

# BOUGAINVILLE AUDIENCE STUDY

NIUPELA WOKABAUT BILONG BOGENVIL

PHASE 2 - JUNE 2019



## PUBLICATION INFORMATION

### **Bougainville Audience Study - Niupela Wokabaut Bilong Bogenvil - Phase 2 (2019)**

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# FOREWORD

Good decision-making requires good information and consultation. This report was commissioned to hear the voice of over 1,000 Bougainvilleans living both in and outside Bougainville. From Siwai to Nissan, from Rabaul to Brisbane, this is a report card from those who have received (or not) information on the Bougainville Peace Agreement (BPA), the Autonomous Bougainville Government (ABG) and referendum preparations. It is a guide for those in government, leadership, the media and our development partners who are designing the awareness activities of the future as we prepare people for referendum and beyond.

It has been three years since the conduct of the first Bougainville Audience Study. That report established a baseline understanding of people's awareness of the Peace Agreement and gained critical insights into how people access their news and information. It highlighted very low levels of awareness, in part related to poor access to media and government.

In response to that report, the ABG and many others have undertaken numerous initiatives to better reach out and inform people. Such activities include ongoing work to restore radio through short wave, improved urban FM coverage and the distribution of thousands of SW/FM radios; continuous production of 14 editions of the Bougainville Bulletin, distributed throughout the region and online; over 200 community broadcasts from the Radio Ples Lain team and 50 community video and Q&A shows; Hundreds of Referendum Dialogues have been held across Bougainville; numerous roadshows and community events; and constant updates on the ABG website and Facebook page. The Bougainville House of Representatives' continue to conduct Referendum Ready activities.

The Bougainville Audience Study provides a report card on the effectiveness of those activities, providing tips and feedback on how to improve. It focuses not on the number of activities conducted, but the level of awareness achieved.

Many of the results are pleasing. There has been a dramatic increase in people's understanding of the three pillars of BPA – weapons disposal, autonomy and referendum – as well as their connection to each other. This has been most prominent among women, who in the past had far lower knowledge levels than men. People see information as a sign of a government serving them. They see better information delivery, new roads, schools, health centres and agricultural support activities as a sign of the growing maturity of the ABG. There is strong support for well publicised reforms such as the Community Government system and anti-corruption measures.



**Adriana Schmidt**

Director

ABG Directorate of Media and Communications

The results also show more is needed. Clearly, we must do better to engage young people who are feeling left out and uninformed. We must ensure information reaches the most remote parts of Bougainville and not just the urban centres. We must provide clear information in multiple ways and give people the chance to ask questions of our leaders. We must support leaders to provide a clear vision of a future Bougainville and how we will get there. We must continue to listen.

Information is power, but it also assurance. As we prepare for referendum and beyond, we must assure people by giving them balanced, credible information upon which they can make decisions, important decisions that will affect future generations to come. This study also charts for the first time the views of Bougainvilleans living outside Bougainville. They are clearly engaged and share a desire for a clearer picture of Bougainville, its government and its future.

While Bougainville continues to be a challenging place to provide information and awareness, I acknowledge the efforts of government colleagues and our many development partners who continue to support our efforts. For this study, I wish to acknowledge the ongoing assistance of the four governments of Bougainville, Papua New Guinea, Australia and New Zealand.

In closing, I wish to thank those who gave their honest feedback during the survey. Without your comments, we cannot improve. But now that you have spoken, it is up to those of us planning and delivering awareness to continue to work together and respond.





## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Ethical approval for the study was received from the ethics committee at Queensland University of Technology.

This research would not have been possible without the commitment of the field researchers who participated in the design of the study, undertook the data collection and provided invaluable information for the analysis.

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We would like to thank the research respondents who agreed to participate in the study and shared their stories to provide information.

The information and opinions presented in this report represent those of the authors and research participants; and are not necessarily representative of the views of the ABG.

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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ABC	Australian Broadcasting Corporation
ABG	Autonomous Bougainville Government
ARoB	Autonomous Region of Bougainville
BiBs	Bougainvilleans living in Bougainville
BPA	Bougainville Peace Agreement
BRA	Bougainville Revolutionary Army
BRC	Bougainville Referendum Commission
CoE	Council of Elders
NBC	National Broadcasting Corporation
NRB	Non-resident Bougainvillean
PaCSIA	Peace and Conflict Studies Institute Australia
PGK	Papua New Guinea Kina (Currency)
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PNGDF	Papua New Guinea Defence Force
RPL	Radio Ples Lain
SW	Short Wave
UN	United Nations
VHF	Very High Frequency

## TOK PISIN WORDS AND EXPRESSIONS

Gutpela Sindaun	Community well-being
Kastom	Traditional practice
Tok Ples	Local language
Walkabaut	Journey
Wantok	Extended family

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Bougainville Audience Study Phase 2 provides an update on the knowledge levels of Bougainvilleans prior to the upcoming referendum, as well as people's attitudes and aspirations towards Bougainville's political development and how this relates to their information needs.

The study used a mixed methods approach. The results presented are based on 583 surveys and over 250 semi-structured interviews conducted in Bougainville across all Community Government areas (except Atolls). It also captured the views of Bougainvilleans living outside of Bougainville through 10 focus groups (with over 60 participants) and an online survey undertaken by over 200 Bougainvilleans.

The following key findings offer community feedback on three years of media and public awareness activities of the Autonomous Bougainville Government (ABG) and other organisations, and provide insight into what they feel the current information and communication gaps are for future awareness activities.

## BOUGAINVILLEANS RESIDING IN BOUGAINVILLE

### Mass Media and Mobile Access

While media access has not changed significantly over the past few years, there has been an increased focus in providing people with information and materials about the referendum. With regard to media access, the research found that:

- Mobile phone use remains high across all regions of Bougainville, although access to signal is hindered by the disabling of several mobile towers due to local conflict or lack of maintenance.
- Print media – newspapers, factsheets and posters – have been received and used more frequently than captured in the previous study, in particular the Bougainville Bulletin has been received by almost half of the respondents who access newspapers (46.7%). Print is favoured for its permanency – compared to word of mouth, for instance, that may become distorted.
- Radio access and use has not increased despite the restoration of shortwave signal (for NBC Bougainville). While some listen to SW radio regularly there is still more awareness needed about SW radio among audiences and providing people further access to appropriate devices.
- More than half of those accessing TV access it via Digicel Playbox.

Similar to the 2015 study, there are significant differences across regions. Media access in the North region is strongest across all media while people in the South generally have less access to traditional media. The great exception continues to be mobile, with equitable access across all regions, with 79.8% of South respondents stating that they have access to a mobile phone.

### Knowledge levels around the BPA and the referendum

Knowledge levels about the BPA and the referendum have increased from the previous study. More than 55% of respondents considered themselves to have a good understanding of the referendum and weapons disposal.

- Younger respondents and female respondents were more likely to report feeling ill-informed about the relevant issues. What emerged strongly was women's role in sharing information among themselves and within their families – creating a key opportunity for future awareness efforts.
- Respondents wanted to know more about possible future scenarios, the pros and cons of the referendum options, and the meaning of 'greater autonomy'.
- Respondents sometimes used the terms referendum and independence interchangeably.
- Some awareness activities about the referendum included strong independence sentiments, but respondents preferred balanced information about their choices.
- Less than a quarter of respondents (23.4%) felt that they understood the process that would take place after the referendum.
- Most respondents (92%) felt they could vote freely.
- 59.2% of respondents were confident that the referendum would have a peaceful outcome.

Respondents perceived 'referendum readiness' in various ways, depending on whether they were focused on reconciliations, weapons disposal, or dealing with law and order problems in the communities. A central feature of respondents' feeling of readiness was feeling confident that they knew enough to make an informed choice.



## Preferred channels of information

When asked about how people have received information about the upcoming referendum, most mention community awareness and word of mouth as a way to receive information. Printed materials have also been widely circulated.

- The Bougainville Bulletin has provided information about the referendum to 39.4% of all respondents (n=540) and ABG fact sheets were seen by 21.1% (n=540). Both sources are deemed to provide good information reliable references to spread the information. Posters have been seen in public places and are referenced by over a quarter of the respondents (27.4%).
- ABG Radio Ples Lain and mobile video shows are well received, as they often provide opportunities for local engagement and answering of questions specific to the area.
- Respondents comment on appreciating awareness initiatives taken by ABG members. Almost half of all respondents comment that they have participated in awareness conducted by an ABG member (42.1%). In addition to ABG members, who might in some cases be distant to the community, ward members are considered as the key people to provide information.
- The Referendum Dialogues were perceived positively because of the participatory engagement which offered opportunities to ask questions. Respondents however commented on the challenge that meetings at one location are not always attended by everyone in the community.
- Respondents would like trusted members in the community and the Community Government Ward members to be equipped with up-to-date information, on a regular basis. Those in official capacities at the local level are most trusted by the community to provide information. This includes the pastor or priest, a health worker, teacher, police officer, the local chief or the community government member.
- Technology was appreciated, although drawbacks are recognised for services that require power and that involve costs (such as mobile phones and internet)

Respondents appreciated all information and they would like to see more of it. They wanted regular updates and the opportunity to ask questions. They asked for information to be made accessible in easy to understand terms, and asked questions about future scenarios.

There was a general request for information to be inclusive, to reach all groups and all levels of the population. Some groups, like youth and people in remote areas, were most vocal in their request for information. Most respondents saw the referendum as a group effort requiring everyone's input because the outcome would affect everyone. Many comments reflected a **feeling of solidarity** and a concern that Bougainvilleans be given the opportunity to operate in unity, as a coordinated group. However, unequal access to information was seen as hampering this goal and risking the potential for a successful referendum outcome.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Radio remains one of the preferred media channels and there is much need to continue upscaling radio coverage within Bougainville and to increase awareness around accessing SW radio. Audiences noted a preference for interactive talkback programming which offers the opportunities for questions. Radio together with face-to-face communication and community awareness remain the preferred ways of receiving information.

- A key recommendation, supported by many respondents is **the need to engage local and existing networks more strongly**. This includes in particular **the ward members and the church groups**. Not only are they trusted by the community, they are also in position to respond in local language, are closer to people and can **create a safe space for asking questions**, an important feature in ensuring that key information is understood by people.
- Overall, it is recommended to **use trusted media, such as print, radio and audio-visual media**, to communicate further in-depth information to people while considering presenting the **information in accessible ways and formats (simplified language, visual and mixed media concepts, question and answer dialogues)**.
- As the 2015 study found, the **engagement of key audiences** who might be more vulnerable and less included in the process continues to be important. Progress has been made with regards to the engagement of **women and youth, and this needs to continue**. But strongly highlighted in this study was the need to also engage **remote communities** in the ongoing dialogue and for everyone to be aware of these activities so that everyone has confidence in **everyone else's ability to participate in the political process**.



- Rather than seeing these vulnerable or less included groups as key audiences or simply ‘passive recipients’, it is important to consider the structural barriers and opportunities that young people, women and those in remote locations might experience, and **consider media and communication strategies that enhances their participation, visibility and inclusion.**
- There is a need for the population to understand not just the basic concepts of the political process or the Bougainville Peace Agreement but **possible post referendum scenarios and what independence might look like and how it would work.**

### Expectations towards ABG

When asked to talk about ABG’s performance since 2005, respondents display a critical attitude closely mixed with pride and loyalty towards “their” own government. Survey respondents, when asked about their level of satisfaction with the ABG’s performance since 2005, were split, with almost half of the respondents being satisfied or very satisfied (48.4%).

**POSTIVE:** Respondents commented positively on the step from the structure of Council of Elders to Community Governments, the recent steps towards eradicating corruption, and awareness efforts to spread information about the referendum. These were appreciated by respondents as the evidence of ABG’s commitment to a “free and fair” referendum. The ABG’s work in the past years was acknowledged by those respondents to whom it is visible, usually in their area: schools, roads, aid posts, coffee projects and the airports.

**NEGATIVE:** Criticism of ABG’s performance was widespread, but focused on two related issues: the lack of services, and the misuse of funds and corruption. Respondents said the ABG had not delivered services as expected or promised, and the infrastructure was lacking, mainly in roads, education and health. ABG was also criticised for the lack of progress in establishing a strong economy in Bougainville.

The referendum was generally **perceived as an opportunity for change**, welcomed by a large majority of respondents at various levels. While some expressed uncertainties about the future, many respondents associated various potential developments with the prospect of gaining independence. Associations with key development areas included infrastructure, economic development and education.

Respondents across Bougainville appreciated the opportunity to provide feedback to the ABG. While some individuals were more vocal than others, the strong sense of solidarity and loyalty to Bougainville and the ABG was evident across all respondents.

- **Key questions raised to the ABG during the research should be addressed in future engagements**, and channels to be kept open for people to continue to ask questions and receive responses. Key information about the government’s plan to work together is important to provide to guide people’s expectations.

Further, it was evident that the trauma of the past played a significant role among Bougainvilleans both in Bougainville and outside of Bougainville. This was not only the case for those who experienced the crisis but young people who have been impacted by the trauma their parents experienced and the stories they have been exposed to.

- Media and communication strategies must consider the way that the experiences of the crisis continue to impact on people. This might include programs that include personal **storytelling or the creative arts to generate a dialogue about the past** and bring out people’s contributions.

### NON-RESIDENT BOUGAINVILLEANS (NRBs)

This study, unlike the first, sought the views of Bougainvilleans living outside the region through an online survey and eight focus group discussions held in mainland Papua New Guinea and two in Brisbane, Australia. Participants were Bougainvilleans born in Bougainville, or born outside Bougainville with at least one Bougainvillean parent. Some respondents identified as Bougainvilleans through their marriage. The reasons for living away from Bougainville included leaving because of the crisis, marriage, work opportunity or study opportunity. Family ties included being in contact through visits, telephone, internet and social media.

Feelings in relation to Bougainville identity often included trauma, anxiety, fear and regret linked to personal and family experience. History still had an impact on the respondents’ situations and attitudes, and some expressed feelings of being uprooted.

- Over two thirds of online respondents (68.4%) stated that they supported people living in Bougainville. Most of these (60.1% of all online respondents) provide financial support.
- Two fifths (40%) of online respondents stated that they were formally part of a Bougainville group. These include Bougainville community groups or associations in all focus group locations, as well as student groups at all PNG universities. Many of these groups hold regular, semi-formal meetings where information is shared and discussed.

- All respondents were easily able to list multiple sources of information on Bougainville affairs. Printed newspapers were more readily mentioned by PNG participants than overseas ones, while internet was used by all overseas, but only some (or irregularly), within PNG.
- Unlike within Bougainville, social media occupies a more prominent position in people's information landscape. For the majority of online respondents, accessing Facebook and social media was an everyday activity, and was their preferred way of receiving information, as well as print media, online news media and the ABG website. Facebook is appreciated for the opportunity to respond and ask questions. Newspapers and ABG media are appreciated for providing reliable information.
- While the online and focus group samples may have an information bias, in general respondents demonstrated high levels of engagement and awareness regarding the referendum but they wanted to know clearly how to participate in the process.

Similar to Bougainvilleans residing in Bougainville, those outside of Bougainville ask for more in-depth information, such as understanding greater autonomy as well as the pros and cons of the choices during the referendum.

The suggestions made by NRBs with regards to how to provide information were consistent to those residing in Bougainville: to provide more in-depth information, to target specific key audiences such as youth and to make media more accessible for people where possible.

