

# Transgender Sex Workers Response to HIV in Papua New Guinea

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### Introduction

Save the Children Sexual and Reproductive Health Program is a national STI and HIV prevention, care and treatment program. The program represent the voice, health and interest of Sex workers, MSM and Transgender people in Papua New Guinea at international and national levels so that their voices and health must be heard and their issues be considered.

Transgender woman in Papua New Guinea, most of them were rejected by their own families are now on the streets doing sex work to survive. Sex work is illegal and most often they are faced with stigma, discrimination and violence. Over the years sex workers trannies have been infected and cannot access the health facilities because of their sexuality and therefore end up dying. The strong religious and cultural beliefs makes it hard for the transgender sex workers to live a normal life.

### Methods

A group of transgender sex workers (100) have been interviewed one by one in a close door from March 2014 to December 2014 within the drop in center in the program. The interview questions asked were issues faced by them when doing sex work in Port Moresby city in Papua New Guinea and how Save the Children SRH program has contributed to their lives.



Transgender sex workers waiting inside the Drop in Center for the interview.

### References

March 2014 . December 2014 National Department of Health Report from Save the Children, Sexual and Reproductive Health Program

### Results

The results from the interview has identified that most of the Transgender Sex Workers in Papua New Guineas have some major issues that are affecting them because of their gender identity , gender expression and their sexual orientation.

There were 100 transgender sex workers interviewed during March 2014 to December 2014. The results below are given according to the common issues identified by percentage.

#### Common Issues:

- 40% were not receiving good sexual health services from the government clinics.
- 10% of transgender sex workers are been raped.
- 30% were not able to be served at the police stations when in need of help.
- 20% were been forced to have sex without a condom because there are seen as a sex objects.

### Conclusions

Through the advocacy and awareness done by Save the Children they have realized who they are, they have a fair ideas about their basic human rights like health and where to go to address their legal issues.

They are engaged in meetings, trainings and conferences international and national to know the concept of being a most at risk population and with the work of Save the Children they could have a voice to represent themselves and other transgender sex workers in Papua New Guinea.

Some transgender can get help that they need now because Save the Children is referring them to the right networking partners that are providing services that they need like VCT, HIV, GBV and STI check up and treatment which are free from stigma, discrimination and violence.