



# ***Gender-Based Analysis for Cufa's Pathways Unlocked Project***

Conducted between October – December 2023

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## List of acronyms

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Acronym	Definition
AROB	Autonomous Region of Bougainville
CV	Curriculum vitae
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
FGD	Focus group discussion
GBA	Gender-Based Analysis
GBV	Gender-based violence
GEDSI	Gender equality, disability and social inclusion
HDI	Human Development Index
HIV/AIDs	Human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
INGO	International non-governmental organisation
KII	Key informant interview
LGBTQIA+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, and more
MEL	Monitoring, evaluation and learning
MSME	Micro, small and medium enterprise
OPD	Organisations for persons with disability
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PSEAH	Prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment
SME	Small and medium enterprise
TVET	Technical and vocational education and training

## **Executive Summary**

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Cufa is an international non-governmental organisation (INGO) that aims to improve economic empowerment of communities throughout Asia-Pacific, with a long history of delivering programs in Papua New Guinea and Bougainville. Cufa undertook this Gender-Based Analysis (GBA) as part of its context analysis and community consultation process in October – December 2023 to inform implementation of its new pilot program titled ‘Pathways Unlocked: PNG School-to-Work Transition Support Project’, which is supported by the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI). The ‘Pathways Unlocked’ program is being implemented between November 2023 and March 2024 and aims to improve pathways to work for school leavers in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea through provision of a series of job, business, financial literacy and life skills trainings as well as linkages to internships for highest performing participants. The purpose of this GBA is to provide Cufa with a better understanding of the local context and target community of youth living in Port Moresby. Through a mixed methodology that draws on both primary and secondary data, this GBA provides an analysis of the barriers, challenges and opportunities facing youth in relation to accessing livelihoods in Port Moresby. Findings are analysed across four key domains: cultural norms and beliefs, access and control over resources, decision-making roles and responsibilities, and human dignity, safety and wellness.

Cultural norms and beliefs: people migrate to Port Moresby from all over the country in search of work and opportunities, therefore there is an incredible diversity of cultures living in this urban centre. Despite this diversity, there are some dominant trends in beliefs and customs that persist throughout Port Moresby, including strict gender roles that reinforce a gender binary which positions men as heads of the household and the breadwinners, and which limits economic opportunities for women and girls and enables the high levels of gender-based violence (GBV) that exist in Port Moresby. These norms and beliefs also lead to challenges for other marginalised identities and groups such as the LGBTQIA+ community and people with disabilities, both of whom face discrimination, reduced access to opportunities and equal participation, protection threats and other issues.

Access and control over resources: within the context of these deeply rooted beliefs and customs, this GBA then analyses the access and control that young women and other groups have to resources such as land and productive resources, education and training, livelihoods and finance. It is found that there is a range of barriers limiting the equitable access of groups such as women, people with disabilities and LGBTQIA+ people to resources across all categories, but that opportunities do exist for improved participation of these groups if they are supported to gain the access and skills required to meaningfully participate.

Decision-making roles and responsibilities: this section outlines roles, responsibilities and decision-making that exist for men and women in particular in Port Moresby, which often follow the deeply rooted traditions and beliefs explored in the previous section. It is found that men are conventionally seen as the breadwinners in the household, and women are expected to take on more caring and domestic responsibilities. In terms of decision-making, it is common for men to lead both financial and non-financial decision-making at the household level. In terms of formal decision-making at the community level and in politics, women are often excluded, even though they play extremely important roles in the community more generally.

Human dignity, safety and wellness: within this context, there are a range of protection issues that threaten the dignity, safety and wellness of youth in Port Moresby. Youth in general face a range of risks in Port Moresby, which is a dangerous city with high crime rates, illegal activity and exploitative forms of labour. Furthermore, marginalised groups such as women, people with disabilities and LGBTQIA+ people face additional protection threats such as GBV, sexual and reproductive health risks, and more. This section concludes with an analysis of some of the risks that may result from the 'Pathways Unlocked' program activities, in order to promote a 'do no harm' approach in Cufa's programming.

### **Key recommendations:**

- Recommendation 1: Provide business and job skills training topics to help youth fill practical skills gaps and access pathways to work.
- Recommendation 2: Provide financial literacy and life skills training topics to youth in order to build confidence and soft skills to manage their lives.
- Recommendation 3: Incorporate gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI) concepts throughout the training.
- Recommendation 4: Use a GEDSI lens to design monitoring and evaluation framework, including in the criteria to select participants for internships.
- Recommendation 5: Develop a referral mechanism to help address some of the protection barriers that youth face to accessing livelihoods.

# Introduction

## Purpose and objectives

The purpose of this Gender-Based Analysis (GBA) is to provide Cufa with a greater understanding of the context and target community of youth in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea (PNG) for the upcoming pilot project, Pathways Unlocked, which will target 300 school leavers in Port Moresby and provide them with a range of trainings and other supports between October 2023 and March 2024 to improve their access to livelihoods. In particular, this GBA aims to examine the roles, barriers, strengths and opportunities for young women, men, girls and boys in Port Moresby. Findings from this GBA will inform project implementation as well as monitoring and evaluation of the FY23/24 Pathways Unlocked program to ensure that the program is relevant and appropriate for the needs of women, men, boys and girls in the target community. Furthermore, the findings from this GBA will also be used to inform future programming that also targets these same communities for similar interventions.