### Expectations towards the ABG

About half of the online respondents (49.1%) stated that they were not or were not at all satisfied with the ABG. They identify similar issues as Bougainvilleans living in Bougainville (BiBs), but were more critical of ABG's performance than BiBs.

The online survey captured numerous specific questions about the voting process, including the registration and voting processes for NRBs. The large majority of online respondents (95.8%) said that they planned to vote in the referendum.

NRBs demonstrate a strong loyalty to Bougainville and they maintain their connections to their home region. Some of their responses resonated with the responses from people residing in Bougainville while others, such as questions around their status, were uniquely distinct for this group of respondents. NRBs appeared somewhat more sceptical than BiBs with regards to Bougainville's economic readiness and with regards to the processes involved. At the same time, most expressed confidence and hope in Bougainville's future.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Social media and traditional mass media** (Radio, TV, Newspaper) might be used initially to reach out to Bougainvilleans residing outside of Bougainville, but **locally organised groups are crucial** in reaching those who do not access media and in providing spaces for discussion and dialogue. In this sense, **Bougainvilleans living outside of Bougainville** should not just be seen as individuals, but as **part of wider communities outside of Bougainville**.
- Many Bougainvilleans residing outside of Bougainville provide support to people in Bougainville and they demonstrate a strong loyalty to their region. Considerations must be taken how to integrate those residing outside of Bougainville in meaningful ways where possible.

With the date of the referendum confirmed for 12 October 2019, there will be an increased engagement around the implementation of media and communication strategies and growing motivation for people to obtain information. The results from the research provide a current picture of information levels and information needs of Bougainvilleans who will be voting in the referendum. The research provides key information for the pre-referendum and post-referendum periods.

The ultimate goal supported by many of the respondents is that everyone who votes in the referendum can make an informed decision. A key component of this process is that no one is left behind and key audiences are reached and engaged. Maintaining dialogue and continuing to provide updates as regular as possible is an important part of the ABG's mandate to build a peaceful Bougainville.

From the results of this study, we have developed a communication and community checklist as recommendations to consider when undertaking awareness-raising and information-sharing sessions with community groups in Bougainville in the lead up to the referendum.



## COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CHECKLIST

- ▶ Work through local networks including local leaders those who are trusted (pastors, chiefs, teachers, ward members).
- ▶ Ensure event timing is appropriate is adequately promoted for maximum audiences such as working through local leaders, church announcements, posters, flyers, radio tok saves.
- ▶ Be aware of groups that might be excluded and discuss ways to include people within the community (women, youth, people living with disabilities).
- ▶ Provide opportunities for questions and dialogue when undertaking face-to-face awareness activities, radio programming and using social media.
- ▶ Where possible provide translations and information in local language and always use terms and explanations that are easy to comprehend.
- ▶ Use mixed media and visual support information for community engagement.
- ▶ Bring approved print materials to be left within the community for further discussion.
- ▶ Consider innovative, visual engaging media formats such as video and drama, and engagement through mobile phones.
- ▶ Contribute balanced information on the pros and cons of the possible choices during referendum where it can be provided depending on the experience and knowledge of facilitators. Ensure that information is contextualised.
- ▶ Be aware of the information circle and information sharing between those living in and out of Bougainville. Online information is often consumed by NRBs, while those residing in Bougainville have access to print materials, radio and face to face dialogues. Consider harnessing these links where relevant for the dissemination of information.
- ▶ Ensure that materials and messages have been approved by the Directorate of Media and Communications (DMC) to ensure consistent messaging and engagement. Provide contact details and phone number of the DMC. ([www.abg.gov.pg](http://www.abg.gov.pg), [www.facebook.com/AutonomousBougainvilleGovernment](https://www.facebook.com/AutonomousBougainvilleGovernment) and 71505009)



# INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Media and communication play a crucial role in Bougainville's peace process and preparations for the referendum about Bougainville's political future. The baseline research of the Bougainville Audience Study (Phase 1), which was conducted in 2015 and published in 2017, demonstrated a number of limitations and opportunities with regards to media and communication for people living in Bougainville. The study provided information about Bougainvilleans' access to and use of information sources and channels, as well as how much they knew about, and how they perceived, the Bougainville Peace Agreement and the upcoming referendum.<sup>1</sup>

This Phase 2 of the study uses the data of the Bougainville Audience Study conducted in 2015 as comparative data, and aims to assess the effectiveness of relevant information activities undertaken and materials circulated since 2016. One significant difference between Phase 1 and Phase 2 is that this second study included responses from two groups of Bougainvilleans: those living in Bougainville (BiBs) and those living outside Bougainville (NRBs). During Phase 2, the research team asked Bougainvilleans how they thought their knowledge level about the peace agreement and referendum had changed, and what their aspirations were for the referendum process and beyond as it relates to information and communications.

This Phase 2 research presents an important component in understanding the knowledge levels of the Bougainville population prior to the referendum, as well as people's attitudes and expectations about the various components of government and Bougainville's political development. The results presented in this report offer insights to the Autonomous Bougainville Government (ABG) and other organisations involved in public awareness and designing media and communication strategies informed by what Bougainvilleans would like to know and what they feel the current gaps around information and communication are.

## Key points from the 2015 baseline study

Phase 1 conducted in 2015 was a comprehensive study on the access and use of media in the Autonomous Region of Bougainville (AROB). During that phase, the research team collected 114 surveys, conducted 203 interviews and undertook field observations across all Councils of Elders (CoEs), which are now community government areas. Regarding access to media and information, the Phase 1 study identified that:

- Word of mouth and mobile phones were the main ways people in Bougainville communicate with each other.
- There were strong differences in information access across the different regions, with North having most access to media, and the South region having the least access to media.
- Radio was accessed by about half of the respondents across Bougainville and was identified as the preferred medium to receive information.
- People commented on the need for face-to-face communication as well as to have printed materials featuring key information on the Bougainville Peace Agreement made available.

Regarding levels of BPA awareness the baseline study found that:

- More than three out of every four respondents said they were not clear or did not know enough about the Bougainville Peace Agreement and about the referendum processes.
- There were differences in knowledge levels between men and women, and different age groups. Young people were less informed, and knowledge levels were generally better in the higher age groups. Women were generally less informed than men.

## Some of the key recommendations of the Phase 1 baseline study in 2015 were to:

- Improve strategies to strengthen the link between the local community and the Bougainville government
- Involve key groups such as women and youth, and design specific programs for them
- Take a regional approach to disseminating information using the media channels available
- Use the strength of each medium
- Ensure that participatory messages are developed, messages are piloted and all messaging is consistent
- Work with community advocates and community leaders to disseminate regular information

<sup>1</sup> Thomas, V., Levy, C., Vetunawa, C., & Rawstorne, P. (2017). Bougainville Audience Study: Niupela Wokabaut Bilong Bogenvil. Goroka: Centre for Social and Creative Media, University of Goroka found at [http://www.abg.gov.pg/uploads/documents/Bougainville\\_Audience\\_Study\\_-\\_Full\\_Report-LR.pdf](http://www.abg.gov.pg/uploads/documents/Bougainville_Audience_Study_-_Full_Report-LR.pdf).





ABG's Radio Ples Lain broadcasting in North Bougainville with former Vice President Patrick Nisira

### **ABG's strategies for communication and information since 2015**

The ABG Directorate of Media and Communication, in partnership with a variety of government departments, Parliament, organisations and committees, has led a process of active engagement to provide information about the Bougainville Peace Agreement to the population.

#### ***Print media content developed and distributed***

- Production of the Bougainville Bulletin: A government 20-page newspaper, which at the time of reporting, had distributed 13 editions of at least 30,000 copies each around AROB and digitally.
- Regular media releases: These average at least two a week, and are published online and in Papua New Guinea's (PNG) national media agencies and international media.
- Factsheets and posters: These have focused on key messages about the Bougainville Peace Agreement and the referendum.

#### ***Established community-based media outlets and supported mainstream media***

- Radio Ples Lain: This mobile community radio station has conducted more than 250 community-based broadcasts around Bougainville since 2015 and has provided broadcast support and coverage of parliamentary sittings, often in partnership with NBC Bougainville.
- Ples Lain Piksa: The mobile video projector has been used to conduct more than 50 community-based screenings and Q&A sessions since 2018.
- Video screen and community information centres have been established in the three regional centres, with Buka operational for over 12 months.

#### ***Other ABG activities to support communication access and delivery***

- The ABG website and Facebook page were established.
- Mobile phone messaging and SMS blasts were used.
- More than 1000 shortwave radios were distributed across all regions in Bougainville since 2016.

- A scoping study was carried out to improve the infrastructure and coverage of FM and shortwave radio in Bougainville, and development partners were engaged for funding support.
- Awareness initiatives undertaken by members of the Bougainville Parliament were supported with information materials.
- Government departments were supported to develop and implement media and communications strategies for health, agriculture, referendum and community government information activities.
- Key messages were developed in response to frequently asked questions about governance, the peace agreement, the referendum and beyond.

#### ***Related ABG community-engagement activities***

- Discussions and engagement with communities were facilitated.
- Community events were staged, facilitated and participated in.
- Training and information sessions were conducted with various partners, including media and civil society groups.
- Coordination meetings were convened with communications stakeholders, including government and development partners.
- Department of Peace Agreement Implementation Referendum Dialogues undertaken by PACSIA across nearly all constituencies
- Parliamentary 'referendum-ready' awareness activities undertaken by ABG Members in their constituencies

A key component of the Directorate of Media and Communication's work has been to ensure that messaging is coordinated effectively and that it is consistent. To do this, the Directorate works closely with the various commissions set up to facilitate the processes under the Bougainville Peace Agreement, including the Bougainville Referendum Commission (BRC), established as the independent agency to conduct the Bougainville referendum (<http://bougainville-referendum.org>). The date for the referendum has been set by the National and Bougainville governments for the 12 October 2019.

# METHODOLOGY

This study was designed to inform the information dissemination and engagement activities related to the Bougainville Peace Agreement and the preparation of the referendum process. However, it is important to highlight that many of the perceptions and questions that Bougainvilleans in and outside of Bougainville expressed as part of this research also play an important role in the post-referendum processes.

The Bougainville Audience Research Study Phase 2 builds on Phase 1 research conducted in 2015. Phase 2 used a similar mixed-method research approach with data collection tools including surveys, interviews and field observations. While the scope of the quantitative data collection within Bougainville was smaller, Phase 2 also included the views of Bougainvilleans living outside of Bougainville, which were not included in Phase 1.

## Research in Bougainville

Overall, 583 survey respondents took part in the research within Bougainville. The quantitative data collection was complemented by qualitative data. Qualitative in-depth interviews were conducted with about half of the survey respondents, resulting in over 250 semi-structured interviews of various lengths. The interviews captured how people had received information, and their feedback on the materials and information they had received. Both through the surveys and interviews, we captured details about how informed respondents were and their perceptions of the ABG.

The fieldwork was designed to include all Community Government areas, with the exception of the Atolls. The research team visited Nissan Island as the only island Community Government. An initial mapping of communication and awareness activities across Bougainville provided data about locations where awareness programs had taken place. The selection of research locations was informed by a preliminary audit of where key awareness activities had been conducted since January 2016.<sup>2</sup> Selection included about half of the locations with confirmed awareness activities, and the other half with no confirmed awareness activities. Researchers visited at least two different locations within each of the Community Government areas<sup>3</sup> and collected on average 15 surveys per Community Government.<sup>4</sup>



The majority of the field research for the Phase 2 study took place during 8-22 December 2018, following on from a three-day workshop and training in Buka during 5-7 December 2018. Additional research was conducted between January and March 2019. Our team involved 11 Bougainvillean field researchers, one coordinator, a technical support person and three senior researchers. The field research team was mostly the same as in 2015, and experiences from Phase 1 fed into Phase 2 of the research.

Field researchers' understanding of the local areas and their local approaches in recruiting participants were invaluable. Field researchers managed their own support budgets and recruited assistants when necessary, in particular when they needed to travel to remote areas. The lack of a functioning mobile network in many areas presented challenges for communicating with field researchers on a regular basis and for providing support in a timely manner. At times, language presented a barrier where people preferred to speak in local language. The approach often used was to make contact with the local ward member, discuss the study with him or her, and ask for assistance to identify potential participants.

2 The key initiatives that provided comprehensive documentation were the awareness and dissemination conducted by the ABG Directorate of Media and Communication, the PaCSIA Referendum Dialogues and awareness programs by ABG members supported by the UN.

3 Prior to the Community Government Act 2016, community governments were named Councils of Elders. The Community Government Act 2016 provides "for a system of community government to replace the Councils of Elders as a level of formal government below the level of the Autonomous Bougainville Government". The 2015 study was undertaken according to the structure of the Councils of Elders, whereas this study uses the structure of the community governments.

4 With regards to sampling, researchers aimed for surveys collected to have equal gender representation and to have 10 out of 16 surveys in each community government from respondents under 35 years of age.





Field Researchers of the Bougainville Audience Study - Phase 2

### Research outside of Bougainville

Unlike the Phase 1 study, Phase 2 included surveys and focus groups with NRBs. Due to time and budget constraints, the research outside of Bougainville included selected focus groups and an online survey. This survey was distributed via email and Facebook during 1-12 March 2019. More than 200 people participated in the online survey, with all questions answered by 166 people.

Overall, ten focus group discussions were facilitated in towns in Papua New Guinea (Port Moresby, Goroka, Lae and Rabaul), as well as two focus groups in Brisbane, Australia. More than 60 people participated in the focus groups. There was an almost equal number of men and women. The participants' backgrounds were varied and the focus groups included students in many of the locations.

The participants of the focus groups were recruited through existing Bougainville associations or groups in each of the towns and were based on personal contact. Because the participants in each group knew each other, the level of knowledge for members within each group appears quite homogenous. Therefore, the analysis highlighted views and opinions representative of specific segments of the Bougainville population: for instance, students in Rabaul, Lae and Brisbane, or long-term expatriates in Brisbane. This report therefore does not present views common to all NRBs, rather the distinct views of various subgroups.

In the same way, the online survey represents the views of a sample with access to internet and sufficient literacy to complete the questionnaire. Together, they give a complementary impression of the varied and complex views of the Bougainville population as a whole, whether living in or outside the AROB.

### Analysis

The analysis triangulated the Phase 2 quantitative and qualitative data to provide a comprehensive picture of the respondents' perceptions and their access to information. In the key areas of media access and knowledge levels around the BPA, quantitative data was compared with results from Phase 1 data from 2015. Similar sampling strategies were used in both phases which has enabled the comparison of results from both samples. A comparison of key demographics also confirmed that the samples at both time points represent the same population. The overall number of respondents in 2018 was half of those than in 2015 taking into account available resources and timeframes.

Because this is an audience study, we have maintained the voices of the respondents by integrating a large number of direct quotes in the report. Most of the Phase 2 interviews were conducted in Tok Pisin. The analysis was done in Tok Pisin but, for the purpose of the report, the quotes were translated into English.



# PART A

# PEOPLE LIVING IN BOUGAINVILLE

## Respondent profile

Survey respondents' genders were balanced (men 51.3%, women 48.7%). More than half (54.7%) were under the age of 35 (see Fig 1). About two thirds (63.9%) were married and about a third (32.8%) had access to electricity at home. Education level varied: about a quarter (22.3%) had completed Grade 6 schooling; slightly more than half (52.8%) had completed Grade 7, 8, 9 or 10; and a quarter (24.4%) had gone beyond Grade 10. Less than 2% had a university degree.

