

**THE STRATEGIES OF CIVIL SOCIETY
ORGANISATION TO SUPPORT THE VANUATU
FAMILY PROTECTION ACT IMPLEMENTATION**

by
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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
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Declaration

Statement by the Author

I, Josephine Kalsuak, declare that this thesis is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge, it contains no material previously published, or substantially overlapping with material submitted for the award of any other degree at any institution, except where due acknowledgement is made in the text.

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Abstract

Vanuatu has a high rate of domestic violence significantly affecting human rights, social, health and economic development. The Vanuatu government made the commitment to prevent and respond to domestic violence through the enactment of the Family Protection Act (FPA) in 2008. This act aims to prevent domestic violence and promote a harmonious family relationship. The implementation of FPA continues to be met with social, cultural, religious, political, and economic challenges. Domestic violence prevention work in Vanuatu is highly challenging and requires significant investment into changing the attitudes and behaviours of women and men. Primary prevention and a whole-of-government, civil society and community approach needs greater focus and investment.

Although the government endorsed the FPA, there is little to no financial commitment and progress for implementation has been slow. There is resistance to social change owing to prevailing gender and social norms permitting men control over female behaviour, notions of masculinity linked to power and decision making and an acceptance of violence to resolve conflict. Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) complement the services of government to prevent and respond to domestic violence by sharing information about the legislation, advocate for the act's implementation, assist survivors of violence to access safe shelters, counselling, and legal aid. This study has explored the strategies CSOs uses to support the implementation of the Vanuatu FPA. Framed within feminist research, this study has used the case study method to explore strategies used by two civil society organisations. Document analysis and *storian* involving groups discussions and individual based conversations have equally been used to collect the data. This research aims to reinforce the strategies used by CSOs to support the implementation of the act.

Abbreviations

CSO	Civil Society Organisation
FPA	Family Protection Act.
GRFV	Good Relationship Free from Violence
FFM	Family Financial Management
LS2	Liftmap Sista 2

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Chapter One: – Study Background

1.1: State of domestic violence in Vanuatu

Domestic violence is past or present physical, sexual, psychological, or economic violence between former or current intimate partners, adult household members, or a parent and children (Hedin 2000). Domestic violence is pervasive, widespread and a serious national issue in Vanuatu (Crook, Farran & Röell 2016). The Vanuatu Women Centre's (2011, pg 16), national survey on women's lives and family relationships revealed that "sixty percent of women had a lived experience of physical and/ or sexual violence, sixty eight percent experienced emotional violence and twenty eight percent were subjected to several forms of control caused by their partners or spouses". This study further exposed that most women experienced more than one form of domestic violence caused by their immediate partners or spouses. The high rate of domestic violence prevalence in Vanuatu demonstrates that women and girls' overall wellbeing is hindered by the existing male patriarchy, which grants men large control over women and girls (Taylor 2016). The existing patriarchy culture in Vanuatu makes domestic violence widely accepted as a disciplinary measure by men towards their wives or partners (Biersack 2016).

Previous studies conducted in Vanuatu reveal that domestic violence is mostly identified as a consistent issue that many women are dealing with silently (Australian Government 2016). It causes women and members of their families and communities to be traumatised, and impacts human rights, creating gender inequality and discrimination (Australian government 2008). Vanuatu's cultural practises of early, arranged marriage and bride price increase women and young women's vulnerability to domestic violence (Laqeretabua, Naidu, & Bhagwan Rolls 2009). Bride price is a common customary practice in Vanuatu, consisting of the payment of a sum of money and goods by the husband's family to the wife's family during marriage, which male partners and paternal family members always use to justify domestic violence (Jalal 2009). The rationale of bride price is to support the family kinship; however, it has been misinterpreted as a justification for men to discipline women by using violence (Crook, Farran & Röell 2016). Women and girls are also adversely affected by the culture of silence or the cultural practice or value of silence. This leaves them with the option of turning to religious and cultural leaders, who advise them to remain in the

violent relationship to respect the family unit and display the role of a good wife (Jolly 1996). Overall, domestic violence creates inequality of opportunities and lack of autonomy for women (Crook, Farran & Röell 2016).

1.2: Implementation status of the Family Protection Act

As international obligations to address domestic violence have gained visibility and currency in the region, Pacific leaders have begun to call for legal, policy and program measures, to prevent and respond to the issue of domestic violence (Crook, Farran & Röell 2016). Vanuatu is one of the first country in the Pacific region whose government endorsed the FPA in 2008, after eleven years of advocacy and controversies with Christian churches and traditional chiefs (Jalal 2009). The purposes of this legal framework are to preserve and promote harmonious family relationships, and to prevent domestic violence in all spheres of society in Vanuatu (Family protection act 2008).

The Department of Women's Affairs (DWA) within the Ministry of Justice and Community Services (MOJSC) supervises the act's implementation (Ministry of Justice and Community Service 2018) with a specific mandate to raise awareness, establish, train, and support the registered counsellors and authorised persons. However, the implementation of the authorised persons and registered counselling is funded by donor partners and is yet to have a full coverage across the archipelago (Pacific Island Forum Secretariat 2016). The Family Protection Unit (FPU) under the Police force implements the domestic violence offences and family protection orders under the act. FPUs have been established in Port Vila and other provincial centres with an aim to respond to domestic violence by facilitating quality investigations into domestic violence incidences (Vanuatu Police Force 2020). The Vanuatu Police have developed and implemented the standard operating procedure that orders police to investigate, arrest, charge the offender committing domestic violence and to consider the protection of the victim in deciding bail (Ministry of Justice 2016).

Since the enactment of the FPA, various agencies within the Vanuatu government progress its implementation, like the Magistrate courts serving protection orders to perpetrators of domestic violence, whereas CSOs undertake the leading role in domestic violence prevention and response services such as awareness raising, counselling, safe shelters, case management, referrals and assistance to survivors of

violence to access the courts and obtain family protection orders (Crook, Farran & Röell 2016). Furthermore, in 2017, the Vanuatu Ministry of health developed a training manual for health care professionals on violence against women, children, and vulnerable and marginalized groups, and endorsed the gender-based violence training guidelines for health workers (Vanuatu government 2019). Similarly, in 2020, the Vanuatu government, via the Public Prosecutor's Office, recruited a domestic violence victim support officer, to assist the survivors of domestic violence during and after court proceedings (Vanuatu Government 2020).

1.3: Research problem

Although the FPA was passed in 2008, and despite the above-illustrated achievements in supporting the act, key challenges remain in the implementation of the act. Notwithstanding the government's political will, this did not commit financial resources for the full implementation of the act (Pacific Island Forum 2016), so that Vanuatu's traditional donors, including New Zealand and Australian Government, provide most financial resources for awareness, training, capacity building, and for the establishment of authorised persons and registered counsellors (Taylor 2016). In 2009, I was employed by the Pacific Community in partnership with the Vanuatu government to support the DWA in coordinating essential services supporting the act's implementation. Specifically, as the Country Focal Officer of the Pacific Community Regional Rights Resource (now Human Rights and Social Development Division), my task was to support the DWA Gender officer to establish the national and provincial family protection task forces and provided training and capacity building on human rights, and gendered domestic violence. The family protection task force members, including representatives from inter government agencies and CSOs, have a mandate to oversee the implementation of the FPA. The national and provincial taskforces have served as a coordination body to oversee the implementation of the act since 2010 to date. Despite the existence of the taskforce, there is no coordination of the essential services in relation to the implementation of legislation among service providers and law enforcement agencies (Pacific Women 2017).

Domestic violence statistics in Vanuatu having in fact increased, addressing the difficulties in implementing the act becomes imperative. As stated by the Vanuatu Women's Centre (2011), sixty percent of women have lived in physical or sexual

violence relationships compared to the global rate. Further, citizens in both rural and urban areas of Vanuatu are not aware of the FPA. Results from a previous study conducted in Vanuatu revealed that eighty-one percent of men and seventy nine percent of women believed that women deserved to be beaten by their spouses (Iliasov & Debeljak 2013). Similarly, in another study on conflict management and access to justice in rural Vanuatu, seventy-four percent of three hundred and seventy-nine women interviewed in a rural village in Vanuatu did not know what the FPA was and what a domestic violence protection order was, and only six percent had used the protection order (Australian Government 2016). The lack of available trusted services and the existing social stigma towards survivors of violence created a barrier for survivors of domestic violence in accessing services (Pacific Women 2017).

The high rates of domestic violence, rooted in gender inequality, discrimination, and harmful cultural and social norms, remain consistent (Jolly 2006). Common reasons men and women invoke to justify the act of domestic violence are the women's infertility, women's refusal to have sexual relationship with the partner, and women not completing their chores or not meeting other requirements set by the men (Vanuatu Women's Centre, 2011). Scholars interested in the causes of domestic violence in Vanuatu have highlighted the influence and contributing factor of cultural and religious norms (Biersack 2016). Harmful social norms rooted in cultural and religious beliefs increases the belief that a man can afford to abuse his wife using all forms of violence (Barclay, Trembath, & Russell 2018). In some Islands of Vanuatu, the cultural practice of arranged marriage, where grandparents and parents choose future spouses for their daughters or sons to preserve the family clan relationships, increases women and girl's vulnerability to violence (Laqeretabua, Naidu, & Bhagwan Rolls 2009). The existing practice of bride price, a sum of money and goods that the husband's family offers to the women's family during the marriage ceremony, contributes to the increased rate of violence towards most young girls (Jalal 2009). Finally, the existing culture of silence in a patriarchal society pressurises most women to remain in violent relationship (Crook, Farran & Röell 2016).

In Vanuatu, majority see domestic violence as a private matter, which creates barriers for most survivors of violence to formally report an incident (Tanyag and True 2019). Survivors of domestic violence feel discouraged to launch a formal domestic violence report to service providers, since they are in areas that do not have access to

advocacy and police services and may additionally lack the financial capacity to pay transport cost or mobile phone recharger to access support services (Barclay, Trembath, & Russell, 2018,). Some women decide to live in the violent relationship to uphold their marriage vows and be a good wife (Jolly 2006). As stated by

Tanyag and True (2019, pg 17), “Ni Vanuatu women who seek help through the formal justice mechanisms eventually abandon the system because most women do not want their marriages to end; they simply want the violence to stop and most of them turn to kastomary reconciliation”.

The recognition of the formal and *kastomary* court does not provide an empowering environment for the survivors of violence. Forsyth (2009), who examined the recognition of the state justice system and the *kastomary* system in Vanuatu, argued that the dual systems created tensions in criminalising perpetrators of domestic violence. The scholar Biersack, who captured a rape case in 2014, noted:

“Although the crime was reported, the survivor and her chief each brought a letter to the prosecutor’s office requesting that charges be dropped on the grounds that the assailant had been fined and had performed a kastom ceremony, paid a fine, and been beaten, albeit ‘lightly’, by men appointed by the chief to do so. The perpetrator had thus met the kastom conditions for a pardon and should not be punished twice, the survivor and her chief argued.” (Biersack 2016, pg 306).

It is evident from the above literature that the *kastom* courts’ intent was to reconcile families rather than prosecute perpetrators or protect women from further harm (Jolly 2000). Biersack (2016) reported that even in state courts the judicial officers and police officers were reluctant to place charges and send perpetrators to jail. In rural islands, the Vanuatu Police Force are not adequately addressing domestic violence, leaving women survivors of domestic violence at the mercy of *kastom* court (Jolly 2000). *This means that an enabling environment is important to facilitate women’s agency to access support services during situations of domestic violence. The*

key messages portray in the literature examples demonstrated that even if legislations are in place, the male dominant culture still prevails and highly influences the attitudes and behaviours of males and service providers who are not gender sensitise and this can be a barrier to survivors of domestic violence to access support services.

Despite the existing challenges, the contribution of CSOs has enriched the work of national governments to ensure they deliver programs and services that are meaningful and tailored to the needs of the survivors. Civil society actors such as the CARE Vanuatu and VCC continuously contribute to key domestic violence prevention programs, which support the implementation of FPA. CARE Vanuatu works with existing church networks advocating for domestic violence prevention, develops promotional resources for domestic violence prevention, and empowers young women and men through life skills and leadership trainings (CARE International in Vanuatu 2017). The VCC is an umbrella body of the churches in Vanuatu and has been working on increasing awareness of violence against women among church leaders, by exploring opportunities for collaboration with development actors to advance gender equality and prevent violence against women and girls (Vanuatu Christian Council 2018).

This study explores and evaluates the existing CSOs' strategies to support the implementation of FPA in Vanuatu, by examining the work of two CSOs operating locally in Vanuatu. Firstly, it provides an overview of domestic violence in Vanuatu, including the FPA legal framework, the role of civil society organisations in the prevention of domestic violence and the protection of the survivors. Secondly, it explores and evaluates the CSOs' strategies in supporting the implementation of the Family Protection Act. Based on the results of this analysis, this study recommends the best strategies for the CSOs to better support the implementation of the act.

1.4: Research questions, aims and objectives.

Research questions:

1. What strategies are used by CSOs to support the implementation of the FPA?
2. How effective are these strategies?

Research aim:

This study explores and evaluates the current strategies used by two CSOs to support the implementation of FPA in Vanuatu.

Research objectives:

1. Provide a situational overview of domestic violence in Vanuatu, and of the implementation status of the FPA.
2. Conduct a literature review on the role of CSOs in the prevention to domestic violence and in the response to survivors of domestic violence.
3. Analyse the strategies that CSOs use to support the implementation of the Family protection.

1.5: Chapter Conclusion

This thesis will explore and evaluate the strategies of civil society organizations to support the FPA implementation in Vanuatu. The two observed civil society organizations in this study are Care Australia Vanuatu, an Australian International NGO, and the Vanuatu Christian Council of Churches (VCC) a faith based non-government organization (NGO). This thesis comprises of seven chapters. Chapter one includes the study background. It provides an overview of the state of domestic violence in Vanuatu, and the implementation status of FPA, and outlines the research problem, and the research questions, aims and objectives. The literature review in chapter two locates this study in relation to other studies done in Vanuatu, with regards to the impact of domestic violence on survivors, the FPA as contextualised legal framework, and CSOs as key actors in implementing the FPA.

