

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Adapting and scaling up Respectful Relationships and School Action Group programs to prevent violence against women and girls in Papua New Guinea

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BACKGROUND

Equal Playing Field (EPF) is a Papua New Guinea-based organization working to prevent violence against women and children. EPF implements an eight-week curriculum to primary school students aged 12 to 15 in Port Moresby and Bougainville. The volunteer-led curriculum focuses on healthy relationships, respectful behaviours, and gender equality. The programming is informed by international 'Respectful Relationships' models.¹

INNOVATION

This project will develop a group of young people (boys and girls) who are committed to ending gender inequality and violence against women, and who have the skills to participate in advocacy and campaigning. Because of their new skills and changed attitudes, this cohort of young people have the capacity to become part of a future workforce that is willing to contribute to social, structural and systemic change around gender equality and violence against women. There are also very few programs in the Melanesian region that focus on boys and girls working together to address these issues. This program's commitment to boys and girls working together to end gender inequality is innovative for the region and it complements existing single sex programs.

OBJECTIVES

1. Improve and strengthen the School Action Group design using a participatory process to involve existing School Action Group members in the design of the program.
2. Test a new model for School Action Groups using volunteer and student-led evaluation methods
3. Develop a curriculum and manual that will allow the School Action Groups to be up-scaled
4. Disseminate findings: The co-principal investigators will work with EPF to develop and publish articles on the achievements of the School Action Group with the intention of promoting it as a model to a range of schools. Dissemination could include presentations in Papua New Guinea, Bougainville, and the Solomon Islands. Presentations at conferences, and publications in journals.

METHODS

1. Participatory planning: Three participatory workshops will be held with EPF volunteers, staff and students to re-design the School Action Groups, design the curriculum and create a simple monitoring framework to assess the implementation of the program.
2. Testing the School Action Groups: EPF staff and volunteers will test the redesign of the School Action Groups at four schools in Port Moresby. School Action Groups will consist of volunteers who will work together to create a range of awareness raising activities in their school and in their community. Topics will include gender roles, gender inequality, and violence against women. Volunteers will provide training to the students so that they build the skills needed to run these activities. During the testing stage, EPF volunteers will implement the new curriculum, and work with students to design an advocacy campaign in their school.
3. Reflection and redesign: A participatory workshop will be held with students, EPF volunteers, and EPF staff to reflect on what has worked well, and what could be improved. These findings will then inform the redesign of the toolkit and curriculum for the School Action Groups.

ADVOCACY IMPLICATIONS

Through strengthening and adapting the School Action Groups, EPF has the potential to change the attitudes and build advocacy skills of potentially thousands of young people across Papua New Guinea, Bougainville and Solomon Islands. This cohort of young people will become a central part of the future strengthening of Papua New Guinea's institutional responses to ending violence against women.

1. Gleeson, C. Kearney, S. Leung, L. Brislane, J. (2015) Evidence Paper: Respectful Relationships in Schools. Our Watch. Accessed online on 6th March 2018 at: <<https://www.ourwatch.org.au/getmedia/4a61e08b-c958-40bc-8e02-30fde5f66a25/Evidence-paper-respectful-relationships-education-AA-updated.pdf.aspx>>

