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Submission to Special Parliamentary Committee on Gender-Based Violence Inquiry

Introduction

HELP Resources has operated as a local NGO for twenty years. HELP-R builds on a strong foundation and history of volunteer service, and women's leadership in the ESP, which was thriving in the 1980s and 1990s. HELP-R respects and has learnt many lessons from a former generation of development workers, who initiated community-based activities to prevent gender-based violence in the East Sepik as early as 1985/86, together with the then Law Reform Commission under the leadership of the late Joseph Kana. HELP Resources is focussed on developing **GBV prevention** activities and resources - mostly at community level. This is continuation of work that commenced in 1999. The work has been entirely funded through self-help and non-government resources.

HELP Resources would like to specifically address the following matters for inquiry listed in the Committee's TORs

- 1. Inquire into **the level and impact of coordination and accountability** for services and policy responses across the government departments, the Royal PNG Constabulary and related enforcement and prosecution services, the courts, provincial and local level governments, non-government and community-based organisations and private sector.*
- 2. Identify the **immediate and long-term measures to prevent gender-based violence**, with the focus on behavioural change for future generations.*

1. Effective provincial Coordination of govt and CSO work on GBV: Lessons from GBV work in the East Sepik Province

By the early 1980s, key personnel from CSOs in East Sepik Province were fully participating in the then national campaign to end Domestic Violence. Key women practitioners travelled to Fiji to undertake one month's training in Human Rights, Gender and ending GBV - conducted by the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre. To this day they remain actively connected to the Pacific Network Against Violence Against Women, which has given them valuable training resources a strong source of solidarity emergency support. (Key government and CSO personnel throughout PNG have completed this foundation training and participate in the Pacific Regional network.)

By the mid 1980s, leaders of the once very active East Sepik Council of Women (ESCOW) had established a network of rural development programmes and training centres. Over the following decade, district councils of women increasingly re-directed/ dedicated their available infrastructure, human and financial resources to addressing the high levels of violence against women and children in East Sepik Province. What were once training centres for agriculture, food security and nutrition, health and HIV and AIDS, have become district safehouses and crisis counselling facilities.

These pioneering women leaders established the ESP's first GBV crisis centres and paralegal support services in Maprik District, Wosera Gawi and Wewak. The Franciscan sisters established the Stella Marist safehouse in the heart of Wewak town in the mid 1990s. Safehouses have been operating in Wosera and Maprik for more than fifteen years. From 1985 to 1995, three officers of the Division of Community Development worked very closely with the East Sepik Council of Women, and together they mounted a strong education and advocacy programme which also made the political and administrative leadership of the province accountable to modelling positive attitudes and behaviour. In the late 1990s with the support of a committed NZ police adviser, a facility was built on the grounds of the East Sepik Council of Women, to serve as a one-stop-shop where women and child victims/survivors could access police, paralegal and other services. Twenty-five years ago all agencies were well coordinated and cooperating, but this declined when several pioneering leaders passed away and the leadership of the East Sepik Council of Women changed.

HELP Resources vision and mission statement is annexed to this report. The mission of HELP Resources is to make our government's key social development policies, laws, strategies, and programmes, (collectively referred to as Protection and Empowerment Laws) known to the public, and to provide the necessary foundation information and education on Human Rights, Gender Equality, the PNG Constitution, and all domestic legislation relating to the protection of women and children from all forms of violence. HELP Resources has always focussed on **Prevention of GBV** and linking communities to the responsible agencies and GBV services - in government and civil society.

HELP Resources has advocated strongly for ESP to have a fully-fledged **Family Support Centre** at Wewak Hospital and a **Family and Sexual Violence Unit** at the Wewak Police station. In spite of the best efforts of committed local health and police personnel, both remain undeveloped and under-resourced. The Provincial Administration has not had an effective GESI programme in the Public Service and the Division for Community Development has not had a dedicated Gender officer for many years. There is no provincial leadership coordination or spirit of cooperation in tackling GBV.

PNG has made considerable progress over the past 10 years, on GBV legislative change and development of policy and strategy. However, ironically, as more NGOs working on GBV and Child Protection have emerged, the partnership of East Sepik provincial government with CSOs has declined and the cooperation and coordination among agencies working on GBV has grown weaker. Currently, ESP does not have a provincial GBV coordinating committee that is inclusive or meeting regularly. This reflects the quality of leadership and the capacity and commitment of key personnel across the board, and particularly in the Division of Community Development to ending GBV.

The East Sepik Province, (and possibly many other provinces), could benefit greatly from greater political and administrative investment in and attention to the GBV problem. Higher-level objective and professional leadership for multi-sectoral and multi-agency coordination of GBV work will ensure that personality politics do not get in the way of effective individual, coordination, accountability and progress.