Chapter three illustrates the research methodology, framed within feminist theory, and presents this work as a case study-based research supplemented by document content analysis and *storian* methods of data collection. Chapter four and five present the case studies' findings. This chapter provides an overview of each organisation and answers the two research questions. Including this study's discussion, chapter six explains the results, and interprets the data by analysing the effectiveness of the organizations' strategies against two previous program evaluations, which provided best practices on effectiveness of violence prevention strategies and programs. The conclusion and recommendations are discussed in chapter seven.

Chapter Two: – Literature review

2.1: Introduction

The review of relevant literature develops around three themes: domestic violence impacts on survivors, legislations to address domestic violence and CSOs as key actors to support the implementation of similar legislations. These themes have located this study in relation to previous research about Vanuatu and situate it within larger theoretical discussions and social analysis, providing a context for exploring and evaluating the existing CSOs strategies to support the implementation of the Vanuatu's FPA.

2.2: Domestic violence impacts on Survivors

Domestic violence is a globally underreported and underrecognized endemic (Forster 2011). This is, grounded on power and control allowing the violent partner to exercise persistent forced control and deceive the partner in the relationship (Maniccia & Leone 2019). Brewer, Roy & Smith (2010) argued that domestic violence is one of the common causes of violence-related trauma on survivors, resulting in low self-confidence, increased risk of depression and suicide, poor general physical health, and a range of physical injuries with both short-term and long-term chronic effects. Domestic violence affects all aspects of a survivor's physical and psychological health, self-sufficiency, employment, and ability to maintain social relationships (Maniccia & Leone 2019). Accordingly, the prevalence of domestic violence in the Pacific Island countries has a serious impact on the region's development and health outcomes and affects families and communities, placing significant strains on health care, social services, policing, and justice systems (Fulu & Warner 2018)

Previous studies done in Vanuatu examined the multifaceted impacts of domestic violence on the overall wellbeing of the survivor. The family relationships study (Vanuatu Women's Centre 2011) noted that most women continued to experience physical or sexual abuse during pregnancy, which caused a significantly high rate of miscarriage, and children whose mothers were subjected to domestic violence had a range of emotional and behavioural problems, including aggressive behaviour towards their mothers and other children. Moreover, this study demonstrated that the husbands or partners in the cases examined forcibly removed

their wife's or partner's saving without consent for their personal use. Additionally, the study demonstrated that in those cases husbands or partners often refused to give their wives money for household expenses, and restricted their mobility to visit their families, participate in community activities, or access their education. The Family relationships study emphasised that all of this was disruptive for the survivors who have full time employment. Community members, who had witnessed incidents of men following their wives or girlfriends to the workplace to continue the physical or verbal abuse, or to demand their wives' or girlfriends' money, provided anecdotal evidence. As a result, the women who are survivors of violence are not economically empowered.

Tanyag and True (2019) condensed that domestic violence affected the women's capacity to participate in the decision-making process of their own homes, communities, and other governing structures of their communities. Domestic violence has implications not only for survivors and their immediate families but the country. First, this is a public health concern associated with disability and poor health and creates an economic burden to the government expenditure (World Health Organisation 2013). Furthermore, domestic violence has other financial implications, due to the cost of procedures relating to the offenders, which includes costs associated with the police forces, prosecutors, courts, and prisons (Chan & Cho 2010). For Vanuatu, all of this is particularly serious, since many communities or Islands do not access timely and reliable services from the government, which doubly impairs holistic responses to protect survivors of domestic violence (Tanyag and True 2019).

2. 3: Legislations to address domestic violence

Endorsing and implementing comprehensive legislations that recognises domestic violence as a form of inequality and imposing penalties on offenders is critical to enable survivor's legal protection (Fulu & Warner 2018).

Domestic violence legal reform has "moved beyond criminalizing physical violence by husbands to include psychological, financial and sexual abuse by a wider range of perpetrators in an intimate relationship and obliges the of government to strengthen its services through the development protocols and national action plans on

preventing and respond to domestic violence in Latin America and Asian countries” (Heise 2011, pg 73).

In the Pacific, domestic violence legislations provide legal protection options and reduce the use of traditional reconciliation for survivors (Forster 2011). Scholars who studied the Vanuatu’s FPA claimed that this law enhances access to justice for survivors of domestic violence as it empowers courts, as well as authorised persons in rural areas, to provide enforceable Family Protection Orders when acts of domestic violence have been, or are likely to be, committed (Ellsberg et al 2012).

Furthermore, the FPA has a wider definition of family recognising the communal relationships and inclusive definition of family in Vanuatu (Kanan 2019; Forster 2011). The two scholars emphasised that the use of authorised persons recognised that Vanuatu has a high population of rural dwellers, hence the authorised person will enable the survivors of violence to access the formal justice system. Furthermore, Kanan (2019) stated that bride price of any amount of money or goods in relation to customary marriage is not considered in the legislation to address the continuous cultural practises of men using bride price to justify domestic violence. Commentators such as Jalal (2009) argued that the treatment of bride price in the legislation addressed the interpretation of bride price to justify domestic violence.

Forster (2011) noted the comprehensive definition of domestic violence where “physical, psychological, and sexual abuse, stalking, damaging property, and threats of any of the above counters the existing perception that domestic violence establishes only as physical violence and is regarded as socially acceptable.” (pg 141). Further, this scholar made the point that the act provided temporary protection order addressing situations of immediate danger, especially for Vanuatu, the rural areas of which are not serviced by formal courts, or where access to court is limited. Additionally, since Vanuatu is prone to natural disaster, as observed by Tanyag and True (2019, pg 16), “the definition of domestic violence under the FPA is inclusive of the types of violence that commonly occurs during and after natural disasters and this recognises that most women experience direct physical and sexual violence before, during and after disasters which is symptomatic of male-dominance in society”. Next, registered counsellors are provided by the act, allowing the courts to refer either or both parties of a domestic violence case to a counselling session, which is crucial since Vanuatu government has no social welfare system and counselling provides options for

domestic violence survivors to discuss the children's welfare issues with the abuser (Forster 2011).

2.4: CSOs as key actors supporting the implementation of similar legislations.

Studies from other countries revealed that even with domestic violence legislation, implementation remains a severe problem, as many domestic violence laws are not sufficiently budgeted and often face resistance from male-dominated judiciary and police (Ellsberg et al. 2015). Therefore, the role and contributions of CSOs are crucial to complement financial resources and influence implementation of similar legislations. Local and global feminist CSOs played an important role in spreading key messages about gender equality and domestic violence legal reform and implementation (Fulu & Warner 2018). CSOs consist of a range of groups of actors, including non-governmental organisations (NGOs), faith-based organisations, trade unions, groups representing marginalised communities, professional associations, indigenous groups, informal groups, media, and social movements (Morgan, McNaught, Baker, Manoa & Tarai 2020). Moreover, several CSOs in India and Latin America have called on the government to provide budgetary allocation to implement domestic violence legislations (Heise 2011). Penjueli (2015) stated that Pacific CSOs played a key role in assisting the government to prevent and respond to domestic violence by advocating for law or policy reform, provide awareness, counselling, safe shelters, and undertake research.

In Fiji, the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre and Fiji Women's Rights Movement were key actors in using gender frameworks for legal and policies reforms, domestic violence prevention and responses services (Biersack 2016). Accordingly, Pacific Women (2017) argued that despite challenges confronted by the Vanuatu government to fully fund the implementation of the FPA, CSOs supplemented these gaps through the provision of psychosocial support services to survivors of domestic violence. In addition, the Vanuatu Women's Centre, a local feminist CSO is the main agency that provides case management, counselling, and safe accommodation for domestic violence survivors (Ellsberg et al 2012). Other existing national and international CSOs in Vanuatu provide awareness on domestic violence prevention to remote areas that are out of reach of the government service (Barclay, Trembath, & Russell 2018).

2.5: Conclusion

In conclusion, the existing literature on domestic violence impacts showed that this issue has multi-layered negative effects on the survivor's wellbeing and affects a country's development. Moreover, the literature discussions on legislations indicated that enacting and implementing comprehensive domestic violence legislations is crucial to provide legal protection for the survivors of domestic violence and the literature theme on the CSO's role in supporting the implementation of similar legislations demonstrated the implementation gaps encountered by the government and the vital role of CSOs in complementing the existing gaps through services provision.

Further, the existing literature highlighted the role of core feminist CSOs in the Pacific and Vanuatu in addressing the issue. However, there is a lack of research about the role of local and international CSOs operating in Vanuatu who have a broader development mandate and have integrated gender equality frameworks and principles into their existing programs and are currently supporting the implementation of the FPA through awareness raising and referrals of survivors of domestic violence to support services. In sum, the literature reviewed pointed to a dearth of research around the implementation of Vanuatu's FPA to date and the role of non-feminist CSOs in influencing positive behaviour changes and advocating for policy and legal reform to address domestic violence issue. Therefore, this study addresses the current research gaps by providing an update on the implementation of the FPA and discussing the role of an international and a local CSO. These use diverse strategies to strengthen the implementation of the Act, including integration between faith and gender approaches.

Chapter Three: - Methodology

3.1: Introduction

This chapter presents the theoretical framework that guides this study's sample, methods of data collection, and analysis. Additionally, it reflects on my positionality, the ethics, and limitations of this study.

3.2: Methodology

This study adopted a feminist theoretical framework, as it pursued to inform social change for women and other oppressed groups who are subject to domestic violence (Hesse-Bieber 2007). Feminist theory argues that the existing male power dynamics over women's behaviours resulted in inequalities (Mc Phail 2016). Therefore, the feminist framework analyses the factors that systematically oppress women and encourages interventions and "messages of empowerment that challenge the encircling of knowledge claims by those who occupy privileged positions, taking steps to eliminate boundaries occupied by the privilege dominant" (Hesse-Bieber 2007, p 3). Feminist theory upholds social justice, integrity of individuals, empowerment, bottom-up approaches, and participatory processes focusing on the structural causes of oppression and characterized by empowerment through critical consciousness and an analysis of power and discrimination (Nikupeteri, A, Skaffari , P & Laitinen, M., 2022.) These authors stated that feminist supports the process of transforming norms, values, and politics that give rise to gendered inequalities by focusing on micro and macro social relations that create unequal social roles for men and women. Complying with the feminist theoretical framework, this research analysed the underpinning power differentials between men and women, warranted by male patriarchy, and existing harmful cultural and religious norms in Vanuatu. Secondly, this research explored the current strategies used by CSOs to support the FPA implementation. This study will demonstrate that the strategies used by the CSOs under examination prevent domestic violence and demand public interventions, programs for women survivors of domestic violence and calls for perpetrator accountability (Dutton & Nicholls 2005). Finally, recommendations provided in this

study will strengthen the programs and services provided by CSOs to educate both men and women in preventing domestic violence and implementing the act.

Feminist scholar Hesse-Bieber (2007, p. 3) pointed that “feminist research supports social inquiry through dialogues”. Accordingly, this study on the CSOs’ strategies rested on dialogues, which were shaped by the *storian* research approach. *Storian* is the “Vanuatu form of *Talanoa*, a reputable and culturally appropriate Pacific research methodology that provides a space to allow people to tell a story about their issues, realities and aspirations” (Warrick 2009, p. 83). The *storian* based research recognises that “knowledge is not traditionally documented but disseminated orally through storian which is embedded in culture and oral lore and is part of Ni Vanuatu’s daily life’ (Warrick 2009, p. 83). This study utilised the existing CSOs networks, experiences, and motivations by harmonising them with the social and cultural systems that promote knowledge in Vanuatu.

The *storian* research approach enhanced CSOs’ active role in this research process, for that methodology encouraged “participation, engagement and allowed sufficient time for in depth exchanged of knowledge and information with the informants” (Farrelly & Nabobo-Baba 2012, p. 9, Thomas 2016, p. 53). The Ni-Vanuatu’s epistemology unified in the *kastom stori* underpinned this research, acknowledging that though some informants are not from Vanuatu, they still operate within the values, knowledge and practices underlying domestic violence in Vanuatu. Therefore, the storian approach mirrored the fact that both the act and the advocacy to support its implementation are framed within the Vanuatu’s cultural context. Finally, this study used a qualitative case study method, outlining “practical inquiry about a current phenomenon set within its real-world context” (Yin 2009, p. 18), and “analysed the data through, expressions of experiences and social interactions” (Levitt et al. 2018, p. 27).

3.3: Sample

This study applied a purposive sample. Purposive sample is a sampling technique used to recruit participants who can provide in-depth and detailed information about the phenomenon under investigation (Patton 2022). This sampling process involves identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals that are knowledgeable about or have experienced with a phenomenon of interest (Cresswell

& Plano Clark, 2011). In this study, staff members from the two organisations were identified by the researcher to voluntarily participated in the research given their knowledge and experiences about the research topic.

3.4: Method of data collection

The methods that were used for data collection are document content analysis and the *storian* method. These two methods were chosen to enhance triangulation that increased the credibility and validity of the research findings (Noble & Heale R 2019).

3.4.1: Document content analysis

Document content analysis was the first method used to develop the two case studies. This research acknowledges that the two organisations used in this study have produced publications that documented their achievements and challenges in addressing the issues of domestic violence in Vanuatu. Bowen (2009) stated that document content analysis involves a systematic content review of the available printed or electronically documents to provide meaning to the research questions. In doing the document content analysis, this study selected programs reports, research papers and case studies documenting respective CSOs' strategies in supporting the implementation of the FPA. The respective documents analysed are described in chapter four and five.

3.4.2: Storian

This research used the *storian* method to inspect the aspirations, experiences, and responses of the two CSOs involved in this study in supporting the implementation of the act. The *storian* method provides a "holistic and expressed consolidation of the emotion, knowledge, interest and experiences between the researcher and the participants" (Farrelly & Nabobo-Baba 2012, p. 1). Using the *storian* method indicates an appreciation of the Ni - Vanuatu's existing context of transmitting culture and knowledge from one generation to the next through stories, conversations, and narratives" (Thomas 2013, p. 53). *Storian* provides the opportunity for people to express their perspectives freely on certain topics or issues and take ownership of the

process (Farrelly & Nabobo-Baba 2012). Moreover, this study noted that *storian* is embedded in “*kastom*, known as *kastom storian*, a term including folktales, narratives and histories that provides participants key ideas about the importance of the beginning, the middle and the end of stories” (Paviour-Smith, Smith 2005, p. 230).

