

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Ending violence against women and building women's economic empowerment



THE CHALLENGE

Papua New Guinea (PNG) is a fragile state. Its social and geographical complexity means its people face many development challenges.

Women in Papua New Guinea lag behind men on all development indicators, including education, economic opportunity, political empowerment and health.

Chronic gender-based violence is a daily reality. Across the country, 68 per cent of women are reported to have experienced physical or sexual violence. Health experts warn that critical gaps in the treatment of survivors are placing thousands of women at serious physical and psychological risk.

Violence, the payment of bride prices, polygamous marriage, and accusations of practicing sorcery severely damage the status of women in PNG.

Rates of HIV and AIDS infections are high across the country; girls and women are particularly vulnerable to infection. PNG's maternal mortality rate is one of the worst in the world, with 250 women dying for every

100,000 live births. Women remain seriously under-represented in all areas of government. And PNG is unlikely to achieve any of the targets in the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

OXFAM'S PARTNERS

Oxfam works through a wide network of local partners to achieve justice for women in PNG. Our work to end violence against women comprises a network of 12 local partner organisations across nine Provinces.

OXFAM'S ROLE

Women's rights are at the heart of what we do. Of the more than a billion people living in poverty in our world, the great majority are women. Working for gender equality is not only an important part of Oxfam's work, it is vital to eliminating global poverty and injustice.

We work with local groups and communities in PNG to transform attitudes and behaviours towards women, as well the policies and government programmes that

have an impact on the status of women.

We help women develop economic opportunities so they can have more control over their own lives. Providing access safe water and sanitation dramatically reduces the daily workload for women and children and improves health.



ENDING GENDER VIOLENCE

Oxfam works with courageous women, men and community organisations to stop violence against women and girls and help them rebuild their lives and their independence.

We are working with partners to provide protection, counselling and support for women and children who've endured abuse. We help women get the medical and legal support they need and help them rebuild their confidence and independence so they can restart their lives.

We are also challenging the low status of women and working with communities to protect and promote everyone's basic rights.



Women rights are at the very heart of Oxfam's work. Achieving gender justice is vital to eliminating global poverty and injustice.



ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE

Oxfam and our partners help women affected by violence to rebuild their dignity and their confidence, and we help them develop valuable skills so they can earn an independent income. Being able to support themselves and their families financially is essential for women to be able to walk away from a violent relationship.

Oxfam's partner in Jiwaka Province is Voice for Change. Together, we help women become more independent by training them to grow organic food. This enables them to feed their families, as well as producing a surplus of food to sell at local markets, which brings in much-needed income. When women have a stable livelihood, they are empowered to make decisions for themselves.



WATER AND SANITATION

Barely 20 per cent of the rural population in PNG has access to clean, safe water and only 15 per cent use a toilet. Women and children often have to walk long distances to collect water. This leaves them

vulnerable to sexual assault, particularly in areas where tribal fighting is common.

Oxfam works with communities to install a range of water supplies and toilets. Good latrines ensure privacy and dignity, particularly for women. With water tanks and tapstands nearby, women spend much less time fetching water, leaving them more time to spend on productive work.

IMPACT

- On average, Oxfam rescues three women a week who are facing extreme violence.
- Our network is fast becoming the major provider of services to eliminate violence against women in PNG.
- More women are able to financially support themselves and their children and feel empowered to move on from violent relationships.
- More people have access to safe water and sanitation, meaning less work for women and children.
- More women and men are speaking out against violence and challenging discrimination against women and girls.

IN NUMBERS

68% of women have experienced physical or sexual violence

77% of rural people don't have access to safe water

156 PNG's ranking out of 186 countries on the UNDP's Gender Index

2.7% proportion of seats held by women in National Parliament

HOW CAN I HELP?

\$48

Can provide materials to build one latrine in PNG's Highlands

\$80

Can provide support for women to earn an independent income

\$100

Can provide safe shelter for women and children



Discover more at oxfam.org.nz/png

PHOTOS: Mai Kelly works with women affected by violence. She helps teach them how to grow food with organic techniques so they can feed themselves and their families, and have a surplus to sell at local market and make a much needed income. *Rodney Dekker / Oxfam*

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