

FORMATIVE EVALUATION OF PACIFIC FAITH-BASED FAMILY VIOLENCE SERVICES

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RESEARCH SUMMARY

Dr Siautu Alefaio-Tugia and Sesimani Havea, School of Psychology, Massey University report on the development and progress of two Pacific faith-based initiatives in addressing family violence in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Affirming Works is a faith-based organisation that worked in close partnership with four Tongan Church denominations (Seventh Day Adventist, Catholic, Methodist and Pentecostal) on the *Kainga Tu'umalie* (KT) initiative. *Kainga Tu'umalie* (translated as “prosperous family/souls”) is the vision for the prevention and restoration of families from family violence.

This initiative integrates Tongan cultural knowledge and biblical faith-narratives. The programme is run with families from selected Churches and includes a retreat and follow-up sessions.

Churches Unite is a collective of nine Churches that formed a collaboration and worked together on the *Churches Unite* initiative. Its approach is underpinned by a faith-based position paper written by one of the vision-bearers.

Each Church developed their own plan of action (e.g. Pastoral care, counselling, prayer support, family mentorship), utilising different strategies of support and engagement (e.g. interactive workshops, using music to promote strengths-based messages, using short video clips to record families' journey of change).

WHAT WERE THE KEY FINDINGS?

There was transformational change for families who participated in both initiatives.

Pacific faith-based initiatives have the potential of delivering positive and sustainable outcomes for Pacific families.

Participating in *Kainga Tu'umalie* has:

- Strengthened collective family values and beliefs
- Provided a safe, communal faith environment to share lived experiences and acknowledge the impact of violence and the urgency to change
- Created a safe village-communal context to challenge perspective/mind-sets
- Fostered the desire (and ability) to realise dreams
- Re-awakened the value of children and the need to take responsibility for their wellbeing
- Strengthened family aspirations to create a loving, peaceful and harmonious home environment before it's too late for the next generation

Participating in *Churches Unite* has:

- Provided a forum to acknowledge impacts of violence in a safe, caring and trusting home environment
- Empowered families to identify their own needs, explore solutions and receive tailored support
- Supported families to access extra support and help where needed through wrap-around services
- Provided families with a plan to help them achieve their aspirations, living free of family violence



What did the literature review find?

- Highlights the importance of spiritual-faith in Pacific communities
- Pacific Church communities are settings where spiritual-faith is nurtured, expressed, lived and sustained
- Pacific faith-based approaches have great potential to positively impact family violence prevention and intervention
- Highlights the need to document faith-based initiatives

SOME ISSUES WERE IDENTIFIED:

During implementation, issues emerged around capacity and capability to deliver effective programmes and services:

- Adequate resourcing, funding and support to sustain transformative family engagement
- More time was required from enablers, champions, Church ministers, Pastors, vision-bearers and staff
- More training and support is required for Church ministers, Pastors and leaders

There was also a risk of quantifying outcomes too early in the development phase. Being able to discuss realistic deliverables with the funder as the initiative evolves is necessary.

THE REPORT MAKES SOME RECOMMENDATIONS:

That consideration is given for further support especially given the immediate transformative impact that has been achieved.

Other recommendations include:

- Ensuring adequate resourcing to enable faith-initiatives to build on current initiatives and not feel stretched to deliver beyond their capacity and capability
- Pacific faith-based initiatives being open and transparent with their capacity and capability needs for the appropriate support to be provided
- Continuing to build research collaborations with Pacific faith-based initiatives to document developments
- Acknowledgment by donors and policy makers that Pacific faith-based initiatives are partners in family violence prevention and intervention
- Ensuring representation of Pacific faith-based communities in policy and strategy development, and in key events relating to family violence
- Facilitating and providing opportunities for collaboration within and between Pacific faith-communities and with mainstream family violence organisations
- Encouraging learning opportunities and forums for sharing learnings/findings

Pasefika Proud embodies a vision of strong, vibrant and prosperous Pacific children, young people and their families. Wellbeing for Pacific families occurs when all aspects of the individual and collective are in balance, co-existing with environments, kinship and support systems while recognising *mana* and *tapu*.

Pacific cultures are strengths that can be used positively to promote and enhance resilience within Pacific families.

Pasefika Proud mobilises Pacific individuals, families and communities to take responsibility for the issues they are facing, find the solutions and take leadership in implementing them.

'OUR FAMILIES, OUR PEOPLE, OUR RESPONSIBILITY'

Find out more

Full research reports can be requested from Pasefika Proud. Email: Pasefika_Proud@msd.govt.nz