3.4.2.1: Storian with CARE Australia Vanuatu

The *storian* with CARE Vanuatu comprised of *storian* group discussions and individual based *storian* conversations with the selected staff members. Adapting to the COVID- 19 travel restrictions protocols, the *storian* were conducted through online modalities¹ and telephone. The *storian* group discussion was conducted with the project staff who are based in the Island of Tanna, a rural project site of CARE Vanuatu. Tanna Island is in the southern part of Vanuatu, and it has the highest rate of violence against women and girls (Webster 2017). Four project staff participated in the group based *storian* conversations. These included: the Team leader Pacific girl for the *vois blong mi*² program, the Gender officer for the Elimination of violence against women and girls project, the Team leader for *letemap sista*³ 11 project and the project officers for the elimination of violence against women and girls and *letemap sista* 11 projects.

The Tanna program staff provided data about the role of CARE Vanuatu in supporting the implementation of the FPA at the community level; the relationship between CARE Vanuatu, community leaders and other stakeholders involved in implementing the FPA; the achievements and challenges working with community members; the strategies used by CARE to address the challenges; and the professional views of the program officers about the role of international non-government organisations (INGOs). They also shared their professional experiences, knowledge and best practices working with members of the communities on raising awareness about the Family Protection Act.

Storian through individual conversations were organised with the Gender Adviser and Director. These collected data on CARE’s mandate to focus its work on domestic violence prevention and the strategies this has so far used to implement the

¹ The online modalities used for CARE Vanuatu were zoom and google chat.

² *Vois blong me* is a bislama term, translated to English it means My voice.

³ *Letemap sista* is a Bislama term, translated to English it means Lift up sisters.

FPA at the organisational and programmatic level. Furthermore, data were collected on CARE’s relationship with other stakeholders in the implementation of the FPA; the support CARE Vanuatu provided in supporting the implementation of FPA; the achievement and challenges working with stakeholders to advance FPA implementation; and the role of NGO in supporting FPA implementation.

3.4.2.2: Storian with Vanuatu Christian Council of Churches

Initially this research planned to work with Vanuatu Women’s Centre (VWC) then it shifted to VCC to explore faith-based work in preventing domestic violence.

The *storian* with identified staff of VCC included a group discussion with three project officers and individual-based storian with the gender officer and secretary general. The project officers provided their experiences working with community members, other churches, CSOs and the government to raise awareness on domestic violence prevention and the FPA. The one-to-one conversations with the gender officer discussed the community engagement and outreach workshops, the delivery of sessions using the human rights and gender training manual and the gender policy development and implementation approaches of VCC. Another individual conversation with the secretary general discussed the VCC collaboration with the government to address this issue.

Table 3.1: Summary of sample sizes across the two organisations

Name of organisation	Method of data collection	Sample size
VCC	Group storian	Three project officers
	Individual based storian	Secretary General
	Individual based storian	Gender officer
Care Vanuatu	Group storian	Four project officers who are based on Tanna Island
	Individual based storian	Director
	Individual based storian	Gender Adviser

3.5: Researcher's positioning and reflexivity

Positionality analyses and questions assumptions made by the researcher based on their own “opinions, beliefs, gender, social background” (Vanner 2015, p. 3), and their “values and attitudes” (Hesse-Biber 2006, p. 10). Acknowledging the researcher’s positionality, I considered my own assumptions, history and personal standing that could influence the research process and produce biases (Merriam et al 2010). I recognised my vast years of professional experience with CSOs supporting the advocacy around the endorsement of the family protection bill into a law and for other women’s rights issues in Vanuatu. On the one hand, I viewed this experience as a strength in the research process, because it comprised previous knowledge about the struggles to enact the legislation and the original efforts in developing implementation and coordinating frameworks of the FPA. My previous experiences enabled me to access data that was paramount to compare previous and current lessons learnt and identify drawbacks in the strategies.

On the other hand, my professional experiences, domain of practice and educational background represented a powerful platform to “influence the research process and the interpretation of data which could lead to biases”. (Chinua 2017, p. 37). Specifically, I acquired professional experiences working with the Vanuatu government, national CSOs and currently for the Pacific Community, an agency that is member of the Council of Regional Organisation in the Pacific (CROP), to support domestic violence prevention and the implementation of the FPA. My informants have less years of professional experience, only practice in the CSO field and some of them are external staff. Moreover, I am aware that as a woman grown up in a patriarchal culture and having a lived experience of being survivor of domestic violence, I could have influenced the research process. Although I share a national identity with my informants, seven years ago my education and professional experiences took me away from Vanuatu, first to Australia and currently in Fiji. I am mindful that this can influence the opinions of my informants towards me because they may assume that my approaches to the research processes are framed as an external researcher.

A feminist research methodology encourages researchers to use reflexivity to apply a “strong objectivity approach to the research process by disclosing their values, attitudes, agenda and biases that may influence the research process” (Hesse-Biber 2006, p. 10). Also, reflexivity “allows the subjects of knowledge to be placed on the

same critical causal plane as the objects of knowledge” (Hesse-Biber 2006, p. 10, Vanner 2015, pg 3). Recognising my positionality, I acknowledged that even though my informants did not have historical knowledge about the journey of the FPA, had less years of professional experiences, only worked in the CSO sector and some were international staff, they brought a wealth of current knowledge and experiences, which would complement my existing expertise and enhance an impartial research process. I acknowledged that most of the female informants may have lived experiences of domestic violence or may have assisted a survivor of domestic violence, hence validated my experiences. This acknowledgement enabled me to “establish a relationship with my informants based on mutual understanding and I informed them about my personal and professional background and their various roles and rights in the research process” (Chinua 2017, p. 37). Finally, I kept track of my positionality throughout the data collection, data analysis and writing phases in a field work journal.

3.7: Analysis of data

The study used recommendations from two previous program evaluation reviews that examined the effectiveness of violence prevention strategies and programs. The reviews that guided the data analysis of this study include:

- Promising approaches for the prevention of violence against women and girls. Care international in Vanuatu (Barclay, Trembath, & Russell, 2018). This paper supported the existing violence prevention programs for girls in Vanuatu by synthesising the literature on promising primary prevention strategies and including examples in the Asia Pacific region.
- Change the Story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia (Webster & Flood, 2015). This paper synthesised other research on violence against women prevention strategies to inform the development of a national framework.

The reviews identified ten recommendations of effective and ethical violence prevention strategies, summarised in box 3.1.

Box 3.1: Ten recommendations for effective and ethical violence prevention strategies

1. Multi-sectoral approach recognised that the focus of domestic violence prevention is not only on the affected person but includes other people within a community.
2. Awareness of risks of violence prevention work promotes the do no harm principle and calls for programs to develop measures that will reduce risks for promote the safety of domestic violence survivors.
3. Domestic violence prevention programs work effectively within existing cultural frameworks and promotes community acceptance.
4. Gender transformative approach demonstrated the link between gender inequality and domestic violence and aims at distributing power and resources equally between men and women to address harmful gender norms.
5. Including strategies for working with young people – Vanuatu has a high youth population and enabling young people to actively be involved in the prevention of domestic violence programs is essential to prevent intergenerational trauma of domestic violence.
6. Empowering women – This approach aims at positioning domestic violence prevention activities within the broader framework of empowering women politically, socially, and economically and enhancing women’s human rights.
7. Focus on prevention and access to support services has led domestic violence prevention programs to an increase in demand for support services. It is an ethical responsibility of violence prevention programs to ensure that survivors of domestic violence have access to counselling and other support services.
8. Intersectional and inclusive – Programs should always consider the situation of the survivors, their age, employment status, education background, geographical location, belonging to a certain ethic group and access to resources. These factors can increase vulnerability to domestic violence.
9. Long term and adequate resources are essential to achieve sustained change, and proper planning and adequate resources will be needed.
10. Evidenced based - Using evidence-based strategies to prevent domestic violence is an innovative way, which uses existing knowledge from the global community, analysing and reflecting on program practice for effective interventions.

The research proposal of this thesis acknowledged the application of these ten recommendations stated above; however, this study resorted to use five recommendations which are listed in the box 3.2 below.

Box 3.2: Five recommendations for effective and ethical violence prevention strategies used in this study

Recommendation 1: Multisectoral approaches

Recommendation 2: Work within existing cultural frameworks.

Recommendation 3: Gender transformative approaches.

Recommendation 4: Empowering Women.

Recommendation 5: Focus on prevention and access to support services

The study resorted to use the five recommendations above as they were relevant to the context and the strategies used by the CSOs examined under this study to support the FPA implementation.

3.8: Ethical consideration

This study abided by the ethical principles set out in the University of the South Pacific Human Research Ethics handbook (2009). Other ethical considerations include respect for the person's views, privacy, confidentiality, informed consent and voluntarily participation (Green & Thorogood 2010). This study ensured that participants were provided with complete information about the processes involved, to enable them to make their own decision regarding their involvement in the research process (Lindorff 2010).

Upon approval of the ethics committee, a consent email was sent to the Directors of the two organisations requesting their permission to utilise their public documents and organise conversation with certain staff members for research purposes. Furthermore, an information sheet, consent and confidentiality forms were provided to the research participants who were involved in the *storian* conversations. This study respected cultural competency and social responsibility.

3.9: Limitation of study

The coronavirus pandemic created travel restrictions to conduct face to face storian with the staff members of the two CSOs and observe them implementing their identified strategies, and to organise storian with the target beneficiaries to assess the effectiveness of the strategies. Using five of the ten recommendations of the ethical

and violence prevention strategies discussed in the analysis of data section is another limitation of this study, since it does not reflect the research project proposal. The five recommendations outlined in box 3.2 were used as they were relevant to the strategies used by the CSOs examined in this study to support the FPA implementation. These five ethical and violence prevention strategies recommendations taken from two previous program evaluations were used as best practises to guide the analysis of the strategies used by the two CSOs under examination.

3.10: Conclusion

In summary, this chapter discussed this study's methodology that was grounded in feminist theory and framed within Vanuatu's indigenous approach of dialogue known as *storian*. The *storian* discussion were organised with the staff members from VCC a national CSO and CARE Vanuatu an Australian CSO, which have expertise in preventing and responding to domestic violence issues. Document analysis, consisting in the examination of the existing published documents of the two CSOs, complemented the *storian*. The data collected from the *storian* and document analysis informed the case study method of this thesis. The researcher's positionality and reflexivity, aiming to maintain rigorous objectivity in the research process, were provided. This study used five recommendations from two previous program evaluation reviews, which focused on the effectiveness of violence prevention strategies, to analyse the case study data and discuss the meanings, importance, and relevance of the CSO's strategies used to support the FPA implementation against the recommendations. Ethical considerations like respect for the person's views and privacy, confidentiality, informed consent and voluntarily participation were upheld throughout the research process. Finally, this chapter concluded with a thorough analysis of its limitation.

Chapter Four: - CARE Vanuatu case study

4.1: Introduction

Chapter four presents the case study of CARE Vanuatu. Firstly, this chapter provides an overview of this organization. Secondly, it responds to the research questions by discussing the four strategies identified and analysing their effectiveness.

4.2: Overview of CARE Vanuatu

CARE International has operated in Vanuatu since 2008 under the name of CARE Australia and later changed to CARE Vanuatu. Working with selected community members, it implements programs and projects promoting gender equality and addressing violence against women and girls, disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation, food security, water, sanitation, and hygiene. Promoting gender equality through the prevention of domestic violence is a core component of CARE Vanuatu's work. This organisation recognises that violence against women and girls, notably within the domestic setting, is a serious issue in Vanuatu, and this has been reflected in its strategic plan and policy directives, hence one of its core goals is working in partnership with government, CSOs and community to prevent domestic violence.

CARE's gender equality program implements the Letemap Sista⁴ project launched in 2014 and operated in Tafea province, which responds to the alarming rate of violence against women and girls through life skills development program (CARE Vanuatu 2014). The results of the Letemap sista phase I (LS1) were educating 200 girls, 74 women, 47 boys and 13 men in life skills development, establishing 62 seed and tool banks for female farmers and promoting female leadership in poultry farming micro enterprise (Care Vanuatu 2014). The LS1 achievements led to the expansion of Letemap Sista phase II (LS2), a project implemented for the period of 2017 to 2021 and funded through the Australian government aid program (CARE Vanuatu 2019). Its outcomes are listed in box 4.1.

⁴ Letemap sista is a bislama term for lifting up our sisters.

Box 4.1: LS2 outcome areas

Outcome 1: 200 women and young women with and without disabilities (including single mothers) in 10 Women Economic Livelihood (WEL) groups in rural and remote areas of Tafea province have access to and control over economic resources, decision-making at the household level and increase their food and economic security by 30%.

Outcome 2: Women, young women, and girls with and without disabilities (including single mothers), are confidently advocating for women and girls in rural and remote areas and providing leadership at the community level to advance gender equality and end violence against women and girls in peacetime and disasters.

Outcome 3: Domestic violence is prevented in target communities and survivors are accessing support services.

4.3: Responses to the research questions

Five documents were used to examine CARE's strategies. Firstly, a synthesis of the literature report titled, Promising approaches for the prevention of violence against women and girls (2018) documenting CARE Vanuatu's effective strategies to prevent violence against women and girls. Secondly, the internal mid-term review report on the Litemap sista II project (2019), illustrating the project's achievements and a case study on tackling violence one at a time (2014), that highlighted the participants' feedback during the CARE's Vanuatu Good relationship free from violence training on the Island of Tanna. The final two documents were CARE Vanuatu training manual on Good relationship free from violence (GRFV) (2017), which outlined the skills and knowledge to prevent violence against women and girls; and the Gender equality and women's voice guidance note (2018), which outlined the approaches for CARE affiliates globally to tackle the underlying causes of poverty and social injustice. CARE Vanuatu has been using the strategies listed in box 4.2 to support the implementation of the FPA. The analysis of these strategies has guided and informed the approach to the organization's documents analysis, and the group and individual *storian* conversations.

Box 4.2: Strategies used by CARE Vanuatu to support FPA implementation.

1. Strengthening the enabling environment.
2. Supporting women and girls' economic empowerment.
3. Multisectoral approaches to respond to domestic violence.
4. Engaging men to support domestic violence prevention.

4.3.1: Strategy one: Strengthening the enabling environment.

