

Gender Equity and League Bilong Laif (LBL)



- The LBL program is delivering messaging around gender equity and is assisting in promoting the inclusion of girls in the program (and sport).
- In the socio-cultural context of PNG, the LBL program improves women's access to sport, generates more respect for women in the community and can empower women via their involvement (as both participants and staff). **Four key processes** facilitate such outcomes:
 1. **Delivery of messages around gender equity** during classroom-based and rugby-based sessions;
 2. **Harnessing the influence of the NRL in PNG** to contest normative gendered assumptions and raise awareness of issues associated with achieving equal rights and access for women;
 3. **Promotion of girls' inclusion** in sport-based activities and in other contexts;
 4. **Employment of female development officers and casual staff**, which has knock-on impacts;
 - NRL team members operate as **role models** for younger girls.
 - Assist in **female capacity building** by providing opportunities to engage with different societal roles and learn new skills.
 - **Empower women** to follow a different path and challenge dominant socio-cultural expectations.



Gender equity

Gender equity key outcomes

Increased female opportunities

- Since the pilot phase there has been an **increase in the number of LBL female staff employed**, currently there are 6 female development officers and 9 female casual staff. At the start of program, during the pilot phase, there were 4 female staff in total.
- During the pilot phase girls consisted of 50% school's program participation. These numbers have grown as the program has developed. To date, 23,520 amount of girls have been part of the LBL program. **These numbers demonstrate the reach of the program and highlight the number of girls that have been exposed to the program's messages, and that have (potentially) been impacted.**

As the program has evolved and embedded itself in local communities, there are gender equity outcomes emerging on **social and behavioural levels**. These are outlined overleaf.

Female empowerment

- *Empowerment* refers to providing the girls and women with opportunities to make choices in their lives and produce different outcomes.
- Female development officers have **advanced their skill base** by delivering the program and participating in NRL training opportunities. Consequently, **new pathways are created** for the women to follow, challenging 'traditional' societal assumptions about female roles in wider society.

"Over the course of the program I believe that I've developed so much in terms of leadership and in terms of public speaking and media exposure" (Female development officer).

Social and behavioural impacts

- **Increased girls' confidence** – Evident changes include; an increased level of girls' rugby engagement; girls' increased desire to play with the boys; and higher comfort levels when participating in a 'mixed' environment.
- **Interactional patterns between boys and girls** – During and after the program there were more respectful interactions and an increased sense of gender equity between boys and the girls. This manifest in the boys showing more respect for girls, participating in activities together, and being more co-operative:

"What League for Life did was added extra fuel, some have been a little bit shy, holding back a little bit, but now everybody is moving forward and the boys and girls talk freely together" (Local school teacher).

- **Respect for female LBL staff** – NRL staff emphasised they are treated equally and shown the same respect as their male colleagues both in the classroom and on the field.

Media and public diplomacy outcomes

- NRL LBL team members are involved in public outreach activities to raise awareness of this pertinent social issue and touch a broader audience.
- Engagement activities promote inclusiveness, showcase the work of LBL and highlight progress.
- Examples include: 'Women in League' focus story on one of the female development officers; media invite to a National Women's Day Girls' Fun Day that was organised by the NRL; EMTV Women's World had a 7-minute feature on NRL PNG staff and their role as women in rugby league; NRL PNG staff participated in White Ribbon photo shoot for NRL media channels.

