

# Empowering women starts within the family

Papua New Guinea Economic Empowerment

June 29, 2018

Project Name: Family Teams, Do No Harm and Coffee Industry Support Project (CISP)

Project Partner: University of Canberra ACIAR (Family Teams), ANU SSGM (Do No Harm) and CARE (CISP)

Total Funding: \$3,000,00 (Family Teams) \$533,150 (Do No Harm) \$4,507,131 (CISP)

Funding timeframe: 2015-2018 (Family Teams) 2013-2016 (Do No Harm) 2013-2019 (CISP)

Research on the interconnectedness of women's economic empowerment and their decision making and safety in the family is informing programming to improve women's livelihoods.

The Do No Harm research by the State, Society and Governance in Melanesia program at the Australian National University is investigating how to empower women economically without compromising their safety. Preliminary findings from Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands indicate that increasing women's income does not necessarily lead to greater bargaining power within the household.

When Pacific women make more money, this does not necessarily translate into economic empowerment. Economic empowerment includes the ability to make decisions over how that income is accumulated and spent. There is a need to address the social norms between women and men that constrain women's decision making ability so that income can be transformed into greater benefits for women and their families. The research shows that often when women make more income through their own efforts, they do not experience benefits, but rather, this work adds to their existing burdens.

A number of Pacific Women funded projects in Papua New Guinea, including the Family Teams project led by the University of Canberra and the CARE-led Coffee Industry Support Project (CISP), work with husbands and wives together to change how they relate to each other, allowing women to have more control over decisions that affect their lives. This approach is showing

that norms can be changed over a short period of time and that these changes are improving livelihoods and income for the entire family.

Ms Rose Koiya is a farmer and village leader who has participated in the Family Teams project.

‘In the past’, Ms Rose Koiya explains, ‘my husband and I never talked about the budget and he always look[ed] down on me because I am not educated and I am just a simple village woman. He always told me to work hard in the garden so I can earn money and feed the family. He would use his wages to buy what he wanted’.



Ms Rose Koiya is one of several village community educators involved in the Family Teams Project. As part of her work, she works with six communities with around 500 farmers. Photo credit: Barbara Pamphilon, University of Canberra.

Due to the training, Ms Koiya proposed to her husband that they work together.

‘My husband is now attending church with me and we are budgeting our money together’, she says. ‘The training truly changed my family to be united and happy.’

Other positive results reported by participants in the Family Teams project include greater family harmony, increased crop production and sales and increased incomes.

\*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](#).