Recommendations:

1. Key provincial leaders should commit to objective oversighting work on GBV, familiarising themselves with what CSOs are doing and how their public servants are performing in key roles related to implementation of the national GBV strategy (lack of capacity in government and weak coordination among all relevant agencies are major impediments)
2. Provincial leaders must ensure that government personnel develop greater capacity and commitment and are willing to learn from CSOs.
3. The critically important work of government and civil society agencies must be adequately resourced
- 4.

2. Effective Prevention of GBV - changing norms, attitudes and behaviour

HELP Resources GBV prevention initiatives and resources.

About *immediate and long-term measures to prevent gender-based violence*, we will focus here on community-based information, education and advocacy programs, providing key information on global Human Rights norms and standards, their link to gender equality and EGBV and child protection, the alignment of PNG's Constitution and GBV and CPLaw reform. We have managed to do all of this through various program and resource development over the past two decades. Throughout, we have raised and mobilised our own resources and we have had no recognition and support from government.

HELP Resources has worked on these issues since 1999. This has included local level development of content, method and materials (resources, toolkits, training manuals) for effective community education and advocacy for the prevention of GBV and Violence Against Children. The tools and resources we have produced include:

1. *Tok Pisin* translation of key Human Rights documents, norms and standards (UDHR, CEDAW and CRC) and key sections of the Constitution of PNG
2. Locally adapted training participatory training manual on Gender / Gender Equality
3. A research report on Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) in PNG (with UNICEF)
4. Partnership with Voice for Change to produce a comprehensive training kit on human Rights, Gender Equality and ending GBV
5. Partnership with the Baptist Union in PNG to produce a unique Highlands adapted adult/ community education and school-based program on Human Rights, gender equality and ending GBV
6. 2021: A new pilot program and toolkit for community-based education and advocacy for ending violence against women and children. (funded by a UN Women/ EU Spotlight Grant and being piloted in 10 communities in East Sepik and 2 communities

in Hel a Province.

2015/16: HELP Resources also supported UNDP to identify and document (in film) 6 community-based initiatives (case studies) to address GBV. HELP Resources provided a study Guide for use with schools and community groups.

HELP has designed and delivered in training and has developed local-fit resources in human Rights, Gender Equality, Sexual and Reproductive Health, ending GBV and child protection.

Inadequate attention to GBV prevention and a lack of attention to sharing resources and lessons learned

We are aware that other local organisations in PNG are designing and delivering EGBV and CP programs and producing information, training and advocacy tools, resources. However, we know very little about each other's work. Except for Voice for Change, (Jiwaka) with whom we have worked closely, and the Pacific Network against Violence against women, we have no connection or insight into the EGBV prevention programs and resources being developed by other agencies and used in other parts PNG

There is no national interest, mechanism or process for coordination, quality assurance, mutual knowledge building and sharing. We know that the FSVAC (semi government?) in Port Moresby and OXFAM (INGO) and its Highland partners have developed programs and resources, but the rollout is very limited, resources are held close to the chest rather than shared and the learning of lessons learned is minimal or non-existent.

There is no leadership or technical expertise for prevention of GBV or Violence against Children (VAC) in government. The best prevention work - program and resource design and messaging - is being done by civil society, and led mostly by women, but it is totally uncoordinated and largely un-evaluated. We believe that this lack of communication, cooperation, coordination, monitoring and evaluation of GBV Prevention organisations and efforts is a serious impediment to progress.

PNG's nationwide campaign to end Domestic Violence in the 1980s

We recall that back in the early 1980s, when GBV was first being addressed by the Law Reform Commission, the short-lived NGO the **Women and Law Committee** led a major national campaign against domestic violence. The campaign was conducted over about 5 years and was truly nationwide. Key messages were developed and translated and disseminated through multiple media: Posters and flyers were produced and distributed through government, church, NGOs, schools and private sector agencies like banks. A feature film - **Stap Isi** - was produced, advocating male anger management and highlighting the criminality and multiple negative social consequences of domestic violence. Popular musicians write songs - **Loi tanbulong paiti mmeri**. A comic book highlighting community-based prevention strategies was developed. A secondary school reader on GBV was developed and mainstreamed into the grade 10 curriculum. Leading politicians and their partners spoke out on television and radio.

This significant national campaign to end domestic violence happened 25 years ago. Unfortunately, the campaign was not sustained as the Law reform Commission shifted its

focus to Law Reform, which was to take another 20 years to be realised. The campaign was evaluated by UNICEF and found to have significant positive impact on raising awareness on the problem of Domestic Violence and was starting to bring about attitude change. It fell short of changing behaviour and would have had to continue to be a longer-term campaign with refreshed messaging and materials.