## Methodology and Limitations

This GBA uses a primarily qualitative research approach and comprises both primary and secondary data collection and analysis. Secondary data was collected through a desk review of relevant information and references are provided in the bibliography. Primary data was collected through key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) conducted by Cufa personnel in Port Moresby during September to December 2023. Following data collection, data was then analysed by Cufa's monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) department in Port Moresby.

The below table summarises participants involved in primary data collection:

Tool	Male	Female	Total
KII – Australian High Commission, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Port Moresby	0	2	2
KII – PNG Assembly for Disabled Persons and The National Youth with Disability Network	1	2	3
KII – Motu Koita Assembly	0	1	1
KII – Abt Associates	0	1	1
KII – Ginigoda	2	0	2
KII – PNG Department of Education TVET Coordinator	0	1	1
FGD – Cufa staff and volunteers	4	7	11
FGDs – community members (youth in Port Moresby)	8	7	15
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>36</b>

Ethical considerations: informed consent of all participants in primary data collection was obtained, all staff involved in data collection and analysis have been trained in safeguarding including

prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (PSEAH), and these principles as well as other 'do no harm' principles were observed and adhered to throughout the process.

Limitations of this GBA include:

1. A small sample size for primary data collection and reliance on only qualitative data was a limitation, due to budgetary and time constraints. A larger data collection exercise such as a questionnaire targeting a wider sample was outside the scope and resources of this GBA. Only a small cohort of community members and key informants are targeted for data collection, and therefore the risk is increased of missing important opinions, or of considering distorted opinions to be more significant than is the reality.
2. Moreover, this GBA is not intended to be a comprehensive analysis of all aspects of gender relations and dynamics in Port Moresby, but rather was specifically designed to provide information relevant to the Pathways Unlocked program, which focuses on improving the access to livelihoods of youth in Port Moresby.

## **Background and context**

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PNG is one of the most culturally and linguistically diverse countries in the world, with over 800 tribes and languages,<sup>1</sup> and an incredible diversity of geographic and natural resources.<sup>2</sup> PNG has an estimated population of eight million people, although this is widely considered to be an outdated underestimate and rapid population growth could take the figure considerably higher.<sup>3</sup> Defined as a lower middle-income country,<sup>4</sup> PNG has high income inequality<sup>5</sup> and approximately 40% of the population is estimated to be living in poverty.<sup>6</sup> Development and delivery of social services throughout PNG is challenging, and the country ranks poorly at 156 out of 191 countries in the Human Development Index (HDI), which measures life expectancy, education, and per capita income indicators.<sup>7</sup> The economy in PNG is dominated by the agriculture, forestry, fishing and the extractives sectors,<sup>8</sup> although in reality formal employment is very difficult to obtain, it is estimated that over 80% of livelihoods in PNG are derived from the informal economy.<sup>9</sup> Gender inequality is a significant issue in PNG, with the United Nations Development Programme ranking PNG almost last in their Gender Inequality Index in 2021, at 169 out of 170 countries,<sup>10</sup> and it rates 135 out of 156 countries in the 2021 Global Gender Gap Index. Young people make up a disproportionately large amount of PNG's population, with an estimated 76% of the population below 35 years of age.<sup>11</sup>

Although approximately 80% of the country's population lives rurally, Port Moresby is the country's fastest growing city as people, including many youths, migrate from rural areas to the urban centre in search of economic opportunities.<sup>12</sup> However, the country's failure to create formal jobs and other livelihood opportunities that matches population growth coupled with this "urban drift" means that people are met with a dearth of opportunities in Port Moresby, and fierce competition for the jobs that do exist.<sup>13</sup> There are also inadequate services and poor living conditions in the city for many of these internal migrants, with many resorting to living in informal settlements.<sup>14</sup> In August 2023, PNG Prime Minister, James Marape, went so far as to urge young people not to come to Port Moresby and for unemployed people to return to their home provinces where they more often have access to land and opportunities to grow and sell produce, rather than "wasting time in Port Moresby" where "there is no meaningful pursuit".<sup>15</sup> The migration of Papua New Guineans, particularly youth, to the

city is often associated with the high crime rates in Port Moresby, which is known for having high rates of homicide, opportunistic crime,<sup>16</sup> and also organised crime through 'raskol' gangs that are largely comprised of disaffected young men who lack other opportunities.<sup>17</sup> Gender-based violence (GBV) is also extremely prevalent throughout PNG, including in Port Moresby,<sup>18</sup> making it a challenging context for female youth seeking livelihood options, as well as youth of other genders.

