

**Title**

The Government of PNG working for prevention of Gender Violence and the promotion of Gender Equality through Policy Development and Implementation.

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**Abstract**

“The Government of Papua New Guinea (GO PNG) Department of Personnel Management in partnership with the Australian High Commission – Australian Aid sponsored Governance Programs, EPSP and PLGP, have developed and implemented a tailored policy and education approach to systemically addressing prevention of Gender Based violence and Gender Inequality for GOPNG employees and mainstreaming equality principles and values into the Government’s delivery of services to its people. “

The work is underpinned by the Government’s commitment to human rights of women and recognising that gender inequality is both a consequence and cause of gender based violence. The work commenced in 2011 but has recently gathered momentum with GOPNG’s Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) policy launched in January, 2013. This policy’s key focus implementation areas urge government employee’s action towards the theme areas of women’s equality and access to resources and opportunity, progression to leadership and decision making role. (Government of Papua New Guinea, 2013)

The presentation will also examine the GOPNG policy and prevention framework and response to workplace sexual harassment and domestic violence. GOPNG staff, working with the Economic and Public Sector Program, developed a number of activities, including transformative Gender education sessions and mobilisation of government leaders for sponsorship of the program. Agency focal points and a vibrant and engaged male advocacy network, high- level women’s leadership networks and Gender Help Desks were also established. Staff at provincial Implementation pilot sites revealed an entrenched work place culture of sexist behaviours and a lack of access to services that served to further amplify violence and inequality experienced by women employees. This presentation will discuss the learnings outcomes and challenges from the implementation of policy including pathways and blockages in delivering Gender Equality and GBV prevention throughout the PNG government bureaucracy.

**Findings/Conclusions**

1. The need for accountability to institutional authority instruments such as General Orders, GESI Policy and Executive Instructions and actions and with results being demonstrated through activities.

2. High level agency sponsorship and leadership for effective implementation was key and therefore incentivising GESI for leaders should be a strong priority.
3. Developing a number of coalitions from a diverse group of contributors to plan and develop activities and to embed into organisation's corporate planning cycle, reporting and budgets (mainstreaming) created a discourse with public service employees which flowed to the community.
4. Whilst awareness raising is a good starting point to gather people together, the real gains for lasting behaviour change is achieved through mainstreaming gender equity initiatives into government processes.
5. The recognition of men's agency was important. Not just as a perpetrator group but also as the "gate keepers" having access to power for women's wellbeing, economic independence, pathways to leadership roles and freedom from GBV.
6. Safety and security of women is important for women to begin to make up a critical mass and move into leadership roles. This means strong policy, consequence for perpetrators of Gender Based Violence and open and responsive complaint pathways.
7. A greater focus is needed to give women encouragement, assurance and permission to progress to leadership. The absence of such support sees women defaulting to a place safety away from the limelight, complying with the status quo and without opportunity or responsibility for leadership. "

## **Introduction**

The aim of this paper is to provide the reader with some learnings experienced by PNG Government Policy makers in the implementation of the National Public Service Gender Equity and Social Inclusion Policy.

## **Background**

In Papua New Guinea, as part of everyday life, women are subjected to large scale inequality, a lack of access to resources and services including education, training and decision making and leadership roles. Women's experience of inequality presents in the form of women's lack of economic independence and high rates of violence. A recent survey conducted by NGO Child fund (2013) indicates that violence occurs in more than two-thirds of families. This is of course a third more than average statistics in the western world that situate one in three women will experience violence from an intimate partner. (Our Watch 2015; Stark 2007; WHO 2015 )

The PNG National Department of Health Department figures from 2014 are also alarming. This department indicates that 66% women seeking assistance have been beaten by their husband/partner, with the figures close to 100% in some areas. These figures are some of the highest in the world. PNG also rates quite poorly on the UNDP Gender Inequality Index at 135 of 186. This index measures adolescent fertility, adult maternal mortality, parliamentary representation of women, educational participation from the secondary level and above for women, and labour force participation. (UNDP 2013)

Other figures from the PNG Health department state that 50% of women have been forced to have sex against their will (inside and outside of marriage) and that 50% of survivors of sexually assault seeking medical treatment are under 16. 17% of these survivors under 16 are between the age of 13 and 14 years of age.

