



Programme Summary

Port Moresby: A Safe City for Women and Girls Programme

Programme at a glance

The Port Moresby Safe City for Women and Girls Programme (PMSCP) in Papua New Guinea (PNG) started in 2011, as one of the five founding city programmes¹ of UN Women’s ‘Safe Cities Free of Violence Against Women and Girls Global Programme’.² The Global Programme aims to prevent and respond to sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence against women and girls (VAWG) in public spaces. The PMSCP aimed to make markets and public transport safe and free of violence for women and girls, and increase women and girls’ autonomous mobility in the city. **The programme is an example of a safe cities initiative that addresses VAWG through a multisectoral and holistic approach;** combining interventions and working with multiple stakeholders to create safe and empowering urban environments for women and girls – which can support women’s empowerment and wider access to opportunities.

Background

UN Women’s Global Safe Cities Programme was launched in 2010, following growing demands from women’s rights organisations (WROs) to address sexual harassment in public spaces, and in response to the lack of evidence, policy and programming to prevent and respond to this issue.³ The Global Programme aims to fill these gaps by making the issue of sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence in public spaces more visible, to help break the silence on this issue which is often normalised by both men and women, and to generate evidence of how interventions can enable women and girls to move freely and be safe in urban spaces.

Programme context

Port Moresby is the biggest and most rapidly growing city in PNG. The city’s markets are important parts of Port Moresby’s social and economic network, providing livelihoods and opportunities for women and girls to socialise. Most vendors in the markets are women (80%). However, many women in Port Moresby are not able to access and enjoy public spaces freely and safely because of the ongoing risk of sexual harassment and other forms of VAWG which are widespread.

Two programme scoping studies⁴ found high rates of VAWG in markets and on public transport:

- 90% of women and girls had experienced some form of violence (physical assault, robbery, sexual harassment, sexual violence, verbal abuse, threats and intimidation) when accessing public transport.
- 55% of women and girls had experienced any of these forms of VAWG in the markets.
- 22% reported having experienced sexual violence (SV) in markets more than once in the past year.

Risk factors for VAWG in markets include: insufficient police presence, men’s and boys’ alcohol and drug consumption, and high levels of unruly behaviour and illegal activities.



PROGRAMME SUMMARY

Programme description

The city authorities together with UN Women and other partners developed two initiatives for the PMSCP:

- **The Safe Markets Initiative** (2011-2019).
- **The Safe Public Transport Initiative** (2015-2019).
- From 2016, the programme also included a behaviour change campaign to raise awareness and address norms and beliefs that normalise VAWG in public spaces: **The Sanap Wantaim campaign** ("Stand Together"). All in all, the programme spanned over eight years (2011-2019).

The Safe Cities Global Programme Hypothesis

"Through a process of partnership-building with and capacity development of local government authorities and community-based organisations, and of women's empowerment and community mobilisation for social change, investment in practical measures for improving women's safety in urban spaces can lead to reduced prevalence of GBV against women and girls within a three-to-five year time-frame, expanding women's exercise of their rights to enjoy public spaces and freedom of mobility. The approach can also lead to personal security for all community members; as well as to potentially advancing women's rights and gender equality across a wider spectrum of socio-economic dimensions."

Theory of Change

The Global Programme had an overarching theory of change (ToC) which proposed that **attitudinal changes** and **practical measures** were two cornerstones of the change process to improve women's safety in urban spaces.

Following the scoping study, a participatory programme design workshop was held with key stakeholders (government authorities, WROs, NGOs, schools, the police, local businesses) to discuss and validate the findings of the study and develop a locally owned ToC.

The Port Moresby Safe City Programme (PMSCP) envisaged a **transformative change process of empowering women and girls using safe markets and safe transport from/to the markets and other safe public spaces**. The change process had three pillars:

Partnerships - Strengthening Port Moresby's government and enhancing the capacities of duty bearers to prevent and respond to VAWG in public spaces.

