

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: EVALUATION OF PROMOTING WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT, PROTECTION, AND HEALING PROJECT, PAPUA NEW GUINEA (PNG)

EVALUATION PURPOSE

In October 2016, IWDA conducted an evaluation of counselling services provided through the Eastern Highlands Family Voice (EHFV) ending violence against women (EVAW) project, covering the period 2011 to 2016. The project is supported through IWDA's Women's Safety and Security Program and funded by ANCP. The evaluation purpose was two-fold. Firstly, to identify the partner organisation's current technical strengths and any technical support needs in relation to EVAW counselling program. Secondly, this evaluation was aimed at providing insights to support future program design for IWDA's broader Women's Safety and Security Program.

METHODOLOGY

A total of 28 stakeholders participated, with data being collected through individual interviews (18), joint interviews (4), a survey (9 respondents) and a desk review. The UN *Essential Services Package for Women and Girls Subject to Violence*¹ was chosen to benchmark EHFV's services against global recommended service delivery standards. The package provides delivery guidelines (principles, common characteristics, and foundational elements) for the core elements of each essential EVAW service to ensure the delivery of high quality services, particularly for low and middle-income countries for women and girls experiencing violence. The guidelines are mainly designed for governments and key agencies that work in EVAW space, but can also be used to assess work of local grassroots organisations, with acknowledgement that not all possible services, guidance and components can be met by one organisation or that any given organisation does not have to necessarily deliver all components of suggested guidelines.

KEY FINDINGS

The evaluation found several **key areas of strength and challenges**. **Strengths** of the EHFV's counselling services is that free counselling is offered by the organisation. Greater outreach to women survivors is done through a number of community counsellors (all volunteers) that are available at community level to provide basic crisis response and counselling. Of the interviewed clients, 80% reported being satisfied with the service and could indicate significant situational changes such as feeling empowered, and reduced feelings of hopelessness. Most key stakeholders from other organisations found it easy to refer clients to EHFV and had a reasonably good overview of what kind of services were provided. EHFV applies a comprehensive approach to addressing family and sexual violence, which includes working not only with women, but also with their partners, male

PARTNER AND PROJECT OVERVIEW

Eastern Highlands Family Voice (EHFV) is a non-government organisation that was founded in 1997 by local women.

EHFV has been working in partnership with IWDA to implement a multi-year project "Promoting Women's Development, Protection, and Healing" (starting from 2013) with women survivors of family and sexual violence (FSV) as the primary target group. Key expected project outcomes are that at least 6,500 women have opportunities to access support services, information, referrals and become aware of their rights on the issue of violence against women.

EHFV provides the following services:

- Counselling and referral services for women and girls who have experienced family and sexual violence.
- Case management for women and girls who have experienced family and sexual violence.
- Information dissemination and awareness raising on violence against women through working with communities and key referral partners.

IWDA has been providing small funding from 2008 onwards, but after EHFV's key partner (Stronger People Stronger Nation Program) finished the partnership, IWDA became the main donor since March 2016 with provision of AUD47,668 for 2015/2016 and AUD104,052 for 2016/2017. This funding was provided by the Australian Government's ANCP program.

¹ [UN Essential Services Package for Women and girls subject to violence: Core elements and quality guidelines](#), United Nations Joint Global Programme on Essential Services for Women and Girls Subject to Violence (the "Programme"), a partnership by UN Women, UNFPA, WHO, UNDP and UNODC

advocates and male perpetrators, communities and families of women and children survivors of violence. This approach allows creating greater opportunities for survivors of violence to receive help, support and justice. EHFV networks with key referral partners to ensure working and effective referral pathways to address family and sexual violence.

Key challenges identified by this evaluation were around standards and procedures for counselling services. For example, the interviewed counsellors found it difficult to articulate standard procedures as EHFV does not have a documented practice manual. Though reviewed case file notes demonstrate safety planning through referrals (mainly to the police), no specific tool is used for risk assessments, but. Though case files are relatively well completed with basic essential information and advice provided, there is no systematic data collection other than client files to inform interventions.

Due to lack of services to address family and sexual violence in the Eastern Highlands Province, there is a challenge in creating effective referral pathways for survivors of violence. At the moment of evaluation, EHFV didn't have documented referral guidance and often referral processes depended on the knowledge of individual staff of the organisation and counsellors. Referrals are made to existing services, which include the public solicitor, police, courts and welfare services. They have limited capacity to support women and children in the situation of violence and mainly provide with partial child support after the husband has left the wife. Often referrals to courts and public solicitor office pose difficulties, as women are left waiting, while men are served first. There are limited opportunities for women survivors of violence to find safe accommodation. For shelter, referrals are made to the Family Support Centre, where clients can stay for 72 hours if they are directed by the hospital, other survivors of violence who didn't require medical assistance are not able to use this service. There is another newly established safe house in Goroka, which is not a part of existing referral network and lacks coordination with other service providers. This creates challenge for EHFV to provide effective referrals and ensure positive and just outcomes for survivors of violence.

The quality of counselling varies amongst counsellors mainly due to limited training and professional development opportunities, including limited options for supervision of working counsellors and absence of work protocols. For instance, one counsellor has a counselling diploma while others have attended short training workshops and the manager has participated in the regional training program of Fiji Women's Crisis Centre. Management would like for all counselling staff to obtain the counselling diploma, but there are insufficient funds and local educational opportunities. Currently, no formal supervision is provided. The EHFV volunteer community counsellors have received basic training in the past, but no refresher or new training was provided for some time.

RECOMMENDATIONS

EHFV has developed a good reputation, with valued counselling, advocacy, school and community activities. To strengthen future approaches, the evaluation report suggested a number of recommendations highlighting that focus is needed on establishment of clear protocols, procedures and processes for their activities.

Some specific recommendations include:

- Develop a counselling and support practice manual, including risk assessment and safety planning template, to ensure consistent approaches and minimum standards of counselling and risk assessment.
- EHFV to consider how legal aid support to survivors of FSV could be included into their services through establishment of in-house legal aid services or working with existing legal aid providers.
- EHFV should develop referral protocols and strengthen their relationships with their partners, particularly with organisations that can provide legal support, safe accommodation, and support women with vocational training and income generating opportunities.
- EHFV consider how to increased accessibility, coverage and provision of support to FSV survivors, for example, through strengthening work with community counsellors, providing them with greater training, considering establishing a help line, reviewing options for information dissemination and/or utilising better existing mechanisms and structures available in province so women and children survivors of violence are able to reach out for help and support, including those with disabilities.
- EHFV should utilise their experience of working with men and strengthen their work, for example through developing a men's behaviour change program, including training male advocates.
- Counselling staff should receive appropriate training (including re-fresher training) in concepts of GBV, human rights and counselling, as well as basic knowledge of legislation. Further skills development is recommended through regular monthly supervision. .
- EHFV should ensure that Child Protection Policy, Code of Conduct and related procedures are in place and implemented. EHFV can identify training needs for their counsellors and volunteers to ensure child protection are met in their work.