The Prevalence of men's Violence Study in 2008 with Men from Bougainville found that 80% of men polled admitted perpetration of physical and/or sexual Violence. (Partners in Prevention 2015)

A Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors without Borders PNG) report stated that the violence against women they are encountering is similar to what they experience in war zones. This group estimate that 70% of women in PNG will be raped or physically assaulted in their lifetime and described by some as a "humanitarian crises". (2014)

Amnesty International researchers visited PNG in December, 2013, found that despite new laws making sexual and domestic violence a crime, attacks against women and girls at the hands of family members and strangers were still being perpetrated. (2013)

One can see from these international agencies and research that PNG men and women experience of life is very different with inequality and violence experienced by women being at alarming levels. It is often interpretations of culture which are often used to reinforce the privilege and entitlement of men and the justification of gender inequality and violence against women.

One such custom is the practice of bride price which is still followed in PNG. The practice of paying the family of the bride was used in times gone by to protect women but today it has translated into one that husbands believe entitles them to use violence and non consensual sex as a method of controlling and disciplining their wives. Amnesty International commented on bride price saying many women feel trapped and unable to escape as their families cannot pay back the money to their husbands family. (2013)

Other societal and cultural practices situate women as belonging to or at least being controlled by men. Polygamist relationships and adherence to strict socialised gender roles and social norms serve to keep women regulated in their freedom of movement, association, dress, access to appropriate health outcomes, education and economic independence.

According to the PNG Governments own data base, the Alesco payroll database, (2015) the public service is the largest employer of people in PNG with over 94 thousand employees on the pay role. An analysis of this data has revealed that 38% of the staff are women. Of all staff, women make up only 22% of Executive management roles and only 7% of Department of Agency Head positions. This demonstrates a lack of representation in leadership and decision making roles for women equivalent to the levels reflected in the Government of Papua New Guinea where only 3 women hold places in the 111 strong Parliament.

## **Methods**

The Government of Papua New Guinea has strong pronouncements in the country's constitution for gender equality as well as commitments in its medium and long term development goals as well as being signatories to international human rights conventions such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). As GOPNG embraces this international and evidence based approach to acknowledging the human rights of others the Department of Personnel Management reviewed the policies governing the behaviour government employees.

### **General Order Review**

In 2011, the Department of Personnel Management assisted by the Australian Aid's Coffey International EPSP Program, conducted a review of the Public Service General Orders with a view to include addressing issues of Gender Inequality, violence against women and social inclusion issues such as Disability and HIV/AIDS.

The review revealed a lack of policy, planning, systems and processes that addressed the rights of women to gain access to leadership and decision making roles, economic empowerment and freedom from gender based violence.

### **Community of Practice.**

In 2011 a "Gender" Community of Practice was established with representatives across centrally based government departments and representatives from the NGO sector. The group of volunteers from the respective agencies met regularly to discuss strategies for addressing gender inequality and social inclusion issues in the public sector. Their focus was on gender sensitisation including awareness and education, sharing approaches and building a cohort of representatives who were wanting change in their agencies.

### **Kirapim Wok GESI campaign**

In November, 2012, a campaign was launched leading into the development of the first public service policy. The Kirapim Wok GESI campaign was launched pronouncing a "A New Awakening" for Gender Equity and Social Inclusion in the public service.

### **Policy Development**

At the end of 2012 a number of consultations were conducted with government departments and the NGO sector develop the PNG Public Service first Gender Equity and Social Inclusion Policy. The design of this policy identified key focus areas aligned with the Existing National Women and Gender Equality Policy. The GESI policy was approved by the National Executive Council and launched at a ceremony in January 2013 by the public service minister on behalf of the Prime Minister. Whilst the drafting of the policy and consultations were very concentrated over a period of 6 weeks the implementation has been a protracted task over the past 30 months.

