

DO NO HARM:

INTEGRATING THE ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMING

BRIEFING NOTE



JUNE 2018

Do No Harm: Understanding the Relationship Between Women's Economic Empowerment and Violence Against Women (VAW) in Melanesia is a partnership between the Department of Pacific Affairs (DPA) (formerly State, Society and Governance in Melanesia (SSGM)) at the Australian National University (ANU) and the International Women's Development Agency (IWDA) funded by the Australian Aid program's Pacific Women Program.

KEY FINDINGS

We know that women's economic advancement and empowerment are critical to women achieving gender equality. However, in anecdotal evidence from partner organisations (backed up by academic research), IWDA became aware that we needed to better understand the interaction of gender norms around women and men's roles and the transformative potential of women's economic empowerment programming.

The *Do No Harm* research identified the critical importance of challenging gender norms when engaged in women's economic empowerment programming. The *Do No Harm* research found that some women in economic empowerment programs experience an increase in, or commencement of, domestic violence relating to their increased economic independence. In this instance, women's economic empowerment challenges unequal gender roles and norms. This can lead to men using violence against women (VAW) as way of reinforcing their power over women and perpetuating gender inequality.

Do No Harm also found that increasing women's economic contribution to the household did not necessarily result in greater economic equality within the partnership, and in some instances resulted in men withdrawing their work and economic contribution to the family. *Do No Harm*, similar to global evidence, found that women tend to spend their income on family needs rather than personal needs. This is a result of gender norms where women learn and are taught to prioritise the needs of the family and others over their own needs.

Do No Harm also found that women's economic empowerment programs can be entry points to address other issues affecting women such as health, education, leadership and VAW. Importantly, *Do No Harm* found that women's economic empowerment programs:

- Provide women greater access to and control over the money they earn.
- Assist women to meet the basic needs of their family.
- Allow women to save for security, emergencies and other unexpected costs.
- Develop women's financial literacy, small businesses and administration skills.
- Increase women's confidence, leadership skills and participation in decision-making.
- Challenge unequal gender norms at family and community level.
- Enable peer support, learning and solidarity among women.
- Provide opportunities for women to show their leadership capacity, increasing women's recognition and position in the community.






The overarching findings from the *Do No Harm* research highlight critical components that must be integrated into women's economic empowerment programming:

- Women's economic empowerment programming must adopt a 'Do No Harm' approach.
- A need exists for community-based gender transformative programs.
- Working with men is necessary.

The Toolkits include a useful Checklist to support organisations to assess their current practice, and tools to guide the integration of the elimination of violence against women in economic empowerment programming, including a targeted Training Package on Gender, Violence Against Women and Women's Economic Empowerment Training.

FROM RESEARCH TO ACTION

IWDA has used the research findings from Do No Harm to develop a series of toolkits that give community organisations the tools to address VAW in women's economic empowerment programs. The Toolkits are framed around program design, implementation and monitoring and include five principles to minimise VAW in women's economic empowerment programming.