## **Findings**

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### **Cultural norms and beliefs**

Port Moresby is home to people from all over the country, which means that it has an incredible diversity of cultures, and while urban centres like Port Moresby do often hold more modernised perspectives than the provinces, it is necessary to assess norms and beliefs more broadly in PNG in order to assess those which are found in Port Moresby, as "rural-to-urban migrants bring their languages and diverse tribal customs and re-create their social norms in urban areas".<sup>19</sup> During focus groups, community members expressed that the extreme diversity in cultures that collides in Port Moresby can result in competing and sometimes stronger perspectives than in rural areas where people tend to agree more often, and as a result this can intensify discriminations and judgements of certain behaviours. The example used in this case was that participants expressed that judgement of women who engage in sex work can be even harsher in Port Moresby than in their home provinces. Cultural norms and beliefs are complex and vary throughout the hundreds of tribes and ethnic groups that exist in PNG. Despite this heterogeneity, there are some common trends across cultures in PNG, such as the fact that culture is deeply rooted in tribal and ethnic identity as well as relationships to land,<sup>20</sup> and also that gender inequality is widespread and deeply rooted within customs and cultures, as discussed below.<sup>21</sup>

In PNG, distinct gender roles exist that promote a strict binary between men and women, and which limit the roles that men and women are expected to inhabit in their respective communities, with men designated as head of the household and decision maker, and women often relegated to a more subservient roles responsible for childcare and domestic duties.<sup>22</sup> These gender norms as well as the practice of 'bride price' means that there are expectations that young girls and women should marry, and in the case of patrilineal societies which make up the majority of PNG, move to their husband's community.<sup>23</sup> These gender norms were confirmed during FGDs with Cufa staff, volunteers and also community members, who described the strict and heteronormative roles that are often assigned to men and women throughout PNG including Port Moresby, with men expected to assume more conventionally dominant roles such as being the head of the household, breadwinner, making decisions, speaking publicly and being strong. Women, on the other hand, are expected to take more conventionally feminised roles centred around taking care of the household and that are stereotypically submissive, nurturing, cooperating, finishing work for the men, listening and obeying.

It was also reported that when men and women behave outside of these expected roles and behaviours, they are at risk of being branded by the community with terms such as inadequate, weak, lazy, or gay. As polygamy is widespread, women who do not behave in these expected feminised roles may be at risk of being "replaced" by their husbands with other women. Community members



expressed that women are expected to stay within the house and take care of the children, but at the same time they may be branded as “useless” for not earning money. There is also a high level of acceptance of GBV within cultures in PNG, and the country is commonly described as having reached “endemic levels of violence against women and girls”.<sup>24</sup> These cultural norms about men and women extend to business and work environments, with gender bias resulting from these traditional norms resulting in perceptions that women may be inadequate in the workplace compared to men, or that they are seen first and foremost as women before being seen as professionals.<sup>25</sup>

Throughout PNG, including Port Moresby, the LGBTQIA+ community also faces restriction of rights, discrimination, hostility and violence from the authorities and community. Male same-sex activity is criminalised and punishable with up to 14 years imprisonment, and no legal protections exist for LGBTQIA+ people, such as protection against discrimination or hate crimes. During primary data collection, mention of LGBTQIA+ people was only made in reference to those who act outside of the expected gender binary, amongst the kind of people who would face criticism from the community for not behaving as per their expected gender roles.

Cultural attitudes to people with disabilities are also relevant in analysing livelihood barriers for youths because it is estimated that at least 15 percent of Papua New Guinea’s population is living with a disability.<sup>26</sup> In PNG, negative attitudes and prejudice exists towards people with disabilities, which result in the denial of their rights and also limiting of opportunities.<sup>27</sup> For example, key informants described perceptions that exist in PNG that people with disabilities are constantly in need of assistance or are unable to participate in activities. This results in stigmatisation and marginalisation of persons with disabilities, and exclusion from decision-making and meaningful participation in society.<sup>28</sup> Many people in PNG see disability as a health issue that sits with the individual, rather than taking a more rights-based approach to disability inclusion that sees societal barriers as the key issue to be addressed.<sup>29</sup>

## **Access and control over resources**

### **Land and productive resources**

In PNG, there is often unequal access and control over land and productive resources between men and women.<sup>30</sup> For example, the majority of PNG practice patrilineal land inheritance, meaning that land is passed from father to son, which means that it is very challenging, if not impossible, for women to own land and its resources. Even in some of the matrilineal societies that exist in certain parts of PNG and the Autonomous Region of Bougainville (AROB), it may often be the woman’s brothers that actually exercise control over the woman’s land,<sup>31</sup> and some also argue that modernisation and colonisation has further eroded women’s control over land and its resources in these societies. This inequality in access to land between men and women in PNG extends to access to the resources that come from the land, such as food, water, agriculture and also benefits gained from extractive industries such as oil and mining, as well as other productive resources such as labour and capital.<sup>32</sup> According to the Asian Development Bank’s Country Gender Assessment, “regardless of whether their society’s descent and inheritance system is based on patrilineal or matrilineal principles, women are rarely considered to have ownership rights over productive resources”.<sup>33</sup> Despite this, key

informants stated that the situation is slowly changing and women in Port Moresby in particular are gaining more control over productive resources and the income that they generate.