The genders of those who participated in qualitative interviews in addition to the survey were also balanced with the average age being slightly higher. Older respondents were more likely to agree to an in-depth interview than younger respondents, as they were more confident in discussing referendum related issues in more depth.

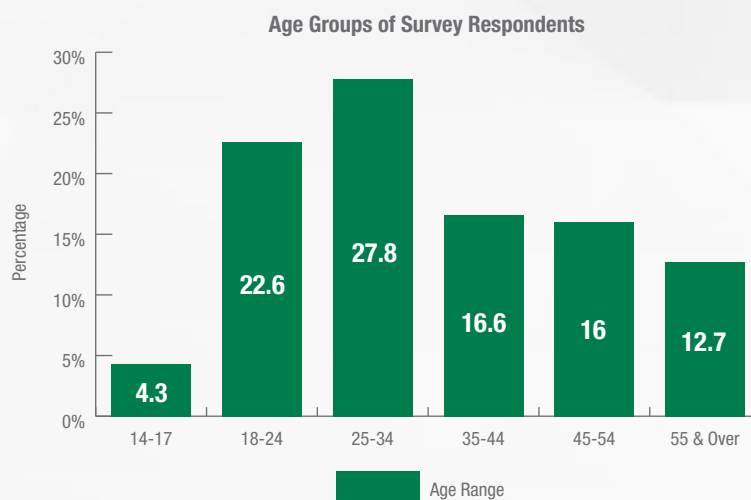


Fig 1. Age groups of survey respondents (n=583)

Survey respondents predominantly lived in rural areas (80.3%). The remainder lived in either remote (14.6%) or urban (4.9%) areas. About three quarters (77.8%) said they spoke and understood English, but almost all said they spoke Tok Pisin and at least one Tok Ples (local language).

Throughout the report we refer to respondents for those who participated in the research. We mention survey respondents and interview respondents separately only when we present results that are only derived from one of these methods.





# MEDIA OWNERSHIP AND ACCESS – A SNAPSHOT

The Phase 1 baseline study had a strong focus on understanding the media landscape and understanding access, ownership and use of various media. While this Phase 2 study was less focused on access to media, and more on people's understandings and the information received, basic comparative data was captured to understand any significant changes in the media and communication landscape over the last three years.

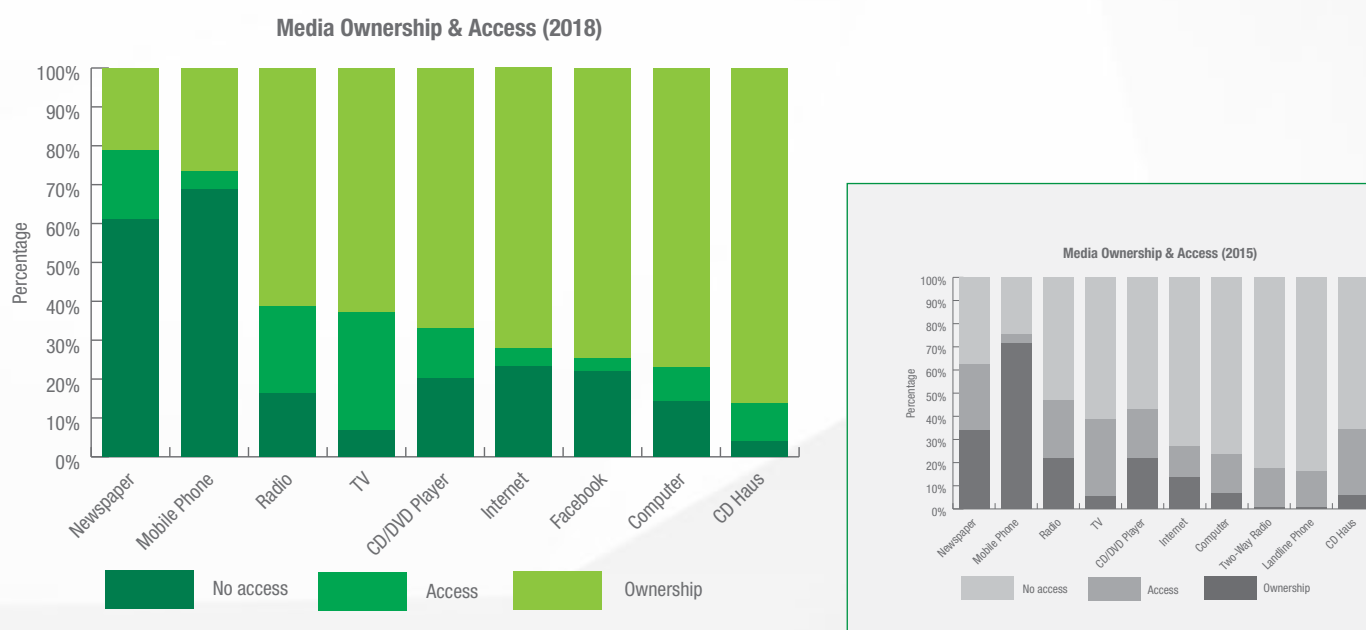


Fig 2. Media Ownership and Access



Newspaper access increased in Phase 2 because the **Bougainville Bulletin's** distribution increased and more respondents reported having accessed the **Post Courier** and **The National** newspapers. This finding does not necessarily mean that respondents had more frequent access to newspapers because rural and remote areas often depend on people bringing newspapers back from town and access is irregular. Almost half (46.7%) of those accessing newspapers (n=497) said they had access to the **Bougainville Bulletin**, compared with 15.8% in 2015.



The mobile phone remains the dominant communication medium. Two thirds of respondents (66.4%, n=434) said there was mobile coverage in their area. The main challenge with mobile phones is coverage and reception. Of those who did not have coverage (n=200), about two fifths (41.5%) said this was due to landowner issues, 27% said the tower was not working, and 14% said there was no tower.

Mobile towers not being functional is a key concern in Bougainville. Research showed that people sometimes deliberately damage towers due to conflicts that emerge because of benefit payments or because mobile communication is perceived as playing a key role in an existing conflict. Once towers are not functioning, it appears that there is no established process to rectify the situation. Respondents seemed to accept that the mobile network was unlikely to be fixed. They said they often made alternative arrangements to connect with people, either through word of mouth or by using their mobile strategically in places where there was reception.

Just over half of those accessing a mobile phone (51.3%, n=431) accessed a 3G phone. In contrast, in 2015, most people (81%) accessed 2G phones. Two thirds of respondents with internet access (66.2% n=231) used it via mobile phone.



Radio access remains low with 39.1% of respondents stating that they had access to radio. Over half of the respondents (52.6%) said that their main challenges with regards to radio were getting reception and coverage in their area. About a third (32.9%) of those accessing radio accessed SW radio (n=295), and 19% of those respondents said they owned an SW radio. SW Radio owners said they received radios through awareness campaigns by the United Nations (UN) and the ABG media unit.

This research indicates a need for further awareness about SW radio and for increased access to appropriate devices. With regards to programming, respondents said the best time to listen to information via radio was in the evenings after 6pm.



The Phase 2 data shows a strong increase in people accessing television via the Digicel Playbox; more than half of those accessing television (56.1%, n=289) accessed Digicel TV. During data collection in 2015, the Digicel Play Box system had just been introduced and we reported on 9% of respondents having access to TV via Digicel Play Box in 2015.

As in the 2015 study, significant differences across regions are apparent (see Fig 3). Media access in the north is strongest across all media. Respondents living in the south region generally had less media access than those in the northern and central regions. Mobile phone access was quite high in the south (79.8%), which is similar to the 2015 data (73.1%).

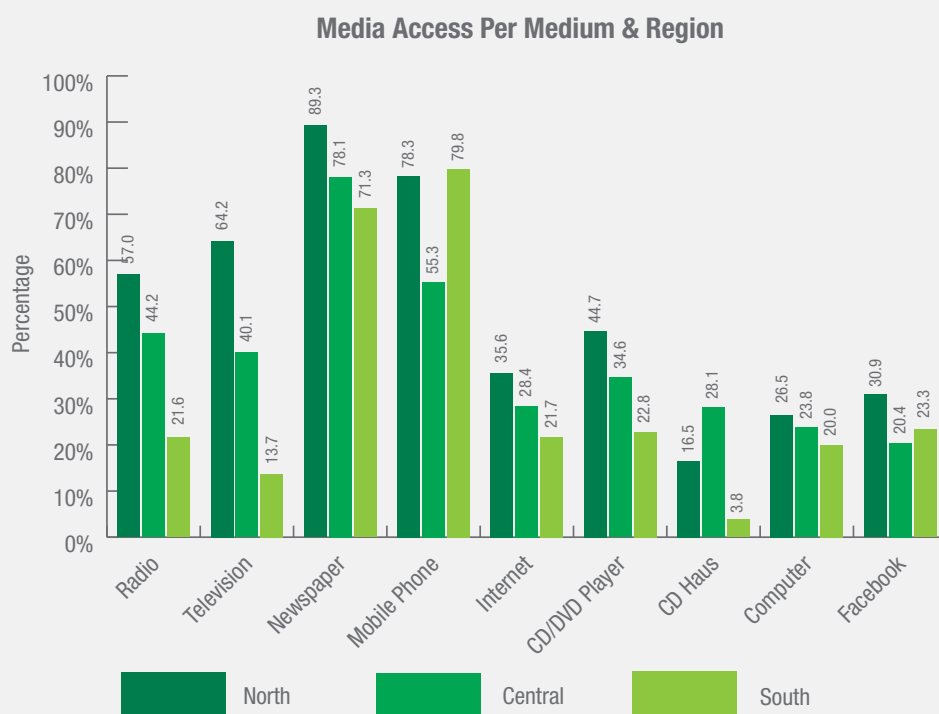


Fig 3. Media access per medium and region

No significant gender differences were found in media access. However, respondents under 35 had slightly more access than older respondents, particularly to the internet and Facebook.

Perceived trust in information

In this study, we expanded the various roles that people might play within the community as information sources. Respondents most trusted information from those in official capacities at the local level, including pastors, priests, health workers, teachers, police officers, the local chief or the community government member (see Fig 4).

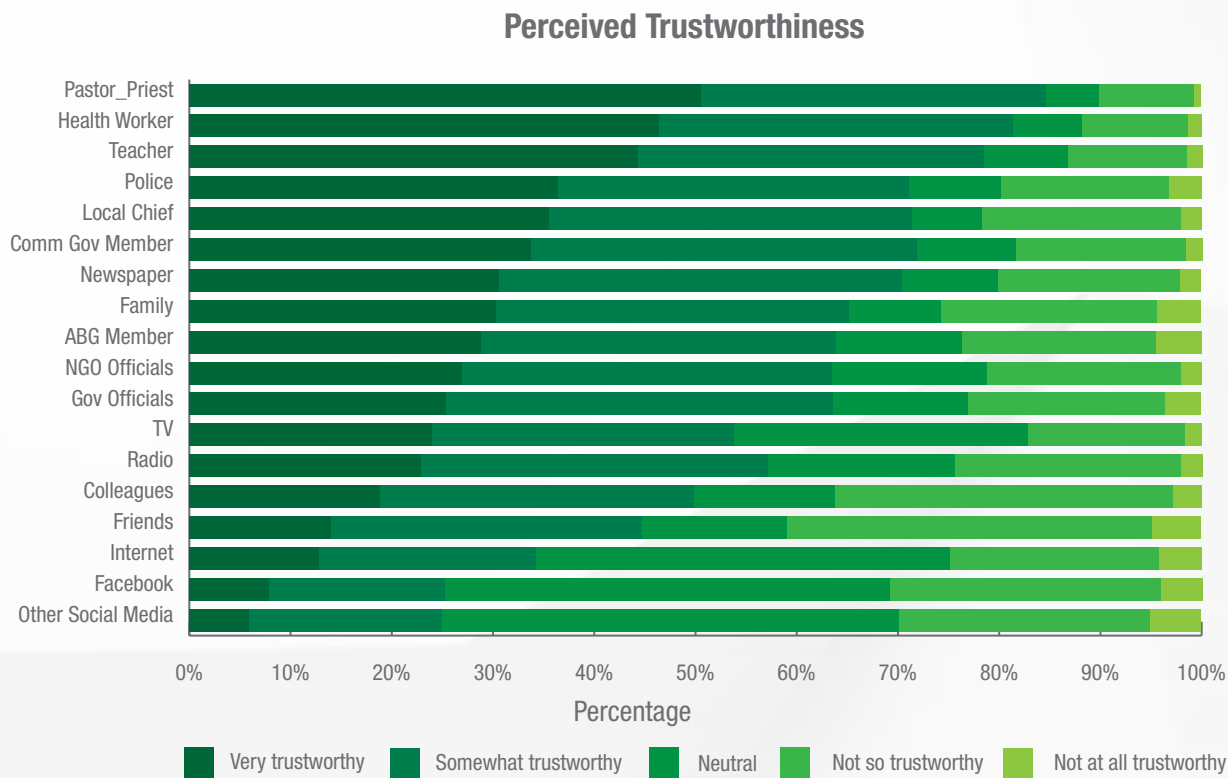


Fig 4. Perceived trustworthiness in information sources

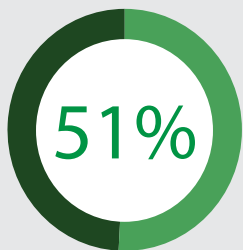


# UNDERSTANDINGS AND KNOWLEDGE LEVELS ABOUT THE BPA AND THE REFERENDUM

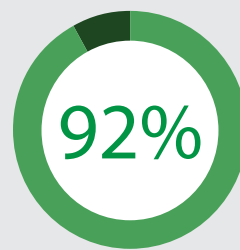
This study investigated people's knowledge about the Bougainville Peace Agreement (BPA) and the referendum. The discussion places this data in the context of respondents' access and exposure to information via various communication channels.

## KEY POINTS

- ▶ Knowledge levels about the BPA and the referendum have increased from the previous study. More than 55% of respondents considered themselves to have a good understanding of the referendum and weapons disposal.
- ▶ Younger respondents and female respondents were more likely to report feeling ill-informed about the relevant issues.
- ▶ Respondents wanted to know more about possible referendum scenarios, the pros and cons of the referendum options, and the meaning of 'greater autonomy'.
- ▶ Respondents sometimes used the terms referendum and independence interchangeably.
- ▶ Some awareness activities about the referendum included strong independence sentiments, but respondents preferred balanced information about their choices.
- ▶ Less than a quarter of respondents (23.4%) felt that they understood the process that would take place after the referendum.
- ▶ Most respondents (92%) felt they could vote freely.
- ▶ 59.2% of respondents were confident that the referendum would have a peaceful outcome.
- ▶ Respondents perceived 'referendum readiness' in various ways, depending on whether they were focused on reconciliations, weapons disposal, or dealing with law and order problems in the communities. A central feature of respondents' feeling of readiness was feeling confident that they knew enough to make an informed choice.



**said that they understood the difference between independence and autonomy.** Older respondents and men were more likely than younger respondents and women to say they had a good understanding of these concepts.



**felt that they could vote freely.**

Over half of all respondents were confident that the referendum would have a peaceful outcome.



Respondents' knowledge about the BPA and the referendum has increased from the previous study. In 2018, more than 55% of respondents said they had a good understanding of the referendum and weapons disposal (see Fig. 5); however, in 2015, this was less than 35% for weapons disposal and less than 30% for the referendum.

