

Powerful voices



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PROJECT BACKGROUND

Powerful Voices is an FHI 360 project helping women use digital photography to document their lives and speak out on the issues of concern to women in their villages and settlements. As part of the Komuniti Lukautim Ol Meri (KLOM) project, FHI 360 provided cameras and training for women from Sanduan and Western Highlands provinces in collaboration with SANCOREDF and the Western Highlands Rural Women Empowerment Project.

Powerful Voices was supported by the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, under the Strongim Pipol Strongim Nesen program, to help end violence against women and girls in Papua New Guinea.

From October 2012 to May 2014, forty-nine women took part in Powerful Voices, coming from Mushu, Krisa, Laitra, Imbinis and Ward Six (Waraston) in Sandaun Province; and Kotna, Pultimb, Kinzibi, Holy Trinity and Warakum in Western Highlands. As most of the women had never before used a digital camera, FHI 360 staff showed them how to turn the devices on and off, change the focus, take a picture and charge the battery. While many of the women were initially nervous, after some practice they became confident photographers and advocates for the project among their friends and neighbours.

The stories these women share are at once encouraging and heartbreaking—their photographs are evidence of the challenges women identified in their own lives and in their communities, but also of their resilience.

Of the many challenges women in Papua New Guinea face, access seems to be the greatest hindrance at the community level, whether it be a lack of access to health, safe drinking water, electricity, markets or education for their children. While these resources do exist, access is often complicated by myriad factors including poor infrastructure, unreliable and expensive transportation, and safety concerns.

“I feel special in the community and have the pride to take photographs. Most people praised me in taking photos while others asked me questions on what will we do about the photos. Even others were ashamed for me to take their photographs.”

– Powerful Voices participant

“Powerful Voices Project has made men to realise the importance of [the KLOM project] and the male folks have stopped beating their wives, girls terminated from school returned to school and interestingly the whole community have worked together and manually fixed the road by filling in potholes with stones and logs.”

– Powerful Voices participant

On a more intimate level, women in the Powerful Voices project also documented and talked about the dramatic impact of violence, the challenges they face performing a woman’s role and meeting community and family expectations, and the lack of support and resources to raise their children.

These women traditionally viewed their roles as constrained within the household – most had never before had the opportunity or space to talk openly about the challenges they face. Through Powerful Voices they were empowered to speak out, and were able to see that their private struggles are shared by other women as well. Women also shared the good

things in their lives, such as spending Sundays at church and free from the demands placed upon them as mothers, wives and sisters. Women shared candidly about men who defy social norms to help their wives and mothers cook food and take care of the children, and how they secretly wish their husbands and other men would do the same.

As empowering as it is for women to come together and share their common problems and joys, the women of Powerful Voices went a step further, and shared their stories. Almost 150 people attended photo exhibitions in Mt Hagen and Vanimo, including community leaders, government officials and

representatives from stakeholders such as PNG Power, the Red Cross and the US and Australian navies. The exhibition gave these women the opportunity and space to raise their powerful voices, and women already report changes in their communities as a result. These have included commitments by stakeholders to provide electricity in underserved settlements and in one village to build a bridge so community members can safely access health and education services when the river is high.

This book is an extension of these women’s voices and of the shared stories and experiences of women across Papua New Guinea. It is

hoped that their photographs and stories will serve as a reminder of their strength, and as a call to action for greater attention and support to the needs and challenges they continue to face.

SAFE CLEAN WATER

Introduction

4.2 million people in Papua New Guinea (three-fifths of the total population) don't have access to safe water.

More than 5.6 million people (over half the population) don't have access to adequate sanitation.

More than 900 children in Papua New Guinea die every year from diarrhoea caused by unsafe water and poor sanitation.

Source

WaterAID website: <http://www.wateraid.org/where-we-work/page/papua-new-guinea>. Retrieved 29 August 2013



Thecla Daroi, Laitre Village

We for many years have been using the river for our drinking, cooking and washing. Drinking and using of dirty water has resulted in water borne diseases such a diarrhoea, itchiness, grille, cough and skin diseases. Women and girls are burdened to carry buckets of water or search for clean water during heavy rain.

