

To the

Special Parliamentary Committee on GBV Secretariat  
PNG National Parliament  
By email to: [parliamentgbvcommittee@gmail.com](mailto:parliamentgbvcommittee@gmail.com)

30 June 2021

### Submission on addressing GBV and SARV from the Yumi Sanap Strong Initiative

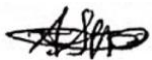
Thank you to the Committee for this opportunity to make a submission in relation to Gender Based Violence (GBV) in Papua New Guinea (PNG). We are very pleased that this issue is on the agenda of the National Parliament, and hopeful that this Committee can bring about lasting change.

The organisations that are making the attached submission are a combination of local community-based organisations, supported by two universities, the University of Goroka and Queensland University of Technology. Together, we have been working towards prevention of GBV and SARV, and justice for survivors, in PNG for many years. We are currently working together on the Yumi Sanap Strong Initiative to increase understanding of human rights and address issues of violence in PNG. Our focus has been on working with local communities, acknowledging the knowledge and understanding they have of local issues, and identifying local solutions that are already working. Our expertise is in supporting community-based organisations (CBOs) and local human rights defenders to tell and document their stories, and to develop education materials, so that prevention strategies and solutions can be adapted and implemented more widely across PNG. Our recommendations are included on page 7 of our submission. In summary, they focus on the following key areas:

- Government needs to engage with CBOs and human rights defenders to understand how GBV is affecting local communities, what resources and systems are in place, and what solutions are already working and could be replicated or upscaled.
- Government to support the application of innovative action research and co-creative strategies to support the continued production of locally development and locally owned resource materials that build on PNG's strong creative expression and values of caring for each other.
- Government needs to invest in upscaling local prevention and education strategies, including supporting CBOs and expanding the training of qualified facilitators and educators to integrate GBV prevention strategies within existing institutional and community structures.

Each of the organisations making this submission can be contacted on the details below if the Committee wishes to discuss any aspects of this submission further.

Yours in partnership,



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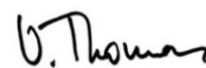
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## Submission to the Special Parliamentary Committee on GBV

### Introduction

As partners we have worked together on donor funded communication and behaviour campaigns. This has included a partnership with UNDP and the Department for Community Development and Religion on the initiative **Yumi Kirapim Senis** in support of the PNG National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender Based Violence 2016-2025, and the initiative **Yumi Sanap Strong**, supported by Pacific Women (through the Papua New Guinea-Australia Partnership) in support of the Sorcery National Action Plan. We have partnered with the Department of Justice and Attorney General, Oxfam, the Highlands Women Human Rights Defenders Movement and Pacific Women, on the development of the **Communicating the Law Toolkit**. Our collective focus is on creative action research programs, the co-development of educational materials and strengthening support and capacity of community-based groups to prevent and respond to GBV.

**Kup Women for Peace (KWP)**, based in Kerowagi, Simbu province, is a women-led community-based organisation. In 2000, following 30 years of tribal fighting with Kup region, KWP was formed by women leaders from four warring clans came together to address violence in their communities with the intention of *daunim hevi bilong ol mama* – reducing the sorrow of the mothers. Since its establishment, KWP has been engaged in helping survivors of violence access quality support services. KWP has trained and appointed focal people within the communities to support referral pathways to the Rapid Response Team, health centres and the police. KWP's work includes awareness raising among men, boys and community leaders on human rights and women's rights, leading to positive changes in behaviour and attitudes; the provision of crisis support services such as counselling, paralegal and mediation for cases of gender-based and sorcery related violations of their human rights; repatriation and reintegration support to survivors of sorcery violence and aggravated gender-based violence.

**Kafe Urban Settlers' Women's Organisation (KUSWA)**, based in Goroka, Eastern Highlands Province, was established in 2001 by eight woman who were survivors of domestic violence. To alleviate their own suffering and others in similar situations, the women created the organisation. KUSWA's vision is to ensure that women and their families are protected, respected and supported to equally contribute to the wellbeing and prosperity of their families and communities. KUSWA's mission is to work with the community and families to support women develop to their full potential and live productive lives through active promotion of health, gender equality, full participation, and life skills activities in Eastern Highlands Province. KUSWA works in partnership with the police, communities, schools, the Department for Community Development, the district and village courts, women's groups, the Family Support Centre, churches, the organisation Family Voice, and focal people in communities.