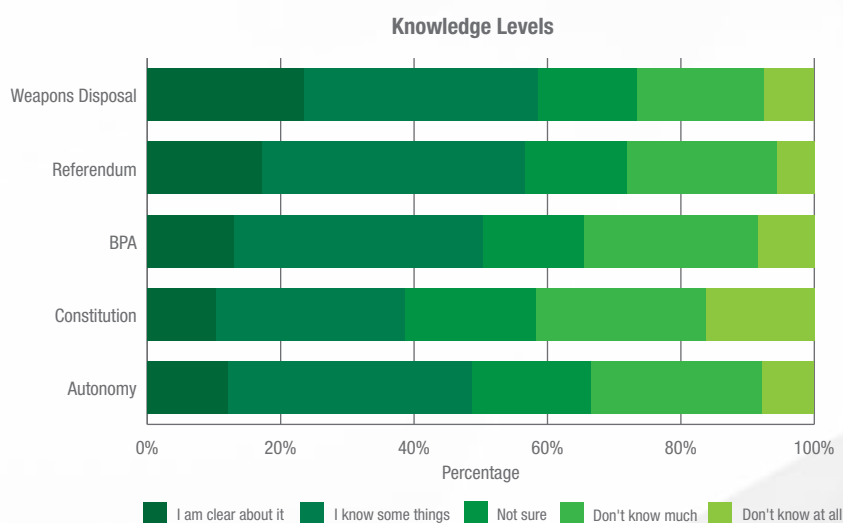


Fig 5. Knowledge levels about the BPA and related topics

More than half of respondents (51.4%) said they understood the difference between independence and autonomy (see Fig. 6). Older respondents and men were more likely than younger respondents and women to say they had a good understanding of these concepts. The finding about younger respondents and women being less informed was similar in 2015, however, there has been an overall increase in knowledge levels since 2015 (see Fig 2). This increase in knowledge levels compared to 2015 was documented to be most significant for older women (55 and over).

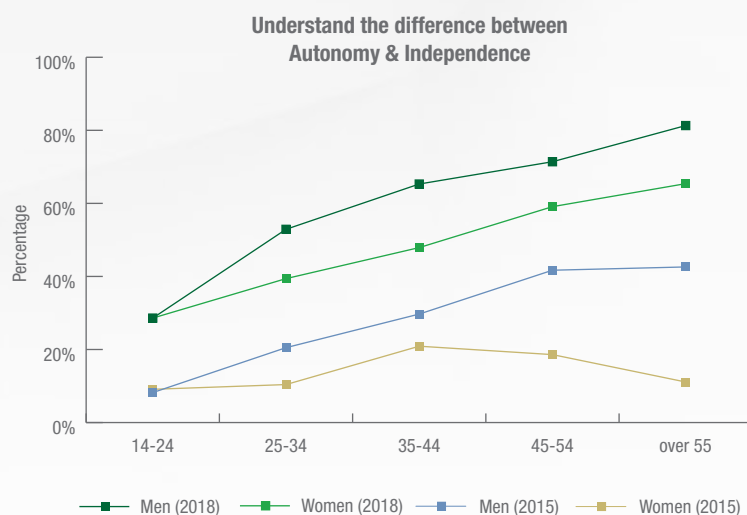


Fig 6. Understanding the difference between autonomy and independence

The table below shows examples of the different responses to express the difference between autonomy and independence.

Autonomy	Independence
<i>Narapela lukautim yumi.</i> Someone else looks after us.	<i>Yumi yet lukautim yumi yet.</i> We look after ourselves.
<i>Nau yumi gat autonomy.</i> Now we have autonomy.	<i>Em sapos yumi bruk lus long PNG.</i> It happens if we separate from PNG.
<i>Yumi traim long wokabaut yumi yet.</i> We are trying to stand on our own.	<i>Yumi sanap yumi yet.</i> We stand on our own.
<i>Yumi nogat olgeta pawa.</i> We don't have full power.	<i>Bai yumi gat gavman na olgeta pawa bilong ronim kantri bilong yumi.</i> We will have a government and full power to operate as a country.
Autonomy is the present stage where we are now.	Independence is what we are heading for (or what we are voting for)

Examples of responses to distinguish autonomy and independence

Autonomy was often simply associated with the present and independence with the future.

*If we vote 'yes' for the referendum it's good, because we Bougainvilleans would like to become independent. I don't really want us to remain part of PNG. What I am saying is that we Bougainvilleans must break away from PNG. (Female 45-54, Central rural) <sup>1</sup>*

The term 'greater autonomy' was more challenging and many respondents asked for clarification about what it encompassed. They wanted to understand the difference between the current autonomy arrangements and greater autonomy.

Many respondents appeared to confuse 'referendum' with 'independence', using the words interchangeably. This suggests that these respondents thought the referendum would definitely lead to independence.

*To my understanding referendum means that we want self-governance for Bougainville. (Female, young, North rural) <sup>2</sup>*

Often, respondents compared the referendum to an election, using words such as 'win' and 'lose' meaning to win or lose independence.

*They say that the referendum is like an election. It's an election vote for the future of Bougainville. (Female, 35-44, South rural) <sup>3</sup>*

Some respondents knew that initial advertised response method for the referendum (writing 'yes' or 'no' on the voting paper) had been changed: voters would have to write an 'X' next to a response printed on the paper. This change led to more uncertainty and respondents said they needed clarification about this to make an informed decision.

The notion of a fair referendum is also widely quoted, though questioned in areas where respondents reported having been told or shown – for instance, on a poster affixed on a public wall – how to vote.

*When they do awareness in the community they tell people to come together and that they must vote in the referendum. That they have to mark 'yes' during the referendum to break away from PNG so we can be on our own. (Female, young, North rural) <sup>4</sup>*

*He did not show us the sample but he was only saying that it would not be yes and no but it would be Greater Autonomy or Independence. (...) telling us to vote for independence, Yes, independence. It was alright but in order for the people to vote, maybe we could have more ideas on, what it would be like...if we vote for independence or what it would be like if we voted for Greater Autonomy. (Female 45-54, South, rural)*

Overall, respondents' comments reflected strong pro-independence sentiments and they reported that those involved with raising awareness about the referendum often actively encouraged them to make that choice. However, respondents said they would prefer to be fully informed about the choices and the consequences of their vote.

Despite a strong push towards independence, including in some of the voter-awareness information, **most survey respondents (92%) said they felt they could vote freely.**

Balanced awareness-raising activities should clearly outline the referendum options, what these would mean in practical terms and what the post-referendum process will be. For example, after the vote, the PNG and ABG governments will negotiate the final outcome and the PNG Parliament will need to ratify it. This research identified gaps in respondents' understanding of this. Less than a quarter (23.4%) felt they understood the process after the referendum. **When asked who, from their understanding, would make the final decision about Bougainville's political future, less than a fifth (17.6%) said the PNG National Parliament.**

There is a clear need for information campaigns and awareness to include information about the decision-making processes post referendum vote and the possible scenarios involved after the voting.



Marianne Kugunia,  
women's leader Paria, Buin

# CONFIDENCE IN A PEACEFUL OUTCOME AND UNDERSTANDING OF 'REFERENDUM-READINESS'

About half of the survey respondents (50.7%) recognised that some groups might pose a threat to a peaceful referendum outcome: the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA) and Mekamui were often mentioned, but the list also included those who might be ill-informed or those who might oppose independence. However, 58.9% of respondents were confident or very confident in a peaceful outcome (see Fig. 7).

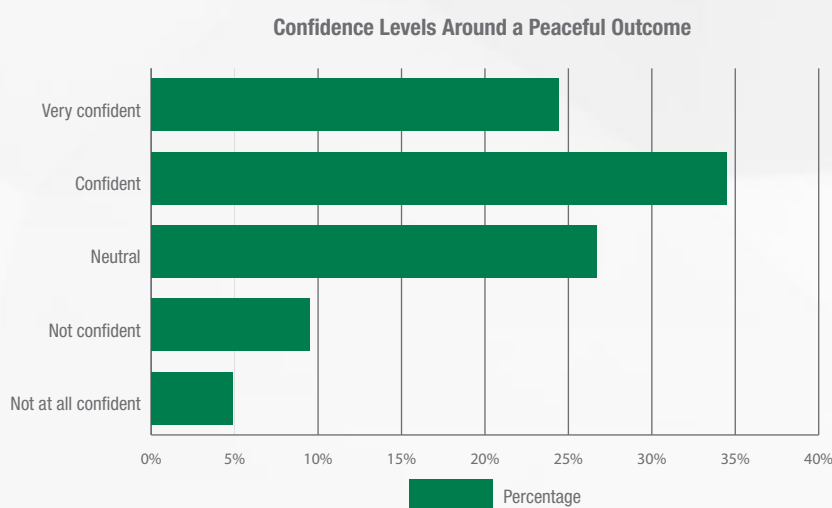


Fig 7. Confidence levels around a peaceful outcome

Many public and political efforts have been made to prepare Bougainville for the referendum. The term 'referendum-ready' has often been used, including in a motion passed in the PNG Parliament in 2016 to declare each constituency as referendum-ready by 2018.

Answers to the question of what referendum-ready means were varied. The research reached respondents in areas that had been declared referendum-ready, and who were pleased with the result. Although some expressed doubts about how ready they were:

*Our constituency member declared already that we are referendum-ready. However, from what I am thinking, we are not well prepared for the referendum, because the service delivery is not actually flowing down the way it should be, and even the law and order system as well as the rule of law, and the respect towards the people like the elders and the ward members is poor. (Male, 25-34, Central, urban)<sup>5</sup>*

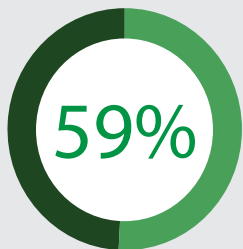
To some respondents, the concept of referendum-ready was not clear. They vaguely envisaged referendum-ready as gutpela sindaun (community peace and well-being), but mostly wondered what the criteria were for judging readiness.

The qualitative analysis showed that respondents who felt less informed also felt less confident that their community or Bougainville as a whole was indeed referendum-ready. Women and youths were more inclined to question their referendum-readiness, while men and older interviewees often demonstrated more confidence in being referendum-ready.

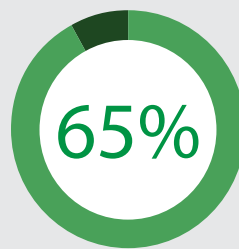
For some respondents, referendum-readiness meant independence-readiness. To them, the referendum was a 'natural' next step, and indeed, the last step in a process that started taking them towards independence with the signing of the BPA in 2001. Other respondents, often the better-informed ones, viewed the referendum as one part in a larger peace process (involving weapons disposal and reconciliation) and as having distinct steps that must be completed correctly to be free and fair.

*We must reconcile with the others and find ourselves without wrong within our own wards, and dispose of anything that would impact the lives of the people negatively, especially the lives of the people in the remote areas. That is 'referendum-readiness'. (Female, 55 and over, Central, urban)<sup>6</sup>*





said that they were either confident or very confident in a peaceful outcome of the referendum.



stated that a reconciliation had taken place in their area.

Almost two thirds of survey respondents (65.3%) stated that a reconciliation had taken place in their area. But some respondents expressed doubts about whether weapons disposal had been fully completed. Rumours about – and fears of – armed factions were kept alive while parts of the process were not considered complete.

Doubts were also expressed about the real worth of government-driven ‘mass reconciliation’, which some respondents deemed not always credible nor in line with traditional reconciliation customs.

*This ‘mass reconciliation’ that they were talking about, is not the right way to do reconciliations. The process or the reconciliation programs [...] did not really pay attention to people’s feelings. That’s why people kept asking if they were going to be compensated. (Female, 55 and over, North, rural) <sup>7</sup>*

With regards to good governance and a successful peace process, law and order disturbances and their link to widespread substance abuse were also mentioned. The expression “clean up” came up repeatedly, particularly among older respondents who saw community law and order problems as “un-Bougainvillean”. To them, becoming referendum-ready represented a way to repair the damage caused by the Bougainville crisis and return to the good situation they had before.

*To prepare for the referendum, we must clean up our communities or villages, families and communities. Any disputes and frictions we have, we must reconcile, live peacefully and look towards the referendum period. (Female, 25-34, South, rural) <sup>8</sup>*

Referendum-ready to some respondents also meant having dealt with the trauma of the past, and to be free of any fear.

A central feature of ‘readiness’ for respondents was feeling confident that they had enough ‘good’ information to make an informed choice. Many respondents thought that referendum-readiness should be realised not only at the community, family and individual levels, but also in the relationship between the ABG and those it governs - for example, by the ABG manifesting its intention to get closer to the people and listen to them. Several respondents pointed out that referendum-readiness cannot be built “on a void”.

The concept of ‘inclusivity’ was crucial for respondents. Young people and those in remote communities, in particular, felt like they were not yet fully included in the process and needed help to become referendum-ready. Young respondents characterised themselves, and were characterised by other respondents, as having low literacy levels, being idle, lacking hope, and looking for solace in destructive homebrew and marijuana addictions. Remote communities suffer from isolation, and lack of access to health facilities, transport infrastructure, and educational and employment opportunities.

Some respondents said Bougainville was not yet referendum-ready and had further work to do before reaching that goal.

*From my observation in my own community, I would say that we are not yet referendum ready because there are still some issues that we need to sort out before we can say that we are referendum ready. (Male, 18-24, South, rural) <sup>9</sup>*

There was definite urgency among respondents: this upcoming referendum may well be Bougainville’s “last chance to be free of PNG”. Part of the population may not be informed properly yet, but in final, it is the whole Bougainville that will suffer the consequences.

*This is our only chance, because what they [politicians] amended inside the constitution says that if we fail this chance, then there won’t be another one. (Male, 45-54, South, rural) <sup>10</sup>*

Overall there is general awareness of the upcoming referendum among respondents as it has been much discussed at the community level. Uncertainties about the referendum process and possible outcome scenarios remained for some respondents. However, the research shows that the respondents’ knowledge levels have increased as they have had increased access to information since 2015.

# ASSESSMENT OF COMMUNICATION AND AWARENESS ACTIVITIES AND PREFERENCES

We investigated how people in Bougainville received information about the BPA and referendum, and what their preferred information channels and activities were. When asked about how they had received information about the referendum, most respondents mentioned community awareness programs and word of mouth. Printed materials had also been widely circulated (see Fig 4).

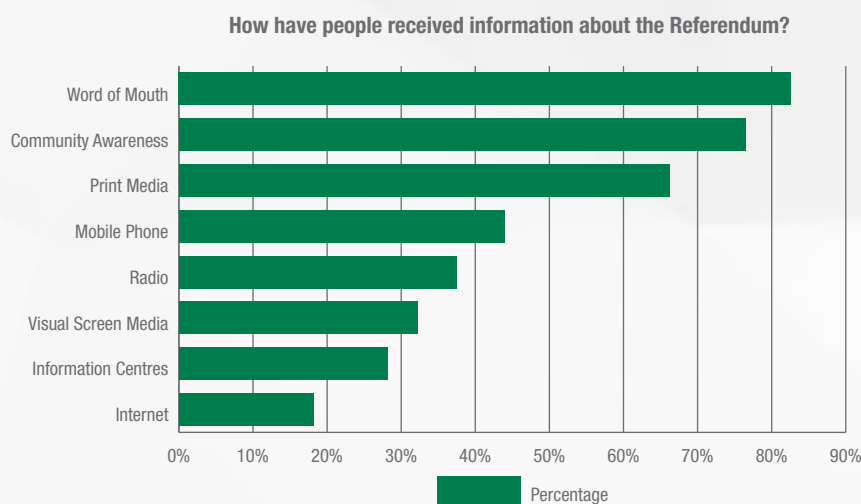


Fig 8. How people have received information about the referendum

Across the sample, respondents displayed a real “hunger for information” and asked “to be fed” information. Most respondents recognised the referendum’s importance, and said that **all** of the information they had received, regardless of the source and tone of the content, contributed to their feeling of empowerment. Interviewees relied on multiple sources, according to what was available to them.