## Education and training

In terms of access to education, this is generally a challenge in PNG, including Port Moresby, because despite the move towards fee-free education policies in PNG, there is insufficient public funding to deliver quality education to the entire school-aged population, as well as inadequate facilities, materials, teachers and staff.<sup>34</sup> Community members also expressed that access to education can be challenging due to issues of discipline within the schools, and due to the transience of children and youth who reside with family members. While enrolment of girls in school has risen, there are still barriers to girls accessing education, such as social and cultural practices in PNG that tend to favour boys' education over girls, and there is a perceived opportunity cost of sending girls to school when families may want girls to stay home to carry out domestic and caretaking duties.<sup>35</sup> Other barriers include a lack of appropriate water and sanitation facilities once girls begin to menstruate, risk of GBV on the way to, from and during school, and the prevalence of early marriage and pregnancy in PNG, which often leads to girls dropping out of school.<sup>36</sup> In terms of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) opportunities, only one third of students enrolled in TVET programs in Papua New Guinea are female.<sup>37</sup> Key informants state that barriers to youth accessing TVET courses include course fees, lack of places available, early marriage, pregnancy and family violence, mindset for some who consider themselves too old for TVET training, and pressure on young women to support the household rather than attend training.

For people with disabilities, barriers to accessing education and training include attitudinal barriers, described above, as well as infrastructure and the school's built environment, financial challenges, level of training and preparedness of the teachers, and other accessibility challenges including physical but also communication barriers, such as the course materials and information about the course.<sup>38</sup>

## Access to livelihoods

Overview: As mentioned above, informal employment is the dominant source of work in PNG, with formal employment opportunities difficult to obtain. In Port Moresby, formal employment opportunities are insufficient to match the number of jobseekers, and the high prevalence of corruption and nepotism in the country means that the formal jobs that are available often go to applicants who have connections through their *wantok*<sup>1</sup> or money to pay for access to these job opportunities.<sup>39</sup> This was confirmed by community members, who spoke about corruption, bribery and the *wantok* system as some of the primary barriers to accessing jobs in Port Moresby, stating that if people who are rich and have connections find it very easy to find a job, but people who are poor and without personal connections will struggle for months or years to find jobs, even if they have excellent grades and qualifications. Even for those youth who have graduated secondary school, university or technical and vocational training, it is often very challenging to find pathways to access employment, and highly qualified graduates are often forced to take low or semi-skilled jobs, leaving

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<sup>1</sup> *Wantok*: literally translating to "one talk" or "same language" in Tok Pisin, *wantok* refers to the system of social connections and networks that exists in PNG, and which strongly influences loyalties, obligations and how social and work relations are conducted.

even less prospects for unqualified youth. While women in Port Moresby are increasingly engaging in work,<sup>40</sup> and the types of jobs that women are able to access are changing, it is still more likely for men to hold formal jobs.<sup>41</sup> Indeed, women make up about 60% of workers in the informal economy in PNG,<sup>42</sup> and in Port Moresby specifically, most vendors in market spaces are women.<sup>43</sup>

Gaps in skills and perception of youth: However, in Port Moresby there are significant barriers for youth to access livelihood opportunities, which may differ depending on other aspects of identity such as gender, disability or ethnic identity. For youth generally, common barriers to accessing employment included lack of technical, business and life skills, low confidence and a lack of pathways that link from training and education to actual employment. Community members gave the example of low literacy levels preventing youth from being capable of putting together business ideas, curriculum vitae (CVs) and cover letters. Key informants also emphasised mindset as a barrier to youth accessing livelihoods, in that low confidence may lead to a lack of tenacity in continuing to apply for jobs after receiving rejections. Moreover, key informants claimed that youth are often embarrassed or reluctant to work low-level jobs or internships, so they do not persevere long enough to be promoted into more lucrative positions. Furthermore, employers in Port Moresby may hold negative perceptions of youth, for example that they lack experience, the right mindset, and may not stay in the job for long. Community members stated that Grade 12 graduates in particular struggle to find jobs, as employers expect further qualifications and experience. For male youth specifically, there may be a perception that they are involved in crime and may steal from the business, while for female youth there may be a perception that she is likely to leave the job soon once she gets married or becomes pregnant. Female community members also expressed that some employers prefer to hire men over women, especially for physical jobs, based on the assumption that women cannot do the job, regardless of actual capability of the individual. For youth with disabilities, employers may lack an inclusive mindset and perceive people with disabilities to be unable of completing job duties, or perceive them to be an additional cost to the business, regardless of whether or not there is evidence to support this assumption.

Micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME): Aside from employment, another pathway to youth livelihoods is starting an MSME. MSMEs can provide income-generating opportunities in a context where employment is very difficult to obtain, and may be better suited to youth who face other barriers to employment or who simply prefer to run their own business. In terms of opportunities, there are certain sectors that were mentioned during primary data collection as more promising for youth, including credit loans businesses, computing and mobile services, welding, security, stationary and printing services. For women specifically, hospitality, hairdressing, food preparation and tailoring, especially of *meri blouses*<sup>2</sup>, *bilums*<sup>3</sup> and workwear such as uniforms, shoes and bags, were mentioned as promising sectors, due to many women's existing skills in cooking, managing the household and sewing. In terms of barriers to youth starting their own MSMEs, barriers found in both the primary and secondary data<sup>44</sup> include the difficulty of the process of registering businesses and the need to have *wantoks* to expedite this process, a lack of business skills and financial literacy, lack of capital or funds to start a business and rent a space, lack of support from family and community, as well as the same protection and gender-based barriers mentioned above. Furthermore, while it is

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<sup>2</sup> *Meri blouse*: a very common style of dress worn by women in PNG.

