

## Pacific Coalition for the Advancement of School Safety (PCASS) Final Evaluation



**Pacific Coalition for the Advancement of School Safety**

For a bright future safe from disasters for all children

**The Pacific Coalition for the Advancement of School Safety is a step to strengthen our commitment to protect children's rights to safety and survival, to educational continuity, to safeguard education sector investments, and build a culture of safety.**

The program aims to bring partners together in support of Ministries of Education and National Disaster Management Offices to collectively improve School Safety across the Pacific. This includes working to make all school facilities structurally safe and able to protect children during disasters, to ensure appropriate school disaster management practices are effectively implemented, and that risk reduction and resilience education is taught in school in order to build a culture of safety in schools and in communities.

Right: Children undertake hazard mapping in their school.  
Photo: Save the Children  
Below: Young girl participates in Child Rights Education Program. Photo: Fiji Save the Children



Financed by



The report was prepared by Nami Kurimoto, Program Quality Advisor and David Nye, Manager Program Quality, Save the Children Australia in January 2017. 33 Lincoln Square South Carlton Victoria 3053 Australia

## Table of Contents

Acknowledgement .....	ii
Abbreviations .....	iii
Executive Summary .....	iv
1. Introduction and Background .....	1
2. Scope and Purpose of the Evaluation .....	2
3. Methodology.....	2
4. Key Findings .....	5
5. Discussion and Recommendations .....	17
References .....	22

## Acknowledgement

The final evaluation is a result of analysis and field work conducted on the Pacific Coalition for the Advancement of School Safety (PCASS) project. The authors would like to acknowledge and express our gratitude to all the key partners, teachers and students who participated in the evaluation interviews and focus group discussions. Their support and voices were invaluable in gaining an understanding of their experiences of the PCASS project. We wish to express special appreciation to the PCASS project team and Save the Children Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu teams, who supported the evaluation process. In addition, we acknowledge staff from Save the Children Denmark and Australia who were involved in the process and provided constructive feedback.

We would also like to acknowledge the support of the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department for providing the funds for the PCASS project.

## Abbreviations

DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
ECHO	European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department
ECCD	Early Childhood Care and Development
ED	Education District
EiE	Education in Emergencies
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
MEHRD	Ministry of Education & Human Resources Development
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOET	Ministry of Education and Training
NDMO	National Disaster Management Office
PCASS	Pacific Coalition for the Advancement of School Safety
PICs	Pacific Island Countries
SDM	School Disaster Management
SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
UNISDR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
WISS	Worldwide Initiative for School Safety

## Executive Summary

In April 2015, Save the Children began implementing the ECHO-funded Pacific Coalition for the Advancement of School Safety (PCASS) project in Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, as well as a regional component across the Pacific. The project was designed to be implemented over an 18-month period. The PCASS project aimed to contribute towards the disaster resilience of children and the education sector in the Pacific, with an objective to build and equip a coalition of stakeholders to collaboratively advance a comprehensive approach to improving school safety in the Pacific.

The final evaluation aimed to measure the progress against the stated objective and results. It also examined the strengths and weaknesses of the project and project model as a means of achieving impact in the Pacific region. Key findings compared and contrasted the approaches of the project implementation across Fiji and Solomon Islands to the School Disaster Management (SDM) resources developed in Vanuatu. The evaluation provided recommendations for scaling up of school safety initiatives in the Pacific region.

The evaluation is based on analysis of school visits and semi-structured interviews with key national and international partners, and project staff. The grey literature review was selectively conducted to develop semi-structured questionnaires and to verify information that was addressed during interviews. It was designed to build on the Mid Term Review of the project which was conducted from January to February, 2016.

The evaluation found that the momentum for school safety provided through the PCASS energised the development of national policies and strategies as well as SDM activities at schools in each country. The PCASS project assisted various international partners to provide technical support to the national stakeholders and enabled Save the Children to develop capacity among the national authorities and school teachers on school safety. The estimated total number of direct beneficiaries were reported to be 4,221 individuals and 28 organisations. The PCASS also created an opportunity for other Pacific Island Countries (PICs) to join the regional discussions on School Safety. There were, however, some variances in the commitment to the process of school safety between the national education and disaster management authorities in Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

Major findings and discussion include:

- There is a challenge for the Pacific regional focus to stand out under the regional category of an “Asia-Pacific” coalition for School Safety. Although the PACSS promoted national and regional

school safety strategies and activities, what the Pacific has implemented hasn't been captured by global attention yet.

- SDM materials developed in Vanuatu were contextualized, adapted and tested in Solomon Islands and Fiji. Both countries incorporated their own national education policy, as well as their cultural and geographical contexts into their version of the materials. The partnership between MOE and Save the Children has proved to be invaluable, especially in regards to technical and operational support.

- A package of templates and materials to support the implementation of national programs for school disaster management, and formal and informal risk reduction and resilience education is now available online to other PICs. It will be essential to continue to communicate the existence of this material and how it can be used to promote the update of using this existing materials.

- 'Key Messages' and 'Education Sector Snapshots' are only effective if used. The national key messages were developed or updated in all three countries. As with the online resources material, these documents will need to be promoted and partners showed how they will strengthen their existing work for them to be used.

Summary of recommendations for PCASS to scale up:

- **It is necessary to present results from PCASS by conducting some studies.** It will be valuable to document the learnings from the project and broadly present Pacific experiences in public. There is currently a gap in publicly available information on this thematic area in the Pacific region. It will also be useful to have the situation analysis ready.

- **The regional cooperation for advancing school safety needs to be strengthened to exchange lessons learned across PICs.** This can contribute to representing the Pacific voice within the Worldwide Initiative for School Safety (WISS). At the recent Pacific Regional Platform on DRR, five countries; Samoa, Vanuatu, Fiji, PNG and Tuvalu, formally committed to signing up to the WISS, to become School Safety Champions and School Safety Leaders for the Pacific region. Applying the similar geographic and climate change issues, Fiji and Vanuatu appeared both strong leaders in this space. They can share their experiences on how the MOE and MOET promoted the national school safety plans in the country and use of SDM activities at schools with other Pacific countries. Discussion boards on the web-site can be established to promote and exchange information across countries in the region.

