



RAPIDLY IMPROVING  
STANDARDS IN ELEMENTARY

BRIEFING DOCUMENT.

# TANGLED THREADS: MULTI-LAYERED BARRIERS TO EDUCATING GIRLS AGED 4-8 IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

SAVE THE CHILDREN, JULY 2018



Produced for Papua New Guinea under the Rapidly Improving Standards in Elementary program.

The Rapidly Improving Standards in Elementary program is supported by the Australian Government in partnership with the Government of Papua New Guinea.

Rapidly Improving Standards in Elementary is delivered by Save the Children in Papua New Guinea in partnership with Callan Services for Persons with Disabilities National Unit and Summer Institute of Linguistics Papua New Guinea.



Save the Children



Not for Re-sale

Acknowledgements

This report was written by Michelle Lokot (Liminal Research Tech LTD.). Thanks to Judith Reen (Save the Children PNG), Catherine Johnston (Save the Children Australia), Asha Bradley (Save the Children Australia) and Alice Macphillamy (Save the Children PNG) for technical inputs and feedback during the assessment design, fieldwork and report drafting. Thank you also to Edwina Miroi for translation support and facilitation of the fieldwork in the Eastern Highlands.



## CONTENTS

|                                                                                                                          |           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>ACRONYMS</b>                                                                                                          | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>                                                                                                 | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>INTRODUCTION</b>                                                                                                      | <b>12</b> |
| <b>RESEARCH DESIGN</b>                                                                                                   | <b>16</b> |
| PURPOSE                                                                                                                  | 16        |
| RESEARCH QUESTIONS                                                                                                       | 16        |
| METHODS                                                                                                                  | 17        |
| SAMPLING                                                                                                                 | 18        |
| ETHICS, CONFIDENTIALITY AND CONSENT                                                                                      | 20        |
| LIMITATIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES                                                                                            | 21        |
| <b>FINDINGS</b>                                                                                                          | <b>23</b> |
| GENDER NORMS (EXPECTATIONS, ACTIVITIES AND TREATMENT)                                                                    | 23        |
| FAMILY ENVIRONMENT                                                                                                       | 36        |
| CAREGIVER AMBIVALENCE                                                                                                    | 41        |
| TRANSPORT & DISTANCE TO SCHOOL                                                                                           | 46        |
| SAFETY DURING SCHOOL JOURNEYS & SCHOOL VIOLENCE                                                                          | 47        |
| MALNUTRITION                                                                                                             | 52        |
| SCHOOL FACILITIES, MATERIALS AND TEACHER AVAILABILITY/SKILLS                                                             | 60        |
| FINANCIAL BARRIERS                                                                                                       | 64        |
| DISABILITY                                                                                                               | 66        |
| <b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>                                                                                                   | <b>70</b> |
| <b>APPENDIX</b>                                                                                                          | <b>81</b> |
| TABLE OF ASSESSMENT PARTICIPANTS                                                                                         | 81        |
| SUMMARY OF SURVEY FINDINGS                                                                                               | 82        |
| EXPECTATIONS FOR GIRLS (AS STATED IN FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS BY GIRLS AND BOYS AGED 4-8, WOMEN AND MEN ACROSS LOCATIONS) | 83        |
| EXPECTATIONS FOR BOYS (AS STATED IN FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS BY GIRLS AND BOYS AGED 4-8, WOMEN AND MEN ACROSS LOCATIONS)  | 84        |
| <b>REFERENCES</b>                                                                                                        | <b>85</b> |



## ACRONYMS

ARoB – Autonomous Region of Bougainville

EHP – Eastern Highlands Province

EMIS – Education Management Information Systems

ESP – East Sepik Province

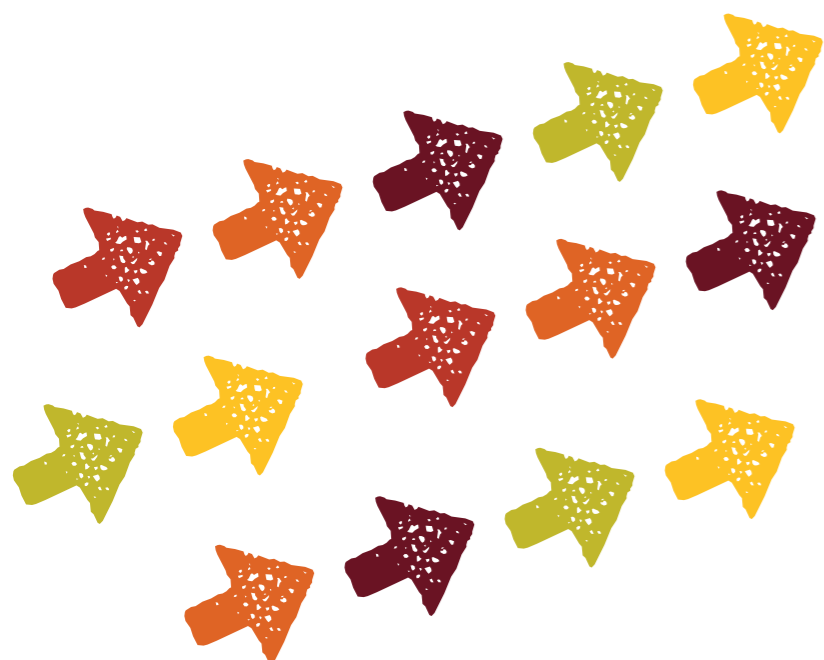
HIES – Household Income and Expenditure Survey

GBV – Gender-based Violence

PNG – Papua New Guinea

SPSS – Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

FGDs – Focus Group Discussions



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### BACKGROUND

This assessment sought to identify the barriers to enrolment, attendance, retention and completion of schooling among girls aged 4-8, as well as specific strategies to address these challenges. Through surveys, focus group discussions (FGDs), semi-structured interviews and small-group interviews, these issues were explored in the Autonomous Region of Bougainville (ARoB), Eastern Highlands (EHP) and East Sepik (ESP). In Papua New Guinea (PNG), as this report will outline, a complex interplay of factors affects education among girls aged 4-8.

### FINDINGS

#### GENDER NORMS (EXPECTATIONS, ACTIVITIES AND TREATMENT)

Gender norms shape the expectations, activities and treatment of girls, boys, women and men. Gender norms in PNG emerge out of PNG's experience of **colonialism**, the influence of **Christianity**, as well as local ideologies around the **wantok** system (social/kin networks), **kastom** (traditional culture), and the idea of the '**big man**' – all of which may shape education of girls aged 4-8. This assessment found that, alongside gender norms acting as an overarching barrier to girls' enrolment, attendance, retention and completion of schooling, gender norms infuse other more systemic barriers to school attendance. For broader issues that influence education for **both** girls and boys, such as access to food, there may be a further gendered dimension that makes it more difficult for girls to access quality education.



An East Sepik Student in E2.

The assessment findings highlight that gender norms create distinct and specific expectations for girls and boys. Across all three provinces, girls were expected to complete household chores, obey, be caring, dress decently and be respectful; while boys were required to be respectful, involved in tasks like gardening and building houses, attend school and be well-behaved. The most common consequences of girls and boys failing to meet these expectations were beating and name-calling.

In all provinces, references were made to the chores girls are responsible for, including cleaning, cooking, washing plates, washing clothes and looking after younger children. In general, there was agreement that girls have more chores than boys. In the caregiver and teacher survey, 28.3% strongly agreed or agreed that it was acceptable for a husband to beat his wife in certain situations.

## **FAMILY ENVIRONMENT**

Across all fieldwork sites, children, parents and teachers expressed concerns about how the family environment affects children's attendance, participation and learning at school. The most commonly mentioned issue was around how family life can be disrupted by caregivers arguing, extra-marital affairs, divorce or death of a caregiver. Some caregivers in ARoB in particular identified that other caregivers were more concerned with their own 'entertainment' (social activities including gambling), resulting in children being neglected. According to a few caregivers, a teacher and children themselves in ARoB and EHP, children as young as 4-8 were involved in gambling, which affected their school attendance.

## **CAREGIVER AMBIVALENCE**

While caregivers emphasised the importance of educating girls, highlighting that education enables girls to obtain jobs and earn income in the future, what emerged from interviews and FGDs was the fact that some caregivers were ambivalent about ensuring children actually attended school; caregivers may not pressure children to attend school if the children do not want to, or may fail to provide food or wash the clothes children need for school. Caregivers may also decide a child no longer should attend school because they are 'slow'. In some families, it was children themselves who influence or make the decisions about schooling.

Findings from the caregiver and teacher survey indicate that 76.1% of respondents strongly agree or agree that a girl can have any career or job she wants. At times, the reasons for educating children were gendered, with caregivers expressing that a son had to become educated since he would be head of the family.

## TRANSPORT & DISTANCE TO SCHOOL

Across provinces, distances to school and the means of transportation varied. In ARoB, girls indicated that they walked between 10-20 minutes, or took a bus for 10 minutes to attend school. Children walked with friends from their village, and/or older siblings. The short distances encountered in the study were likely a result of field site selection. In ESP, where fieldwork sites were rural, distances to travel to school were more varied, ranging from a 5 minute to a 1.5 hour walk. In EHP, where fieldwork sites were located in rural and urban locations, participants reported travelling between 5 minutes and 30 minutes to school.

## SAFETY DURING SCHOOL JOURNEYS AND SCHOOL VIOLENCE

The survey findings indicate that 85.9% strongly agree or agree that it is safe for girls to attend elementary school. In ARoB, there were no references to children's safety being an issue on the way to school, however this may be because fieldwork sites were close to schools. In ESP and EHP, girls on the way to school mentioned feeling afraid of people affected by drugs and alcohol. Although girls felt it was safe for boys to walk to school, boys expressed fears about violence from older boys on the way to school.

At school, references to violence largely involved bullying – though there were also examples of boys fighting each other. Girls and boys both experienced verbal altercations, often referred to by children as 'teasing'. Teasing sometimes included boys making fun of girls when they got the answer wrong in class, resulting in girls being too shy to participate.

Apart from bullying, a few children mentioned teacher punishment at school. The assessment findings indicate that punishments are more frequently given by male teachers, while female teachers are viewed as gentler. These perceptions may be influenced by gender norms that suggest women are more caring and men more violent.

## MALNUTRITION

In PNG, malnutrition among children under the age of 5 is described by UNICEF as a 'silent emergency'.<sup>1</sup> In PNG, 48.2% of children under 5 are stunted.<sup>2</sup> Save the Children's RISE baseline found connections between children eating breakfast and higher educational outcomes.<sup>3</sup> In all three fieldwork sites, children shared stories about either their own experiences with hunger, or the experiences of their friends. At times, access to food was influenced by gender and age, with males and older children accessing more food.

Malnutrition may be linked to late entry into school as it influences perceptions about a child's readiness for school. According to a teacher in ESP, parents make decisions about readiness based on a child's physical stature rather than their age – this practice is consistent with findings in other contexts.<sup>4</sup> This suggests a connection between problems: malnutrition affects a child's weight and height, which can create the perception that they are not old enough for school. This perpetuates delayed entry into school, which may mean older children experience teasing and bullying from younger children. Alongside this, children affected by malnutrition are more likely to suffer from illnesses, resulting in more absences and having to repeat a grade, increasing the gaps in ages between children in the same grade.

## SCHOOL FACILITIES, MATERIALS AND TEACHER AVAILABILITY/SKILLS

When asked about the top three things needed for their elementary schools to function effectively, teachers across all provinces most mentioned classroom facilities and learning materials.

Teacher absenteeism and lateness were identified as problems by caregivers and children. Teachers themselves felt they treated girls and boys equally and referenced 'gender equity', however showed a low understanding of what this actually involved beyond equal participation of girls and boys.

- 1 UNICEF (2014) 'Malnutrition – a silent emergency in Papua New Guinea', Press Release, available online: [https://www.unicef.org/png/media\\_22749.html](https://www.unicef.org/png/media_22749.html)
- 2 International Food Policy Research Institute (2016) *Global Nutrition Report: From Promise to Impact, Ending Malnutrition by 2030*, p. 120.
- 3 Johnston, C. et al. (2018) *Rapidly Improving Standards in Elementary (RISE) Literacy and Numeracy Boost Baseline Report, Papua New Guinea, Save the Children*, p. 48.
- 4 McCoy, D.C. et al (2015) 'Poverty, Physical Stature and Cognitive Skills: Mechanisms Underlying Children's School Enrollment in Zambia', *Developmental Psychology*, vol. 51, no. 5, pp. 600-614; Alderman, H. et al. (2009) 'Preschool Nutrition and Subsequent Schooling Attainment: Longitudinal Evidence from Tanzania', Working Paper 75/08, Center for Research on Pensions and Welfare Policies, p. 13; Daniels, M.C. & Adair, L.S. (2004) 'Growth in Young Filipino Children Predicts Schooling Trajectories Through High School', *Journal of Nutrition*, vol. 134, no. 6, pp. 1439-1446.

## FINANCIAL BARRIERS

School fees as well as school-associated expenses (food, uniforms, stationery, transport, loss of labour) emerged as issues that place increasing pressure on families. It was not a clear theme that caregivers prioritise boys when finances are under stress, however there were a few references to this.

## DISABILITY

In PNG, having a disability results in stigma. When gender and disability intersect, this can result in 'double discrimination',<sup>5</sup> resulting in lack of access to education and health services, and the isolation of girls with disabilities.

The assessment findings highlight some children with disabilities do display agency, making their own decisions about their education. Despite this, persistent stereotypes about the capacities of children with disabilities continue. In the survey, 34.8% of caregivers and teachers strongly agreed or agreed that they would object if someone with a mental disability was placed in the same class as their child, while 83.7% strongly agreed or agreed that girls with disabilities should attend special schools with other children who have disabilities.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Gender may be a relevant factor across each of these issues, further complicating how girls access quality education. However, in many cases there are more systemic issues at play that are not always gendered, meaning that both girls and boys may be affected. The assessment findings suggest that multiple strategies targeting multiple levels are required in order to ensure girls' enrolment, attendance, retention and completion of schooling.

Based on these barriers, the following strategies are recommended:

1. Implement a tailored parenting intervention, specifically a parenting curriculum combined with support groups
2. Implement a conditional cash transfer pilot
3. Engage teachers on personal attitudes and equip them with strategies to promote gender equality and address bullying in the classroom
4. Implement a school feeding pilot
5. Implement an after-school learning support program for girls and boys who are struggling at school, particularly children who are older than their grade
6. Mobilise women with disabilities to act as community role models to address stigma around disability
7. Engage faith leaders in social norm change processes

<sup>5</sup> Leonard Cheshire Disability (2017) *Still Left Behind: Pathways to Inclusive Education for Girls with Disabilities*, p. 7.



## INTRODUCTION

Papua New Guinea (PNG) is a developing country, with estimates suggesting a population of over 8 million people, who live across over 600 islands, speaking more than 850 languages.<sup>6</sup> Approximately 85% of the PNG population rely on subsistence agriculture as well as hunting and gathering. PNG's population is primarily rural, making access to services a challenge for people living in remote areas.<sup>7</sup>

PNG's diverse population and geographical spread has created a number of challenges for the delivery of education services. PNG's education system is decentralised, which means that schools have more control over funds – which at times has created problems between province and district school administrators.<sup>8</sup> Under pressure to deliver services across provinces, the government has struggled to regularly inspect schools to ensure quality; in 2012, only 64% of schools were inspected.<sup>9</sup> There are ongoing questions about whether vernacular languages should be used in schools. Rural areas continue to struggle to attract trained teachers.<sup>10</sup> The 'Tuition Fee Free' policy launched in 2012 resulted in increased enrolments, putting pressure on schools who have struggled to cope with increases in class sizes alongside limited infrastructure and low staffing.<sup>11</sup>



Photo of a school in ESP, taken by Michelle Lokot

While enrolment of girls has grown faster than among boys, increasing by 58% from 2002 to 2012,<sup>12</sup> attendance of girls remains a challenge, resulting in disparities in girls' access to education at every level of schooling. The most significant loss in transition rate from one school level to the next in PNG occurs from grade 8 to 9 (primary to lower secondary), where only 63.1% of boys and 55.1% of girls transition.<sup>13</sup> The disparity in educational access between girls and boys has longer-term consequences, including decreased literacy among women. Self-reported literacy rates among women are 57% compared to 69% among men.<sup>14</sup> Research shows that the low literacy of parents has ripple effects in the family; for example, a child whose mother can read is 50% more likely to live beyond the age of five.<sup>15</sup> Research in the Solomon Islands shows that children whose mothers did not attend school were less likely to be engaged in early learning to promote school readiness.<sup>16</sup>

For girls and boys aged 4-8, elementary education represents a strategic moment for intervention that lays the foundations for a child's ongoing educational journey. Despite the World Bank and other agencies asserting that this early education period represents 'the most important developmental phase throughout the lifespan,'<sup>17</sup> this life stage remains the period of life least invested in.<sup>18</sup> Importantly, it is during the early years of a child's education that girls and boys absorb ideas about gender norms, shaping the gender roles they adopt throughout their lives<sup>19</sup> and determining which behaviours are acceptable or not acceptable because of their male/female identity.<sup>20</sup>

In PNG, access to quality elementary schooling and improving learning outcomes for children aged 4-8 (especially girls) are issues of concern to Save the Children, who is implementing the Rapidly Improving Standards in Elementary (RISE) program in the Autonomous Region of Bougainville (ARoB), Eastern Highlands (EHP) and East Sepik (ESP).

Ongoing challenges to elementary school enrolment include: lack of elementary schools, poor school infrastructure, teachers not being qualified and insufficient numbers of teachers, making it difficult for schools to absorb new students. Elementary schools also face problems with limited access to educational materials and poor attitudes and attendance of teachers.<sup>21</sup>

6 World Bank (2018) 'The World Bank in Papua New Guinea', available online at: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/png/overview>  
7 Asian Development Bank (2012) *Papua New Guinea. Country Gender Assessment 2011-2012*, pp. 2-3.  
8 Walton, G. (2018) 'Fee-free Education, Decentralisation and the Politics of Scale in Papua New Guinea', *Journal of Education Policy*, pp. 10-14.  
9 Howes, S. et al. (2014) *A Lost Decade? Service Delivery and Reforms in Papua New Guinea 2002 – 2012*, The National Research Institute and the Development Policy Centre, pp. viii; 66.  
10 Rena, R. (2011) 'Challenges for Quality Primary Education in Papua New Guinea—A Case Study', *Education Research International*, p. 4.  
11 Parade, P. (2015) 'Challenges with the Tuition Fee Free Education Policy Implementation in Papua New Guinea', *Contemporary PNG Studies: DWU Research Journal*, vol. 23, p. 47.

12 Howes, S. et al. (2014) *A Lost Decade? Service Delivery and Reforms in Papua New Guinea 2002 – 2012*, The National Research Institute and the Development Policy Centre, p. v.  
13 Department of Education (2015) *EMIS data 2015*.  
14 National Statistical Office (2012) *Papua New Guinea Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2009–2010: Summary Tables*. Port Moresby (ADB).  
15 Gakidou, E., et al. (2010) 'Increased Educational Attainment and its Effect on Child Mortality in 175 Countries between 1970 and 2009: A Systematic Analysis', *The Lancet*, vol. 376, pp. 959–974.  
16 UNICEF Pacific & Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (2014) *Study of Parental Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices Related to Early Childhood Development*, p. 30.  
17 Irwin L. et al. (2007) *Early Child Development: A Powerful Equalizer*, Final Report for the World Health Organization's Commission on the Social Determinants of Health.  
18 Plan International (2017) *Gender Inequality and Early Childhood Development. A Review of the Linkages*, p. 5.  
19 Plan International (2017) *Gender Inequality and Early Childhood Development. A Review of the Linkages*, p. 4.  
20 Kelly-Ware, J. (2016) 'What's He Doing That For? He's a Boy!': Exploring Gender and Sexualities in an Early Childhood Setting', *Global Studies of Childhood*, vol. 6, no. 1, p. 147.  
21 Department of Education (2009) *Achieving Universal Education for a Better Future. Universal Basic Education Plan 2010 – 2019*, pp. 12-14.

At the elementary school level in PNG, 84% of boys and 81% of girls transition from elementary grade 2 to primary school, with differences across province and district levels. In EHP, 82.4% of boys transition compared to 78.4% girls. In the South Bougainville district of ARoB, 64.9% of girls and 70.8% of boys transition from preparatory to elementary 1. In elementary schools, the ratio of teachers to students is 51:1 – higher than teacher to student ratios at other levels, highlighting that class sizes are a challenge.<sup>22</sup> At the national level, male teachers make up 55.3% of all elementary teachers, but this differs per province. In ARoB, 67.9% elementary teachers are female, while in Eastern Highlands, 44.4% teachers are female and in East Sepik 40.2% are female.<sup>23</sup>

Importantly, provincial and district data only reveals averages, missing the day-to-day negotiations, discrimination, financial struggles and dynamics in the home – all of which influence the extent to which children can access schooling. This report seeks to explore these challenges facing the education of girls aged 4-8 in more depth, identifying the key barriers to education and recommending specific strategies to enable RISE to implement interventions that will promote girls' enrolment, attendance, retention and completion of schooling.

22 World Bank (2015) *Papua New Guinea Education Management Information Systems, SABER Country Report 2015*, p.5.

23 Department of Education (2015) *EMIS data 2015*.



Mother and daughter at a health post.



# RESEARCH DESIGN

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this gender analysis is to support RISE - an existing program implemented by Save the Children in PNG in partnership with SIL and CSNU. There are two main components to the gender analysis:

- a) Undertake a deep dive into cultural, social and economic barriers to girls' participation and completion of elementary school, and successful transition to primary school in three selected provinces of PNG. Analysis will include identifying barriers to transition that may exist in early childhood education in order to identify replicable, scalable strategies for increasing enrolment in and completion of elementary school for girls aged 4-8.
- b) With low rates of school inclusion for children with disabilities in PNG, the approach will aim to investigate the intersecting disadvantage of gender and disability in order to increase educational opportunities for the most marginalised girls in elementary education in Papua New Guinea.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the major barriers (individual, household, community, school, education system) to enrolment, attendance, retention and completion of elementary education for girls aged 4-8 years (and children with disabilities) in the three program sites?
  1. Autonomous Region of Bougainville;
  2. Eastern Highlands Province; and
  3. East Sepik Province
2. Which strategies could Save the Children in PNG adopt to overcome gender-based constraints to enrolment and retention of girls at school at individual, household, community and district levels?

## METHODS

### PRIMARY:

Focus group discussions (FGDs), surveys, individual semi-structured interviews (SSIs) and small-group interviews which explore barriers to access, retention and transition in early education in PNG.

### SECONDARY:

Pooling data from multiple data sets including RISE baseline, HIES and EMIS in order to garner a holistic overview of PNG's education system and the gender-dimensions as well as assessing interventions that address gender-based discrimination and create pathways for girls' access and retention to education, and their replicability in PNG context.

Surveys and FGDs were conducted by a team of 6 enumerators in each location. SSIs were conducted by Michelle Lokot (consultant) with translation support from Edwina Miroi (Community Education Officer, EHP) in ARoB and ESP. Edwina Miroi conducted SSIs in EHP. Analysis was conducted by the consultant, who also wrote the report. SPSS was used to analyse survey data.