**The University of Goroka (UOG)** is the leading teacher training institution in the country. The Centre for Social and Creative Media (CSCM) at UOG leads research projects that capture community perspectives on important social issues. CSCM has developed innovative approaches to filmmaking and communication and social change. The Centre works closely with donors, government and community partners to implement high impact research and education projects across PNG.

**Queensland University of Technology (QUT)** in Brisbane Australia have a long engagement in Papua New Guinea. The research group Creative Research in Development (CRID) develops innovative strategies towards sustainable development using creative approaches. CRID supports partners in Papua New Guinea in action research and the development of communication strategies and advocacy programs. CRID also provides facilitator training and capacity building in research.

Our collective work and experience demonstrate the need to find ways to communicate local and existing solutions to GBV and to create a space where education and behaviour change programs build on positive local values and strengths. Our approach integrates PNG's rich forms of creative expression to highlight local community solutions as sustainable interventions to create safer communities.

## ***Terms of Reference***

The organisations making this submission are best placed to comment on the following aspects of the Committee's Terms of Reference:

- How to undertake research that investigates the complexities and root causes of GBV, as well as barriers to access to justice
- Identify the immediate and long-term measures to prevent GBV, with a focus on behavioural change for future generations
- Identify perpetrator intervention programs and support services to help them change behaviour
- Consider the views and experiences of frontline services, advocacy groups and others working to address GBV
- Inquire into the gendered impacts of COVID-19, with a particular focus on the differential experience of GBV ion PNG women and men, identify how the Government and other stakeholders can ensure more effective responses in the context of the ongoing threat of COVID-19

## ***Recognising local solutions***

Our projects are framed as developing communication and intervention strategies that can shift behaviours with regards to GBV and SARV. We note that everyday in our communities, there are people and organisations finding solutions for their contexts and for the people involved. Often those with solutions, however, go unnoticed beyond their own communities, yet their insights to provide contextualised solutions are key in addressing GBV within their communities and provinces.

For example, Awok Awok, an elementary school teacher at Finch Road Community in Madang, has been running a community sports program for over 15 years, using sports to address GBV issues in the community. Through this he developed ways for young women and men to work together through sports and to respect each other, ultimately reducing incidents of harassment and GBV in the community. Through the Yumi Kirapim Senis initiative, his story was identified from 147 studied initiatives as innovative, and subsequently captured on film and widely shared (Thomas, Kauli, Borrey 2018). This included screening the film *Stingcoins* to key government departments and stakeholders in the lead up to the endorsement of the PNG National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender Based Violence 2016-2025. Like Awok Awok, the organisations KWP and KUSWA and many other CBOs, have been working for decades to develop strategies to make their communities safe and protect vulnerable individuals.



Awok Awok and Stingcoins member presenting their program in Port Moresby (2015)

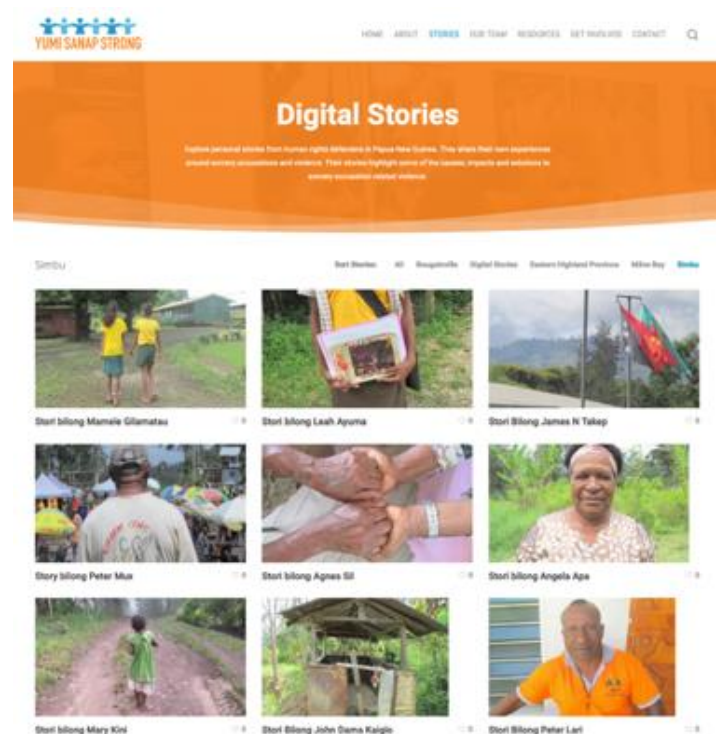
Our approach ensures that we can understand local knowledge in addressing GBV and SARV, and that the voices of those with solutions in place can be amplified to benefit others. Through the distributions of the Yumi Kirapim Senis film series, other communities replicated the models and approaches shared, and for example, those taking on board Awok Awok's approach supported sports clubs in their communities to work with girls and boys. We know that actions around GBV are learnt behaviours. We need to provide the space for people, in particular young people, to learn good behaviour, and we can do this by strengthening the availability of appropriate resources and systems that support positive change within communities.

