



# MiBank embraces gender equity



PARTICIPANTS of the Gender Equity and Social Inclusion awareness workshop. Inset: MiBank Human Resources Wendy Piskaut with the GESI booklet that has been developed for this training.

THE Board of MiBank back in 2017, endorsed a Gender Equity and Social Inclusion Policy, known as GESI.

Since then MiBank has utilised its own internal resources to create awareness throughout its branch network in Papua New Guinea, which comprises 175 staff.

The most recent awareness workshop was held in Goroka on the weekend of 3-4 August led by Manager Human Resources Wendy Piskaut and her team from the Bank's Head Office.

There were 22 women and men in attendance from Mount Hagen, Kundiawa, and Goroka.

At these workshops the MiBank facilitators discuss awareness of gender sensitising.

This included the need to develop gender responsive products and services.

MiBank Director Dame Carol Kidu has previously challenged the MiBank staff to think about gender & social inclusion in the context of the freedoms provided under Papua New Guinea Constitution.

This was reiterated by Wendy Piskaut and the team in Goroka.

Chief Executive Officer of MiBank Tony Westaway said: "We at MiBank already know that lack of access to financial services for women compared to men is particularly acute.

"We also know that discrimination based on sex, age, disability, health status, religion, sexual orientation, or social status is a significant contributor to exclusion.

"We believe that gender equity and social inclusion values and principles need to be pursued in their own right.

"But also believe they are critical to sustained economic growth and faster poverty reduction".

MiBank is happy focus efforts on addressing gender issues.

This includes ensuring a safe and secure workplace for women and their communities.

## All men need to be the catalyst for change

BY ROCKY ISSOU

A typical Papua New Guinean women's role is usually associated with childbearing, running the house hold and taking a back seat to the role of the husband, yet she is more than that.

As she brings children into this world she must make sure she secures a piece of the most important assets, traditionally whether it's land to bring in food or working as a professional modern day woman, she adds value to her husband and family a compliment and helper.

In 1966, music legend James Brown recorded it's a Man's World in a New York City studio.

The song quickly climbed Billboard's music charts and became a classic in Brown's repertoire.

This is a man's world, strains Brown in the raw, soulful song.

Over five decades later, the world is singing a different tune, for the first time in our male dominated history, women are pulling ahead, and this shift in social order is profoundly impacting the way we live.

The role of the Papua New Guinean woman has significantly changed in recent times due to this shift in social order yet attitudes and mentality remain the same.

Gendered violence against women, limited access to education, restricted health services and the cultural practice of witch hunts are all issues which arise for PNG women.

While the Government has introduced several pieces of legislation to combat these issues, and more attention is placed on women by corporate, Non Government Organisation's, and

advocates of change calling for change of attitudes it seems PNG is stuck in a social enclave and a continual change needs to occur.

It's very easy to blame someone from a poorly educated background or those living in settlements as treating women unfairly or abusively however this is a one sided prejudiced attack; many of the educated live in the settlements thus change must start with the individual and in the home.

All men need to be the catalyst for change, a husband should be treating his wife with tender loving care at all times, from the way he speaks to her and treats her even when angry.

Children, especially male, need to be taught how women should be treated, and the traditional past and ways that degrade women must be left in the past.

Families can than build the foundation into communities with interaction outside of their comfort zones thereby building a modern multicultural society and a sense of communal existence talking about the issue is important as a country with many languages and cultural groups sticking with the wantoks or cultural groups has become the norm.

Educators also have a major role in changing the mindset of the younger generation, a child's mind is a sponge and absorbs everything that is thought from a young age with this change comes greater respect, greater honor for the most hardworking person in a family circle.

James Brown sang about a man who can be powerful but behind that man is a strong woman, search far as you can and you will understand that in the end this is a woman's world.

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