The features of the policy included an Implementation plan and activities to support implementation and the launch included a commitment by the Prime Minister and the Public Service minister to increasing the numbers of women in the public service by 15% and women into Leadership and

decision making roles by 30%. This is and remains a very important underpinning promise and principle that guides the work of DPM.

Historically policy implementation has been particularly problematic in government with policies often left gathering dust and action not being taken towards actual implementation.

## **Implementation**

The Implementation of the GESI policy has squarely focussed on Mainstreaming the policy through education training and developing networks within the agencies. From the launch activities revolved around the implementation of the GESI policy and utilising government processes to achieve mainstreaming throughout the everyday business of government.

## **Inputs**

### ***Focal Points***

The establishment of a GESI focal point networks and supporting committees across 13 centrally based agencies and 2 Provincial Administration's in Gulf and West New Britain. In addition to this, the Secretary of DPM has released a direction in the form of an Executive Instruction to all Government Agencies and Departments to appoint funded focal point positions in agency structures. These employees are appointed at executive management level and have line accountability to the department head and manage and coordinate the GESI implementation strategies within their agency .

### ***Mainstreaming GESI in Agencies***

Agency responses have been significant with work being done to re invigorate discipline committees, processes for reporting Sexual Harassment and GBV, referral networks have been provided to victims of GBV and the Government policy such as Housing including a zero tolerance to Domestic Violence has been re written. Recruitment policy and processes have been modified and the Public Service Management Act has been drafted to include more commitment to GESI. Accountability for GESI in employment contracts, recruitment and performance management are all gathering traction throughout the public service.

Internal policy development and ongoing transformative gender training for staff has been undertaken together with committees.

GESI is now being included in the corporate planning process including in annual action plans and reporting frameworks.

Agencies are now working with Monitoring and Evaluation frameworks during their own implementation to establish best practice and how to best rationalise their resources when it comes to GESI implementation.

Agencies have committed to budgets and awareness raising during the international 20 days of human rights activism and have committed to more effective communication and marketing of the policy.

The latest agencies to embrace implementation of the GESI policy are the Institute for Public Administration (IPA) and the Madang Provincial Administration. There are two GESI leadership conferences being held in June to further support mainstreaming. These are the Gender Equity and Human Rights Mainstreaming for Executive Managers and Policy Makers at the IPA and the Gender Equity and Social Inclusion Dialogue for Provincial and District Administrators at the Lae International Hotel on the 25th of June, 2015.

### ***Provincial Pilot Program***

From October 2013 to October, 2014, DPM in partnership with the DPLGA and two Australian Government Aid sponsored programs EPSP and PLGP conducted an intensive Implementation into two Provinces in Gulf and West New Britain. This pilot achieved a number of outputs including the setting up of committees, a GESI Help Desk, changes in provincial processes, education, mentoring capacity needs analysis and commitment from the local Government and political bureaucracy.

### ***GESI Help Desks***

The establishment of GESI help desks within 3 central (Port Moresby based ) agencies and 3 Provincial desks in West New Britain, Gulf and Madang.

- These desks are set up as referral and support for women experiencing domestic violence and workplace sexual harassment or discrimination.
- The desks link in with focal points and women's networks to provide services and support.

The desk provides a realistic and accountable avenue to have a complaint acted upon and holds management to account. New systems for reporting have also been developed to compliment the work of the help desks and provide tangible pathways to holding perpetrators to account and providing support to victims.

### ***Male Advocacy***

The staging and maintenance of a Male advocacy network supporting women's human rights and the elimination of violence against women was launched in August of 2013. The Male advocacy Network (M.A.N. )features the following.

- The M.A.N. network boasts over 26 members across government departments, have undergone extensive and approved training facilitated through the Fiji Women's Crises Centre (FWCC.) who are internationally renowned human rights based trainers. The men have undergone progressive and intensive week long sessions with FWCC trainers.
- The group meets regularly and respond to their workplan and also evaluate their own publically and proactively challenging of misinformed and unhelpful public statements through the media and within their agencies.
- Some of the group have developed further training for men in their own agencies.