## Using action research and co-creative strategies

The complexity of GBV and SARV requires approaches that can respond to local contexts and relations while providing evidence-based strategies to inform solutions. Action research provides a process where groups of people assess the problem, engage in observation and reflection, to implement and co-design solutions appropriate to them. In our work we have harnessed creative strategies to support an action research approach, as this process allows to bring out community knowledge while creative a safe space for people to voice their concerns (Kauli & Thomas, 2020). Further, our approach has provided CBOs and human rights defenders with the tools to share their experiences and developed solutions more widely at national and international levels (see resource links provided on p. 8).

We note that SARV was raised a number of times in the Public Hearings before this Committee. It is our experience that SARV is sometimes closely linked with gender issues, and sometimes is not. The experience can vary from one community to another. In our research we found that SARV must be understood within the context and histories of each cultural group and province. For example, experiences of SARV are different in communities in the Simbu province with a history of tribal fights, in contrast to communities in Bougainville where the civil war needs to be taken into account when understanding the causes and impacts of SARV. An advantage of our focus on community understandings, and community-led solutions, is that it becomes possible to identify more accurately the links between GBV and SARV, and to analyse how these problems might be dealt with together, or differently, in particular communities and areas of PNG.

For example, the Yumi Sanap Strong initiative engaged over 40 human rights defenders across PNG to share their own experiences in addressing SARV within their communities via digital stories. Each of the digital stories that they themselves produced provides contextualised solutions to the issue of SARV. When shared with others, the stories create empathy among audiences and provide viewers with role models that they can relate to. In assessing the impact of the digital stories on viewers, over 80% of audiences stated that the stories they viewed changed their understanding of SARV. For example, the story of Uмба Peter, a former perpetrator and now male advocator with KUSWA, was particularly impactful among young people. One viewer commented on the story "Because it shows that everyone can learn from their own mistakes and do not repeat it again. We can be role models to our small brothers and sisters." (Student, 19, East Sepik Province).