Strengthening the enabling environment is a core strategy applied by CARE Vanuatu to support the implementation of the FPA. An enabling environment to prevent domestic violence entails the recognition of this issue at the policy, legislation, and institutional levels (Barclay, Trembath, & Russell, 2018). Globally, CARE integrates transformative gender approaches across its programmatic goals, organisational leadership and culture as stipulated in CARE's gender equality and women's voice guidance note (CARE International 2018). This guidance note defines the approaches that CARE affiliates will use to tackle poverty, social injustice and bring lasting change to the lives of the vulnerable people through three components which are 1) Strengthening gender equality and women's voice, 2) Promoting inclusive governance and 3) Increasing resilience. This mandated CARE Vanuatu to ensure that the prevention of gender-based violence within a domestic setting and the promotion of gender equality is being stipulated in its internal policies and program operational mechanisms (CARE International 2018).

A research participant made the point that:

CARE's global Gender equality and women's voice guidance note 2018 developed the gender equality framework that provided the enabling environment for CARE Vanuatu's prevention approach to domestic violence.

The gender equality and women's voice concept note 2018 includes the gender equality framework that aims to "build agency of people of all genders and life stages, change relations between them and transform structures in order that they realise full potential in their public and private lives and are able to contribute equally to, and benefit equally from, social, political and economic development" (CARE International 2018, pg.3).

Figure 4.1: CARE International Gender Equality Framework

Build Agency	Change Relations	Transform structures	Women and Girls
Building consciousness, confidence, self-esteem, and aspirations (non-formal sphere) and knowledge, skills and capabilities (formal sphere).	The power relations through which people live their lives through intimate relations and social networks (nonformal sphere) and group membership and activism, and citizen and market negotiations (formal sphere).	Discriminatory social norms, customs, values and exclusionary practices (non-formal sphere) and laws, policies, procedures and services (formal sphere).	realise their human rights and people of all genders and life stages live in gender equality

Source: Gender equality and women’s voice guidance note (2018).

Another research participant echoed that:

CARE’s focus on the prevention of domestic violence mandated in CARE 2020 program strategy, ensures the right to a life free from violence and requires all CARE affiliates to address the power inequalities between women and men, girls and boys, and people of all genders that underpin gender based or domestic violence.

The CARE program strategy 2020 provides a policy directive to all programs to prevent gender-based violence, including domestic violence, and the strategy recognises the right to a life free from violence as an outcome, through which CARE will measure its work and be held accountable (CARE International 2014).

Furthermore, as by Barclay, Trembath & Russell (2018), CARE Vanuatu’s prevention of domestic violence and the promotion of gender equality programs aligns to Vanuatu government’s recognition of the need to promote gender equality and end domestic violence. In turn, this reflects what is mandated in the Vanuatu constitution, FPA, and other regional and international commitments that Vanuatu is a party to: for example, the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Beijing Platform for Action (BPA), the Pacific Platform for Action on the Advancement of Women and Gender Equality, the 2012 Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration (2012), the Pacific Framework for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2016) and the Pacific Islands Forum Reference Group on Sexual and Gender Based Violence. CARE Vanuatu strengthens the implementation of these legal and policy frameworks by

focusing on the prevention of domestic violence at the community and provincial level of selected areas in Vanuatu.

A research participant stated that:

Understanding the Vanuatu government's existing gender equality and domestic violence prevention and policies and legal frameworks enables CARE Vanuatu to identify the areas that needs to be strengthened and develop approaches focusing on preventive strategies of domestic violence at the community and provincial level.

In summary, both the documents analysed and the individual and group *storian* present strengthening the enabling environment as one of the core strategies implemented by CARE in Vanuatu to support the implementation of the FPA.

4.3.2: The effectiveness of strengthening the enabling environment strategy

In examining the effectiveness of strengthening the enabling environment strategy, Barclay, Trembath, & Russell (2018) stressed that policies and laws that promote gender equality make an important contribution to the prevention of violence against women and girls. CARE Vanuatu's domestic violence prevention work has been informed by CARE's global gender policies, which are the Gender equality and women's voice guidance note (CARE International 2018) and the CARE 2020 program strategy containing the gender equality framework (CARE International 2014). CARE's global overarching gender policies were effective since they provided the mandate and enabling environment framework supporting CARE Vanuatu's domestic violence prevention work with other partners in government and CSOs.

Moreover, CARE global policies enhance a gender transformative approach for CARE Vanuatu to implement its programs in collaboration with its partners and have the autonomy to acquire financial resources for its program implementation. CARE's global Gender equality and women's voice guidance note (2018) captured that:

“Implementing a transformative gender approach requires gender integrated programmatic goals, strategies and organisational enablers in leadership, accountability, investment and innovation. If CARE does not step up its efforts to strengthen leadership and accountability for performance on internal gender policies and reforms and increase

capacities to deliver on our core gender equality mandate, we will lose credibility and market position, among other things.” (pg 28).

A research participant stated that:

CARE Vanuatu’s work aligns to CARE’s global mission statement of preventing insecurity and injustice recognising that domestic violence is a form in injustice and insecurity, and this provide an enabling environment strengthening CARE’s prevention work on gender-based violence.

Another research participant reiterated that:

CARE’s existing policies such as the Gender equality and women’s voice guidance note (2018), the CARE 2020 program strategy is effective since it sets the framework that recognise gender equality as a core part of CARE’s work. The research done by Vanuatu Women’s Centre, the FPA, Vanuatu existing Human Rights commitments and the national gender policies enables the contextualisation of CARE Vanuatu’s work in domestic violence prevention.

Therefore, the data collected demonstrated that the strategy of strengthening the enabling environment has been effective in allowing this CSO to support the implementation of the FPA.

4.3.3: Strategy two: Supporting women and girls’ economic empowerment.

Supporting women and girls’ economic empowerment is another pragmatic strategy CARE Vanuatu used to support the implementation of FPA. According to Fulu, Kerr-Wilson & Lang (2014), women experiencing domestic violence have limited chances to participate actively in economic activities, training, and other opportunities. Programs aiming at advancing the social and economic empowerment of women and girls are vital to transform gender relationships and empower women to prevent domestic violence (Barclay, Trembath, & Russell 2018). The Mid-term review LS2 report (2019) demonstrated that CARE Vanuatu works to empower women and girls’ economic wellbeing by enabling them to access further skills development training and support services during situations of domestic violence.

Table 4.1: LS II project design

Project title	Lifemap sista II
Project aim	Support women, young women, and girls, including those with a disability, in rural and remote areas in Vanuatu to be free from violence, have increased economic opportunity and participate meaningfully in decisions that affect their lives.
Intended outcomes	Two hundred women and young women with and without disabilities (including single mothers) in ten Women Economic Livelihood (WEL) groups in rural and remote areas of Tafea province have increased safe access to and control over economic resources and decision-making at the household level, allowing them to increase their food and economic security by thirty percent. The medium outcomes are: Medium-Term Outcome 1.1: Ten WEL groups practice improved food and economic production techniques. Medium-Term Outcome 1.2: Ten WEL groups have improved access to financial services and markets. Medium-Term Outcome 1.3: Eleven WEL groups make decisions with their partners to manage household finances and livelihoods.
Project donor	Australian government aid program
Project location	Tafea Province
Project timeframe	2017-2022
Project activities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establishment of WEL groups. 2. Strengthens provision of resources and capacity building in basic agriculture skills training. 3. Organises leadership and Good Governance workshops to strengthen management committees. 4. Establish four Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA) to improve access to financial services. 5. Support women to participate actively in household financial decision-making.

Domestic Violence is linked to women’s social and economic position and locating violence prevention activities within the broader framework of empowering women across these spheres will ensure women are free from violence and can access support services freely (Barclay, Trembath, & Russell 2018). The participants engaged in the *storian* conversations agreed that educating women and girls in financial literacy enables them to participate in income generating activities to be resilient to domestic violence.

A study conducted by Vanuatu Women Centre's (2011) indicated that the lack of access to financial resources and information is a contributing factor forcing women to remain in a domestic violent relationship. The data collected from the participant stated below showed that the females participants engaged in Care Vanuatu's gender and income generation program noted changes that are directly linked to behavioural and attitudinal causes of domestic violence.

One participant asserted that:

CARE Vanuatu works with the women and their husband's integrating awareness about basic financial management training, shared home responsibilities and domestic violence prevention. Integrating these topics enable the women and their spouses to practice shared decision making about management of their household financial resources.

Another participant reiterated that:

CARE collaborates with the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) to provides gardening tools, seeds and training in poultry and pig rearing engaging both women and men to generate income.

Therefore, the findings demonstrated that CARE Vanuatu has supported the economic empowerment of women and girls to address domestic violence, therefore contributing to the implementation of the FPA.

4.3.4: The effectiveness of Women and Girl's economic empowerment strategy

According to CARE Vanuatu (2014), women and girls are receiving the support they need to earn an income, make informed decisions, and develop leadership skills to be free from violence. The findings from the mid-term review LS2 report (2019) showed these achievements:

Table 4.2: LSII outcome 1.1 achievements

Medium Term Outcome 1.1: Ten WEL groups practice improved food and economic production techniques.

Activities	Achievements
1. Establishment of WEL groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nine WEL groups established under Letemap sista in phase 1 have received ongoing trainings and technical support under LS2. • Loanialu community WEL group received funding support through another Australian government program.
2. Strengthen provision of basic resources and capacity building in basic agriculture skills training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective collaboration with DARD resulting in the provision of gardening tools and seeds to the participants, enabling them to have access to basic resources to advance their small scale farming business. • Training in poultry and pig rearing and growing vegetables equipped the participants with basic knowledge and skills in small scale farming methods. • The WEL group members reported that the collaboration between CARE Vanuatu and DARD resulted in an increased income through support from LS2. Respondents reported weekly income generated contributed to some household expenditures like children’s education and family members’ health. • In one location respondents reported using income generated through LS2 initiatives to transport produce to the main market in Lenakel (the provincial capital), which generated 10 times more income than the roadside stalls where they had previously sold their produce. • A respondent in the FGD in Lowenata reported that they usually earned VT 500 when they sold their vegetables at a roadside market. After participation in LS2, they are earning between 1000vt – 1500vt at the roadside markets, and VT10,000 – VT15,000vt at the Lenakel market. • One respondent mentioned that household nutrition had improved through upgraded agricultural practices.

<p>3. Organise leadership and good governance workshops to strengthen management committees.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WEL groups are effectively operating. • The leadership and good governance capacity building and training provided by LS2 strengthened the establishment of the management committee and enabled the members to understand their leadership roles, communicate effectively and undertake conflict resolution.
<p>4. Piloted the established four VSLA to improve access to financial services.</p>	<p>CARE established four VSLAs. The achievements documented during the MTR were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VSLA members reported an increased in savings and a space to practice financial literacy and decision making. • VSLAs is seen by respondents as a transparent and organized savings options. The benefits mentioned by respondents included not having to pay bank fees for withdrawals, transparent governance mechanisms resulting in greater trust and accountability, affordable interest rates and sufficient time for repayment. • Respondents reported that their participation has given them greater control over their savings and provided a space for them to practice financial literacy and decision-making skills. • Through VSLAs families practice regular and systematic savings. No data was available on amounts saved or borrowed, but respondents spoke of borrowing money to support existing small businesses, transporting vegetable to markets and paying school fees. • <i>VSLA has been helpful as we have now been able to save money and lessen expense to get a transport to Lenakel market. Also, we don't have to pay regular fees like the banks charge. VSLAs give us an opportunity to learn and continually practice budgeting'. Female respondent LS2 mid-term review.</i> • <i>'My wife is a member of the VSLA group. Our family have started to benefit from it. I used to think about the loose coins I usually have are nothing and I can spend it all in anything. VSLA helps me to save all my loose coins through my wife. She took a personal loan from the group for VT7,000 to buy fabric for sewing to enable her to generate an income'. Male respondent LS2 midterm review.</i>
<p>5. Support women to participate actively in household financial decision making.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The workshops on FFM equipped both men and women with skills to manage their family's financial resources and make financial decisions together, increasing women's voice in household decisions. • The workshops focus on roles and responsibilities in a household, encouraging discussions about working together for the benefit of the whole family.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Women were involved in household financial decisions that were previously largely the domain of men, such as deciding on the price for selling pigs and cattle and the price for selling produce at the market.• Women reported that they were being involved in other kinds of decisions previously made only by men, for instance where children attend school and how many children a couple will have.• <i>'My husband told me he now realizes how hard he used to make me work before and he wants to help me in my roles as a leader and around the house'. Female respondent midterm review.</i>• <i>'Sharing responsibilities is now practice and husband reported spending more time to support their wives with domestic chores compared to the past. One example is my own son. He is helping his wife and taking care of their children while the wife is weaving mats to earn money for their VSLA savings'. Male respondent midterm review</i>
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The data collected for this section provided the evidence that favouring women and girls' economic empowerment is an effective strategy for CARE Vanuatu in supporting the implementation of the FPA.

4.3.3: Strategy three: Multisectoral approach to respond to domestic violence

Another strategy implemented by CARE Vanuatu to support the implementation of the FPA is using a multisectoral approach to respond to domestic violence. While CARE Vanuatu focuses on primary prevention, providing referral pathways for survivors of domestic violence to access support services remains part of a balanced and comprehensive strategy (CARE International 2014). According to the research participants involved in the individual and group *storian* conversations:

CARE Vanuatu values the linkages between raising awareness about the prevention of domestic violence and providing referral pathways to enable survivors of domestic violence to have access to support services as a response measure. This approach is implemented by establishing partnership with other CSOs and government agencies. CARE collaborated with Vanuatu Women's Centre (VWC) and developed a poster and help card containing information about the available support services for survivors of domestic violence. CARE Vanuatu staff continues to refer the survivors of domestic violence to access support services available at VWC or police.

CARE works with community, church and traditional leaders and government agencies to prevent and address domestic violence and improve the legal, health and support services for survivors. Additionally, another participant made the point that:

a holistic approach implemented by CARE Vanuatu was the integration of prevention initiatives and responses services. CARE formed partnership with VWC, the Vanuatu police, Ministry of Health (MOH), Ministry of Justice, Community and traditional leaders and other NGOs advocating for domestic violence preventions. Through this partnership survivors of domestic violence are referred to VWC to access counselling or a family or temporary protection order under FPA. Moreover, survivors are referred to the Ministry of health for

medical treatment or family planning services and the police to access a protection order. Using the holistic approach of prevention and response enabling the target audience to understand the linkages.