➤ **It is required to identify other funding opportunities and submit a proposal for implementing the next phase of the PCASS.** For any new proposal development, it is essential to have strong evidence and a current situation analysis to demonstrate the solid foundation that was established under PCASS. The regionally unique approaches, which Fiji has already taken, can be highlighted as examples of integrating climate change into DRR and Education and utilising traditional knowledge surrounding hazards.

➤ **Any existing Education, DRR and climate change projects at Save the Children can carry on the PCASS activities, especially SDM activities at schools.** As Vanuatu suggested, school-based activities can be integrated and promoted during school visits and/or monitoring under existing projects. It is necessary for Save the Children to keep advocating the importance of school safety initiatives in each country so that the MOE and NDMO can start allocating their budgets into those activities. Vanuatu showed that this can be achieved.

## 1. Introduction and Background

The Pacific Island Countries (PICs) are highly exposed to a range of natural hazards, which can lead to disasters and emergencies. These countries have suffered from frequent cyclones, floods, drought, earthquakes and volcanic activity, exacerbated by climate change and rising sea levels. Every year such natural hazards affect children's social and emotional well-being, as well as their educational achievement.

In April 2015, Save the Children started the implementation of the Pacific Coalition for the Advancement of School Safety (PCASS) project in Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. The PCASS was designed for implementation over 18 months and was funded by the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department (ECHO). The project aimed to contribute towards the resilience of children and national education systems to the impacts of natural hazards and climate change across PICs. The successful implementation of the project supports a regional approach to advancing school safety, including supporting regional engagement with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) Worldwide Initiative for School Safety (WISS). It also supports national governments to effectively: (1) protect learners and education workers from death, injury and harm in schools; (2) plan for educational continuity in the face of all expected hazards and threats; (3) safeguard education sector investments; and (4) strengthen risk reduction and resilience through education<sup>1</sup>.

The specific objective of the project was to build and equip a coalition of stakeholders to collaboratively advance a comprehensive approach to improving school safety in the Pacific. Three result areas were identified:

- 1) One regional and three national plans to advance school safety (and Education in Emergencies, EiE) in the Pacific have been developed;
- 2) The suite of Schools Disaster Management activities developed in Vanuatu are adapted to and tested in Solomon Islands and Fiji; and
- 3) A package of templates and materials to support the implementation of national programs for school disaster management, and formal or informal risk reduction and resilience education is widely available to PICs national stakeholders.

---

<sup>1</sup> PCASS Interim Report (narrative summary).

## 2. Scope and Purpose of the Evaluation

The final evaluation aimed to measure the progress against the stated objective and results. It also investigated the strengths and weaknesses of the project and project model as a means of achieving effects in the Pacific region. In particular, the findings compare and contrast the project implementation across three countries. Key questions and analysis to be explored throughout the evaluation included:

- The extent to which the project objective and results have been achieved;
- The extent to which the project has improved school safety in the targeted countries and region more broadly;
- The strengths and weaknesses of the project model; and
- Critical analysis of the project's capacity and ability for scale-up.

The evaluation also provided recommendations for scale-up of school safety implementation for the Pacific. The findings of the evaluation will be shared with stakeholders, including donors, to promote investment in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Education for the region.

The report is organised to present the methodology in the next section. Then, it describes key findings based on the interviews with national and international partners, staff from three country project teams and Save the Children member offices as well as grey literature review. The findings are presented according to each result area. In particular, key findings around the second result were drawn from several school visits, which involved discussions with teachers and students in Fiji and Solomon Islands. The report then leads to discussion and concludes with key recommendations for future scale up.

## 3. Methodology

The final evaluation was conducted by using three methods: 1) Grey literature review<sup>2</sup>; 2) Semi-structured interviews with national and international partners as well as project staff; and 3) School visits that contain semi-structured interviews with teachers and focus group discussions with students. The evaluation was scheduled for September and October, 2016 and the report was completed in

---

<sup>2</sup> Access to project reports, which were maintained under each holder per activity, was provided by the PCASS regional project manager. In addition, the most recent versions of particular reports that were addressed during interviews, e.g. Education Sector Snapshots, National Priority Setting Workshop reports were also shared electronically.

December, 2016. In particular, in-country evaluation work in Fiji and Solomon Islands took place during the second week of October, 2016.

### 1) Literature Review

The grey literature review was conducted as the first step to guide the development of the semi-structured questionnaire<sup>3</sup> for the interviews. A Mid Term Review of the project was conducted from January to February, 2016 and to build on this, the activities that were identified during the last half of the project implementation were highlighted as supplemental questions. These also included country-specific questions. The grey literature was referred to throughout the evaluation process to help clarify more detailed information that was discussed during the interviews.

### 2) Semi-structured interviews

Key informant interviews were conducted with government staff and development partners in each country based on the semi-structured questionnaires. The questionnaires were slightly modified for national or international partners to further explore national, regional and global aspects throughout the PCASS implementation. Face-to-face interviews were conducted in each country. Participants in those interviews were identified by PCASS project staff in each country. Those participants included:

- In Fiji, 3 staff at the Ministry of Education (MOE), 1 staff at UNISDR, 1 staff at the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC).
- In Solomon Islands, 1 staff at the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO), 2 staff at the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (MEHRD) and 1 staff at Live and Learn.
- In Vanuatu, 1 staff from the following institutions: Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) and Live and Learn.

The following PCASS project staff were also interviewed: 1 staff in Fiji, 2 staff in Solomon Islands, and 1 staff in Vanuatu. It also involved 2 project staff from Save the Children member offices: 1 staff in Fiji and 1 staff in Melbourne office<sup>4</sup>. Those interviews were conducted through Skype except face-to-face interviews in Fiji and Solomon Islands.

### 3) School Visits

School visits were conducted in Fiji and Solomon Islands to understand the progress around SDM activities. Out of the total number of 15 pilot schools in each country, three primary schools: 2 schools

---

<sup>3</sup> The questionnaire can be made available upon request.