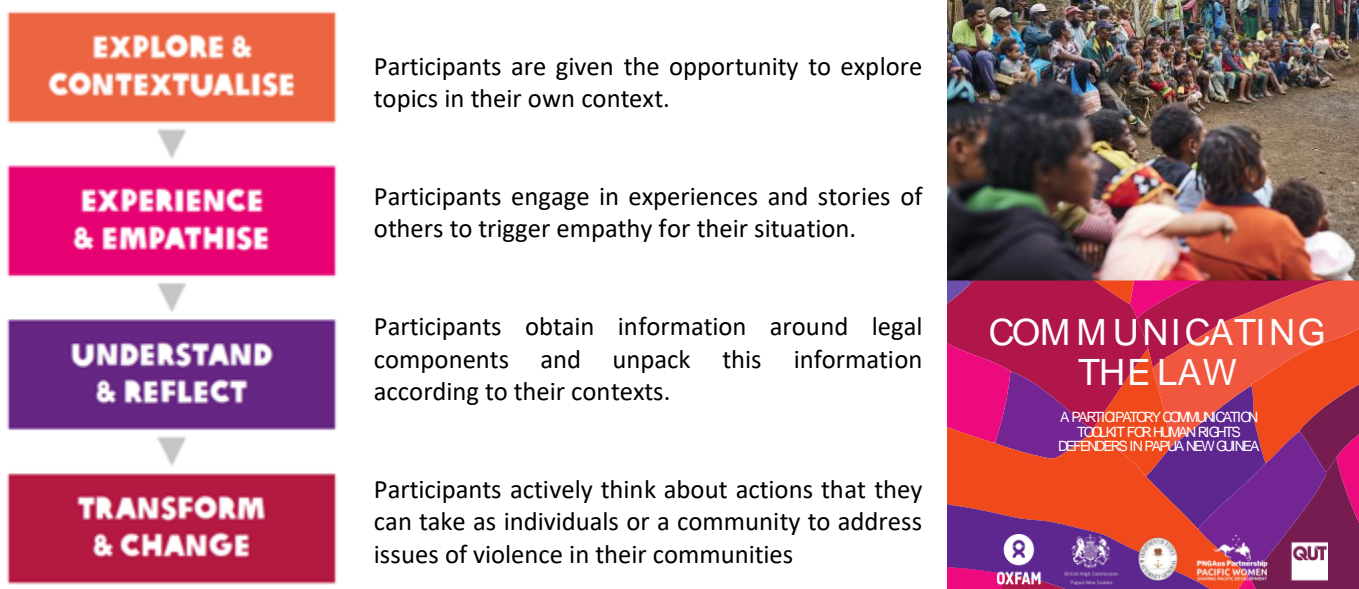


Digital Stories on the Yumi Sanap Strong Website

The digital stories have been widely used in community advocacy programs and there is opportunity to expand this approach further.

## Educational resources to facilitate dialogues and conversations for behaviour change

Following on from this we recognised the need for participatory tools to be available to community-based facilitators. These tools needed to be able to build on existing community knowledges instead of providing external solutions. Together with Oxfam in PNG and the Highlands Human Rights Defenders we identified a need for communities to better understand current laws around family and sexual violence, children's rights and sorcery accusation related violence. Based on previous experiences in working with community groups we collectively developed the **Communicating the Law Toolkit**. The Toolkit follows a guided approach of four steps:



Activities in the toolkit are designed for facilitators to design their own strategies based on the needs of communities. To date, the toolkit has been implemented in the Simbu and Eastern Highlands Provinces with community members and key influencers graduating from their participation in the training. Our evaluation has shown that key influencers such as village court magistrates, police and community leaders are in a better position to step in and mediate cases after receiving the training. CBOs also continue to provide feedback mechanisms on the challenges participants might be experiencing to iteratively inform their ongoing training and prevention strategies.

An extension of this activity was the training of University of Goroka students by KUSWA and KWP in September 2020. This training pointed towards key gaps and opportunities. Understanding of gender issues was low among students, and they had not received specific education around gender issues. As one student noted:

*"I acquired a lot of new skills and knowledge regarding Gender Based Violence, Sorcery Accusation Related Violence and Human Rights, and the laws and penalties involved. These are new to me and are not part of my content of study, but I am glad to have learned something new. The role plays really helps me to change the way I feel and think about people especially those who are accused of sorcery. I have come to realise that I as an individual member of a community, have to play my part to step in and help solve such social issues that arise in my community or report it to the right authority." (UOG Student)*

Students were activity engaged in facilitating discussions with other students and community members as part of their industry experience. They were keen to share the information with their own communities, acknowledging the impact that GBV and SARV were having in their own families and communities.

The university program, supported through the involvement of CBOs, demonstrated the need for educational programs on GBV and SARV in educational institutions. Our experiences can be used to further expand the available training programs.



Watch the video

[www.vimeo.com/437576727](https://www.vimeo.com/437576727)

[www.yumisanapstrong.org](http://www.yumisanapstrong.org)

### CBO's role in responding to COVID-19

The experiences of KUSWA in responding to COVID-19 in their surrounding communities have been documented in a video for the Global Women of the World (WOW) Festival. In the video, Eriko Fufurefa, Erina Erick and Umba Peter discuss their challenges and solutions to responding to COVID-19. During the national state of emergency, KUSWA addressed the fears experienced by the sick and also by health workers in Goroka. They supported women to access services and mediated with health workers to ensure patients were attended to. The organisation travelled to remote areas to carry out information sessions. They worked through their networks to increase and deepen understanding around the issue. Their networks included Health Services, the Police, the Eastern Highlands Governor, the local Member for Henganofi and Oxfam International.

KUSWA's work was instrumental in saving lives, providing support to the most vulnerable and in carrying out important work in remote communities.



In summary, our work to date demonstrates that our participatory and contextualised approaches can significantly contribute to behaviour change around GBV and SARV in PNG. So far, we have been able to demonstrate this through our partnership and working in key communities. Addressing behaviours at a broader level will require a strategic approach in working with organisations and investing in educational strategies to ensure individuals and communities, including students, are provided with the resources they need and that they can apply within their own contexts. We need to tap into the solutions that are already working and support that these strategies are documented and shared.

We encourage the Committee to explore the audiovisual resources we have provided links for on page 8. These are materials and stories developed by CBOs and human rights defenders that explore their solutions to issues of GBV and SARV.