*Because of the Post Courier or the Bougainville Bulletin, I have information about how the Bougainville Peace Agreement was formed, how people are getting ready to vote in the referendum. I received some information about the referendum and independence and also about arms disposal. Sometimes I get text messages with information on the mobile phone. (Male, 35-44, South rural) <sup>11</sup>*

*Those who go to Buka or Arawa or to the main town, they come back and tell us, and we hear it. (Female, 55 and over, South rural) <sup>12</sup>*

There was a general request for information to be inclusive, to reach all groups and all levels of the population. Some groups, like youth and people in remote areas, were most vocal in their request for information. Most respondents

saw the referendum as a group effort requiring everyone’s input because the outcome would affect everyone. Many comments reflected a **feeling of solidarity** and a concern that Bougainvilleans be given the opportunity to operate in unity, as a coordinated group. However, unequal access to information was seen as hampering this goal and risking the potential for a successful referendum outcome.

*We might create disunity amongst our own people and this is not good. Because we need to unite, we must have unity to move to the next phase. (Male, 25-34, Central rural) <sup>13</sup>*

*I know how to read and can understand the information. But those that do not know how to read, I really want a team to come and conduct more awareness with those people in the community through their community ward member. (Male, 55 and over, North rural) <sup>14</sup>*

Information was considered key to a successful outcome and people saw a risk if people were not well informed. This was particularly mentioned with regards to the younger generation:

*A lot of young men here, a lot are youths, who are the future generations, the majority of them did not go to school because of the crisis, and if they do not have information on the processes for us to go for referendum, this can cause problems. (Female, 45-54, Central remote) <sup>15</sup>*

Respondents were acutely aware of the difference being informed makes to an individual or a community:

*I can say that those people that have a chance to know are those that have status, the working class and those that have access to attend some training, only these people have a fair idea. (Male, 18-24, South rural) <sup>16</sup>*

Local members appeared to be judged on the quality of their efforts to inform their electorate.

*Some government members are doing their best to bring information to the community. Others are not doing as much but conducting a general awareness. (...) I have heard of a woman ward member, how she manages to hold awareness sessions through her electorate and makes sure her constituency understands the information, that's how she does it in her constituency. (Female, 55 and over, North, rural) <sup>17</sup>*

A central element in the concept of fairness, besides information, is comprehension, often linked to the level of literacy. Respondents requested careful choice of words, and of language. Again, these requests were made by those with low levels of literacy themselves, and others on their behalf.

*If everybody is given the opportunity to be given that awareness, honestly be given the pros and cons – the good of greater autonomy, the benefits of independence and the disadvantages for both sides, then they will be able to give their vote. (Meri, 55 and over, North rural) <sup>18</sup>*

*Awareness they carried out is a big thing, [but] it's not right when leaders conducting awareness don't simplify the English terms so people can understand what they mean. So, when leaders come to conduct awareness about the referendum, they have to use accessible terms so everyone can understand them. (Male 35-44, South, remote) <sup>19</sup>*

Respondents in remote areas felt the need for information intensely and some regretted not having had sufficient access to information.

*ABG is doing good work, but it's the communities and the people in the communities now that the ABG must refocus and go into each village, door to door to carry out awareness or to carry out this vote to get a positive result. (Female, 25-34, North rural) <sup>20</sup>*

*I reflect back on my village, a lot of men, women and youths in the village do not understand what the Autonomous Bougainville Government means, (...) we haven't had awareness in our community, or clarification on the type of government system we have or what we are working towards as [a region]. (Male, 18-24, South, rural) <sup>21</sup>*

There is still confusion, in some parts of Bougainville more than in others, about what the referendum really means, what its real consequences would be. But in parallel, there is also a lack of self-confidence about one's own knowledge: respondents often sought reassurance and repeatedly asked basic questions. The research shows the need for repetition and for confirmation.

*In some areas here when they call and talk to me, I am clear about the referendum, but at other times I do not fully understand what they are saying about the referendum. (Female, 25-34, Central, rural) <sup>22</sup>*

The underlying feeling of confusion has led to rumours that some interviewees found disquieting.

*I think about the crisis, what if we say yes and then there is a crisis like the last time. These thoughts make me worried (Female 18-24, North, rural) <sup>23</sup>*

Generally, preference for first-hand information was repeatedly expressed, and the need to ensure that the information is understood by everyone in the community.







# HOW HAVE MATERIALS BEEN RECEIVED VIA DIFFERENT MEDIA CHANNELS?

## KEY POINTS

- ▶ All information about the referendum was appreciated by respondents, particularly the factsheets and Radio Ples Lain. The video shows were also well received.
- ▶ Respondents wanted more information, regular updates and the opportunity to ask questions. They asked for information to be accessible in easy-to-understand terms, and wanted to know more about future scenarios.
- ▶ Respondents would like trusted members in the community and the community government to be regularly provided with up-to-date information.
- ▶ Communication via newer forms of technology, such as videos or smart phones, was appreciated by respondents, although they recognised drawbacks for services requiring electricity and involving costs (such as mobile phones and internet).

## PRINT MEDIA



Printed information was viewed as informative and was favoured for its permanency compared with word of mouth, for instance, which may allow messages to become distorted. Multiple respondents asked for printed versions of the constitution, for instance, or of

other official texts, when they realised they had not seen them and did not know their exact content.

*With regards to this question, I have not read a Bougainville Peace Agreement book, in fact I have not seen it with my eyes, but the people who carry out awareness refer to the Bougainville Peace Agreement. (Male, 25-34, South, rural) <sup>24</sup>*

While respondents' support for print media is similar to the 2015 study, there has been a demonstrated increase in access to printed information. Some respondents in areas with no radio or phone coverage were grateful to get printed material as a resource. While illiteracy is a challenge widely acknowledged, literate respondents gladly shared any information they had access to. In the spirit of solidarity mentioned earlier, some made it their mission to share their knowledge as widely as possible.

*One thing is when go to town, that's the news our friends send to us, or any information they have, they pass it on to us. (Female, 55 and over, South, rural) <sup>25</sup>*

*I understand what referendum and what independence mean, but at first, I was not really clear what they meant, but now I know more, which is good. I will go home, and educate the young ones, so they can understand, I will explain what referendum and what independence mean because they, the young people, do not know what they mean. (Female, 25-34, South, Urban) <sup>26</sup>*

Print in general and newspapers in particular were appreciated by respondents for using clear wording, allowing their readers to develop sound judgement, and giving regular updates. These updates were particularly appreciated because the BPA was perceived as a process involving steps and changes.

*I like the Post Courier, because when I see how the government talks about the referendum and autonomy, I am interested because both governments, ABG and the national government are doing something and agree about our future and what will happen. (Female, 14-17, Central, rural) <sup>27</sup>*

The **Bougainville Bulletin** reached 39% of respondents (n=557) and the ABG fact sheets were accessed by 21% (n=557). When they have been sighted and read, both sources were deemed to provide good information, and to be reliable references to spread the information.



RPL Live broadcast of IWD2018 – RPL producers  
Lynn Gegera and Jason Davero

*I like it, I get it and I really like the Bougainville Bulletin because I receive more information about the referendum and independence. (Male 35-44, South, rural) <sup>28</sup>*

*In the factsheets, I see that we receive very important key messages (...) Regarding the posters, especially within our networks – the Women's Federation – during our forums, we use the posters. Many times we get our posters from the office of the Referendum directory. (Female, 45-54, South, rural) <sup>29</sup>*

Publicly visible posters were referred to by over a quarter of the respondents (27.8%) as having provided information about the referendum. The posters were deemed appealing through the combination of text and photos.

*The way I understand the referendum is through reading posters. When I see posters, I stand there and read it. That is how I understand the referendum, not necessarily through awareness. (Female, 25-34, North, rural) <sup>30</sup>*

The poster of the veterans' message in particular reassured people (about the veterans' intentions), and was viewed as trustworthy. Such messages reinforced the feeling of togetherness latent among the population.

*I use the posters to give information to my kids and to my family members as well. I tell them, we are not living in ordinary times, we are going through this change because of what happened during the Bougainville crisis. (Female, 45-54, South, rural) <sup>31</sup>*

## WORD OF MOUTH



Word of mouth is the informal communication in conversations between community members. Respondents used the word "awareness" for face-to-face, in-person information received from a source with a level of official authority.

While word of mouth messages might be distorted, this communication method offers the advantage of allowing one to ask questions.

*Word of mouth – when my friends tell me where they get news from – my friends get their information from newspapers, some get it from radio, some receive information from some ward members. When we sit and tell stories, my friends tell me about the referendum and how life will be like (...). Word of mouth, I like, because some things the government workers are not explaining clearly enough but through word of mouth, people can ask questions, and they can answer us. (Male, 35-44, South, rural) <sup>32</sup>*

Within "awareness", we heard mention of teams of the Referendum Dialogues, ward members, community government members and chiefs having received a recognised "induction", "workshops" and "skul" organised by the Electoral Commission and other groups. "Awareness", or face-to-face communication, and radio, were the most preferred information channels. Respondents appreciated the direct contact, the informant's effort to come to them, and foremost, the possibility to ask questions, which is essential to confirm the correctness of one's interpretation.

*Those that come to do awareness, they come and explain. They come and ask us what we understand about referendum and some of them explain it to us. I like that because, when they talk and if you don't understand it fully, you can ask them questions and they will explain it. (Female, 55 and over, North, urban) <sup>33</sup>*

A condition for successful awareness-raising is that enough time is allocated for the session. Another condition is that, rather than an isolated occurrence, the visit is repeated, as a token of goodwill and intention to inform well. Repeated visits provide opportunities to listen again, ask more questions, clarify information and retain it. Respondents in remote areas unanimously asked for this.

*Some things not going well are that some community members do not attend the awareness that the ABG conducted regarding autonomy and independence. Another thing that is not so good is that the ABG come and do one awareness and then they don't come back again. (Male, 18-24, Central, rural) <sup>34</sup>*

Some respondents pointed to the fact that awareness sessions were not always well attended:

*Presentations given about the referendum are alright. But a lot of time I see that people do not turn up the time the awareness is carried out. Attendance from the community is not good. (Female, 25-34, North, rural) <sup>35</sup>*

When attended, the Referendum Dialogues, organised by the Peace and Conflict Studies Institute Australia (PaCSIA), received good reviews:

*They give us a lot of information. Some of this information, we have not received from other sources, but we get it from PaCSIA. And the style they conduct the dialogues is good because their process gives everyone a chance to talk and ask questions. This is a great way to give information because those that are there have the freedom to say what they truly want to share or say. The only thing that I do not agree with, as a leader from this community, is that we are selected from one central location. (Female, 45-54, South, rural) <sup>36</sup>*

Respondents noted that only certain people attended gatherings and that not everyone was reached when holding sessions in one location. Some respondents commented on challenges with timing because they were waiting for the integration of the awareness process towards referendum-readiness.

*The referendum dialogues were carried out by the member, it was for an hour and it was held at the school grounds. At the time the package about referendum readiness was not released yet, so we were not really clear about it. (...) We are waiting for our constitutional member to come and conduct the awareness with us. (Male, 25-34, North, rural) <sup>37</sup>*

ABG members' initiatives were appreciated by respondents. Almost half of all respondents (42.9% n=578) said they had participated in awareness sessions conducted by an ABG member. When detailing their appreciation of ABG members' awareness efforts, respondents provided various layers in their answers. They appreciated:

- seeing their member in person in their area, as evidence of their commitment for their electorate's well-being
- information efforts made in person, as an opportunity to access first-hand information from an official source, and to get answers to their questions
- objective information about the two main options to be proposed in the referendum: the best information detailed the pros and cons of each option.

Respondents said awareness sessions helped them to understand the process, and highlighted the steps involved. The sessions emphasised weapons disposal and reconciliation as preliminary steps, and provided much-needed reassurance to the audience, thereby gaining further credibility. In addition to ABG members, who might in some cases be distant to the community, ward members were considered the key people to provide this information.

*When the ward member and the team we work with come and run the referendum workshops, it gives us a good understanding on how to vote, to vote well for independence, and we are provided with more information around this during the awareness. When our leaders come and deliver awareness we are happy to participate. (Male, 25-34, North rural) <sup>38</sup>*

For all these reasons, all respondents wanted more awareness sessions and more teams to be sent to them and other villages, ideally several times.

*I observed that the awareness team came once only but they must continue to carry out more awareness and provide posters so that we can clearly understand the process of the referendum. This way we will get more information on what to do during the referendum. (Female, 55 and over, South, rural) <sup>39</sup>*



The consensus among respondents was that awareness sessions had not yet reached all people within Bougainville. Respondents wanted more efforts made to reach remote areas because villagers may not have the opportunity, the means or the inclination to travel to the town centres.

*I see that most of the people don't attend the forums. When we call for a meeting in a particular location, most people don't attend. It's usually the same people who come together to hear the information. Some people don't care – they stay in their homes. (Female, 45-54, South, rural) <sup>40</sup>*

Respondents asked for printed materials to be left within communities, as reference for further discussions.

*The Ward Members need to be inducted so that they must carry out the work to each of the hamlets. And the information leaflets should be printed English and in Tok Pisin. (Male, 35-44, North, rural) <sup>41</sup>*

*Use the Ward Member to talk because I can ask questions if I am not clear about some things (...) One thing, the ward member is from our community and it is easy for them to conduct awareness – they also use our mother tongue. (Female, 45-54, North, rural) <sup>42</sup>*

Respondents wanted the existing networks to be used, including ward members, community governments and chiefs, churches, teachers and local groups: these people know the area, are trusted and are accountable because the locals know them. They are efficient because they use the “adequate” language (appropriate choice of words and of language) that suits the community’s needs. Information was seen as trickling down to the community from ward members, to chiefs, then to wantoks (extended family), and finally, to families and individuals.

## RADIO



Confirming previous findings, radio is the preferred medium. It allows for timely messages that reach large groups of people in real time and first hand, without distortion. Radio reaches remote areas and people in their homes. Multiple respondents throughout remote areas of the three regions requested to “fix the network”.

*I prefer radio because I don't have to walk distances to get information about referendum awareness. I can stay at home and tune my radio and listen to it. (Female, 45-54, North, rural) <sup>43</sup>*

*Some awareness is carried out by Ples Lain Radio. it would be good to get this kind of information on a regular basis, day to day, from this radio. So can it improve its coverage so we can receive it from here as well, and not just Buka people have access to it, us too from isolated places – the government must set up coverage so we can have access to the radio station. That way we can tune in to the radio and receive information ourselves. (Male, 25-34, Central, rural) <sup>44</sup>*

Radio should, however, be complemented with opportunities to ask questions.

*When I listen to the radio, I feel good but sometimes I don't feel so good, I like face-to-face communication. Some must come with teams to confirm what is being said on the radio with their own mouths. On the radio, I sometimes I doubt it, and think about if what they are saying is true or not. (Male, 55 and over, North, rural) <sup>45</sup>*

The touring **Radio Ples Lain** was appreciated by respondents. One respondent, for example, was gushing with praise about how a women’s forum that was advertised on the station and how they were given information about the event.

