

PAPUA NEW GUINEA COUNTRY SUPPLEMENT



# 1 BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

This paper supplements *Violence against Women in Melanesia and East Timor: Building on Regional and Global Promising Approaches*, which addresses the issue of violence against women in the region as a whole. The main report describes all promising approaches identified by the team from across the region, and proposes, by way of a series of recommendations, an action plan relevant for all five countries studied. This document attempts to provide more country-specific information on Papua New Guinea (PNG), permitting a more nuanced approach to proposed solutions. It is intended that the regional report and the PNG report, when read together, will provide a comprehensive picture of promising approaches across the region, recommendations relevant for all countries and specific direction for where to focus efforts in PNG.

The process began in 2007, when the Australian Agency for International Development's (AusAID) Office of Development Effectiveness identified violence against women as a major barrier to development in the region, with serious effects not only on the health and welfare of the women experiencing violence, but on their families, communities and countries (AusAID Office of Development Effectiveness 2007). Following a review of international lessons learned, visits of four to nine days were carried out by the international evaluation team to each of the five countries in the region (Fiji, PNG, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and East Timor) during September and October 2007.

Interviews and focus group discussions using a set of participatory exercises were carried out with policymakers, service providers, users of the services, civil society groups and community members. These were continued by locally recruited researchers, except in East Timor, where there was a shortage of qualified individuals, but a number of recent studies.<sup>1</sup> Selection of the potentially promising practices to be reviewed was made in collaboration with AusAID staff, local activists, and the local researchers. Local advisory groups of prominent individuals were established in each country in order to provide feedback and direction to the evaluation team, to encourage ownership of the review's findings and to help promote and implement its recommendations. (Annex 1 lists advisory group members for PNG.) Research was done in Port Moresby and Goroka (Eastern Highlands Province) by the international evaluation team. Additional fieldwork in Simbu and Eastern Highlands Provinces was carried out by four researchers of the PNG Institute of Medical Research Cadet Training Programme.

In all, 64 organisations were consulted via interviews with 41 individuals and focus group discussions with another 248 people. (Annex 2 lists organisations consulted.<sup>2</sup>)

<sup>1</sup> Many thanks to Martha Kup, Agnes Mek, Barbara Kepa, Kritoe Keleba, and the director of the Cadet Training Programme, Dr Angela Kelly, for their thorough work.

<sup>2</sup> To protect confidentiality, individuals have not been named.

Regional recommendations on the four theme areas (multisectoral coordination, access to justice, support services for survivors and prevention) were developed during a workshop in Port Moresby in March 2008, which involved local researchers and advisory group representatives from all countries.

This is not a situational analysis, nor is it a comprehensive or complete listing of all the good work that is happening in PNG. There are many inspiring examples of work being done in all parts of the country on violence against women, but only those that were brought to the team's attention could be covered. The study focused on finding lessons learned and examples of promising interventions that could be scaled up, or applied in other countries. It highlights women's own experience of violence, and what does or does not help them in terms of protection and prevention.

## 2 SITUATION OF WOMEN AND CONTEXTUAL FACTORS

Ethnic and cultural diversity in PNG prevent generalisations about women's experience of violence. However, the risk of violence both at home and in the community is a constant presence in the lives of many women in large parts of PNG, especially in the Highlands and major cities. Previous research has established that two out of three women experience domestic violence as a national average<sup>3</sup> and that 50 per cent of women have experienced forced sex.<sup>4</sup> Gang rape, payback rape, rape in connection with tribal fighting, and the torture and murder of women suspected of sorcery are distinctive features of violence against women in PNG, with the additional risk of contracting HIV in the context of a generalised epidemic spreading rapidly throughout rural and urban areas.

Women in PNG are disadvantaged in numerous ways relative to men and to women in other parts of the world. Economic deprivation due to lack of land rights, patterns of out-marriage, and little independent access to cash income trap women, making them dependent on men for economic survival and reinforcing the expectations of male dominance and control founded on the still-prevalent practices of bride-price and polygamy. Further details on other cultural factors that contribute to women's exposure to male violence in PNG are in Chapter 2 of the regional report to which this paper is a supplement.

PNG ranks 124 out of the 136 countries in the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) gender-related development index.<sup>5</sup> PNG's maternal mortality is more than double that of any other Pacific Island country. Educational enrolment rates for girls relative to boys are among the lowest in the Pacific, which leads to

3 PNG – Law Reform Commission (LRC) 1992

4 National Sex and Reproductive Research Team 1994

5 The greater the gender disparity in basic capabilities, the lower a country's gender-related development index compared with its human development index.

disadvantage in the formal economy. (Annex 1 of the regional report details further indicators of women's situation).

Currently, PNG ranks 145 of 177 countries listed in the UNDP's human development index.<sup>6</sup> Growing poverty, high levels of armed crime and sporadic civil unrest have a disproportionate impact on women in large parts of the country, especially in urban areas. Increasingly, women's economic survival is dependent on exchanging sex for money, goods or favours, either through informal transactional sex or regular sex work (National HIV/AIDS Support Project 2005). This is alarming within the context of HIV/AIDS. In 2002, PNG became the fourth country in the Asia-Pacific region to reach the level of a generalised epidemic, and since 2005, more infections have been recorded among women and girls than among men (National AIDS Council of Papua New Guinea 2006a). The high level of domestic and sexual violence in PNG contributes to the rapid spread of the epidemic.

On women's political participation, PNG is 119 in an international ranking of 121 countries (Schoeffel 2004). Only four women have ever been elected to PNG's national Parliament in the 33 years since Independence. The picture is similar at provincial, district and community levels. The national machinery for women—the National Council of Women and the Gender Division of the Department for Community Development (DCD)—has been marginalised, and the level of awareness of human rights, including women's human rights, remains low. Although PNG acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1995, it has yet to submit its first country report.