## **Recommendations**

Based on our collective experience and work we make the following recommendations with regards to prevention strategies and designing behaviour change strategies:

- **PROVIDE DIRECT SUPPORT TO COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANISATIONS:** CBOs and local NGOs are important players in addressing GBV and SARV within communities. We recommend that the government provides direct support to CBOs to support GBV initiatives. Currently, many of these organisations operate with international donor funding, but a strengthening of government support directly to CBOs provides a foundation for a stronger government to community partnership and a more effective response to GBV.
- **UNDERSTAND THE ROOT CAUSES OF GBV THROUGH CREATIVE ACTION RESEARCH:** Action research and creative approaches provide ways to understand and tap into community strengths and values. By working closely with community-based partners, research and advocacy projects can be implemented to better understand the barriers to accessing justice and draw on the collective knowledge of the community to co-develop solutions.
- **CO-CREATE ADVOCACY MATERIALS TO COMMUNICATE WITHIN CONTEXTS:** CBOs and community partners play a key role in contextualizing information to respond to the specific needs of communities and to provide support to the most vulnerable populations. Advocacy and educational materials need to be co-created and co-developed, reflecting local contexts and local solutions. At the same time, this process builds community ownership of advocacy initiatives and strengthens distribution networks.
- **BUILD CAPACITY OF SKILLED FACILITATORS AND KEY INFLUENCERS:** Developing communication strategies is not just about messaging but about providing opportunities to facilitate and mediate conversations and dialogue. In order to provide information to communities, an investment needs to be made to provide training to facilitators and educators as well as community key influencers to use the resources to generate dialogues. This includes training for journalists, teachers, police, village court magistrates and others in decision making roles. A key focus of facilitating conversations around GBV and SARV needs to be on schools and universities.
- **INTEGRATED AND ITERATIVE MONITORING AND REFLECTIONS:** Locally based organisations can thrive if they are supported and work well in partnership with others, such as government and NGO partners. Ongoing reflection and planning can support these strategic partnerships. Prevention programs need to include iterative monitoring and reflections in order to inform appropriate delivery in a variety of contexts and situations.
- **UPSCALE LOCALLY DEVELOPED PROGRAMS:** There is a need to upscale locally developed programs by investing in CBOs and community facilitators and educators. This work requires skillful facilitation, ongoing documentation and reflection to provide spaces for sharing and learning. Creative strategies and appropriate technology use can support upscaling of such initiatives. We recommend investing in local organisations and their networks to deliver prevention programs across PNG.

## REFERENCES

### Audiovisual Resources

The Yumi Kirapim Senis Films

<https://vimeo.com/showcase/yks>

Yumi Sanap Strong: Digital stories of human rights defenders

<https://yumisanapstrong.org/stories/digital-stories>

Communicating the Law Toolkit

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/dyegg7adf7hokpo/Communicating%20the%20Law%20Toolkit%20Download%20Version.pdf?dl=0>

KUSWA responding to COVID-19 in PNG

<https://yumisanapstrong.org/responding-to-covid-19-kafe-womens-association-participates-in-wow-global-24/>  
<https://vimeo.com/437576727>

### Research Articles

Thomas, V, Kauli, J, Fufurefa, E, Apa, A, Peter U (2021 forthcoming) *Igat wei bilong lukautim mipela yet istap – We can look after ourselves: Community-based organisations responding to COVID-19 in Papua New Guinea* in Campbell Y. and Connell J. (eds) *COVID-19 and Islands: The Caribbean and the Pacific*, Palgrave Macmillan.

[\[download link\]](#)

Thomas, V & Kauli, J (2020) Strengthening the Voices of Human Rights Defenders in the Media: A case study on addressing sorcery accusation related violence in Papua New Guinea, *Pacific Journalism Review* 26 (1), 86-104.

[\[download link\]](#)

Kauli, J. & Thomas, V (2020) When you kill the body, do you kill the spirit? Curating affectual performances addressing sorcery accusation related violence in Papua New Guinea, *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*, 25 (3), 351-363. [\[download link\]](#)

Crook, T, Fufurefa, E., Hukula, F, MacLeod, K, Sar, L, Munau L (2019) KUSWA: A case-study of indigenous participatory filmmaking in addressing gender violence and sorcery accusations, Papua New Guinea. Working Paper. AHRC GCRF Research Networking Scheme Highlight Notice for International Development. [\[download link\]](#)

Thomas, V., Kauli, J, Borrey, A. (2018). Harnessing community-led innovations: The role of participatory media in addressing gender-based violence, Special Issue on Communicating Development, *Development in Practice* 28(3), 345-357. [\[download link\]](#)

