



Success Story

Key Population Integrated Bio-Behavioral Survey Papua New Guinea Partnership

Building a Foundation for the Future

Papua New Guinea has the highest HIV prevalence in the Pacific, and reaching vulnerable communities remains an obstacle in the fight against the HIV epidemic. The lack of evidence related to key populations – female sex workers (FSW) and men who have sex with men (MSM)/transgender women (TG) – obscures effective rollout of prevention and treatment services.

Understanding this weakness catalyzed action for a ground-breaking new study, *Kauntim mi tu*, that lays the foundation for life-saving interventions in the Papua New Guinea HIV response. This integrated bio-behavioral survey (IBBS) for key populations aims to transform the provision of essential HIV prevention and treatment services and ensure programming reaches the populations that need it most.

“The IBBS study has, for the first time, changed our understanding of the HIV epidemic in Papua New Guinea. Besides pointing to where the epidemic is, it has also provided us data on where to intervene. Being the first

IBBS study covering three sites, the data serves as the foundation for future key population programming,”

commented Dr. Abel Yamba, Strategic Information Advisor, Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, US Embassy, Port Moresby.

The survey was conducted from June 2016 to December 2017 in Port Moresby, Lae, and Mt. Hagen – three high HIV burden cities. In addition to conducting the first size estimation of FSW and MSM/TG, it also collected bio-behavioral data about these key populations to inform HIV and sexually transmitted infection prevention, treatment, and care programming and policy development. Such research provides critical insights to reaching key populations.

A member of Friends Frangipani, an organization of sex workers in Papua New Guinea, highlighted the importance of the IBBS. “Many of us live very difficult lives. We don’t all have access to clean water, healthy food, or a safe space. We are struggling. Yet we are told to look after ourselves, to protect ourselves from HIV, and, if HIV-positive, to stay healthy. That is very hard for many of us. People need to understand our lives better, and *Kauntim mi tu* has done that.”

The study identifies the need for the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and partners to focus on promotion of safe sex practices and intensifying the *Test and Start* approach to provide access to treatment services for key populations.

Armed with this new evidence, public health programming can now ensure programming reaches the right populations, at the right time, with the right interventions.

Kauntim mi tu is a unique partnership among government, non-government, academic research, donors, and international agencies, with implementing partners Oil Search Foundation, CDC Papua New Guinea, Institute of Medical Research, the National AIDS Council Secretariat, and the National Department of Health.

Size Estimate / HIV Prevalence

Port Moresby

FSW: 16,053 / 14.9%
MSM/TG: 7,487 / 8.5%

Mt. Hagen

FSW: 2,600 / 19.6%

Lae

FSW: 6,100 / 11.9%
MSM/TG: 4,700 / 7.1%