



GENDER-SMART BUSINESS SOLUTIONS

CASE STUDY: ADDRESSING GENDER- BASED VIOLENCE WITH COMPANIES IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA



IFC

International
Finance Corporation
WORLD BANK GROUP

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Project Overview

In Papua New Guinea, gender-based violence (GBV) is widespread, with 94 percent of employers saying their staff has likely experienced GBV. This violence affects women at home and at work.¹ The impacts on the workplace are many and varied: The threat of violence at work increases liabilities, creates occupational safety and health risks, and reduces productivity by affecting victims' performance. It also contributes to turnover and hinders career progression. For the private sector, these expenses add up, with direct costs of GBV adding 3 percent to 9 percent to total payroll expenses and indirect costs adding another 45 percent.²

To address this and other gender-related challenges, a group of companies from Papua New Guinea came together under the umbrella of the IFC-sponsored Business Coalition for Women (BCFW). By developing and implementing GBV policies and working jointly to change public perceptions, coalition members have been successful in supporting their employees and reducing the costs of GBV.

Challenges: The Cost of GBV for Companies

The Overseas Development Institute (ODI) worked with three companies of the BCFW to track the financial costs of GBV.³ The research monetized staff time lost to GBV, costs of dealing with GBV, and indirect costs, such as staff turnover. Challenges faced by the coalition included:

¹ IFC/BCFW Baseline Survey, 2014.

² Darko, E.; Smith, W.; Walker, D. (2015). *Gender Violence in Papua New Guinea-the cost to business*, The Overseas Development Institute. Available at: <http://www.odi.org/publications/9887-gender-violence-papua-new-guinea>

³ Darko, E., Smith, W.; Walker, D. (2015). "Gender Violence in Papua New Guinea-the cost to business", The Overseas Development Institute. Available at: <http://www.odi.org/publications/9887-gender-violence-papua-new-guinea>

- *Presentism*, attending work while highly unwell or distracted, or attending to personal tasks during work hours
- *Absenteeism*, increased absence from work due to doctor's appointments or other GBV-linked needs
- *Turnover*, leaving the post because of illness, stress, or security
- *Lowered productivity*, both for GBV victims or their colleagues; for instance, when family members of victims make unauthorized visits to workplaces
- *Fraud*, committing dismissible offenses under duress from a family member or partner
- *GBV response*, such as maintaining workplace support services and increased security

These cumulative costs made a substantial difference to companies' earnings. On average:

- Staff lost 11 work days per year to GBV, including two days to presentism, five to absenteeism and four to assisting other GBV survivors.
- Staff time alone cost companies between 3 percent and 9 percent of payroll, or 300,000 to 3 million Papua New Guinean kina (\$96,000–\$961,000).
- Indirect costs, such as increased staff turnover or increased outlays on employer-provided healthcare, added 45 percent to the above figure, for a total of 435,000 to 4.35 million kina (\$138,500–\$1.38 million).

DEFINING GBV

The United Nations defines GBV as any act that "results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life."¹ The ODI research featured here noted instances of rape, sexual assault, forced marriage, denial of resources, and psychological or emotional abuse.²

¹ UN General Assembly (1993), *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women*, A/RES/48/104. Available at: <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/48/a48r104.htm>

² United Nations (n.d.), *Gender-based violence information management system*. Available at: <http://www.gbvim.com/gbvims-tools/classification-tool/>

Gender-Smart Solutions

BCFW is a membership organization of more than 50 companies that recognize that empowering women is smart business. With the vision to "be the innovative and inclusive driver of business growth through positive change for women in PNG," Coalition members came together to develop and share practical solutions. IFC supports the Coalition through technical assistance and quality assurance on each of its four objectives: promoting women in leadership, developing gender-smart policies and practices, expanding opportunities for women in supplier and distributor networks, and

addressing GBV. In the organization's first two years of operations, BCFW launched the following business solutions to counter GBV:

- Created a suite of practical tools, policy advice, and training resources, including a model human resources policy, implementation guidelines, training and a legal guide for employers.
- Toolkit and training offering for women's safety on remote worksites
- Referral information and awareness-raising materials for companies to use with their staff
- Advocacy of greater public understanding of the cost of GBV and the benefits of taking action

The Coalition is currently assessing feasibility of developing a safe house along with counseling and case management services that member businesses can access.

