

Six year Evaluation of Femili PNG's Lae Operations

Femili PNG Management Response

Overview

Femili PNG (FPNG) is an NGO based in Lae and Port Moresby that runs Case Management Centres (CMC) to assist survivors of family and sexual violence (FSV) to access the services they need. Our target population is women, men or children who are survivors of intimate partner violence, sexual violence and/or child abuse. Survivors of FSV need access to a range of services, from medical and psycho-social care to emergency shelter, police protection, legal recourse, and vocational training.

FPNG opened its CMC in Lae in mid-2014. Over its last six years of operations in Lae, FPNG has provided services to over 3,000 survivors of FSV.

As FPNG entered its sixth year, operations in Lae were evaluated against the strategic priorities to assist the organisation with future planning and operations. The scope of the evaluation of Lae operations included the following functions:

- Case management services
- Partner and core service provider coordination, resourcing and capacity-building
- Outreach, awareness and training activities
- Monitoring & evaluation, research and advocacy
- Administration and governance

The objectives of the evaluation were to:

- Review FPNG's progress against its strategic priorities
- Assess the impact of FPNG's work on the lives of clients
- Evaluate the relevance and effectiveness of FPNG's work with partners and core service providers in embedding a case management approach to FSV
- Assess the effectiveness of FPNG's outreach, training and advocacy activities
- Observe and consider any lessons learned / strengths / weaknesses in FPNG programs.

In late 2019, Dr Judy Putt was engaged to conduct the Evaluation, and visited PNG and interviewed stakeholders in March 2020. The comprehensive Evaluation was finalised in the second half of 2020, and a draft presented to the Board at its meeting of 21 November 2020.

The Evaluation noted recommendations and immediate priorities that emerged in **Section 4.5 Options going forward** (pp 85-87).

Femili PNG management agreed with all recommendations, noting that some were subject to resourcing and others were outside of the control of the organisation, as noted below.

Recommendations

Recommendation	Management response
Acquiring land and a building in Lae: There is limited office space in the current building, with additional pressures being created by the increasing number of walk-in clients. In 2019-20, both short term and longer terms options were being explored. Having its own premises in Lae is seen as assisting Femili PNG achieve long-term financial sustainability.	Femili PNG is exploring the acquisition of land in central Lae, with the intention of securing support to build premises comprising a case management centre, office and training centre. The Operations Director has been working on the land acquisition throughout 2020, and we are hopeful that it will be finalised in 2021. As a short term measure, additional office space has been rented in Lae, with the support of the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative.

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Improving opportunities for promotion and training of support/corporate staff	Management notes the need for continuing professional development for corporate and administrative staff. An additional funding proposal has been submitted for 2021 including a work plan for staff training in finance, accounting and computer skills.
Reviewing case-loads regularly, and prioritising supervision.	<p>The high case-loads of casework staff is an area of concern for both Management and the Board.</p> <p>Case-loads are constantly monitored and, where necessary, additional casework staff employed. Strategies to manage increasing numbers of clients have been developed by the CEO/Senior Social Worker (SSW), Operations Director and Casework Manager, discussed at EMC and implemented. These strategies include: follow-up consultation and intake of new clients on certain days; working with service providers to fast-track cases where possible; and looking at case closure processes.</p> <p>In terms of professional supervision, the following activities are conducted to support the case management teams:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Regular case discussions and urgent discussions when the case is high risk or requires specialised care or intervention. 2. The Casework Manager conducts monthly individual caseworker supervision. 3. The CEO/SSW regularly reviews case files, provides individual feedback and regular discussion with each caseworker. 4. An annual reflections workshop is held for the case management teams in Lae and Port Moresby. These workshops allow the team to talk about the issues and challenges they encounter and to communicate these to management. 5. Each case management team conducts a fortnightly case management team meeting, where high risk cases, challenges and approaches to cases are discussed. <p>Femili PNG will continue to look at how professional supervision is carried out and for opportunities to further support caseworkers.</p>
Stronger public communication campaigns, redesigning the website, and focusing on more support from the private sector in Lae.	A lack of staff resources has meant that a new communications strategy and website redevelopment has been put on hold. However, Femili PNG aims to initiate new public communications campaigns and redevelop its website in 2021. There are also plans to engage more with the public sector in Lae through fundraising, outreach and awareness.
Agreeing on and collecting data of outcomes from outreach and training.	This is underway. With the additional training and outreach undertaken through the EU-UN Spotlight program and new partnership with the Kokoda Track Foundation, the way in which training and outreach data and participant feedback is collected is being examined and improved. Steps have already been undertaken to link the outreach to clients presenting at the case management centres through targeted questions at intake.

