

Are attitudes and behaviours towards violence against women changing in Papua New Guinea?

Papua New Guinea

SHARE

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An endline family wellbeing project survey from FHI 360 provides data.

Since 2012, FHI 360 has implemented the *Komuniti Lukautim Ol Meri* (KLOM) project to address violence against women and girls. A survey from the end of phase 2 of this *Pacific Women*-funded project provides useful data on the experiences of violence and access to services for women and girls living in Western Highlands and West Sepik Provinces.

KLOM aims to reduce the level of violence against women and girls and support survivors of violence through three pillars: prevention, response and empowerment. The project approach is grounded in a socio-ecological model, which stipulates that taking decisive actions at the individual, relationship, community, institutional and societal levels leads to ending violence against women and leads to positive changes in behaviour and practices.

The survey, conducted in 2018, assessed changes in gender norms from the project's baseline data from 2014. The questions assessed the effectiveness of KLOM in reducing the incidence of psychological, sexual and physical violence against women in the last year. It also measured the prevalence of gender-based violence as ever experienced.



Pictured: The research team at Vanimo. Photo credit: FHI 360.

“The research highlights the changes in perception and practice due to consistent and systematic community-based interventions. It also identifies persistent negative gender perceptions which are intertwined with culture. The findings will contribute to the evidence based that is essential to tailor interventions of highest impact and effectiveness”, said Daniel Tesfaye FHI 360 country director.

The researchers interviewed 658 people (377 women and 249 men) across the two provinces. The survey showed that interviewees’ agreement with harmful gender norms such as duty of having sex when men demands, permission to get medical care, marry a man if bride price is paid primarily dropped, but agreement with five justifications for wife beating remained high, especially among women.

The justifications for wife beating – neglecting children, going out without telling the husband, arguing with the husband, refusing sex or because of payment of a bride price – are traditional norms regarding what is and is not expected from a ‘good’ wife.

Intimate partner violence remains high in the KLOM project areas -psychological violence is common, forced sex within marriage is high and women reported being physical assaulted during pregnancy. KLOM project will focus interventions on intimate partner violence. The survey found that women who had their own or a joint bank account with their husband or partner were six times less likely to experience intimate partner violence.

Women with disabilities experience multiple forms of discrimination and have fewer options as such were more likely to agree that a woman should tolerate being beaten to keep her family together and more likely to experience sexual violence within marriage.

KLOM works to ensure that women and men know where to go to receive services in the case of family sexual violence. The majority of men and women interviewed knew where to seek help. Comparatively large percentages of female physical violence survivors reported having sought help, with the first point of contact primarily being the police. The overwhelming majority of men reported having helped women and child violence survivors in the past and were willing to do so in the future

The survey includes recommendations for phase 3 of the project. This phase is being funded by *Pacific Women* from 2018–2021. The full survey report can be read here: <https://www.fhi360.org/resource/survey-family-wellbeing-western-highlands-and-west-sepik-provinces>