PNGAus Partnership

Save the Children

Learning from men in Papua New Guinea about power and relationships (at home and in the community)

Background to the Research

Violence against women and children is a global public health and human rights issue that has longstanding and devastating consequences for the lives of millions of women, young women, girls, and boys. Current estimates indicate that 1 billion children experience some form of violence every year – physical, sexual, emotional – and almost 1 in 3 women have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime.

In Papua New Guinea (PNG), according to the latest *DHS data (2016-2018)*, 58% women reported experiencing **sexual violence, physical violence or both** by a partner during their lifetime and 48% in the previous 12 months. Just under one-third (29%) reported sexual violence by a partner/husband. A contemporaneous study by the United Nations: *Why Do Some Men Use Violence Against Women and How Can We Prevent It? (2013)* conducted in Bougainville revealed high rates of perpetration by men, with 80% reporting having committed physical violence, sexual violence or both against an intimate partner and 41% reporting having raped a non-partner.

There is also growing global interest in examining the **intersections between Violence against Children (VAC) and Violence against Women and Girls (VAW/G)** and how policy makers and practitioners can support more synergy between the sectors that work to prevent and respond to such violence.

In 2021, Papua New Guinea became a *Pathfinding country of the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children*. This means the country has committed to taking action and using the *INSPIRE Seven strategies for ending violence against children* to (a) understand the drivers of violence and (b) build integrated responses that improve the lives of children and young people. The commitment includes creating a national plan to end such violence. This adds impetus to Papua New Guinea's efforts to address the high levels of violence against girls, boys and young women.

With the above in mind, Save the Children commissioned this formative research study to learn from men aged 18 years and older about power and relationships in the home and in the community and to examine both the extent to which men's experiences, attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge internalise violence and how gendered social norms can impede social change in some cases or facilitate gender equality in others.

Methodology

The research study aimed to develop a deeper understanding of both the positive masculinities that men aspire to in their parenting and intimate relationships, and the drivers and cultural, social and gender norms that embed violence as a norm and perpetuate harmful behaviours and beliefs around power, gender, and patriarchy.

In brief, therefore, the study set out to learn from men in Papua New Guinea:

- How do men understand the concepts of manhood and masculinity?
- How do men learn violence?
- How do men understand and practice harmful behaviours against women and children?

The research study was framed using a variant of the well-known **socio-ecological model**, enabling exploration of *patterns and drivers of violence against women and children in four domains:*

- **Individual**, e.g.: factual beliefs, aspirations, skills, attitudes, self-efficacy.
- **Social**, e.g.: social networks and support, availability of models, positive deviants.
- **Material**, e.g.: availability of services, transport / infrastructure, available assets (property, land, jobs, livestock).
- **Institutional**, e.g.: laws, governance structures, economic policy, criminal justice systems.

Overview of Data Collection Tools

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION TOOLS

1. Young men *(18-25)*

2. Fathers *(26-49)*

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS / KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

3. Positive outliers
Young men *(18-25)*
Fathers *(26-49)*

4. Negative outliers
Young men *(18-25)*
Fathers *(26-49)*

5. Service providers

Conclusions and Recommendations

Main Findings

- Violence against women and violence against children in Papua New Guinea is sustained by the **transmission and internalisation of cultural norms of patriarchy** (men as heads of households, male dominance) and the subordination of women and children in family matters

- Men tended to normalise high levels of violence in relation to intimate partners, especially in urban areas

- Injunctive norms played a slightly bigger role in child corporal punishment

- Men who shared stories in which they found themselves particularly vulnerable to violence and extreme deprivation were often found to be using violence towards women and girls

- The **inter-generational dimensions** of violence were clear, in both the positive and negative aspects

- **Positive role models** (non-violent fathers, religious figures) have a huge impact, providing men with support and inspiration in their efforts to resist social pressures to engage in violence

- **Religion**, too, plays an important part in transforming violent behaviours – although it was also used to reinforce inequitable gender stereotypes

Recommendations

- Prevention interventions need to be informed by **research on favourable and detrimental social norms** related to men's and women's role in society and their attitudes and behaviours

- Messages, advocacy, and training should draw on **men's positive aspirations**

- Culture, tradition and religion should be used to harness social change. Progressive or women/child rights friendly religious leaders and traditional authority figures should be mobilised to convey messages about non-violence and engage with men

- Efforts should be made to reverse harmful social norms around masculinity and male violence, including through emphasising the negative impact on men's health and relationships of gender stereotypes and consequence of violence on women's and children's health and the benefits of positive parenting and men's involvement in parenting

- Positive male role models should be identified as influencers and spokespersons to promote social norms change

- Implement programs, strategy and advocacy efforts aimed at women's economic empowerment, ensuring that they are carefully planned to avoid detrimental consequences for women

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