**Josephine Yeki,
Imbinis Village**

This is Buoib River which serves the Imbinis community as washing, drinking and toilet out. Our children have experienced sickness such as diarrhea, cough, and skin diseases. We need safe water!



**Monpi William,
Kotna**

Clean safe drinking water is a problem for people living between Kotna station and the mountain, where the current water supply for Kotna station comes from. This woman and her children are fetching this dirty water for cooking and drinking.

***Josephine Yeki,
Imbinis Village***

Our community has no clean water and this is a big problem as it causes women and children to argue over water, husbands beating their wives because their clothes are dirty and our community has been experiencing increase waterborne diseases such as typhoid.



***Glenda Willie,
Warakum KC***

We can spend a day at the creek washing clothes than carrying water up the mountain. Distance to the creek and isolation of the creek from our houses makes it unsafe for us women and girls. We are scared of being attacked or even getting raped by drunken men along the road or at the creek.





***Alice Robert,
Holy Trinity***

Holy Trinity is the place where the Mt Hagen city water supply is coming from but still water supply is not provided to the landowners. People depend on water coming from the ground.

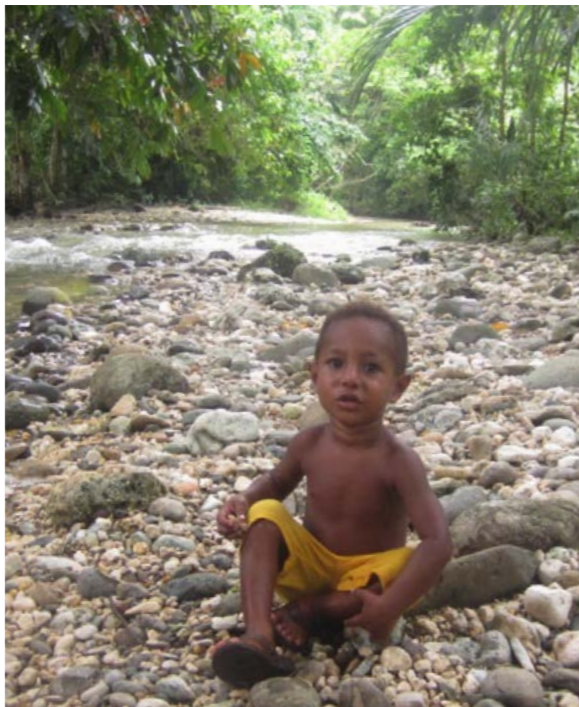


***Lina Kons,
Pultimb***

Water is a big problem in our community and for us women it is a big burden to carry as we are responsible for finding clean and safe water for our family to drink, cook and wash.

***Helen Noho,
Mushu Village***

Following our ancestors we are using this river to cook, drink, bath, and do our laundry. But most of our (women) time is spent carrying 50 litres of water which takes up a day. This heavy load makes us have chronic backache, joint aches and headaches.



***Philomena Lawa,
Krisa Village***

In Krisa village we have a lot of worries and problems, we find it hard to look for food and clean water. It is hard to make gardens, plant cocoa and trees because landslides destroy all the village surrounding. We live in the mountains and it rains for 1-2 weeks straight creating landslides which destroy food gardens, cocoa and clean water for drinking, bathing and washing.





***Rebecca Kiwai,
Waraston Community***

I am a mother living in Palmai settlement at ward 6 Vanimo Urban LLG. We do not have safe drinking water, as photo can show we use well water which is dirty and oily. Because we are drinking unsafe water we become sick.

***Susan Manangop,
Warastone Community***

We use the river for different purposes, like washing our clothes, bathing, fishing and dispose our human waste (pekpek). Because of this unhealthy habits our children are badly affected with diseases such as diarrhea, malaria, severe headache and skin diseases.



“ I am glad to be part of this
powerful voices project. ”

GENDER ROLE

Introduction

Traditional gender relations in many cultures in Papua New Guinea are characterised by inequality and the subordination of women, with men benefiting from women's production.

Women bear the heavy daily burden of child care, food production and other household chores.

