

# CAEVAC Evaluation Summary

## Project Overview

The Collective Action to End Violence Against Children (CAEVAC) project was a five-year initiative led by Save the Children Fiji (SCF) with support from Save the Children New Zealand (SCNZ) and funding from the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT). Implemented from 2020 to 2025, the project aimed to strengthen community-based child protection systems and reduce violence against children across 24 communities, including formal iTaukei villages and informal settlements in Fiji. CAEVAC focused on raising awareness, building skills, and promoting behavioural change among parents, caregivers, children, and community leaders through participatory training, peer engagement, and local leadership development. The project also sought to strengthen national frameworks and partnerships by working closely with key government agencies such as the Ministry of Women, Children, and Social Protection, the Fiji Police Force, and the iTaukei Affairs Board. By embedding child protection into community structures and institutional systems, CAEVAC contributed to a more integrated and sustainable approach to children's safety and well-being in Fiji.

## Evaluation Purpose and Methodology

The end-of-project evaluation aimed to assess CAEVAC's performance against its intended objectives and outcomes, using internationally recognised evaluation standards. It focused on measuring the project's relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability, particularly in strengthening community-based child protection systems, improving children's safety and participation, and influencing government collaboration and policy changes. The findings were intended to inform future programming, contribute to organizational learning, and ensure accountability to key stakeholders, including the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), Save the Children New Zealand (SCNZ), and national partners. The evaluation also aimed to generate actionable recommendations to guide a potential second phase of the CAEVAC initiative. A mixed-methods approach was used, combining both qualitative and quantitative tools to gather insights from 24 communities across the Central Division of Fiji. Surveys with children and adults were complemented by key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and case studies involving focal points, project staff, and community stakeholders. Data was disaggregated by gender, age, and community, and safety measures were embedded throughout to ensure ethical and inclusive participation, particularly for children.

## Project Impact

The CAEVAC project has contributed to long-term, sustainable improvements in the safety and well-being of children in Fiji by making child protection part of everyday community practices. Over its five years of implementation, CAEVAC supported 24 communities, including both iTaukei villages and informal settlements, to develop stronger, locally driven child protection structures. Through community child clubs, child protection committees, and trained community focal points, the project created safe spaces for children to express their views, increased adult understanding of nonviolent parenting, and strengthened community attitudes and actions to prevent and respond to violence. These efforts have led to lasting shifts in attitudes and behaviours. Parents and caregivers reported stronger, more respectful relationships with their children. Village leaders integrated child protection into existing bylaws and community routines, including curfews, devotion time, and community meetings. Focal points and volunteers in many sites ran concurrent awareness sessions, home visits, and child club activities beyond the scope of the project, showing signs of local ownership and sustainability.

At the national level, CAEVAC's collaboration with the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Protection (MWCSP), the Fiji Police Force (FPF), and the iTaukei Affairs Board (iTAB) helped extend the project's reach and influence. Child protection training was delivered across all the provinces and to key government stakeholders. Specialized toolkits were developed or updated and rolled out, including Parenting Without Violence, Children Are a Precious Gift from God, and the Child Participation Toolkit – launched just before project closure. CAEVAC's alignment with national policy goals also supported broader reforms, including the reactivation of the National Coordinating Committee for Children and the passing of the Child Care and Protection Act and Child Justice Act in 2024. Together, these achievements reflect CAEVAC's lasting impact on children's safety in Fiji. By combining grassroots mobilisation with policy engagement, the project helped to establish more protective environments for children, environments where violence is less tolerated, support networks are more visible, and children's voices are recognised as part of the solution.

## **Key Outcomes**

### **Safer Communities and Families**

In all 24 communities, parents and caregivers learned how to better protect children. At the beginning, most adults were not familiar with child protection systems. By the end of the project, 87% felt confident in recognising and responding to child abuse. More than half (54%) had stronger beliefs and attitudes against violence, and 69% said they were willing to report abuse. Parents also learned new, more respectful ways to talk to and discipline children. Harmful practices like shouting and hitting were openly discussed and challenged in parenting sessions, churches, and community meetings.

