

New details from Oxfam on gender violence response in PNG

By Ashlee Betteridge

An [Annual Update](#) [pdf] from Oxfam PNG's Elimination of Violence Against Women (EVAW) program has shed further light on the drivers of violence in the country and shows that despite all the bad news about gender violence in Papua New Guinea, there is a response developing.

Oxfam, through its partners, is becoming a major provider of services. Its EVAW work supports 12 community-based organisations in nine provinces, which collectively reached 2774 women and girls with crisis services and 6599 men and boys with awareness-raising messages between July 2013 and May this year.

In early findings from Oxfam's study of clients, using a sample consisting of 70 per cent female victims and 30 per cent male victims, four key causes of violence have been reported:

- Marital problems including polygamy-related arguments and adultery.
- Disagreements over financial management
- Violence caused by accusations of sorcery.
- Violence caused by drug and alcohol abuse.

The chart below shows what percentage of cases in each category occurred in urban, semi-rural or rural areas.



The report also shows how sorcery allegations, particularly in the Highlands, are

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behind many cases of extreme violence. Figures from the Highlands Women's Human Rights Defenders Network shows that 24 out of 25 relocation cases were due to sorcery-related violence. The group has relocated 122 people (including primary clients and accompanying people, such as children) assessed to be at risk since October last year.

Given the current dearth of data on the gender violence issue in PNG, this analysis of case data is valuable. While there is still much work to do, it is also positive to see a response developing, highlighting the [importance of supporting civil society and local partners](#). We are aiming for the [PNG Family and Sexual Violence Case Management Centre](#) in Lae, which we are supporting in conjunction with Oxfam, to further contribute to this knowledge base and to the response.

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