### 3 MULTISECTORAL COORDINATION

PNG has benefited from the work of two organisations that have been active in multisectoral coordination, the first from a government base and the second from civil society. Beginning in 1985, the Law Reform Commission (LRC) took a strong lead and coordinated collaboration between government, non-government, and private-sector partners for five years. In 1990, it completed its *Parliamentary Report on Domestic Violence* and was obliged to end its involvement in the issue. Activism lapsed until the creation in 2000 of the Family and Sexual Violence Action Committee (FSVAC) under the Consultative Implementation and Monitoring Council, a civil-society organisation with private-sector funding established to offer policy advice to the Government of PNG.

The FSVAC has a coordination and advocacy role and is guided by its integrated multisectoral strategy (Box 3.1). While it has achieved a great deal, participation from government agencies has been weak or absent. In May 2008, a new strategy for the FSVAC was developed through an AusAID-funded process involving extensive

6 A measure of development by combining indicators of life expectancy, educational attainment and income into a composite index ([http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/hdr\\_2007-2008\\_tables.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/hdr_2007-2008_tables.pdf)).

consultations. The strategy has been framed as a national strategy for the country rather than just for the FSVAC, in the hope of stimulating government ownership. Multisectoral coordination at provincial and district levels will be a focus of the new strategy, which has recently been adopted by the DCD.

#### **BOX 3.1: THE FAMILY AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE ACTION COMMITTEE**

Since 2001, the FSVAC has been implementing a multisectoral strategy under six focus areas (Bradley and Kesno 2001):

- > institutional framework
- > legal reforms
- > services for victims
- > perpetrators
- > community prevention and response
- > data collection and research.

The FSVAC's role is to coordinate activities in each focus area, which involves working with dozens of groups around the country, with funding from various bilateral and multilateral donors. Despite having only a small staff, the FSVAC has made numerous valuable contributions, including: assisting with the reform of sexual offences and child welfare legislation; promoting the Family Protection Bill; distributing legal literacy materials; developing training and advocacy materials; running national awareness campaigns, especially during the global 16 Days of Activism for Eliminating Violence Against Women; collecting data from service providers; successfully lobbying for the establishment of hospital-based centres; and commissioning research. Provincial-level committees have also been set up in several provinces, to coordinate local activities.

## **4 WOMEN'S ACCESS TO JUSTICE**

It is widely acknowledged within PNG's justice sector that the current justice system does not yet provide adequate protection for women against violence, whether through formal or informal means. Offender impunity remains the norm. This perpetuates women's suffering and undermines prevention efforts. A number of encouraging recent initiatives, however, have aimed to strengthen women's access to justice, many picking up on initiatives introduced by the LRC during the 1980s, which fell into disuse during the 1990s (PNG LRC 1992). Many other initiatives have begun or are in the pipeline than can be profiled here, but it is expected that this heightened attention to violence against women will bare fruit in the near future.

Australian Government support for the law and justice sector in PNG has, since 2004, focused on sector-wide capacity development by supporting PNG Government priorities and using PNG Government systems. A valuable 'plus' in the law and justice sector has been the adoption of a sector gender strategy in 2006 (Box 4.1). Australian support through the Law and Justice Sector Program (LJSP) has supported the implementation of this strategy, including through technical assistance in the areas of gender, family and child rights and HIV mainstreaming. This is a positive

development and the benefits of this more sustainable approach are bearing fruit. However, given the scale of the problem and the size of the sector, greater investment in these areas, with a priority focus on implementing the gender strategy to improve the justice system's response to violence against women at all levels, is necessary.

**BOX 4.1: PNG'S JUSTICE SECTOR GENDER STRATEGY, 2005–2010 STRATEGIES:**

Develop policies and practices that will enable men and women to participate equally as employees of the Law and Justice sector.

- > Develop and support a human rights approach to service delivery throughout the sector.
- > Develop sector-wide knowledge and involvement in the prevention and management of HIV/AIDS.
- > Strengthen relationships between sector agencies and civil society organisations to promote non-violent conflict resolution.
- > Increase women's access to the formal justice system.
- > Monitor women's experiences of restorative justice initiatives and encourage gender equitable practices.
- > Enhance PNG's capacity to provide detailed information on the situation of women and men before the law.

Specific activities related to violence against women include:

- > Training prosecutors and magistrates on the new Sexual Offences legislation.
- > Developing and providing training on a medico-legal *pro forma* on sexual assault.
- > Piloting a 'court accompaniment' program with the Salvation Army for survivors of rape or child sexual abuse.
- > Supporting the Police Commissioner's efforts to improve police response on domestic violence.
- > Setting aside one day a week in the National Court to hear sexual offence cases.
- > Reviewing and updating village court policy to include family and sexual violence.

## 4.1 Legal reform

A major breakthrough is the new legislation on sexual offences, including marital rape and offences against children. This came into force in 2003 and has the potential to improve both reporting levels and prosecution outcomes for sexual offences. Initial training and awareness activities conducted by sector agencies are being strengthened by a joint approach with the DCD and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) (Box 4.2).

**BOX 4.2: CHANGES TO PAPUA NEW GUINEA'S LEGISLATION ON SEXUAL OFFENCES**

With technical expertise provided by the UNICEF from 2000 to 2002, the FSVAC and the DCD prepared amendments to the Criminal Code and Evidence Act, both of which were passed by Parliament in 2002.

Features include:

- > Clearly defined **sexual offences against children** (under 16 years for most offences, under 18 years for others). Offences include sexual touching and sexual exploitation, with increased penalties for those in a position of trust, such as parents, teachers and the police.
- > Definition of incest expanded to cover more categories of relationships, in line with custom.
- > Court procedures improved to protect survivors' safety and dignity.
- > Definition of **rape** expanded to cover penetration of the mouth or anus and use of objects; requirement for medical corroboration removed; victim's previous sexual conduct not admissible as evidence.
- > **Rape in marriage** became illegal.

UNIFEM and DCD are now collaborating on a three-year project to educate communities, leaders, health service providers, legal aid organisations, the police and the judiciary about the amendments in two pilot provinces. Progress will be monitored and evaluated annually.

## 4.2 Police response

Despite some encouraging initiatives and the best efforts of some individual women and men, domestic violence is still not consistently treated as a crime by the police, except in the most extreme cases. Women are often pressured to drop charges and are not provided with additional sources of support. Domestic violence perpetrated by police is also widespread (Amnesty International 2006).