A participant reiterated that:

the community level partnerships with the chiefs, officials from the government and CSOs enables the survivors to access support services and if they decide to start their own small-scale business, CARE supports them through the economic empowerment and financial management programs.

The content of the GRFV training manual (2017) contained topics that integrated multisectoral approaches to both domestic violence prevention and response. This manual strengthens a “partnership approach drawing on existing expertise of partners in Vanuatu to facilitate sessions on family planning and violence against women and girls and to act as a link between communities and local service providers.” (CARE international in Vanuatu, pg 7). The manual is structured into modules, session and topics outlined in table 3.

Table 4.3: GRFV manual content structure

Module	Session	Topics
Introduction	Relationships that are free from violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationship foundations • Healthy and unhealthy relationships • Assessing what you want in a relationship
Gender Equality	Gender inequality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sex and gender • Gender norms and roles. • Changes in gender
	Gender Equality and Human Rights Law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human rights • Access to rights • Laws in Vanuatu
	Gender in emergencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vulnerability in disasters • Gender role in preparing and responding to an emergency

Violence in relationships	Violence against women and girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Violence against women and girls in Vanuatu • Different types of violence • Identifying violence in a relationship • The cycle of violence • Myths and attitudes that support violence against women and girls • Impacts of violence and non-violence
	Sexual Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sex and consent • Question and answer session with a representative from the Vanuatu Family and Protection Unit, Vanuatu Police Force
	Where to seek support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to support a friend • Formal and informal support • Question and answer session with VWC
Skills for building a healthy relationship	Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introducing communication • Non-verbal communication • Active listening • Aggressive, passive and assertive communication
	Negotiation and conflict resolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introducing negotiation • Negotiating a healthy relationship
	Self-care and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying and managing anger. • Support and asking for help
Family Planning	Puberty and reproductive system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical changes during puberty • Reproductive systems • Menstruation • Reproduction
	Family planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family planning • Human rights and family planning • Gender, sex and family planning • Impacts of teenage pregnancy • Myths and facts on family planning
	Contraception	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introducing contraception • Sexually Transmitted Infections. • Female condom demonstration • Male condom demonstration • Where to access family planning services • Negotiating contraceptive use
Closing		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection • Planning and goal setting for action. • Closing.

A research participant stated that:

During any workshops on good relationship free from violence, CARE Vanuatu collaborated with other partners to deliver respective sessions about the role of their organisation in implementing the FPA. These partners include VWC, Police, Ministry of Justice, Court, and the Department of public prosecution in relation to family.

In brief, this section revealed that applying a multisectoral to respond to domestic violence is a strategy that CARE Vanuatu uses to support FPA implementation.

4.3.5: The effectiveness of multisectoral approach

To create substantial and sustainable change, actors must work across the individual, household, community, and societal levels (Barclay, Trembath, & Russell, 2018).

Accordingly, a research participant in the individual *storian* stated that:

the GRFV training brought all stakeholders from other sectors and focuses on building relationship free from violence at community level targeting household, community groups, chiefs, church leaders and officials from the provincial government.

Another participant in the *storian* group discussion outlined that.

Representatives from the FPU Tanna police commented that collaborating with CARE to facilitate sessions on the role of police in implementing the FPA provided an opportunity to enhance the connection and engagement between the government and the people.

The GRFV training manual (2017) built on a multisectoral approach, addressing domestic violence issues at the structural level within communities, services, and policies, and receives support for change. This approach has been effective in bringing all the stakeholders together to address the issue of domestic violence.

Box 4.3: CARE Vanuatu multisectoral approach to domestic violence prevention

1. Community: CARE Vanuatu works with communities' members to promote gender equality and prevent violence against women and girls. It ensures that the community members who attend the GRFV training are able to disseminate messages to other people about domestic violence prevention.
2. Systems: CARE Vanuatu collaborated with the health and education services to ensure they understand their role to support young women to access the services and information they need to be able to stay healthy, make good decisions, have equal opportunities to young men and enter healthy relationships that are free from violence. This CSO provides technical support to the health and education agencies to ensure that adequate, non-judgmental services and referral systems are in place to respond to women and girls who are currently experiencing violence and/or need access to family planning services.
3. Policy: CARE Vanuatu advocates to relevant government authorities to ensure policies are in place to support young women to access equal opportunities to men and be protected from violence in private and public life.

Additionally, the Mid-term review LS2 report (2019) captured the following achievements under outcomes 3 of LS2. Two medium term outcomes were related to multisectoral approaches to prevent domestic violence and are describe in table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Outcome 3 medium term achievements

Medium term outcome	Achievements
<p>3.1: Referral protocols are being used by community members and service providers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community members, CARE staff and stakeholders have been trained in referral protocols and there is emerging evidence that they are using them. • At the time of the MTR, 17 referrals had been made by community members and CARE staff to Tafea Counselling Centre⁵ (TCC). Although these numbers appear small, they indicate that people are aware and starting to use referral pathways. • Service providers and chiefs noted reduced violence in locations where CARE and partners have delivered GRFV. • CARE staff reported increased interest in information and support from the Tafea Counselling Centre following delivery of the GRFV workshops.
<p>3.2: Service providers in target areas are making appropriate survivor centred care available and accessible to survivors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CARE collaborated with TCC to design and deliver a workshop for service providers on survivor-centred care and referrals. This reached 12 people (F:6, M:6) from Ministry of Health (MOH), Red Cross, Island Court, TCC and the Vanuatu Police. • The Family Protection Unit reported that there had been fewer calls for them to respond to acute violent incidents in the communities in which CARE and its partners work compared to others.

In conclusion, data revealed that applying a multisectoral approach to response to domestic violence was an effective strategy to support FPA implementation.

4.3.6: Strategy four: Engaging men to support domestic violence prevention

Working with men and boys to address gender inequality and prevent violence against women and girls reduces the risk of reaction (Barclay, Trembath, & Russell 2018). The GRFV training has therefore equipped men and young men with skills and

⁵ Tafea Counselling Centre is Vanuatu Women Centre branch in Tafea province.

information to raise awareness about healthy and equal relationships that are free from violence at community level (CARE international Vanuatu 2017). Moreover, while this program targeted women and young women, the specific focus is to include men and young men to change their behaviour to build stronger communities (Webster 2014).

Strengthening males' involvement in domestic violence prevention programs promotes collaboration with women and girls and enables the community members to examine their attitudes and behaviour towards domestic violence prevention and increase the understanding that all people have the right to live free from violence (Webster 2014). The research participants involved in the *storian* group conversations, made the point that.

“Since Vanuatu is a male patriarchy society, working alongside male to understand the power relationship in a domestic violence situation is crucial. It enables men in the community to support CARE’s work and engage actively”. Male research participant.

“The male advocacy or having men leading the awareness on domestic violence prevention created a lot of support for CARE’s work at the community level. Men will listen to other men and learn from them about domestic violence prevention” Male research participant.

“Most community leaders in Vanuatu are men therefore engaging the men and boys through community dialogue allows for mutual engagement in domestic violence prevention programs”. Female research participant.

Therefore, the data collected from the document analysis and the *storian* conversations, provided evidence that engaging with men and boys to support domestic violence prevention is a strategy utilised by this CSO.

4.3.7: The effectiveness of men to support domestic violence prevention strategy

The GRFV training was piloted with a group of participants in Loukanral, Tanna Island. Tanna Island has the highest rate of violence against women and girls in Vanuatu, with 67 percent of women in Tafea province saying they have experienced

physical or sexual violence from a husband or partner in their lifetime (Vanuatu Women's Centre, 2011). Promising results and positive feedbacks have been documented about the project during LS1. Webster (2014) captured the feedbacks from community leaders and participants who participated in the workshops:

"Since the training, my husband and I have had good consultation with each other. Now people in the community think that the young couples should follow our example. I think the training is very good and I'd like my husband and I to work together even more." Female participant in the GRFV training pilot sessions in Loukanral, Tanna. " (pg 2)

"The training positively changed my behaviour; I have had good consultation between with my girlfriend and family members in the community. Cooperation in the community is strengthened". Male participant in the GRFV training pilot sessions in Loukanral, Tanna. " (pg 2).

The Mid-term review LS2 report (2019) encapsulated these progresses during the Focus Group Discussions (FDG) and individual interviews with Key Individual Informants (KII):

'I was the only one making decisions in the family, but I am trying to change this and now some decisions we make together. I was a short-tempered person but after attending the training, there has been a change in me personally' Male KII (pg.15)

'There has been change in the way men are managing their anger, they are more understanding and are becoming less violent and aggressive compared to the past. Men are now realizing their past behaviour was not good and they are improving'. Female FGD (pg.15)

'Before there used to be many community meetings on Saturdays for youth issues, domestic violence, and other issues, however there are fewer of the community meetings nowadays, and we feel that it is partly because of the Good Relationship training'. Male FGD.(pg.14).

The above data provided evidence that this strategy was effective for CARE Vanuatu to prevent domestic violence at household and community level, which supported the implementation for FPA.

4.4: Conclusion

Using a range of documentation and *storian* about the role of CARE Vanuatu in supporting the implementation of the FPA, this chapter illustrated the CSO's strategies. These included strengthening the enabling environment, supporting women and girls' economic empowerment, adopting multisectoral approaches, and engaging men to support domestic violence prevention. It is clear from the overview section that gender transformative approaches are a core guiding principle of this CSO, enabling the prevention of domestic violence and supporting the implementation of FPA. Strengthening the enabling environment strategy indicated that this CSO's prevention work on domestic violence aligns to CARE International existing gender policies and the existing gender policy and legal frameworks of the Vanuatu government, thus enhancing an enabling environment for FPA implementation.

Supporting women and girls' economic empowerment has been another effective strategy applied and it is evident from the findings that this CSO has economically empowered women and girls and actively involved their husbands and partners in this strategy. Applying multisectoral approaches is another innovative strategy CARE Vanuatu has used to ensure survivors of domestic violence have access to support services. Through collaboration with key stakeholders, this strategy ensures different partners combine their expertise in raising awareness about domestic violence prevention and enables survivors to access support services. Engaging men to support domestic violence prevention is the final strategy considered in this study and is a crucial strategy to address Vanuatu's patriarchal society. This strategy has revealed that support has been fostered by men to prevent and respond to domestic violence.

The challenges encountered during the implementation of these strategies are partnership and patriarchy culture. Establishing partnership with other CSOs and government agencies during the initial implementation of CARE Vanuatu's LS2 was a challenge since the stakeholders from the justice and gender sector delayed positive responses and the health, agriculture and education sectors' stakeholders did not

recognise the alignment of prevention of gender-based violence into their core work. The continuous liaison efforts by CARE Vanuatu addresses this challenge. Next, the patriarchy culture affects the implementation of all the strategies, being a continuous obstacle to changing social norms. CARE Vanuatu addresses this challenge by increasing its human resources in the project sites and recruiting men to take the lead in facilitating the life skills and gender workshops. Secondly, the prevention of gender-based violence awareness has been mainstreamed into the life skills, leadership and Women economic empowerment and livelihood training to leverage social norms. Finally, this organisation uses a participatory approach in the community sensitizations/dialogue sessions with community leaders and chiefs to influence social change. The research findings noted that CARE Vanuatu will continue to invest resources to develop innovative ways to address the challenges.

Chapter Five: - Vanuatu Christian Council of Churches case study

5.1: Introduction

This chapter presents the Vanuatu Christian Council of Churches (VCC) case study findings. It begins by providing an overview of VCC. It then deliberates on the four strategies used by VCC and their effectiveness, linking the case study findings to the research questions.

5.2: Overview of Vanuatu Christian Council of Churches

VCC is an umbrella body of the Christian Churches in Vanuatu and was established in 1966. It is managed by a secretariat and has five member churches⁶ and two observers⁷ with provincial links to churches (Act Alliance 2015). In 2014, VCC began its human rights and gender advocacy programs working with church and community leaders and developed its first gender policy and training manual on gender, human rights, and faith (Sista 2017). VCC has a mission to work in a Christian prophetic role towards promoting love, justice, peace, and harmony for the people of Vanuatu (Vanuatu Christian Council 2020).

5.3: Responses to research questions

The data used to discuss the strategies employed by VCC and their effectiveness came from the content analysis of the documents described in box 5.1 and the *storian* discussions with VCC staff members.

⁶ Apostolic Church, Churches of Christ, Church of Melanesia, Catholic Church, and Presbyterian Church

⁷ Assemblies of God and Seventh day Adventist Churches

Box 5.1: VCC documents analysed

Document 1: Vanuatu Christian Council (2019). Pacific People Advancing Change small grant scheme phase 2 narrative report.
Document 2: Vanuatu Christian Council (2020). Pacific People Advancing Change small grant scheme phase 3 narrative report.
Document 4: Vanuatu Christian Council Gender Policy (2020).
Document 5: Vanuatu Christian Council training manual on Human Rights, Faith and Gender (2014).
Document 6: Uniting World Australia (2020). Gender Equality Theology home page.
Document 7: World Vision Vanuatu (2020). Relationship Education About Choices and Healing (REACH) homepage.

VCC has been using the strategies listed in the box 5.2 to support the implementation of the FPA. The analysis of these strategies has guided and informed the approach to the organization's documents analysis, and the group and individual *storian* conversations.

Box 5.2: Strategies used by VCC to support FPA implementation.

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engaging with chiefs to support domestic violence prevention activities.• Development of training resources.• Partnerships with Australian faith-based organisation.• Strengthening the enabling environment. |
|--|

5.3.1: Strategy one: Engaging chiefs to support domestic violence prevention activities.

Since June 2018, VCC has been receiving annual small grants from the Human Rights and Social Development Division (HRSD)⁸ of the Pacific Community-SPC, Pacific People Advancing Change Program (PPAC). PPAC builds advocacy capacity among Pacific CSOs promoting human rights by supporting specific campaigns in advocacy training workshops, ongoing mentoring, providing small grants, and facilitating regional dialogue for advocates (Pacific Community-SPC 2019). VCC utilises the

⁸ Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT) and the SPC Social Development Programme (SDP) are newly merged to become the SPC Human Rights & Social Development (HRSD) Division.