## SAMPLING

Overall, 92 people participated in surveys: 33 caregivers and 12 teachers in ARoB, 8 caregivers and 13 teachers in ESP, and 13 caregivers and 12 teachers in EHP. The following tables outline survey participation by province, sex and role:

Table 1.

|          |      |                   | Sex    |       |        |
|----------|------|-------------------|--------|-------|--------|
|          |      |                   | Female | Male  | Total  |
| Province | ARoB | Count             | 39     | 7     | 46     |
|          |      | % within Province | 84.8%  | 15.2% | 100.0% |
|          | ESP  | Count             | 11     | 10    | 21     |
|          |      | % within Province | 52.4%  | 47.6% | 100.0% |
|          | EHP  | Count             | 15     | 10    | 25     |
|          |      | % within Province | 60.0%  | 40.0% | 100.0% |
| Total    |      | Count             | 65     | 27    | 92     |
|          |      | % within Province | 71.0%  | 29.0% | 100.0% |

Table 2.

|       |        |              | Parent | Teacher | Total  |
|-------|--------|--------------|--------|---------|--------|
| Sex   | Female | Count        | 41     | 24      | 65     |
|       |        | % within Sex | 63.1%  | 36.9%   | 100.0% |
|       | Male   | Count        | 14     | 13      | 27     |
|       |        | % within Sex | 51.9%  | 48.1%   | 100.0% |
| Total |        | Count        | 55     | 37      | 92     |
|       |        | % within Sex | 59.8%  | 40.2%   | 100.0% |

71% of survey participants were female and almost 60% were parents. Survey participation was highest in ARoB (representing 50% of the survey sample) and lowest in ESP (22.8% of the survey sample).

Alongside surveys, FGDs and SSIs were also conducted. In ARoB, 9 girls, 17 boys, 19 female caregivers and 7 male caregivers participated in 4 FGDs'. In ESP, 5 FGDs were held with: 9 girls, 17 boys, 47 female caregivers (across two groups) and 8 male caregivers. In EHP, 4 FGDs were held with: 12 girls, 12 boys, 11 female caregivers and 14 male caregivers.

In ARoB, SSIs were held with 7 adults and 9 children: 5 caregivers (1 male), 5 in-school primary girls, 2 girls who dropped out of primary school, 2 in-school primary boys, 1 woman who dropped out of primary school, and 1 elementary teacher. This includes two small-group interviews with girls and one small-group interview with boys. It also includes a caregiver of an 18-year old girl with a disability.

In ESP, SSIs were held with 7 adults and 18 children: 3 caregivers (1 male), 8 in-school primary girls, 1 girl who dropped out of primary school, 9 in-school primary boys, 1 woman in primary school, 1 elementary teacher, 1 primary teacher and 1 head teacher. This includes two small-group interviews with girls and two small-group interviews with boys.

In EHP, SSIs were held with 4 adults and 16 children: 1 caregiver, 8 in-school primary girls, 1 girl who dropped out of elementary school, 7 in-school primary boys, 1 woman who dropped out of primary school and 2 elementary teachers. This includes two small-group interviews with girls and one small-group interview with boys. It also includes one 14-year old girl with a disability and 1 caregiver whose primary-aged son has a disability.

As well as this, SSIs were held with organisations working in each province. In ARoB, this included one organisation and two key informants from the Autonomous Bougainville Government and in ESP this included one organisation. In Port Moresby, two organisations were interviewed.

A table outlining the participants in each location can be found in the Appendices.

## ETHICS, CONFIDENTIALITY AND CONSENT

Informed consent was obtained from each FGD, SSI and survey participant. In order to protect their confidentiality, participants were assured that their data would be anonymised and that identifiable information would not be used in the research products. Participants were made aware that their participation was voluntary, and they would not experience negative consequences if they decided not to participate. They were free to avoid answering any questions they were uncomfortable with. For FGDs and interviews with children, parents and children consented to participate. Consent was explained in simple language to children.

As part of conducting ethical research, enumerators were trained on ways of minimising risk to participants, including conducting interviews and implementing surveys in spaces that are private so that participants feel comfortable responding. Engagement with children was also managed carefully. The enumerators and consultant were never in a one-on-one situation with a child. The enumerators and consultant were made aware of reporting processes in cases of child abuse or neglect disclosed or witnessed during the research. Enumerators and the consultant had information about services for gender-based violence (GBV) survivors, to provide to any participants who disclosed GBV during the course of the research.

As part of managing power dynamics between participants and the research team, SSI participants were asked if they had questions for the consultant/translator. These queries were largely around how the information from the assessment would be used, and what (if any) next steps would occur. This interest in the outcomes of the assessment highlights that it will be important to provide feedback to the communities who participated in the research.

## LIMITATIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Logistical arrangements were often a challenge, making it difficult to reach the planned sample. This was connected to the rural location of field sites, where it was more challenging to pre-arrange interviews. In ARoB and ESP, school holidays were happening at the same time as the field research, so it was more difficult to ensure participation of children. In ARoB, in-service training was occurring for teachers during fieldwork, so interviews and surveys with teachers had to be scheduled more flexibly. In one community in ARoB, a community death meant that the field site had to change at the last minute. In one rural location in ESP, parents had to work, taking along their children for assistance, so it was not possible to interview many participants. At times, miscommunications with communities meant that participants were waiting for interviews and FGDs for long periods. Community leaders were not always aware of the fieldwork, as the participants were largely organised through schools and teachers, requiring field staff to explain the research with community leaders upon arrival to avoid tension. Managing transportation across multiple sites was also a challenge in ESP due to limited vehicles.

Despite these logistical challenges, there was strong community willingness to participate in the research. Although the final sample was different to the planned sample, the key issues could still be explored within the limited fieldwork timeframe. Since logistical challenges were a problem from the beginning, the Child Rights Situation Analysis process was merged more directly with this research, so that children who had been selected for this reflection on child rights were also asked questions more focused on education for children aged 4-8. This ensured multiple issues could be covered in one interview with a child. Children were given the opportunity to be interviewed with their friends, in small-group interviews (2-4 people). This proved helpful when children were nervous to be interviewed, creating a comfortable space with their friends where they felt less awkward to participate compared to a larger FGD.

Sampling was challenging because what was listed as an 'urban' location was actually a rural location in both ARoB and ESP. It had been anticipated that comparisons would be made between issues in urban versus rural contexts, however the field sites selected as 'urban' were sometimes located quite far from city centres and were also characterised by low population density and less physical infrastructure – making them visually indistinct from the sites selected as 'rural' locations. Participants also referenced wanting their children to get out of the 'village' in apparently urban locations, making it clear that the community's perspective was also that these sites were rural. In order to address this issue in EHP, communities closer to city centres were selected, however the small sample has meant that comparisons between urban and rural locations were not possible.

Given the limited time period for data collection, the sample sizes for this study are relatively small. This needs to be kept in mind particularly with respect to the survey findings, which may not always be representative of the wider community. Further, 50% of the 92 survey participants were from ARoB. This meant that responses were skewed towards ARoB attitudes and beliefs. The qualitative data is also limited by smaller sample sizes, however using FGDs and interviews helped to validate findings. It is also important to note that although efforts were made to organise interviews with children with disabilities, this was only possible in EHP where an interview was held with a teenage girl with a disability.

Language translation was a slight issue in ARoB, as the Tok Pisin used in ARoB varies from that used in other parts of PNG and is more similar to the Tok Pisin used in the Solomon Islands. This was not an issue for local enumerators, but was a challenge for SSIs, requiring the translator (Edwina Miroi) to clarify issues and ask more follow-up questions to ensure understanding. During FGDs, one key challenge was the lack of experience of enumerators in facilitating FGDs; they had strong skills in survey implementation but little/no experience in leading group discussions. During the two-day enumerator training, enumerators were trained in the basics of facilitating FGDs and note-taking, however due to time constraints this training focused less on asking follow-up questions to explore participant responses. As a result, some comments made during FGDs were not explored further. In EHP, Edwina conducted SSIs, however other staff and enumerators assisted with translating her notes into English, which may have resulted in minor errors.

During interviews in particular, it was sometimes difficult for caregivers to focus specifically on the 4-8 age group, because they had multiple children across different age groups. Similarly, it was a challenge to focus the discussion on barriers that faced girls specifically, as caregivers often wanted to reflect on more systemic issues within the school system such as school fees and teacher attendance. This required more direct questions and regular clarification.



## FINDINGS

These findings present the broad issues that emerged across FGDs, surveys, small-group interviews, individual SSIs and secondary data. While survey data was analysed across the key survey variables (gender, teacher/parent, location, education level), these variables are referenced only where results were particularly striking or had specific implications.

### GENDER NORMS (EXPECTATIONS, ACTIVITIES AND TREATMENT)

The expectations, activities and treatment of girls in PNG is tied to gender norms, which emerge out of a largely patriarchal system. The assessment findings indicate that as well as gender norms acting as an overarching barrier to girls' enrolment, attendance, retention and completion of schooling, gender norms infuse other more systemic barriers to school attendance. This means that for broader issues that influence education for both girls and boys, there may be a further gendered dimension that makes it more difficult for girls to access quality education.

**Gender norms in PNG emerge out of the country's experience of colonialism, the influence of Christianity, as well as local ideologies around the wantok system, kastom, and the idea of the 'big man' – all of which may shape education of girls aged 4-8.** PNG's colonial history has laid the foundation for the way patriarchy dominates decision-making, power dynamics and the status of women in PNG. During the Australian presence in PNG, men's leadership was affirmed through the involvement of PNG men in the colonial administration, which negated the leadership roles women played in matrilineal communities.<sup>24</sup> Christianity also arrived in PNG as a result of colonialism, and was used to 'civilise' local behaviour.<sup>25</sup> Christianity shaped women's position in society in mixed ways. While it consolidated men's authority in the public and private spheres, it also provided opportunities for women's empowerment and mobilisation.<sup>26</sup> Some Christian ideologies existing today in PNG emphasise women's subordinate position in society, promoting the 'disciplining' of women with violence.<sup>27</sup>

Alongside these outside-influenced belief systems, the identity of women and men in PNG is influenced by the 'wantok' – the social/kin networks. In Tok Pisin, *wantok* means 'one talk', highlighting the unified language shared by members of the same clan/tribe/social group.<sup>28</sup> Patronage and favours are exchanged with people of the same *wantok*, resulting in obligations and benefits. Research in the Solomon Islands highlights that the expectations

24 Sai, A. (2007) *Tamot: Masculinities in Transition in Papua New Guinea*, PhD Thesis, Victoria University, p. 21; 121.

25 Eves, R. (2012) 'Christianity, Masculinity and Gender Violence in Papua New Guinea', *SSGM Discussion Paper*, Australian National University, p. 3.

26 Strachan, J. et al. (2010) 'You Have to be a Servant of All: Melanesian Women's Educational Leadership Experiences', *School Leadership and Management*, vol. 30, no. 1, p. 70; MacIntyre, M. (2017) 'Introduction: Flux and Change in Melanesian Gender Relations' in MacIntyre, M. & Spark, C. (eds.) *Transformations of Gender in Melanesia*. Australian National University Press, Acton, p. 5; Sai, A. (2007) *Tamot: Masculinities in Transition in Papua New Guinea*, PhD Thesis, Victoria University, p. 8.

27 Anderson, J. (2015) 'Struggling With 'This Gender Relations Thing' in the Papua New Guinea Church Partnership Program', *Gender, Place & Culture*, vol. 22, no. 10, p. 1363.

28 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (2017) *DFAT Country Information Report. Papua New Guinea*, p.3.



**Across all three provinces, it was expected that girls would complete household chores, obey, be caring, dress decently and be respectful; while boys had to be respectful, be involved in tasks like gardening and building houses, attend school and be well-behaved.**

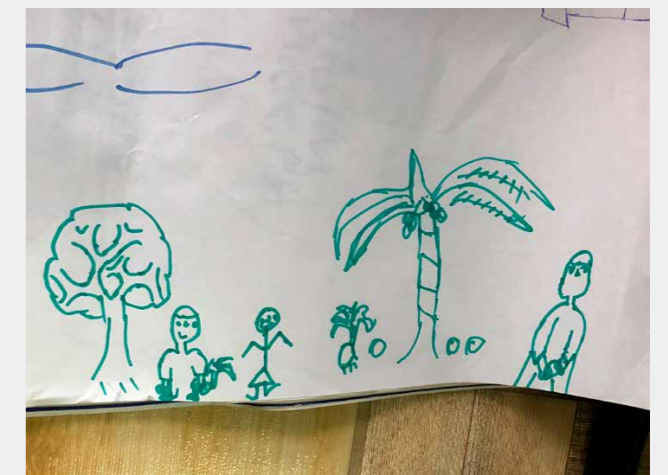
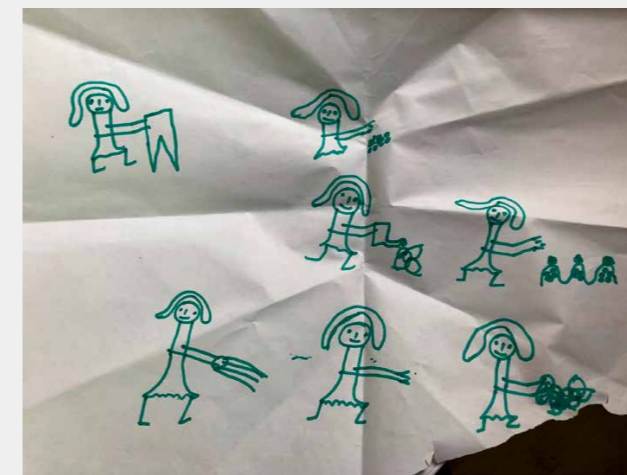
Multiple references were made to the specific chores girls were responsible for, including washing plates, gardening and washing clothes. Many references were also made to girls dressing decently. One female caregiver in an FGD in ESP said dressing appropriately was important for girls because 'improper dressings might attract the opposite sex'. This helps to contextualise the many references to the exact clothing that girls should wear; clothing is seen as preserving modesty and protecting girls.

The differences in expectations across provinces were minimal, however some issues received different emphasis depending on the province. In EHP, male caregivers also mentioned that girls should not cry quickly. In ARoB and EHP, there were references to girls needing to behave like women. One female caregiver in an FGD in ARoB said, 'The girl child must act according to her mother's good morals'. In the boy's FGD in EHP, one boy commented, 'They must be like mothers'. In EHP, speaking of expectations for boys, one boy in the FGD said, 'Our thoughts must be tough', which emphasises the pressure on boys to behave in 'manly' ways. In the female caregiver FGD in EHP, one woman said, 'Boys are there to lift up their father's name'. Another said, 'Boys must be educated and to get a job no matter what'. In this FGD, one woman also added, 'The main thing that the boys will do to make us parents happy is the "haus man". If we don't send them to the "haus man", they will get out of hand. And if they go into the "haus man", they will become good boys. And if they want to go off track, they will recall the good things that they learn in the "haus man"'. The 'haus man' refers to the ritual ceremony marking the transition into manhood; boys are taught morals and expectations by village elders during this ceremony.

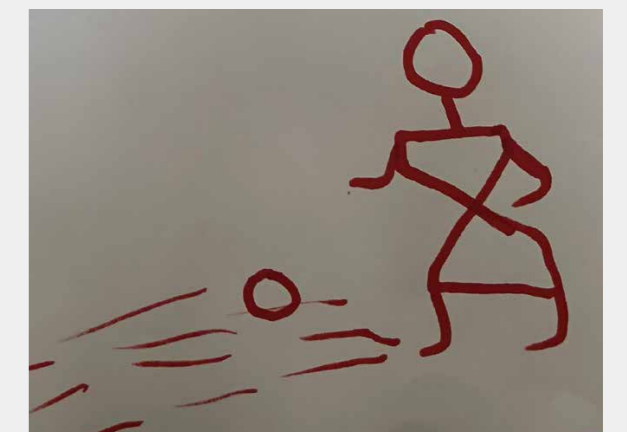
**Across all provinces, the most common consequences of girls and boys failing to meet these expectations were getting beaten and getting called names.** The kinds of names girls may be called were: stupid, lazy, tomboy, naughty; the kinds of names boys may be called were uncivilized, naughty, lazy and useless. Referring to consequences for boys, one man in the ESP group said, 'People will say that the boy is gay'. This was affirmed in EHP. In ARoB, one man said boys would be kicked out of the house for failing to meet expectations. In ESP, one man in the male caregiver FGD said that if girls don't meet expectations, 'people will say that the girl should have been a boy'. In EHP, consequences for not meeting expectations for girls was not having food (according to boys and female caregivers) and being neglected by their parents and God (according to boys). During the female caregiver FGD in EHP, when asked about consequences for girls not meeting expectations, one woman said, 'We don't feed them' and the whole group laughed. This holding back of food for disobedient children also emerged in one small-group interview with girls aged 8-11 in EHP. One girl said, 'My friend did not help her mum that was why her mum punished her. She did not give her food'. Holding back food from children also applied to boys; the men's FGD in ARoB commented that boys may be punished by withholding food. This is different to the Save the Children Child Protection Baseline findings in Morobe and ARoB, where 91% of caregivers in ARoB said they would never withhold food from a child.<sup>31</sup>

Interestingly, this group of men in ARoB also mentioned that boys may be punished with additional chores. Since the general consensus during interviews was that boys don't have as many chores as girls, using chores as a punishment has a gendered connotation. Interestingly, the men's group in ARoB also said if children with a disability fail to behave in expected ways, 'they are described according to their disability'.

In discussing expectations for behaviour, there was often a focus on describing the chores for girls aged 4-8. The following pictures were drawn by children during FGDs and describe the chores of girls and boys:



ARoB girl's FGD depicting girls' chores: washing clothes, gardening, sweeping, cleaning (first picture) and collecting coconuts (second picture)



ESP boy's FGD depicting girls' chores: sweeping, collecting firewood (first picture), fetching water (second picture)

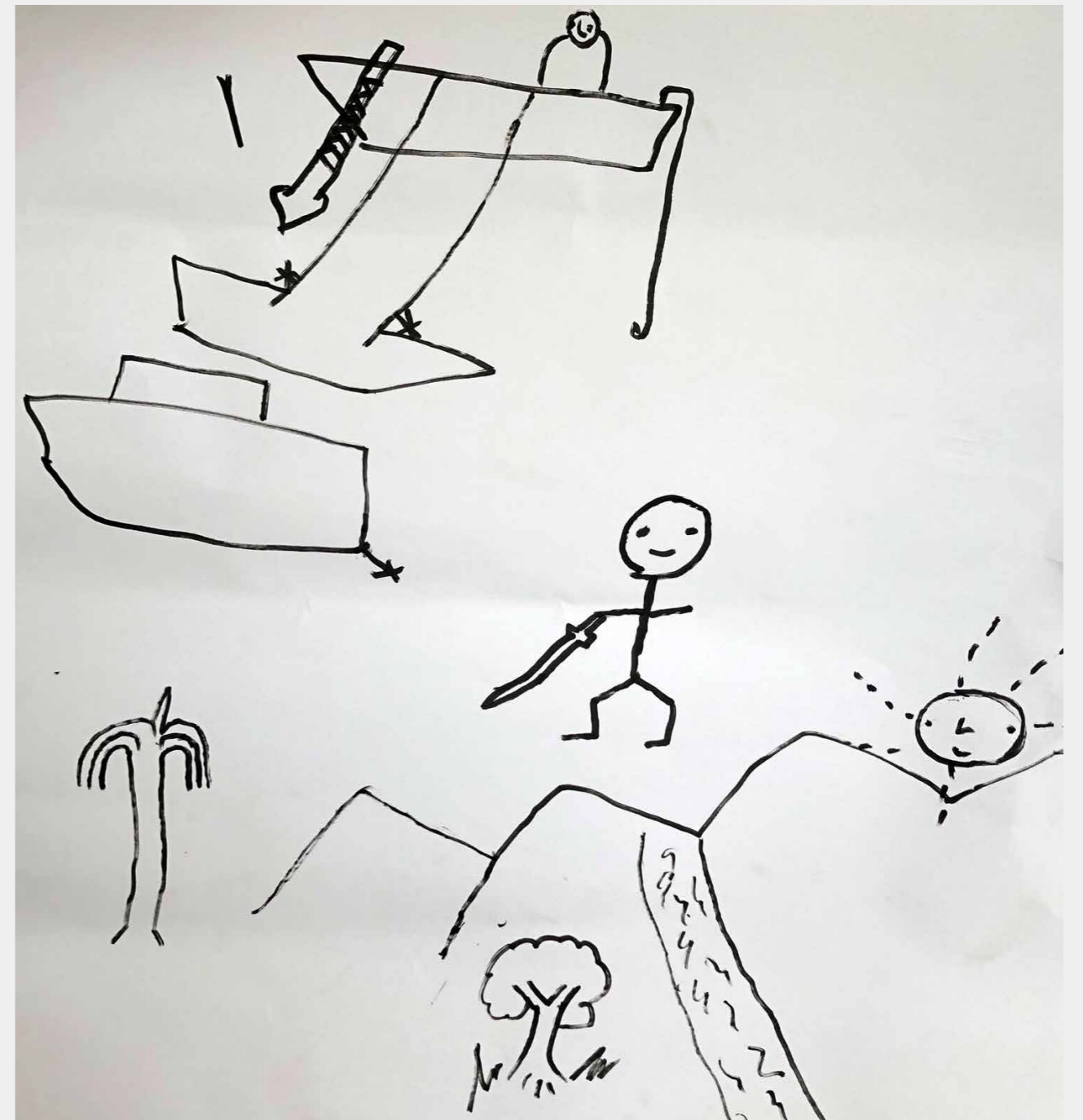
31 Save the Children (2018) *Safe Communities, Safe Children Baseline Report. Child Protection Assessment in Morobe and ARoB*, p. 24.



EHP girl's FGD depicting girls' chores: cooking and washing clothes



EHP boy's FGD depicting boys' chores: chopping firewood



ESP boy's FGD depicting boys' chores: fishing and hunting

A primary teacher in a rural area of ESP explained that girls aged 4-8 help their mothers with gardening – planting, weeding and harvesting vegetables. At times, girls go to the market with their mother and sell things. Gardening may be seasonal, explained one female caregiver in EHP: ‘Sometimes during coffee season or if we needed to weed the garden, we used to tell our female children to stay home and assist us. I sometimes ask my girls to do the same but my daughters got on me...’ In this case, her daughters complained about having to stay home from school, so she changed her behaviour. This example also highlights that there may be busier periods during the year when parents feel that they need more support with cash crops, and where there may be more pressure to enlist support from children. While it would be expected for older girls to have more chores than younger girls, this is not always the case. In a small-group interview with girls aged 12-15 in EHP, one primary school girl talked about chores: ‘My big sister doesn’t help. She goes around doing nothing. My smaller sister and I help mum do the cooking’.

**In all provinces, references were made to girls aged 4-8 looking after younger children.** A head teacher in ESP affirmed this practice, explaining how mothers keep their young daughters at home to care for their small children, to help at the market and to do housework. She felt that this was linked to the social hierarchy that preferences boys: ‘In our society, mostly they regard the boys as important compared to the girls’. She explained that this was a patrilineal society: ‘They think boys will be the leaders for tomorrow, so the priority goes to the boys’. Importantly, the head teacher said boys may also be absent due to chores, but not very often. She said that boys work on the sago patches with their fathers. Only one boy referred to absence from school due to chores; he had to collect firewood.

While acknowledging that sometimes girls are absent because of household chores, one mother of an elementary school girl in ARoB said, ‘I don’t agree with this. Girls must go to school’. Later this mother mentioned that her six-year-old daughter helps with cooking, sweeping, washing dishes and cleaning every day. She said that when her daughter is not tired she helps with these chores. Her daughter wakes up early to cook breakfast. She added, ‘In the morning after cooking, she likes to wash the plates, but I stop her because she needs to go to school’. A female caregiver in EHP similarly said, ‘Generally, girls have lots of chores than boys; however, my children carry out their daily chores equally. I used to tell them that no one is above any one. I am the only one above everyone. That is why all my children do obey me’. During the female caregiver FGD in EHP, one woman said, ‘Parents depend heavily on girls, so they hold them back to do household work’. During an FGD, one female caregiver in EHP acknowledged the workloads girls face and the connection of workloads to education: ‘Girls should be educated well, but I see that mothers fail them and not fathers. So, when they come home from school, we did not let them to rest. We send them to the garden, fetch water, and wash dishes. Yet, they don’t get enough rest. Also, we never tell them to go and do their school work, never. That is how we spoil them’.