Recently there has been a surge of interest in the issue following the attendance by the current PNG Police Commissioner at the Pacific Police Commissioners' Conference of 2007, where a joint resolution was passed to make violence against women a priority. The Police Commissioner announced he intended to tackle police who abuse their wives. He issued a memorandum directing police to treat domestic assault as a crime, not a 'family matter'. Translating this intention into real change will be an enormous task requiring sustained and substantial support. Experience in PNG, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu indicates that strong commitment at the highest level of command is more effective in creating change than relying on training at lower operational levels.

The establishment of Sexual Offences Squads in the late 1980s, through the influence of a highly supportive police commissioner, is an example of initial improvements that have diminished over time and failed to lead to sustainable change. The purpose of the squads is to facilitate the reporting and prosecution of sexual offences by reducing the trauma for survivors. Box 4.3 describes both the ideal and the current reality. Initially, the squads were set up in most provincial police stations, with AusAID project funding, but those remaining are barely functioning. Nevertheless, the overall approach remains valuable and is also favoured by the other countries in the region.

The resumption of Australian support to the PNG police provides an opportunity to support the current Police Commissioner's violence against women reform agenda, and to strengthen the hand of the squads within the PNG police.

#### **BOX 4.3: POLICE SEXUAL OFFENCE SQUADS**

Ideally, a successful squad needs:

- > well-trained staff (mainly females) available 24 hours every day
- > facilities that allow for privacy and confidentiality, communication and data-collection equipment, and reliable access to transport
- > strong links with medical services and organisations that provide support to survivors
- > high-level champions in the police force.
- > training for all police on addressing violence against women.

In reality, all squads are seriously under-staffed, lack training, are grossly under-resourced, and are given low priority by other police. There is no specific training or orientation for the positions, officers are transferred in and out without consultation, many female officers have been replaced by men (undermining the basic principle of providing a victim-sensitive service), and even essential resources (telephones, private interviewing facilities, transport, computers and lockable filing cabinets) are generally absent. Remarkably, a few dedicated individuals struggle to provide a service, even resorting to public transport and working during off-duty hours to help victims.

Despite this overall dysfunction, women report receiving better attention from the squads than they get when forced to report to police station front desks. Women want to see the system improved.

### **4.3 Traditional and community-based justice**

The formal system of government courts is difficult for most women to access due to lack of knowledge of the law and their rights, male dominance within staff and the judiciary, and the placement of services only in major towns. Most survivors must rely on community-based justice through village courts, which remain strongly male-biased. PNG's experience of trying to make the village courts more woman-friendly provides sobering lessons.

Assisting village courts, accustomed to applying customs that assert male control over women, to move toward greater gender equality, is a challenge. Significantly increasing the number of female magistrates in PNG's village courts has proven difficult. It is only in recent years that real increases have begun to occur. By the late 1990s, only a handful of female magistrates could be found in PNG, with estimates of only 8 or 10 across 1400 courts from a total pool of 7500 magistrates. Proposed amendments to the Village Courts Act, requiring each village court to have one or more female magistrate (out of a usual total of four or five per court), failed to pass PNG's Parliament in 2000. Despite this setback, a renewed push to promote female magistrates is yielding results: women's representation in village courts is now accelerating. In 2006, the



numbers had risen to 60 and by mid-2008 the total had risen to 250<sup>7</sup> magistrates.<sup>8</sup> This renewed push is also bringing increased attention to human rights and gender equality in training for officials, and strong encouragement for each of PNG's 14 000 village courts to have a female magistrate. Revisiting the failed 2000 amendments to the Village Courts Act could pay dividends.

Village courts are already integrated into the formal justice system (since 1973). Less formal systems, such as 'restorative justice', community-based justice, community policing, peace mediation and conflict prevention/resolution, supplement PNG's village court system. These less formal mechanisms play a valuable role, including by engaging men in reconciliation and restorative processes. But they also have the potential to undermine gender-equality goals unless the specific rights and needs of women and children are recognised and appropriately addressed. For example, restorative justice is central to the PNG Government's national law and justice policy. However, restorative justice can subordinate women's rights to protection from violence and to redress for wrongs as individuals, to the goal of restoring harmonious relationships within and between groups dominated by men. And 'community' is a gender-blind term, masking the fact that communities are usually controlled by men. This highlights the importance of ensuring that competent gender analysis is a fundamental component of the design, implementation and monitoring of all the above approaches to ensure the human rights of women and men are protected and promoted. Further research in this area may be prudent to ensure restorative justice and community-engagement frameworks recognise, respect and protect the rights of women.

The lesson from the Nauro-Gor example (Box 4.4) is that gender-equitable approaches do not emerge spontaneously from male-dominated traditional groups, but sensitive support to gatekeepers of traditional justice can stimulate change from within. The communities' hopes for peace and economic development can help create an environment conducive to gender change and entry points for integrating human rights.

<sup>7</sup> Written communication, Elizabeth Morgan, LJSP Village Courts Advisor.

<sup>8</sup> Personal communication, Elizabeth Morgan, LJSP Village Courts Advisor.

**BOX 4.4: COMMUNITY-BASED JUSTICE AND PEACEMAKING: NAURO-GOR COMMUNITY LAWS INITIATIVE, SIMBU PROVINCE**

In 2005, male leaders of nine clans came together, mediated by the Roman Catholic Church, to make peace after 32 years of devastating tribal fighting. They signed a peace agreement and formulated a list of 'community laws', which they all pledged to support. These were based on local custom and contained provisions that were restrictive of women and that trivialised domestic violence. Men were appointed to leadership positions in the new United Nauro-Gor Association, and several men trained as community police. At the same time, Oxfam offered funding for some economic development activities in the area.