<sup>3</sup> *Bilum*: literally translating to "womb", a *bilum* is a very popular style of woven bag worn throughout PNG.

common for youth and other people from disadvantaged backgrounds to sell their goods on the street, this is technically illegal and leaves them vulnerable to police harassment including being forced to leave and / or subjected to brutality.<sup>45</sup> Community members confirmed that there are many unregistered businesses in Port Moresby that face this risk, stating that police harass small business owners for money if they are unregistered, and will “beat up” the business owner rather than taking legal punitive actions.

Protection threats and safety: In terms of safety, Port Moresby is an unsafe city with high rates of crime, and therefore both male and female youth who move throughout the city to access employment or to run their own MSME are routinely left vulnerable to being robbed, assaulted or killed. The above example of police brutality demonstrates that anyone can be subject to violence in Port Moresby, however for women and people with disabilities, this risk is heightened. According to UN Women, 90% of women and girls in Port Moresby had experienced some form of violence<sup>4</sup> when accessing public transport, and 55% had experienced some form of violence in the markets.<sup>46</sup> Female community members stated that there are a lot of places in Port Moresby that are not safe to move around and that harassment is widespread in Port Moresby, even in public areas, so females seeking livelihoods need to be home before it gets late in the day. This was echoed by representatives from the OPDs in Port Moresby, who explained that *raskols*<sup>5</sup>, pickpockets and other criminals will target anyone, especially if they are drunk or under another influence, and that people with disabilities may have less ability to physically defend themselves if they are confronted. Moreover, women with disabilities are also more vulnerable to GBV when they go out to work due to their gender combined with their impairment. OPDs and community members agreed that police in the city are unreliable, slow and only show up for what are perceived to be really serious issues, and generally expect some payment when they do show up. Key informants also highlighted sexual harassment and abuse as a risk for female youth in the workplace, from employers or colleagues. Other protection threats that present a barrier to women accessing livelihoods are similar to those mentioned above, including early marriage and pregnancy, GBV and pressure to take care of the household.

Additional barriers for LGBTQIA+: LGBTQIA+ people face additional challenges in accessing livelihoods such as significant discrimination for their identity. As mentioned above, there are no legal protections for LGBTQIA+ people in employment settings such as protections against discrimination at work. LGBTQIA+ people who are unable to access formal employment may turn to sex work, which leaves them vulnerable to criminal charges, violence and exposure to sexually transmitted infections such as HIV/AIDs.<sup>47</sup>

Additional barriers for people with disability: Besides prejudice and safety issues mentioned above, OPDs shared that other barriers for people with disability to access livelihoods include infrastructure and accessibility in training environments as well as workplaces such as markets, communication barriers, and attitudinal barriers. For example, customers may refuse to buy products from sellers with disabilities, or in the official marketplaces in Port Moresby, where there is competition for spaces, and people with disabilities may be pushed out or told to leave by other sellers.

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<sup>4</sup> Some form of violence included: physical assault, robbery, sexual harassment, sexual violence, verbal abuse, threats and intimidation.

<sup>5</sup> *Raskol*: a term used to refer to gang members or criminals in Papua New Guinea, particularly in urban centres such as Port Moresby.

## Access to finance

Despite women being critical players in the informal sector through MSMEs, women's access to finance such as credit or loans remains limited.<sup>48</sup> Barriers to accessing finance include limited financial literacy, lack of collateral such as land, particularly for women who come from societies with patrilineal land ownership, and requirements for extensive documentation which is a challenge as the majority of female-owned businesses are informal. Indeed, a study of market vendors in Port Moresby found that essentially all of the randomly surveyed vendors (many of whom were women) were from outside of Port Moresby, including 60% of vendors who were from the Highlands. This means that the majority of vendors are internal migrants who likely do not have access to land in Port Moresby.<sup>6</sup> As a result of these barriers, many women remain excluded from the banking system and lack access to credit and loans.<sup>49</sup> According to a study of market vendors in Port Moresby, most market vendors were using their incomes to meet basic needs and so this indicates that informal sellers are using their incomes to make ends meet and survive and so do not have additional savings to formalise or expand their businesses.<sup>50</sup>

Moreover, another challenge for both male and female youth is the obligations of the *wantoks* system, which heavily impacts the ability of youth to save and spend their finances wisely.<sup>51</sup> While *wantoks* can provide an important resource and safety net for many people,<sup>52</sup> including informal business owners, they can also create financial obligations that can drain the resources of small business owners. Aside from obligations to contribute funds to cultural ceremonies and customs such as bride price ceremonies and *haus kra*, key informants described the pressure that Papua New Guineans generally, but especially youth, are under to support their *wantoks*, including by gifting or lending goods or money from their businesses, which are frequently never repaid. While *wantoks* can provide support during times of hardship, this practice can make it very difficult for youth to manage their finances and to start and expand profitable businesses once they start to earn some income.<sup>53</sup>

