



*For the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence campaign, we asked SPC directors and staff to share a few words on the importance of gender equality and the need to eliminate all forms of violence against women. Here is what they said:*

*'[V]iolence is a real issue that has detrimental impacts on girls and boys, and young women and men, in all their diversity, and it must never be condoned if we want our youth to succeed at school and in life.'*

*Michelle Belisle, Director, Educational Quality and Assessment Programme, Pacific Community*

The Educational Quality and Assessment Programme of SPC works with Pacific Island countries to improve the quality of education and training for Pacific learners. To provide high-quality education, schools must provide an environment with social supports that is safe and respectful to all students, in all their diversity. However, some young people and children still experience violence and harassment in, around and on the way to school. It can take many different forms, such as bullying, sexual abuse, use of derogative terms, street harassment and cyber bullying through social media, to name a few. Girls and members of the LGBT group are the principal victims, and the perpetrators are not only boys and young men, but can also be adults including staff at the school.

Therefore, it is critical that those in positions of authority within an educational institution recognise and practice their duty of care in ensuring that students feel safe in schools. During this year's 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence, we encourage students, teachers and those working in the education sector to recognise that violence is a real issue that has detrimental impacts on girls and boys, and young women and men, in all their diversity, and it must never be condoned if we want our youth to succeed at school and in life. Let us say no to violence in schools, and make education safe for all! We commit, at SPC, to support our partners to this end.

*The 16 days of activism campaign, which runs every year from 25 November – International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women – to 10 December – Human Rights Day – calls for the elimination of violence against women and invites everyone to take action against it.*