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Exploring future partnerships with other NGOs – for example, to produce and distribute the business start-up kits.	Since the Evaluation, Femili PNG has entered into a partnership with the Kokoda Track Foundation to deliver outreach in training in Oro Province. Other partnerships with NGOs and faith-based organisations are being explored for the purpose of establishing new safe accommodation for women and children, and to capitalise on joint funding opportunities.
A research and advocacy plan that includes developing linkages with networks in the Pacific region.	<p>Research and advocacy has long been a strategic priority of Femili PNG. Management acknowledges the important role of research and advocacy to the work of Femili PNG specifically and in combatting FSV more generally.</p> <p>Developing links with others (including across the Pacific) doing work in FSV is important, but also dependent on resources. One option Femili PNG could explore is to partner with other organisations across the Pacific. The first step to doing this could involve identifying these stakeholders and networks, examining their advocacy activities, and taking part in regional workshops.</p>
Supporting another safe house in Lae, as proposed by the Seventh Day Adventists.	This is underway. Through the assistance of Pacific Women, Oil Search Foundation, Digicel Foundation and private donors, Femili PNG provided building materials to the SDA Church. At the time of this response, construction is advanced but still requiring completion. Femili PNG has entered into an MOU with the SDA Church to support the safe house through providing training, case management, and basic necessities where possible.
The documentation of practices, as there is a risk that practice knowledge will be lost. Several practice ‘tools’ could form the basis of the documentation.	<p>Management agrees that there is a need to further document the practices and ‘tools’ used daily by caseworkers to guard against loss of knowledge.</p> <p>Femili PNG could do this through updating the Case Management Manual. This could occur through a workshop between the case management teams in Lae and Port Moresby, as Management believe that it is important for those implementing the procedures to develop and revise them.</p> <p>There are some challenges to this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to capacity and activities, it is not currently possible for case management teams to be taken offline for the purpose of this workshop. However, it may be possible to do this as a project in 2022 or beyond. • Some institutions/organisations on the referral pathway are not currently functional, especially in relation to child protection. This affects the efficacy of the tools and procedures documented. <p>Despite these challenges, Femili PNG shall further explore ways to document procedures and ensure the Case Management Manual is updated and useful.</p>