*Radio Ples Lain - my first time to listen to them and to see them was during a Women's Unification Forum for us women from South Bougainville. That forum was organised by the women member for ABG. Radio Ples Lain came along as well. (...) and they gave us a radio each. We transited before going back to Aran Siwai District. We accessed all the information during that week. I really liked it, and I saw that that the service itself was very effective to the people inside Bougainville. (Female, 45-54, South, rural) <sup>46</sup>*

*I think it's good because I receive first-hand information from the radio. It's not second-hand information that you receive. Radio provides the right information. (Female, 55 and over, South, rural) <sup>47</sup>*

## VISUAL SCREEN MEDIA



**The use of visual technology** was generally appreciated, and was perceived by respondents as helping information retention through entertainment. Some respondents appreciated **the billboards** in towns for the informative content and some particularly liked the referendum countdown. Others were at times puzzled by non-political content, such as cultural or tourism-related content.

*The thing that made me understand was what I saw especially from the Buka TV screen. It describes the process and talks about integrity, and each group should be well prepared. (Female, 34-45, Central, remote) <sup>48</sup>*

*I once went for a visit and on the billboard, I saw the president and the ABG members. They were talking about the processes of the referendum. I did not quite get it, so I did not understand it really. But I collected a bit of the information about the referendum. (Male, 25-34, North, rural) <sup>49</sup>*

Some respondents expressed regret that the billboards were only accessible to a small part of population:

*It's not so great to place the billboard in town only. They should put this billboard in the villages as well so that at least everyone is informed of the awareness, and then can be clear about it. (Male, 25-34, North, rural) <sup>50</sup>*

Videos involving James Tanis were judged informative and attractive, but one drawback of this form of media is the inability to ask questions.

*I only watched awareness from the team which was James Tanis recorded on video. He did referendum awareness regarding arms disposal (...) He was explaining all the steps of the referendum and how it will come about (...) What is not so great about it is that we can't ask them questions. Because we only see him talking. This is one-way information. (Male, 25-34, Central, urban) <sup>51</sup>*

Videos and the use of projection were generally well received.

*They talk and give us good information on the referendum, and I understand. Sometimes they also show us pictures. (Male 25-34, South, rural) <sup>52</sup>*

## MOBILE PHONES AND INTERNET



Mobile phones were noted for their ability to receive information quickly and precisely.

*I was in school and they just told me that we would have a referendum. They rang me and said in 2019, we would have a referendum. (...) With regards to phone and using phones, it is good, because you can pass the message faster to people. (Female, 25-34, Central, urban) <sup>53</sup>*

Some (mostly urban) respondents said they relied on their mobile to get information:

*I prefer mobile phones because it's handy. Even if you are on a bus or wherever, you will still hear the news. This is how it helps us because, with a mobile phone, you can ask questions if you are not clear about something. (Male, 25-34, Central, urban) <sup>54</sup>*

Some respondents reported receiving texts communicating the referendum date only, while others received complementary information. About a third of all respondents (29.8%) commented on receiving a text message from the ABG media unit.

*They send text message about the referendum, the text says we are about to go for referendum (...) As for the mobile, when they ring, I like when they ring me... I can understand what they are saying about the referendum. (Female, 25-34, Central, rural) <sup>55</sup>*

Some urban, often younger respondents appreciated **using the internet to get information**. They mentioned, however, the need to check the value of the information because they had heard about false news circulating on the internet.

*What I don't like is that there is false information coming from the internet and from Facebook as well. (Male 25-34, Central, urban). <sup>56</sup>*

Downsides of the internet noted by respondents were the unreliable network, and the cost of access.

*I don't like the internet because sometimes the network plays up. And also the use of internet costs money. (Female, 25-34, Central, urban) <sup>57</sup>*

# PREFERRED WAYS OF RECEIVING INFORMATION

Respondents said they liked receiving referendum information because it gave them more knowledge and contributed to their self-confidence. They felt it was their right to get information from their own government, and they demanded it. They felt that being informed and knowing what to do would allow them to support the ABG by voting correctly, and later, by giving active support where needed. In addition, respondents saw the role of the ABG in imparting information to the population demonstrated its good will, and the credibility and seriousness of its intentions.

The main problems identified by respondents were the confusion about the correct information needed for the population to make informed decisions, and the foreseen consequences of inadequate information. Notions of solidarity and interdependency were intertwined: the vulnerability of the less informed parts of the population would have an impact on the Bougainville population as a whole. If not addressed, their poorly informed vote might “endanger” the future of the region. Respondents often said that remote areas had not yet been reached with adequate levels of information.

Those respondents who were satisfied with their experience of awareness sessions said they understood that the BPA was a process, with consecutive steps that must be followed in the correct order, starting with weapons disposal and reconciliation.

Respondents viewed being informed as an important component of maintaining peace in Bougainville. Across the board, respondents supported there being a number of activities and channels to receive information (see Fig. 9). Radio remained one of the most popular media to receive regular and trusted information. However, a key component highlighted by respondents was the opportunity to ask questions, which might be provided through talkback radio shows or through community-awareness sessions. In particular, respondents highlighted the important role ward members and trusted community members played in conducting community-awareness sessions in which people felt comfortable to ask questions.

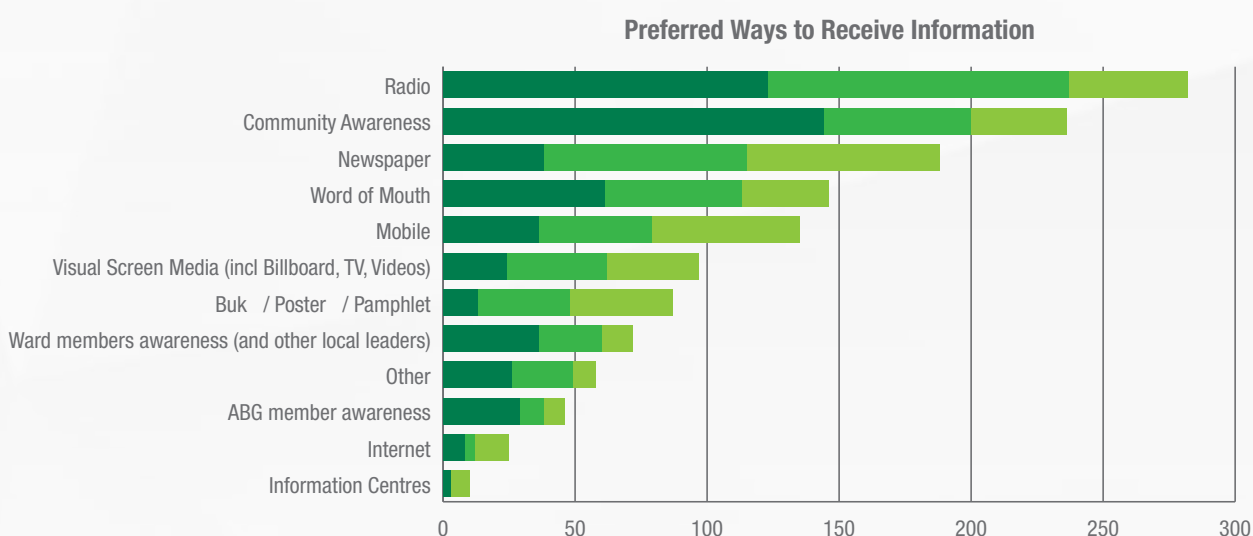


Fig 9. Preferred ways to receive information about the Referendum

*Note: Respondents were asked for their top three preferences for receiving information. Respondents also mentioned teachers and schools, and churches (all coded under Other).*



Print media was highly appreciated by respondents and has contributed to consistent messages being received by the communities, in particular through the factsheets, the Bougainville Bulletin and posters. Respondents requested more materials to be able to further understand the more complex aspects and components of the referendum and the BPA more broadly. Respondents used print materials to share information with others and facilitate discussions.

The assessment on the knowledge levels of respondents in this research demonstrates that not everyone has the same access to information and is provided with the opportunities to engage and ask questions. There are key audience groups that need to be considered in the process of information dissemination, both in terms of targeting them specifically and in terms of their role in providing support to share information with others.

In the next section, we focus on women, youth, veterans and people living in remote communities as key audiences identified in the study.





# KEY AUDIENCE GROUPS

## WOMEN

The findings show that women in general are less informed or less confident than men in what they know about the BPA and Bougainville's political processes. About two thirds of female respondents (66.9%) felt they could freely express their opinion in their community, compared with more than three quarters of male respondents (78.3%, n=583). Female respondents said they welcomed awareness sessions, in particular, sessions with opportunities to ask questions and have discussions.

*I like it when we have an opportunity to ask questions when we don't understand things and they can explain it to us further. (...) Sometimes, I don't like it because they are in a hurry and don't explain things properly. (Female, 55 and over, North, urban)<sup>58</sup>*

Women of all ages were happy to participate in the interviews. Similar to the youth, some were shy to talk, resulting in very short interviews. Others, by contrast, were keen to find and share information, and express their views to the researchers. Women generally emphasised the need for more information across the whole population. What emerged strongly was women's role in sharing information among themselves and within their families. Women saw themselves as assets in the society and in the process:

*People of Bougainville are resilient, they in their own way try emotionally, economically, for example women in informal sectors, women in business is what is uprising at the moment. Women in top decision-making bodies, people standing up and speaking up for their rights. (Female, 45-54, Central, Urban)*

Women emphasised safety in relation to weapons disposal, law and order issues, and peace more broadly.

*The process of peace and reconciliation has to be done first to settle problems from the past. Like with weapons disposal, they must dispose of all guns so that there are no conflicts after the referendum. (Female, 35-44, North, rural)*

Many female respondents said they received information from women's groups or church groups, which are often linked. Women's meetings were viewed as a good place to receive, share and discuss information, as well as ask questions. Most female respondents seemed to regularly attend these meetings, and as a place for discussing any issues and expressing their opinion, they ranked it second, after doing so with family and close relatives. In line with the broader population, women also commented positively on the use of radio and newspapers where they are being accessed.



Students in Piano, Buin, South Bougainville pick up their copy of the Bougainville Bulletin

## YOUTH

Youth (14-34 years of age) are an important audience because the study's results show that they are generally less informed than those above 35 years of age, and often seem to lack confidence in their knowledge and understanding. Young respondents often referred to 'what they heard' instead of stating 'what they knew'.

Similar to the findings in the baseline study, the 2018 data shows that young respondents had less opportunity to actively engage in discussions and participate in conversations at the community level. They said they felt most comfortable expressing their opinion within their own families. In addition, they were less likely than older respondents to report feeling free to express their opinion. However, the data demonstrates a general increase in all respondents' confidence in expressing their opinion freely within their community since 2015 (see Fig 6).

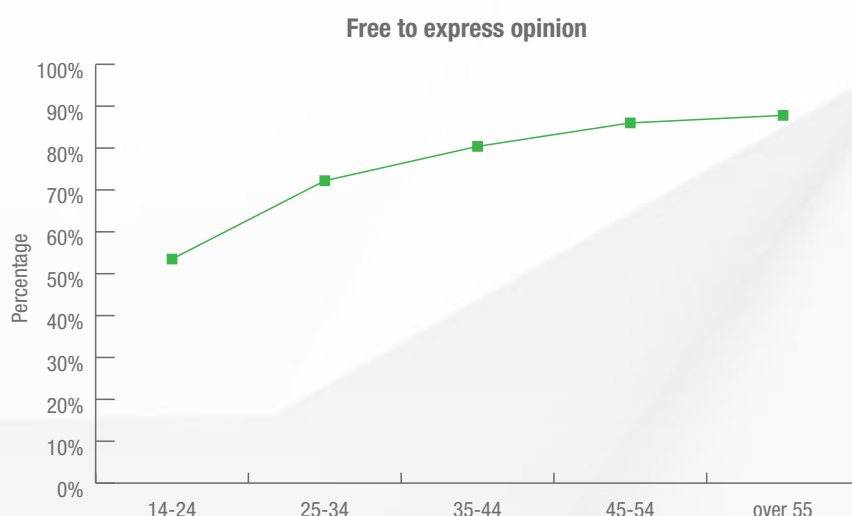


Fig 10. Respondents who feel free to express their opinion in their community according to age

Young respondents were actively asking and looking for information about the referendum. Some commented that they read over the received materials several times to better understand them.

*I have seen some posters and after reading the information several times I'm beginning to slowly understand. (Male, 18-24, Central, rural) <sup>59</sup>*

In addition, young respondents seemed to be more vocal about requesting information from official visitors, such as government staff or ward members or from official media sources.

*I wanted to know because I wasn't sure, that's why I read the newspaper to get knowledge and understand the various things around the referendum. (Female, 18-24, Central, rural) <sup>60</sup>*

Less than a quarter of young respondents spontaneously mentioned youth groups as the place to go to voice their opinion or get information. However, respondents who were youth group leaders more strongly emphasised the opportunities these youth meetings offered. According to them, youth meetings and networks could be used as a place to share and pass on information. Many young respondents said they were actively engaged within church groups and networks.



Youth expressed various uncertainties about the referendum, for example, about the likelihood of a peaceful outcome. About half (53.7%) of respondents younger than 35 were confident in a peaceful outcome, compared with 69.3% of those over 45 years of age. Youths strongly commented on the need for community development and they associated hopes for positive change with the upcoming referendum, particularly with regards to education and employment opportunities.

*Most of the services that are not functioning are services like schools for the children. Because most of the youth are grade 8 dropouts. We need more education. The government needs to restore such services. It needs to build more educational institutions. (Female, 18-24, North, rural)* <sup>61</sup>

A clear gap remains in knowledge levels and engagement among the young population. This group might be best addressed within their peer groups to receive information and participate in discussion; however, their lack of participation at the community level also needs to be addressed, and any programs must be strongly integrated with the wider community, and not happen in isolation. Both male and female ward leaders might be best placed within the community to develop programs specifically targeting and involving youths. Young respondents said they would like to be given the opportunity to be more actively involved, and, as a result, become better informed about the various processes involved in the referendum.



## VETERANS

Because of their direct involvement in the Bougainville crisis, veteran respondents' views appeared to keep a "before and after" (crisis) perspective and described the situation as evolving:

*Since the establishment of ABG, there has been gradual development. If you travel out, you will see that there is development progress within Bougainville. When you are here in Bougainville, you don't realise it that much, it's only when you look at it from outside that you can see ABG's work. (Male, 45-54, North, rural)* <sup>62</sup>

The veterans viewed PNG in a rather negative light, for example, saying that PNG was responsible for the slow progress of Bougainville's development. They expressed their loyalty to the ABG as a token of gratitude for bringing peace and returning their life "back to normal". Veterans expressed apprehension about a return to violence through the actions of the PNG government:

*People are afraid when it comes to the ratification. They fear that although we will vote for independence that the PNG government might not support us in the ratification. (Male, 35-44, Central, rural)* <sup>63</sup>

But apart from this uncertainty, the veteran respondents were confident in a peaceful process. They appeared generally well informed and able to judge the present situation based on their past experiences. They best understood how the past has shaped Bougainville's present and many had played a critical role in Bougainville's referendum and peace process.

Among veteran respondents were two broad types. On the one hand, there were veterans who were actively involved, taking part and supporting reconciliations, expressing strong support for the ABG, and keen to receive all forms of information. On the other hand, we encountered other veterans who kept their distance and did not want to play an active role, and were less likely to express demands for information.

Veteran respondents appreciated receiving information through official media channels or from government. They mentioned radio, newspapers, the **Bougainville Bulletin** and community awareness involving ABG members as their preferred ways to receive information.

