



Child abuse and family violence in Samoan communities.

Presentation
By
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Purpose

To conduct an exploratory study on processes used to address the physical and sexual abuse of children in Samoa.

Methods

- Semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with key people with cultural expertise, knowledge on abuse, and who were recognised leaders in the community.
- Discussion groups from six villages from the perspectives of chiefs (*matai*), women's committees (*komiti*), untitled men (*taulele'a*), and wives and widows of untitled men (*tama'ita'i*)
- Review of secondary data including statistics, case files, legislation and other sources.

| Negotiator | Contact | Population | Groups | Ages |
|-------------------|----------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| Mediator | Pulenu'u | 200-250 | Matai (3) | 40 - 70 |
| | | 200-250 | Tamaita'i (1) | 30 - 35 |
| Mediator | Tausi | 200-250 | Komiti (13) | 30 - 70 |
| | | | Matai (15) | 30 - 75 |
| | | | Taulele'a (10) | 15 - 65 |
| | | | Aumaga (1) | 30-35 |
| Mediator | Faifeau | 155-205 | Komiti (10) | 30 - 75 |
| | | | Matai (4) | 40 - 65 |
| Mediator | Matai | 275-325 | Komiti (15) | 40 - 70 |
| | | | Matai (4) | 35 - 50 |
| | | | Aumaga (2) | 25 - 30 |
| Mediator | Faifeau | 275-325 | Komiti (10) | 30 - 70 |
| | | | Matai (4) | 35 - 60 |
| | | | Aualuma (3) | 20 - 25 |
| Mediator | Matai | 310-360 | Komiti (10) | 30 - 65 |
| | | | Matai (15) | 30 - 65 |

Key Findings

- Conflict between child rights and the survival of collective, traditional culture.
- Role of religion in social engineering, and the perpetuation of violence to women and children.
- Conflicting rationales regarding sexual abuse.
- The role of cultural gatekeepers (religious leaders, chiefs, women's committees) in social control, and the emerging educated and politically active young who are becoming bridges between traditional culture and modern society.