In order to make GBV prevention work more effective, we need a more coordinated and collaborative approach. Most GBV prevention work is done by CSOs. Government needs to get more involved and to ensure that the relevant government agencies, (police, courts, health and community development) develop the required capacity and expertise and commitment to higher standards of behaviour. Provincial GBV Action Committees, proposed provincial GBV secretariats and Provincial Leaders need to include organisations specialising in GBV prevention in their GBV coordination mechanisms and processes.

We need **common key messaging** and **oversight of standard terminology and translations**. High level guidance and expertise on GBV prevention is needed. A community of practice needs to be built. The different GBV prevention initiatives and resources already developed and lessons learned about their effectiveness need to be more readily shared. We need an evidence-base and documentation of good practice and support for scaling up prevention programs.

Recommendations:

1. Recognise the importance of GBV prevention programs and resources - and support their outreach to the most remote corners of every province and district.
2. Mount a campaign to build a dynamic national movement for normative change - towards zero tolerance of GBV CP. Develop a long-term national campaign, (5-10 years) with a phased approach to the elimination of all forms of violence against women and children, with strong and highly visible political leadership guidance and encouragement and key core messages, language and low cost participatory media and the engagement of multiple provincial and districts level organisations.
3. Develop core messaging, common terminology and translations and encourage and learn from creative and innovative approaches.
4. Ensure agencies specialised in GBV prevention are included in provincial and national coordination bodies. Recognise the expertise in local civil society.
5. Build a national community of practice on GBV prevention and enable annual national convening/ workshoping to ensure that we all learn from the expertise and experience of local organisations and individuals and together build coordinated national action to end GBV.
6. Build national level technical capacity and allocate adequate resources for **effective coordination, monitoring and of GBV Prevention programs and resources**



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MISSION STATEMENT (2021)

VISION

Effective implementation of PNG policy, law and Strategy for the social protection and empowerment of citizens, in line with PNG's national and global development commitments (including the SDGs) and in collaboration with local government.

MISSION

HELP Resources will provide a responsive and inclusive hub of information, resources and services to citizens, communities and CBOs in the East Sepik Province, to support social and economic development, sustainable livelihoods, and continuing education. HELP-R will inform, educate, and provide technical support to individuals, organizations and communities working for local level development, specifically for practitioners and organizations engaged in the implementation of PNG's protection and empowerment policies and law (Ending VAW, Child Protection, Informal Economy Development and Community Learning and Development Centres.)

PURPOSE

To contribute to more active and informed citizenship and citizens' collective demand for participatory local governance, with a focus on planning, budgeting and delivery of social protection and empowerment for all citizens of the East Sepik Province.

Core Objectives

1. Provide a strong foundation for effective Informal Economy Development in Wewak District in partnership with The Wewak Urban Local Level Government and the District Development Authority. **(Contribute to (PI) effective implementation of the PNG Informal Economy Policy, Law and Strategy)**
2. Update training programs and resources to support revitalisation of East Sepik Provincial responses to and prevention of violence and against Women and Children. **(Contribute to effective implementation of the Family Protection Act and the Child Protection Act)**
3. Explore the potential for Community Learning and Development Centres (CLDCs) in Wewak District, Urban and Rural LLGs, in association **(PI) effective implementation of the Provincial Integrated Community Development Policy (PICD)**

HELP Resources works with

1. Citizens of the East Sepik Province - addressing their right to local level social and economic development and access to basic information, education and training on key government policies, laws and strategies of and their implementation
2. Organizations working to end violence against women and girls East Sepik Province and (upon request) other provinces in PNG
3. Market vendors and street traders of the informal economy in Wewak District and the East Sepik Province
4. Organizations and communities in the East Sepik Province that are working for self-determined, self-reliant, just, equitable and sustainable social and economic development and are keen to develop community-based learning and development centres.

PURPOSE HISTORY AND CURRENT ACTIVITIES

Brief history

HELP Resources was established in Wewak, East Sepik Province and formally registered as a non-profit association in 1999. Since then, HELP Resources has delivered training, tools and support services for individuals and organizations working with grass roots communities to strengthen, promote their health, education, livelihoods, and participation in local government (citizens' education/governance/good governance and active citizenship).

In 2016 HELP downsized significantly, to function as a local hub for a range of local development services and knowledge products. HELP is currently focusing on working with citizens and local government to facilitate the implementation of the PNG government's social protection and empowerment policies, laws and strategies.