## REMOTE COMMUNITIES

People living in remote areas are another key group that are important to consider with regards to providing updated information about the Bougainville peace process because they are less likely to leave their communities and access to their communities is challenging for awareness teams to reach. Respondents from remote locations reported generally being less informed and feeling isolated; they often commented on government services not reaching them, which contributed to them feeling left out.

*What I think is not working is the financing. The money that is for all people is not reaching those in remote communities. (Male, 55 or over, Central, remote) <sup>64</sup>*

As a consequence of feeling left out, remote respondents reiterated how they felt their knowledge about their region's political situation was neither complete nor adequate. They appealed for information, and for inclusion in the information process. In doing this, they looked towards the outside for help: they expressed the distinct feeling that the community did not have the resources to help themselves. Their 'appeal' was supported by respondents from rural and urban areas who regularly made the observation that remote communities had not yet been reached. Furthermore, the perceived lack of information reaching the remote population was considered a liability for the region as a whole because ill-informed voters may jeopardise the region's future by "not voting well".

*If they provide good information then people will listen and they will understand it, they can then make the right decision, and we will all do well. (Female, 55 and over, Central, remote) <sup>65</sup>*

The best evidence that remote areas have received due consideration comes from respondents' reports that well-trained visitors had come to see them – either "official" visitors or officially trained local people. Respondents characterised good awareness sessions as those that were repeated and included opportunities to ask questions, thereby contributing to self-confidence in their knowledge. These characteristics were deemed necessary so that people could digest and integrate the information.

*They have to walk here to come to see us, and they need to give us the right information for us to understand, so we can make an informed choice during the referendum. (Male, 18-24, Central, remote) <sup>66</sup>*

Respondents from remote communities wanted to discuss the information with their leaders and those at the ward and community government level. They asked for printed materials to be distributed so they could be used in discussions. Examples given of trustworthy information were official messages in the **Bougainville Bulletin** and ABG factsheets. These respondents saw the ideal situation as one in which information was disseminated across various media, including awareness sessions, printed materials and radio where possible. Suggestions were made for the ballot paper to include a visual representation such as the Bougainville and the PNG flags to support the two options. In general, remote respondents asked for information to be made available to everyone in the form that they could best understand it.

Most respondents from all locations agreed that time and resources must be invested in taking information to the remote communities on mainland Bougainville without access to direct road networks and to the island communities such as Nissan and Atolls.



## NISSAN ISLAND

Nissan Island can be accessed from Buka by boat, taking about 2-3 hours to travel when the sea is calm. Limitations to frequent travelling to the mainland include costs for transport and challenging sea conditions that increase risks for those travelling. In terms of accessing referendum information, many Nissan Islander respondents said they relied on what they heard from those returning to the island through word of mouth.

Respondents on Nissan Island mentioned the non-functioning mobile network as a key concern in relation to communication. Newspapers were accessed when brought from Buka, providing an important information source considered trustworthy by respondents. Some respondents mentioned very high frequency (VHF) radio as one of the main forms of communication and some regularly listened to SW radio. Those who accessed television accessed it via Digicel Playbox.

Nissan Islanders had received information on the referendum through community awareness sessions and through official channels at the ward level. Local respondents deemed the information received on the peace process, the referendum and its consequences insufficient at this stage. They appealed repeatedly for better information in the form of community awareness sessions through official channels and the need for more information via radio.

*Good information comes through the radio, but only a little bit through awareness (...) Also many don't have a radio. So, when they don't have a radio, they don't receive good information. If the towers worked, Citifon and Digicel, we would get lots of information, but because these key areas are not adequately supported, we are not fully informed. (Female, 25-34, Nissan Island) <sup>67</sup>*

From the interviews, Nissan Islanders' priorities related to their feelings of isolation and remoteness, the difficulties associated with transport and communication, and the perceived scarcity of government and social services. Central in their comments were aspirations for change – towards development – and the perception that such long and eagerly awaited change might only come with the opportunity for independence.

Respondents here viewed the ABG as mostly absent and indifferent. While some ABG effort was acknowledged through the presence of a school, respondents focused more on what was lacking, including organised transport to and from mainland, mobile towers in working order, and general services. Nissan was perceived as disadvantaged and in need of government services.

*Nissan is a most disadvantaged area and ABG should make it a key consideration. (Male, 35-44, Nissan Island) <sup>68</sup>*

The Nissan Islanders' desire for change was connected to the option for independence as a means to catalyse change: more powers to the ABG meant more possibility of development. As heard on the mainland, Nissan Islander respondents reported confidence that Bougainville's resources could be used to develop the region. They repeatedly asked for more information from the ABG, particularly about the referendum questions, and the meaning of the option of greater autonomy. As on the mainland, the Nissan Islanders often sought reassurance about the various possible scenarios after the referendum, and PNG's supportive attitude for a peaceful and satisfactory outcome.

*I would like to strongly appeal to the people of Bougainville to come together and maintain peace in Bougainville (...) We must show the National Government that we can create a strong Bougainville. (Female, 25-34, Nissan Island) <sup>69</sup>*

Respondents from Nissan Island asked for a strong focus on inclusivity. Due to their relative proximity to Buka, they were aware of the information and communication possibilities and wanted to be involved in the ongoing dialogues about the referendum and Bougainville's political future.



# FUTURE ASPIRATIONS AND INFORMATION NEEDS

The audience study asked respondents to talk about their perceptions of the ABG's performance to date and their expectations of their government.

When asked to talk about the ABG's performance since 2005, respondents displayed a critical attitude closely mixed with pride in "their" own government, and the realisation that the ABG is their best hope to achieve the Bougainville they want. Respondents talked about the ABG with something that could be qualified as 'tough love'. When asked about their level of satisfaction with the ABG's performance since 2005, respondents were split, with almost half (48.8%) being either satisfied or very satisfied (see Fig 7).

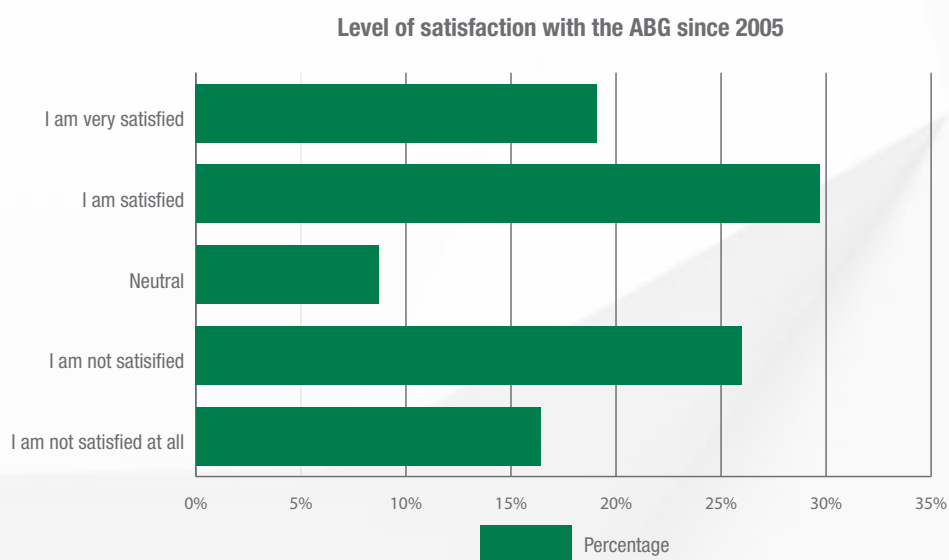


Fig 11. Level of satisfaction with the ABG since 2005



# RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE ABG

## POSITIVES ABOUT THE ABG

The mere fact that the ABG exists was seen as positive. The ABG has been and is the first government of Autonomous Bougainville. It has produced the Constitution and the First House of Bougainville Parliament, which has guided the first steps toward autonomy. The ABG started in difficult conditions, in a region in ruins. It has worked towards establishing and promoting peace in the region. Making things “better than the crisis” has been one of its achievements and its push for reconciliation has been fruitful.

*Some of the good things that autonomy brought was that when we gained autonomy the good things we had are ‘peace and reconciliation’ in which I feel that this particular government succeeded in. (Male, 35-44, South, remote) <sup>70</sup>*

This is given as explanation by many respondents: the region had been effectively destroyed, so the ABG had to “start from scratch”.

*A number of good things that came into existence were from the health sector and from the education sector. In terms of education. We had re-functioning of schools that trained our children to become literate children, you know. And in terms of the hospitals, in a way I am proud of having this autonomy, we had medication brought in. (Male, 35-44, South, remote) <sup>71</sup>*

Other respondents saw “superficial” accomplishments, which require more in-depth work in the remote areas:

*According to my observation, ABG is carrying out its roles, however it has to come right down to the people in the remote areas. (...) From the top, yes, I see development taking place but in order to reach people, there are some areas, in terms of communication services we really lack it. (Male, 35-44, South, remote) <sup>72</sup>*

*They don't fund money. They never spend it wisely in the communities. Especially during that time when it was flowing into the community, a lot of people here usually complain about the disappearing of funds. (Male, 45-54, Central, remote). <sup>73</sup>*

President John Momis is regarded as a grand, trusted figure in the political landscape. The MPs generally, as the “local face of ABG”, are at the heart of respondents’ perception of the ABG: the satisfaction with Momis affected perceptions of the ABG’s performance. Conversely, disappointment reflects negatively on the ABG’s performance.

Some recent initiatives were mentioned as positive: the transition from CoEs – initially put in place to promote a return to peace – to community governments, had led to greater development and encouraging opportunities. However, the ABG was yet to make full use of this new institution.

*We used to have the CoE (Council of Elders), however we now have the Community Government where male and female both have equal voices. Gender equality is in existence now. Therefore, this is the type of government that empowers the remote areas. (Male, 25-34, Central, rural) <sup>74</sup>*

The recent steps towards eradicating corruption, largely picked up from media reports, were perceived as a sign of the ABG’s credibility. Recent awareness efforts to spread information about the referendum were appreciated by their recipients as the evidence of the ABG’s commitment to a “free and fair” referendum.

*They are carrying out their roles the way they should. They are trying their best to disseminate information right down to the people in order for them to understand what we need to do for the referendum. (Male, 25-34, North, rural) <sup>75</sup>*

*One service that came about is the delivery of awareness documents for the referendum. That is one of the changes. (Female, 34-45, Central, remote)*

The ABG’s work in the past years was acknowledged by those respondents to whom it was visible, usually in their area: schools, roads, aid posts, coffee projects and the airports.

*I've seen small changes such as electricity flowing this way and poles being erected. The cables are being connected for electricity. As well as the re-establishment of schools (...) Schools received assistance from them such as classrooms. And the communities were supported, they were given materials bought by them. The government paid for that and offered it to communities. In terms of water supplies, tanks for instance. Lots of things happened. (Female, 18-24, North, rural) <sup>76</sup>*

Loyalty to the ABG included keeping a fair attitude about one’s responsibilities, the ABG’s and that of the communities. Overall, there was a latent or expressed loyalty to the ABG as representative of Bougainville’s aspirations. The ABG was regarded as “better than PNG”. This perception was





often based on disappointment with PNG's performance in looking after Bougainville, but was also based on a negative perception of PNG's financial management abilities.

*The PNG government does not really fund us with money for the constituencies, the constituency fund us, you know. This money is purposely for that, so it should be given. (PNG) must hand these funds over, however they never do, therefore our Autonomous Government is unable to bring change because it is financially broke. (Male, 45-54, North, rural) <sup>77</sup>*

To some, then, PNG was seen as “a hindrance”, in the way of true and good development. This sentiment was particularly clearly expressed when respondents were asked about their view of what they thought would happen after the referendum: in essence, it seemed that once PNG was “out of the way”, everything good might be within reach.

*After we gain independence we will have our own government and it will manage us well. From what I can see today with the system of autonomy, there have not been that many good changes towards development. (Male, 35-44, South, remote) <sup>78</sup>*

For some respondents, PNG was seen as “the bad guy” who caused the crisis in the first place. A lot of fear was still attached to the image of the PNGDF, and unsettling rumours circulated.

*They normally update us on the events that occur because some people tend to scare us about having another war. Therefore, when awareness is being done, they tend to explain that ‘such things won’t happen.’ There’ll be all kinds of rumours happening such as the PNGDF are in training to start war if we vote ‘yes’ to gain independence. (Male, 25-34, Central, urban) <sup>79</sup>*

For others, PNG had provided the support to get Bougainville to where it was. And some respondents saw both PNG and the ABG as an inherent part of the journey to the end goal, which was within reach: “We have come so far. One last effort.”

*We have reached our final count down now and that is our vote for the referendum. (Male, 45-54, South, rural) <sup>80</sup>*

Yet, it was also clear to respondents that there were many steps involved after the referendum vote. The referendum, however, was considered an important point in time when people could make an individual contribution and show their support one way or the other.



## NEGATIVES ABOUT ABG

Criticism of ABG's performance was widespread, but focused on two related issues: the lack of services, and the misuse of funds and corruption. Respondents said the ABG had not delivered services as expected or promised, and the infrastructure was lacking, mainly in roads, education and health.

*Towers, network, health centers and all these types of services are not, there is not really a sign of development taking place here. (Female, young, North, rural)* <sup>81</sup>

*The only thing that I have seen and I am not happy about, is that we use road transport to travel into town however our roads tend to deteriorate often. (Male, 25-34, North, rural)* <sup>82</sup>

Respondents said the lack of investment in education disadvantaged Bougainville's youth in terms of employment opportunities, and they longed for Bougainville to have its own tertiary establishments:

*We simply don't have enough resources really. The government has not revived most of the services. We have to have a university out here and even colleges as well should be in existence. The other provinces are well ahead of us. (Female, 18-24, North, rural)* <sup>83</sup>

Some respondents commented that the ABG had made promises, some of which turned out to be empty words. To them, the ABG appeared to display a lack of effort, and was simply not doing enough. This sentiment was particularly acutely felt in relation to education and business opportunities, but was also mentioned in relation to reconciliation and referendum awareness-raising efforts. Young and remote populations were particularly vocal about feeling left out, expressing an element of urgency, and of deadlines to be met.

*From what I have observed, we have been sleeping so soundly during these past 15 years. The government did not prepare in advance to prepare us to take on the next step. We are now doing the last-minute preparations by rushing this process in order to achieve the referendum. (Female, 35-44, North, rural)* <sup>84</sup>

*From what I've observed, what I can say is, I think ABG is doing its work but it has not reached the remote areas. It is playing its role inside the office. However, for them to leave their offices and travel to the remote areas and make speeches and awareness directly to the remote areas is not happening. (Male, 18-24, North, rural)* <sup>85</sup>

Lack of effort was also mentioned in relation to the ABG's failure to properly tackle law and order problems, and the double perceived threat of fear-inspiring veterans and restless, idle youth. Some respondents commented on inefficient village police.

But most expectations and negative perceptions emerged in the discussion about the ABG's role in boosting the economy. The perception of corruption within the ABG and public services was widespread and readily mentioned by respondents, and may have been deduced from the lack of services. Some respondents felt that PNG and donors were handing over money that was not spent properly. The latest case was the money that was reported as allocated for referendum awareness-raising activities, but was not distributed.

*What could be the reason to make sure that the member is actually spending money on this? The only way is to check the balance. If you go to the remote areas and ask the people and if their response is 'no,' then what are you going to do since the money is spent somewhere else. This is an important issue. Honesty in relation to work has to be practiced by the members of the ABG as well as the leaders who are taking the lead in this area. (Female, 55 and over, North, rural)* <sup>86</sup>

Respondents in rural areas felt the lack of funds more acutely. Paradoxically, judging by the choice of words used by respondents, it may be that this perception was heightened by the media coverage about the ABG's recent anti-corruption actions, which actually threw light onto a problem that was latent.