During 2006, members of these same clans participated in Community Conversations, a community development approach to (HIV/AIDS) prevention that integrates principles of gender equality and human rights throughout all its processes. Male leaders then decided to create positions for women in the United Nauro-Gor Association. Two men (including the chairman) and two women were selected to attend a week-long training course on gender and human rights with the UNIFEM in Port Moresby. This led to the revision of the 'community laws, with the participation of women, and the training of female community police equal to the number of male police. The association has asked for gender equality and human rights to be taught in local schools.

The making of peace—itself a major achievement—has created an openness among communities, including male leaders, to rebuilding their lives with some different principles. The initiative is still in its early days, and both women and men need time to change old habits of dominance and subservience. The ongoing process of Community Conversations, and commitments of continued support on gender equality and human rights from UNIFEM and Oxfam, will help to consolidate the present enthusiasm of the new leadership and prevent potential backlash.

The community policing system (Box 4.4) requires a word of caution. These volunteer auxiliaries are given uniforms and rudimentary orientation, but there is no training on gender or human rights, nor any effective oversight or accountability. Indeed, Amnesty International's 2006 report found this approach reinforced power hierarchies in the community, trivialised crimes against women and discouraged women from attempting to access formal remedies. Even where women are also appointed as community police, as in the example above, there is the risk of corruption and vigilante behaviour. Compensation is retained as the main method of settling problems, even though women do not feel this approach resolves their issues: *'The victim does not get anything. She loses out double time: suffering the beatings and not having a share of the compensation payment'*. (reserve policewoman, Kainantu).

#### 4.4 Knowledge of laws and rights

Three approaches to improving knowledge of laws and rights have been used in PNG for many years: public awareness using printed materials and media campaigns, legal literacy training for organisations and individuals and legal support to individual cases. Many organisations are still using the leaflets produced 20 years ago by the LRC and the Women and Law Committee, since the legal situation pertaining to domestic violence and related family laws has not changed. The leaflets are distributed by national and provincial FSVACs, provincial councils of women, Family Support Centres and numerous others. A new push for awareness on the new sexual offences legislation is being undertaken by the DCD, with UNIFEM support (Box 4.1).

The Individual Community Rights Advocacy Forum (ICRAF) is a Non-Government Organisation (NGO) based in Port Moresby that has specialised in giving trainings on legal literacy and providing legal aid to survivors since the early 1990s. Demand far outstrips supply, since PNG's Public Solicitor's Office provides little legal aid in family cases. An interesting pilot project is the Salvation Army's effort to develop a court-based program of volunteers to support complainants in cases of sexual or physical violence. These initiatives are supported by Australia's LJSP and additional support in these areas should be encouraged. Knowledge of laws and rights, also a strategy for prevention, is discussed further in Chapter 6.

## 5 SUPPORT SERVICES FOR SURVIVORS

### 5.1 Core support

PNG does not have a strong lead agency providing services to abused women and children. The country's national lead agency, the FSVAC, has no service provision function. Existing services are small and scattered, under-resourced technically and financially, located only in major towns, and provided mostly by faith-based organisations. The penetration of faith-based organisations into PNG's rural areas, where Government services are weak or non-existent, offers opportunities to extend the reach of support services to survivors of violence in rural areas. However, using faith-based organisations to provide such services requires complementary actions. Standardised training on counselling for survivors of sexual and domestic abuse encompassing a human-rights approach is needed; some counselling provided by faith-based groups can be counterproductive to protecting the rights of women. An example of counselling messages provided by a faith-based service is in Box 5.1.

**BOX 5.1: MEN'S EXPECTATIONS ABOUT THEIR WIVES' BEHAVIOUR \*****Respect**

[The man] is the head of the family. In Papua New Guinean culture, men are to be the leader in our societies and tribes ... Ladies, no matter how important you are at your professional level, when it comes to your home, your man is the head of the family ... [The] wife encourages and strengthens her husband's masculine leadership role and must never try to destroy, usurp, weaken or eliminate it ... A man has status among his peers if the wife is seen to have respect for him ...

**Submissive**

Support his ego. Be submissive to him ... [A wife] submits to her husband, not because he (the husband) demands it but because Christ directs her to it in his word ...

**Helper**

Men like their wives to anticipate their needs and not wait to be told. 'You were created to be a helpmate.'

**Sexual fulfilment**

'Sexual relations two or three times a week on average. Willingness to experiment, find ways to increase his enjoyment of sex'.

\*Extracts from an interview with a family counsellor of PNG Counselling and Care, published as 'Things that husbands want their wives to know' in New Age Woman (a monthly supplement to the national newspaper *The Post Courier* February 2008, pp. 26–27).

Against this background, PNG has examples of promising practices in service provision for survivors. These include organisations such as Family Voice, a Goroka-based NGO providing counselling for women and children, training for community volunteers to assist survivors in accessing health and justice services and coordinating the Family Support Centre for survivors at the local hospital.

Family Support Centres (recently renamed Stop Violence Centres) are being set up in all major hospitals in PNG, as an initiative of the National Department of Health (NDOH) (Box 5.2). Similar hospital-based centres are in use in other parts of the world, including in East Timor, to improve coordination of services to victims.

## 5.2 Safe havens

There is a huge unmet need for emergency and temporary shelter for abused women. Port Moresby has three, run by the Salvation Army, ICRAF and City Mission (Haus Ruth), the latter being the largest and offering the most comprehensive services (Box 5.2). In some parts of the country, shelter is provided by churches, HIV/AIDS care centres and women leaders in their own homes. Often these provide only temporary relief, since women usually have no other choice than to return home, but they do contribute to women's empowerment and, therefore, to longer-term change.

**BOX 5.2A: HOSPITAL-BASED 'ONE-STOP CENTRES'**

For many abused women, the first (and often the only) help they seek is medical treatment for their injuries. For this reason, PNG's NDOH decided to set up hospital-based centres for women who have been physically abused or raped, where they can receive treatment, counselling and referrals in privacy; where they cannot be pursued by irate husbands; and where medico-legal evidence can be collected in a timely and respectful manner. Funding for these Stop Violence Centres has been provided by AusAID and UNICEF.