## Decision-making, roles and responsibilities

As mentioned above, there are a diversity of cultures from various provinces that come together in Port Moresby, however traditional expectations that follow a binary conception of gender do persist and dictate productive and reproductive roles amongst the target population of youth in Port Moresby. Primary data collection confirmed that women are commonly expected to assume caring and domestic responsibilities in the household, and men are often seen as being the main breadwinners. Community members stated that customs and beliefs in PNG run very deep, and that these customs include an expectation that the man will be the head of the household and the one to go and work. Even if women are breadwinners in the household, often a man will still be designated as the head of the household due to cultural practices,<sup>54</sup> and only 12% of households in PNG are headed by women.<sup>55</sup> Moreover, men tend to lead household decision-making, including about how to spend household income as well as non-financial decision-making. For example, Pacific Women found that women are often excluded from decision-making about their own health and bodies, such as cultural practices relating to pregnancy, childcare and isolation of women during menstruation.<sup>56</sup> When discussion does occur within households, it is often men who get the "last say".<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Vendors were predominantly from the Highlands region, followed by the Southern region (mostly Central Province), then a minority from Momase and New Guinea Islands.

In terms of control over household income, primary data collection confirmed that it is commonly men who make financial decisions in PNG households, due to the same beliefs and customs described above. Even if women earn money, there may be an expectation that women share their income with their husband, but not the other way around.<sup>58</sup> When asked about the consequences of men making decisions about how to spend money, female community members said that it often means the household's real needs are not being met, such as nutrition, education, hygiene and sanitation needs of the women and children in the household. They felt that it can also lead to bad long-term savings plans and dysfunction or violence in the household, primarily due to the claim that many male household members will disappear every fortnight during payday, and will waste money on alcohol, gambling, *buai*<sup>7</sup> and on buying things for other women. According to key informants, while the mindset around this is changing and women are increasingly gaining economic empowerment and ability to control their own money, there is still a risk that male family members may control the finances of female youth. For male and female youth with disabilities, while OPD informants claim that economic empowerment is also improving, there is also a risk that family members will control any income they earn, particularly female youth with disabilities due to these intersecting aspects of vulnerability.

Decision-making at the community level and in public forums, including politics, is also dominated by men, and quotas for women's representation are often ignored in practice.<sup>59</sup> Culturally embedded patriarchal norms prevent women from accessing opportunities in politics and leadership.<sup>60</sup> For example PNG has one of the lowest rates of female parliamentarians in the world, having only elected nine women to parliament since independence. Before the election of two women to parliament in August 2022, there was a period of five years from 2017 until 2022 with no women sitting in parliament.<sup>61</sup> Some barriers to accessing participation and decision-making at this level include gender norms that prioritise masculinity, violence against women candidates and voters, lack of financial resources for women candidates, and corruption.<sup>62</sup> According to Executive Dean of the University of PNG, "Women are capable of being leaders, but men are simply preferred as leaders".<sup>63</sup>

At the provincial and local government levels, leadership and participation is also male-dominated, although documentation at the local level is weak and so contributions by women may be hidden. Historically, women have played important roles through conflict resolution and peacemaking, such as during and after the civil war in Bougainville.<sup>64</sup> However, focus groups revealed that men are seen as more confident in public speaking and taking the lead in community events in PNG, and that women tend to be shyer or not present in community meetings. According to OPDs in PNG, women with disabilities do not generally attend OPD meetings due to the multifaceted marginalisation that they experience from patriarchal attitudes against women combined with stigma associated with disability.<sup>65</sup>

However, despite women being underrepresented in community decision-making, or their contributions being less visible, women still play important roles in the community. According to secondary research, these roles include childcare, sharing of information, supporting their *wantok*by, for example, minding their stall or collecting firewood or water.<sup>66</sup> Community members confirmed that women play pivotal roles in the community, including looking after each other's children,

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<sup>7</sup> *Buai* also known as "betel nut", *buai* is a seed from a particular kind of palm tree, that is consumed across Asia-Pacific. In PNG, it is chewed with mustard seed and lime powder and spat out, giving a sense of euphoria and alertness.

accompanying sick community members to the hospital, organising events such as *haus krais*<sup>8</sup>, sharing information particularly about significant events such as births and deaths, and taking the lead in fellowships and church activities, which themselves are important institutions for community-building activities. Community members also shared that it is common in PNG for women to help fellow community members with their businesses and income-generating activities. For example, women will look after one another's market stalls while they go to pick up their children, and it is also common for women to provide microloans to one another, which are commonly paid back within an agreed period of time, for example two weeks, with some interest. Community members expressed that these types of lending systems are very common amongst the women in all their respective communities in Port Moresby, and that they function very effectively with the money being paid back and rolling on.