		 <p>PRINCIPLE 5 Partner with experienced VAW service providers</p>	 <p>PRINCIPLE 4 Change men's attitudes and behaviours that support gender inequality and VAW</p>	 <p>PRINCIPLE 3 Increase women's participation in programs</p>	 <p>PRINCIPLE 2 Transform gender inequality</p>	 <p>PRINCIPLE 1 Support women victims / survivors of violence</p>
DESIGNING PROGRAMS	Train staff, volunteers and partners implementing programs in gender, VAW and women's economic empowerment.	Understand how VAW impacts on women's lives.	Ask women about how men should be involved in the program.	Identify women who are disadvantaged in the community.	Understand how gender and power inequalities impact on women's lives.	Understand how VAW impacts on women's lives.
		Identify and partner with services for women victims / survivors of violence.	Understand how men are contributing to the household income.	Understand men's support for women's participation in the program.	Understand women and men's attitudes towards gender, VAW and women's economic empowerment.	Identify and partner with services for women victims / survivors of violence.
		Refer women victims / survivors of violence to support and justice services or, if not available, provide direct support to women victims / survivors of violence.	Understand men's attitudes towards gender, VAW and women's economic empowerment.	Identify barriers to women's participation.	Understand women and men's unequal workload.	Identify and partner with services for women victims / survivors of violence.
IMPLEMENTING PROGRAMS	Refer women victims / survivors of violence to support and justice services or, if not available, provide direct support to women victims / survivors of violence.	Conduct awareness with men about the program to encourage women's participation.	Engage women who are disadvantaged in the community in the program.	Develop women's knowledge, confidence and skills.	Work with individual women and men, families and communities to promote gender equality.	Encourage women victims / survivors of violence to access justice.
		Encourage women victims / survivors of violence to access justice.	Work with male partners, family members and community leaders to change their attitude towards gender, VAW and women's economic empowerment.	Work with women and men participating in the program and in the community to increase women's participation in the program.	Monitor changes in women and men's workloads, income and financial decision-making.	Support staff, volunteers and partners implementing programs who are exposed to VAW.
		Support staff, volunteers and partners implementing program: who are exposed to VAW.	Train women and men in gender, VAW and women's economic empowerment.	Monitor women's participation in the program.	Monitor changes in women and men's: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workloads. • Income and financial decision-making. • Attitudes towards gender, VAW and women's economic empowerment. 	Support staff, volunteers and partners implementing program: who are exposed to VAW.
MONITORING PROGRAMS	Monitor women's experience of violence.	Monitor women's experience of violence.	Monitor men's support for the program.	Monitor women's participation in the program.	Monitor changes in women and men's: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workloads. • Income and financial decision-making. • Attitudes towards gender, VAW and women's economic empowerment. 	Monitor women's experience of violence.
		Monitor unintended harmful impacts of the program.	Monitor changes in men's: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribution to the household income. • Attitudes towards gender, VAW and women's economic empowerment. 	Monitor women's participation in the program.	Monitor unintended harmful impacts of the program.	

PRINCIPLE 1: SUPPORT WOMEN VICTIMS / SURVIVORS OF VIOLENCE



Women in Melanesia are experiencing high rates of domestic violence. *Do No Harm* found cases of women participating in women's economic empowerment programs experiencing violence. In some cases women were experiencing violence that started after women's participation in the program and in others it was violence that was happening before their participation in the program. Where violence started after women started participating in the program, this violence is not caused by the program. Rather, women's economic empowerment challenges unequal gender roles and norms and this can lead to men using VAW as a way of reinforcing their power over women and gender inequality.

Do No Harm found examples of domestic violence relating to women questioning men's spending on alcohol. Men's use of alcohol and domestic violence are caused by attitudes and behaviours about gender inequality and their abuse of power and control over women. Men's violence while using alcohol is often given as an excuse for their choice to be violent. This distances men from their violence by blaming their violence on their drinking rather than their own attitudes and behaviours.¹

Do No Harm found that women in violent or controlling relationships were less able to participate in women's economic empowerment programs. For example, women can have their movements restricted or monitored by controlling partners or they might not participate in activities because they feel ashamed.

To support women victims / survivors of violence, programs should:

- Train staff, volunteers and partners to have an understanding of gender, VAW and women's economic empowerment.
- Conduct a gender and power analysis to understand how VAW impacts on women's lives and their participation in the program.
- Know what services are available to women experience violence in the communities where you were by mapping service providers.
- Support women victims / survivors of violence to access support and justice services by referring women to experienced VAW services or, if not available, providing direct support to women victims / survivors of violence, and ensuring that there is budget allocated to support women to access support services and justice.
- Ensure that staff are trained to respond to women's stories of violence to provide survivor-centred and rights-based responses.
- Use women only focus groups to monitor women's experience of violence and any other unintended consequences during the program.
- Support staff, volunteers and partners implementing programs who are exposed to VAW through workplace policies and procedures.

¹ Wilson, I. M., Graham, K. and Taft, A. (2017). 'Living the Cycle of Drinking and Violence: A qualitative study of women's experience of alcohol-related intimate partner violence', *Drug and Alcohol Review*, 36, 115–124.

PRINCIPLE 2: TRANSFORM GENDER INEQUALITY



In Melanesia women have less access to, and control over, decision-making, economic resources, health care, education and leisure compared to men. These gender norms impact on whether women's economic advancement and empowerment programs empower women.

Do No Harm found that where programs included awareness sessions or trainings on gender they contributed to changing unequal gender norms. This could be seen through evidence such as men doing household work and women doing work previously seen to be only for men. However, there was little change seen in responsibility for tasks, such as work related to the household, care, agriculture, church and community, which are still mostly done by women.

Women had heavy workloads before participating in women's economic empowerment programs. *Do No Harm* found that women's workload rarely reduces as a result of women's economic empowerment programs. In fact, participation in women's economic empowerment programs can increase women's workload through the time needed to earn an income and participate in program activities. At the same time, *Do No Harm* found that some men were decreasing their contribution to the household once women were earning money which means men can increase their discretionary spending. In some cases, men had never contributed to the household.