The preferred model is the one-stop centre, where treatment, counselling and legal aid are provided on the spot by paid staff and trained volunteers, and where police statements are prepared. This spares women the many difficulties, dangers and costs involved in visiting other agencies around town. Overnight accommodation is available in an emergency, with referrals to shelters for longer periods. Lae's Angau Hospital has the country's current best practice model, which has been in operation since 2001 and is now being supported by *Médecins Sans Frontières*.

The 'safe space' model is being used by smaller hospitals. The Centres at Goroka Base and Kainantu Hospitals have only one room each, but each has one paid staff member and is expanding its volunteer roster. Both are coordinated by Family Voice, which provides follow-up support and connections to other organisations. However, there is no women's shelter in the area, and no access to safe overnight accommodation.

In 2007, the NDOH stepped up its efforts to improve and standardise the Centres, expand them to all provincial hospitals, formalise protocols and referral pathways, and introduce training for staff and volunteers.

**BOX 5.2B: TWO MODELS OF SAFE HAVEN FOR ABUSE SURVIVORS IN PORT MORESBY****Haus Ruth hostel**

Since 2001, Haus Ruth has been providing short-term accommodation, counselling and other support services to abused women and children. The hostel can hold up to 30 women, some of whom are employed women paying rent, which helps sustain the service. City Mission and donors make up the difference. Staff work full time, are well trained and have excellent links with other services. The hostel is always full and has to turn many women away. Those lucky enough to be taken in have found strength in the support of other women, and expressed enormous gratitude for the service.

*Women want peace of mind and rest. When we enter this place, they are like friends to us. They are like family. They love us and feed us three times a day.*

*We encourage each other, how to stand up and tackle our problems ... It's only when you can share your pain with others that you can feel some relief.*

**Morata women's group**

In 2003, a group of women in Morata settlement, Port Moresby, began taking action on wife beating, with the inspiration and support of a committed female police officer. One of the leaders of the group obtained her husband's permission to allow beaten wives to spend a few nights in their house, until they could safely go home again. Community men agreed to treat the house as a safe haven, under threat of arrest by the female police officer. Members raise funds locally, and contribute whatever food items they can spare to the women being sheltered. More than 70 women have so far been helped in this way. The group has now branched out into other activities, with some donor funding. The city council covering Port Moresby is planning to support the expansion of this model throughout the city through the project *Meri Seif Ples* (Safe Places for Women).

### 5.3 Health services

PNG's NDOH is the first in the region to introduce a formal protocol and training on domestic violence for primary health care providers in rural as well as urban areas (Box 5.3). It is also developing clinical and medico-legal guidelines on rape for use in health facilities around the country.

#### **BOX 5.3: NATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH PROTOCOL ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

Introduced in 2003, this protocol is based on a simple desktop checklist of six steps. The health worker is required to ask about domestic violence with certain presenting conditions, ensure privacy, inform the client she has the right to be protected, provide treatment, plan with the client how to reduce future risk, and record injuries in the woman's health book. Each health worker is required to develop a local referral network, recorded on the inside of the checklist.

The checklist explains that the 'health worker's role is to prevent domestic violence by a) helping victims reduce their risk and b) encouraging community action. Please follow all the steps. If you only treat the injuries, it allows the violence to continue'.

A teaching poster and separate leaflets for men and women, used in health-promotion activities or given to individual clients, have been produced and distributed. A full package of training materials was created, and tutors from all the colleges of health work and nursing were trained in 2004 in how to use them. By error, the materials were not fully incorporated into the new curriculum for community health workers, so rollout of the system was disrupted. The NDOH is in the process of re-implementing the system and stepping up training. In 2008, it created the position of Gender-Based Violence Coordinator to sustain the new emphasis on this issue. An urgent priority is removing extra fees for domestic violence victims, imposed in some provincial health-care facilities in a mistaken attempt at deterrence.

## 6 PREVENTION

Most prevention initiatives in PNG remain focused at the level of awareness raising, with little use of human rights or empowerment approaches. The lack of effective sanctions through the justice system seriously impedes efforts to change community norms. Much of the preventive work with men and young men, such as that done by Men Against Violence through the FSVAC, has not attempted to transform gender relations but has presented domestic violence as a 'family problem' for which both partners are responsible and that can be prevented or solved by better mutual understanding. This approach perpetuates rather than challenges accepted gender roles and male authority. Initiatives by faith-based organisations to reduce violence against women by appealing to men to be better husbands and fathers carry the risk of reinforcing the patriarchal attitudes and norms of male control that are one of the underlying cause of the problem.

## 6.1 HIV/AIDS

The rapid spread of HIV/AIDS in PNG, although devastating in its effects, has paradoxically opened the door for preventive work on violence against women. HIV/AIDS is having a disproportionate impact on PNG's women. This reflects women's greater vulnerability to HIV and the fact that pervasive gender inequalities undermine women's ability to negotiate safe sexual practices. As a result, women often contract the virus from their male partner. This reality has created an environment in which many people are ready to recognise and address gender inequality, violence against women and the need to empower women as a means of reversing the epidemic.

Box 6.1 describes the kinds of promising work being done.

### BOX 6.1: HIV/AIDS AS AN ENTRY POINT FOR PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

These initiatives have been introduced through the collaboration between the National AIDS Council and AusAID's HIV/AIDS support programs:

- > Required training since 2002 for all paid and unpaid persons working on HIV/AIDS, with core modules on gender inequality, violence against women and human rights.
- > The *National Gender Policy and Strategic Plan on HIV and AIDS 2006–2010*, adopted in 2007, which asserts gender inequalities and violence against women as priority strategies (National AIDS Council of Papua New Guinea 2006a). This is a first in the Asia-Pacific region.
- > A gender advisor position created in the National AIDS Council.
- > A handbook distributed to all organisations working on HIV, giving guidelines on how to integrate gender sensitivity and prevention of violence against women into activities on HIV/AIDS (National AIDS Council of Papua New Guinea 2006b).
- > Skills for addressing the links between violence against women and HIV testing and disclosure included in training for voluntary counselling and testing (VCT) counsellors.
- > A training course for men and boys, accredited by the National AIDS Council, addressing gender equality and violence against women.
- > Community Conversations: a method for community mobilisation around HIV/AIDS that addresses gender power inequalities and is now being widely adopted by Government and NGOs.
- > Save the Children's work with young people in Goroka on sexual health, using participatory action research that makes the links between violence against women and HIV/AIDS.