Community mobilisation - Building social networks, raising awareness and transforming social norms that perpetuate VAWG in public spaces, and increasing the respect among market users for women's and girls' right to a life free from violence.

Gender sensitive and violence preventative infrastructure - Improving the built environment and transport, and management of the same, to address women's and girls' safety in marketplaces and when using transport.

THE PMSC HAD FIVE KEY OUTCOMES:

OUTCOME 1: Reformed and enhanced implementation of NCDC policies, by-laws, budgets and systems that translate on prevention and protection of all forms of violence against women and girls and increased economic opportunities for women and youth.

OUTCOME 2: Enhanced capacities of duty bearers to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls in public spaces.

OUTCOME 3: Increased respect among market users for women's and girls' rights to a life free from violence.

OUTCOME 4: Gender sensitive infrastructure and social planning measures are put in place to address women's and girls' safety in marketplaces.

OUTCOME 5: Media representatives have acquired knowledge to report on all aspects of VAWG, with particular attention to SV, including service provision, legal assistance to victims of violence, community engagement in violence prevention and the protection of women and girls.

PROGRAMME SUMMARY

Core components

THE SAFE MARKETS INITIATIVE

Institutional capacity: The programme built the capacity of the city government, the National Capital District Commission (NCDC), to integrate gender and VAWG prevention into structures to govern the city's markets. The NCDC established a Market Division and received support to develop systems for planning, budgeting, operations, and monitoring. Gender expertise was ensured through seconding a staff member from the NCDC's Women's Desk and embedding UN Women staff in the Market Division, alongside training of regular staff in gender, VAWG and human rights.

A model for market governance: A Market Management Committee (MMC) and a Market Vendor Association (MVA) were established in each market. The MMC consisted of key stakeholders in the markets, while the MVA gathered vendors, the majority being women. The MVAs enabled women vendors to have a collective voice in MMC meetings, where they for instance discussed gender responsive infrastructure and addressed problems within the market such as VAWG.

Skills training and financial opportunities: The MVAs provided skills training for women vendors (e.g. financial literacy and business development) and provided access to loans and credit for members.

VAWG response services: The police and market security guards were trained on VAWG prevention and response. The trainings followed a gender curriculum and were given monthly for a year from 2017 to 2018. The programme established a Community Referral and Mentoring Service (CRAMS) and trained 32 community volunteers and local government service providers (police, health services, courts) to handle referrals and ensure that VAWG survivors accessed services. Furthermore, a police post was established in selected markets.

Improved environments: Market infrastructure was upgraded, for instance improved fencing, security, and public toilets, and the programme built transit centres to host women who travel from rural areas. Participation of women was integral to the process, for instance through **safety audits**

where women, service providers and local authorities assessed the safety of public spaces.

Electronic payments: A mobile payment system was created to allow vendors to make electronic payments of market fees. This aimed to reduce illicit collection of fees and extortion, which women vendors experienced on a regular basis.

Awareness raising: Monthly events were organised in the markets to inform the population about programme developments and raise awareness on selected topics such as gender equality and health.

Women's Safety Audits:

- **Asked:** What is the space used for? Who uses the space?
- **Assessed:** Lighting, state of roads/ footpaths, maps/signs, public toilets etc.
- **Recorded discussion:** Do you feel comfortable in this space? Has anyone experienced anything negative here? Could you get help if you were in need? What kind of changes would make you feel safer?
- Came up with **recommendations** for interventions to increase safety.

THE SAFE PUBLIC TRANSPORT INITIATIVE

Women-only bus service: The *Meri Seif* Bus service was developed to provide safe, reliable and affordable public transport for women and girls. In 2017, the buses had recorded 230,000 trips made by women and girls on the buses which operated in morning and afternoon peak hours. The programme also designed a six-month course to train women to become *Meri Seif* bus drivers.

Transport governance and management: The programme worked with the Road Traffic Authority (RTA) to improve the safety for women and girls on regular public transport. This focused on improving the reliability of services and safety around bus stops, as bus services in Port Moresby were often unreliable and diverted from the

PROGRAMME SUMMARY

outlined routes, dropping women and girls off in unsafe places and at unsafe times.