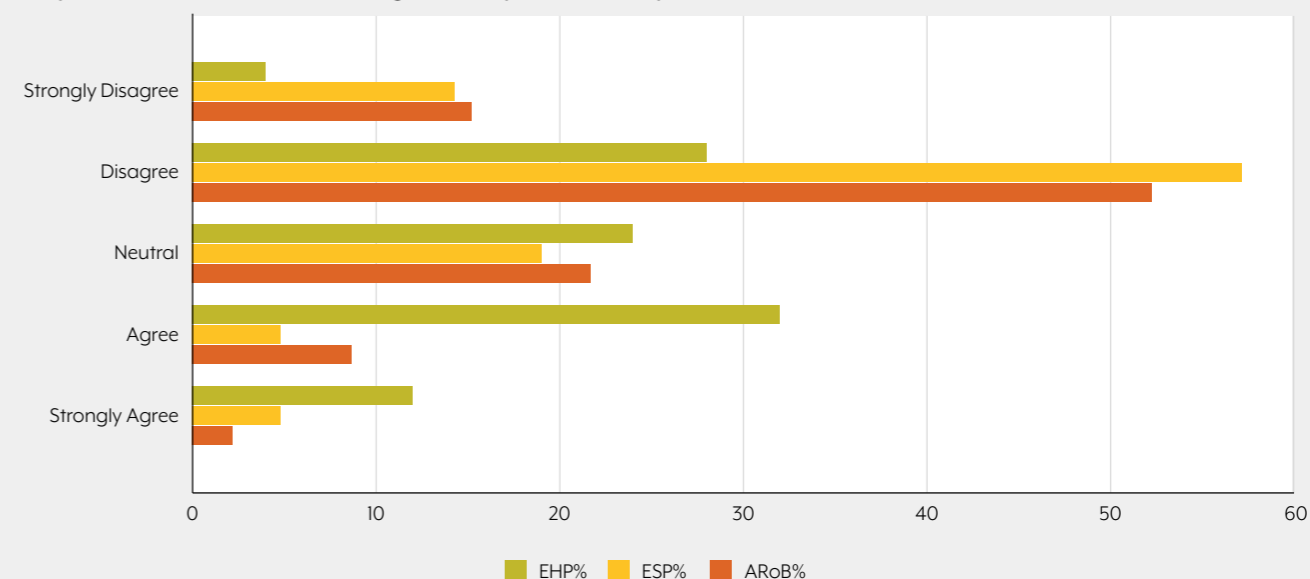
**In general, there was agreement that girls have more chores than boys.** One primary-aged boy in a small-group interview with boys aged 14-15 in ESP said, ‘For boys, we don’t really have chores, but girls I observe they help their mother with things’. Another boy in this group added, ‘In our culture, boys don’t do a lot. I think girls do a lot’. Primary school girls affirmed their heavy workloads. In a small-group interview with girls aged 14-16 in ESP, one girl said, ‘Sometimes the mum asks them to wake up early in the morning to prepare breakfast, and then they become sleepy and return to bed instead of going to school’. A primary school boy in a small-group interview with boys aged 9-12 in ESP said that boys don’t have chores, instead ‘they play’. Another boy in this group commented, ‘The parents tell the girls that they are girls, that’s why

they have to do these things’. Being female was strongly linked to completing these household chores. One caregiver of an elementary boy in ESP even said, ‘He helps me to wash dishes because I don’t have a girl’.

One male caregiver in ARoB said, ‘Most of the time... Some parents, instead of sending them they make them do household chores during school time. Sometimes lateness causes them to stay at home’. There was sometimes an implication that girls not attending school was the mother’s decision. In the men’s FGD in ESP, one man said, ‘Most girls are not in school because their mothers are using them to do household chores’. This implies that chores are the mother’s jurisdiction; the male here is in a sense absolving men from blame by saying women are keeping girls at home to help with chores – women’s job. Other contradictions also emerged, for example a male caregiver in ESP saying he always prioritises all his children irrespective of them being male or female, but then mentioned his sons generally stay home and play in contrast to his daughter: ‘She is a girl, so she sometimes helps with household activities like washing plates and going to the garden with her mother’. The idea of chores being solely the female’s responsibility seems so entrenched that the inequalities in how labour is divided are not seen.

Findings from the caregiver and teacher survey indicate that 19.5% agree or strongly agree that boys are treated better than girls in their community, while 58.7% disagree or strongly disagree. Surprisingly, a higher proportion of men agreed with this statement (29.6%) compared to women (15.4%). These general findings and findings about male/female attitudes were consistent in ARoB, however in ESP, 90% of men strongly disagreed or disagreed while no men agreed and 10% were neutral; and in EHP, 70% of men strongly agreed or agreed compared to 26.7% of women. The theme in ARoB and EHP around higher proportions of males agreeing that boys were treated better may be due to the experience of men themselves when they were children. It is possible that women tended to disagree with the statement because they may be the ones mostly responsible for raising children and may feel the statement is challenging their treatment of girls. The graph below captures the provincial differences in survey responses:

Graph 1.  
**BY PROVINCE**  
Boys are treated better than girls in my community



**The idea of males being favoured over females emerged more strongly during interviews.**

A representative from one organisation in ESP commented, 'We favour males over females. That's usually what happens'. A female elementary teacher in EHP said, 'Also in our culture, parents favour boys over girls. When girls started seeing that parents are not treating their children equally, they start giving up going to school'. She also said, 'Parents should balance their treatment to both sexes in the family. This will make girls feel equal to boys and will push girls coming to school just like boys'. One representative from an organisation in Port Moresby felt that ESP as a province was 'highly patriarchal'. She said that in ESP, 'Men are up there, women are... women are just nothing'.

**The overarching context of gender inequality in PNG, which is shaped by colonial history, Christian beliefs, wantok, kastom and the 'big man', also influences norms around GBV.**

The survey specifically asked caregivers and teachers: 'In some situations, it is ok for a man to beat his wife, for example if she burns the food, if she argues with him, if she goes out without telling him, if she neglects the children, and if she refuses to have sexual intercourse with him'. The most comprehensive GBV prevalence survey occurred in 1992,<sup>32</sup> indicating that two-thirds of women in PNG have experienced violence. Later research in 2009 affirms this rate, highlighting that GBV rates are highest in urban locations and in the highlands compared to coastal areas.<sup>33</sup>

More recent research documents that GBV remains an ongoing issue.<sup>34</sup> Médecins Sans Frontières reports that 49% of sexual violence survivors said the violence occurred at home. Among sexual violence survivors, 49% said the violence occurred at home.<sup>35</sup> In one PNG study, almost 70% of women said, as children, they had witnessed their fathers beating their own mothers. Witnessing violence has health and psychological implications for the well-being of children.<sup>36</sup>

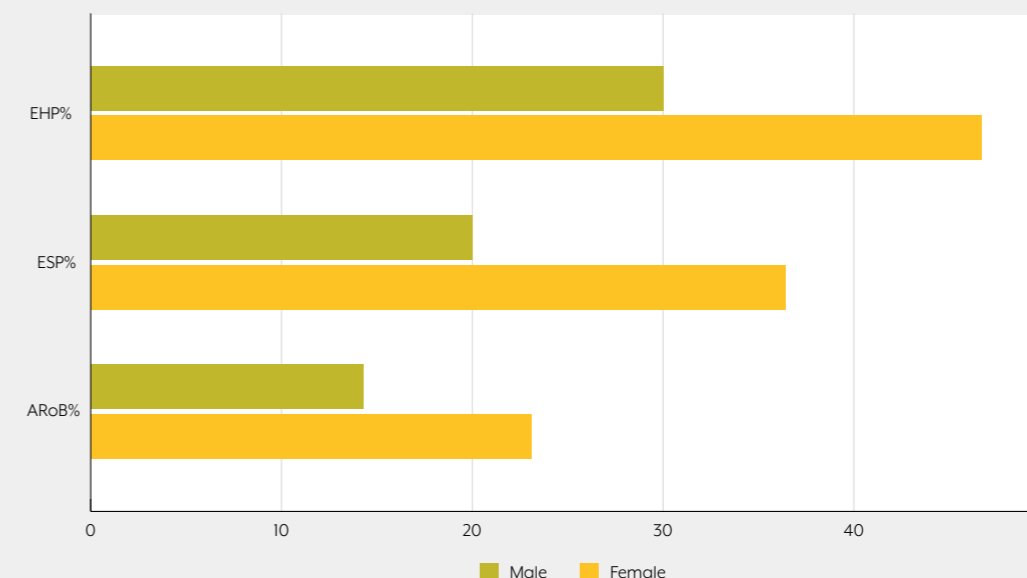


In the caregiver and teacher survey, 28.3% strongly agreed or agreed that it was acceptable for a husband to beat his wife in certain situations. Interestingly, a slightly higher proportion of women agreed with this statement: 30.8% of women compared to 22.2% of men, though 14.8% of men gave a 'neutral' response. While interesting that a greater proportion of women agreed with this statement, note that 49.2% of women strongly disagreed and 18.5% disagreed, compared to 14.8% of men who strongly disagreed and 48.1% who disagreed. The following graph depicts strong agreement or agreement with the statement, based on sex:

Graph 2.

**BY SEX**

In some situations, it is ok for a man to beat his wife, for example if she burns the food, if she argues with him, if she goes out without telling him, if she neglects the children, and if she refuses to have sexual intercourse with him.



32 Bradley, C. (1992) *Final Report on Domestic Violence*, Papua New Guinea Law Reform Commission.

33 Ganster-Breidler, M (2010) 'Gender-Based Violence and the Impact on Women's Health and Well-Being in Papua New Guinea', *Contemporary PNG Studies: DWU Research Journal*, vol. 13, p. 23.

34 Human Rights Watch (2015) *Bashed Up: Family Violence in Papua New Guinea*; Overseas Development Institute (2015) *Gender Violence in Papua New Guinea: The Cost to Business*.

35 Médecins Sans Frontières (2016) *Return to Abuser: Gaps in Services and a Failure to Protect Survivors of Family and Sexual Violence in Papua New Guinea*, p. 7.

36 Ganster-Breidler, M (2010) 'Gender-Based Violence and the Impact on Women's Health and Well-Being in Papua New Guinea', *Contemporary PNG Studies: DWU Research Journal*, vol. 13, p. 18.

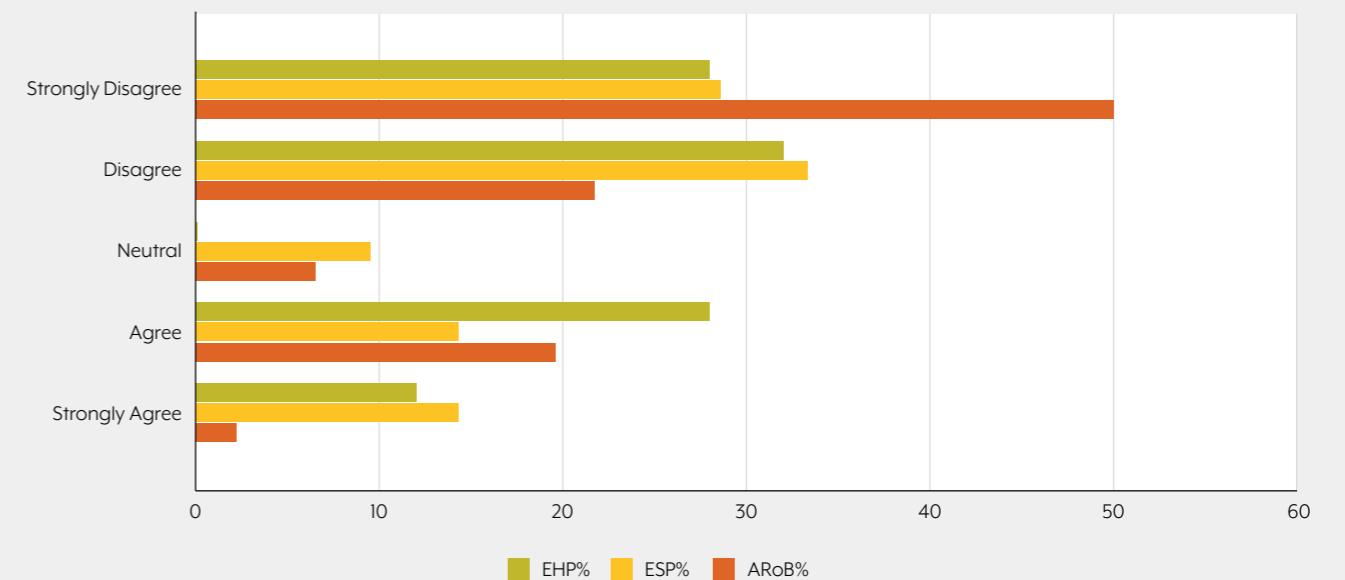
The differences between women and men and differences across provinces also should be noted here. In ARoB, there was slightly lower acceptance – with only 21.8% strongly agreeing or agreeing. Consistent across all provinces, more women than men agreed in ARoB: 22.9% compared to 14.3% of men, while 28.9% of men gave a neutral response. In ESP, 28.6% of respondents agreed: 36.4% of women compared to 20% of men, while 20% of men gave a neutral response. In EHP, overall agreement was highest (40%) with 46.7% of women agreeing compared to 30% of men. No men or women gave neutral responses. This provincial data indicates lower acceptability of GBV in ARoB – unsurprising given that research shows GBV only became an issue when the conflict began.<sup>37</sup> The high agreement in EHP aligns with comparable data in the highlands.

It is however important to note the weaknesses and limitations of this data. Given the incidence of GBV in PNG, it is likely that at least some female respondents had experienced GBV and some male respondents were perpetrators. This means responses may be influenced by personal experiences of violence. This could affect honesty of responses. This may explain why more women agreed; if women have experienced GBV, they may have been conditioned to believe violence for these reasons is justified. Further, and perhaps most importantly, being asked these kinds of questions by international development agencies has implications; people may be aware that there is a ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ answer and may feel pressured to respond based on this rather than their personal beliefs. This may account for the relatively high number of men who entered a ‘neutral’ response – wanting to avoid the question rather than answer it honestly. The following graph captures the provincial differences in responses:

Graph 3.

**BY PROVINCE**

In some situations, it is ok for a man to beat his wife, for example if she burns the food, if she argues with him, if she goes out without telling him, if she neglects the children, and if she refuses to have sexual intercourse with him.



Attitudes about violence against women are particularly important to understand in the PNG context, where GBV rates are high. Although this assessment did not explore attitudes regarding violence against children, Save the Children’s recent Child Protection baseline in Morobe and ARoB highlights that there is greater tolerance for use of physical punishment towards boys (22% agreement) compared to girls (16% agreement), among caregivers in ARoB.<sup>38</sup>

37 Braithwaite, J. (2006) ‘Rape, Shame and Pride’, *Journal of Scandinavian Studies in Criminology and Crime Prevention*, vol. 7, pp. 2–16.

38 Save the Children (2018) *Safe Communities, Safe Children Baseline Report. Child Protection Assessment in Morobe and ARoB*, p. 21.

## FAMILY ENVIRONMENT

**Across all fieldwork sites, children, parents and teachers expressed concerns about how the family environment affects children's attendance and participation at school.**

The issue of family environment covers a few key issues: disruptions to family life (primarily parental arguments/separation/divorce/death), parents' social life and entertainment for children.

**The most common factor related to family environment was how family life can be disrupted by caregivers arguing, extra-marital affairs, divorce or death of a caregiver, which has consequences for the schooling of children.** One female (sole) caregiver in ARoB with a few children, including a 6-year old daughter, said, 'If the family is not stable, if there is violence or arguments in the family... If the father has extramarital affairs, it affects the girl. I also experienced this. The father left them and they are alone by themselves. My daughter sometimes doesn't want to go [to school] because of that'.

An elementary teacher in ARoB commented: 'Parents with problems – 02, 03 [referring to the numbering system used to refer to multiple partners in PNG] – this can affect girls'. She added, 'When parents are caught up in these issues, they won't give attention and won't give good support to kids and the kids will just do whatever they want'. She felt that some girls give up schooling when they have these problems in the family. A female elementary teacher in EHP observed how disruptions to family life affected children's performance at school: 'Some children struggle to catch up with others if their parents are having continuous fighting because the father is having extra-marital affairs. These children will be emotionally and mentally disturbed, causing them to not concentrate in class. They will need to repeat'. In an FGD with female caregivers in EHP, one woman said, 'Some children - their parents have passed away and they lived with their relatives. They feel so depressed and they don't attend school often'. In some cases, this kind of difficult home environment may result in an informal adoption. One male caregiver in ARoB explained how he and his wife adopted a relative: 'Her parents face difficulties, they [were] always arguing. We managed to take the daughter out of there'. He felt that the change in her family life enabled her to focus on her studies.

Although disruptions to family life affect girls and boys, it is possible that when female caregivers are away or distracted by arguments, the household may fall to girls. This gendered consequence emerged in one small-group interview with girls aged 8-11 in EHP. One girl, speaking of school attendance among girls aged 4-8, said, 'Sometimes, if the mum is away from home due to an argument with their father, the girls feel obliged doing household chores, that is why they don't prioritise their education'.

Disruptions to family life also affect older age groups. A 12-year old girl in primary school, when asked the first question, 'Tell me about school', responded with this: 'I love going to school. My performance is OK, I love my teachers, but my parents are not OK. This is affecting me and I'm not happy about it. My father got married to another lady and I now live with my mother'. Later, she added, 'I am worried that my daddy is not here with me to listen to me

when I am in need'. One female caregiver felt that these family disruptions affected her older children more. These children had a better understanding of what was going on in the family as a result of her husband's drunken behaviour. His behaviour resulted in him chasing the entire family out of the house on some occasions. Her children also witnessed her being hit by her husband while he was drunk. She said, 'If you see my children, they are always living in fear... of their father'. This kind of environment can cause children to be anxious and fearful, affecting their other relationships and their ability to focus at school. In this case, the children were not harmed by their father; it was the mother alone who experienced violence. At the end of the interview, she was provided with information about where to seek assistance and counselling. This was the only direct mention of familial violence in ARoB, however in ESP, violence against children emerged in one small-group discussion with girls aged 14-16. One primary-aged girl in this group said, '*There is incest. If the father abuses the child, when she comes to school she won't concentrate and she'll stop going to school*'.

Apart from changes in family relationships that affect children, one 19-year old girl who had left primary school explained her reasons for leaving: '*Due to tribal fights, I left school in grade five*'. She went on to explain, '*My parents see that school is important, but they need me so much. They said, after the mediation, we will return home and I can go back to school*'. In this case, her family moved out of the village because of tribal conflict, affecting her schooling. This was the only example of tribal fighting affecting schooling. This also needs to be understood in the context of disruptions to family life. Save the Children has also encountered families who withdrew children from school in fear that they would be targeted for retribution killings.

**As well as disruptions in family relationships, the family environment is influenced by the social activities of caregivers (particularly gambling), which has consequences for the schooling of children.** In a female caregiver FGD in ARoB, one woman said, 'Parents are busy socialising and they tend to neglect their children'. In this FGD, parental involvement in gambling or drinking alcohol were referred to as 'disturbances' to the child. In an interview, one female caregiver in ARoB said, '*A lot of parents are involved in gambling. They are more concerned with their own entertainment than educating their kids*'. Another female caregiver in ARoB similarly said: '*The thing that is causing parents not to care is gambling, bingo. Parents are caught up with these activities and they don't care about the children*'. In a small-group interview with girls aged 12-15 in EHP, one primary school girl said, '*Sometimes, parents gamble and forget about children*'. Another girl in the same group said that her friend's father works far away: '*When he sends the money, their mother uses the money to gamble with. She returns home late at night*'. These reflections about the social life of parents affecting their care of children only emerged in ARoB and EHP; in ESP there was no mention of gambling. Caregivers in ESP were asked about what adults do in their free time, and only mentioned that women weave baskets, men tell stories, men and women are involved in fishing and chew betel nut.

Alongside the issue of caregivers prioritising their social lives comes the issue of children's entertainment. Interestingly, in ARoB, it quickly became clear that girls and boys as young as 4-8 were also directly involved in gambling. One male caregiver in ARoB outlined the problem, '*In this community, they may be abusing children because of gambling. In this area, gambling is popular. They're doing it every night, every day. Children are involved in gambling – through the*

night. *Instead of getting up early, they sleep in*'. He explained that both girls and boys not only watch the adults playing games like bingo, but they also join in. This affects their ability to regularly attend school. A female caregiver in ARoB similarly criticised the idea of children being involved in gambling: *'For me, I don't play these games and I don't allow my children to play these games'*. In ESP, this issue was not mentioned by parents, children or teachers when asked about how children spend their time, however it emerged as an issue in EHP. An elementary teacher in EHP said, *'Gambling is very popular pastime activity in the community. Most of the children take part in gambling'*. One female caregiver in EHP said, *'In the village, gambling is very common. Sometimes, girls instead of going to school, they go out gamble till afternoon and pretend to be back from school when everyone is returning from school'*. This comment is particularly concerning because of the parallels to gambling addictions among adults. However, some social condemnation of children gambling appears to exist; in the EHP case study below, a girl was reprimanded by her school for gambling and chewing betel nut although her activities occurred during the weekend.

The issue of children chewing on 'betel nut' (**buai**) – which generates heightened alertness and in some cases a euphoric feeling, and is linked to mouth cancer - also emerged. Chewing betel nut was most evident in ARoB. Even very young children were observed. In an interview with an 8 year old girl in ARoB, she shared how she chewed betel nut for the first time at the age of 6: *'The first time I took betel, I got drunk. It was gross. I spat it out'*. She explained she felt 'dizzy' and 'drunk'. Her friend also took betel nut in elementary school – she started chewing in prep. She said, *'It's not good'*, however she is allowed to chew betel nut during the holidays. In ESP, girls said that boys and girls take betel nut from the age of 6 – which was confirmed by an elementary teacher. They also said they felt 'dizzy' when chewing it. They explained they are not allowed to chew it at school and their parents also don't allow it at home, but they do it behind their parent's back. One female caregiver said that her son began chewing because 'he was influenced by his aunt'. This mother beats him when she catches him chewing. In ARoB, however, caregivers showed no concern at very young children chewing betel nut in their presence.

The practice of gambling and chewing betel nut among children is perhaps tied to a broader issue around how children are entertained. Save the Children's Child Protection Assessment report in ARoB noted that fathers and mothers felt their parenting would improve if they stopped smoking marijuana. In this report, mothers also noted that they should stop 'entertaining children' with alcohol and drugs<sup>39</sup> - a quite-striking statement illustrating the fact that children are consuming harmful and toxic substances. The idea of children needing to be entertained is an important one here. It may be that caregivers do not know how to keep their children busy (having little experience of play in their own childhoods), and therefore are allowing their children to join adults in their own activities. Some of this may be linked to the use of physical spaces in the community. If gambling is occurring in someone's house and multiple families are gathering there, it may be natural for younger children to also be present, because they do not have other places where they can go unsupervised. Interestingly, the Child Protection Assessment Report found that in ARoB, younger children aged 8-12, particularly girls, felt that they had fewer places for games, play and sport in the community – compared to older children and compared to what parents thought about the availability of such spaces.<sup>40</sup>

This raises a few questions: are parents aware of where their young children play? Do they understand the need for younger children to have child friendly safe places to play freely? Why do children themselves feel spaces are not available while parents think they are? These are all questions that were beyond the scope of this assessment, but which deserve further investigation.