Two gender advisor positions created within AusAID's program of support on HIV/AIDS (Sanap Wantaim).

That the HIV/AIDS epidemic in PNG is, in part, being fuelled by violence against women, does not mean that violence against women should be seen predominantly through the lens of HIV/AIDS. A comprehensive, multisectoral approach to addressing violence against women is required; HIV/AIDS programming is just one component of such a response.

## 6.2 Prevention of conflict

In the Highlands, where tribal fighting causes enormous suffering and violence for women in many ways, ending tribal conflict is a potent means of preventing and reducing violence against women. The experiences of Nauro-Gor and Kup, in Simbu, show that making peace does not eliminate violence against women, but it does reduce it, putting women in a stronger position to protect them and opening opportunities for changes in gender relations. Kup Women for Peace (KWP) not only took the lead in creating peace, but have continued to do so through their innovative methods of reducing domestic violence and creating leadership roles for women (Box 6.2).

### BOX 6.2: WOMEN AS PEACEMAKERS: KUP WOMEN FOR PEACE, SIMBU PROVINCE

The organisation that became KWP grew out of the activities of three women, driven by the atrocities they had experienced during 30 years of tribal fighting, who risked their lives by breaking custom and secretly meeting with women of enemy tribes to talk about peace.

Between 1999 and 2002 they formed a committee of women in each tribe and clan. During the 16 Days of Activism to End Violence Against Women in 2002, peace was finally made at the compensation ceremony for a university student killed in the fighting. People saw that *'the mothers are doing all they can to bring peace'*, and they made a settlement, at which the KWP leaders gave their first public speech. Since then, KWP volunteers have helped maintain the peace by acting as polling officers during national elections, doing community awareness on good governance, helping arrange the public surrender of armed gangs, and obtaining water tanks for schools.

Despite the peace, *'wife-beating is still common'* and KWP volunteers carry out regular house-to-house awareness raising. *'We move around and sleep in people's houses with families. After we speak to people from that household, we move on to other houses and do awareness there. We also go to the men's [meeting] house at night, and in the daytime, we go to the small markets in the community. People ask lots of questions and they learn so much this way.'* This face-to-face dialogue method is highly effective because it overcomes the illiteracy barrier (most women's schooling was disrupted by the fighting) and because whole families learn together, diminishing the risk of male backlash.

KWP members recognise that *'It's hard to break down culture in a short time'*. They have found it very helpful to access *'many trainings on national rights, self rights, formation of women's groups, HIV/AIDS, community justice, peace mediation, and other things'*. Support from donors for local development projects and from UNIFEM for gender equality training in schools has also increased members' confidence and influence in the community.

## 6.3 Women's empowerment

Because women's status is so low in PNG, increasing their participation in political leadership positions and economic and social status at all levels must be a priority. This means strengthening women's participation and leadership in community development and economic programs, as well as increasing their representation in national-level leadership positions, including in Parliament.



### Political participation

There is recent evidence demonstrating that having more women in government has a positive impact on the provision of public goods to communities. Research comparing local governments in India that have reserved seats for women (and so which have a higher representation of women), with those that do not reserve seats for women (and so have lower representation by women), found that:

*... villages [with] reserved [seats] for women leaders have more public goods and the quality of these goods is at least as high as in non-reserved villages. Moreover, villagers are less likely to pay bribes in villages [with] reserved [seats] for women. Second, we provide evidence from two Indian states that children in villages headed by female [leaders] do better on two dimensions, drinking water and immunisation. Girls in villages reserved for female [leaders] also experience an improvement in school attendance.<sup>9</sup>*

The team is not aware of similarly rigorous research on the impact of women leaders on violence against women. However, intuitively the team would expect more women leaders (in national parliaments, local governments, senior public and private sector positions) to have a positive impact on efforts to reduce violence against women. Emerging evidence from East Timor appears to support this belief.

In 2004, East Timor's local (*suco*) councils and chiefs were given both the power and the duty of protecting women from domestic violence. A 2006 evaluation of efforts to increase women representation on the *suco* councils, and to equip them with 'transformative leadership training' prior to their election onto the councils, identified some positive impacts:

- > Increased confidence and ability to speak up, both in the family and in the council.
- > Less conflict and violence in the family, attributed to husbands paying more respect. *'Men are happy when their wives are elected. It's a privilege for the family'.*
- > Some husbands more willing to share money and domestic chores with wives, thereby reducing domestic disputes and violence.
- > Some elected women able to raise the issue of domestic violence with their councils, as well as other women's issues, such as family planning, sanitation, children's vaccinations, school facilities and women's sports.

### Economic empowerment

In the longer run, economic empowerment of women will strengthen violence-prevention efforts in PNG (as well as having many other positive development outcomes). However, economic development programs in PNG, particularly those targeting women, need to incorporate education around violence against women and gender relations. Programs increasing a woman's access to economic resources can put her at risk of increased

<sup>9</sup> Beaman, L, Dufllo, E, Pande, R & Topalova, P 'Women Politicians, Gender Bias and Policymaking in Rural India' (UNICEF, December 2006), p. 4.

violence, if not carefully addressed in the program. This is particularly true in settings where a woman's status is low, because increasing her income can lead to greater conflict within the family (Koenig, Hossain et al. 1999). On the other hand, if such issues are addressed within the community and among women leaders, programs can significantly contribute to reducing violence against women. Community-mobilisation activities and micro-finance programs in PNG involving education about rights and violence against women are likely to significantly reduce the levels of violence against women and improve repayment rates in micro-finance activities.<sup>10</sup>

## 7 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 7.1 Conclusions

PNG's progress in addressing violence against women over the last 20 years has gone through peaks and troughs, but appears now to be on a strong upswing. Initiatives first begun in the days of the LRC but that fell apart during the 1990s have been reintroduced and are taking root in more solid ground. This can be attributed to a number of factors, such as the energetic work of the FSVAC and numerous other NGOs in raising public awareness of the issues; the recognition that gender inequality and violence against women are key drivers of the HIV epidemic; the role of the media in highlighting cases of extreme violence against women; and the increasing support from donors for addressing gender issues in their programming.