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<p>Explore how family counselling skills could be developed or provided externally.</p>	<p>Management agrees that family counselling would be a valuable service in many cases in PNG, especially if court-ordered.</p> <p>Femili PNG caseworkers currently provides counselling to survivors by advising them of their options and how they can be supported. There would be challenges to Femili PNG providing family counselling, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk and conflict of interest – for Femili PNG staff to conduct counselling with both the survivor and perpetrator may result in risk to staff and client, and conflict of interest for the caseworker if they then have to represent the survivor in further interventions against the perpetrator. • Capacity of Femili PNG – at the moment, Femili PNG’s staff resources are stretched between case management, training and outreach, and so it would not be currently possible to take on another function. • Family counselling would require a great deal of training for caseworkers or recruitment of specialist social workers where there is limited expertise in-country. <p>As a result of these challenges, Management believes that providing family counselling as part of Femili PNG’s services is not viable in the short-term.</p> <p>However, for some low-risk client cases, Femili PNG would welcome the ability to refer to an external experienced family or couple counselling service. Advocating for, and partnering with, such services would be of benefit to Femili PNG’s clients.</p>
<p>Investigate what systems could be put in place to consolidate the relationships between agencies, rather than solely relying on relationships between individuals. There are various family safety multi-agency frameworks that could act as a model based on common risk assessment tools and MOUs to share information.</p>	<p>Management agrees that the establishment of a family safety multi-agency framework and shared risk assessment tools would be ideal and is a strong aspiration for PNG.</p> <p>Achieving this requires that all institutions and organisations in the referral pathway are guided by professional ethics. It would need a strong government commitment to public accountability and a fully functioning system to assist survivors of FSV.</p> <p>While the scope of this is bigger than anything Femili PNG could achieve on its own, we will continue to advocate for better and increasingly coordinated services. This would assist in laying the groundwork for the government to consider a multi-agency approach.</p>
<p>Investigate why the private sector does not appear to be referring clients to Femili PNG.</p>	<p>Management conducted interviews with business HR managers as a result of this Evaluation recommendation and found that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is still a divide between what is considered private and public in the work sphere – many thought that FSV was just a “family matter”. • Some businesses have rejected Femili PNG’s offer to conduct FSV awareness sessions as it was thought this would take staff time away from work. <p>Femili PNG will actively continue to build its relationships with the private sector in Lae and foster engagement with issues of FSV. As part of this process, businesses will be encouraged to refer clients and provided with information how to do so.</p>

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<p>Continue to develop short community education courses, as part of developing a strategic plan for training, outreach, and awareness raising.</p>	<p>As part of the new Strategic Plan 2020-21 to 2024-25, Femili PNG reconfirmed its commitment to providing outreach and highlighted plans to expand its training reach. Femili PNG currently delivers training to community leaders, service providers and officials, and awareness-raising sessions to the general public.</p> <p>The Strategic Plan also highlighted Femili PNG’s need to devise a Business Development Strategy. The Business Development Strategy will consider current training and outreach programs and make recommendations for the future of these programs. One option that may be considered is new or revised community education courses. Work on the Business Development Strategy is expected to commence within the next 12-18 months.</p>
<p>Expand the work with and support for male advocacy and HRD networks, and Village Court officials, especially in rural settings.</p>	<p>Since the Evaluation was concluded, Femili PNG has been funded under the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative to deliver training to village court and other officials in Enga, Hela and Southern Highlands Province. Femili PNG will expand its outreach work in Eastern Highlands Province, working with community leaders to establish FSV community committees, also under the Spotlight Initiative.</p>
<p>Develop a research agenda that addresses questions that Femili PNG wishes to know, and can draw on the client data. Various stakeholders may be involved in this process.</p>	<p>Since Femili PNG’s client data was moved onto the data platform in 2020, it has become more accessible, usable and is now a rich research resource. In 2021-22, Femili PNG will aim to draw up a research agenda, and work closely with researchers to realise this research. We will prioritise using our data for research and advocacy purposes and making it available for partner researchers and organisations to use.</p>
<p>Agree on key indicators that should be monitored– such as staff retention rates, and levels of post intake abuse and violence.</p> <p>Consider acquiring additional M&E information such as on clients’ long term outcomes, and via annual surveys of stakeholders and staff.</p>	<p>Femili PNG has an agenda of continuous improvement in relation to its data collection and management. At the moment, resources are concentrated on improving the efficiency of entry of client data into the platform and the data quality. It is expected that once this has been achieved, Femili PNG will be in a position to consider what other M&E information can be gathered within the current system.</p> <p>In 2021-22, it is anticipated that Femili PNG will design the next phase for its Lae operations to submit to a new Australian Government Pacific gender funding mechanism. As part of this design process, a new M&E Framework will be devised which will consider implementing this recommendation.</p>