The PNG Constitution, Human Rights, Gender Equality and the Sustainable Development Goals inform our work. HELP-R facilitates active citizenship, responsive local government and participatory governance and 'PNG Ways' to maintain rich cultural heritage, meet basic needs and initiate bottom up change. HELP-R is accessible, responsive and inclusive, giving local development workers' improved access to information, communication, education, documentation and capacity building for locally led development initiatives.

Current main activities and programs

1. Community-based education and advocacy to end violence against women, girls and children
2. Piloting the implementation of PNG's Informal Economy policy, law and strategy
3. Capacity building to strengthen East Sepik provincial response to VAW and protection of children
4. Piloting implementation of the revised Community Development and Learning Centre Policy of PNG
5. Offering a range of training programs in social and economic development for govt. and NGO development workers on demand.

PNG's Informal Economy Development and Control and associated Protection & Empowerment Policies, Laws & Strategies

	Ending All forms of Violence Against Women and Girls	Child Protection and child rights	Community Learning and Development Centres	Inf De
PROBLEMS to be ADDRESSED .	Addressing PNG's High Levels and severe nature severe violence in homes and communities, in institutions and public domain especially against women and girls, between intimate partners and between other family members.	Addressing high levels of physical, sexual, and psychological violence and neglect suffered by too many children in PNG. Prevention through strengthening families to reduce social exclusion, and to lower the risk of separation, violence and exploitation.	Safe, capable and productive Communities - partner with government to tackle social and economic inequities. Connect national policies and practical implementation at provincial and district levels, to make progress towards social development for all.	Enal emp cit. rem dep inc in eco Maj wom Inf at tab com mar urb and roa tra
POLICIES DEVELOPED		National Child Protection Policy (2017-2027) Strengthening Child rights and state and parents' accountability. More awareness of and services for child protection and forms of child abuse. Promotion of standards to establish a safe environment for children.	Policy for Integrated Community Development (PICD) (2019-2028) Community governance, learning, informal economy and enhanced community environment. More focus on strengthening communities from the 'inside-out'	Nat Pol Inf Eco Dev (20 (IS rec rev to ali law ava dra con

			with some support from the 'outside-in', including economic empowerment through a diversified informal economy.	
LAWS PASSED	<p>Family Protection Act (2014)</p> <p>Under the Family Protection Act, domestic violence is an offence. Domestic Violence occurs when someone does one of the following to a family member: Assault (whether physical or otherwise), Psychological abuse, harassment or intimidation, Stalking, Offensive or indecent behaviour, Damage to property</p>	<p>Lukautim Pikinini Act (2016)</p> <p>Child protection Act</p> <p>The LPA is based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child and extends protection to all children, including those infected/affected by HIV/AIDS, sexually and physically exploited children, children affected by conflicts and children with disabilities.</p>	CLDCs are the decentralized community based mechanisms for citizens access to key development information and government policy, legal and strategic planning documents. CLDCs aim to building community awareness of and understanding of all relevant policies and laws and in particular, the 'protection and empowerment' policies, laws, strategies outlined here.	Inf Eco. Dev. and Act Bil. ame. 201 Pro emp. maj. Pap. Gui. ear. all liv. thro. inf. eco. Inf. Pro. Loc. Dis. gov. obl. des. all. to inf. and fac. adap. and tra. liv. opt. edu.

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<p>STRATEGIES ADOPTED</p>	<p>Papua New Guinea National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to GBV (2016-2025) Zero tolerance of VAWG by 2025, All agencies and efforts to end Violence against Women and other forms of family violence. Government services (Police, courts, hospitals, welfare) are obliged coordinate with the vital services delivered by NGOs, community based organisations, Faith based organisations etc.) Provinces to develop local strategies, and budgets</p>	<p>National Child Protection strategy. 2017 Training and Certification of 2 Provincial Child Protection Officers and District-based Child Protection Volunteers At the level of prevention, their aim includes supporting and strengthening families to reduce social exclusion, and to lower the risk of separation, violence and exploitation.</p>	<p>Protection and Empowerment Services delivered via District Community Development Centres (DCDCs) and Community Learning and Development Centres. (CLDCs) Strengthening district, LLG and community partnerships and systems to protect the vulnerable and to empower and build the capacity of communities using a rights-based approach, GESI. (Local implementation CEDAW, CRC, SDGs, EFA)</p>	<p>The Str Inf Eco org emp ther rai col voi evi sup dem dia dip lob str neg bet gov pla bud man mar des Inf eco sit Pro Loc gov sen more resp you inc pro rec the voi con ven dev</p>

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