PPAC small grant facility to promote the prevention of domestic violence using human rights, gender, and faith-based approaches (Child and Kalsuak 2020). It does so by engaging with the chiefs of three outer Island communities residing in Port Vila, the main capital town, to raise awareness about the Family Protection Act. Chiefs, an English term translated into Bislama and spelled as jif, are the men who are the authoritative representatives of indigenous knowledge and practice (Bolton, 1999). The FPA provides a provision for the chiefs to be an Authorised person, if they wish to pursue that role (Family Protection Act 2018), to strengthen their existing work in resolving conflict. VCC has a reputation of engaging with the chiefs and church leaders through its gender policy implementation, which enabled the implementation of the PPAC funded Human Rights and Faith Advocacy project. The project design is outlined in table 5.

Table 5.1: VCC’s PPAC program design outline.

Project title	Promoting peaceful and harmonious communities
Project aim	Support the chiefs of three outer Island communities in Port Vila with training, information dissemination and mentoring to promote human rights, and prevent domestic violence activities in respective communities.
Activities	1.Organise FPA workshops with chiefs and other community leaders. 2.Establish Human Rights Working group in the three communities. 3.Develop brochures on FPA and translated into bislama.
FPA workshop topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to human rights, gender, and biblical principles. • Domestic and types of domestic violence • Advocacy steps and FPA advocacy campaigns.
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chiefs increased knowledge about the causes and impacts of DV. • Chiefs gain confidence to advocate for domestic violence prevention and promote human rights in respective community.
Outcomes	Chiefs continuously advocate about domestic violence prevention and FPA.
Project donor	PPAC is funded by the Government of Sweden and implemented by HRSD
Project timeframe	Phase 1 commenced on June 2018 to June 2019 Phase 2 commenced on June 2019 to June 2020. Phase 3 commenced on June 2020 to June 2021. Phase 4 commenced on June 2021 to June 2022.

The group and individual *storian* discussions demonstrated that the collaboration between VCC and the chiefs was important to support the implementation of the FPA. The excerpts documented from the group and *storian* discussions below with VCC staff members, demonstrated the importance of the collaboration.

A research participant in the individual *storian* stated that:

“In Vanuatu chiefs are the gate keepers of individual communities therefore collaborating with them to prevent domestic violence is significant to strengthen their existing leadership roles at the community level. All the chiefs are members of the churches under VCC. VCC engages with the chiefs by applying a faith-based approach that encourages the chiefs to integrate biblical texts into the domestic violence prevention and gender equity messages for their communities. This approach enabled the chiefs and community leaders to be supportive of VCC’s initiative in their communities”.

Other group *storian* research participants concurred that,

“Engaging with the chiefs was important since it provided the opportunity for the chiefs and their community members to reorganise their existing community activities and identify entry points to integrate domestic violence prevention activities. Moreover, the engagement provided opportunities for the chiefs to understand their role in prevention domestic violence. The chiefs commented that despite they are confronted with challenge, they recognised that they have a duty to respect and value human dignity, a component of human rights.”

To support the sustainability of this activity, VCC has supported the chiefs and their people to establish a local Human Rights Working Group (HRWG) in the three communities and has developed the HRWG’s terms of reference: It equally funds meeting costs and provides ongoing training and mentoring in domestic violence prevention. In summary, the documents and individual and group *storian* demonstrate that engaging with the Chiefs to prevent domestic violence is one of the core strategies implemented by VCC to support the implementation of the FPA.

5.3.2: The effectiveness of engaging with Chiefs to support domestic violence prevention.

Practice-based evidence in the Pacific showed that programs that work in partnership with existing community structures and cultural frameworks have a greater chance of success (Barclay, Trembath, & Russell 2018). The VCC's project narrative reports under the PPAC program demonstrated that VCC has engaged effectively with the chiefs by providing ongoing technical and training support for the establishment of the HRWG in the three targeted communities and has empowered the chief to continuously commit to prevent this issue. Additionally, the evaluation data of this project proved that the chief's increased awareness about their role in domestic violence prevention and the engagement with chiefs is effective in promoting ownership and continuity of domestic violence prevention awareness. The chief's stated, the workshop increased their awareness about the importance of taking proactive measure to address domestic violence situations to create positive changes amongst people's lives. (Vanuatu Christian Council 2020). In brief, the above data provided the perspectives of VCC and the chiefs regarding the added value of VCC's ongoing technical support to the chiefs which led to the establishment of the HRWG and increased in knowledge about the role of chiefs in support domestic violence prevention. However, there were no data provided that indicated the actual changes in behaviour and attitude of people at the community level as a result of the Chief's engagement in domestic violence prevention work.

5.3.3: Strategy two: Development of training resources

VCC commenced its gender and human rights advocacy and developed its first ever training manual on faith, gender, and human rights in 2014 (Sista 2017). The aim of the manual is to raise awareness about the principles and application of faith, gender, and human right within the church and communities (Vanuatu Christian Council 2014). The training manual comprises of four chapters, described below.

Box 5.3: Overview of VCC’s faith, gender, and human rights training manual

Section One: Training Guidelines for Facilitators is the first section that provides VCC staff with practical checklist about the content and logistics planning of a workshop and includes icons to inform the facilitator about the relevant training activities of respective sessions.

Section Two: Introduction to Human Rights defines human rights, its features and history. It links specific human rights to the fundamental rights section in Vanuatu’s constitution, traditional and religious values.

Section Three: Faith and Human Rights examines the biblical basis for a Christian understanding of human rights. This section introduces how human rights issues can be addressed using faith. For example, it looks at the right to non-discrimination using human rights and biblical perspective.

Section Four: Introduction to Gender provides the definition and concepts of gender, explores the existing gender issues, and discusses the approaches that churches can use to prevent these gender issues in the communities. This section allows the opportunity for external resource people such as the officers from the Vanuatu Police or Vanuatu Women’s Centre to facilitate sessions about the FPA.

The *storian* discussions confirmed that a faith-based approach to promote human rights, gender and prevention of domestic violence was an enabler for VCC and its member churches. The manual supports this approach by aligning the biblical texts to human rights and gender principles and concepts. For example, the manual quoted:

“GENESIS 1:26-28: God created human beings making them to be like himself. He created them male and female. God blessed them, and said, have many children, so that your descendants will live all over the earth and bring it under their control. I am putting you in charge of the fish the birds and all the wild animals.”

A research participant in the individual *storian* discussion explained the linkages of the above quote to gender and human rights by stating that,

gender focuses on the roles and relationship between women, men, boys and girls and the importance of sharing responsibility to be in control of the living creatures in the earth (Vanuatu Christian Council Gender policy 2020 pg 9) a human rights analysis to the biblical text above promotes human dignity and respect between men, women, boys, and girls.

Another participant reiterated that,

Faith-based messaging calls for all men and women in church communities to treat each other according to God's image representing human value and this means is that domestic violence is an unfair treatment and is condoned in the FPA and in the bible.

Additionally, the development of this training manual strengthened VCC's partnership with other CSOs such as CARE Vanuatu, Vanuatu Women's Centre (VWC) and World Vision encouraging them to use faith-based approaches to collaborate with church leaders and educate them about gender concepts and the prevention of domestic violence. According to Pacific Women (2017), in Vanuatu faith-based approaches are favouring a changing attitude towards domestic violence in faith communities; for instance, VWC partnered with the Seventh Day Adventist Church, a member of VCC, to conduct domestic violence prevention activities, while CARE works with the Vanuatu Christian Council and Presbyterian Church on joint advocacy to end violence against women.

According to the research participants engaged in the *storian* group discussion:

“Christian faith is an important part of people's lives and VCC have been able to raise gender equality perspectives within the Church. VCC recognised that Vanuatu has a high rate of domestic violence and the development of the training manual on gender, faith and human rights provided basic training tools to VCC program staff to educate the church leaders, chiefs, youth and women leaders about domestic

violence as a gender-based issue and discuss ways to prevent domestic violence using faith messages”.

“Christianity is the dominant paradigm in Vanuatu, and it is the language of life and culture. Church leaders are often the first refuge and source of help for women and girls in situations of violence, especially in rural settings. VCC believed that engaging the churches to teach about nonviolence practices and gender equality are drivers of behaviour that can sustainably prevent violations of right by shifting the attitudes that justify violence and exploitation of women and girls”.

Another participant in the individual *storian* discussion stated that:

“The use of faith, the introduction of gender equality concepts in the context of the Bible in VCC’s training manual helped the church leaders to understand their role in preventing violence in the church community. It can also prepare the church leaders for future engagement with the formal justice systems, a Pastor or a church leader is also a community leader and can be appointed under the FPA to be an authorised person”.

To conclude this section, the development of the human rights, faith and gender training manual was an entry point that engaged VCC in using faith-based messages to promote gender equity, human rights and prevent domestic violence whilst supporting the FPA implementation.

5.3.4: The effectiveness of the training resources

In Vanuatu, churches are a trusted source of knowledge that significantly influence people’s lives and are uniquely positioned to disseminate information and mobilise communities (Barclay, Trembath, & Russell 2018). Churches have existing community structures and have an important role to play in promoting gender equality and non-violence (World Vision, 2018). VCC’s faith, gender, and human rights training manual demonstrated several achievements. I have had first-hand experience providing training and technical support to this organisation to develop its first faith,

gender, and human rights training manual in 2014, witnessing how this motivated the VCC staff to increase their capacity in these areas and strengthen their approaches. Furthermore, this manual increased VCC's partnerships with other CSOs and the government and provided access to an increased funding opportunity platform. According to the Vanuatu Women's Centre (2016), the manual amplified active collaborations between Vanuatu Women's Centre and VCC to institutionalise domestic violence prevention as a priority. A research participant in the individual *storian* discussion emphasised that:

“The manual drives VCC to actively explore opportunities to collaborate with development actors in government and other CSO to advance gender equality and prevent violence against women and girls. Similarly, it created pathways for other CSOs to confidently approach VCC to dialogue and identify entries points of collaboration to raise awareness about FPA”.

Secondly, VCC uses the training manual to change attitudes and social norms that favour domestic violence. Barclay, Trembath, & Russell (2018) argued that churches shape attitudes and norms by utilizing the scripture to promote gender-equitable and non-violent messages, which has been highly effective at achieving attitude and norm change. Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development (2017) made the point that engaging with faith-based organisations is essential for effective violence prevention programming in countries such as Vanuatu, where churches are key in social processes shaping community attitudes and norms.

Research participants in the *storian* group discussion emphasised that:

“Church leaders are becoming more aware of the importance of to prevent domestic violence since it affects everyone and are calling on their church congregation to be committee to prevent domestics violence in their own household”.

Community acceptance and ownership is another effectiveness of the training manual. An evaluation report on faith-based training and counselling approaches by World Vision (2018) reveals that using faith-based approaches resonate with the

people, and faith leaders collaborate well with VCC and other organisations that deliver training using faith-based approaches and not just gender or rights.

A research participant stated that:

“Churches leaders are taking the ownership to integrate messages about gender equality, human rights and domestic violence prevention in their Sunday sermons”.

In conclusion, this strategy has strengthened VCC’s partnership with other CSOs to promote gender equality and prevent domestic violence. It has enabled VCC to advocate for changing attitudes and social norms that favour domestic violence, and it has increased ownership and acceptance of domestic violence prevention initiatives.

5.3.5: Strategy three: Partnerships with Australian faith-based organisations

VCC has strengthened partnerships with Australian faith-based organisations, who host and implement violence prevention projects in selected rural areas in Vanuatu. The two organisations this section will consider are World Vision Vanuatu’s (WVV) and Uniting World Australia’s (UWA). Through the partnership, these organisations work directly with VCC’s member churches to advance gender equity and/or violence prevention activities. World Vision Vanuatu is an Australian faith-based non-government organisation and a para member of VCC (Act Alliance 2015). World Vision’s REACH project uses faith-based approaches to strengthen the community and faith leaders’ understanding of gender equality and gender-based violence prevention and encourage them to apply it to their work in the community (World Vision Vanuatu 2020).

World Vision Vanuatu (2020) confirmed that the faith and community leaders’ awareness was increased to reinforce positive gender norms, relationships, and anti-violence messages. The activities implemented included the establishment of faith leaders’ peer support group to facilitate continuous discussions about gender equality and domestic violence prevention. Another activity equipped faith-based leaders with knowledge and skills to refer survivors of domestic violence to accessible services providers, such as the police or VWC counsellors in provincial areas. Finally, this project developed curriculum enabling the World Vision staff to discuss topics like healthy relationships, anger management and identifying violence prevention support

systems. The World Vision staff used this curriculum to facilitate workshops for faith leaders to influence behaviour changes.

Uniting World Australia (UWA) collaborated with the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu (PCV) to implement the GET-IT project, aiming to improve women's safety in families and communities by supporting institutional transformation within churches in alignment with gender equality theologies (Pacific Women 2017). The GET-IT project established procedures and mechanisms for situations of violence that respect women's rights in accordance with relevant national protection laws (Uniting World 2020). The project duration was from 2018 to 2021 and the activities implemented in Vanuatu included the development of media programs raising awareness against domestic violence. These used a faith-based approach highlighting the key message that violence is a sin and establishing gender focal point in PCV (Pacific Women 2017; Uniting World 2020).

A research participant reflected that:

“The PCV media messages attracted not only faith leaders but all Vanuatu citizens who identifies themselves as Christians. The television featured church leaders speaking out against domestic violence and the key take away of the message is violence against women deprives men and women from the fullness of life that God offer”.

Additionally, UW in partnership with church leaders in PCV organised GET-IT workshops and resources through the development of Bible studies, dialogue in gender theology and workshops that engage men and women in examining beliefs and behaviour to prevent domestic violence.

In conclusion, churches have performed a significant role to support the FPA implementation through projects such as REACH or GET-IT. The project activities explicitly demonstrated that churches influence behaviours preventing domestic violence and supporting survivors to access basic support services. However, the documents publicly available or provided to me do not directly mention that the projects were developed to support the implementation of the FPA.

5.3.6: The effectiveness of partnership with Australian faith-based organisations.