39 Save the Children (2017) *Child Protection Community Capacity Assessment*, p. 17.

40 Save the Children (2017) *Child Protection Community Capacity Assessment*, p. 19.

## CAREGIVER CASE STUDY: EASTERN HIGHLANDS PROVINCE

*'My daughter is 10 years old [in elementary 2] and the youngest in the family. She doesn't go to school often. She feared going to school because the teachers and the Board members sometimes bring outside matters into school. For example, if they caught my daughter involved in gambling or chewing [betel] during weekend, they will approach her to talk about the gambling on Monday when she returns to school. It's three days now - she did not come to school. She does things on her own, no one decides what she's going to do. She is the last born as well as female, that is why I don't mind much'.*

This case study highlights the way intersecting issues form barriers to girls' attendance. At the forefront is an issue around fear of being unfairly treated by teachers and board members due to behaviour outside of school hours. Accompanying this is young children being involved in adult activities – gambling and chewing betel nut. As well as this, the daughter herself is deciding whether she goes to school or not – the role of the female caregiver (who is a single parent with multiple older children) appears minimal. The caregiver's ambivalence is tied to two issues: the fact that this is her youngest child (the implication being that she is less strict with the youngest child – which is not unusual) and the fact that she is female. The meaning behind her being female is important. Later in the interview, this female caregiver commented that her son needs to be educated because he will live with her (in the same village) and look after her. She expressed the hope that education could enable her daughter to look after her as well, but there was an overriding idea that the son's success in education and return to the same village – along with him carrying 'his father's name' – was more definite. The caregiver here is not relying on the daughter as much as the son – this is why she does not mind as much that her daughter doesn't attend school.

## CAREGIVER AMBIVALENCE

Although caregivers across provinces emphasised the importance of educating girls, there was sometimes ambivalence around ensuring children actually attend school.

Caregivers strongly identified the importance of schooling for girls and boys. One female caregiver in ESP, who was educated to grade 10, said, *'School is important for children. It helps them to become somebody in the future. They will have money to take care of themselves'*. A father of a girl in elementary 2 in ARoB put it like this: *'If I don't send her to school, what's the income?'* The survey findings affirm this commitment to girls' education; 82.6% of caregivers and teachers strongly disagree or disagree with the idea that it is more important for boys to attend elementary school than girls while only 10.9% strongly agreed or agreed with this statement.

During interviews, the idea of girls using their education to care for their parents when they became older also emerged. One female caregiver in ARoB said, *'I want her to complete her schooling and get a job and take care of me for the future'*. In ESP, where communities participating in this research were located in more rural areas, caregivers also noted that education would enable their girls to leave the village. A female caregiver with two elementary daughters said, *'Living in the village is hard so they have to go to school to earn their living'*. A male caregiver with seven children in school seemed to associate the village with a more sedentary experience: *'The reason I want my girls to go to school is that I wouldn't want them to be at home like other ladies here who stay at home. I want them to become like ladies who are earning a living outside in the town'*. He added, *'We want our girls to be educated and leave the village'*. Findings from the caregiver and teacher survey indicate that 76.1% of respondents strongly agree or agree that a girl can have any career or job she wants. A slightly higher proportion of men (81.4%) compared to women (73.9%) agreed with this statement.

When asked why it is important for boys to go to school, both boys and girls in EHP said school is important for boys not to become 'drug addicts'. This is in addition to talking about becoming educated, getting a job and looking after parents (mentioned by both girls and boys), not being 'mentally affected' and roaming the street (mentioned by girls). Similarly, when asked why school was important for girls, apart from listing becoming educated, getting a job and looking after parents, both girls and boys referred to girls not having a way to earn a living in the future and having to look around for money.

**There were also gendered overtones to the rationale for educating children.** In an FGD with female caregivers in ARoB, one caregiver talked about the reason boys should be educated: *'He will become the head of the family, so he must complete his education'*. In ESP, a female caregiver in an FGD similarly said, *'They are the future head of the family'*. In ESP, one participant referenced that boys use their education for their family when they marry – taking it outside – whereas girls keep it with them for their natal families. During the training of enumerators for this research, one enumerator from EHP said, *'When he finishes school, a boy returns to his clan. Whatever he learns at school will benefit the clan because in a patrilineal*

society, when a man or boy speaks, it stands'. Here, education was linked to influence in the clan unit. In EHP, a female caregiver expressed similar views: *'In our custom, male children are the ones who will continue living with the parents and take care of us and he will inherit his father's name, that is why I want him to get educated to take care of me'*. The idea here is that male children continue living in the same village as their parents, while daughters may marry men in other villages and leave. In contrast, a girl's education might sometimes be a 'waste' according to the male caregiver's FGD in ARoB, because a girl may neglect her studies or not do well. One female caregiver in ARoB said that because ARoB society was mostly matrilineal, many girls don't attend school - because they have a traditional obligation to maintain their land. Interestingly, this was only mentioned by a female caregiver originally from another province. A Save the Children staff member similarly added, *'There is no need to force girls to go to school because they have the land for them'*. One key informant on education suggested, however that although women in ARoB own land, men may make decisions relating to that land.

One female caregiver in ESP said there was also a feeling among some parents that girls may not complete their education due to marriage. This was her experience with an older daughter. This is not necessarily a reference to early marriage, but links to the issue of children being older than the average age for their grade – where even people over 18 are still in primary school. In the female caregiver FGD in EHP, one woman acknowledged the role of parents in determining the marriage of their daughters: *'We send our girls to school, but then, we, the parents, took them out of school in grade 7 and 8 and send them to get married'*. In the men's FGD in ESP, one man commented, *'Boys must be sent to school so that they can have a job so that it would be possible for them to pay their wives' dowry'*. In ARoB, a key informant on education highlighted the problems with bride price: *'When men pay bride price they think they own her. They expect her to work, 'feed my family', like they made an investment and want it to pay them back'*. Bride price was also mentioned in ESP, in a small-group interview with girls aged 14-16. One girl said a girl may leave school if her father fails to pay the bride price for his wife (her mother), which can result in her mother's family cursing the child's education. Girls indicated this occurs a lot. It may also happen with boys'.

**The findings highlight that it is mostly parents who decide if girls attend school.** For some, it is definitively the parents – or perhaps specifically the father - who determine if the children attend school. One male caregiver in ESP said, *'As a father I always make sure my daughters go to school every day'*. In the men's FGD in ESP, one man said, *'In our community most decisions are made by the men, so in my family as a father, I am the one who should be making decisions for my daughter whether to go to school or not'*. In the female caregiver FGD in EHP, there was general agreement that parents decide whether girls should go to school. However one person commented that it was the father who decided, then another person added: *'It depends on their learning capacity, who learns fast[er] than [the] other'*. This may explain some of the references to children being 'slow' in learning. This comment indicates that sometimes the perceived intelligence of the child may determine if education continues, however it is interesting that such determinations are being made at the young age of 4-8. In the girls FGD in EHP, one girl said, *'Sometimes when our parents are away, our brothers*

*and sisters decide if we should come to school or not'*. This highlights the role of other family members making educational decisions. This is based on the age hierarchy in families: older children have more power than younger children.

**Some parents do not take definitive action to ensure their children attend school.** One mother in ARoB observed: *'For me, girls' education is very important. That's why I hardly allow my girl to stay at home. However, from observing other women in the village, they don't push their girls to go to school. If the girls don't want to go to school, they just leave them'*. A head teacher in ESP said that sometimes children themselves are not motivated to attend school because they find the work difficult and lose interest. She said parents push them but if the children see that they can't cope, they just won't go to school. In a female caregiver FGD in EHP, one woman said, *'Sometimes we don't wash clothes or prepare food for them'*. Another added, *'We don't respond to their needs when their teacher tells them to bring something to school'*. When asked about why school attendance for girls is lower at the elementary level, one female caregiver of an elementary aged daughter in ARoB said, *'Girls themselves decide not to go to school'*. She added, *'When they don't want to go, if the mother hits them or tells them to go, it makes them not want to go to school'*. In the female caregiver FGD in EHP, one woman said, *'On their way to school, they themselves decided to come back home'*.

**In some families, it is children themselves who influence or make the decisions about schooling.** One female caregiver of a 6-year old girl in elementary school in ARoB said, *'She was crying to go to school – that's why I took her to school'*. Her daughter was at the correct age for starting elementary school, but it seems the motivating factor was her daughter telling her mother she wanted to go. At times, ambivalence and neglect may occur within adoptive families. One female elementary teacher in EHP said, *'If the parents are both dead and the other relatives take the children in with them, they will definitely not prioritise the girls' education. This goes back to our culture'*. She added, *'Some children are left with other relatives because both parents are dead. If the caregivers don't provide everything they need or neglect them, it can affect their learning'*.

A primary school girl in ARoB explained why she thinks elementary girls are sometimes absent or drop out of school, *'It is sometimes just because of their laziness. They just don't want to go to school'*. An 11-year old primary school girl in ARoB talking about elementary girls said, *'They like to stay at home'*. While these themes emerged most strongly in ARoB, there were also similar references among ESP and EHP participants. A 19-year-old woman in ESP talking about elementary girls said: *'They just don't want to come to school, that's why'*. She explained that some parents who recognise the importance of school push their children to attend but others just leave their children. In a small-group interview with primary boys aged 8-11 in EHP, one boy, speaking of girls aged 4-8, said, *'Girls don't obey their parents to come to school'*. One female caregiver in EHP who has a daughter in elementary 2 said, *'I don't force my daughter to stay home. She decides for herself'*. One organisation in ARoB felt that girls' attendance was tied to the family: *'Families don't understand or encourage kids to go to school'*. She added, *'When I see a big sister babysitting, I tell them [the parents], "You're depriving the girl from education"'*. A key informant on education in ARoB felt that girls do not feel positive about their future, so are not motivated to attend school.

**What is not clear from the assessment, however, is the extent to which this ambivalence also applies to boys.** One primary school girl in EHP commented that her brother (the third male in the family) left school because he didn't want to go to school and so worked on supporting the family with growing coffee. His two older brothers were still in school and were currently in grade 12. This seems to indicate that boys also exercise autonomy in deciding about school and/or that parents allow this because it is financially expedient. However, this was the only such example, therefore it is difficult to draw conclusions. Teachers, parents and children were asked about girls' education, and while boys did talk about their own education, all the boys actually interviewed were in-school and did not specifically mention out-of-school boys deciding to leave for themselves.

**Responsibility for decision-making and caregiving of children more broadly may be gendered.** In the survey, teachers and caregivers were asked about the extent to which responsibility for education of a child belongs to fathers or mothers. Overall, 47.8% strongly agreed or agreed that it is mostly the mother who is involved in a child's education in their family, while 42.4% strongly disagreed or disagreed with this statement and 9.8% were neutral. The findings were slightly less mixed in response to the idea that it is mostly a father involved in a child's education in their family: 30.4% strongly agreed or agreed, 54.4% strongly disagreed or disagreed and 15.2% remained neutral. Responses were similarly mixed among males and females. Overall, the mixed findings may be a result of a broad interpretation of the word 'involved' in the statement people responded to – which could either mean meaningfully engaged in decision-making, or just knowing about the status of a child's education. Participants may also feel that both women and men are involved in a child's education. In ARoB and ESP, 60.8% and 52.4% of participants strongly disagreed or disagreed with the idea that it is mostly fathers who are involved, while in EHP 44% strongly disagreed or disagreed. This may be due to the stronger sense of women's role in the community in ARoB.

Reactions among survey participants to the idea that changing nappies, bathing children

and feeding children are a mother's responsibility shed further light on the gendered underpinnings to caregiver responsibility. Just over one-third (33.7%) of participants strongly agreed or agreed with this statement. Overall, 35.4% of all women strongly agreed or agreed, compared to 29.6% of men. In ESP, compared to other provinces where agreement was closer to one-third, a slightly higher proportion of participants strongly agreed or agreed (42.8%), and a higher proportion of women strongly agreed or agreed (63.7%). Women's slightly higher agreement with the statement may be an indication of their own responsibilities in the household. It may also be that men wanted to emphasise their own roles in caring for the children or felt pressured to provide answers that reflect more equitable attitudes.



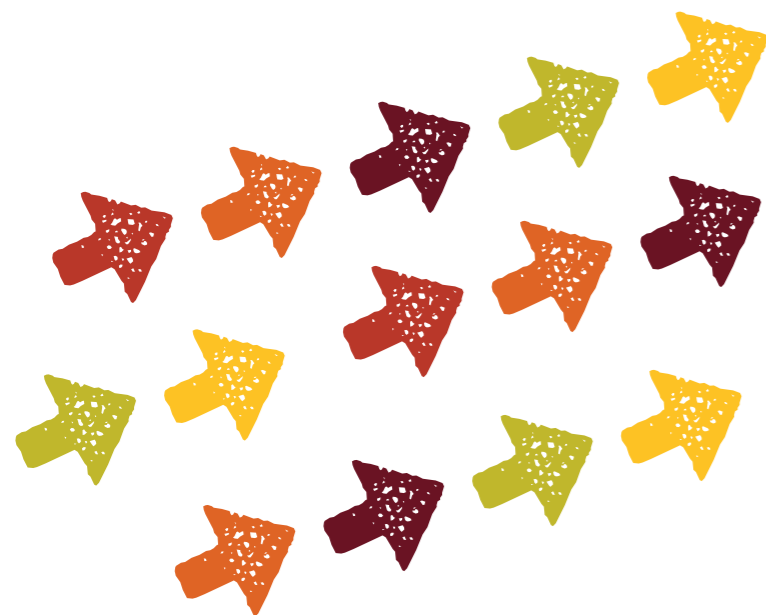
Mother reading Bloom Reader stories to her daughter.

## TRANSPORT & DISTANCE TO SCHOOL

**Across provinces, distances to school and the means of transportation varied.** In ARoB, all the fieldwork sites were rural. However the areas chosen were not very far from elementary schools, with girls indicating that they walked between 10-20 minutes or took a 10 minute bus ride. Children walked with friends from their village, and/or older siblings. In one case, a mother accompanied her daughter on the bus. This is not to say that distance to school is not a challenge in ARoB; one organisation commented that distance was a challenge for some communities, where children even travel by canoe to school. This organisation felt that more schools were needed to ease the long journeys to school.

In ESP, where fieldwork sites were also located in rural locations, distances to school were more varied, ranging from a 5 minute to a 1.5 hour walk. One female caregiver in ESP with two girls in elementary school said her main safety concern was the vehicles on the road. Her daughters, however, only had to walk 5 minutes to school.

In EHP, where fieldwork sites were located in rural and urban locations, participants reported travelling between 5 minutes and 30 minutes to school. Perceptions of safety varied between adults and children. In one community, where the school is located in the middle of the community, a female elementary teacher said the main safety issue was car accidents.



## SAFETY DURING SCHOOL JOURNEYS & SCHOOL VIOLENCE

In PNG, girls sometimes fear sexual assault on the way to and from school.<sup>41</sup> Fighting between students is seen as normal.<sup>42</sup> The caregiver and teacher survey findings indicate that 85.9% strongly agree or agree that it is safe for girls to attend elementary school. Only 13% strongly disagreed or disagreed with this statement. Agreement was slightly higher with respect to boys' safety (90.2%) with only 8.7% strongly disagreeing or disagreeing. The only differences in data at the provincial-level occurred in EHP, where 100% strongly agreed or agreed that it was safe for both girls and boys to attend school. No one disagreed with either statement. It should be noted that the phrasing of the question may have caused some parents to reflect on the journey to school, some to reflect on school only, and some to reflect on both these components, which may have affected the results. It is also important to emphasise that adult perceptions about safety may be different to children's perceptions, therefore these findings need to be viewed alongside the qualitative data, specifically the feedback from children themselves.

**In ARoB, safety on the way to school was not mentioned as a problem.** One participant of the women's FGD in ARoB even commented: *'Parents are too overprotective for their children'*. These ideas about safety align with the Save the Children Child Protection Assessment in ARoB, which found that even girls and boys aged 8-12 felt safe walking or using transportation to attend school. This is an older age group than the 4-8 age group of focus for this study, however it highlights that in ARoB, there may be a perception that it is safe for children to travel to school. In that assessment, this was the case even for girls, who scored 1.8 out of a possible 2 in agreement that it was safe, compared to boys who scored 1.2. This may be an indication of bullying from older boys.<sup>43</sup> Note that perception of safety and thresholds for risk are subjective. Expectations upon children in PNG to look after themselves may lead to tolerance for higher levels of risk.

41 UNGEI (2013) *International Women's Day, East Asia and Pacific Regional UNGEI Statement. A Promise Is a Promise: Time for Action to End Violence against Women.*

42 UNICEF (2012) *Child Protection in Educational Settings. Findings from Six Countries in East Asia and the Pacific: Indonesia, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Papua New Guinea, Philippines and Thailand*, p. 11.

43 Save the Children (2017) *Child Protection Community Capacity Assessment*, p. 19.

**Safety on the way to school emerged as a bigger problem in ESP and EHP than in ARoB.**

In small-group interviews with girls aged 11-12 and girls aged 14-16 in ESP, the issue of safety on the way to school was raised. A primary-aged girl in the older girls' group said that in some cases, a girl may walk to school alone if she is the only one in her family attending school and she lives far away. This was the only reference to girls walking by themselves for journeys longer than 5 minutes- in all other locations and interviews, girls walked with others. The girls were asked about this specifically in relation to the 4-8 age group. Another girl in the group added, *'It's not safe for girls to walk to school'*. The discussion continued to the threat of sexual abuse from *'drunkards or people addicted to drugs'* on the way to school. This was echoed by girls in the younger age group: *'They chase us'* – in reference to drunk men. A female elementary teacher from ESP also mentioned that there was a fear of people who were on drugs and drunk. When the older age group was asked if the threat of violence on the way to schools existed for younger girls, one girl mentioned the case of a girl aged 5-6 who was raped on the way to the market. Her friends were also familiar with this example. One 16-year old girl in ESP, who left school in grade 8, said that she observed elementary aged boys physically fighting girls on the way to school – *'so the girls go home'*. This was the only example of a girl experiencing violence on the way to school from a boy her own age. In ESP, the older girls' group felt that it was ok for boys to walk to school. Similarly, the younger age group said that boys were not afraid of drunk men. Despite these impressions from girls, a small group of boys in primary school aged 9-12 from ESP expressed that they were afraid to walk to school because of *'big boys'*. One said, *'They hit us'*. This fear boys have of older-age boys also translates into the school setting, as outlined below.

In EHP, one 16-year old girl in primary school said, *'I walk to school with my friend. It's a 30 minutes' walk to the school I attended. I don't feel safe walking to school alone because there are lots of drunkards and drug[ged] bodies along the road. There was once an incident [where] a girl was held and raped by a guy on her way to school'*. In a small-group interview with girls aged 12-15 in EHP, primary school girls similarly commented on people affected by alcohol and drugs – however this was in an urban settlement. EHP had by far the most references to people under the influence of drugs and alcohol being a threat to children, especially in urban areas. In one small-group interview with primary school girls aged 8-11 in EHP, one girl said, *'[The] road to school is not safe because of drugged bodies and drunkards. One time we were held up by a group of men. They took all our money and food. Sometimes they used to swear at us if we ignore them'*. An elementary teacher in a settlement in EHP gave the example of a girl in elementary 2 who was raped and was not able to attend class due to being the court case.

**Almost all references to violence in schools across all three provinces were related to bullying.** In a female caregiver FGD in ARoB, one woman mentioned bullying as something that can stop girls from attending elementary school. In discussing school violence more generally, boys and girls gave examples of big boys bullying smaller boys. In a small-group interview with boys aged 14-15, one primary aged-boy in ESP gave an example of a small boy

who was bullied by an older boy. This younger boy called his older brother to fight his bully.

There was a strong indication from participants in all provinces that when it came to physical fights, it was almost always boys fighting with other boys. In contrast, girls and boys would have verbal altercations, often referred to by children as *'teasing'*. When asked what *'teasing'* involved, children mentioned swearing and a few also referred to calling other children by their physical attributes. A 12-year old primary school boy in ARoB said, *'Boys fight because of teasing done when people describe each other'*. This connects to how children with disabilities are bullied at school, as outlined in the disability section below. They are referred to by their disability instead of their name. One female elementary teacher in ARoB commented on teasing between girls and boys, observing that girls feel bad when they answer questions incorrectly because of how boys react: *'Boys laugh at them when they get the answers wrong and that discourages them'*. This was affirmed by one primary school girl in a small-group interview of girls aged 12-15 in EHP. Speaking about elementary-aged girls, she said, *'Sometimes when they don't give right answers and got teased by the boys, they got shy, so they don't come to school the following day'*.

There were exceptions to the idea that physical violence is mainly directed from boys to boys, in situations when teasing escalated. One older girl - an 11-year old in primary school in ARoB - said, *'Some boys bite me because I do bad things, like spoiling things, pulling down their papers from the wall'*. There was no mention of girls aged 4-8 experiencing violence from boys. One elementary teacher in ARoB indicated that boys react more strongly to provocation at school: *'Girls report if there are any problems or fights, but boys react to the situation'*. Girls and boys both said they knew where to seek help in situations of violence at schools, saying they would tell their teacher, school captain and caregiver if violence occurred.

**A few children mentioned violence experienced at school in the form of punishments from teachers.** In PNG, physical punishment is legally permitted in schools if used for correction and as long as force is 'reasonable'. However the Department of Education's policies position corporal punishment more seriously.<sup>44</sup> The issue of corporal punishment is often gendered in terms of who uses it, who it is directed at, as well as the degree of severity of the punishment.<sup>45</sup> Interviews with children and teachers indicate that girls and boys are punished by teachers with rulers, caning, as well as non-violent approaches such as requiring children to complete chores around the school. A female elementary teacher in ESP said, '*We give them a little bit of cane*', referring to punishments to both boys and girls, however she observed that boys are caned more because they are more disobedient. A female elementary teacher in EHP said canes are also used at her school, explaining that teachers '*give them cane when they continue doing it over and over*'.

The level of punishment may differ if the offender is a girl or boy. One primary school teacher in ESP said, '*If girls... when they do wrong, we don't punish them*'. She explained that they ask the girls to do weeding in the garden if they do something wrong, but boys are asked to carry stones and cut grass. This may also be due to boy's perceived physical strength in comparison to girl's, correlating strongly with the way household tasks are distributed even from a young age, as described in the earlier section on gender norms. One female elementary teacher in ARoB uses 'discipline cards' for students – the same for girls and boys. She observed however, '*It's not easy to discipline boys – they retaliate... Some boys, when you try to discipline them, they go home and get their parents to question the teacher*'. This suggests there may be a disincentive to punishing boys.

**The assessment findings indicate that punishments are given by male teachers, while female teachers are viewed as gentler.** A group of primary-aged boys aged 9-12 in ESP said they prefer a female teacher to a male teacher because '*she doesn't hit us*'. One added, '*She is not hard on us*'. A 14-year old boy in primary school in ESP said, '*I like women because they are very kind, they don't beat us up*'. He added that male teachers get angry, explaining that if children leave the school boundaries, they are beaten by male teachers. A female elementary teacher in EHP herself commented on male teachers using corporal punishment: '*Sometimes girls are absent from classes because they don't like male teachers because male teachers are sometimes hard on students. They also hit students*'. This last comment has implications. It may mean that girls are afraid of the reactions of male teachers, so may be more inclined to be absent from class if they have a male compared to a female teacher. This requires more detailed investigation.