<sup>4</sup> At the time of interviews, their affiliations later changed.

in Suva education district (ED) and 1 school in Nausori ED were selected in Fiji. In Solomon Islands, two schools were selected, 1 from North East Guadalcanal and 1 from Sahalu. In Fiji, a total number of 8 teachers participated in interviews or discussions<sup>5</sup> which involved at least one teacher who participated in the training delivered by Save the Children and at least one teacher who was trained by the teacher who participated in the training organised by Save the Children. In Solomon Islands, a total number of 4 teachers were involved all of whom had received training from Save the Children. In addition, school visits included focus group discussions with students from grade 4 to grade 8<sup>6</sup> in Fiji and grade 3 to grade 5 in Solomon Islands. Relatively equal proportion of girls and boys participated in discussions. Although students from grade 1 to 3 have been involved in school safety activities at the selected schools in Fiji, grade 4 to 8 students were selected as they were expected to engage more independently than younger children during discussions.

Prior to the interviews and schools visits, the purpose and scope of this evaluation were explained to all participants. Consent forms were completed and confidentiality was assured<sup>7</sup>. Each interview and discussion took approximately one hour. Interviews that took place in Fiji were tape recorded upon agreements by the interviewees and were facilitated by Save the Children staff using both English and local languages. In Solomon Islands focus group discussions with children were conducted in local languages and led by Save the Children staff. After the interviews and discussions were completed, brief notes were compiled to summarise discussions. At the end of all interviews held throughout the evaluation an analysis was completed by cross checking the notes and taped records.

### **Limitations**

There were several limitations on this evaluation since the initial plan has changed due to unexpected circumstances. First, this evaluation was conducted internally within Save the Children country and member offices due to limited financial and human resources. The interviews and focus group discussions were conducted by Save the Children staff which could result in a slight bias since some interviewers have previous interactions with interviewees, teachers and/or students. To mitigate this, interviewers followed consistent instructions and followed the questions developed. Secondly, some country teams experienced challenges in arranging interviews with national and international partners with whom the evaluation initially identified because those partners were unavailable. Although several follow ups were conducted, some interviews did not happen. Despite such limitations, the authors feel that they had sufficient information to complete this report.

---

<sup>5</sup> At one school a focus group discussion was conducted with teachers due to time constraints.

<sup>6</sup> Although grade 4-6 were initially identified to be targeted population, it was informed that grade 1-8 have actually been participating into SDM activities at schools in Fiji during the project staff interview in a country.

<sup>7</sup> Only a number of the participants per institution and country are stated in the report based on our agreements with them.

## 4. Key Findings

This section provides the main findings to the key questions, which leads to section 5 on further discussion. These findings are presented in the order of the objective and result areas by addressing similarities and uniqueness of the progress for the project activities in each country. In addition, for each result area, analyses were conducted against each activity in the plan. Finally, some findings around strengths and weaknesses of the project model will be described.

***Objective: To build and equip a coalition of stakeholders to collaboratively advance a comprehensive approach to improving School Safety in the Pacific***

Much of the earlier efforts around school safety in the Pacific were organised independently and in an ad hoc manner, furthermore they were often conducted by external consultants in isolation of other regional initiatives and projects. A key contribution by PCASS was reported as consolidating individual activities into a harmonised initiative and aligning these with the Worldwide Initiative for Safe Schools (WISS). This also applied to the Comprehensive School Safety (CSS) framework, especially addressing the three pillars of the framework: safe learning facilities (disaster-resilient infrastructure), school disaster management and disaster risk reduction and resilience education (UNISDR and Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction & Resilience in the Education Sector, 2014). Within the past 18 months, PCASS has successfully built up momentum for advancing school safety in the Pacific region. In particular, the project supported key national stakeholders, such as the MOE in Fiji, MOET in Vanuatu and the NDMOs in both countries, to take ownership of this initiative to help establish and contribute to the regional platform.

It was clear the momentum for school safety provided through PCASS energised the development of national policy and strategies as well as School Disaster Management (SDM) activities at schools in each country. The PCASS project assisted various international partners to provide technical support to the national stakeholders and enabled Save the Children to develop capacity among the national authorities and school teachers on school safety. According to PCASS Final Report, the estimated total number of direct beneficiaries were 4,221 individuals and 28 organisations<sup>8</sup>. In addition, the PCASS created an opportunity for other PICs, such as Papua New Guinea, Tonga, Samoa, Kiribati and Tuvalu to join the regional discussions on School Safety. It should be noted there was evidence of variance in the commitment to the process of school safety between the national education and disaster

---

<sup>8</sup> PCASS Final Report (page 10).

management authorities in Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. This will be described in the following section per result.

***Result 1: One regional and three national plans to advance school safety (and education in emergencies) in the Pacific have been developed.***

Three countries of Fiji, Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands have completed an “Education Sector Snapshot for Comprehensive School Safety and Education in Emergencies (EiE)” (which is a baseline of the institutional arrangements which support the delivery of School Safety and EiE activities). The three countries have also completed a five year roadmap of action plans, framed against the Comprehensive School Safety framework and policies. PCASS encouraged the MOE in Fiji and MOET in Vanuatu to further prioritise actions on School Safety and DRR in Education by supporting and/or strengthening a task force within the Ministry, especially Fiji and Vanuatu having already had EiE focal points established prior to 2014. In particular, the highlights in Fiji and Vanuatu was the national and regional consultations held, that led to strengthening national policy and strategies on School Safety and DRR in Education, especially how to deliver against the policies.

As Vanuatu and Fiji were hit by cyclones in 2015 and 2016, respectively, both countries tested and practiced those developed strategies on the ground. Save the Children Fiji observed that the Education cluster had the strongest response to manage Cyclone Winston as a contingency plan already existed. The national regulation on safe school buildings was also established in Fiji. Whilst the MOE in Fiji has emphasised the nationwide endorsement of their policies among all schools, they observed that the schools to which Save the Children Fiji has provided support, helped to advance their implementation of the school safety plans. In Vanuatu, the schools that were affected by Tropical Cyclone Pam were assessed and the condition of the schools were reported. This information and data was used to update the national school safety plans, especially shifting EiE towards a broader comprehensive school safety approach.

