information on child protection as is currently done with the data from Fiji police – perhaps as a lead agency in developing the integrated surveillance system • Consider linking the child protection agencies (individually or through the NCCC) with the geo-spatial planning champions (DISMAC and FIBOS) so that child protection issues are included into the risk assessment model. • Consider partnering with the CHIPSR to either include a child protection module to its current operations or to replicate their experience to create a similar unit under the USP School of Social Sciences.
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Quality assurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The DoSW may consider ways to extend current Minimum Standards of Residential Care to the rest of service providers and extend these standards to cover non-residential services. • At the very minimum, the current set of standards should become more transparent (openly published and promoted across all NGOs, rather than just the government grantees and approved institutions); ideally, they should become law. • In addition, a mandatory certification procedure based on these standards, along with a feasible mechanism to sanction violations, would be an important next step. One possible option to consider as an enforcement tool could be a joint policy with the Chief Registrar whose office currently bears responsibility for legal incorporation of all NGOs in Fiji and power to cancel incorporation, although the current plausible reasons are limited to fraud and unlawful actions. At the very least, the Registrar should provide a working-level access to the list of currently incorporated NGOs involved in social welfare activities to the DoSW for the purposes of designing a supervision system. • The current practice of risk analysis for identifying vulnerable communities could become a cornerstone for gradual development of a full-scale surveillance system. Key agencies to lead in this initiative (MoSWWPA, in cooperation with the MoH, Fiji police and FIBOS) would benefit from respective training and technical support.
Public communications and influencing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider involving influential public figures and celebrities into delivering value-changing messages for child protection. • Future internationally led attitudinal studies should clearly link to the government's own programmatic agendas (such as those formulated in the RDSSSED and ministerial corporate plans) and, ideally, engage at least a symbolic co-funding from the state budget so that diagnostic attitudinal research is recognized as a practical investment. This should also help to extend communication objectives to cover a comprehensive range of child protection concerns rather than the currently selective areas such as positive parenting, child labour or school-based abuse. The government-owned communication strategy should also involve clear specification of audiences and methods, perhaps with a stronger involvement of media campaigns, social advertising, socially responsible investments by the private sector and other state-of-the-art techniques. • Consider forging stronger working-level cooperation with the USP student and research communities to draw attention to child protection concerns, make government's attitudinal questions known to the academia, and request research on the issue. The government could initiate specific joint events with the students to present key policy concerns and use teasers in the form of access to data, access to field-level experience and honorary recognition of any contributing work.

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