### **Over 1,300 Parents and Children Strengthened in Child Safeguarding**

More than 1,300 children and adults directly benefited from CAEVAC activities, including children in clubs and parents and caregivers who took part in training. In all 24 communities, child clubs were set up and became safe spaces for children to learn about their rights, speak up about safety issues, and support each other. By the end of the project, 88% of children felt safe in their communities, and 59% showed good knowledge of their rights. Children's active involvement helped change how communities respond to protection issues and supported a new generation of confident, informed youth leaders.

### **Local Leadership and Focal Points Driving Change**

Community focal points, trained volunteers working alongside the Turaga-ni-Koros and religious leaders, played a key role in sustaining activities. Many focal points led awareness sessions, supported children and families in need, and built relationships with nearby police posts and social services. Some communities adopted child-centred bylaws, such as designated study times and restrictions on late-night movement, reinforcing local norms around child safety.

### **Stronger Partnerships Between Communities and Institutions**

The CAEVAC project helped build strong working relationships between communities and important government agencies like the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Protection (MWCSP), the Fiji Police Force, and the iTaukei Affairs Board (iTAB). These partnerships made it easier to share child protection messages and support families through joint training, awareness sessions, and community visits. CAEVAC's tools were used by police officers, social workers, and other frontline staff to talk about child safety in churches, settlements, and village meetings. These efforts improved trust between families and service providers and supported government goals to keep children safe, promote family care, and involve traditional leaders in protecting children.

## **National Policy Support and Reform**

At the national level, CAEVAC helped create momentum for child protection reform. Project staff and partners contributed to consultation processes for the Child Justice Act and the Child Care and Protection Act. Awareness campaigns and data from the project were used to inform policy discussions and amplify children's and communities' voices. The re-establishment of the National Coordinating Committee for Children in 2025 provides a mechanism to carry forward these gains.

## **Key Outputs**

### **24 Communities Engaged Across 3 Provinces in Fiji**

The CAEVAC project supported 24 communities across Fiji's Central Division, including both iTaukei villages and informal settlements. These sites were selected based on high levels of violence and limited access to child protection services.

### **Child Clubs established in 24 Communities**

Child clubs were set up or revitalised in all 24 communities, involving 449 children. These clubs provided safe spaces for children to learn about their rights, build confidence, and support one another. Many clubs continued operating after the project ended, reflecting strong community ownership and sustainability.

### **Child Protection Integrated into Community Structures**

CAEVAC helped embed child protection into local governance systems. In iTaukei villages, child safety was integrated into village development committees. In informal settlements, the project worked through local Crime Prevention Committees. These groups received training, developed action plans, and built stronger links with police and social services, strengthening local leadership and long-term responsibility for keeping children safe.

### **Over 800 Parents and Caregivers Trained**

More than 866 parents and caregivers participated in structured training across the 24 communities. Training topics included child safeguarding, non-violent discipline through the Parenting Without Violence package, and faith-based approaches through Children Are a Precious Gift from God. These sessions helped families create safer, more nurturing home environments.

### **Over 200 key stakeholders trained in Child Safeguarding Approaches**

Around 204 key stakeholders, including ministry staff, provincial council officers, and community policing personnel, were trained in child safeguarding approaches. The training clarified protection principles, reporting responsibilities, and referral pathways. It supported the operational goals of the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs, MWCSP, and the Fiji Police Force by strengthening frontline capacity to prevent and respond to child protection concerns.

### **Four PCAN Day Celebrations Held Through Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships**

CAEVAC organised four annual PCAN Day events in partnership with over seven government ministries, NGOs, civil society groups, and faith-based organisations. More than 3,000 people attended across four years, including children, parents, community leaders, and government representatives. These events featured advocacy performances by children and provided direct access to services such as counselling, birth registration, and social welfare referrals, advancing the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Protection's mandate to increase public awareness and service access in underserved areas.