In the caregiver and teacher survey, 55.4% strongly agreed or agreed that it was better for an elementary teacher to be a woman. Surprisingly, 62.9% of men agreed and 52.3% of women agreed. When asked if it is better for an elementary school teacher to be a man, 46.7% strongly agreed or agreed, with 55.5% of men and 43.1% of women agreeing. This preference for female elementary teachers may be linked to the age group of the children. Younger children may be perceived as needing care from a woman. In contrast to other countries, in PNG there are more male elementary teachers; 55.3% of elementary teachers are male. The RISE baseline found a higher percentage of male teachers in charge in East Sepik (76%) and the Eastern Highlands (51%), but more female teachers in charge in ARoB (60%).<sup>46</sup>

Note that it is possible some of these perceptions about male teachers are influenced by gender norms that suggest women are more caring and men more violent. One female caregiver of an elementary boy commented, '*Female teachers teach well, because it's like [they have] motherly love to the child*'. Her assumption is that only female teachers can provide a caring environment for students, and that such care is the same as being able to teach well. It may also be that such assumptions change for older students; children aged 4-8 may be perceived as needing more care rather than technical knowledge. These perceptions may influence not only the kind of environment that teachers feel they ought to provide, but the way parents and children view what is appropriate and what is not.

44 Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children (2017) *Corporal Punishment of Children in*

45 Levtov, R. (2014) *Addressing Gender Inequalities in Curriculum and Education: Review of Literature and Promising Practices to Inform Education Reform Initiatives in Thailand*, Women's Voice and Agency Research Series, no. 9, p. 21.

46 Save the Children PNG (2018) *RISE Baseline Report. Headline Numbers*, pp. 2; 9; 15.

## MALNUTRITION

In PNG, malnutrition among children under the age of 5 is described by UNICEF as a ‘silent emergency’.<sup>47</sup> PNG’s rate of stunting (height-for-age) is the fourth highest worldwide - 48.2% of children under 5 are stunted.<sup>48</sup> Additionally, 27.2% of children under 5 are underweight (weight-for-age) and 16.2% suffer from wasting (weight-for-height).<sup>49</sup> While hospital data in PNG indicates that 33% of all deaths of under-5 children are due to malnutrition either directly or indirectly, this does not account for deaths in community facilities, which Frontier Economics estimates could increase the malnutrition attribution to 76%.<sup>50</sup> Importantly, there are regional differences in malnutrition rates in PNG; the Highlands Region has an extremely high stunting rate of 58%.<sup>51</sup> Malnutrition has significant consequences among children. Research among young children in South Africa found that stunting led to poor cognitive functioning and decreased fine motor skills - although social skills were not affected.<sup>52</sup> Malnutrition in the early years of a child’s life can lead to later problems with attention spans and activity levels.<sup>53</sup> Further, food may positively influence school performance; the RISE baseline makes a connection between children who have eaten breakfast and higher educational outcomes.<sup>54</sup>

Within this assessment, the issue of hunger and nutrition was primarily explored in individual and small-group interviews. A representative from one organisation in Port Moresby discussed the problem of malnutrition in PNG, explaining that in some communities people only eat one meal a day. She said, ‘They are unable to find the nutrition they need’. Most children asked about food intake during the day in this assessment said they eat twice a day, but this response may have been influenced by others in the small-group interview, since the question was nearly always asked of children in smaller groups. In one community in ESP, it was observed that children had swollen bellies (which may be due to intestinal worms/parasites, or, more seriously, a fluid retention condition called **kwashiorkor** which is caused by insufficient protein intake and has been frequently documented in PNG).<sup>55</sup> This was despite one teacher explaining that families in this community did well, largely working on cocoa and vanilla cash crops. It is possible, therefore, that the issue is less about poverty but more related to accessibility (and knowledge of) healthy and nutritious food – especially during the critical early years of a child’s growth where exclusive breastfeeding and access to health foods is very important. The recent Save the Children report also identified that lack of information about appropriate nutrition may be a cause of malnutrition in PNG.<sup>56</sup>

In all three fieldwork sites, children shared stories about either their own experiences with hunger, or the experiences of their friends. Since nearly all semi-structured interviews were conducted with primary-aged (not elementary-aged) children, the reflections about hunger are largely from older age groups rather than the 4-8 age group, however, given the presence of multiple children in one family, the issues of hunger may also affect younger children in the household.

**Hunger was often linked to parents being absent.** In a small-group interview with girls aged 14-16 in primary school in ESP, one girl said, ‘*If the mother is alone with the children, she cannot do everything to support the family. They run out of food*’. The implication here is that the mother is not earning enough on her own to feed her family. In EHP, one 16 year-old primary school girl shared how her friend’s mother passed away and now her father sometimes does not give her money for lunch and is unable to provide the food the family needs. In ESP, in a small-group interview with boys in primary school aged 14-15, one boy said, ‘*Last month [I was hungry] because my mum and dad got into an argument and mum was not there to cook. That’s when I felt hungry*’. This boy just ate sago for the week that his mother was not present. In EHP, a 14-year old girl with a disability who is in elementary 2 said, ‘*During the day, sometimes I am left alone in the house. One time I was so hungry because everyone went away and no one was with me to cook my food*’. A 16-year old girl in primary school in EHP said, ‘*The last time I felt hungry was before the Term 2 break. My mum and dad got into an argument so we couldn’t cook. They told us not to go to school, but I insisted and went without having anything for breakfast. I felt so hungry at school so returned home at recess [10:00am]*’.

A primary aged boy in a small-group interview with other boys aged 14-15 in ESP commented on the relatives providing insufficient food for children: ‘*Their parents left them so they are with relatives and these people don’t feed them well*’. Another boy in this group added, ‘*Sometimes when parents argue and separate, and they live with a grandmother or other relatives, the relative is greedy or doesn’t want to share with them*’. In a small-group interview with boys aged 13-16 in EHP, one primary school boy talked about his friend: ‘*She does not live with her parents. She lives with another lady so sometimes she goes without bringing any food to school*’. However, in some cases, problems with having sufficient food are resolved by a child being informally adopted and leaving their biological parents. This was the case for one girl in ARoB, whose male caregiver was interviewed. He said, ‘*When she was with her real parents... We see that she is not [eating]... most of the time she goes hungry. We felt sorry for her. When I talked to the elementary teacher, they told me, “She’s not developed”*’. When he and his wife adopted this young girl (who was a relative), they were able to ensure she had sufficient food.

47 UNICEF (2014) ‘Malnutrition – a silent emergency in Papua New Guinea’, Press Release, available online: [https://www.unicef.org/png/media\\_22749.html](https://www.unicef.org/png/media_22749.html)

48 International Food Policy Research Institute (2016) *Global Nutrition Report: From Promise to Impact, Ending Malnutrition by 2030*, p. 120.

49 National Statistical Office (2010) *Household Income and Expenditure Survey. Summary tables*, p. 90.

50 Save the Children (2017) *Short Changed: The Human and Economic Cost of Child Undernutrition in Papua New Guinea*, p. 21.

51 National Statistical Office (2010) *Household Income and Expenditure Survey. Summary tables*, p. 90.

52 Casale, D. et al. (2014) ‘The Association Between Stunting and Psychosocial Development Among Preschool Children: A Study Using the South African Birth to Twenty Cohort Data’, *Child: Care, Health and Development*, vol. 40, no. 6, pp. 900-910.

53 World Bank (2006), *Repositioning Nutrition as Central to Development: A Strategy for Large Scale Action*.

54 Johnson, C. et al. (2018) *Rapidly Improving Standards in Elementary (RISE) Literacy and Numeracy Boost Baseline Report, Papua New Guinea*, Save the Children, p. 48.

55 Papua New Guinea Department of Health (2015) *Child Morbidity & Mortality. Annual Report 2015*, p. 9.

56 Save the Children (2017) *Short Changed: The Human and Economic Cost of Child Undernutrition in Papua New Guinea*, p. 16.

**In other cases, children felt that the issues related to hunger were because of poor caregiver decision-making.** A 10-year old girl in primary school in ARoB commented that her friend's family doesn't have enough money for food because *'they spend money unnecessarily'*. A 14-year old boy in primary school in ESP said, *'Their parents do not go to work. They don't work in town or find a job. Sometimes they lose their husband or wife and they don't make arrangements to grow food'*. A 12-year old girl in primary school in ARoB said that her friends are hungry because of their mother consuming alcohol: *'Their mother never cares for them, that's why. Their mother leaves them and gets drunk'*. A 16-year old in primary school in ARoB, echoed the problem with alcohol: *'My aunt doesn't do gardening, but my uncle goes fishing and he gets money from the fishing. Last time he came back with fish and he sold them, but he got beer. He drank all the money'*.

Other reasons for hunger included lack of rain, laziness, or not having a garden to work in. Occasionally, the connection was made between lack of food and school attendance. In a small-group interview with girls aged 14-16 in an ESP primary school, one girl said, *'There are a lot of them in the family, so they don't have enough for everyone. They don't come to school all the time because of this'*. In a small-group interview with boys aged 13-16 in EHP, one primary school boy said, *'I did not bring lunch to school because there was no food in the house'*.

**There is also a more directly gendered connection to the issue of access to food, which may be linked to kastom, ideas about 'big men', as well as some Christian teaching, which positions females as subordinate.** In a context where malnutrition is already a significant problem, the preferential treatment given to males may mean that girls experience more negative consequences of malnutrition than boys. One ten year-old primary school girl in ARoB said that her father and brothers get the biggest plates of food. Similarly, a 16-year old girl in primary school in EHP said that her brother, who is the third oldest in the family after two girls, eats first and gets the bigger share. This may be due to the perception that girls do not need as much food because of the nature of their tasks – which also carries implications for how women's/girls' work is viewed in comparison to men's/boys'. Two boys in a small-group interview with primary boys aged 8-11 said their fathers are served first. A key informant on education in ARoB said, *'The big share of the food is given to the father, then the children then the mother. Sometimes the mother won't eat anything good. Sometimes the mother will say to her children 'no no no leave that food, that's for your father'*.

Sometimes, preferential treatment requires not just being male but also being older in age. In a small-group interview with girls aged 12-15 in EHP, one primary school girl said, *'When I cook, my adopted sister serves the food. She serves small brother's food first. Every one of us eat after. My dad eats a bigger plate. My small brother eats in a small plate'*. In this last example, the smaller brother is the only male (apart from the father) who lives at home, which may be why he is served first, however he is served a small amount perhaps because he is still young - in elementary 2. One 15-year old secondary school boy in EHP said his three younger siblings (a baby and two elementary children) eat first and everyone gets the same share. These examples highlight that preferential treatment around food is affected by gender and age.

It is not always the case that men and boys receive preferential treatment; this may vary from family to family and could be influenced by a range of factors including education level, wealth and cultural customs related to food. In ESP, in a small-group interview with boys in primary school aged 14-15, one boy emphasised, *'all of us get an equal share'* – a comment which his friend agreed with. This diversity similarly emerges in the survey findings, where 47.8% of caregivers and teachers strongly agreed or agreed that boys are given more food, however only slightly less (41.3%) strongly disagreed or disagreed with this statement. These mixed findings may be connected to geographical areas; in EHP the gap was largest between those who agreed and disagreed: 52% were in agreement and 32% disagreed. It may also be that there is greater sensitivity to agreeing with this statement; people may feel embarrassed about disclosing these practices to enumerators. In some communities, social or cultural ideas about food influence access in gendered ways. A CARE study found that in the Highlands, men are always served first and eat the most, even when women are pregnant or lactating.<sup>57</sup> This may be linked to hierarchical power structures, as well as to the belief that having a high food intake may result in deformities in the child – an interesting link here to the fear of disability.<sup>58</sup>

**Assessment findings suggest that malnutrition may be linked to late entry into school because it influences perceptions about a child's readiness for school.** One head teacher in ESP explained that children start school late because their parents enrol them based on physical stature rather than their age: *'They don't follow the age, they look at the growth. "My child is still looking small so..."'* This teacher felt this was a particular problem in rural settings. Similarly, teacher trainers have also indicated to Save the Children staff that due to lack of birth certificates (making age difficult to verify), during enrolment, children are asked to line up and touch their opposite ear (across the head) as a means of identifying if they are ready to start school. The Save the Children Child Protection Assessment in ARoB found that in communities with high adult illiteracy rates, some children did not know their age or date of birth.<sup>59</sup> In the RISE baseline, 51.4% of assessed students were unable to recall their age.<sup>60</sup> Use of physical size to determine school readiness becomes problematic in a context where malnutrition is prevalent, further complicating age of entry into school.

57 CARE (2015) *Initial Rapid Gender Assessment Report Papua New Guinea 2015 El Niño. Select Communities of Eastern Highlands, Morobe and Chimbu*, p. 2.

58 Kuzma, J. et al. (2013) 'Food Taboos and Traditional Customs Among Pregnant Women in Papua New Guinea: Missed Opportunity for Education in Antenatal Clinics', *Contemporary PNG Studies: DWU Research Journal*, vol. 19, pp. 1-11.

59 Save the Children (2017) *Child Protection Community Capacity Assessment*, p. 10.

60 Johnson, C. et al. (2018) *Rapidly Improving Standards in Elementary (RISE) Literacy and Numeracy Boost Baseline Report, Papua New Guinea*, Save the Children, p. 43.

Existing research documents the connection between malnutrition and delayed entry into school. One study in Tanzania found a direct correlation between stunting and delay in enrolment as well as the number of years of schooling completed.<sup>61</sup> A study among 6-year olds in Zambia found that caregivers sent children to school based on their physical size rather than their age, meaning that smaller children were entering school later.<sup>62</sup> In the Philippines, stunting at the age of two was connected with later entry into school, higher dropout, more grade repetition, decreased rates of graduation from primary and secondary school and poorer school performance.<sup>63</sup> In such situations, where children appear physically smaller because of stunting, wasting, or being underweight, parents may feel their children are not ready for schooling. They may believe their children are 'physically and perhaps mentally immature'.<sup>64</sup> Although this was not specifically explored in this assessment, it may also be that school administrators, facing large class sizes, assess readiness based on a child's height to postpone entry in order to make class sizes more manageable for teachers.<sup>65</sup>

Late entry into school is not only a consequence of poverty, but can be a result of stunting – as one study found in Pakistan.<sup>66</sup> There is a difference between not being in school because of poverty and not being in school because of stunting; in Tanzania, one study found that poor children were involved in economic activities like fishing or farming instead of attending school, however stunted children were less likely to be involved in these economic activities and less likely to be in school.<sup>67</sup> This distinction is important because it signifies that stunting may have more serious ramifications than poverty as a stand-alone issue. In PNG, as noted in Save the Children's recent report,<sup>68</sup> stunting does not necessarily only affect the poorest communities. While the stunting rate of people in the poorest wealth quintile is very high (55%), this rate is not significantly less for the richest quintile (36%).<sup>69</sup> This further indicates that poverty and nutrition are not always connected, and points to the importance of access to information about nutrition.<sup>70</sup> This also has consequences for the types of interventions proposed; economic interventions may not necessarily resolve the issue of poor school attendance among children with stunting.

The RISE baseline found that the average age of children in elementary school within ARoB, East Sepik and Eastern Highlands, was one and a half years over age.<sup>71</sup> Similarly, within this assessment, the variety of ages within the same grade was evident among interview participants. A child could be age 10 in elementary 2, or even age 14 and in elementary 2. This is not an issue unique to elementary school. In one case, girls aged 8 and 11 were in the same primary school grade. A higher age for the grade may not only be due to delayed entry into school (and the potential links with malnutrition), but at times girls and boys are over-age due to repetition. School repetition, according to the RISE baseline findings, is a significant issue (around 30%) across all three RISE provinces. Repetition may occur when children miss too many classes to catch up; sometimes assessments are used to decide if a child should repeat a grade, while in other cases more arbitrary and subjective decisions are made. The RISE baseline found that repetition does not result in better academic performance,<sup>72</sup> which may be because the existing context of the child (home environment, poor nutrition, teacher absenteeism etc.) has not been addressed.

The baseline found most students had missed school three times or more in the previous week, while some 50% of students were absent at least once the previous week.<sup>73</sup> Absenteeism was slightly higher in the Eastern Highlands and East Sepik (both at 52%) compared to ARoB (46%). The most common reasons for absenteeism were illness (37.3% of children stated this reason) and teacher absenteeism (16.2% stated this).<sup>74</sup> UNICEF's child undernutrition conceptual framework outlines the reciprocal relationship between poor nutrition/diet and illness.<sup>75</sup> Girls and boys may become sick more easily if they have an underlying problem with nutrition, resulting in them being absent from school, which in turn makes grade repetition a possibility. As stated, the RISE baseline suggests a connection between higher educational outcomes and eating breakfast.<sup>76</sup> This highlights the way problems with nutrition affect school attendance.

61 Alderman, H. et al. (2009) 'Preschool Nutrition and Subsequent Schooling Attainment: Longitudinal Evidence from Tanzania', Working Paper 75/08, Center for Research on Pensions and Welfare Policies, p. 13.

62 McCoy, D.C. et al (2015) 'Poverty, Physical Stature and Cognitive Skills: Mechanisms Underlying Children's School Enrollment in Zambia', *Developmental Psychology*, vol. 51, no. 5, pp. 600-614.

63 Daniels, M.C. & Adair, L.S. (2004) 'Growth in Young Filipino Children Predicts Schooling Trajectories Through High School', *Journal of Nutrition*, vol. 134, no. 6, pp. 1439-1446.

64 Jukes, M. et al. (2008) *School Health, Nutrition and Education for All: Levelling the Playing Field*, p. 39.

65 Alderman, H. et al. (2009) 'Preschool Nutrition and Subsequent Schooling Attainment: Longitudinal Evidence from Tanzania', Working Paper 75/08, Center for Research on Pensions and Welfare Policies, p. 10.

66 Alderman, H. et al. (2001) 'Child Health and School Enrolment – A Longitudinal Analysis', *Journal of Human Resources*, vol. 36, no. 1, pp. 185-205.

67 Jukes, M. et al. (2008) *School Health, Nutrition and Education for All: Levelling the Playing Field*, p. 38.

68 Save the Children (2017) *Short Changed: The Human and Economic Cost of Child Undernutrition in Papua New Guinea*.

69 The World Bank Group (2015) *Stagnant Stunting Rate Despite Rapid Economic Growth in Papua New Guinea*, Policy Research Working Paper 7301, p.4.

70 Omot, N. (2012) 'Food Security in Papua New Guinea', in Templeton, D. (ed) *Food Security in East Timor, Papua New Guinea and Pacific Island Countries and Territories*, ACIAR Technical Report 80, p. 33.

71 Johnson, C. et al. (2018) *Rapidly Improving Standards in Elementary (RISE) Literacy and Numeracy Boost Baseline Report, Papua New Guinea, Save the Children*, p. 43.

72 Ibid., p. 48.

73 Ibid., p. 6.

74 Ibid., p. 42-43.

75 UNICEF (2013) *Improving Child Nutrition: The Achievable Imperative for Global Progress*, p. 4.

76 Johnson, C. et al. (2018) *Rapidly Improving Standards in Elementary (RISE) Literacy and Numeracy Boost Baseline Report, Papua New Guinea, Save the Children*, p. 48.

Additionally, grade repetition may be needed if girls in particular are required to remain at home to complete household tasks, causing them to find it difficult to catch-up at school. Research shows that repetition rates in PNG are higher at the elementary than primary or secondary level<sup>77</sup> - a very interesting finding considering that older children face greater barriers to attending school regularly, particularly as gender roles become more entrenched. The RISE baseline findings indicate that over a third of elementary students repeated a grade.<sup>78</sup> Repetition rates are higher in EHP where 38.5% of children repeat an elementary grade, compared to ARoB (33.1%) and ESP (30.8%)<sup>79</sup> During interviews, reasons for repetition were varied: absenteeism of students, sickness, and simply being 'slow' were mentioned by participants. Additionally, the issue of children themselves deciding to repeat emerged from one primary school girl in ARoB who is aged 10. *'They fear if they continue to E1, they will find it difficult, so they repeat'*. Usually, the teacher in charge gives final approval for grade repetition on the basis of the teacher's decision, sometimes in consultation with parents.

**Taking into account the complexity underlying grade repetition, the connection between malnutrition and late school entry may have other potential consequences: specifically bullying in the classroom.** One primary school teacher in ESP explained that when students enter elementary school late, they find it difficult to cope with studying alongside younger children and leave school. She talked about how there are children of very different ages within the same class. When older children get lower marks than the younger children, she explained that *'they get ashamed and they leave school'*. Students often compare marks with each other and it can be embarrassing when the younger children get better grades than the older children. This can result in 'teasing', which was mentioned by almost every child who was asked about school violence. A head teacher in ESP also referred to this, saying, *'If a bigger one is in the class, the smaller ones tease them'*. This, she explained, affects both girls and boys – there was no distinction for teasing except, *'Boys are a bit brave and strong, so they fight back when they are teased'*. She added that sometimes if an older child responds badly to the teasing, it might discourage the younger one from coming to school. This may be a similar situation to what one female elementary teacher described in ARoB, where students who were 'slow learners' would disrupt the students who were trying to learn by throwing sticks and stones at them during the class.

These findings highlight that there may be causal relationships between intersecting problems: malnutrition affects a child's weight and height, which can create the perception that affected children are not old enough for school. This perpetuates delayed entry into school, which may result in an older child experiencing teasing and bullying from younger children. Furthermore, overage pupils, especially girls, are more likely to leave primary school before completion. Furthermore, children affected by malnutrition and continue to experience insufficient food may struggle to attend school or concentrate. Children with malnutrition are more likely to suffer from illnesses, resulting in absenteeism, repetition and increasing gaps in ages between children in the same grade.



77 Agigo, J. (2017) *The State of Education: Growth & Expansion of Education in Papua New Guinea in Last Six Years 2010 – 2016*, Senior Education Officers Conference 2017.

78 Johnson, C. et al. (2018) *Rapidly Improving Standards in Elementary (RISE) Literacy and Numeracy Boost Baseline Report, Papua New Guinea*, Save the Children, p. 6.

79 Ibid., p. 48.

## SCHOOL FACILITIES, MATERIALS AND TEACHER AVAILABILITY/SKILLS

When asked about the top three things needed for their elementary schools to function effectively, teachers across all provinces most commonly mentioned classroom facilities and learning materials. Additionally, in ARoB and ESP, more knowledge and skills for teachers was mentioned. In ARoB, teachers felt there should be better communication between teachers and the board of management so that teachers could explain their needs. In ESP, teachers mentioned the need for more regular visits by inspectors to improve teacher performance, as well as access to computers to speed up processes. In EHP, teachers mentioned access to water and fencing around the school.

### **The overwhelming feedback from children, parents and teachers across all three provinces, was that the facilities of elementary schools need to be significantly improved.**

One female caregiver from ARoB said that the children in the elementary school sit on the cement floor because there are no chairs or desks in the classroom. She said that the classroom is run-down and during the rainy season the roof leaks, ending the class. This was also the case in ESP; one female caregiver said, *'If there is a heavy downpour, the teachers send the kids home because the roof leaks'*. An elementary teacher in ESP said there are too many elementary children in her class - over 50 children – all of whom sit on the ground. The classroom size and lack of tables and chairs also affects the ability of teachers to provide individual support to children, making it more difficult to track whether children are falling behind. Teachers stressed the need for more classrooms to cope with demand. In one community in ESP, the primary school teacher explained that the school does not have a toilet, but parents are currently working to build this. She said that sometimes children go to the toilet in the bush which upsets the landowners who come and argue with the teachers. A head teacher in ESP felt that good facilities were an incentive to attend: *'When you have good facilities, it motivates the children to come to class'*.