PCASS assisted the MEHRD in Solomon Islands to keep DRR and EiE on the agenda for their national education action plan but it was reported that the engagement with the MEHRD was a challenge. It was suggested this was due to the limited resources and the structural changes within the MEHRD. The Education in Emergency focal point has recently been given additional duties within the ministry leaving less time to focus on school safety.

National and international partners as well as project staff from all three countries identified that PCASS has improved coordination to advance school safety in the Pacific region by creating links with each country's activities. The PACSS project promoted having two national leading government bodies, i.e. MOE, MOET and the NDMOs, together. This helped synergise the information on School Safety and DRR in education at regional workshops. In particular, project staff from three countries recognised that PCASS strengthened the development of partnerships among key stakeholders, such as government officials, local and international experts in School Safety and DRR in Education.

International partners and project staff recognised it is a challenge for the Pacific regional focus to stand out from the Asian agenda. A quote by an international partner reflected this difficulty

*"... What the Pacific does just doesn't capture the rest of the world's attention ... We are the 'forgotten region,' when it comes to the global level ...".*

It was noted that an independent Pacific region would experience difficulty in securing sufficient funding, so being part of the Asia-Pacific strategy was unlikely to change. Through cross country discussions held at the first of the 2 regional workshops, it was indicated that there was a possibility of having the PCASS initiative integrated into the existing mechanisms of the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat (PIFS), such as the annual meeting through PIF Secretariat for Ministers of Education. This could potentially increase visibility of a PCASS initiative in the future. However, with the very recent launch of the Regional Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific and the current review of all of the PIFS working groups and fora, a suitable home has yet to be established.

Two unique approaches were identified as the key components from which the Asia region could learn: 1) integration of climate change with DRR in Education and 2) SDM learning curriculum for using traditional knowledge on natural hazards in Fiji. The first approach was identified as the MOE in Fiji worked with district education offices to identify which schools should be involved with DRR in Education and EiE activities. The MOE reported that they were approached by a community who requested a relocation of their school due to sea-level rise. Reflecting such communities' voices, that consider the long-term effects of climate change in the country and MOE's understanding on the importance of the issue, the School Safety initiative has addressed both DRR in Education/EiE and climate change. This is also supported by the curriculum development unit at MOE when they were involved in the development of SDM materials.

Secondly, the MOE developed a textbook that contains traditional knowledge and local wisdom on how people predict potential natural hazards. These culturally and locally sensitive approaches

should be globally recognised and replicated in different regions. Although it's been a challenge in getting the attention of the international communities on what the Pacific has been doing, it can be done and PCASS has helped highlight that potential, as international partners reported a number of unique national approaches.

The exchange visit to the Philippines from the MOEs and program managers in three Pacific countries suggested mixed results. Fiji presented productive outputs based on their observations of the Philippine case. There was differing views on whether the appropriate people from Solomon Islands attended, with one government official stating the attendees were mismatched due to not having the most senior people attend. In Vanuatu, however, a brief meeting took place with the Director of Education and Training who was very positive about the lessons learned from the Philippines. Two MOET staff who participated in the exchange visit presented at their senior level meeting. This resulted in promoting the integration of EiE into school improvement planning in 6 provinces and supporting plans to strengthen the national ministries EiE section by recruiting an additional 3 national officers who would work under each pillar of the Comprehensive School Safety. Other fruitful outputs were reported in Fiji where the MOE asked Save the Children to draft a policy brief on School Safety and DRR in Education to update and expand their existing EiE policy, and to use it to demonstrate their commitment to the WISS by the Ministry. The MOE also proposed to the Permanent Secretary the expansion of the unit that works on DRR in Education and EiE, as this had been done in the Philippines. In addition, the MOE now supports the involvement of the whole community during school drills and continues to promote the practicing of drills in order to reduce the evacuation time. This leaning was based on their observation of the drill demonstration at a school in the Philippines.

The exchange visit led to useful lessons as the PICs were exposed to what can be considered a very advanced level of activities in the Philippines. On the other hand, a question remains whether it was the best use of resources to go to the Philippines given the geographical, social and economic differences between PICs and the Philippines. One of the suggestions for the next action plan includes expanding the PCASS initiative to other countries in the Pacific through regional exchanges at the operational level. Such an exchange could be more relevant across the PICs as they face similar geographic and climate change issues, limited financial resources and limited internet access across small islands in each country.

The Pacific Platform for Disaster Risk Management 2016 was held in Suva, Fiji from 24 to 26 October<sup>9</sup>. This regional workshop opened up a window of opportunities for active exchanges among PICs and was particularly successful due to the presence, for the first time ever, of three Ministers of Education. Save the Children held two key events on the formal agenda. The first showcased Schools Safety in Action across the Pacific countries of Samoa, Vanuatu, Fiji, PNG and Tuvalu.

The second session was the high level meeting on Pacific Coalition for Safe Schools and the Worldwide Initiative for School Safety which was attended by three Education Ministers and two Ministry representatives, as well as the head of the UNISDR the Special Representative for the UN Secretary General, Save the Children, UNICEF and GIZ. One of the key outcomes was that all five countries formally committed to signing up to the WISS, to become School Safety Champions and School Safety Leaders for the Pacific region. Additionally, the outcomes statement of the whole conference, which feeds into global DRR processes, had a strong reflection of the education sector as the three points below were included:

- **COMMEND** the commitment by the Governments of Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu to be School Safety Champions for the Pacific region and School Safety Leaders as part of the Worldwide Initiative for Safe Schools (WISS), and to report back on achievements, progress and challenges. Encourage governments of other Pacific Island nations to also commit to WISS.
- **RECOMMEND** that Ministries of Education lead in the identification of a sustainable mechanism for regional coordination to promote progress in achieving school safety, through synergies and economies of scale. Call for a greater investment in knowledge exchange, shared learning, and technical support.
- **RECOGNISE** the critical role the private sector plays in the effective implementation of the FRDP through building resilience within business as well as supporting government and communities; and the need to strengthen governance<sup>10</sup>

During the conference these governments reported on achievements, progress, challenges and resources and will continue to do this under the WISS as well as encourage other Pacific Island governments to also commit to the WISS. In particular, the MOEs continue to foster the development of national strategies for school safety as part of national DRR strategies as they invest in sharing experiences and good practices in school safety implementation. Those MOEs also committed to lead

---

<sup>9</sup> The First Technical Meeting for the Advancement of School Safety Workshop was held in May, 2016, participated by 33 decision-makers and program implementers from MOE, MEHRD, MOET and NDMO and multi- and bilateral development organisations who work in the area of Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Education (A draft of workshop meeting report).