Faith leaders perform a unique influential role in determining values, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours about the acceptability of violence against women and girls at the individual and community levels (Bhagwan 2020). The data collected from the two organisations demonstrated the achievements discussed below. World Vision Vanuatu (2018) revealed an integrated programming to change attitudes towards domestic violence prevention and promoting healthy family relationships outlined in Fig 2.

Fig 5.1: World Vision’s integrated programming



Another success story demonstrated how a mother witnessed changes in her husband violent behaviour after his engagement in this project. The entire success story taken from the (World Vision Vanuatu 2018) website is captured below:

Tovock, spoke of how her husband did little work around the house and expected all chores to be done by her on time and without any complaint. She feared her husband Jean as he would get very violent if he was not happy with the state of their home or felt that he was not obeyed or respected. “He would beat me badly and make my children go hungry!” she said emotionally.

John, a faith leader working in Tovock and Jean’s community, shared his experience of Jean’s reluctance to participate in the program, “I remember when I went with the World Vision project officer to pick up participants for the workshop, Jean made a lot of excuses so that he

would not have to go. We had to sit with him and his wife to talk about it until he reluctantly agreed. He was the last participant to get into the vehicle.” During the workshop, something happened to Jean that changed his family’s life.

“There was a time when I beat my wife unconscious when she was pregnant for not cooking food on time and I remember so many other terrible things I have done to her and our children,” said Jean. He then went on to say, “During the workshop, I learnt that no one was created by God to be abused. I learnt the emotions and pain that women and children feel and how it affected them when they were abused. I was also taught anger management techniques to help me during conflicts and all of this made me begin to realize what I was putting my family through, and I felt really bad and want to change.”

Tovock stated, “After attending the counselling workshop Jean started to cut firewood, clean the house, make lap lap (a traditional dish) and prepare other food in the house by himself and without complaint,” She then went on to say with a big smile, “Not once has he beaten me again or treated my children badly, so we feel much safer and happier around him.”

With a huge smile across his face Jean said, “My family is happier now and I am happier.”

“It has been over a year since Jean first attended the counselling workshop and we are so pleased with Jean’s progress. He continues to treat his family well and now advocates for World Vision in relation to gender based violence among youth in his community.”

Said Lotty Riri, the REACH Development Manager

Uniting World (2020) stated that GET-IT workshops engaged the church leaders under the VCC to realise the importance of advancing positive changes to transform the relationship between women and men. Upon completion of the GET-IT workshop, the church leaders engaged in mentoring other men and women in their communities

and influenced them to foster positive relationships and end violence behaviours. Another effectiveness is the observation of the reduction in violence against women. Excerpts captured from the Uniting World blog (2021) revealed positive change at individual level because of engagement in the GET-IT project,

“On the second day of the workshop I realised that I was abusing my wife and children,” a prominent village Elder⁹ admitted after he attended the training.

“My community know about me and knew that I am an Elder, but I am abusive. I have used knife, axe, and physical force to abuse my wife, but this workshop helped me to realise that my actions are wrong, and I would like to openly confess to my community that I will never again practice violence in my home. The GET workshop has helped me understand that we men and women are equal because we are created in the image of God and we must love and treat each other well.”

“I think we need to admit that this part of our culture is not in line with God’s word,” a significant village leader declared after attending the Gender Equality Theology workshop. *“It is time for us to start to choose God’s way instead.”*

In conclusion, Australian faith-based organisations have supported the implementation of domestic violence prevention activities at the village, provincial and national level in Vanuatu, which directly supports the implementation of the FPA. It is clear from the data above that this strategy has been effective for VCC and its members since it has provided the opportunity for each member to acquire ownership and advance gender equality and domestic violence prevention interventions not only in the churches but in the communities and at national level.

⁹ Church leader

5.3.7: Strategy four: Strengthening the enabling environment.

The VCC gender policy provides an enabling environment for VCC to support the implementation of the FPA. The policy targets the VCC board members, staff, Ministers' fraternal, VCC associate members and anyone living within the compound of the Vanuatu Christian Council. The Vanuatu Christian Council Gender Policy focuses on reducing domestic violence, supporting women's leadership and economic empowerment and mainstreaming gender principles in Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction (CCDRR) (Vanuatu Christian Council 2020). VCC gender policy area one calls for VCC to prevent domestic violence amongst its members, accompanied by the objectives of promoting protection from harassment at all levels of institutional structures, increasing knowledge about domestic violence prevention, and promoting male advocacy programs.

The activities provided under this policy are continuously generating awareness on gender-based violence and the FPA amongst VCC members, encouraging them to develop their own gender action plans, facilitate national observation of a prevention of domestic violence week, support male faith-based approach advocacy programs, integrate domestic violence prevention programs into the existing boys scout program, and encourage churches to organise their respective domestic violence prevention programs.

“Since VCC made the decision to develop its own gender policy, VCC staff and its members have actively involved in gender discussions at the national and provincial level, and this is a strength. The activities in the new gender policy builds on existing activities and identify entry points within VCC domain to strengthen nonviolence intervention using faith-based approaches” stated a research participant in the group storian discussion.

Another research participant echoed that,

‘The Gender policy is a guidance and churches will need to drive it forward because the policy defines God's plan for us to promote gender equality and prevent violence at all form beginning from the home to other part of the community and it has was endorsed by the board and

this revealed the important role churches has to advance gender equality”

In brief, the development of VCC’s gender policy has enabled this CSO to support the implementation of the FPA.

5.3.8: The effectiveness of strengthening the enabling environment.

The gender policy provides an enabling environment for VCC to advance its commitment to domestic violence prevention. Strengthening partnership with national CSOs and government to prevent domestic violence is one key achievement of the policy. In 2016, The Vanuatu Women’ Centre (2016) stated that faith-based organisations were beginning to institutionalise their commitments to domestic violence prevention. The VCC gender policy recognised domestic violence as an issue, and VWC has used this gender policy as its entry point when engaging with FBOs (Vanuatu Women Centre 2016). A research participant in a one-to-one *storian* discussion stated:

“VCC receives numerous requests from the government to be part of its national task force on national gender and development issues. I recalled VCC was a member of the national FPA taskforce and even though this taskforce is not functioning, VCC is always consulted in any matters related to this law and it always good to have voices from the churches. Another national committees VCC is a member of is the national gender protection cluster group, this taskforce comprises of both government and CSOs representatives and we coordinate disaster responses. Even though we do not deal with FPA directly, literature evidence and our experiences revealed that there are linkages between domestic violence and natural disasters whereby many women and girls are vulnerable to all form of violence when they are in evacuation centres. These avenues increase the opportunity for churches to make interventions and help people to understand that all human beings are created in God’s image and should be treated with human dignity and there should be no violence, even if natural disaster strikes”.

The gender policy provides the momentum for member churches to commit to preventing domestic violence. Faith-based organisations who are members of VCC such as the Anglican, Presbyterian and Seventh Day Adventist Churches are committing to eliminating violence against women and girls (Vanuatu Government 2019). A research participant in the group *storian* discussion highlighted that,

“Church leaders are becoming more aware of the importance of developing interventions to promote domestic violence prevention in individual churches. For example, integrating key violence prevention messages with biblical sermon. The Apostolic board members approved for Anglican Church in Vanuatu to develop its own gender policy and VCC will be supporting them in 2021”.

Therefore, it is evident from the above discussions that the gender policy is an effective strategy that provides an enabling environment for VCC to support the implementation of the FPA.

5.4: Conclusion

Chapter five presented the case study of VCC and responded to the research questions by describing the strategies used and analysing their effectiveness. The analysis shows that faith-based approaches are a core guiding principle of this CSO, which enable the work on the prevention of domestic violence. However, it has been noted that despite the work done by VCC to support the implementation of the FPA, there is no direct reference to this legislation in the documents analysed. The FPA is considered in the *storian* discussion only. Other strategies used by VCC have been engaging with Chiefs to support domestic violence prevention, development of training resources, partnership with Australian faith-based organisations, and strengthening the enabling environment. All the strategies have been effective in fostering support from the chiefs to collaborate with VCC to promote domestic violence prevention work and strengthening partnerships with international and national CSOs and the government to support domestic violence prevention using faith-based approaches. Another key sign of effectiveness is the ownership and commitment by respective churches to advocate for domestic violence prevention and develop policies or procedures to promote gender equality and prevent or respond to

domestic violence. Moreover, strengthening partnership with Australian faith-based organisation demonstrated behaviour changes at an individual level.

Despite the achievements, a challenge identified during the initial engagement with the chiefs was the disagreement about the use of the gender and human rights terminologies because of the misunderstanding that gender and human rights are only promoting women's rights and are foreign ideas. VCC addressed this challenge by using the slogan "promoting peaceful and harmonious communities" in all its project activities and the faith-based approach. The lack of gender practitioners employed in the organisation has been another challenge. Apart from this project, VCC receives continuous requests from other CSOs and the government to co-facilitate workshop sessions on domestic violence prevention and faith-based approach. VCC has one full time gender desk coordinator, hence responding to the external institutions request has delayed the implementation of VCC's internal activities under this area. VCC first addressed this issue by engaging other staff in the finance and administration, and is currently seeking financial assistance from the donors to hire an additional gender officer.

Chapter Six: - Discussion

6.1: Introduction

This discussion chapter deliberates the case study findings by revisiting the research problem and explaining the results. It discusses the importance and relevance of the results according to the recommendations from two previous program evaluation reviews. The two program evaluation reviews explored the effectiveness of violence prevention strategies and programs. Furthermore, it explains and evaluates how the results relate to the literature review and research questions. Finally, it identifies the study's strength and limitations.

6.2: Revisiting the research problem

This study's research problem argues that although the FPA was passed in 2008 and despite some progress, its implementation remains a challenge. Notwithstanding the Vanuatu government's political will to enact this legislation, this has not provided financial resources and current funding for implementation is driven by donor partners (Pacific Island Forum 2016). These support individual agencies within the government and CSOs for training, awareness raising and establishment of authorized persons and registered counsellors (Taylor 2016). However, the donor's funding supports these agencies to implement individual workplans on domestic violence prevention and response, resulting in no overall coordination despite the efforts taken by MOJCS to establish the national FPA and provincial taskforce in 2009.

Moreover, domestic violence statistics in Vanuatu have increased and many citizens are still unaware of FPA's legal protection mechanisms. The lack of available and trusted services provides limited options for survivors of domestic violence to access support services (Pacific Women 2017), who mostly remain in the culture of silence supporting the belief that a man can afford to abuse his wife using all forms of violence (Crook, Farran & Röell 2016). The legal recognition of the formal and customary court does not empower the survivors of violence (Forsyth 2009), as it makes provision for state courts, judicial and police officers to disincline placing charges and sending perpetrators to jail and instead reconcile families using customary approaches (Jolly 2000). This study argues that CSOs in Vanuatu perform an important

role in countering these issues, including non-feminist CSOs, by supporting the Vanuatu government in implementing projects and programs on domestic violence prevention and response, which, in turn, supports the implementation of the FPA.

6.3: Explanation of results

The findings showed various strategies used to support the implementation of the FPA, responding to the first research question which focused on the strategies adopted by CSOs to promote the act. CARE Vanuatu, an Australian CSO, abides by a gender transformative framework in its violence prevention work. The strategies it uses include multisectoral approaches to domestic violence prevention and response, supporting women and girls' economic development, engaging men and boys to support DV prevention and strengthening the enabling environment. The challenges connected to these strategies were the lack of timely responses from key government agencies and CSOs regarding partnerships to initially implement the LS2 project and the patriarchy culture posing an obstacle to changing social norms.

VCC is, on the other hand, a local CSO and applies faith-based approaches to its gender and human rights programs to support domestic violence prevention. The strategies used by VCC are engaging with chiefs to prevent domestic violence, development of training resources, partnership with Australian faith-based organizations and strengthening the enabling environment. Challenges included the chiefs' disagreement on the direct use of the gender and human rights terminologies, because of the perception that gender and human rights were foreign ideas and primarily promoting women's rights, and the lack of gender practitioners employed in the organisation.

The results proved the effectiveness of the strategies, addressing the second research question, which asked how effective the CSO's strategies were. CARE Vanuatu strategy of strengthening the enabling environment was effective in setting the framework and mandate that have enabled this CSO to support the implementation of the FPA. The strategy of empowering women and girls economically, socially, and physically has contributed to equipping the latter with the resources and opportunities to earn an income, make decisions about their own lives, and develop leadership skills to be free from violence. The multisectoral approach strategy set this CSO to prevent and respond to domestic violence through the development of CARE's GRFV training

manual and the referral of the survivors of violence to support services. Finally, the strategy of engaging men to support domestic violence prevention has enabled both men and women to develop positive behaviours towards domestic violence prevention and response within their own communities.

VCC's strategy of engaging the chiefs has been effective in using existing community and cultural protocols to prevent domestic violence, which contributes to support FPA implementation. Additionally, its strategy of developing the training resources has increased the dissemination of information, mobilised communities and influenced people's lives to understand the importance of living free from violence. The VCC partnership with Australian faith-based organisations has enabled the church leaders to realise the importance of advancing positive changes to transform the relationship between women and men. Finally, VCC's strategy of strengthening the enabling environment has obtained the commitment of the VCC board of executive members to promote domestic violence prevention and response and provided guidance for each member churches under VCC to develop its own gender equality policies and programs.

6.4: Results interpretation

This section interprets the data by discussing the meanings, importance, and challenges of the CSO's strategies against the above-mentioned previous program evaluations recommendations.

6.4.1: Recommendation 1: Multisectoral approach

A multisectoral approach to domestic violence prevention and response interventions comprises of the collaboration between the broader stakeholders and not only the domestic violence survivor (Webster & Flood, 2015). The results showed that CARE Vanuatu collaborates with the broader stakeholders such as community leaders, government and CSO officials to support survivors of violence. The findings indicated that CARE Vanuatu has used a multisectoral approach to support the implementation of the FPA by collaborating with the officials in the police, health and justice ministries, chiefs and community leaders and Vanuatu Women's Centre staff to provide support services to survivors of domestic violence and developing the

GRFV training manual. CARE collaborates with the stakeholders in other CSOs and sectors such as the law enforcement, justice, health, provincial government, and the agriculture sector to strengthen its prevention and response measures to domestic violence, which supports the implementation of FPA.