**The learning materials provided by schools were described as insufficient by many teachers and parents.** In ESP, one primary school teacher said there are not enough books for children, so some teachers bring in their personal story-books to school to photocopy them for the children. A female caregiver in ESP emphasised the linkage between having learning materials and attendance: *'Learning materials encourage children to go to school'*. In a small-group interview with girls aged 12-15 in EHP, one primary school girl commented that they don't have sufficient learning materials because people in nearby settlements steal the learning materials. Two female caregivers, one in ARoB and one in ESP – purchased additional learning materials for their elementary daughters, working with them at home. One did so after moving from a school in another province, finding that her daughter was not adjusting well. She also gave materials to the teachers and got advance materials from the teachers of all her children, to work with them beforehand. This caregiver, who accompanies her children to school and waits to take them home, said that she also helps her children (and other children) during class itself: *'If they don't understand something, they run out and ask me'*. The other female caregiver purchased separate learning materials

because her daughter was struggling and repeated one grade in elementary school. She said, *'If the school doesn't have enough, then parents must help'*. In both these examples, caregivers felt that schools were not able to sufficiently support their daughters with learning materials (and even quality teaching), so took the initiative to ensure their children received the support they needed. These examples highlight the possibility that there are more parents, possibly without the educational background or financial means to take this kind of action, whose children would benefit from targeted support outside of school hours.

**In general, parents appeared satisfied with the teachers of their children aged 4-8, however in all provinces flagged that teacher absenteeism was a problem.** The issue of teacher absenteeism was linked to parents' impression of the elementary schools. Although the government has made headway in reducing the teacher absenteeism rate from 15% in 2002 to 13% in 2012,<sup>80</sup> this remains an ongoing issue perpetuated by teachers being not sufficiently trained,<sup>81</sup> being unpaid (volunteers), being paid late, and having to live in poor quality subsidised housing.<sup>82</sup> The rural location of some schools also poses a challenge to attracting quality, well-trained teachers. One organisation in Port Moresby noted that schools have closed down in some communities: *'No one wants to work in remote areas'*.

An organisation in ARoB also commented: *'This day the teacher will come, then the next day she won't come'*. This representative felt that this affects the child: *'The child feels that he or she is not being attended and eventually the spirit of wanting to attend school is out'*. This was echoed by a female caregiver in EHP, who said, *'Sometimes my daughter's class teacher who is a male teacher never comes to class. Sometimes it is her excuse that the teacher will not be at school - that is why she will not go to school'*. She also mentioned that a few of the teachers are absent because they are studying. This example highlights that teacher absenteeism can be linked to student absenteeism.

Distance may also be an issue; one elementary teacher in ESP said that she walks 1.5 hours to get to school. Older children also referred to absenteeism. In a small-group interview with girls aged 12-15 in EHP, one primary school girl said that their teacher is always late; the teacher lives close to the school which is why she is late or stays home. Here, being closer to the school had the opposite effect.

Teacher absenteeism may force parents to take drastic action. One male caregiver in ARoB changed his daughter's elementary school because of teacher absenteeism: *'The reason we changed schools was because some teachers don't stay at class all through the day. The new school is better – the teachers are there'*. Three other students also left the elementary school and moved to this different one. In ARoB, one female elementary teacher said that reasons for teacher absences are sickness, death (of a family member) and the weather (rain).

80 Howes, S. et al. (2014) *A Lost Decade? Service Delivery and Reforms in Papua New Guinea 2002 – 2012*, The National Research Institute and the Development Policy Centre, p. 47.

81 Department of Education (2015) *EMIS data 2015*.

82 Howes, S. et al. (2014) *A Lost Decade? Service Delivery and Reforms in Papua New Guinea 2002 – 2012*, The National Research Institute and the Development Policy Centre, pp. 45; 51.

**Linked to absenteeism, teacher lateness is also a challenge.** One female caregiver in ARoB said, *'When we go to school, our teachers never arrive early'*. She explained that students arrive early to school but stay around *'making noise'* while waiting for their teacher to arrive. Interestingly this caregiver also raised the fact that female teachers face extra challenges: *'Sometimes female teachers come late because of the workload at their houses'*.

**Teacher skills, identified as an area needing support in ARoB and ESP by teachers themselves, seemed less of a concern for caregivers.** One female caregiver FGD in EHP, where a woman said, *'Sometimes teachers do not prepare lessons according to their grades and levels'*. This is perhaps unsurprising given the wide variety of ages in one grade, the large class sizes and the lack of materials.

**Among not just teachers (who are trained to address gender inequity/inequality), but girls and boys as well as caregivers, it emerged that pervasive ideas about girls and boys may influence attitudes and behaviours.** This assessment sought to understand the extent to which teachers adhere to principles of gender equity/equality in how they treat children. In the survey with caregivers and teachers, 65.2% strongly disagreed or disagreed with the idea that boys are more clever than girls, while 13.1% strongly agreed or agreed. Interestingly, 16.9% of women strongly agreed or agreed with the statement, compared to 3.7% of men who agreed (no men strongly agreed). All participants who agreed were caregivers, and all participants who strongly agreed (who were all female) were teachers. Perplexingly, 50% of those who had a Bachelor's degree strongly agreed or agreed that boys were more clever. There were differences across provinces: in ARoB, 10.9% strongly agreed or agreed; in ESP, 19.1% strongly agreed or agreed; and in EHP surprisingly only 12% strongly agreed or agreed.

One primary-aged boy in a small-group interview with boys aged 14-15 in ESP, said, *'Parents think boys are more clever than girls'*. He added, *'Boys are creative, girls are not. They see boys are active in talking so they keep the boy at school'*. He said girls, in contrast, are *'silent'*. He also said boys are good at drawing and girls are not. An elementary teacher in EHP said, *'I don't see any difference in teaching boys and girls. They are all my students. However, boys are creative and actively participate while girls are shy and slow or not active in participating'*. A primary teacher in ESP explained that girls in her class struggle compared to the boys because they are shy. She said, *'Boys don't care. Boys always ask questions if they're not sure. Girls feel ashamed and they don't ask'*.

These findings seem to indicate that although nearly two-thirds of people reacted negatively to the idea of boys being clever, there may still be entrenched ideas about intelligence among girls versus boys that influence attitudes. This raises interesting linkages to the way school bullying occurs from younger towards older children, suggesting that both adults and children may hold fixed ideas about intelligence itself. Among children, these ideas are not necessarily gendered however are age-based; among adults, these ideas are linked to gender. The value placed on intelligence may be something that is used by children against each other, and that continues to shape attitudes into adulthood.

**The findings also reflect that approaches of teachers to gender equity seem to be solely about ensuring the same opportunities for girls and boys rather than a more complex**

**approach to addressing power hierarchies.** During interviews, the extent to which gender equality/equity is addressed in the classroom was also discussed. A few teachers directly mentioned that gender equity is taught in the new curriculum. In ESP, the head teacher commented that sometimes in the curriculum there are activities that are specifically for boys or girls, but at her school they tell the girls and boys to do both activities. For example, there is an activity for the boys to make a model of a canoe and the girls make a **bilum**, but she has the boys and girls do both. An elementary teacher in ESP said *'We practice gender'* – a quite unclear statement that illustrates a low understanding of what gender is. She went on to explain: *'We don't separate them, we put them together'* – referring to girls' and boys' participation in activities. She added that this was because of 'gender equity'.

In this kind of approach, promoting gender equity/equality becomes reduced to managing 'difference' – but loses its grounding in tackling of gendered and intersectional power hierarchies. In this kind of approach, power between girls and boys in the classroom, power dynamics in the 'teasing' and gendered/aged violence that occurs, and power hierarchies between different students (for example children with disabilities and children without disabilities) and between teachers and students, become less of a focus. This means that addressing inequities/inequalities becomes about all children doing the same activities, instead of actually addressing complex power hierarchies. Teachers need to recognise that students bring ideas about gender from the home to the classroom, that gender norms affect relationships between children, with teachers, and with parents. This more complex way of looking at gender equity/equality is important in order for teachers to tackle these issues.



Photo of a community in ARoB, taken by Michelle Lokot

## FINANCIAL BARRIERS

**Throughout interviews with caregivers, the issue of school fees as well as school-associated expenses (food, uniforms, stationery, transport, loss of labour) emerged as issues that place increasing pressure on families.** In the caregiver and teacher survey, while only 7.6% strongly agreed or agreed that if there were limited funds, boys should be sent to elementary school instead of girls, there were distinct differences based on province. In ARoB, agreement was lowest (2.2% - all of these strongly agreed and no one just agreed); in ESP, agreement was next (9.5% - all of these strongly agreed and no one just agreed); and in EHP, agreement was highest (16% - 12% strongly agreed and 4% agreed). In EHP, 30% of men and 6.7% of women felt boys should be prioritised, in ESP it was only women (18.2% of them) who felt boys should be prioritised (all the men disagreed/strongly disagreed) and in ARoB it was only women (2.6% of them) who felt boys should be prioritised (similar to ESP, all the men disagreed/strongly disagreed). The lower agreement in ARoB and greater agreement in EHP, followed closely by ESP, aligns with how the matrilineal context of ARoB may influence the way girls and boys are valued. The fact that only women agreed about prioritising boys in ESP and to far lesser degree in ARoB, is somewhat unexpected however, but may be a reflection of what is actually occurring rather than what 'should' occur as the question stated.

**During interviews, it did not emerge as a clear theme that caregivers would preference a son's education instead of a daughter's in situations of financial stress, however a few individuals suggested this may occur.** One head teacher in ESP said that sometimes parents choose to send boys to school instead of girls if they need to prioritise due to limited finances. One female caregiver in ESP also made a reference to this in an FGD: *'Sometimes, due to financial issues girls stay back home and boys went to school'*. In the female caregiver FGD in ESP, one woman said, *'We have many kids, so we only send boys to school while the girls are kept at home'*. The implication here may be that the decision is financial. As noted in the gender norms section, caregivers did reflect on the ways a son returns to his village to provide for the family, and the benefits of investing in a boy's education; which could be a less direct way of indicating how resources may be allocated in families.

The assessment findings indicate that despite the 'Tuition Fee Free' policy, which since 2012 has meant that, at least on paper, school fees up to grade 10 are abolished and upper secondary school education is subsidised,<sup>83</sup> families are still asked to pay school fees for elementary school. These costs, which ranged from 20 kina in one school to 100 kina in another, were referred to by caregivers as 'school fees' although the school itself may refer to them as 'project fees' or fees for facilities/maintenance. In addition, caregivers are often asked to make 'contributions' which cover extra costs the school incurs, stationery, or end-of-year events/parties. One female caregiver in ARoB said, *'For my child's learning I can say that the school is OK. That's why when they send a note or ask for contributions, I just do it because they support my child's education'*. This caregiver does fundraising for her daughter's school

expenses through 'coffee nights' when mothers cook together and buy food from each other. This caregiver felt that her fundraising efforts acted as an incentive for her daughter to attend school: *'Sometimes that pushes the child to go to school. When she tells me she needs pencils and books, if I look for ways to find the money, it pushes her to go to school. She goes and she's happy'*. In this example, the daughter valued her caregiver's efforts to raise the money, therefore committed to attending regularly. Although none of the caregivers mentioned this, one organisation in POM said that these contributions are important and have consequences for their children's grades: *'If you don't contribute, you automatically get zero'*. It is unclear if this is an anecdotal example or a widespread practice.

The idea of incentives also emerged in ESP, where one female primary school teacher talked about how having books, school bags and pencils *'makes them interested to come'* to school. She emphasised that parents need to buy children these supplies: *'If they come and see other kids having these things, they will run away'*. A female caregiver in EHP acknowledged the challenge in meeting these needs: *'Sometimes, we parents failed the girls. We don't support them with their needs like buying clothes, stationeries, plus their other needs that is why they leave school'*. In the female caregiver FGD in ARoB, women spoke about parents mismanaging household funds and being unable to meet the basic needs of the children. One primary school boy in EHP, talking about girls 4-8, said, *'Some girls don't have enough clothes, so when these clothes are dirty they stay home'*. In a small group of girls aged 14-16 in ESP, one primary school girl commented, *'Sometimes parents don't buy proper clothes to wear to school'*. She felt this was a factor that affects attendance. In this group, one girl said, *'My parents can't afford the school fees, so we are now all at home'*. This was the only direct example of a girl (and her siblings) being unable to attend school due to not paying school fees; however, she gave the impression that this was temporary and had only just occurred.

The only other consequence mentioned regarding parents not meeting financial needs was referenced in the female caregiver's FGD in EHP. *'Sometimes, we parents do not meet their needs... It causes them to go out with those men that have enough money, get pregnant and come back home'*. The participants in the FGD had children aged 4-8, however it seems likely this comment was in reference to older children rather than girls aged 4-8.

83 Department of Education (2015) *National Education Plan 2015-2019*, p. 20.

## DISABILITY

**In PNG, having a disability may result in stigma. When gender and disability intersect, this can result in 'double discrimination',<sup>84</sup> resulting in lack of access to education and health services, and the isolation of girls with disabilities.** According to a specialist disability organisation in ESP, girls with disabilities are *'too much protected'*. There is a perception that they are unable to act by themselves, therefore caregivers in particular believe protecting girls is the best option. One staff member said, *'The parents tend to hold them back'*. This may explain why there are more boys with disabilities than girls accessing specialist disability support. It is clear however that both girls and boys may be hidden from broader society due to disability. One representative from one organisation in Port Moresby discussed the stigma associated with disability, saying, *'Children with disabilities are kept indoors. You don't get to see them'*. A representative on education in ARoB emphasised the importance of engaging parents, saying that sometimes parents may not see education as important for children with disabilities, so may not send them to school: *'If they don't have education themselves, they will just tell her to stay back at home – that's easier for everyone'*. There is a need however to understand the extent to which girls are affected more by this. The findings also emphasise the importance of hearing from children with disabilities themselves about their needs. Speaking broadly about how to engage with children with disabilities, one member of a Disabled Person's Organisation commented that a different approach should be taken: *'They need to be empowered to talk on behalf of themselves, not other people talking for them'*.

Women and girls with disabilities are also more vulnerable to GBV. Research by Oxfam showed that over 12% of GBV survivors had disabilities.<sup>85</sup> One specialist disability organisation in Port Moresby said that there are cases of school-aged girls who were lured into relationships by married men. Some of these men become 'sugar daddies' for girls with disabilities. She gave the example of a 13-year old who *was made pregnant by a sugar daddy*. A specialist disability organisation in ESP also discussed how girls with different kinds of disabilities may be more vulnerable to GBV. For example, it will be difficult for a girl who is hearing impaired to hear people coming behind her when she walks to school. This organisation believed that people felt boys with disabilities could defend themselves, but girls could not. They gave the example of a family with two children with disabilities: a girl and boy. The boy attends school, but the girl does not because the parents are worried about sexual abuse. This organisation felt that the fear of GBV against girls with disabilities was especially a concern in rural areas.

In PNG, having a disability is often linked to sorcery. Research by Oxfam highlighted that one third of people who experienced violence due to being accused of sorcery, had disabilities.<sup>86</sup> One organisation in Port Moresby commented that there is a belief that disability shows up in the child if the mother is a sorcerer. This was affirmed by a specialist disability organisation in ESP, who stated, *'When disability starts, people might speculate that this is because of the mother being a certain way. It could be something that the mother did during pregnancy for example'*. Here, the source of disability also has gendered connotations: it is the mother who is seen as responsible for disability. During interviews, there were references to the connection between sorcery and disability, with a few children in ESP and EHP referring to siblings who had developed disabilities (paralysis) apparently due to sorcery. In two cases, the siblings died as a result. In EHP, a small group of girls aged 12-15 said they do not go near the bush because of sorcery.

**Different narratives about the agency of children with disabilities emerged in this assessment.** One female caregiver, who looks after an 18-year old girl with a disability in ARoB, expressed the flexible approach she takes to education, saying, *'We don't force her to go to school'*. She added, *'When she wants to go, she goes'*. This caregiver went on to explain that in their family, the girl with a disability was given *'first priority'* because if she was not prioritised, she would cause problems: *'She expects to be the first. If we don't prioritise her she locks herself in the house... Everything she wants, she must get that thing'*. While this girl is bullied at school, this is not what makes her stay at home, rather, *'she does whatever she wants'*.

This idea of children with disabilities being prioritised also emerged from the specialist disability organisation in ESP. One staff member commented that parents may allow children with disabilities to have their wishes fulfilled out of fear or pity. She gave the example of a boy who had a lot of physical strength and wanted to be married and wanted to have his own house and his parents kept saying, *'Yes, yes'* because they were afraid of his reaction: *'They feared him because of his disability'*. This staff member added, *'Out of pity they give everything'*.

These two examples illustrate a different narrative to how development agencies have typically depicted the agency of children with disabilities. At times, children with disabilities are described as if they lack agency, voice and decision-making ability by default<sup>87</sup> - instead of recognising that there are cases where children (and adults) with disabilities do not need to be 'given' such rights, because they are already exercising them. This ties to the way children with disabilities are often underestimated.<sup>88</sup> In some communities, children with disabilities may already be displaying agency – making their own decisions about education and their futures. In the first example, the decision not to attend school whenever she felt like it may not necessarily be one that development agencies would support - because education is not being prioritised – however, the other side to this is that the child is exercising autonomy over her own life choices. These examples illustrate that within communities and especially among caregivers, it might be useful to emphasise the principles contained

84 Leonard Cheshire Disability (2017) *Still Left Behind: Pathways to Inclusive Education for Girls with Disabilities*, p. 7.

85 Oxfam (2017) *Understanding Gender-Based and Sorcery Related Violence in Papua New Guinea. An Analysis of Data Collected from Oxfam Partners 2013-2016*, p. 13.

86 Ibid., p. 19.

87 World Health Organization & World Bank (2011) *World Report on Disability*, p. 157.

88 UNICEF (2007) *Promoting the Rights of Children with Disabilities*, p. 31.

within the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, specifically that people with disabilities should have autonomy to make their own decisions, to exercise consent and be viewed as active members of society.<sup>89</sup>

When it comes to educating children with disabilities, there were often divergent opinions. In the survey, 34.8% of caregivers and teachers strongly agreed or agreed that they would object if someone with a mental disability was placed in the same class as their child. Overall, 37.8% of teachers were in agreement, compared to 32.7% of caregivers. This may be due to the idea that schools and teachers do not have the skills to accommodate children with specific kinds of disabilities.

In a few cases, the issue of bullying of children with disabilities was also mentioned. One specialist disability organisation in ESP commented on this, saying, *'In the school other children always bully children with disabilities. They call them by their infirmity, not their name'*. This was an interesting comment because it links to broader bullying in classrooms, where girls and boys 'tease' each other based on physical attributes. This organisation also noted that sometimes children take away assistive devices from children with disabilities.

Perhaps due to some of these concerns, there was broad consensus that children with disabilities need special, separate schools. In the survey with caregivers and teachers, 83.7% strongly agreed or agreed that girls with disabilities should attend special schools with other children who have disabilities. Interestingly, a higher proportion of men (18.5%) than women (12.3%) strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement – which may be a reflection of who most feels the responsibility of caring for children with disabilities and the challenges they face. The strong reaction to the idea that children with disabilities should attend separate schools may be a reflection of how disability is perceived as shameful and a result of the actions of the mother during pregnancy.

One organisation in ARoB felt that it was important for there to be separate institutions for people with disabilities – for example a dormitory and a school in one location when families cannot care for them. This idea about having something separate for children with disabilities is not a new one, but can reinforce the separation between people with disabilities and people who do not have disabilities. It creates a situation where instead of addressing inequalities within a school setting, the idea is that children must be taken out of that setting in order to access education, when in many cases integration may be possible. This was evident in a few examples given by teachers and caregivers of children with disabilities who attend school. An elementary teacher in ESP said there was a hearing-impaired girl in her class who sits close to the front and reads lips. In EHP, a female caregiver said, *'My son who is living with disability has successfully completed his elementary without repeating and is now in grade 3. He did his studies well because I was always there for him. His teachers were great. His schoolmates are also good to him. I think this is because the children are too small to recognise the disabilities and make fun or do anything which would hurt him or cause him to give up going to school'*. Here, the female caregiver attributes her son's participation

of school and completion of elementary education to multiple factors: her support, his teachers, as well as his accepting classmates who did not show prejudice to her son – which she explains by their young age.

Sometimes, having special schools for children with disabilities occurs at the expense of addressing issues of stigma within communities, perpetuating the idea that people with disabilities should be hidden and separated from others. The idea of integration of children with disabilities in mainstream schools may be more uncomfortable, however does have benefits, especially when attempted during elementary school, while children's ideas and values are still being shaped and where there are opportunities to create positive associations. This can be a powerful way of normalising disability from a young age, instead of feeding into stigma. In some cases however, the types of disability may be more severe, making it difficult for teachers and schools to provide the specialised care needed. In those cases, attending a special school may be more appropriate. The evidence suggests that decisions about the type of school may vary on a case-by-case basis, highlighting the need for open discussions and the active decision-making of the child with a disability themselves.<sup>90</sup>



## RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this assessment highlight that the following are barriers that prevent girls aged 4-8 from school enrolment, attendance, retention and completion: gender norms (as an overarching issue shaping the expectations, activities and treatment of girls); family environment; caregiver ambivalence; malnutrition, delayed school entry and bullying (as interconnected issues); transport, distance to school and school violence; financial barriers; and disability. Across each of these issues, gender may be a relevant factor, further complicating how girls access quality education. However, in many cases, there are more systemic issues at play that are not always gendered, meaning that both girls and boys may be affected. The barriers identified in this report are not only interconnected and multi-layered, but also cannot be addressed by single interventions. Instead, multiple strategies targeting multiple levels are required in order to promote girls' enrolment, attendance, retention and completion of schooling.

Based on these barriers and current evidence, the strategies below are recommended. As noted in the Literature Review conducted to inform this assessment, it is important to emphasise that the existing data on programmatic interventions primarily focuses on improving primary and secondary school attendance (rather than pre-primary schooling), and comes from developing contexts more broadly, given the lack of rigorous research in PNG and Melanesia.<sup>91</sup> Further, the evidence that exists does not necessarily focus on interventions designed to tackle gender inequality, rather challenges in educational access.<sup>92</sup> Within the Literature Review, evidence challenging common assumptions about interventions also emerged. For example, providing economic opportunities to women may in fact reduce girls' attendance, placing the responsibility of household chores solely on girls in the mother's absence.<sup>93</sup> The Literature Review also highlighted that interventions such as curriculum review may not be realistic and peer support/mentoring programs do not necessarily improve attendance but may be a useful add-on intervention.<sup>94</sup>

With this background, the following strategies are recommended: parenting curriculum with support groups; school feeding; conditional cash transfers; after-school academic support; teacher engagement; community role models with disabilities; and engagement of faith leaders. In the longer-term, a nutrition program is recommended. Given the scale of the challenges, multiple interventions are required, however these may be phased in, prioritising the parenting intervention, school feeding pilot and conditional cash pilot. More time may be needed to establish the teacher engagement and disability role model interventions, and it may be more challenging to begin the after-school academic learning (which ideally should be implemented after the parenting intervention) and engagement of faith leaders.

91 Lokot, M. (2018) *Literature Review: Gender and Early Years Education in Papua New Guinea*, Save the Children, p. 21.

92 Unterhalter, E. et al. (2014) *Girls' Education and Gender Equality. Education Rigorous Literature Review*, DFID, p. 1.

93 Lokshin, M. et al (2000) 'The Effect of Early Childhood Development Programs on Women's Labor Force Participation and Older Children's Schooling in Kenya', Policy Research Report on Gender and Development Working Paper Series No. 15, World Bank, p. 20.

94 Lokot, M. (2018) *Literature Review: Gender and Early Years Education in Papua New Guinea*, Save the Children, pp. 23-25.

### 1. IMPLEMENT A TAILORED PARENTING INTERVENTION, SPECIFICALLY A PARENTING CURRICULUM COMBINED WITH SUPPORT GROUPS

The quality and extent of parents' role in the lives of girls and boys emerged as a significant barrier in this assessment. Failing to provide a supportive and stable environment, failing to meet material needs, being ambivalent about school attendance, allowing household responsibilities to prevent girls in particular from attending school, and (in ARoB and EHP) being distracted by 'entertainment'<sup>95</sup> and allowing children to become involved in less-appropriate activities like gambling – all arise as practices that need to be addressed through more targeted engagement with parents.