In the past, donor support for gender issues was hampered by a lack of Government of PNG leadership in this area and by the lack of a vibrant women's movement and political leadership committed to promoting women's interests. Recently, however, the quiet perseverance has paid off, with justice-sector agencies and the Department of Education inaugurating gender policies and strategies that include attention to violence against women, and the NDOH currently embarking on the same process. A consultative process for developing a new national strategy for the FSVAC has also contributed to creating a critical mass of agencies and individuals ready to push for genuine change. The climate is right for all actors in PNG—government, civil society and donors—to strengthen collective efforts to address the scourge of violence against women.

The recommendations outlined in the regional report on priorities for supporting anti-violence against women initiatives are all relevant for PNG. In addition, the team suggests a number of other priorities.

<sup>10</sup> For example, see: Pronyk, PM & Hargreaves JR, et al. 2006, 'Effect of a structural intervention for the prevention of intimate-partner violence and HIV in rural South Africa: a cluster randomised trial', *Lancet* 368(9551): 1973–83; Kim, JC & Watts, CH et al. 2007, 'Understanding the impact of a microfinance-based intervention on women's empowerment and the reduction of intimate partner violence in South Africa', *American Journal of Public Health* 97(10): 1794–802.

Australia is well positioned to play a supporting role in this endeavour by systematically integrating into its PNG program, work and strategies to reduce violence against women through human rights and gender-sensitive approaches.

## 7.2 Specific recommendations for all Papua New Guinea actors

**Support the development of a government-led national plan of action.** This is one of the recommendations of the UN Secretary General's *Report on Violence against Women 2006*. The Government of PNG's decision to endorse the FSVAC's new national strategy is positive. Through the use of participatory processes across PNG Government departments, the new FSVAC strategy provides a basis to strengthen government ownership and leadership on the issue. The next challenge is to translate this new strategy into a Government-led national plan of action to address violence against women.

**Conduct national research using the World Health Organization's methodology (WHO 2005).** PNG's statistics on violence against women derive from research that is 15 to 25 years old. In 2006, the National Research Institute conducted a survey of domestic violence, but the results (not yet available) will not readily allow comparisons with other countries because the methodology chosen was the original one pioneered by the LRC rather than the state-of-the art methodology developed and recommended by WHO. National research using this methodology has been carried out in Samoa, is being undertaken in the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, and is planned for Fiji. It would be highly desirable to carry out a similar study in PNG.

**Strengthen the enabling environment.** Advocacy and activism on violence against women are more likely to succeed where there is open public discourse on gender and human rights, where leaders are sensitised to women's human rights, where women can participate effectively in decision-making bodies, where there is an active civil society, and where there are independent institutions for investigating human-rights complaints. Action on all these fronts would be highly beneficial.

**Cultivate high-level male champions on violence against women within the public and private sectors.** This is particularly important in the public sector, as the only female minister is too overstretched to effectively carry this agenda alone. The current Police Commissioner is one clear example of a motivated and highly influential champion who, with access to technical support, could make faster progress on his agenda for violence against women.

**Develop community-level male champions on violence against women** based on Vanuatu's Male Advocates Programme, targeting traditional leaders such as village court magistrates, peace officers and community police. It may be feasible to envision this as a joint enterprise between Australia's LJSP and the Sport for Development and Peace Initiative, to encourage cross-generational communication and prepare future leaders.

**Invest in capacity development for organisations providing critical support services.**

Numerous organisations and individuals are providing ‘counselling’ or other support services in cases of violence against women in ways that can exacerbate the problem and increase women’s exposure to violence. Competency-based training is urgently required to develop specific skills to address cases of violence against women and children. A standardised and accredited program of training could target professional and lay counsellors; health workers, including staff at Stop Violence Centres; clergy and pastoral workers; VCT counsellors; social workers; community development workers; welfare officers (government and private sector); youth workers; school guidance officers; and peace mediators.

**Assess the effectiveness of justice-sector actors and initiatives**, such as village courts, community justice training, peace mediation training (through Peace Foundation Melanesia), community policing, and the restorative justice approach generally, in addressing women’s needs, improving gender parity, addressing potential backlash and promoting human rights. This requires the application of a gender lens to the key concepts and underlying values and field research to understand the processes affecting, and potentially distorting, implementation, as well as the development of clear monitoring criteria and procedures.

**Create a focus on preventing violence against women and girls through support to the education sector.** Existing procedures to prevent and respond to sexual harassment of students and staff, to train guidance counsellors, and to conduct safety audits of facilities continue to be poorly implemented. The capacity of the District Women’s Education Facilitators system to address violence against women requires strengthening. This would enable more effective advocacy in schools and communities.

The most glaring gap at present, however, is the dearth of core curriculum materials explicitly promoting the right of women and girls to be free of gender violence, and teacher training to facilitate both the appropriate use of materials and the ability of teachers to identify and provide support to students experiencing or at risk of violence, whether at school or in the home. This will become increasingly necessary as more students lose one or both parents to AIDS-related illnesses.

**Support political empowerment of women** at the national, provincial and community levels, drawing on the positive experience in East Timor.

**Support economic empowerment of women** through equality in land rights, property and inheritance rights, and income-generating opportunities, while incorporating education around violence against women and gender relations in all relevant empowerment interventions to minimise short-term spikes in violence against women.

### 7.3 Specific recommendations for Australia

**Be explicit and proactive in supporting gender equality and human rights in policy dialogue**, encouraging, motivating and assisting the PNG Government to address violence against women.