The VCC's case study findings showed that the application of multisectoral approaches has led to the development of training resources and to partnership with Australian faith-based organizations' strategies. The development of the training resource has increased VCC's partnership with other development actors in both government and civil society to advance gender equality and domestic violence prevention. Additionally, the partnership with Australian faith-based organizations has strengthened the VCC relationships with other social organizations in the community and the media in advancing domestic violence prevention. These results support the relevancy of a multisectoral approach in supporting FPA implementation, since this approach does not only consider the involvement between key stakeholders in relevant disciplines but provides a space for active partnership and acceptance by the community members and leaders to promote policies and programs design to reduce gender inequalities (Ostlin et al., 2006).

6.4.2: Recommendation 2: Work with existing cultural framework

This recommendation argues that domestic violence prevention initiatives works effectively within the existing cultural frameworks (Webster & Flood, 2015). The case study revealed that both CSOs have developed their own strategies to work within and support the existing cultural frameworks of their targeted community to advance the awareness about domestic violence prevention and FPA. CARE Vanuatu's strategies of using multisectoral approaches resulted in the collaboration amongst the chiefs, community leaders, government and CSO officials, which strengthened their work at the community level and enabled the chiefs to use the existing cultural frameworks to advocate for domestic violence prevention. The strategy of engaging men to support domestic violence prevention enabled them to understand the power dynamics in a domestic violence situation to be able to challenge the male patriarchy culture towards this issue.

All the four strategies used by VCC applied elements of working within existing cultural frameworks. Both CSOs worked within the existing cultural frameworks by

providing gender training to chiefs, community, and church leaders, who are all men and are known for upholding cultural practices in Vanuatu. By working with these targeted people, these organizations were welcomed into the locales to implement their activities. In brief, working within the existing cultural frameworks is crucial to end domestic violence and the above analysis supported the argument that in the Melanesian region, programs that collaborate within the existing informal justice frameworks have a greater chance of success and restoring community relationship that has been fractured by violence and conflict (Mackay 2005). While working with male traditional, community and church leaders is important since they are the gatekeepers in the cultural and religious space and requires the 'benevolence or permission of the elder or church leader in the community for women in the community to be actively involve and benefit from this process.

6.4.3: Recommendation 3: Gender transformative approaches

Gender transformative approaches recognize that the existence of harmful gender norms resulting in gender inequality is a contributing factor to domestic violence (Barclay, Trembath, & Russell 2018). It calls for equitable distribution of power, resources, attitudes and behaviours between men and women to prevent violence (Casey, Carlson, et al. 2018). CARE Vanuatu's mandate to use gender transformative approaches in domestic violence prevention work was informed by CARE's global gender policies comprising of the Gender Equality and Women's Voice guidance note and the Gender Equality Framework in CARE's 2020 program strategy (CARE International 2018; CARE International 2014). The VCC's gender transformative approaches were instead driven by the development of its gender policy, which was endorsed by its board of directors in 2013. The contrast is that CARE Vanuatu's transformative approaches were prompted by its global movement, whereas VCC identified them locally through the board of directors' approval, which led to the development of its gender policy. Therefore, the above analysis demonstrated the importance of using gender transformative approaches to attain the prevention of violence by strengthening equitable relationships (Casey, Carlson, et al. 2018), which contributes to implementing the FPA.

6.4.4: Recommendation 4: Empower women and girls

This recommendation recognized that women and girls are highly subjected to domestic violence and calls for the importance to empower women and girls with skills, information, and resources, so that they are equipped politically, socially, and economically to withstand domestic violence (Barclay, Trembath, & Russell 2018; Webster & Flood, 2015). The findings outlined the various tactics both CSOs applied in empowering women and girls to prevent or respond to domestic violence. CARE's Letemap sista project sited in Tanna has developed livelihood activities ensuring that women and girls have access to and control over economic resources and decision-making in the household level. Their strategy of strengthening the enabling environment has led to the development of gender transformative policies, which recognize the importance of empowering women and girls to prevent domestic violence. Their multisectoral approach has encouraged the prevention of domestic violence and referral of survivors of domestic violence to support services, while the development of GRFV training manual has contributed to educating both men and women about domestic violence prevention and responses, which directly links to women and girls' resilience towards domestic violence. Finally, the engagement of men and boys as agents of change in domestic violence prevention work is ensuring those change their violent behaviours to produce a peaceful community, which empowers women and girls.

Similarly, VCC's engagement with the chiefs to support the prevention of domestic violence through activities aimed at promoting peaceful and harmonious communities has enabled the chiefs in their respective communities to develop locally led interventions to prevent domestic violence, which will particularly strengthen women and girls' empowerment to address violent relationships. VCC has also developed training resources on gender, faith, and human rights, which advance the promotion of gender and human rights and the prevention of domestic violence using a faith-based approach. VCC uses these resources as a pathway to shift negative attitudes and norms that favour domestic violence and disempower survivors of domestic violence, who are mostly women. Additionally, this strategy empowers women and girls with knowledge about domestic violence, human rights and the FPA. VCC's partnership with the Australian faith-based organizations displayed that the projects implemented by World Vision and Uniting World recognized the

importance of developing interventions to prevent domestic violence which is an enabler to women and girl's empowerment. Finally, the gender policy provides policy directives for VCC to develop intervention to reduce domestic violence, support women's leadership and economic empowerment and mainstream gender principles in CCDR, thus provides a border scope for VCC's activities to empower women and girls to prevent and respond to domestic violence.

It is clear from the above examinations that the two CSOs apply various strategies that support the empowerment of women and girls to be free from violence from the organizational policy level to the individual, village or community levels. Facilitating the empowerment interventions through an individual, organizational, and social frameworks provide a supportive environment to recover the survivor's low self-esteem and self-efficacy (Anczewska, Roszczyńska-Michta et al 2012).

6.4.5: Recommendation 5: Prevention and access to support services

This recommendation recognizes the important link between domestic violence prevention programs and referral of survivors to support services and presents prevention and access to support services as an ethical responsibility to end violence (Barclay, Trembath, & Russell 2018; Webster & Flood, 2015). A comprehensive access to support services such as psychological, medical services, legal support, and safe accommodation are essential components to potentially contribute to preventing the reoccurrence of violence (Ellsberg et al., 2008). The research findings showed that CARE's multisectoral approaches strengthened partnership with other CSOs, government departments and community leaders in Tanna to prevent domestic violence and refer survivors to support services that are provided by VWC, MOH and the police department. The VCC's partnership strategy with Australian faith-based organizations, particularly World Vision, equally promoted prevention and access to support services. The World Vision's REACH project equipped faith leaders with knowledge and skills to refer survivors of domestic violence to accessible services providers, such as the police or VWC counsellors in several rural areas. The research findings indicate that both CSOs recognized the connection between prevention of domestic violence and ensuring the survivors have access to support services in rural areas. This approach addresses the challenges of most services being concentrated in the urban areas and thus inaccessible for most survivors (Ellsberg et al., 2008).

6.5: Results implications

This study's results build on existing research in the Pacific and Vanuatu (Barclay, Trembath, & Russell 2018; Ellsberg et al., 2008; Fulu & Warner 2018; Penjueli 2015), demonstrating the historical achievement of feminist CSOs and women's movements, which lobbied for the enactment of the FPA and have supported its implementation through their existing programs (Biersack 2016). The study supports the current research emphasis on the importance of gender transformative approaches, which are typically used by feminist CSOs and women's movements in the Pacific and Vanuatu. Moreover, it supports other studies done in Vanuatu that provided an overview of the FPA, its importance and a brief update on its implementation status.

The two case studies provide new knowledge that can contribute to the existing literature. Firstly, it documents the role of other CSOs who do not focus specifically on feminist activities but have integrated feminist approaches into their existing programs; for example, CARE has a development focus and VCC uses a faith-based approach to development. Findings display the approaches of those two CSOs in integrating gender transformative approaches into their existing work to strengthen domestic violence prevention and response, which supports the FPA implementation. The study demonstrates the effectiveness of linking faith-based and gender transformative approaches in the FPA implementation. Additionally, results prove the importance of micro-level, community, and provincial-led changes. Both CSOs have targeted specific semi-rural communities in Port Vila and in Tanna and have shown the importance of extending domestic violence prevention and response programs to rural areas. The recommendation on supporting women's economic empowerment does not only focus on providing information, for the study shows how CARE's has facilitated entrepreneurial opportunities for rural women who are subject to violence. The research results illustrate the effectiveness of this approach in sustaining the survivor's and the family's livelihood. Secondly, this study provides updated information about the status of the Act, by indicating the role of various government agencies in its implementation, such as the DWA, Police Department, Courts, Prosecution, and the Ministry of Health.

Moreover, this study's results support the use a feminist theory, showing how the patriarchal system plays a paramount role in violence against women and girls

(Danis 2003). The CSOs' strategies discussed support the feminist theory that recognizes that violence towards females is rooted in the society's structure influencing men to control their partners (Yllo 1993). The strategies discussed thus demonstrate the feminist approach of using programs to empower women survivors of domestic violence and call for perpetrator accountability (Hesse-Bieber 2007).

6.6: Conclusion

The chapter discussed the key findings in relation to the two research questions. The first research question emphasised the strategies used by the CSOs to promote the act. The second research question focused on the effectiveness of the CSO's strategies. Recognising the important role and effectiveness of CSOs in supporting the Vanuatu government to implement the FPA is a strength of the study. This equally contributes to mainstreaming gender equality principles and gives visibility to the way CSOs apply them into existing programs and policies, which enables them to support the implementation of the Act. One limitation of this study is that the CSOs under examination did not explicitly make the connection between their current gender program or domestic violence prevention program and the FPA legal framework. Results explicitly show the linkages between their program and the issue of domestic violence; however, very little connection is made to the FPA provisions. For example, the research shows both CSOs have collaborated effectively with the church and chiefs to prevent or respond to the issue. Still, the research participants and the CSOs documents make slight references or do not explicitly recognise that the church and chief leaders trained under these CSOs can be recommended by the CSOs to the government as potential authorised persons or registered counsellors to implement a key provision of the Act. The absence of information about the two CSOs in the academic literature domain is another limitation. Finally, this study focuses on two CSOs as a case study, which means that its outcomes cannot be generalised (Yin, 2014).

Chapter Seven: - Conclusion

This thesis explored two CSO's strategies and their effectiveness in supporting Vanuatu's FPA implementation. It fulfilled this study's aim by providing a situational overview of the domestic violence issue, the FPA implementation status and the role of CSOs in the prevention and response to domestic violence. Chapter one provided a background by overviewing domestic violence in Vanuatu and the FPA implementation status. The literature review in Chapter two demonstrated that domestic violence has multi-layered negative effects on survivors' wellbeing and a country's development. It equally emphasised the vital role of government in enacting and implementing comprehensive domestic violence legislations as a legal protection for the survivors of domestic violence, as well as the role of CSOs in supporting the implementation of similar legislations by complementing the existing gaps encountered by the government through services provision. Literature review demonstrated the need for further research around the implementation of Vanuatu's FPA to date and the role of non-feminist CSOs in influencing positive behaviour changes at various levels in the community and advocating for policy and legal reform to address domestic violence issue. The research methodology, which was discussed in Chapter three, used feminist theory and case study method supplemented by document content analysis and *storian* methods of data collection.

Chapter four presented CARE Vanuatu's results showing that this applied the strategies of multisectoral approaches, supported women and girls' economic development, engaged men, and strengthened the enabling environment to prevent and response to domestic violence. Findings showed that CARE Vanuatu's strategy of strengthening the enabling environment directed this CSO to support the implementation of the FPA. Its strategy of empowering women and girls' economic development enabled them to generate income and leadership skills to be free from violence. The multisectoral approach strategy equipped this CSO to prevent and respond to domestic violence through the development of CARE's GRFV training manual and the referral of the survivors of violence to support services. Finally, the strategy of engaging men to support domestic violence prevention has enabled both men and women to develop positive behaviours towards domestic violence prevention and response within their own communities. The challenges encountered by this CSO

were the lack of timely responses from key government agencies and CSOs to form partnerships and the patriarchy culture opposing changes to social norms.

Chapter five presented VCC's strategies of formed partnership with the chiefs and Australian faith-based organizations, developed training resources, and strengthened the enabling environment to prevent and response to domestic violence. The results demonstrated that the strategy of engaging the chiefs to strengthen the existing community and cultural protocols for preventing domestic violence, as well as its strategy of developing the training resources, increased the dissemination of information, mobilised communities and helped people understand the importance of living free from violence. The VCC partnership with Australian faith-based organisations has enabled the church leaders to realise the importance of advancing harmonious relationships between women and men. Finally, VCC's strategy of strengthening the enabling environment motivated commitment of the VCC board of executive members to promote domestic violence prevention and response and provided guidance for each member churches under VCC to develop its own gender equality policies and programs. VCC's challenges included disagreements by the chiefs about the use of gender and human rights terminologies and the lack of gender practitioners recruited in the organisation. The discussion chapter in Chapter six interpreted the results according to two previous program evaluation on the effectiveness of violence prevention strategies and programs.

Despite the achievements of the CSO's strategies, more areas need to be strengthened by Vanuatu government in partnership with the CSOs. These are provided as recommendations of this study:

Recommendation

1. This thesis only draws on two cases studies; therefore, it is recommended that the Ministry of Justice and Community Service (MOJCS) conduct a future national study or research extending to other CSOs to identify the services those are providing to support the FPA implementation. It is proposed that the future study will include:
 - a. Conducting a CSO stakeholder mapping nationally to identify the CSOs working in the areas of domestic violence prevention and response;

- b. Using the results from the stakeholder mapping to indicate the areas where the CSOs can support the government to implement the FPA and identify the areas that will need to be strengthened;
 - c. Developing a coordination system nationally that will enable the government and CSOs to integrate resources, program implementation and reporting regarding the FPA implementation.
2. It is recommended that the MOJSC will organise a dialogue with CSOs working with faith, traditional and community leaders in gender equality and prevention of domestic violence, and will explore options to use this CSOs network to establish authorised persons and registered counsellors in areas in the country that still lack access to this service;
 3. It would be useful for the MOJCS to activate the national and provincial family protection taskforce that was discussed in chapter one of this study to strengthen coordination;
 4. It is proposed that the MOJCS develop a national communication strategy about FPA provisions and approaches to access legal protection mechanism and fund its implementation.

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