

Pasin bilong lukautim pikinini gut Parenting for Child Development



A parenting program for Papua New Guinea

Pasin Bilong Lukautim Pikinini Gut is also known as *Parenting for Child Development* or *P4CD*. P4CD is a parenting program that was developed by the Menzies School of Health Research, UNICEF in partnership with the Catholic Church in the Archdioceses of Mt Hagen and Madang and the Diocese of Kundiawa. The program was developed through the support of the Australian Government in partnership with the Government of Papua New Guinea through Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development. Other Churches and provinces are expected to join the partnership in 2019.

Children do not grow well when exposed to violence, neglect and abuse in early childhood. Research shows that harsh parenting and maltreatment when children are young increase the risks of antisocial behaviour, drug and alcohol misuse and mental health problems as they grow up. Family violence often goes together with child maltreatment and is endemic in many societies, including Papua New Guinea. The effects of exposure to family violence are inter-generational.



Research shows that problems such as disobedience, aggression and antisocial behaviour in young children can lead to more serious problems in adolescence. These problems can become worse if parents try to deal with them through increasingly harsh parenting and physical discipline. Experiences of witnessing violence between parents and exposure to harsh discipline are linked with later antisocial behaviour in boys and with depressive symptoms for girls who may be more likely to become victims of future violence.

P4CD aims to reduce aggressive, hostile and verbally abusive interactions between parents and children. The program improves parents' knowledge and awareness of children's development needs and helps them to learn alternatives to harsh and coercive styles of discipline. P4CD aims to bring about improvements in parenting and both family and parent-child relationships in early to middle childhood, from age 3–9 years.

What is P4CD?

P4CD is for all caregivers with children aged from 3–9 years. It consists of six workshops covering a range of topics. Each workshop is a full day in length, they are held once a week over a seven-week period. Groups of up to 20 parents and caregivers, both women and men attend the program. P4CD is delivered by trained teams of community volunteers and is supported by the church, local government, schools, counsellors and others in each community.

The program was developed in PNG through workshops and training held in four provinces of Madang, Western Highlands, Jiwaka and Chimbu in 2016. Resources are in English and *tok pisin*. Groups are run in *tok pisin* or *tok ples*.

Over 100 people have been trained in the roles of team leader, group facilitator and trainer to lead the workshops in each community. The program is led by a Coordinator in each Diocese or province. More provinces will join the program through their churches from 2019.



Training will be provided by the partners so that the program can be made available to more communities and regions.

What are the outcomes of the program?

P4CD was evaluated in a pilot program in 10 communities in 2017. In 2018, it was extended to a total of 28 communities in the four provinces.

Before the beginning of each program, there are meetings to explain the program to parents and community leaders and parents are invited to join. The research is explained to parents and information is gathered by the evaluation team. Attendance at the workshops is recorded by facilitators. Team leaders and facilitators take notes about what happens in the workshops and gather feedback from parents about what they liked and what they didn't like about the program. At a meeting before the program starts, all parents and caregivers complete questionnaires on parenting, on family wellbeing, and on the types of discipline they use with their children. The parents and caregivers then meet again at the end of the program and complete the same questionnaires again. The researchers then compare results before and after the program to see whether family relationships and parenting practices have improved.



Results of the evaluation in 2017 and 2018

The pilot evaluation showed that with their training, the volunteer teams could successfully deliver the program to groups of parents and that parents would attend each week. Over 200 parents participated in the pilot program in 2017. In 2018, over 500 parents participated in the program in 28 communities across all Archdiocese communities. Comparison of data from before and after the program showed many positive changes. There were large reductions in verbal abuse and in use of all kinds of corporal punishment with their children. There were also reported reductions in physical violence between couples. These improvements were reported by both men and women. There were also improvements in parents' and caregivers' sense that they were caring for their children well, and that they were coping better with the demands of being parents. Perhaps most importantly, parents were very positive about the program. Program leaders receive many requests from parents and communities to join P4CD in the future.

Figure 1 Changes in family violence and harsh parenting from pre- to post-program

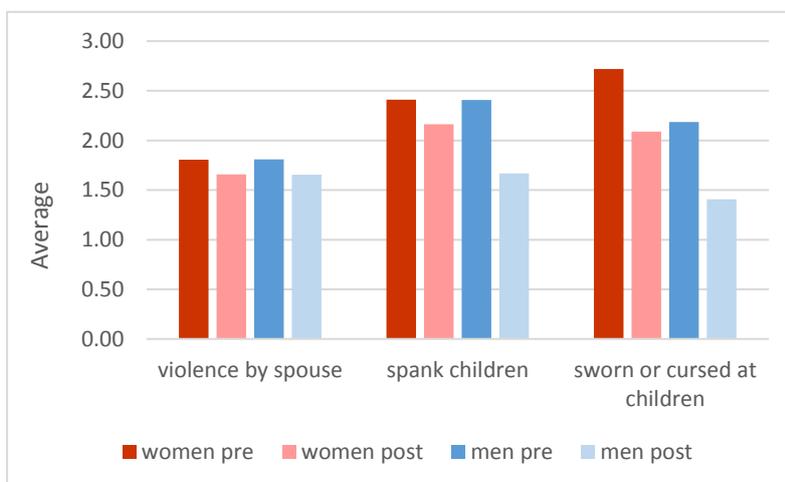


Figure 1 shows that both women and men reported reductions in violence by their partner, reductions in spanking of their children and in swearing at or cursing their children after attending the program.

The vertical axis indicates the average of responses from 1-3 (no, sometimes, always) for violence and from 1-4 (never, one time, sometimes, always) for spanking and swearing.