### Human dignity, safety and wellness

As above, there is a high degree of social inequality in PNG and this impacts access to rights, dignity, safety and wellness for many youths living in Port Moresby, especially for marginalised groups such as women, LGBTQIA+ communities and people with disabilities. Moreover, a lack of viable livelihood options in the city compounds these issues because it can lead youth to resort to negative coping strategies in order to survive and meet their basic needs, such as exploitative or illegal forms of labour, use of alcohol and illicit drugs, sex work, child labour, and so on. While not exhaustive, this section discusses some of the major protection threats facing youth in this context.

One major protection threat in PNG is GBV, the rates of which are some of the highest in the world and widely considered to be of epidemic proportions. It is estimated that over two-thirds of women have suffered some form of physical or sexual violence during their lifetime,<sup>67</sup> and in some parts of the country 80% of men admit they have been responsible for sexual violence against their partner.<sup>33</sup> GBV and family violence were raised numerous times as a commonplace practice by community members and key informants during primary data collection. The vast majority of women only seek assistance through informal support structures, indicating that cases are underreported.<sup>68</sup> Cultural practices such as bride price and polygamy, which exist also in Port Moresby, may contribute to these levels of GBV.<sup>69</sup> Although less present in urban centres like Port Moresby, belief in sorcery is widespread across PNG, which results in accusations and brutal violence against predominantly women, who are often poor and marginalised.<sup>70</sup> As above, same sex relations between men are criminalised in PNG, and LGBTQIA+ communities more broadly face strong discrimination and often hostility and violence for their identity.<sup>71</sup>

For youth generally, but especially for women and LGBTQIA+ people, reproductive and sexual health may also present a protection threat in the context of Port Moresby. PNG has a high incidence of early marriage and early pregnancy,<sup>72</sup> and a high adolescent birth rate of 55 out of every 1,000 girls aged 15-19 giving birth in PNG in 2021 and a high maternal mortality rate of 192 women dying per 100,000 live births.<sup>73</sup> PNG has the highest incidence of HIV/AIDs in the Pacific, and saw an estimated 33% increase in new HIV infections in PNG from 2,500 in 2010 to 3,300 in 2019. Rates of HIV/AIDs and other sexually transmitted infections are significantly higher amongst sex workers and LGBTQIA+

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<sup>8</sup> *Haus krai* translates to "house of crying", a *haus krai* is a mourning ritual that occurs after someone dies in PNG, and involves the gathering of people together to mourn the death, often for multiple days. People bring food, money and other offerings to the location of the *haus krai*.

communities.<sup>74</sup> Community members felt that sex work is rapidly increasing in their neighbourhoods, because of the severity of corruption and subsequent lack of jobs in Port Moresby. Many women have skills and qualifications but still cannot find jobs, so they turn to sex work to survive, or to escape dysfunctional or abusive households. According to these community members, consequences for women and girls doing sex work in Port Moresby is rejection from their families and communities, exposure to illnesses, and suicide.

As discussed above, Port Moresby is a dangerous city for anyone to live and work, due its high rates of crime and poverty, and therefore protection threats also impact male youth living in Port Moresby. As a result of the high unemployment and lack of opportunities in Port Moresby, youth may turn to illegal income generating activities, anti-social behaviour, substance abuse or crime, severely impacting male youth safety and wellbeing.<sup>75</sup> Due to the lack of livelihood options and the negative perceptions some employers have towards youth, male youth may also experience exploitation from employers, such as poor wages and working conditions, and child labour and exploitation is a risk. Moreover, while the informal economy can provide viable income earning opportunities for male and female youth in Port Moresby, it can also leave people vulnerable to a lack of job security and poor access to labour rights, and potentially exposes people to exploitation, dangerous work and other protection threats. While current data is lacking, studies have in the past shown that the worst forms of child labour are present in Port Moresby, including sexual exploitation and hazardous work.<sup>76</sup>

Primary data collection also aimed to identify any potential risks or harm that may come to target community members as a result of proposed project activities. Key informants raised several potential risks, for example the risk of exploitative forms of labour through internships or linkages to other jobs. Another risk flagged was the potential of threats to child protection if the participant is under 18 years old, or if the participant has a dependent child that may suffer neglect as a result of the participant spending more time earning an income. Another risk identified during primary data collection was the risk of GBV towards female youth who improve their economic empowerment and as such may challenge patriarchal gender dynamics that exist at the household and / or community level. This may cause male household or family members to feel threatened and attempt to regain dominance through coercive control, control of income, GBV or other means.

## **Conclusion**

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In conclusion, PNG is a country that is rich with diverse cultures and ethnicities, yet gender bias is widespread, deeply rooted in traditional customs and norms, and it significantly impacts the ability of youth to access livelihoods in Port Moresby. Gender inequality is compounded by other intersections of identity and forms of discrimination, such as disability or age. While there are many barriers that prevent youth more generally from accessing livelihoods, such as corruption and nepotism, a shortage of jobs, lack of training and key skills for employment or running MSMEs, low confidence and mindset, and lack of capital, there are also specific barriers that impact women, LGBTQIA+ people and people with disabilities due to the cultural norms in PNG that place greater value on heterosexual and able-bodied men. Some of these barriers include expectations for women to remain in the household to complete reproductive and domestic duties, lack of leadership opportunities for females and people with disabilities, gender-based protection threats, lack of control over finance and other resources, accessibility challenges and negative stigma for people with disabilities, and



discrimination towards LGBTQIA+ youth, among others. Overall, gender inequality and these other forms of discrimination ultimately harm everyone, including male youth, by promoting rigid and harmful gender roles and by failing to include and take advantage of the strengths of people from all demographics in PNG's economic opportunities and development.