The critical role of parents was noted across all locations during the assessment. In ARoB, one organisation emphasised that parents need to be committed to the education of their children. An elementary teacher in ESP said, '*Parents must not use them. They must encourage them to come to school. Parents need to understand that it's not the children's job to take care of the younger ones. They're not supposed to do that... This is not what children should do*'. A female caregiver in EHP acknowledged the role parents play: '*For girls to go to school every day, we, the parents should stop asking them to stay at home but push them to go to school regularly*'.

The recommendation for a parenting curriculum combined with support groups, centres on the idea that social norm change among parents is an important part of ensuring girls (and boys) access quality education. Importantly, the delivery of a curriculum that addresses the problems found in this assessment should be accompanied by support groups that provide an environment for parents to discuss their attitudes and beliefs. The idea underlying the support groups is that it is not sufficient to merely communicate information about how to become a better parent. This is based on the understanding that the attitudes and beliefs of individual parents in PNG are shaped by the ideologies and **kastom** of their **wantok**; and especially the idea that the collective view carries more power than individual ideas.<sup>96</sup> This means that merely 'raising awareness' or increasing individual knowledge will not necessarily address the entrenched belief systems that underlie parental behaviour – especially with respect to gendered division of labour among children and adults - rather the process of social norm change must occur at the collective level.<sup>97</sup> Heise & Manji and Bicchieri & McNally, whose gender and social norm change work has influenced the programmatic strategies of DFID and other agencies, emphasise that social norms are collectively shared

95 This term was used by participants during fieldwork, and during the ARoB Child Protection Assessment.

96 Nongkas, C. (2007) *Leading Educational Change in Primary Teacher Education: A Papua New Guinea Study*, PhD Thesis, Australian Catholic University, p. 10.

97 Heise, L. and Manji, K. (2016) 'Social Norms', *GSDRC Professional Development Reading Pack*, no. 31, University of Birmingham, p. 2.

beliefs that are sustained by collective approval or disapproval. As such new beliefs must be created within 'reference groups' (in this case, parents) in order for social norms (for example, related to gendered division of labour and active parenting) to change.<sup>98</sup> Support groups may provide better opportunities for this kind of development of new beliefs, providing a safe environment for parents to discuss their attitudes and to collectively influence each other.

Including a gendered dimension to the parenting curriculum is an important part of implementing this intervention, to address the gender norms that result in household chores being solely the girls' responsibility - which places pressure on girls and affects their ability to regularly attend school – and to promote shared caregiving between the female and male caregiver. An evaluation of Plan International's work across multiple countries highlights that specifically targeting messaging about gender can allow men to understand the importance of their involvement in caregiving and increase awareness on harmful practices.<sup>99</sup>

## 2. IMPLEMENT A CONDITIONAL CASH TRANSFER PILOT

The assessment findings highlight that the financial pressures faced by families affect the ability of caregivers to provide the care children need, including food and educational expenses. Girls in particular may be required to help families with gardening or coffee harvesting instead of attending school; the benefits of girls assisting families to maintain their livelihoods may be perceived as higher than sending girls to attend school. This assessment emphasises that when financial need intersects with patriarchal norms, it is possible that decisions are made to prioritise the education of boys over girls. Therefore, helping to address the financial challenges faced by households has the potential to reduce the likelihood of preferential treatment of boys regarding access to education.

There is increasing evidence on the benefits of providing cash transfers to improve school attendance, with studies suggesting that conditional cash transfers can increase the likelihood of a child being enrolled in school by 41%.<sup>100</sup> Cash transfers are seen as more reliable than in-kind transfers (such as provision of school uniforms), which show mixed impacts.<sup>101</sup> In a discussion about potential interventions to improve attendance in ARoB, one organisation said of cash transfers: '*Such an initiative could be a breakthrough... It would be like a partnership. Parents would feel like it's not one-way traffic*'. This organisation's representative felt that cash transfers would reduce the perception among parents that they are always investing in schooling – through the 'school fee' payments, contributions as well as other expenses – and make parents feel like schools are investing in their families.

The evidence around cash transfers suggests that conditional transfers are more effective than unconditional transfers.<sup>102</sup> Conditional cash transfers are not automatic, rather are only issued when specific conditions are met, for example if girls attend a specified number

of days per year, or (implemented in other context but less relevant for the 4-8 age group) if girls remain unmarried. In situations where households are under pressure, the cash transfer may act as an incentive for children to remain in school.<sup>103</sup> Few studies have explored the benefits of conditional cash transfers for girls specifically – rather the evidence that exists focuses on the benefits to school attendance for girls and boys more generally. It may be possible however to understand the extent to which girls benefit by comparing the differences cash transfers make for girls and boys.

Implementation of conditional cash transfers must be done appropriately, in close coordination with community leaders and schools, and with careful consideration of who is included (and excluded).<sup>104</sup> This is linked to financial vulnerability, specifically what criteria is used to define economic vulnerability,<sup>105</sup> which is challenging in a context like PNG where poverty is a significant issue. In PNG, mobile cash transfers may be a good way of transferring cash, as they have already been used.<sup>106</sup>

For the PNG context, it is recommended that conditional cash transfers be piloted over a 6-month or 12-month period with a small group of lower-income families. If a school feeding intervention is also implemented (recommendation 4), it may be better to implement the cash transfer intervention within a different province, in order to explore the potentially different benefits. It may also be interesting, resources permitting, to explore the joint effect of school feeding alongside cash transfers. This however needs to be balanced with the fact that a combined school feeding and cash transfer intervention across multiple sites is unlikely to be sustainable over the long-term.

## 3. ENGAGE TEACHERS ON PERSONAL ATTITUDES AND EQUIP THEM WITH STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AND ADDRESS BULLYING IN THE CLASSROOM

The assessment findings highlight that teachers face challenges in the classroom, including a context where bullying occurs regularly. In the RISE baseline, there were some 40 instances where teachers did not appropriately manage the conflict between children.<sup>107</sup> This may be linked to capacity and challenges managing large classes. Although teachers are provided with skills in classroom management, they may need further support to understand their roles and responsibilities in ensuring children do not come to harm, so that they can better respond to situations of bullying and fighting at school. Alongside this, teachers themselves hold specific attitudes regarding girls' versus boys' intelligence, the capacity of children with disabilities to be integrated into classroom activities, and the physical disciplining of children. In interviews, it appeared that teachers did not always understand what promoting gender equality actually means in practical terms. Teachers also face challenges around low/late/no pay, which may influence their motivation to regularly teach.

98 Heise, L. and Manji, K. (2016) 'Social Norms', *GSDRC Professional Development Reading Pack*, no. 31, University of Birmingham; Bicchieri, C. and McNally, P. (2015) 'Shrieking Sirens. Schemata, Scripts, and Social Norms: How Change Occurs'. *Working Paper*, University of Pennsylvania.

99 Kilsby D. (2014) *Synthesis Report: Research into Gender in ECCD in Six Countries*. Plan Australia and Plan Finland, p. 18.

100 Baird, S. et al. (2013) 'Relative Effectiveness of Conditional and Unconditional Cash Transfers for Schooling Outcomes in Developing Countries: A Systematic Review', *Campbell Systematic Reviews* 8.

101 Evans, D. et al. (2008) *The Impact of Distributing School Uniforms on Children's Education in Kenya*, Poverty Action Lab; Hidalgo, D. et al. (2010) 'Can Provision of Free School Uniforms Harm Attendance? Evidence from Ecuador', Tinbergen Institute Discussion Paper.

102 Baird, S. et al. (2013) 'Relative Effectiveness of Conditional and Unconditional Cash Transfers for Schooling Outcomes in Developing Countries: A Systematic Review', *Campbell Systematic Reviews* 8.

103 Unterhalter, E. et al. (2014) *Girls' Education and Gender Equality. Education Rigorous Literature Review*, DFID, p. 30.

104 Sperling, G. & Winthrop, R. (2016) *What Works in Girls' Education. Evidence for the World's Best Investment*, Brookings Institute, p. 113.

105 Unterhalter, E. et al. (2014) *Girls' Education and Gender Equality. Education Rigorous Literature Review*, DFID, p. 29.

106 Singh, S. & Nadarajah, Y. (2011) 'School Fees, Beer and "Meri": Gender, Cash and the Mobile in the Morobe Province of Papua New Guinea', *Working Paper*, Institute for Money, Technology and Financial Inclusion.

107 Johnston, C. et al. (2018) *Rapidly Improving Standards in Elementary (RISE) Literacy and Numeracy Boost Baseline Report*, Papua New Guinea, Save the Children, p. 34.

Teacher attitudes about the capacity and intelligence of girls is important, shaping how they interact with teachers and parents.<sup>108</sup> In Kenya, when teachers were more supportive of girls (including having positive attitudes about girls' pursuing 'hard' subjects like mathematics), dropout rates for girls reduced.<sup>109</sup> In India, the 'GEMS' program, which involved workshops on power and gender for teachers, influenced how teachers interacted with students.<sup>110</sup> These studies highlight the important role of teachers in challenging gender norms, therefore illustrating that engaging teachers needs to be done intentionally. Teachers also need support to understand how to recognise the individual capacity and talent of a child rather than their disability.<sup>111</sup> In PNG, research highlights that children with learning difficulties experienced harsh treatment from teachers (as well as students).<sup>112</sup>

Providing training to teachers on strategies to address bullying and promote gender equality – beyond just including girls and boys in all activities – is important to ensure a conducive environment for girls and boys to learn. Specifically, training should address teacher attitudes towards children, providing opportunities for discussion around more equal treatment towards girls and children with disabilities. Teachers have already received training from Save the Children on gender and inclusive education, however guidance on social norm change indicates that it takes time to shift collective norms.<sup>113</sup> Teachers themselves hold specific attitudes and beliefs about girls and boys and gender equality that may be just as entrenched as attitudes within the general community, therefore the approach to behaviour change among teachers needs to similarly involve a longer-term strategy. These trainings for teachers should therefore not be once-off, but need to be integrated into an ongoing package of training interventions, recognising that changes in attitudes and behaviours may take time, and that social norm change requires more effort than merely raising awareness about particularly problems or telling teachers how they should behave.<sup>114</sup> Teachers need strategies for promoting gender equality, and need to be able to recognise how gender norms may shape child participation, division of labour, interactions between girls and boys, interactions between children and parents, and the ability of children to regularly attend school. Teachers also need strategies for addressing conflict, including using positive approaches to disciplining children instead of resorting to physical violence. Teachers should also be engaged in discussions about their motivations for teaching, in order to address some of the root causes influencing teacher absenteeism. The reason for teacher absenteeism has generally been attributed to issues of salary and poor housing provision,<sup>115</sup> however there may also be other issues influencing absenteeism. This issue requires more investigation.

## 4. IMPLEMENT A SCHOOL FEEDING PILOT

The assessment findings highlight that malnutrition in PNG is a critical issue that affects attendance of girls and boys. Not only does insufficient food impact a child's ability to concentrate - in some cases the lack of food stops children from attending school. Further to this, the assessment identified that there may be synergies between malnutrition, delayed school entry and bullying. Children who are malnourished early in life may present as underweight or stunted, which can lead to parents believing they are not ready for school, and delaying enrolment. This may perpetuate the situation where elementary classes contain children of varied ages resulting in younger children bullying older children for their perceived lack of intelligence. Malnutrition therefore emerges as a critical issue that affects enrolment, attendance, retention and completion of schooling in multiple, potentially-interconnected ways.

Across all locations, food was identified as important for school attendance. In the female caregiver FGD in ARoB, lack of food was listed as a reason for girls aged 4-8 not attending school. One organisation in ARoB felt that the benefits of school feeding went beyond merely nutrition: '*He or she will feel, I'm being cared for, I'm being given attention*'. A 19-year-old girl in primary school in ESP felt that girls in elementary school would come to school if they were given food by their parents. She urged: '*Parents should prepare breakfast for them*'.

According to the World Food Programme (WFP), school feeding programs 'provide a nutritional incentive' for children to attend school. In a 32-country review of the WFP's school feeding programs in sub-Saharan Africa, in-school feeding for girls and boys as well as take-home food for girls resulted in enrolment increasing 28% for girls and 22% for boys.<sup>116</sup> School feeding programs also reduced the pressure on families to provide food for children at school – which may deter parents from keeping children in school.<sup>117</sup> Importantly, the approach to school feeding may vary depending on the context: it may take the form of an in-school (fortified) snack, a full meal, or provision of canned fish and rice.<sup>118</sup> Even a snack could help minimise issues around concentration, enabling attendance among children who may ordinarily avoid school because they have not had breakfast.

In the context of PNG, despite very poor nutritional indicators, it appears that school feeding programs are yet to be implemented, creating a unique opportunity to pilot how this intervention might influence attendance and educational outcomes. It is highly recommended that for reasons of sustainability, this should not be a stand-alone intervention, but should link to other interventions that are focused on economic development, agricultural development or livelihoods, leveraging existing programs rather than creating something new. This can have other benefits, enabling other positive economic consequences by linking to local food production processes.<sup>119</sup> As Save the Children does not currently work on these issues in PNG, a possible option may be linking to the work of other agencies who work on these issues, increasing inter-agency collaboration. The decision about where the pilot should occur therefore should be influenced not only by different rates of malnutrition or school attendance across different provinces, but also the ability to synergise with existing programs. A 6-month

108 Sperling, G. & Winthrop, R. (2016) *What Works in Girls' Education. Evidence for the World's Best Investment*, Brookings Institute, p. 171.

109 Unterhalter, E. et al. (2014) *Girls' Education and Gender Equality. Education Rigorous Literature Review*, DFID, p. 36.

110 Levtov, R. (2013) *Promoting Gender Equity Through Schools: Three Papers on Schooling, Gender Attitudes, and Interventions to Promote Gender Equity in Egypt and India*, PhD Thesis, University of Michigan.

111 Leonard Cheshire Disability (2017) *Still Left Behind: Pathways to Inclusive Education for Girls with Disabilities*, p. 34.

112 UNICEF (2012) *Child Protection in Educational Settings. Findings from Six Countries in East Asia and the Pacific: Indonesia, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Papua New Guinea, Philippines and Thailand*, p. 9.

113 Heise, L. and Manji, K. (2016) 'Social Norms', *GSDRC Professional Development Reading Pack*, no. 31, University of Birmingham; Bicchieri, C. and McNally, P. (2015) 'Shrieking Sirens. Schemata, Scripts, and Social Norms: How Change Occurs'. *Working Paper*, University of Pennsylvania.

114 Heise, L. and Manji, K. (2016) 'Social Norms', *GSDRC Professional Development Reading Pack*, no. 31, University of Birmingham.

115 Howes, S. et al. (2014) *A Lost Decade? Service Delivery and Reforms in Papua New Guinea 2002 – 2012*, The National Research Institute and the Development Policy Centre, pp. 45; 51.

116 Gelli, A. et al. (2007) 'Does Provision of Food in School Increase Girls' Enrollment? Evidence from Schools in Sub-Saharan Africa', *Food and Nutrition Bulletin*, vol. 28, no. 2, pp. 149–155.

117 World Food Programme (2011) *Feed Minds, Change Lives: School Feeding, the Millennium Development Goals and Girls' Empowerment*, p. 10.

118 World Bank (2012) *Do School Feeding Programs Help Children? Evidence to Policy Note Series*, p. 3.

119 World Food Programme (2011) *Feed Minds, Change Lives: School Feeding, the Millennium Development Goals and Girls' Empowerment*. p. 4.

or 12-month pilot may enable analysis of the extent to which school feeding programs influence attendance and educational outcomes.

There are challenges however with implementing school feeding programs, primarily around cost and the ability to fund such an intervention over the long-term, raising questions about sustainability. On average, school feeding programs cost between US \$28-63 per child per year.<sup>120</sup> In a context like PNG, where communities face significant challenges around health, economic development, access to water and sanitation and other issues, it may be difficult to ensure such a program is prioritised over the longer-term. This may be mitigated somewhat by building in a cost-sharing mechanism to the program, whereby Save the Children (or other partner agencies) partially fund the school snacks/meals, in conjunction with the school itself. Over the long-term, the responsibility for funding the program would shift to the school. This however may be challenging given the other financial difficulties faced by schools. This needs to be thought through quite carefully to ensure the gains of school feeding programs can be sustained. This may include strategies such as making access to school meals conditional to parental participation in nutrition workshops. There is also a need to ensure that the food production required for a school snack/meal does not inadvertently affect the education of children in negative ways, for example, resulting in some children missing school in order to support subsistence activities. If this program is implemented in conjunction with another organisation who is working on economic development/livelihoods initiatives, there could be good synergy to, for example, use this school snack/meal program as a way to support women's livelihoods. The extent to which some of the challenges around school feeding sustainability can be addressed will depend on strong planning and analysis at the outset of the program. This may require a more targeted assessment to identify specific partners, risks and mitigation strategies, and other opportunities to address the issue of malnutrition.

The World Bank suggests that, viewed as merely a means to improve attendance, school feeding may not be the most cost-effective intervention, however when implemented 'as a social transfer' - as a means of helping families to feed their children, this intervention may be useful.<sup>121</sup> Research suggests that cash incentives may be more efficient than school feeding if the only purpose of school feeding is incentivising attendance.<sup>122</sup> In the case of PNG however, school feeding can act as more than an incentive, but a way to ensure children receive appropriate nutrition. Other challenges around school feeding programs include issues around targeting: there may be disputes within the community if only certain children or certain schools in a geographical area are selected.<sup>123</sup> It is recommended therefore that all children at a school – girls and boys – receive the intervention. Further, selection of schools who are to participate in any pilot (or broader) program needs to occur carefully, with consideration made for the presence of other schools in the area. It may be better therefore to implement a pilot in a more contained geographical community, perhaps a rural one, where there are 2-3 schools, ensuring all receive the intervention.

Although school feeding may influence attendance rates, school feeding programs for the 4-8 age group will not undo the **permanent** consequences of undernutrition that have already occurred during the first 1000 days of a child's life. A longitudinal study focused on Brazil, Guatemala, South Africa, the Philippines and India found that addressing poor nutrition among children who were over the age of 2 did not lead to increased schooling.<sup>124</sup> Stunting among children aged 4-8 is a reflection of inadequate nutrition in the first 1000 days, therefore when children over the age of 2 access school feeding programs, it will not address their malnutrition, therefore leaving the issue of delayed entry into school because of malnutrition and bullying unaddressed through the school feeding intervention. There are however ways to address these issues across the other interventions mentioned in this section of the report, specifically through a) including messaging about nutrition and age of entry for elementary school within the parenting curriculum (recommendation 1), b) integrating nutrition messaging across existing interventions related sectors (programming in economic development, agricultural development, livelihoods etc), c) implementing a more specific nutrition intervention, and d) supporting students who are older than their grade or struggling in class through an after-school tutoring program (recommendation 5).

## **5. IMPLEMENT AN AFTER-SCHOOL LEARNING SUPPORT PROGRAM FOR GIRLS AND BOYS WHO ARE STRUGGLING AT SCHOOL, PARTICULARLY CHILDREN WHO ARE OLDER THAN THEIR GRADE.**

The findings of this assessment suggest that some girls and boys are struggling to keep up at school, either because of being unable to access appropriate support from teachers given large class sizes, being absent due to chores or illness, or facing unstable family environments. Combined with lack of appropriate learning materials and a school context where bullying (especially of children who began school late and overage) is common, there are significant challenges to learning.

Research highlights that slowing down delivery of content can help children to better-absorb messages, preventing children from being left behind.<sup>125</sup> In India, remedial education programs for two hours during school improved test scores among children who were falling behind their peers.<sup>126</sup> There are challenges around remedial programs however, including children feeling that their challenges in the classroom are evident to a broader group (especially those who do not participate in this tutoring program). This could be mitigated somewhat by integrating this intervention within existing community literacy activities – so that it is implemented within a broader suite of activities, to ensure children feel comfortable to participate. Longer-term sustainability may also be a challenge if there are not enough older students or teachers to assist with this program. Again, linking to existing community literacy activities may help here.

120 Ibid., p. 4.

121 Ibid.

122 Jukes, M. et al (2008) *School Health, Nutrition & Education for All: Levelling the Playing Field*, p. 44.

123 Manful, E. et al (2015) 'The Impacts and Challenges of the Ghana School Feeding Program as a Social Protection Tool', *Journal of Critical Southern Studies*, vol. 3.

124 Martorell, R., et al. (2010) 'Weight Gain in the First Two Years of Life is an Important Predictor of Schooling Outcomes in Pooled Analyses from Five Birth Cohorts from Low- and Middle-Income Countries', *Journal of Nutrition*, vol. 140, no. 2, pp. 348-354.

125 Pritchett, L. & Beatty, A. (2015) 'Slow Down, You're Going Too Fast: Matching Curricula to Student Skill Levels', *International Journal of Educational Development*, vol. 40, p. 276-288.

126 Banerjee, A. et al. (2007) 'Remediating Education: Evidence from Two Randomized Experiments in India' *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, vol. 122, no. 3, pp. 1235-1264.

In PNG, an after-school learning program, located within communities where children live (instead of at school – which may be far from some communities), implemented by volunteer parents or older peers, may be a helpful intervention to address some of these challenges, providing more opportunities for children to strengthen reading and numeracy skills through creative games, art, craft, drama and exercises, for example. Such an approach may be easier to implement during school holidays before expanding to being conducted regularly. An after-school program could also be used as a way to engage with children on issues of bullying, GBV, and attitudes to disability and division of labour, alongside providing educational support. In PNG, the after-school tutoring program could be held in nearby churches. One organisation in Port Moresby raised the issue of how churches may be a safe space for children that is close to communities. She said, ‘Everybody goes to church’ to emphasise the level to which these spaces are recognised in the community, however flagged that these spaces are not always utilised throughout the week, providing opportunities for use outside of church activities. A community-based intervention that engages parents and/or older children in the learning of young children, may help create greater prioritisation of education among children aged 4-8.

Importantly, the implementation of an after-school program will depend on reallocations of household chores, to ensure girls can actually attend. This has proven a challenge in other contexts,<sup>127</sup> and therefore needs to be managed carefully. If introduced after implementation of a parenting curriculum that explicitly focuses on more equitable reallocation of responsibilities in the home, this after-school tutoring support program will be more likely to result in positive outcomes for girls’ learning.

It may also be possible for after-school programs to evolve into separate basic education programs for out-of-school children, enabling them to catch up in order to re-enter the education system or to focus just on developing basic literacy and numeracy skills. Such interventions may be particularly important for low-income communities.<sup>128</sup>

## 6. MOBILISE WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES TO ACT AS COMMUNITY ROLE MODELS TO ADDRESS STIGMA AROUND DISABILITY

The assessment findings highlight that, as in many contexts, there is significant stigma attached to disability in PNG. In PNG, the added dimension of sorcery affects how people with disabilities are treated. Girls and boys with disabilities may be kept at home instead of attending school, as a result of feelings of shame around their disabilities. Girls in particular may be viewed as more vulnerable, resulting in them facing greater barriers to education. Communities themselves hold specific ideas about disability, feeling uncomfortable about children with mental disabilities being present in the same class as their children, and feeling it might be better for children with disabilities to attend ‘special schools’. While these may be appropriate in certain cases, at times separating children with disabilities from other children may perpetuate the idea that children with disabilities are best segregated from other children.<sup>129</sup> At school itself, girls and boys with disabilities may experience bullying because of their disabilities, highlighting the need to address stigma among children.