- Men in the program have changed their own personal behaviours and attitudes as well as developing a social conscience and staging activities regarding women's human rights.
- The men have spear headed a number of campaigns including a reclaim the night march and fund raising for women's services BBQ during the days of international activism for human rights at the end of 2014.
- MAN members are currently now working across private and public sector partnerships. Some of the members of the group coordinated and delivered awareness sessions over an entire weekend on a "Oil Search" mining site in late 2014. Others have delivered training sessions for other donor agencies and also have partnered with PNG AFL and the NRL in Australia.

### ***Women In Leadership***

The Establishment of a women in leadership group (WIL) comprises of influential current and former senior and respected women public servants.

- Meeting regularly in learning workshops
- Planning mentoring and coaching responses to the issue of women's leadership
- The creation of further opportunities and access to resources by women in the public service.
- Planning political advocacy for the elevation of the status and resources available for women.

### ***Gender Sensitisation Package***

The development and delivery of a standard gender sensitisation and policy implementation learning and development package for agency staff at multiple levels of government.

- This training features highlighting and recognising gender inequality
- The enabling factors of Gender based violence and Patriarchal constructs and social norms that support or enable violence against women.
- How to mainstream activities into Government policies and processes in departments.
- Establishing action plans to address gender risk and needs in departments.

### ***Tool Kit***

The development of the GESI Toolkit which is a step by step guide to gender mainstreaming using dot points, process maps, tick box check lists and templates has been available to all agencies and focal points to assist in developing concepts of mainstreaming and activities in the agencies.

## ***Monitoring and Evaluation***

A monitoring and evaluation framework and accompanying data collection in the form of surveys, questionnaires and formal and informal interviews provided the team with rich stories and context providing validation of the policy and direction for the development of further inputs and activities.

## **Findings**

The conclusions reached during the implementation of the policy support or validate the development and implementation of the GESI policy. Many of the activities developed during the policy's implementation were forecasted in the policy's own implementation plan but are validated by the feedback collected and observations made by the implementation team.

Throughout the implementation of the National Public Service Gender Equity and Social Inclusion policy, many women spoke of their own experience of gender inequality including violence. Women reported being sexually and physically harassed and discriminated against or emotionally abused by peers and supervisors. There were some instances reported where women were blackmailed into having sex with their superiors in order to progress their career path or keep their current job.

DPM staff heard from women whose experience of domestic violence at home was common with many examples of this transcending into the workplace. One workplace recorded 8 instances in one year where threatening and aggressive perpetrators forced their way into the workplace to terrorise their partner and other staff members.

Abuses of power in the workplace were common with women often overlooked for promotion, training opportunities or even consideration for roles beyond rudimentary office support staff positions. Women reported an inability to progress to positions of a higher pay grade being unsupported by training or coaching and mentoring. One woman working in Gulf described her life in the public service saying, "We are like wall flowers at work, of no consequence and paid no attention and treated like that by the males at work." Another woman at the same workshop said, "I have worked in the Provincial Administration for 20 years and never been given one opportunity for training and development. This (the women's development workshop) is the first thing I have heard for women."

The importance of women in leadership in decision making and leadership cannot be overstated. Women in positions of power and authority should make better decisions on behalf of women and the subsequent development of gender responsive and equitable policy will enable women better access to resources, education, safety, freedom, health and justice outcomes.

To address the shortage of women in leadership and decision making and to establish a fairer and more diverse representation of people in leadership it is critical to develop policies that encourage more equality and a workplace that encourages women to participate and graduate to leadership roles.



## Conclusions

Over the past 30 months the development and Implementation of the PNG Government's first Gender Equity and Social Inclusion policy for the Public Service has been a focussed and intensive exercise. Whilst the mainstreaming of the policy into government systems and processes has involved significant resources, for progress to continue there needs to be ongoing budgetary support from the Government. The conclusions and recommendations were many however the following are the most important with regard to applicability to this GESI policy and implementation to come in the future.