Do No Harm found that women value their ability to generate income and to improve their lives and their families lives, with some women reporting increased control over their income.

Do No Harm found examples of joint decision-making between women and men about the family income where women appear to have a degree of respect and power. However, sometimes women were simply agreeing with men's decisions and in some of these relationships the women were experiencing domestic violence. There were also examples of women and men managing their own income separately and some women reported preferring this approach. However some women reported not trusting men with their income and conflicts over men's use of money that does not benefit the family. Finally, *Do No Harm* found that women's increase in income and their reporting of degrees of control in decision-making about their income did not lead to less domestic violence.

Not all programs working to empower women economically will be able to adopt a community-wide approach to transforming gender inequality due to the skills, time and resources required.

However, as a starting point programs should:

- Conduct a gender and power analysis to understand how gender and power inequalities impact on women's lives; and women and men's attitudes towards gender, VAW and women's economic empowerment, unequal workloads and income and financial decision-making.
- Train individual women and men, families and communities to address women's workload, women's influence over financial decision making and women and men's attitudes towards gender VAW and women's economic empowerment.
- Use pre and post assessments to monitor changes in relation to gender equality such as women and men's workload, income and financial decision-making and attitude towards gender, VAW and women's economic empowerment.

PRINCIPLE 3: INCREASE WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN PROGRAMS



Do No Harm found that some women face barriers to participating in women's economic empowerment programs including:

- Heavy workloads that mean women do not have time to participate.
- Women needing support/permission from men to participate.
- Men being jealous of women's income which challenges men's roles as a provider and means that men have less control over women.

Some women, as a result of inequality, discrimination, stigmatisation and physical and geographical environments, can face additional barriers to fully participate in community activities. Factors that can make it harder for women to participate include their age, marital status, location (urban, town, rural and outer island areas), health, ability, sexual orientation, gender identity and experience of poverty.

Do No Harm found that women only spaces provide an opportunity for women to learn and experiment in a safe space that encourages peer support among women which then increases their ability to participate in and take on decision-making roles in mixed community settings with women and men.

To increase women's participation in activities, programs should:

- Conduct a gender and power analysis to identify women who are disadvantaged in the community, identify barriers to women's participation and understand men's support for women's participation in the program.
- Promote inclusion and participation to ensure that women who are disadvantaged in the community can participate in the program.
- Use women's only spaces to develop women's knowledge, confidence and skills.
- Train women and men to increase women's participation in the program.
- Disaggregate data about who is participating in the program to monitor women's participation in the program.

PRINCIPLE 4: CHANGE MEN'S ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS THAT SUPPORT GENDER INEQUALITY AND VAW



Do No Harm found that some men did not support women's economic empowerment programs but where awareness raising was done with men at the beginning of the program, men's support for the program increased. *Do No Harm* also found that men's acceptance of women's economic empowerment programs increased as they saw the benefits to the family and the community.

Men's resistance to women's empowerment is a way of maintaining their power and control over women and maintaining gender inequality. Challenging men's attitudes and behaviours that support gender inequality and VAW requires skilled staff, time and resources to be effective. This work needs to be ongoing and not a one-off awareness or training.

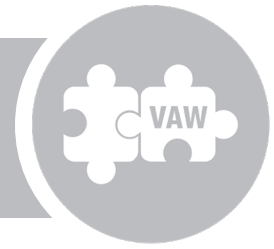
The high prevalence of domestic violence in Melanesia means that it should be assumed that some men participating in programs are perpetrators of domestic violence. Working with perpetrators of domestic violence has additional risks and requires specific and advanced skills and should only be done by highly skilled individuals.

Organisations wanting to implement specific programs for men should partner with women's organisations experienced in this kind of programming.

However to begin to change men's attitudes and behaviours that support gender inequality and VAW, program should:

- Conduct a gender and power analysis to ask women how men should be involved in the program and to understand how men are contributing to the household income and their attitudes towards gender, VAW and women's economic empowerment.
- Conduct awareness with men about the program to encourage women's participation.
- Conduct training with male partners, family members and community leaders to change their attitudes towards gender, VAW and women's economic empowerment.
- Use pre and post assessments to monitor changes in men's: support for the program; contribution to the household income; and attitudes towards gender, VAW and women's economic empowerment.