The following examples highlight instances of BCFW members taking action to address GBV:

- "A female employee had exhausted all her leave. HR put up a case to senior management to grant paid compassionate leave. The CEO approved this leave."
- "A female employee was violated in her home. The company paid for a security assessment by an independent firm and undertook the upgrade of the house."

BCFW is funded by the Australian Government through the Pacific Partnership, under which Australia, New Zealand, and IFC work together to stimulate private sector investment and reduce poverty in the Pacific.

- "A male staff member was hitting his partner at work in front of colleagues, who did not intervene to protect their colleague. The manager took disciplinary action against the perpetrator and canceled the bonuses for the whole team of colleagues who observed without acting. This event became well known across the business and most certainly had a powerful deterrent impact."

Benefits

BCFW members are able to provide a structured and informed response to staff who experienced GBV by supporting survivors so they can keep their jobs and be safe, establishing practical steps for dealing with perpetrators, and creating a work culture in which violence is not tolerated. Typical results included reduced GBV, reduced costs, and improved company reputation.

- *Reduced GBV:* Focus groups with male staff reported that they were less likely to abuse their partners because they could lose their jobs, indicating a reduction in overall GBV.
- *Reduced costs:* Improved support structures for survivors, and reduced absenteeism, turnover, and time spent dealing with incidents of GBV—all reduced costs to BCFW members.
- *Improved reputation:* Members who promoted the BCFW received a reputational premium. Anitua Group, for instance, received positive media coverage⁴ for its stance against GBV and successfully positioned itself as an employer of choice for women.

GENDER-SMART SOLUTIONS IN ACTION

The implementation of companywide gender policies and programs also made a difference. In one instance, a female staff member reported to her male boss a serious assault against her by another employee. "The result was a quick, concerted team effort to both protect and support her while simultaneously dealing with the perpetrator—the police arrested him. Two years ago, before we helped establish the Business Coalition for Women, I doubt very much that this woman would have had the confidence to come forward and know that Anitua would respond in the way we have. It is likely that she would have just not turned up to work and then been terminated as a result, becoming yet another good female employee lost to gender violence." —Linda Van Leeuwen, Capacity Development and Marketing, Anitua Group

PUTTING THE BUSINESS CASE INTO ACTION WITH IFC

Recognizing that equality of economic opportunity between women and men drives productivity, profitability, and performance, IFC's Gender Secretariat helps clients achieve gender-smart solutions to their business challenges. We work with clients to better manage talent in their workforce and supply chains and to design products that tap the earning potential of the women's market. Our motivating force is the knowledge that when companies and people—no matter their gender—can reach their full potential, families, communities, and economies can achieve sustainable growth and prosperity.

⁴ PNG Resources (n.d.). "Anitua keeps community in mind by spear-heading gender violence programs". Available at: <http://energy-pubs.com.au/png-resources/anitua-keeps-community-in-mind-by-spearheading-gender-violence-programs/>

What the company says

Family and sexual violence results in a loss of talent to all businesses. Because of this it is very important that policies and procedures like those developed by the Business Coalition are in place to support staff

who are impacted by violence.

David Toua

General Manager of Corporate Affairs, Steamships Shipping

Implementation of the Business Coalition's workplace policy means we now have a systematic and

therefore much more efficient and effective approach to responding to (family and sexual violence). This has considerable benefit for all of our staff and our business.

John Gethin-Jones

Managing Director, NCS

What IFC says

Throughout Papua New Guinea and the world, people have mobilized to promote greater opportunities for women and more gender equality. The uniqueness of the Coalition is the hard-nosed focus on the business

rationale for this work and the real, demonstrable change that can come quickly once the private sector gets behind the effort.

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