<sup>10</sup> Pacific Platform for Disaster Risk Management 2016. Outcome Statement: PPDRM Outcome statement, FINAL 26 Oct 2016 ([http://www.unisdr.org/files/50790\\_ppdrm2016outcomestatement.pdf](http://www.unisdr.org/files/50790_ppdrm2016outcomestatement.pdf))

in the identification of a sustainable mechanism for regional coordination to promote progress in achieving school safety through synergies and economies of scale (UNISDR, 2016). The main concern is how to keep this momentum active and lead to more productive outcomes within the region. What has been established under PCASS will need sustained support to continue to progress.

***Result 2: The suite of school disaster management activities developed in Vanuatu are adapted to and tested in Solomon Islands and Fiji.***

Both Fiji and Solomon Islands have successfully advanced the adaptation of their SDM materials, integrating their unique country contexts into the existing materials from Vanuatu. Fiji and Solomon Islands teams also found the SDM materials and activities from Vanuatu extremely practical and similar to their country contexts. This basis from Vanuatu made it more straightforward for both countries to plan for their own versions of SDM materials and activities at schools. The MOE in Fiji applied their overall strategies on the integration of information and communication technology (ICT) into education to SDM materials by promoting the use of DVDs for the dissemination of messaging on Standard Operating Procedures. Whilst the technical curriculum review team was formed with various national and international stakeholders, e.g. the MOE, Red Cross, GIZ, the leadership by the Curriculum Development Unit at MOE was identified. The curriculum development unit collected existing books and texts, including traditional knowledge on understanding potential signs for natural hazards, and then accordingly updated the contexts in the DVD materials. In addition, the Curriculum Development Unit has recently promoted the integrated curricula on DRR and Climate Change.

Solomon Islands formed a school disaster management task force which consisted of government officials, local and international development practitioners and academic members, including University of South Pacific (who are supporting a project on school leadership for the country and plan to implement training on SDM). Solomon Islands SDM materials are in hard copies and the team has made several changes on the illustrations to represent local geographical, social and cultural contexts. This included changing the school uniforms and removing a volcano in the environment of the community. Some texts were also modified into simple English to help children understand. The MOE decided to use English rather than translating into Pidgin since they promote English as the national official language. The Solomon Islands SDM material was shared with Vanuatu and Vanuatu then reviewed their existing SDM material to reflect some of the changes made by Solomon Islands.

Fiji and Solomon Islands each selected 15 schools as the first schools to pilot the newly developed SDM materials. Since the MOE in Fiji has been promoting DRR and EiE activities in all schools, including

extension to ECCD learning centers, School Safety initiatives for using SDM materials were promoted among all students from grade 1 to grade 8 at the pilot schools. In Solomon Islands grades 3 to 5 were targeted as it was identified that this age group would be the most appropriate to understand the SDM materials, as they are of an age where they can readily comprehend the information and their curriculum is already suited to integrating SDM into lessons (such as science and English). Grade 6 was not involved in the pilot as these students were preparing for their secondary school entry exams.

In Fiji, each school selected three academic or management staff<sup>11</sup> to participate in the training, which was organised by Save the Children for two full days in August 2016. In Solomon Islands, the school selected a teacher from each of grades 3, 4 and 5 to participate in the training. There was a total of 43 teachers trained in Solomon Islands of which 19 were female. The training was held in Honiara for five days in April 2016.

Three schools were visited as part of this evaluation in Fiji and the visits revealed that teachers who participated in the training found it useful, comprehensive and informative. Those teachers at the three schools mentioned that the training equipped them with necessary and clear information about evacuation and preparation at school that their students need to understand. Teachers in Solomon Islands who participated in the training shared the same views that the training provided new knowledge on how to manage disasters at schools and how to reduce the risks from hazards. Although the training was well received by the participants, the duration of two days in Fiji was identified as too short to fully grasp all the information provided. Although the training was allocated to five days in Solomon Islands, there was an opinion that it was still short. In Fiji, the training was organised during the school holidays and conflicted with the busy schedules for the teachers' associations. Thus, it was reported that follow up and monitoring visits by Save the Children to some of the schools became invaluable.

In Fiji, Save the Children confirmed that three initially trained school staff already organised a training for teachers at their own schools who did not participate in the initial training by early October. During the school visits, teachers and students at those schools mentioned that they had already started practicing drills on a regular basis<sup>12</sup>. During one school visit, teachers for early Graders, especially grades 1 and 2, reported that they provided pre-drill practice by explaining and showing the evacuation routes so that young children can follow older children during drills. Another teacher

---

<sup>11</sup> Three schools which were visited during the final evaluation in Fiji presented that all head teachers have already participated in the training that was provided by Save the Children.

<sup>12</sup> The frequency for drill practice seems to be different per school, e.g. one drill per week, every other weeks or monthly.

identified that the training was first organised by the head teacher as a lecture, which included in-depth explanation about DRR. Then, a drill took place to demonstrate what was explained during the lecture. The same teacher reported that specific signs were clearly presented per type of disasters. These signs were not available when this teacher was still at the high school. Despite the DVD being a training course in its own right, consistent feedback was reported by the teachers interviewed, that ongoing workshops and training on school safety, DRR and EiE needed to be provided to keep the activities alive and of a good quality. This perception may change as schools have greater access to the final DVD training.