1. Bringing people along requires gender transformative training as a first priority and then the formation of supporting committees staffed by people with some decision making authority and commitment. The allocation of roles and responsibilities should be carefully considered given that not always the most senior person is the most educated or motivated to bring about change.

DPM, Issuing institutional authority instruments such as General Orders, GESI Policy and Executive Instructions were imperative with Implementation however without the accompanying human resources committed to regular accountability for implementation, gains would have been limited. Having said this, the best advocate for implementation was the motivated executive manager.

2. High level agency sponsorship and leadership for effective implementation was key and therefore incentivising GESI for leaders should be a strong priority. Our own experience with Secretary John Kali in DPM was extraordinary. He never missed an opportunity to lead from the front, add his authority to an instruction or planting seeds of innovation for the team to grow. As a spokesperson and an ambassador he was open to learning and honest about his own progression of knowledge over time. Mr Steven Raphael who was the first Provincial Administrator from West New Britain implementing the the GESI policy gave a newspaper interview and labelled himself as WNBs GESI champion. He was quoted in the Post Courier daily newspaper (31<sup>st</sup> October, 2013, p.4) saying , "Traditional Customs should be kept out the public service and women must not be made to look like slaves." Agency or department heads making pronouncements and commitments carry enormous weight with the rank and file of the public service who recognised this leadership as directional, motivating and focussed on changing the mindset of staff in the province. People in the public service who see their career progressing are interested in what their supervisor is interested in but fascinated with what their department head is interested in. PNG organisation and agency heads can set the course for change by leading, speaking and acting on implementation.

3. Developing a number of coalitions from a diverse group of contributors to plan and develop activities and to embed into organisation's corporate planning cycle, reporting and budgets (mainstreaming) created a discourse with public service employees. This in turn flowed to the community. Layers of different cohort groups representing a wide range of participants were assessed as being as most effective. On the pathways to change hearing voices from many areas adds to the perception of movement and change occurring. Whilst some groups were strong some others had limited capacity and capability to move with the implementation so accordingly, with some limited resources of our own, those who showed commitment benefited the most from our own attention.

4. Whilst awareness raising is a good starting point to gather people together, the real gains for lasting behaviour change is achieved through mainstreaming gender equity initiatives into government processes. Awareness raising had some history in attempting change in PNG particularly with Gender Issues, with some limited success. Events such as marches, information sessions, and launches still provide a rallying point for participants as well as a tool for marketing and broader communication to the community on Government initiatives but these are only the beginning of the journey and regular inputs involving brainstorming, coaching and mentoring were most valuable in institutionalising changes to support GESI.

5. The recognition of men's agency was important. Not just as a perpetrator group but also as the "gate keepers" having access to power for women's wellbeing, economic independence, pathways to leadership roles and freedom from GBV. Male advocacy and such initiatives require some careful management having regard to the tendency these type of programs to run off the rails. It is recommended that Male advocacy remain focussed on women's human rights and women's experiences of inequality and violence. "Checking In " with women's services working for women's human rights and having strong policy frameworks with similar standpoints should ensure men remain focussed on their own behaviour change and broader systems that support, excuse or encourage men's violence against women. This "checking in" is also recommended as best practice by a number of highly regarded international male advocacy champions. (Katz 2006; Funk 2006)

6. Safety and security of women is important for women to participate and begin to make up a critical mass and to move into more leadership roles. This means strong policy, consequence for perpetrators of Gender Based Violence and open and responsive complaint pathways.

7. A greater focus is also needed to give women encouragement, assurance and permission to progress to leadership. The absence of such support sees women defaulting to a place safety away from the limelight, complying with the status quo and without opportunity or responsibility for leadership. In some instances women were even predisposed to dragging other women down who would voice any expression of ambition to progress.

The framing of gender inequality as both the cause and consequence of gender violence experienced by women in PNG is an enormous education challenge for all PNG people to embrace. The notion challenges many religious, cultural and social constructions and interpretations around what it is to be a man or what it is to be a woman. There is however, movement and changes happening as the DPM and the Government now moves to consolidate on the gains of their first 30 months of GESI implementation and building a future for equitable outcomes for all people.

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