Drivers' associations: The intervention worked with the Public Motor Vehicle (PMV) association, which represents drivers of public transport vehicles, to mobilise drivers to join the cause of making public transport safer for women and girls. The programme supported the association to strengthen their governance and held trainings which addressed their responsibility in making services safe for women and girls.

THE SANAP WANTAIM CAMPAIGN

The programme included a city-wide behaviour change campaign to sensitise youth, commuters, vendors, drivers, authorities, and the public about VAWG in public spaces. It specifically aimed to **mobilise men and boys against VAWG; empower women and girls** to stand up for themselves and each other and acknowledge their right to the city; and **equip people with the knowledge** of how to identify VAWG, and what to do when it is experienced or witnessed. The campaign messages were shared through media and events with government authorities, private sector, communities and schools, and through weekly awareness sessions on the *Meri Seif* buses.

Youth engagement was a critical component of the campaign. A youth advisory committee, consisting 50% young women, spearheaded the vision, plan and messages of the behavior change campaign. Youth civil society organisations facilitated peer-to-peer youth mobilisation and launched the campaign in schools.

Campaign Messages:

- **Equality:** Men and women are equal. This is our constitutional right - this a human right.
- **Consent:** Consent means a woman's right over her body. When she says 'no' it means 'no' every time by everyone.
- **Harassment is wrong:** Women and girls have a right to be safe in this city.
- **Stand together:** Men and women, boys and girls must stand together to make a safe city.
- **A safe city is a great city:** When Port Moresby is safe for women and girls it is great for everyone.

Monitoring and evaluation

The monitoring of the PMSCP was carried out by government institutions and implementing partners. This was part of the programme's institutional capacity building approach, aiming to build sustainability. In addition, UN Women regularly commissioned programme reviews to gather complementary data.

An evaluation of the programme was carried out in 2018/19. The mixed methods, participatory impact evaluation engaged 322 participants such as women vendors, MMC and MVA members, bus users, community volunteers and youth, and conducted around 40 key informant interviews.

The evaluation did not measure changes in the VAWG prevalence since the programme did not have a baseline. However, it used systematic methods to assess the contribution of different interventions to programme outcomes

The evaluation highlights several contributions to women's and girls' safety:

- **The forming of market vendor associations (MVAs) contributed to women's participation in market management** and provided a platform to address gender and VAWG issues. However, women's influence in the market management was challenged by resistance for change from other stakeholders.
- **The MVAs reduced ethnic conflicts as women** developed a collective identity as vendors and organised themselves according to what they sold instead of based on ethnicity.
- **Improved infrastructure and market security contributed to an increased sense of safety among women and girls**, and the police reported less security incidents and violence within the markets.

PROGRAMME SUMMARY

- **The establishment of market by-laws, and enforcement by better trained security staff** contributed to a safer environment with less alcohol and drug use within the markets. However, there were still reports of threatening behaviour by market controllers and security guards towards women vendors.
- **Women and girls reported high levels of satisfaction with the *Meri Seif* bus service**, rating it 10/10 for achieving safety, freedom and affordability for women and girls. Women and girls also found the bus highly reliable in terms of running on time and to the scheduled destinations. This facilitated safer access to markets, especially for female vendors.
- **The programme contributed towards building a more gender sensitive transport sector** by providing institutional support to the Road Traffic Authority (RTA) and giving gender trainings to PMV operators. The PMV Association continued the trainings after the programme had ended.
- **The Community Referral and Mentoring Services (CRAMS) contributed to improved access to essential services for VAWG survivors.** The community volunteers were recognised as the driving forces behind this, as they made women and girls aware of the system and how to access services. However, the capacity of the CRAMS system to provide referrals was constrained by limited capacity of government counterparts such as the police.
- **The *Sanap Wantaim* campaign contributed to creating cohesion and a sense of shared values among participating youth.** However, since the campaign only started in 2016, the evaluation conducted in 2018 could not assess if this had translated into transformative change of attitudes and behaviours amongst the wider audience. More than 40,000 citizens mobilised across the city and leveraged municipal budget to implement the second phase of the behaviour change intervention in schools and public transport.