## Snapshot

### Project Overview



24

Target Communities

Donor NZ  
MFAT



5

Year  
Project

3

Provinces



21

Informal  
Settlements

3



iTaukei Villages

3



Key Government  
Partners

### Capacity Building and Training



4

Training packages  
rolled out throughout  
the project

110

iTAB staff

trained in  
CP/PwV



9



Provincial Councils  
receiving training in  
CP/PwV

866

Adults  
trained in  
CP/PwV



87

Fiji Police –  
Community Police  
Officers trained in  
CP/PwV

66%

Women trained in CP/PwV



7



MWCSP staff trained  
in PwV



4

Divisions  
of Community Police  
Officers trained in CP/PwV

### Community Engagement & Events



4

PCAN events  
organized  
annually

674

Attendees at PCAN  
2024



449

Children

attended child club  
awareness sessions



## Behaviour and Systems Change

87% of parents

have high perceptions that CP systems and plans are in place



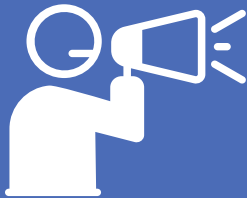
88% of

children have high to moderate perceptions of safety



54%

of adults had high changes in beliefs, attitudes, and norms on violence against children



69%

of adults have positive attitudes toward reporting child abuse incidents

59%

of children have high to moderate knowledge of their rights



## Project Reach and Beneficiaries



24 Child Clubs  
established



1315

Direct project beneficiaries reported



61% of direct  
beneficiaries were women

## Next Steps for Save the Children Fiji and Government Partners

To sustain and build on the gains made through CAEVAC, coordinated action is needed from government ministries, local authorities, and community partners. The following steps are recommended to translate the project's outcomes into long-term, broad improvements across community and government systems in child protection:

### 1. Operationalize New Child Protection Laws

Work with the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Protection, the Ministry of Education, the Fiji Police Force, and civil society organizations to finalize and roll out user-friendly implementation guides, including simplified summaries and FAQs, to help frontline staff and community members understand and apply the laws. This should include nationwide training for frontline staff, such as police officers, teachers, health workers, and social service providers, and accessible community awareness efforts to ensure consistent and inclusive application of the laws.

### 2. Institutionalize Focal Point and Safeguarding Training

Collaborate with the Ministry of Women, Children, and Social Protection and the Ministry of Education to embed safeguarding and child protection training into existing training frameworks for school staff and community leaders. This will strengthen local-level accountability, promote uniform protection standards, and ensure continuity of community-based support networks beyond external project funding.

### 3. Strengthen Local Child Protection Committees

Support the establishment or revitalization of Child Protection Committees in partnership with the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs and the Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development. Ensure these committees have clear terms of reference, standard operating procedures, and linkages to district and national referral mechanisms. This will help embed sustainable structures for local leadership and response to child safety issues.

### 4. Invest in Inclusive, Community-Led Awareness Campaigns

Design and implement ongoing awareness campaigns on child rights and protection in partnership with faith-based groups, schools, and the media. Campaigns should be accessible in vernacular languages and deliberately include messages for and about children with disabilities and those in vulnerable settings, to ensure wide reach and inclusive impact.

### 5. Allocate Dedicated Budget Lines for Child Protection

Advocate for child protection to be prioritized in both national and subnational budget planning. Establishing dedicated budget lines will support continuity of training, outreach, and community-based activities such as child clubs, parenting programs, and safeguarding initiatives, helping to institutionalize gains made through CAEVAC.

## Reference Note

This end-of-project evaluation was conducted by James Sinclair and Mere Vunisa, Independent Evaluators. The evaluation was completed in June 2025. For access to the full report, please contact Save the Children Fiji at [info@savethechildren.org.fj](mailto:info@savethechildren.org.fj).