Men support women: (While the top five self-employed pursuits are common to both men and women (agriculture and hunting, retail trade, water transport, land transport and wholesale trade), men are more than three times as likely as women to report being self-employed).

Source

Papua New Guinea country gender assessment 2011-2012



Senny Thomas, Pultimb

Taking care of pigs can be a very tiring work, especially when our community does not have water and so we cannot build houses to keep pigs inside. Instead we, women have to take the pig out every day and bring it back home every afternoon so that the pigs are well taken care of.

***Nelly Andrew,
Kinzibi***

Single mothers do work for both men and women like this women is digging drain for her garden that's men's work. But it's not just single mothers, all women work hard. It is our work if we complain who will hear us so it stays with us and we just work.



***Carolyn Jack,
Kinzibi***

Pigs control our lives but it is also good as it takes care of us when we need money for bride price, compensation or school fees so we must take care of it.

***Patchula Keta,
Holy Trinity***

Women carrying heavy loads and working on the road experience backaches, muscles aching and this makes women become sick. Even though there is a new bridge being built the cars don't want to drive this road so we women walk with our heavy loads.





***Cathy Nick,
Mushu Village***

For the past six year we women have watch as our men went to work with logging companies, while we women remain in the village performing both men and women roles such as making gardens, fishing and fixing leaky roofs. Sadly when pay day comes men spend money on beer and don't give us money to buy clothes and needs of the family.



***Doris Wamua,
Mushu Village***

This man is very unique because he is very helpful to his wife especially taking care of their children, bringing food home for his family and does not beat his wife. We women wish that most of our men should be like him – a man who is a helping hand to his wife.



***Cathy Napri,
Krisa Villag***

My husband and I adopted this young man and he is the only person who helps us collect water, wash dishes, make garden and helps me to care for his disable father. Water is our big problem in our village we do not have rivers or streams nearby as we live up in the mountains.

ACCESS TO SERVICES

Introduction

Poorly maintained roads, unreliable and expensive land and water transport, and an unstable law and order situation make it difficult for rural populations (and particularly women) to access high-quality services such as healthcare, police, and water and sanitation services.

While roughly 45 percent of Papua New Guinea's population enjoys access to electricity, coverage is lower in rural areas – less than 25 per cent of rural schools have electricity.

Source

Papua New Guinea country gender assessment 2011-2012

World Bank Asia sustainable and alternative energy program:
<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/EASTASIAPACIFICEXT/EXTEAPASTAE/0,,content-MDK:21042058~menuPK:2900575~pagePK:64168445~piPK:64168309~theSitePK:2822888,00.html>
Retrieved on 29 August 2013



Nancy Kous, Kotna

A disable man on his walking stick will have to cross this river to get to the village but when the river rises or floods it becomes too difficult for him so one of his sons will carry him across.



***Theresa Numdi,
Holy Trinity***

This picture shows a mother and her two sons crossing Warakum River to get home after gardening on the other side of the river. When this river floods it is difficult for people to move back on forth the river, our community needs to have a bridge so that when we have rain and flood we can still go to our gardens.



Elitha Sinene, Laitre Village

In our community we have a lot of cocoa gardens, harvest is very good but people gave up on sales because of poor transportation and bad road conditions. We women have to make 2-4 trips to the main road carrying betel nut and sago bags weighing 25- 50 kg. These heavy load carrying has resulted in us women having chronic backaches, sore foot, and headaches which results in us being sick.

**Lucy Apo,
Krisa Village**

Our road is bad ever since and it's still the same. There is no improvement on our roads. The road is full of potholes, landslides, trees falling on the road and the road condition is even worse during rainy seasons. When we (woman) and children are sick, carrying heavy loads to the market, it take about 4- 6 hours to walk into town.



**Tania Bartley,
Warakum KC**

Electricity is a problem in Warakum, families use candles and kerosene lamps for light at night. School children do their study and homework using candle lights which is not good for their eyes.

