

If you are an ADULT and you have noticed:

- evidence of a child being sexually abused;
- evidence of a child being physically abused, eg being beaten or hit;
- a child constantly being told that he or she is good for nothing; or
- a child always left alone with no one to take care of him or her,

then help that child and help stop child abuse. You can talk to the people listed at the back of this brochure for more information.

For help or more information contact:

The Police

Ph: 22222 (Port Vila)

Fax: 26085

The Vanuatu Women's Centre

PO Box 1358, Port Vila

Ph: 25764 / 24000

Fax: 22478

Sanma Women's Counselling Centre

PO Box 335, Luganville, Santo

Crisis line: 36076

Ph: 36157

Fax: 36157

UNICEF (Vanuatu)

PO Box 926, Port Vila

Ph: (678) 24655

Fax: (678) 27709

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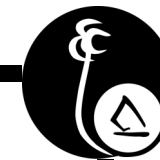
The information contained in this brochure is only intended as a guide to the law and is not a substitute for obtaining legal advice. If you have any further questions we strongly suggest you seek legal advice.

Note: This information applies to people who live in, or are affected by, the law as it applies in Vanuatu.

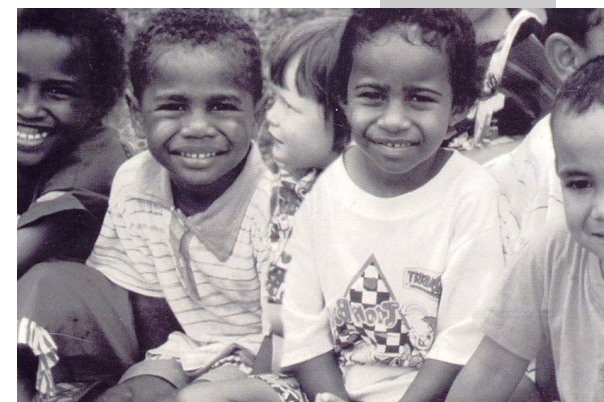
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University of the South Pacific Community Legal Centre
PMB 9072 Port Vila VANUATU Ph: 27026 Fax: 25543
<http://legalcentre.vanuatu.usp.ac.fj/>

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CHILD ABUSE IN VANUATU



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What is Child Abuse?

‘**Child**’ is defined by the law to be any person under the age of 18.

Abuse can be physical, sexual, emotional or mental, or neglecting a child.

Abusing a child is child abuse whether the person doing it a parent, uncle, aunt, cousin or stranger.

Examples of Child Abuse

Physical Abuse - means causing physical harm, for example by beating, kicking, shaking or burning a child with cigarettes. A child showing non-accidental injuries on any part of his or her body is a possible sign that that child is being abused. For example bruised eyes, handprints or unexplained burns may be signs of physical abuse.

Sexual Abuse - Having sex with a child, touching the private parts of a child, making a child touch the private parts of another person, or making sexual comments to a child are some examples of child sexual abuse. A child who has been sexually abused may seem frightened of being touched and look worried when someone puts a friendly hand on them or the child may even become pregnant.

Emotional or mental abuse - Continually shouting at a child, telling a child that he or she is stupid, or not allowing a child to think that he or she can be right, are some ways in which a child can be mentally abused. A child who is always afraid to say something in case he or she is wrong, or takes very little interests in things, runs away from home or attempts to harm himself or herself may be demonstrating signs of emotional or mental abuse.

Neglect - Child neglect can occur when someone who is responsible for a child does not care properly for the child, for example, by failing to give the child enough to eat. A neglected child may appear dirty or underweight, lack interest in his or her appearance, or demand attention. A child who always looks sick, does not appear to sleep properly at night, or who is left alone without adult company may be suffering from neglect.

Where can child abuse happen?

Child abuse can happen **ANYWHERE**.

It can happen where you LIVE or at SCHOOL.

What does the law say?

Vanuatu does not have specific law on

children or special groups of children. However, the laws of Vanuatu protect every child by making **CHILD ABUSE** an offence. In Vanuatu it is a criminal offence to sexually or physically abuse a child.

Vanuatu is also a party to the **Convention on the Rights of the Child** and has enacted legislation, the *Convention on the Rights of the Child (Ratification) Act* which makes that convention binding on Vanuatu. This convention requires State parties to, among other things, take all appropriate measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse.

What can be done to help stop child abuse?

If you are a **CHILD** and someone is or has been:

- touching you in a way that you think they should not be touching you;
- hurting you;
- telling you that you are stupid; or
- neglecting to take care of you,

then you should TALK to SOMEBODY you can trust, or contact the people listed at the back of this brochure.