Lessons for programming

Importance of a multisectoral, holistic approach: The programme demonstrates that infrastructure improvements are not sufficient to improve safety for women and girls but need to be included in an integrated strategy. Investments in public infrastructure should be coupled with access to services for women, municipal action plans that forge multi-sectoral collaboration, meaningful participation of women rights organisations, and a shift in norms and mindsets within institutions, market management and communities, in order to address the underlying root causes of VAWG and generate transformative change.

Inclusive and gender responsive market management: Although market management structures became more inclusive of women, the market management's responsiveness to women's demands were sometimes insufficient, restricting women's influence in decision making. This highlights that efforts to support women's agency and leadership must be coupled with gender sensitisation within broader governance structures in order to achieve transformational change.

Building the institutional environment and capacity: Prior to the programme, the NCDC lacked governance structures for the city's markets, and the public transport sector displayed a low sense of accountability towards women and girls. It was essential for the programme to establish and support governance structures for markets and the transport sector, as this laid the foundation for the work to integrate gender and violence preventative measures across different levels. In addition, key partnership across sectors and levels of governance, such as between the market division and the gender desk, and transport authorities at local and national levels, was crucial to ensure an integrated and sustainable interventions.

Potential to adapt market model to other sectors: The MVAs proved to be a powerful platform for women vendors to unify and gain a voice in market management structures. The evaluation highlights the potential to transfer the market governance model to other informal sectors.

PROGRAMME SUMMARY

Participation of women and girls in urban planning: The programme's infrastructure interventions were made with the participation of women and girls to ensure that these prioritised the needs of women and girls. This was for instance achieved through conducting Women's Safety Audits in public spaces and consulting women in the planning and designing of infrastructure.

Safe public transport for women and girls can be effective and affordable: The evaluation found that when some of the *Mari Seif* buses trialled introducing a bus fare (from initially being free of charge), women still preferred using the

buses as they were more reliable and safer than the regular public transport. This demonstrates that there is a demand for public transport that prioritise women's mobility and safety needs.

Longer timeframes needed to transform attitudes and behaviours: The *Sanap Wantaim* campaign run during the last two years of the programme. Although it showed promising results in mobilising and building shared values among participating youth, the evaluation found that it is too early to see any transformative impact on norms and attitudes that underpin VAWG.

Source documents

[Evaluation of the 'Port Moresby: A Safe City for Women and Girls Programme](#), UN Women, 2019

[Making Port Moresby Safer for Women and Girls. Report on Scoping Study Findings](#), Jimenez, A., Au, R. and Sandeka, D., 2011

[Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces for Women and Girls Global Flagship Initiative: International Compendium of Practices](#), UN Women, 2019

[Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces: Global Results Report](#), UN Women, 2017

Links to further resources

- [Safe Cities Part 2: Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea](#), Short documentary, UN Women, 2013
- [Safe Public Transport Programme: First Anniversary of the Meri Seif Bus](#), UN Women, 2015
- [SANAP WANTAIM](#), UN Women, 2016

Endnotes

¹ The other pilot cities for the Global Programme were Quito (Ecuador); Cairo (Egypt), New Delhi (India) and Kigali (Rwanda).

² See UN Women (2020) [Corporate brief on Safe Cities And Safe Public Spaces](#)

³ *Safe Cities FPI: Programme Document*, April 2017

⁴ Jimenez, A., Au, R. and Sandeka, D. (2011) [Making Port Moresby Safer for Women and Girls](#). Report on Scoping Study Findings.

This document is part of the RESPECT Framework Implementation Guide, commissioned by UN Women and developed by Social Development Direct, which can be found [here](#).

Suggested citation: UN Women and Social Development Direct (2020) Port Moresby: A Safe City for Women and Girls Programme, RESPECT Preventing Violence against Women Programme Summary.