HOUSING IN URBAN AREAS

Introduction

In Papua New Guinea, squatter settlements have developed around Port Moresby, Lae, Mt. Hagen and Rabaul and now house up to 50 per cent of the urban population. (UNCHS, 1993)

Source

United Nations Economic and Social Communication for Asia and the Pacific – Human Settlements website: <http://www.unescap.org/huset/pacific/pacific2.htm> Retrieved 29 August 2013



Betty Kewa, Warakum KC

Living in the settlement I can describe it as: houses made out of cardboard boxes, plastic bags and loose tin roof irons. We cook, eat, socialise and sleep in this one small space. One house can have up to 15 people living inside it.

“ I have never used a camera and never owned a camera in my life. I am happy I can use and even touch a camera. ”

EDUCATION

Introduction

The distance students in remote and rural areas must travel to attend school is a key factor affecting enrolment and attendance, particularly of female students, because parents are especially concerned about girls' safety.

Women are 25 per cent less likely to consider themselves literate, with 69 per cent of men reporting that they can read and write, compared to 52 per cent of women. Source of information National Statistical Office 2012

Source

Papua New Guinea country gender assessment 2011-2012



Rachael Matthew, Kinzibi

Our school children walk 2 hours every morning and afternoon to get to school and come back home but seeing them in their black and white uniforms walking on the road every day makes us feel proud of them



Veronica George, Kinzibi

These men are building classrooms for our children so the little ones do not have to walk far. We make our children happy so they can make us happy in our old age.



Cathy Samuel, Kotna

Students bring firewood for the teachers. We have to support the teachers' needs if we want them to stay and educate our children.



*Sheila Nakama,
Krisa Village*

BOM held a meeting for her agenda to return back to school. The meeting included the board members of the school; headmaster, chair of BOM, teacher's ref, chief, ex-councillor, Community Mobilizers and the woman's mother. Chairman opened the meeting and addressed her issue to return to school. After some private discussion among the BOM they agreed to let her attend classes. At last the lady is now at school.

*Priscilla Yakum,
Laitre Village*

Children's education is very important for our future. Every day it takes about 45 minutes to 1 hour to walk to school. Our learning environment is good but the classrooms are not in good conditions; windows are taken out and covered with coconut palms which are a sore eye. During rainy seasons many children do not go to school because of distance by canoe and walk more than 1 hour to school. The very sad thing is school girls are getting pregnant.



HEALTH

Introduction

The poor performance of Papua New Guinea's overburdened and under-resourced health services affects women more heavily than men. Women are more likely to use most health services (for instance, maternal and child health facilities), but they also have greater difficulty accessing these services. The closing of many aid posts has meant that women have to travel further, usually with their children, incurring greater transportation costs and undertaken greater risks to their security. Access for rural women has been further restricted by the unacceptably low number of outreach clinics conducted in remote villages to provide immunization, antenatal care, nutrition monitoring and family planning services.

Source

Papua New Guinea country gender assessment 2011-2012

Lydia Masa, Laitre village

This baby's mother died after child birth due to loss of blood. The child is sick and admitted to sleep on the bed used by pregnant women during delivery of babies. We think this is very unhealthy and could be a risk to our children's health and hygiene to use the same bed for women and children.



**Julie Apai,
Krisa Village**

Krisa village has an aid post building but does not have a health worker and medicines. People in the village get sick because of no clean and safe water, no medicine, no proper toilet/not using toilets. Further more people do not want to walk through the rugged and long distance into Vanimo town for hospital services. It takes 3-4 hours or 4-6 hours to reach the first PMV stop.



**Colete Wembi,
Imbinis Village**

Shortage of medical supplies is making sick people unable to recover from diseases such as TB, leprosy and asthma.





*Cathy Yaka,
Warastone Community*

This is the Dapu Health Centre it is catering for a growing population and this small space cannot fit both sick people and health workers. This year we experienced drug shortage when we went to the clinic and was advised to go to Vanimo General Hospital, it would be good that this clinic is supported well to cater for communities who have access to it.

“ I feel special in the community and have the pride to take photographs. Most people praised me in taking photos while others asked me questions on what will we do about the photos and even others were ashamed for me to take their photographs. ”

FAMILY PLANNING

Introduction

Just 26 per cent of married women in Papua New Guinea use any method of contraception, a result in part of the high prevalence of gender-based violence and other forms of gender inequality that limit women's power to decide for themselves whether they will use contraception.