PRINCIPLE 5: PARTNER WITH EXPERIENCED VAW SERVICE PROVIDERS



It will take time to develop the knowledge, skills and experience of staff, volunteers and partners needed to integrate the elimination of VAW into women's economic empowerment programs. While this learning is happening, organisations supporting women's economic empowerment programs should partner with individuals and organisations experienced in addressing VAW from rights-based and survivor-centred approaches to:

- Train staff, volunteers, partners and communities gender, VAW and women's economic empowerment.
- Conduct a gender and power analysis to understand how VAW impacts on women's lives.
- Support victims / survivors of violence to access support and justice services, including conducting risk assessments.
- Use women only focus groups to monitor women's experience of violence and any other unintended consequences during the program.
- Support staff, volunteers and partners implementing programs who are exposed to VAW.

ABOUT THE *DO NO HARM* RESEARCH PROJECT

Partnering with The Department of Pacific Affairs at the Australian National University and funded by the Australian Government's Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development, the *Do No Harm: Understanding the Relationship Between Women's Economic Empowerment and VAW in Melanesia* research project (*Do No Harm*) explored questions about the effects of women's economic empowerment activities on gender and power relationships in the family, and the relationship between women's economic empowerment and their experience of family violence..

The research was conducted in Solomon Islands (2014) and Papua New Guinea in the Autonomous Region of Bougainville (2015) and the Highlands (2016) with a range of programs working to increase women's economic advancement and empowerment at the community level and with women business owners. Most of the programs included in the research focused on women earning an income in the informal economy. As a result, the findings will not be inclusive of all forms of women's economic empowerment programs.

The aim of *Do No Harm* was not to criticise or question women's economic empowerment programs. The aim was to understand women's experience of domestic violence and how it relates to their participation in women's economic empowerment programs so that we can improve our programs. While the strategies recommended require more work and resources, they will strengthen programs to improve outcomes for women.

Recommendations to implement a *Do No Harm* approach to women's economic empowerment programs.

To Duty-Bearers

- Advocate to local, provincial and national governments
 - To provide core funding to civil society and faith-based violence against women services who use rights-based, survivor-centred approaches
 - To improve the quality of government services responding to violence against women, including through capacity building of state actors in the rights-based, survivor-centred approaches
 - To increase the reach of state, civil society and faith-based violence against women services (particularly into rural and remote locations)
 - To integrate violence against women response and prevention into women's economic empowerment programs, particularly by ensuring that programs
- Support women victims/survivors of violence
- Transform gender inequality
- Increase women's participations in programs
- Change men's attitudes and behaviours that support gender inequality and violence against women
- Partner with experienced violence against women service providers

To Bilateral and Multilateral donors

- Advocate to donors to fund the integration of violence against women response and prevention into women's economic empowerment programs, particularly by ensuring that programs have funding to
 - Support women victims/survivors of violence
 - Transform gender inequality
 - Increase women's participations in programs
 - Change men's attitudes and behaviours that support gender inequality and violence against women
 - Partner with experienced violence against women service providers
- Advocate to donors to support follow-up research to
 - monitor the impact of a *Do No Harm* approach to women's economic empowerment
 - explore the construction of underlying gender norms in Pacific communities and the tools and accountability mechanisms required to bring about transformation of informal and individual consciousness and capabilities and informal and systemic social norms and deep structures.

To International Non-Government Organisations and local Non-Government Organisations

- Assess women's economic empowerment programs against the *Do No Harm* Toolkit "Checklist for integrating the elimination of violence against women into women's economic empowerment programs."
- Seek/allocate funding to ensure the integration of violence against women response and prevention into women's economic empowerment programs, particularly by ensuring that programs
 - Support women victims/survivors of violence
 - Transform gender inequality
 - Increase women's participations in programs
 - Change men's attitudes and behaviours that support gender inequality and violence against women
 - Partner with experienced violence against women service providers

FURTHER INFORMATION

Do No Harm Toolkits

<https://iwda.org.au/resource/do-no-harm-toolkit/>

Do No Harm Report: Solomon Islands

<http://dpa.bellschool.anu.edu.au/experts-publications/publications/6002/do-no-harm-research-solomon-islands>

Do No Harm Report: Bougainville

<http://dpa.bellschool.anu.edu.au/experts-publications/publications/6000/do-no-harm-research-bougainville>

Do No Harm Report: Papua New Guinea

<http://dpa.bellschool.anu.edu.au/experts-publications/publications/6001/do-no-harm-research-papua-new-guinea>