**Provide expertise in gender and in violence against women** to all sectoral programs during design and implementation, to ensure the integration of appropriate strategies and indicators. Programs that have had sustained technical input on gender, such as the LJSP, the Basic Education Development Project and Sanap Wantaim, have made far greater progress in addressing women's issues, including violence, than those that have not. The work of AusAID's recently appointed gender advisor presents an opportunity to conduct and update a stocktaking of initiatives regarding violence against women and of the level of in-country expertise, and to develop an active 'community of practice' on violence against women that should include donors as well as practitioners.

**Continue to support the FSVAC strategy process** and assist stakeholders in conducting sustained and strategic advocacy, both for PNG Government follow-up action to implement the strategy and for its further development as a national plan of action with buy-in from all government departments and civil society agencies. This would also include:

- > Providing long-term core support to the FSVAC as the main multisectoral coordinating body at both the national and provincial levels. The impressive achievements of the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre (FWCC) and the Vanuatu Women's Centre (VWC) have been made possible by the continuity of core funding for 20 and 12 years respectively.
- > Appointing a violence-against-women capacity development specialist to work with the FSVAC for one to two years. This is an urgent need for the FSVAC, as confirmed by the recent FSVAC review and strategy upgrade process. The position requires an experienced international professional (not a youth ambassador), as no one is available locally who has sufficient depth and breadth of expertise in this relatively new field.

**Maintain rigorous quality control of programs and services** that address gender and/or violence against women. All Australian-funded activities in this area should be grounded in a gender equality and human rights perspective, as described in the regional report. This is particularly relevant to the governance, health (including HIV/AIDS), and justice sectors when considering funding for mediation and counselling, and approaches by faith-based groups, which may have an agenda that conflicts with human rights and gender-equality principles.

Provide targeted support to key Government of PNG departments at national and provincial levels.

- > **Assisting the departments of Finance and Planning** to integrate strategies on violence against women into national and provincial planning would add value. In the longer term, the Office for the Development of Women and the Gender Division of the DCD plan to advise all Government of PNG departments on how to integrate a gender perspective that includes violence against women into their planning processes. In the interim, Australia should consider offering a short-term gender advisor with expertise in violence against women to develop counterparts' strategic planning skills on these issues.
- > **Develop the leadership capacity of the DCD.** Both the department's Gender Division and the proposed Office for the Development of Women require sustained capacity building across the board, but particularly on violence against women. The latter should be done speedily, to make use of the valuable opportunity that exists to enable the current minister to accept a greater leadership role on violence against women. The minister is motivated, but is overworked and in need of specialist advice and support in this area.

**Support the introduction of competency-based training.** Australian support for a new training college may offer the best entry point for this initiative. In the interim, a training package addressing the levels of need and types of audiences could be developed and piloted through other institutions, such as the Divine Word University or the International Education Authority. A proposal for further developing such a package based on existing draft materials trialled this year in PNG has been submitted to Sanap Wantaim, which would allow a fast start to be made on this initiative.

**Increase support for women's empowerment, both political and economic,** subject to efforts to minimise violence backlash by incorporating education around violence against women and gender relations in all empowerment interventions. AusAID's community development program provides a key opportunity to pursue this agenda.

## ANNEX 1: ADVISORY GROUP MEMBERS FOR PNG

Ila Geno, Chief Ombudsman

Sir Mari Kapi, PNG Chief Justice

Dame Carol Kidu, parliamentarian and Minister for Community Development

Biri Kimasopa, former Minister for Justice, currently businessman

Avie Koison, President PNG-Alumni Association

Iva Kola, former NCD Deputy City Manager

Cecilia Nembou, , Vice-Chancellor, Divine Word University

Oseah Philemon, Editor-in-Chief, Post Courier

Margaret Thomas, former Minister Counsellor, AusAID, PNG

Robert Titi, Co-ordinator of Men Against Violence

Ume Wainetti, FSVAC National Co-ordinator

Ruby Zarriga, Director, Department of National Planning

## ANNEX 2: ORGANISATIONS CONSULTED<sup>11</sup>

### Organisation

#### Port Moresby

Ministry for Community Development

Minister Dame Carol Kidu

Gender Division

Welfare Division

CEDAW taskforce

Child Protection

National Department of Health

National Department of Education

Port Moresby General Hospital, Family Support Centre

Royal PNG Constabulary

Sexual Offences Squad, Boroko

Victims Desk, Waigaini

Family and Sexual Violence Action Committee (secretariat and member organisations)

Salvation Army

Anglicare

Papua Hahine Social Action Forum

World Vision PNG

Community Justice Liaison Unit

Porosapot (Save the Children)

Tingim Laip (HIV/AIDS prevention)

ICRAF

DCD Gender Division

Department of Education, Counselling and Guidance Branch

FSVAC Strategy Review team

National Council of Women (interviews with 10 members)

Haus Ruth (including interviews with staff and 16 current and former residents)

Individual Community Rights Advocacy Forum

PACSO (PNG AIDS civil society organisations) (interviews with 11 members)

National Research Institute

Morata Women's Safe House (interviews with 6 members)

Oil Palm Research Association

<sup>11</sup> To protect confidentiality, individuals have not been named.



AusAID Law and Justice Sector Program (interviews with advisors)

Sanap Wantaim (AusAID's HIV/AIDS program)

AusAID's health program

AusAID's education program

### **Eastern Highlands Province**

Royal PNG Constabulary, Goroka police

(interviews/focus group with 26 police officers)

Eastern Highlands, provincial village courts administrators

Kainantu Police (focus group involving 7 officers)

Kainantu Hospital, Family Support Centre

Eastern Highlands Family Voice (interviews with staff and survivors)

Goroka Base Hospital, Family Support Centre

Eastern Highlands Province, FSVAC provincial branch

Save the Children

Sisters of Mercy, Goroka

LJSP Eastern Highlands Province

Kona-Bena (village focus group involving 14 individuals)

Kainantu Save the Children's project for sex workers

(focus group involving 15 individuals)

Kainantu Gold, Women in Mining

### **Simbu Province**

Kup Women for Peace (5 members)

United Nauro-Gor Association (officials)

Gor Community (focus group involving 19 adults)

Gor Community (focus group involving 28 youth)

Gor Community policewomen (focus group involving 26 officers)

Gor Community policemen (involving 20 officers)