Gender Profile: Papua New Guinea

General

Total female population under 15 (2014) (CIA, 2015): 1,125,104

Total female population over 15 (2014) (CIA, 2015): 2,075,539

Health

Maternal mortality rate per 100,000 live births (2010) (CIA, 2015): 230
Infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births (2014) (CIA, 2015): 39.67

Under-five mortality rate for males per 1,000 live births (2012) (United Nations Gender Statistics, 2015): 67.8%
Under-five mortality rate for females per 1,000 live births (2012) (United Nations Gender Statistics, 2015): 58%

Births attended by a skilled health professional (2011) (WHO, 2014b): 42.7%

Prevalence of HIV among males aged 15–49: NA
Prevalence of HIV among females aged 15–49: NA


Education

Female youth literacy rate, ages 15–24 (2012) (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2015): 75.82%


Male adjusted net enrolment rate in primary education (2011) (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2015): 90.05%


Graduates from tertiary education who are female: NA

Students enrolled in engineering, construction and manufacturing tertiary education programs who are female: NA

Teachers in secondary education who are female (2012) (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2015): 42.2%
Teachers in tertiary education who are female (1999) (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2015): 19.8%

**Economic Activity**

Males over 15 who are active in the labour force (United Nations Statistical Commission, 2010): 73%
Females over 15 who are active in the labour force (United Nations Statistical Commission, 2010): 71%

Men who have an account in a formal financial institution: NA
Women who have an account in a formal financial institution: NA

**Decision-Making**

Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament (World Bank, 2014): 3%

**Human Rights**


Females married between 15 and 19: NA

Women subjected to physical/sexual violence by an intimate partner during their lifetime: NA

Women subjected to physical/sexual violence by an intimate partner or a non-partner during their lifetime (UN Women, 2012): 65.82%

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Gender Gaps

Health

• In a 2013 report, the Government of Papua New Guinea (PNG) indicated: “The low antenatal care coverage (60 per cent for one visit); the low percentage (only 39 per cent) of births delivered by trained personnel; a contraceptive prevalence rate of only 24.1 per cent in women aged 15–49 and 29.8 per cent in married women; and a rate of 13 per cent of teenage pregnancies, combined with the challenges of distance, isolation, lack of transport and an extreme shortage of skilled birth attendants, highlight the hazards of childbirth in PNG” (p. 13).

Education

• A 2011 UNICEF article about male advocacy for girls’ education in Papua New Guinea identified four reasons that girls do not complete school: lack of school fees, parents’ reluctance to invest in their daughters’ education, family violence, and pregnant girls not being permitted to re-enter school.

Economic

• A 2009 study by the International Finance Corporation, World Bank Group, aimed at understanding how to significantly improve women’s economic position in Papua New Guinea (PNG), found: “Women in PNG derive limited benefit from the formal economy, mainly operating small-scale informal businesses. Women are held back by a male dominated culture, limited ability to control business income, exclusion from decision making, and by violence directed against them. Women are further constrained by a legal framework that does not adequately protect their interests, particularly in relation to property rights and employment. Customary law, which frequently discriminates against women, is commonly applied” (Hedditch & Manuel, 2010, p. 10).

• The same study indicated that while women and men have about the same participation in the labour force (67% for women, 68% for men), “women dominate in subsistence employment, and men are more predominant than women in the urban sector” (p. 11).

• They concluded that “[o]verall, women’s businesses tend to be smaller and less profitable than those run by their male counterparts”: no male-owned formal-sector firms (in 2006) showed a profitability below K10,000 (K = PNG kina), compared with 60% of female-owned formal-sector firms in that profitability bracket; only 12% of female-owned firms in that sector had a profitability above K20,000 (versus 30% for male-owned); and in the informal sector, 77% of female-owned firms had a profitability of less than K10,000 (compared with 38% of male-owned). Yet women’s labour, “(much of it unpaid) is making a significant contribution to PNG’s economy” (p. 3).

Decision-Making

• UN Women (2014) states that in Papua New Guinea, “cultural and systemic obstacles prevent women from participating in political life and holding public office.”

Human Rights

• Papua New Guinea criminalized domestic violence in 2013, but according to Human Rights Watch (2015a), “few perpetrators of violence against women are brought to justice.”
• Human Rights Watch (2015b) further notes that “PNG is one of the most dangerous places in the world to be a woman, with an estimated 70 percent of women experiencing rape or assault in their lifetime.”

• According to UN Women (2014), “Papua New Guinea (PNG) ranks very low in all global indicators in advancing gender equality and elimination of violence against women.” They note that “extreme, often fatal, forms of gender-based violence . . . exist in PNG,” but official figures on female deaths from violence are not available.

• Amnesty International (n.d.) observes that “gang members in the country admit to committing rape and armed robbery, with two-thirds of their victims being women.”

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References