## **Recommendations**

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In order to tailor program interventions to address the real needs and barriers of youth in Port Moresby that have been identified through this GBA, the following recommendations are made to the Pathways Unlocked Program.

### **Recommendation 1: Provide business and job skills training topics to help youth fill practical skills gaps and access pathways to work.**

- Job-ready skills training: include specific modules in the Pathways Unlocked training curriculum that help both male and female youth to understand and approach the job market and employment opportunities, such as how to write CVs and apply for jobs and how to succeed in job interviews. These modules should aim to help participants shift their mindset and low confidence in order to enter the job market with a willingness to build work experience and be more resilient to job application rejections.
- Labour rights training: provide training to participants that helps them understand what their rights are in the workplace, for example rights relating to decent work, fair pay, working conditions, and prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (PSEAH), discrimination, etc.
- MSME training: provide training modules that teach participants the fundamentals of starting and building an MSME. This should include some basic skills in budgeting, setting up and registering a business, and how to grow a business sustainably. This training should include some guidance on how to avoid the business suffering financially due to the pressures of the *wantok* system, and also should promote inclusivity, such as encouraging female youth to be confident business owners.

### **Recommendation 2: Provide financial literacy and life skills training topics to youth in order to build confidence and soft skills to manage their lives.**

- Deliver financial literacy training: deliver financial literacy training to support participants to understand how to spend, save and invest their money. Include some contextualised guidance in this topic about how to deal with the financial pressure of the *wantok* system without letting it negatively impact management of personal finances, and also include some gender equality content in order to raise awareness about the importance of equality in financial decision-making and the economic empowerment of women, including women with disabilities.
- Deliver training to improve confidence and leadership skills: include training topics that help youth, particularly female youth and people with disabilities, to improve their self-confidence

and leadership skills. As part of this content, include gender, disability and social inclusion as a cross-cutting topic in order to emphasise that everyone is equal and valuable.

- Workplace skills training: include generalised training modules that help participants to develop the skills needed to be a good employee or MSME owner, depending on their chosen pathway, for example time management, communication, customer service, work ethic and patience to persevere through more junior jobs or with building an MSME until they gain more experience to build up to more senior jobs or to grow their MSME.

### **Recommendation 3: Incorporate gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI) concepts throughout the training.**

- Include GEDSI content throughout the training schedule: at a minimum include GEDSI as a cross-cutting topic throughout various training sessions, or ideally with some specific GEDSI-related sessions, such as gender equality, LGBTQIA+ rights and awareness, and disability inclusion. These sessions should actively include all participants, in order to, for example, encourage men to become 'male champions' of change for gender equality.
- Consider inclusion and accessibility in training sessions: ensure inclusion and accessibility is considered throughout program implementation of the training sessions, for example include targets for women and people with disabilities, consider accessibility in selection of training venue and delivery of training sessions, consult with people with disabilities and their representatives, offer extra travel allowance for people with disabilities and their carers, address potential communication barriers in training content, and so on.
- Prioritise safeguarding and do no harm: ensure that safeguarding and do no harm are consistently prioritised throughout the entire program period, for example by providing safeguarding training to all staff and also businesses that are offering internships, conduct safeguarding screening of personnel and businesses, continually update risk assessments, strengthen and raise awareness of Cufa's complaints mechanisms amongst staff, participants and other personnel.

### **Recommendation 4: Use a GEDSI lens to design monitoring and evaluation framework, including in the criteria to select participants for internships.**

- Incorporate GEDSI into MEL Framework: ensure that GEDSI is captured in the MEL framework and systems, such as data disaggregated by gender, disability and age, and gender and disability-sensitive indicators. Use the Washington Questions to screen for disability. Ensure to capture Most Significant Change stories from people from a variety of demographics. Ensure that data collection tools adequately consider GEDSI considerations.
- Consider GEDSI in the criteria for selection of internships: in recognition that women, people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups face additional barriers to completing training courses, it is recommended that GEDSI is considered in the criteria for selection of participants for internships, for example by setting targets for women and people with

disabilities, or by using selection criteria that takes a more open-minded and inclusive approach to what success looks like for different people.

**Recommendation 5: Develop a referral mechanism to help address some of the protection barriers that youth face to accessing livelihoods.**

- Develop referral mechanism: Cufa staff should develop a referral mechanism that enables staff to support participants who identify protection threats or barriers, such as GBV, health issues, disability services or labour exploitation, so that they can access support further to what Cufa can provide. For example, referrals to protection, psychosocial, health, legal or other services.

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