In Solomon Islands, Save the Children visited schools approximately twice a month to see how the SDM activities are going and provide, emergency evacuation kits, additional exercise books, colouring books, radios, torches lights, megaphones and medical kits to complement the simulation exercises. Teachers who participated in the interview reported that they have the correct level of support from Save the Children. However, some teachers reported that they felt unable to fully implement what they learned from the training as the head teacher at the school was not onboard with the initiative. A request for follow up and continuous training was also raised by teachers and shared with the Save the Children staff. In addition, teachers requested more visual SDM materials and posters, which help students remember important information.

During school visits in Fiji, teachers at the selected schools reported they observed students became more serious about disasters and started paying closer attention to natural, environmental and weather related information, especially after Fiji experienced Cyclone Winston in early 2016. The provision of SDM materials and school safety and DRR and climate change-related activities at school was very timely and provided clear guidance on preparation for evacuations. Teachers and students together conducted risk assessment mapping around the school by identifying resources in their communities. Given the visited schools were prone to Tsunamis, teachers wondered why there had been no trainings and/or disaster preparedness activities until now and found this initiative extremely beneficial.

In Fiji the MOE made a decision to have SDM materials (Standard Operating Procedure –SOPs - for Emergency management) developed in DVD formats. This replicates the successful model Save the Children has used in other countries. Save the Children Fiji confirmed that all 15 pilot schools have already received the DVD and been currently expanding its dissemination to additional schools (up to 38 schools – 15 PCASS schools and additional 23 schools – as of October 2016 as part of their response

program/funding). Although the MOE's initiative on integration of ICT into educational materials has been consistent and progressing, two out of three school visits during the evaluation had a lack of DVD players at school. Thus, teachers have reached out to community members to secure a DVD player for the school so that all students and teachers can watch the SDM materials before the end of the year. It was too early to discuss about feedback on the SDM materials. At one school where the DVD was presented to all students and teachers, it was reported that students discussed and reviewed what they are supposed to do with a classroom teacher after they watched DVD. That school invited the National Fire Authority during their fire drill and their head teacher presented "go bags" (emergency evacuation kits) to the fireman. Although an interview at the MOE revealed their concerns on the slow or limited involvement of community during school drills, some schools are gradually reaching out to communities.

In Fiji, one school initiated a visit by all 8 teachers to households in their students' villages, during the evening when people are at home. Teachers discussed with caregivers the reunification process in the event of an evacuation and were informed by caregivers that their children tell them what to put in a "go bag." Teachers also noticed that the initiative of "buddy friend," (where two students are assigned to hold each other's hand during an evacuation) gave students a sense of discipline as they gain their awareness of looking after and helping each other.

During the evaluation, students' discussions on their recent school safety activities revealed that they appreciate and value these new SDM activities as they gain practical knowledge about evacuations from various hazards. Students demonstrated their understanding during school visits with both boys and girls in grades 5 to 8 from one of the selected schools recalling the "Four Evacuation Rules." A grade 6 girl started, "*Do not push!*" followed by a grade 5 boy who added, "*Do not talk.*" Other children looked at each other, nodding and adding "*Do not run!*" and "*Do not look back.*" Another popular message captured by students was "*...drop down, low and go go...*" during a fire drill, to which they all agreed by nodding and saying "*Yes!!!*". It appeared that the children remembered key messages which were taught and demonstrated by Save the Children Fiji during their monitoring and follow up visits.

As the MOE Director stated throughout the school safety initiative in Fiji, children will become "future leaders" in their communities. Almost all of the children reported that they had already shared what they learned about evacuation from hazards with their parents, siblings and friends. It was highlighted that one of the grade 8 boys shared such information with his friends, who are 9<sup>th</sup> graders

at secondary school. Students in grade 5 to 8 agreed that they would like to have more training on school safety and DRR. In addition, children requested more visual learning materials about disasters and evacuations. It was reported at one of the schools that some teachers found additional visual materials with their students online and coloured these together and posted them in a classroom. The more students became active in asking questions around SDM activities, the more motivated teachers were to make activities practical and attractive to their students. The Solomon Islands reported very similar findings with students discussing how they involved the community in activities and are speaking to their family and friends about how to prepare for emergencies. Some highlighted that the information they were sharing was new to their parents. Teachers spoke of wanting to receive more training and information on SDM and DRR to continue improving their knowledge and skills.

It has been three months since the introduction of the SDM materials at the pilot schools in Fiji, when the evaluation took place. Some schools are about to watch the DVD SDM messages. Another school teacher recommended having the school safety and DRR information electronically available so that schools can update this specifically based on their school environment. The teacher also suggested that all pilot schools can exchange their experiences of the first three months on what and how SDM activities have been done, especially how those have been aligned with three pillars in the comprehensive school safety frameworks. One school reported there is a strategy plan for the next school term, which all interviewed teachers at that school were aware of and ready to act on even if Save the Children Fiji is unable to come back. However, questions remain on the lack of follow up training and coordination among schools.

The second result did not specify any activities in Vanuatu. However, it should be noted that Save the Children Vanuatu has included their review and update of the SDM materials, which was developed in 2013, as a part of another ECHO funded DRR project activity. In addition, Vanuatu undertook an exchange visit to Solomon Islands to join a teacher training workshop and assist in sharing knowledge and expertise. They had an opportunity to see the work undertaken by Solomon Islands schools and then made it more user friendly to teachers. Such continuous activities for school safety initiative should be encouraged in other countries in the region moving forward.

***Result 3: A package of templates and materials to support the implementation of national programs for school disaster management and formal or informal risk reduction and resilience education is widely available to PICs national stakeholders.***

A catalogue of existing materials and tools has been made available across the region. Those materials have been uploaded onto a web-site called Pacific Disaster Net; <http://www.pacificdisaster.net/pdn2008/>. The collection and selection of those materials were done with ministries, UN agencies and development partners. People who are unfamiliar with the materials can now access the web-site and independently improve their knowledge about the issues as well as identify how and what to do for school safety activities. The web-site provides a best practice source of information and allows people to use the materials rather than develop their own and/or avoid unnecessary duplication. This will create consistency in the approach of PICs.