In an interview with a specialist disability organisation in ESP, they emphasised that efforts to ‘raise awareness’ about disability through radio announcements and posters are not enough. One representative instead suggested, ‘You need to go to the doorstep’, highlighting the importance of one-to-one interventions. This organisation suggested that role models – women with disabilities in particular – could be a powerful way of engaging caregivers, children with disabilities and children in general on issues of stigma around disability. The idea is that successful, educated people with disabilities could come to communities to share their experiences, helping to challenge attitudes around the limitations sometimes placed upon children with disabilities. This kind of intervention is important because of the generally low representation of people with disabilities; due to the lack of role models, stereotypes and assumptions about people with disabilities persist.<sup>130</sup>

Within RISE, this might mean having special events where women with disabilities share about their experiences and successes, as well as allowing opportunities for more targeted engagement between role models and caregivers, and role models and children with disabilities. Tackling stigma and stereotypes through role models cannot be done in isolation however, but should be supplemented by training teachers to respond to children with disabilities more appropriately (recommendation 3) and by addressing attitudes (recommendations 3 and 7).

## 7. ENGAGE FAITH LEADERS IN SOCIAL NORM CHANGE PROCESSES

This assessment did not specifically explore the role of faith in shaping people’s attitudes and beliefs in PNG, however during interviews and FGDs, issues of faith came up incidentally: during ‘ice-breaker’ questions in interviews with children where they talked about prayer and the role of faith in helping them through difficult times, through the way girls and boys described their activities during the week, and across the FGDs, where attending church and upholding the principles of the bible were regularly identified as an expectation for girls and boys. A key informant on education in ARoB also commented on the role of faith messaging in reinforcing gender norms: ‘They will say that the bible says that a woman must submit to their husband. They use that statement a lot to control women. They are not in favour of women being equal to men. They like men to stand out and say that’s according to our culture and to the bible’.

Faith – specifically Christian faith - is an important part of life in PNG and Melanesia. Faith leaders are increasingly recognised as having an important role in influencing change in communities.<sup>131</sup> In PNG, faith leaders are already identified as strategic actors, and are mobilised by development agencies to challenge traditional gender roles, GBV and ideals about masculinity.<sup>132</sup> It is possible that while evidence does not currently exist on the linkages between girls’ education and faith-based beliefs about the value and status of girls, that faith-based messaging may be useful in tackling barriers to girl’s education. For example, as opposed to using explicitly human rights related language, faith leaders may be able

127 Klugman, J. et al (2018) *Working to Empower Girls in Nigeria. Highlights of the Educating Nigerian Girls in New Enterprises (ENGINE) Program*, p. 33.

128 Akanksha Foundation (2016) *Impact Report 2015-2016*.

129 DFID (2010) *Education for Children with Disabilities - Improving Access and Quality, DFID Guidance Note*, pp. 4-5.

130 Leonard Cheshire Disability (2017) *Still Left Behind: Pathways to Inclusive Education for Girls with Disabilities*, p. 16.

131 DFID (2012) *Faith Partnership Principles. Working Effectively with Faith Groups to Fight Global Poverty*; UNICEF (2012) *Partnering with Religious Communities for Children*.

132 Anderson, J. (2015) ‘Struggling With “This Gender Relations Thing” in the Papua New Guinea Church Partnership Program’, *Gender, Place & Culture*, vol. 22, no. 10, pp. 1368-1369.

to focus on ideals around care and compassion that are often linked with Christianity,<sup>133</sup> to address the gender norms that result in girls being valued less than boys. Messages around respect, dignity and equality for women and girls from the bible could also be mobilised in engaging with faith leaders. In the Solomon Islands and PNG, faith-based messaging to address GBV has already been implemented, with positive results,<sup>134</sup> therefore there is scope for using this messaging to address gender inequality. Similarly, faith leaders may be able to use their platform to directly tackle the issue of bullying with children, or gambling and neglect of children. Further, there may be strategic value in partnering with faith leaders to more systematically address stigma around disability. The nature and scope of engaging faith leaders needs to be explored further before implementation, perhaps as part of a broader strategy for partnering with churches and faith leaders. It is important to engage carefully with this group, in order to avoid a situation where their role becomes simply about 'raising awareness' about social issues; instead as outlined above (recommendation 1), social norm change efforts need to be carefully structured based on beliefs of the reference group and notions of approval and disapproval, in order to sustain change.

Alongside these recommendations, the assessment findings emphasise that the education of girls and boys aged 4-8 is shaped by a broader context, where pervasive problems such as malnutrition have specific impacts on education. The 'emergency' around child malnutrition in PNG requires a systematic response outside of RISE specifically. Given the way malnutrition influences education in multiple ways, it would be strategic to develop more targeted nutrition interventions especially among children who are under the age of 2 (such as those recommended in Save the Children's recent report),<sup>135</sup> recognising that such interventions would have ripple effects on education as well as broader consequences for child health. These may include maternal nutrition during pregnancy, promotion of exclusive breast-feeding, direct treatment of malnutrition during the first two years of a child's life, deworming and community education around nutrition. Alongside this focus on malnutrition, addressing food security more broadly, including ensuring access to livelihoods opportunities and supporting consumption of more nutritious foods, is important to ensure that children are healthier and communities are able to meet their needs. A longer-term strategic approach to education should ideally address these broader issues of malnutrition and food security in a more targeted way, recognising that these issues are not only tied to each other, but linked to the education of girls and boys.



## APPENDIX

Table 3.

Table of Assessment Participants

|                                                      | ARoB                                                                   | ESP                                               | EHP                                       |
|------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Caregiver FGD                                        | 1 FGD with 19 women<br>1 FGD with 7 men                                | 2 FGDs with 47 women in total<br>1 FGD with 8 men | 1 FGD with 11 women<br>1 FGD with 14 men  |
| Elementary children FGD                              | 1 FGD with 9 girls<br>1 FGD with 17 boys                               | 1 FGD with 9 girls<br>1 FGD with 17 boys          | 1 FGD with 12 girls<br>1 FGD with 12 boys |
| Survey                                               | 39 women<br>7 men                                                      | 11 women<br>10 men                                | 15 women<br>10 men                        |
| SSI - Caregiver whose female child has dropped out   | 1 (prim)                                                               |                                                   |                                           |
| SSI - Caregiver with female child in school          | 1 female (elem)<br>1 female (elem)<br>1 male (elem)<br>1 female (prim) | 1 male (elem)<br>1 female (elem)                  | 1 female (elem)                           |
| SSI - Caregiver with male child in elementary school |                                                                        | 1 female (elem)                                   |                                           |
| SSI - Elementary Teacher                             | 1 female                                                               | 1 female                                          | 2 female                                  |
| SSI - Primary teacher                                |                                                                        | 1 female                                          |                                           |
| SSI - Head teacher                                   |                                                                        | 1 female                                          |                                           |
| SSI - Primary aged Girl in school                    | 2<br>3                                                                 | 8                                                 | 8                                         |
| SSI - Primary aged Girl who dropped out              | 2                                                                      | 1                                                 |                                           |
| SSI - Elementary aged Girl who dropped out           |                                                                        |                                                   | 1                                         |
| SSI - Primary aged Boy in school                     | 2                                                                      | 9                                                 |                                           |
| SSI - Woman who dropped out of primary               | 1                                                                      |                                                   | 1                                         |
| SSI - Woman who is in primary school                 |                                                                        | 1 (aged 19)                                       |                                           |

<sup>133</sup> Eves, R. (2012) 'Christianity, Masculinity and Gender Violence in Papua New Guinea', *SSGM Discussion Paper*, Australian National University, p. 10.

<sup>134</sup> World Vision (2016) *Hope for a Safer Solomon Islands. Findings from evaluations of gender norms change and violence prevention initiatives in Honiara, Temotu and Weather Coast.*

<sup>135</sup> Save the Children (2017) *Short Changed: The Human and Economic Cost of Child Undernutrition in Papua New Guinea*, pp. 38-39.

### Summary of Survey Findings

The following is a summary of the survey findings:

- 47.8% strongly agreed or agreed that it is mostly the mother who is involved in a child's education in their family, while 42.4% strongly disagreed or disagreed with this statement, and 9.8% were neutral.
- 30.4% strongly agreed or agreed that it is mostly the father who is involved in a child's education in their family, 54.4% strongly disagreed or disagreed, and 15.2% remained neutral.
- 83.7% strongly agreed or agreed that girls with disabilities should attend special schools with other children who have disabilities.
- 65.2% strongly disagreed or disagreed with the idea that boys are more clever than girls, while 13.1% strongly agreed or agreed.
- 33.7% strongly agreed or agreed that changing nappies, bathing children and feeding children are a mother's responsibility.
- 47.8% strongly agreed or agreed that boys are given more food, however only slightly less (41.3%) strongly disagreed or disagreed with this statement
- 85.9% strongly agree or agree that it is safe for girls to attend elementary school while 13% strongly disagreed or disagreed with this statement.
- 90.2% strongly agree or agree that it is safe for boys to attend elementary school while 8.7% strongly disagreed or disagreed.
- 19.5% agree or strongly agree that boys are treated better than girls in their community, while 58.7% disagree or strongly disagree.
- 76.1% of respondents strongly agree or agree that a girl can have any career or job she wants.
- 82.6% of caregivers and teachers strongly disagree or disagree with the idea that it is more important for boys to attend elementary school than girls.
- 28.3% strongly agreed or agreed that it was acceptable for a husband to beat his wife in certain situations
- 34.8% of caregivers and teachers strongly agreed or agreed that they would object if someone with a mental disability was placed in the same class as their child.
- 55.4% strongly agreed or agreed that it was better for an elementary teacher to be a woman and 46.7% strongly agreed or agreed that it is better for an elementary teacher to be a man.
- 7.6% strongly agreed or agreed that if there were limited funds, boys should be sent to elementary school instead of girls

Table 4.

**Expectations for Girls (as stated in FGDs by girls and boys aged 4-8, women and men across locations):**

| Description of theme | Frequency of theme |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| Be respectful        | 12                 |
| Wash plates          | 10                 |
| Chores               | 9                  |
| Cook                 | 9                  |
| Gardening            | 9                  |
| Obey                 | 8                  |
| Girls' games         | 8                  |
| School               | 8                  |
| Wash clothes         | 8                  |
| Be caring            | 7                  |
| Clean                | 6                  |
| Listen               | 6                  |
| Dress decently       | 5                  |
| Behave well          | 5                  |
| Wear meriblouse      | 5                  |
| Collect firewood     | 5                  |
| Share                | 4                  |
| Bible                | 4                  |
| Wear skirt           | 4                  |
| Fetch water          | 3                  |
| Sweep                | 3                  |
| Grate coconut        | 2                  |
| Wear dress           | 2                  |
| Wear laplap          | 2                  |
| Mop                  | 2                  |
| Church               | 2                  |
| Know her culture     | 2                  |
| Quiet                | 2                  |
| Welcome visitors     | 2                  |

Table 5.

**Expectations for Boys (as stated in FGDs by girls and boys aged 4-8, women and men across locations):**

| Description of theme | Frequency of theme |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| Respectful           | 9                  |
| School               | 7                  |
| Gardening            | 7                  |
| Cut firewood         | 7                  |
| Build house          | 6                  |
| Job                  | 5                  |
| Cut grass            | 5                  |
| Behave well          | 5                  |
| Listen               | 5                  |
| Church               | 4                  |
| Dress decently       | 4                  |
| Fetch water          | 4                  |
| Obey                 | 4                  |
| Strong               | 4                  |
| Sport                | 4                  |
| Soccer               | 3                  |
| Share                | 3                  |
| Bible                | 2                  |
| Manly                | 2                  |
| Fishing              | 2                  |
| Know his culture     | 2                  |

## REFERENCES

- Agigo, J. (2017) *The State of Education: Growth & Expansion of Education in Papua New Guinea in Last Six Years 2010–2016*, Senior Education Officers Conference 2017.
- Akanksha Foundation (2016) *Impact Report 2015-2016*.
- Alderman, H. et al. (2009) 'Preschool Nutrition and Subsequent Schooling Attainment: Longitudinal Evidence from Tanzania', Working Paper 75/08, Center for Research on Pensions and Welfare Policies.
- Anderson, J. (2015) 'Struggling With "This Gender Relations Thing" in the Papua New Guinea Church Partnership Program', *Gender, Place & Culture*, vol. 22, no. 10, pp. 1357-1373.
- Asian Development Bank (2012) *Papua New Guinea. Country Gender Assessment 2011-2012*.
- Baird, S. et al. (2013) 'Relative Effectiveness of Conditional and Unconditional Cash Transfers for Schooling Outcomes in Developing Countries: A Systematic Review', *Campbell Systematic Reviews* 8.
- Banerjee, A. et al. (2007) 'Remedying Education: Evidence from Two Randomized Experiments in India' *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, vol. 122, no. 3, pp. 1235-1264.
- Bicchieri, C. and McNally, P. (2015) 'Shrieking Sirens. Schemata, Scripts, and Social Norms: How Change Occurs'. *Working Paper*, University of Pennsylvania.
- Bradley, C. (1992) *Final Report on Domestic Violence*, Papua New Guinea Law Reform Commission.
- Braithwaite, J. (2006) 'Rape, Shame and Pride', *Journal of Scandinavian Studies in Criminology and Crime Prevention*, vol. 7, pp. 2-16.
- CARE (2015) *Initial Rapid Gender Assessment Report Papua New Guinea 2015 El Niño. Select Communities of Eastern Highlands, Morobe and Chimbu*.
- Casale, D. et al. (2014) 'The Association Between Stunting and Psychosocial Development Among Preschool Children: A Study Using the South African Birth to Twenty Cohort Data', *Child: Care, Health and Development*, vol. 40, no. 6, pp. 900-910.
- Daniels, M.C. & Adair, L.S. (2004) 'Growth in Young Filipino Children Predicts Schooling Trajectories Through High School', *Journal of Nutrition*, vol. 134, no. 6, pp. 1439-1446.
- Department of Education (2015) *EMIS data 2015*.
- Department of Education (2009) *Achieving Universal Education for a Better Future. Universal Basic Education Plan 2010–2019*.
- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (2017) *DFAT Country Information Report. Papua New Guinea*.
- DFID (2012) *Faith Partnership Principles. Working Effectively with Faith Groups to Fight Global Poverty*.
- DFID (2010) *Education for Children with Disabilities - Improving Access and Quality, DFID Guidance Note*.
- Educational Development Trust (2016) *A Study on Children with Disabilities and their Right to Education: Republic of Rwanda*.
- Evans, D. et al. (2008) *The Impact of Distributing School Uniforms on Children's Education in Kenya*, Poverty Action Lab.
- Eves, R. (2012) 'Christianity, Masculinity and Gender Violence in Papua New Guinea', *SSGM Discussion Paper*, Australian National University.
- Gakidou, E., et al. (2010) 'Increased Educational Attainment and its Effect on Child Mortality in 175 Countries between 1970 and 2009: A Systematic Analysis', *The Lancet*, vol. 376, pp. 959-974.
- Ganster-Breidler, M (2010) 'Gender-Based Violence and the Impact on Women's Health and Well-Being in Papua New Guinea', *Contemporary PNG Studies: DWU Research Journal*, vol. 13, pp. 17-30.
- Gelli, A. et al. (2007) 'Does Provision of Food in School Increase Girls' Enrollment? Evidence from Schools in Sub-Saharan Africa', *Food and Nutrition Bulletin*, vol. 28, no. 2, pp. 149-155.
- Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children (2017) *Corporal Punishment of Children in Papua New Guinea*.

- Heise, L. and Manji, K. (2016) 'Social Norms', *GSDRC Professional Development Reading Pack*, no. 31, University of Birmingham.
- Hidalgo, D. et al. (2010) 'Can Provision of Free School Uniforms Harm Attendance? Evidence from Ecuador', Tinbergen Institute Discussion Paper.
- Howes, S. et al. (2014) *A Lost Decade? Service Delivery and Reforms in Papua New Guinea 2002–2012*, The National Research Institute and the Development Policy Centre.
- Human Rights Watch (2015) *Bashed Up: Family Violence in Papua New Guinea*.
- International Food Policy Research Institute (2016) *Global Nutrition Report: From Promise to Impact, Ending Malnutrition by 2030*.
- International Women's Development Agency (2012) *Exploring the Opportunities and Challenges of Local Cultures in Working Towards Gender Equality in Solomon Islands*. Learning Paper.
- Irwin L. et al. (2007) *Early Child Development: A Powerful Equalizer*, Final Report for the World Health Organization's Commission on the Social Determinants of Health.
- Johnson, C. et al. (2018) *Rapidly Improving Standards in Elementary (RISE) Literacy and Numeracy Boost Baseline Report*, Papua New Guinea, Save the Children.
- Jukes, M. et al. (2008) *School Health, Nutrition and Education for All: Levelling the Playing Field*.
- Kelly-Ware, J. (2016) "'What's He Doing That For? He's a Boy!': Exploring Gender and Sexualities in an Early Childhood Setting', *Global Studies of Childhood*, vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 289-306.
- Kilsby D. (2014) *Synthesis Report: Research into Gender in ECCD in Six Countries*. Plan Australia and Plan Finland.
- Klugman, J. et al (2018) *Working to Empower Girls in Nigeria. Highlights of the Educating Nigerian Girls in New Enterprises (ENGINE) Program*.
- Kuzma, J. et al. (2013) 'Food Taboos and Traditional Customs Among Pregnant Women in Papua New Guinea: Missed Opportunity for Education in Antenatal Clinics', *Contemporary PNG Studies: DWU Research Journal*, vol. 19, pp. 1-11.
- Leonard Cheshire Disability (2017) *Still Left Behind: Pathways to Inclusive Education for Girls with Disabilities*.
- Levtov, R. (2014) *Addressing Gender Inequalities in Curriculum and Education: Review of Literature and Promising Practices to Inform Education Reform Initiatives in Thailand*, Women's Voice and Agency Research Series, no. 9.
- Lokot, M. (2018) *Literature Review: Gender and Early Years Education in Papua New Guinea*, Save the Children.
- Lokshin, M. et al (2000) 'The Effect of Early Childhood Development Programs on Women's Labor Force Participation and Older Children's Schooling in Kenya', Policy Research Report on Gender and Development Working Paper Series No. 15, World Bank.
- MacIntyre, M. (2017) 'Introduction: Flux and Change in Melanesian Gender Relations' in MacIntyre, M. & Spark, C. (eds.) *Transformations of Gender in Melanesia*. Australian National University Press, Acton.
- Manful, E. et al (2015) 'The Impacts and Challenges of the Ghana School Feeding Program as a Social Protection Tool', *Journal of Critical Southern Studies*, vol. 3.
- Martorell, R., et al. (2010) 'Weight Gain in the First Two Years of Life is an Important Predictor of Schooling Outcomes in Pooled Analyses from Five Birth Cohorts from Low- and Middle-Income Countries', *Journal of Nutrition*, vol. 140, no. 2, pp. 348-354.
- McCoy, D.C. et al (2015) 'Poverty, Physical Stature and Cognitive Skills: Mechanisms Underlying Children's School Enrollment in Zambia', *Developmental Psychology*, vol. 51, no. 5, pp. 600-614.
- Médecins Sans Frontières (2016) *Return to Abuser: Gaps in Services and a Failure to Protect Survivors of Family and Sexual Violence in Papua New Guinea*.
- National Statistical Office (2012) *Papua New Guinea Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2009–2010: Summary Tables*. Port Moresby (ADB).
- Nongkas, C. (2007) *Leading Educational Change in Primary Teacher Education: A Papua New Guinea Study*, PhD Thesis, Australian Catholic University.
- Omot, N. (2012) 'Food Security in Papua New Guinea', in Templeton, D. (ed) *Food Security in East Timor, Papua New Guinea and Pacific Island Countries and Territories*, ACIAR Technical Report 80.
- Overseas Development Institute (2015) *Gender Violence in Papua New Guinea: The Cost to Business*.
- Oxfam (2017) *Understanding Gender-Based and Sorcery Related Violence in Papua New Guinea. An Analysis of Data Collected from Oxfam Partners 2013-2016*.
- Papua New Guinea Department of Health (2015) *Child Morbidity & Mortality. Annual Report 2015*.
- Paraide, P. (2015) 'Challenges with the Tuition Fee Free Education Policy Implementation in Papua New Guinea', *Contemporary PNG Studies: DWU Research Journal*, vol. 23, pp. 47-62.
- Plan International (2017) *Gender Inequality and Early Childhood Development. A Review of the Linkages*.
- Pritchett, L. & Beatty, A. (2015) 'Slow Down, You're Going Too Fast: Matching Curricula to Student Skill Levels', *International Journal of Educational Development*, vol. 40, p. 276-288.
- Rena, R. (2011) 'Challenges for Quality Primary Education in Papua New Guinea—A Case Study', *Education Research International*.
- Sai, A. (2007) *Tamot: Masculinities in Transition in Papua New Guinea*, PhD Thesis, Victoria University.
- Save the Children (2018) *Safe Communities, Safe Children Baseline Report. Child Protection Assessment in Morobe and ARoB*.
- Save the Children (2017) *Child Protection Community Capacity Assessment*.
- Save the Children (2017) *Short Changed: The Human and Economic Cost of Child Undernutrition in Papua New Guinea*.
- Save the Children PNG (2018) *RISE Baseline Report. Headline Numbers*.
- Save the Children Sweden (2005) *Discipline and Punishment of Children: A Rights-based Review of Laws, Attitudes and Practices in East Asia and the Pacific*.
- Singh, S. & Nadarajah, Y. (2011) 'School Fees, Beer and "Meri": Gender, Cash and the Mobile in the Morobe Province of Papua New Guinea', *Working Paper*, Institute for Money, Technology and Financial Inclusion.
- Sperling, G. & Winthrop, R. (2016) *What Works in Girls' Education. Evidence for the World's Best Investment*, Brookings Institute.
- Strachan, J. et al. (2010) 'You Have to be a Servant of All: Melanesian Women's Educational Leadership Experiences', *School Leadership and Management*, vol. 30, no. 1, pp. 65-76.
- UNGEI (2013) *International Women's Day. East Asia and Pacific Regional UNGEI Statement. A Promise Is a Promise: Time for Action to End Violence against Women*.
- UNICEF (2013) *Improving Child Nutrition: The Achievable Imperative for Global Progress*.
- UNICEF (2012) *Child Protection in Educational Settings. Findings from Six Countries in East Asia and the Pacific: Indonesia, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Papua New Guinea, Philippines and Thailand*.
- UNICEF (2012) *Partnering with Religious Communities for Children*.
- UNICEF (2007) *Promoting the Rights of Children with Disabilities*.
- UNICEF Pacific & Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (2014) *Study of Parental Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices Related to Early Childhood Development*.
- Unterhalter, E. et al. (2014) *Girls' Education and Gender Equality. Education Rigorous Literature Review*, DFID.
- Walton, G. (2018) 'Fee-free Education, Decentralisation and the Politics of Scale in Papua New Guinea', *Journal of Education Policy*, pp. 10-14.
- World Bank (2015) *Papua New Guinea Education Management Information Systems, SABER Country Report 2015*.
- World Bank (2018) 'The World Bank in Papua New Guinea', available online at: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/png/overview>
- World Bank Group (2015) *Stagnant Stunting Rate Despite Rapid Economic Growth in Papua New Guinea*, Policy Research Working Paper 7301.
- World Bank (2012) *Do School Feeding Programs Help Children? Evidence to Policy Note Series*.
- World Bank (2006), *Repositioning Nutrition as Central to Development: A Strategy for Large Scale Action*.
- World Food Programme (2011) *Feed Minds, Change Lives: School Feeding, the Millennium Development Goals and Girls' Empowerment*.
- World Health Organization & World Bank (2011) *World Report on Disability*.
- World Vision (2016) *Hope for a Safer Solomon Islands. Findings from evaluations of gender norms change and violence prevention initiatives in Honiara, Temotu and Weather Coast*.

