

# Gender-Smart Safety Resources

Papua New Guinea Economic Empowerment

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Project Name: Strengthening Business Coalitions for Women and Economic Empowerment Partnership with the private sector

Project Partner: International Finance Corporation

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Employees of the Hidden Valley gold mining operation in Morobe, Papua New Guinea. Photo: PNG Business Coalition for Women.

The Papua New Guinea Business Coalition for Women, with support from the International Finance Corporation, works with members to develop and adopt policies and practices that encourage the participation and leadership of women in the workplace. Global evidence indicates that doing this will improve the bottom line for individual companies. It also lays the foundation for women's participation and leadership more generally. The work of the Coalition addresses four key areas: reducing violence against women and improving protection, enhancing leadership capabilities of women, developing 'gender smart' human resource policies and practices and improving the numbers of women owned businesses in supply chains.

The Coalition has 65 member companies representing almost 63,000 employees. With funding from Pacific Women, the International Finance Corporation (IFC) works with the Coalition to assist member companies to develop a range of model policies, training, tools and resources to improve women's leadership and career paths within the private sector.

Over the past year, the Coalition has developed Gender Smart Safety Resources for its members. The impetus to improve workplace safety for women in Papua New Guinea was the realisation that some women were being overlooked for career development opportunities because their employers believed they could not guarantee women's safety on some worksites.

Amy Luinstra is the Gender Program Manager, East Asia Pacific for the IFC. She explains that:

**'the basic premise of a gender smart approach to workplace safety is that men and women experience workplace safety differently. Our Gender Smart Safety consultant and trainer ... teaches businesses how to identify the specific hazards that put women at risk at work and how to mitigate those risks.'**

A new audit system has been developed to assess women's safety and to promote continuous improvement on work sites. The audit tools investigate women's physical, emotional and occupational safety at work. Training includes learning how to conduct a women's safety audit. The data from the audits can then be used to make targeted changes to create a safer workplace environment.

Recognising the value in such an approach, 20 members helped develop the gender smart safety resources. Pilot materials were then trialled by Oil Search, New Britain Palm Oil Ltd and St Barbara's Simberi Gold Mine.

**'The Gender Smart Safety program is already positively impacting the safety of everyone on site',**

reports Mr Bob Vassie, Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director of St Barbara. Following the review of the pilot, a model policy for women's safety in Papua New Guinea workplaces is being developed and audit tools and training are being readied for scale up and use by other Coalition members.

*\*This Story of Change was originally published in the [Pacific Women Annual Progress Report 2016 – 2017](#). All values are consistent with that reporting period. For the most up-to-date value of activities, visit our [interactive map](#).*