Action-oriented key messages for Disaster Risk Reduction were developed or updated in each country. In Fiji, the messages were drafted using the template from the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. The drafted messages were reviewed by various members from technical specialists to educators, leaders from girl and boy scouts, and members of disability forums. The MOE mentioned that those key messages became accessible to households. The MOE also noted that many students were coming to Fiji from other Pacific countries, including Kiribati, Nauru, Papua New Guinea and Tuvalu to study and were hopeful to learn about DRR in Education and EiE. When those students return to their home countries they will be able to share the key messages with their communities.

In Vanuatu, the key messages were originally developed in both English and French in 2013. A review and update took place under PCASS with various stakeholders, including NDMO, MOET, shelter coordinator, Education, Health, WASH, Gender and Protection clusters. The review included adding additional material relating to the past experiences from Tropical Cyclone Pam to support preparedness planning in the future. In Solomon Islands, the key messages were built upon the existing messages that were developed by NDMO and other key stakeholders, including Ministry of Health, MEHRD, Fire Service, UNICEF, Oxfam, World Vision and ADRA, in the country. PCASS encouraged this revision with the Save the Children program management team providing technical support. However, a question remains on the role of the MHERD as some staff appeared not to be aware of the newly developed key messages.

The project has been successful in providing a package of templates and materials to support the implementation of national programs for school disaster management and DRR. However, it is clear further monitoring and evaluation will be required in order to identify how well the materials are being used. Lessons learned could be shared on the web-site.

### ***Strengths and Weakness of the Project Model***

This final evaluation validated the importance of having a project manager based in the Pacific region (echoing the findings of the Mid Term Review). Save the Children project teams recognised it is essential for the project manager to be equipped with strong technical knowledge and skills in DRR in Education and School Safety as well as familiarity with the Pacific context. With the project manager based in the region, staff were able to receive timely technical support for and discussion on conducting various project activities. International partners also identified the strong technical contribution from Save the Children PCASS project manager with the involvement of Fiji's experience in WISS.

The project manager was based in Suva, Fiji, and the location appeared to be a strategic approach for driving activities throughout PCASS since it is already the regional hub for international development. The project manager was in the best location to consistently present an active role in and strong commitment to DRR in Education and School Safety discussions with other major international and regional stakeholders in the Pacific. It also enabled the project manager to communicate and highlight ongoing priorities to MOE in each country as the activities progressed. Constant interactions and close partnerships with the MOEs in the Pacific were reported as a "must" in order to be socially and culturally accepted in the region.

National and international partners as well as school teachers and students highlighted the significant role of the Save the Children PCASS project team in each country. In particular, school visits in Fiji and Solomon Islands presented an invaluable role for Save the Children to organise training, including follow-up sessions, and conduct frequent monitoring visits where teachers were able to request additional support if needed. In Fiji, the MOE repeatedly mentioned close partnerships with the Save the Children PCASS project team. Now a gradual shift has been identified as the MOE prepares to lead school monitoring visits. Although the MOE in Fiji showed a strong commitment in advancing school safety at the national level, it was indicated that the Save the Children supported their capacity building in those activities. Continuous support on capacity building will remain important. Similar patterns were also identified in Vanuatu. The MOET started to identify the importance of school safety, DRR and EiE and have begun to allocate funds towards such activities. This was largely led by advocacy that the Save the Children constantly promoted for school safety initiatives.

There were some areas for development in the Save the Children PCASS project model. First, ECHO provides a time and resource limited funding mechanisms for projects like PCASS which at their core require sufficient years of project implementation to be able to present reasonable impacts in target locations and countries as well as regionally. Secondly, there was a concern with staff turnover. Although it was the right moment for PCASS to identify a next step, project managers and some team members who were involved from the beginning changed their roles and responsibilities. Although international partners understand these difficult structures in the development sector, including a short span of funding cycle, the management gap was unfortunately visible towards the end of the project.

The implementation of the four recommendations that were identified during the Mid Term Review were examined for accountability. The four recommendations were: 1) Clear documentation on strategies, action plans and activities (including workshops) should be continued for the next 9 months; 2) Monitoring systems on how SDM materials are used at schools should be established; 3) Supervisory visits and systems can be led by MOEs to monitor teacher trainings; and 4) It is recommended to conduct some studies to present results from PCASS. The first recommendation on the clear documentation was reported to have been met for the last half of the PCASS implementation. For the second recommendation, Fiji and Solomon Islands teams reported that they have developed a monitoring form based on their country context. For the supervisory visit, the MOE in Fiji has been involved and actively preparing for their routine monitoring mechanisms. However, in Solomon Islands it was not clear how or if the MOE is actually preparing for their monitoring. The fourth recommendation appeared to be a challenge as the team has faced lack of funding. Fiji was able to include a study under the emergency response fund for Cyclone Winston, which was supported by a program manager during the deployment of the response in country. In order to secure future funding and seek opportunities for business development, documenting and evaluating sufficient evidence will be critical.

## 5. Discussion and Recommendations

The final evaluation indicated that PCASS has energised the targeted countries and the Pacific region to establish a solid foundation to collaboratively work towards advancing school safety among national and international partners. The leadership at the MOE in Fiji and MOET in Vanuatu appears to stand out, positioning themselves to be leading champions in advancing school safety in the Pacific region and for the WISS at the global level. There was a consistent message from interviews in each

country that PCASS has provided a base that needs to be scaled up. Led by the PCASS project manager partnerships across the three countries in the Pacific have also been developed through the coordination of project managers in each country. Although each country has progressed project activities at the different levels, it is reasonable to say that the main objective for the PCASS was met during the past 18 months. At the same time, it is critical to explore a next phase for PCASS without disregarding achievements to date. A summarised discussion of the findings are as follows:

- **PCASS has successfully created momentum to advance school safety in the Pacific region within 18 months by having MOEs and NDMOs take ownership of the initiative.** PCASS strengthened the development of partnerships among key stakeholders, such as government officials, local and international experts in School Safety and DRR in Education. With contributions from those partners, Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu completed an “Education Sector Snapshot for Comprehensive School Safety and Education in Emergencies (EiE)”, as well as a roadmap for a 5-year action plan under the three pillars of the Comprehensive School Safety Framework. In particular, the MOE in Fiji and the MOET in Vanuatu further prioritised School Safety and DRR in Education by setting up and/or strengthening a task force within the Ministry. In those two countries, national and regional consultations led to the development of national policy and strategies on School Safety and DRR in Education. Vanuatu and Fiji were hit by tropical cyclones in 2015 and 2016, respectively, which allowed both countries to test and practice those strategies on the ground. These practical experiences need to be documented and shared across PICs. There was limited evidence on how the Solomon Islands can build on the momentum. In Solomon Islands this project helped to strengthen the partnership with Ministry of Education & Human Resources Development (MEHRD) and support the integration of school safety and DRR in the National Education Action Plan for Solomon Islands Government. As a result of the partnership with MEHRD, a Save the Children Education Technical officer under a complementary UNICEF project was seconded into the MEHRD office for two weeks to develop the MEHRD contingency plan. This secondment resulted in stronger commitments to school safety initiatives by the national education authorities and with increased support for their focal point to be able to focus more of their time on School Safety.
- **There is a challenge for the Pacific regional focus to stand out under the regional category of an “Asia-Pacific” coalition for School Safety.** Although PACSS promoted national and regional school safety strategies and activities, what the Pacific has implemented hasn’t been captured by global attention yet. Two unique approaches: 1) integration of climate change with DRR in

education; and 2) SDM learning curriculum for using traditional knowledge on natural disasters in Fiji, were identified as key components that the Asia region had yet to implement and could provide substantial learnings from the Pacific region. Considering geographic, social and economic similarities across PICs, such unique approaches can broadly be shared with other countries in the region by strengthening the network to exchange information and lessons learned.

- **SDM materials developed in Vanuatu were contextualized, adapted and tested in Solomon Islands and Fiji.** Fiji and Solomon Islands identified the value in the SDM materials from Vanuatu and contextualised and adapted them for their own use. They incorporated their own national education policy, cultural and geographical contexts in their version of the materials. Both countries successfully organised training sessions for teachers on how to use the material, which the participants found very practical and beneficial. Each country has started to use the SDM materials and activities, which included 15 pilot schools where students began sharing what they learned with their family members and friends. Teachers and students are keen to continue learning school safety and DRR, having requested more training and visual learning materials. In Fiji, the MOE has been active in joining school monitoring visits with the Save the Children team and gradually preparing for their own plans. The partnership between MOE and Save the Children has proved to be invaluable, especially in regards to technical and operational support.

- **A package of templates and materials to support the implementation of national programs for school disaster management, and formal or informal risk reduction and resilience education is now available online to other PICs.** Having this package of material freely available online for governments, development partners, and other interested parties is a significant contribution towards building on school safety investments and lessons learned to date. However, having material online by itself will not lead to it being used. It is essential to continue to communicate the existence of this material, what it is and where it is. Promoting this material will prevent people continuously spending time reinventing materials that already exists. In addition, this provides the opportunity to update and/or add new materials in one place.

- **‘Key Messages’ and ‘Education Sector Snapshots’ are only effective if used.** The national key messages were developed or updated in all three countries. Each country built their existing resources and experiences. In Vanuatu, their key messages were updated. In Fiji and Solomon Islands, they collected existing messages and then integrated into IFRC guidance. The MOEs are committed to broadly disseminate the finalised key messages in the country as they are hoping

that students from other PICs, *“future leaders of our society,”* also learn those and share with their families and friends in their own countries. Similar to the resource materials developed under this project, these documents need to be promoted so they can continuously be used. Furthermore, partners need to understand the value in the documents and how they can use them to strengthen their work.

The PCASS was designed to be taken to scale. However, to achieve this it is essential to build on the relationships developed and progress made, as well as continue the momentum created. Concerns were reported by the project team on the lack of resources in ministries, which can make it difficult to go to scale without investments. Fiji and Vanuatu might be the exceptions as they have more resources than other countries in the Pacific. Below is the highlighted summary of recommendations for PCASS which can contribute to scaling up the project:

- **It is necessary to present results from PCASS by conducting some studies.** It will be valuable to document the learnings from the project and broadly present Pacific experiences in public. There is currently a gap in publically available information on this thematic area in the Pacific region. It will also be useful to have the situation analysis ready.
  
- **The regional cooperation for advancing school safety needs to be strengthened to exchange lessons learned across PICs.** This can contribute to representing the Pacific voice within the WISS. The most recent regional workshop presented an expansion of PCASS’s initiative to other countries in the Pacific. Applying the similar geographic and climate change issues, Fiji and Vanuatu are both strong leaders in this space. They can share their experiences on how the MOE and MOET promoted the national school safety plans and use of SDM activities at schools with other Pacific countries. Discussion boards on the web-site can be established to promote and exchange information across countries in the region.
  
- **It is required to identify other funding and submit a proposal for implementing the next phase of PCASS.** For any new proposal development, it is essential to have strong evidence and a current situation analysis to demonstrate the solid foundation that was already established under PCASS. The regionally unique approaches, which Fiji has already taken, can be highlighted as the integration of climate change into DRR and Education and utilising traditional knowledge surrounding hazards.

➤ **Any existing Education, DRR and climate change projects at Save the Children can carry on PCASS activities, especially SDM activities at schools.** As Vanuatu suggested, school-based activities can be integrated and promoted during school visits and/or monitoring under existing projects. It is necessary for Save the Children to keep advocating the importance of school safety initiatives in each country so that the MOE and NDMO can start allocating their budgets into those activities. Vanuatu showed that this can be achieved.

## References

UNISDR (2016) Pacific Platform for Disaster Risk Management 2016, Outcome Statement. Available at: [http://www.unisdr.org/files/50790\\_ppdrm2016outcomestatement.pdf](http://www.unisdr.org/files/50790_ppdrm2016outcomestatement.pdf) (accessed on November 14, 2016)

UNISDR and Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction & Resilience in the Education Sector (2014) Comprehensive School Safety. Available at: <http://gadrrres.net/uploads/files/resources/Comprehensive-School-Safety-Framework-Dec-2014.pdf> (accessed on November 11, 2016)