Source

Pathfinder International: <http://www.pathfinder.org/our-work/where-we-work/papua-new-guinea/> retrieved 29 August 2013

Imelda Abala, Krisa Village

I find it very hard to care for my children and other children that I and my husband are caring for. At times our children go without food as we struggle to provide for them with little we have for the family.



*Kasiana Dou,
Laitre Village*

We women carrying the burden of having so many children so close together, a mother can give birth to 7-10 children. We struggle to provide the needs of our children, and we feel not supported when our husbands do not support us. Not having enough food forces us (mothers) to go without food so our children can eat.



MARKET – EARNING AN INCOME

Introduction

Approximately 85 per cent of PNG's rural population rely primarily on subsistence farming, hunting, fishing and gathering for their livelihood. Where people have access to markets, including roadside sales, they are likely to sell fruit, vegetables, fish and game, as well as cooked food to earn cash. Cash is increasingly required to meet the costs of education, health and other goods and services and has also become indispensable in many non-market exchanges such as bride price, compensation payments and other social obligations.

Source

Papua New Guinea country gender assessment 2011-2012



Thecia Kim, Imbinis village

My village plants and harvest rice which we eat and sale to out neighbouring village. Now, we are unable to do this as our rice mill machine which was donated by Belden Namah is not working. My village wants to go back to rice planting but how do we mill our rice harvest?

***Priscilla Pokawin,
Warastone Community***

This home-made drum oven has supported me very well because from it I bake bun and soft bread and sell it for money. Money I make I use it to pay for school fees, power bills, food and water.



***Filomina Noho,
Mushu Village***

Women making a living own their own are a good thing but would be better when they have their husband or partners supporting them. In Mushu village one of the three trade stores in the village is owned by a woman but this woman is successful because she is supported by her husband.





***Rose Pinol,
Warakum Repela Graun***

We market during the day and night time. Sitting at the market, places us at risk of having all our market goods destroyed by drunkards but there is also this fear that we might get raped too.

***Alpha Rumins,
Pultimb***

Some women are breadwinners in their own right especially in situations where their husbands don't work. Market sales are one form of making an income which pays for school fees and bus fares to school for their children.



***Lonica Michael,
Holy Trinity***

People grow potatoes for many reasons and it is also hard work. Women sell them to make money, cook them and little potatoes are kept for seedlings it is a demanding food in Western Highlands. Women do a lot of work to make potatoes growing successful.



***Cathy Yaga,
Holy Trinity***

Women look for little opportunities to support their husband and their families. This woman has used her backyard to grow vegetables which she sells at the market. Money she makes from this sale is to compliment her husband's income and support the family.

“ Powerful voices project is very effective and looking forward to the day of photo exhibition. Hope changes occur to improve the lives of women and children. ”

ADDITIONAL VULNERABILITIES

Introduction

The gender-related challenges faced by many women and girls in Papua New Guinea are further compounded by the interplay of gender inequality with a host of other vulnerabilities. Poverty, unemployment, mental illness and physical disability, homelessness, the social stigma associated with divorce or widowhood, infectious diseases (including HIV) and natural disasters are all serious threats to life and livelihood, and they all disproportionately affect those least equipped to cope with the disruptions they cause.

Source

Sunday Chronicle: <http://sundaycommentators.blogspot.com/2010/03/most-vulnerable-get-recognised.html>. Retrieved 29 August 2013



Rose Wunie, Imbinis Village

I am an orphan and I live with my relatives, right now I am sick as I have spleen. I am not the only one without parents there are other children like me.



***Dorothy Nawoto,
Warastone Community***

My mother died leaving me behind with my brothers and sisters and we are cared for by our aunties. Our father has remarried and does not support us. Orphan children is a concern in our community.

***Cathy Raiya,
Kotna***

My mother she sees old people as vulnerable members of our community, so she is taking care of them using her own resources and time. She will cook, feed, wash and bring them out of the house to get some sunlight.





Vero Jordon, Pultimb

In my community I have noticed that there are a lot of women who are widows and these women have a very hard life as there is no one to support them.

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