*Because I hear about it. A number of times I heard that there is corruption inside the government. A number of things like money has been misused. The members are still within the 'Treasury Office' and during that time I heard that a lot of money went missing. (Female, 45-54, Central, rural)* <sup>87</sup>

The perception of corruption was closely associated by respondents with deficient leadership that lacked quality, training and commitment. This perception lingered throughout questions about topics such as Bougainville's

capacity for sustainable independence. Respondents closely associated the judgement on the ABG with the perception of the individual member in the area: where the member was deemed satisfactory, so was the government they represented. Conversely, unsatisfactory performance suggested to respondents that the ABG had failed to correctly supervise and mentor the local members, and therefore, had failed in their duty of care.

Many respondents deplored the distance between the ABG and its people, the physical gap made visible by the ABG's lack of presence in the remote areas. This concern was reported as bringing the morale of the people down. Public servants were seen as estranged, bureaucratic, self-centred office workers, rather than closely involved "field" workers that would serve the public. Again, an individual MP's performance played an important part in this overall perception.

*They are never concerned about the people in the remote areas. They always have concern for those they know. Even if it means to help people working in offices they support them, but not to all of them. However, the services are not equally distributed to every single area. (Female, 55 and over, South, rural) <sup>88</sup>*

*If the government cannot be an example to the people in the remote areas, then it is destroying the people's moral, the impression on people's minds back in the remote areas on how confident they would feel to come and vote during the referendum. (Male, 55 and over, North, rural) <sup>89</sup>*

Respondents perceived a disconnection between "us people" and "them government": the ABG was reported as showing

little or no effort to establish and maintain contact, to listen and to hear. The research team for the Audience Survey was actually perceived as the ABG's effort to "bridge the gap".

*I am actually proud of the research you are doing. What you are really doing is you are capturing perceptions from the people in the remote areas towards this issue. Therefore, you are in a position where you are able to identify whether it is possible for us to go through it or whether we need to strategise some ways in order to go through this referendum. (Female, 35-44, North, rural) <sup>90</sup>*

Besides the idea of corruption, but associated with it, was respondents' perception that the ABG relied too much on foreigners or advisors, maybe even on the western system, rather than favouring the 'Bougainville Way'.

*The thing that is not good about it is 'I've had enough of this 'yes, master' business. 'Yes master,' is what I am already fed up with (...). In the ABG; well there are more than thirty advisors. We will have to terminate this group of people first before we start talking about the referendum because we don't want foreigners in there. (Female, 18-24, Central, remote) <sup>91</sup>*

Such responses to foreign advisors by respondents were influenced by experiences where outsiders were perceived to not have Bougainville's interests as their first priority. Yet, other times Bougainvilleans were seen to have demonstrated a strong capacity for partnerships and collaborations. An important component for respondents in forming their perceptions was the idea that Bougainvilleans could be in control and prioritise their values and not have an outside value system imposed on them.

ABG has three video screens in regional centres  
Buka, Awara and Buin supported by the UN



## WHAT DOES 'THE BOUGAINVILLE WAY' MEAN TO YOU?

The ABG Strategic Development Plan 2018–22 mentions “integrating the Bougainville Way into government planning”. We asked respondents what the ‘Bougainville Way’ meant to them, to trigger responses about unique characteristics of Bougainville or Bougainvilleans that could be used to inform communication strategies. Some respondents referred broadly to **kastom** (traditional practice), or pointed towards notions of unity and peace. Some respondents had more specific ways to explain the expression. We highlight the main characteristics expressed by respondents.

- ▶ Bougainville is matrilineal, respects women as custodians of the ground and customarily involves women in community discussions. This aspect of the Bougainville Way is upheld in women’s mandatory political representation.

*I’ve noticed in decision making that opinions from women are invited as well. We must also take part in decision making. And that is the Bougainvillean Way. (...) That’s why, whatever takes place in Bougainville, it’s inclusive. Both men and women are involved in decision making. (Female, 45-54, South, rural) <sup>92</sup>*

- ▶ Bougainville’s hierarchy gives a central position to chiefs who are respected by the people. Hence, chiefs need to be given prominence in the community and regional affairs. The constitution enshrines this aspect of the Bougainville Way. In return, chiefs bear responsibility for their people’s well-being – including passing on relevant information about the referendum.

*Even the Papua New Guinean or the Bougainvillean constitution has this recognition of this traditional Chief System. (Female, 35-44, North, rural) <sup>93</sup>*

- ▶ The Bougainville Way has particularly good methods to settle disputes and could therefore refer to complete reconciliation.

*The Bougainvillean Way, according to how it was before, was that we were well off. Our great grandparents rarely had disputes amongst themselves. Compared to nowadays, people tend to start up disputes over land, and argue and fight against each other. (Female, 14-17, Central, rural) <sup>94</sup>*

- ▶ The Bougainville Way is considered a destiny rooted in history: the blood of thousands of victims testifies to the region’s commitment. This very sacrifice shows the depth of this commitment, which should be honored by fighting for independence.

*They fought for independence and they lost their lives. They are heroes for Bougainville. If Bougainville is not going to prepare itself, it will most likely fail these heroes who lost their lives. So that is something important to consider. We don’t want another war to start. (Female, 45-54, South, rural) <sup>95</sup>*

- ▶ To some, the Bougainville Way means to not let outsiders lead the way. It means not waiting for others to do something for Bougainville, but for people to do it themselves and use Bougainville’s existing strengths.

*Whatever has happened must be sorted out our own way. For example; we must not wait for a white man to come and sort it out for us. We ourselves must stand firm and sort it ourselves. (Male, 35-44, South, remote) <sup>96</sup>*

- ▶ The Bougainville Way is a way of functioning from the “bottom up”, reaching community consensus using community resources, both people and land. This traditional way, according to respondents, must be taken into account, and it outlines the ABG’s obligation to be present and to listen to its people.

*The Bougainvillean Way is a way in which we always do things together. We are resourceful people like with human resources as well, we are resourceful. And we are also very good in hospitality. Though some regard us Bougainvilleans as bad people but what we have, that unique character compared to others is to look after the people and the resources. (Female, 35-44, Central, remote) <sup>97</sup>*



## EXPECTATIONS OF CHANGE

The referendum is generally perceived as an opportunity for change, welcomed by a large majority of respondents at various levels. The respondents' way of talking reflected a strong amalgamation of the concepts of referendum and independence. For many of them, the referendum was but a step to go through, a formality, leading to the long-awaited goal of independence. In their comments, little room appeared to be left to – and little thought wasted on – the perspective of not gaining independence. While some expressed uncertainties about the future, many respondents associated various potential developments with the prospect of gaining independence. Associations with key development areas included infrastructure, economic development and education.

*Referendum is just fine for us to cast our votes because we need to bring in some changes to Bougainville, start up some form of changes in terms of development, and infrastructure and all that. (Male, 18-24, North, rural) <sup>98</sup>*

A choice for greater autonomy was associated with little or no change: things would stay as they were. Respondents' uncertainties about the term 'greater autonomy' and what it would mean for Bougainville played a role in their responses.

The pictures they conjured of the post-referendum landscape were varied: some had confident attitudes and others were more fearful and cautious.

## CONFIDENT ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE POST-REFERENDUM PERIOD

Some respondents expressed a vision of blissful images, where the population would be provided with education and employment opportunities, adequate services for good health, improved law and order, transport, business and growth opportunities. Those in remote areas were particularly hopeful.

*From my understanding, after referendum, most people think that there will be better services. People in remote villages will be free to move around (...) A lot of changes will emerge. It seems like people's standard of living will improve, and new Bougainville laws will be understood and followed by the people. (Female 45-54, Central, rural) <sup>99</sup>*

The existence of resources reassured some respondents about the future of the region. The fact that Bougainville would manage these resources on its own was equally reassuring to them:

*From what I think, forecasting the future, if we get referendum there's going to be a big change. We have lots of resources in Bougainville, from the jungles down to the ocean. We are rich with all those resources. (Male 25-34, North Urban) <sup>100</sup>*

Some respondents saw a similar picture, which, to them, was really a return to an idealised time before the crisis. This model would, in effect, "erase" the bad times. Other respondents said they wanted to make sure lessons were learned from the past, particularly about resource management and mining issues. These respondents expressed overall feelings of trust and self-confidence, and the idea Bougainville would rise to the challenge because it had existing resources, both in the land and the people.

*After the referendum, from my understanding and knowledge, if we are independent we will live free, everything will be run by ourselves without others ruling or assisting us. (...) We will come up with great things. Like cocoa, all cash crops will have factories for processing, we will have those institutions, we will have everything here instead of looking for it somewhere else. (Female, 25-34, South urban) <sup>101</sup>*

However, respondents were aware that, for success, the ABG would have to play its part by encouraging and enabling self-reliance, encouraging and supporting business, and providing quality higher education locally rather than overseas. Independence would also mean that the fear of PNG physical interference disappeared. To some respondents, independence meant that Bougainville would no longer be hindered by PNG, and would be "in full swing".

*I don't want the referendum to be deferred until next year or whatever. We must do that now, so that we know our future and Bougainville's political future. (...) I'm just happy for the referendum to happen sooner so real work can begin, because at the moment is only temporary. (Male, 14-17, North rural) <sup>102</sup>*

Respondents said that not choosing independence would only "prolong the wait" for the ultimate goal. Most respondents associated an independence vote with many positive development changes and an opportunity for Bougainville to rise to its full potential.

## FEARFUL ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE POST-REFERENDUM PERIOD

Other respondents were more prone to envisaging negative scenarios and expressing deep fears – basically of going back to the terrible times of the crisis. These negative visions

appeared to be more often linked to a perceived lack of information, or remoteness. The less informed respondents had to rely on others to receive information. These respondents' feelings of isolation and helplessness translated into a lack of self-confidence, and bred apprehension and even anxiety.

*I'm a bit afraid of referendum because there are two groups within Bougainville, our Government and Mekamui. I fear these two groups. (Male, 18-24, North, rural)* <sup>103</sup>

*Many are afraid of the referendum. They say that when we vote and if we lose, if the majority go for greater autonomy instead of independence. That's what I am worried about. I want more awareness and explanation on that. If they lose they might start up a fight again, first in a small group and then everyone will follow. (Male, 35-44, North, rural)* <sup>104</sup>

However, this apprehension was also found among urban respondents, particularly young respondents whose fears came from what they had heard about the past, mostly from their immediate families. Doubt was a major component of their views, based on the perceived present reality: doubt about sufficient resources, the ability to handle the situation, the quality of leadership, the general preparedness, the ABG's commitment and its ability to prepare for independence.

*I have only two questions; Is ABG equipped with its development regarding human resource? Human resource is very important in the country's development when it gains independence so is it capable of developing our human resource? (Female, 23-34, North, rural)* <sup>105</sup>

The respondents' projections of the future seem to depend on various factors, such as how well-informed they felt, and their personal experience of first-hand information; what they had heard, particularly disquieting rumours or interpretations; and their level of education and exposure to more in-depth reasoning, such as considering economic factors. When the overall balance weighed towards uncertainty, the respondents were more likely to wish for postponement of the referendum date, until all of the population was deemed properly informed. Some respondents tried reasoning about the fear factor:

*What will, what might happen, from experiences in other countries, once they vote for independence, sometime later, a fight breaks out. I'm urging the Bougainvilleans*

*that this is our home, there is no one to fight with. We don't have an enemy here. (Male 55 and over, North rural)* <sup>106</sup>

Other respondents clearly stated that they did not feel that Bougainville was ready to be independent, mostly because of the economy and the level of education among its population due to the experiences of the crisis.

*What I for one want is, that we don't have to separate from Papua New Guinea yet because of everything that our small Bougainville does not have. In terms of educational institutions and health and what not, we still go back to Papua New Guinea to these big institutions and hospitals. We simply don't have all these things. (Male, 45-54, South, rural)* <sup>107</sup>

Questions were asked about public servants, such as teachers and the police, and the certainty of their positions and funding after the referendum.

*For us to go towards independence, there has to be public servants in place and people made known. That's one of the fears people have. What will happen if PNG government withdraws all its public servants? (Male 35-44, Central, rural)* <sup>108</sup>

Some respondents said the referendum was not about whether Bougainville gained independence or not; instead, it was about how people within the Bougainville government approached their work.

*I don't believe there's going to be any changes if Bougainville gains independence. Change will happen if the mindsets of our members are focused for the better in a positive way. (Male, 35-44, North, rural)* <sup>109</sup>

In some cases, the respondents bounced the interview questions back to the researchers – and to the ABG: How do we vote right? What is the right choice for Bougainville? What will the post-referendum period look like for Bougainville?

*I just want to ask ABG to inform the people on what kind of plans it has after referendum, so that they understand what they are doing and the plans ABG will move forward with. (Male 25-34, North rural)* <sup>110</sup>

In general, the interview respondents said the limited information about possible scenarios and strategies associated with the post-referendum period created uncertainties about the future, how they might vote and how they felt about possible change.

## QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS TO THE ABG

We asked interview respondents if they had any questions or comments for the ABG. This part of the interview got respondents talking. Even those who had had little to say and hesitated throughout the interview found that they had questions to ask the ABG. The overall picture gained from the respondents was that more information, more clarity, or more reassurance, was needed at all levels. The respondents' delight at being invited to ask questions was genuine because it translated into: "The ABG wants to listen to us." Responses were categorised into the "genuine" questions, which were most often about practical details or reassurances, requests to the ABG, and challenges to be communicated to the ABG.

### Genuine questions

Respondents asked for practical information and reassurance. Questions that came up repeatedly included those about the practicalities of the voting process; readiness for political independence, in particular Bougainville's economy; peace and security; and post-referendum scenarios. Some examples of questions and comments that respondents made in the interviews are outlined below.

### Practical questions about the process of voting

What exactly is the referendum? What does greater autonomy really mean? Is a date really set? How does the referendum date affect the elections? Can you explain the ballot paper, including questions and choice? Will the vote be confidential? Will you provide security during referendum?

*Government must do something to send officers or whoever to go into communities and clarify the voting system to the people. How they will vote, they have to explain and clarify well the process of voting, that is very important. Most communities do not fully understand, ABG members don't clarify them most of the time.* (Male, 55 or over, Central, rural) <sup>111</sup>

*Will they witness my vote when I go in to cast my vote?* (Female 25-34, South rural) <sup>112</sup>

### Readiness for potential independence

With all the problems we seem to have, are we ready for independence? How will we perform on the economic side? Who will pay public servants? Will we need to reopen the mine and would that be beneficial? Will that endanger peace?

*My question is; if ABG is successful with referendum and Bougainville mines are open, are all Bougainvilleans going to benefit from the resources? (Male, 18-24, North, rural) <sup>113</sup>*

### PNG's position and peace

What is PNG's position, and are there reasons to be fearful? If the referendum "fails", what then? Will PNG give us "another chance"? Can we be independent without the referendum?

*My question is; if this referendum, that everyone is talking about, if we don't achieve it, what will be the outcome? Are we not going to gain independence without referendum? (Male, 35-44 South, rural) <sup>114</sup>*

### Post-referendum process and scenarios

What will happen if we do get independence? Can you explain what comes with independence on a practical level?

*If we vote for independence, what is it that we are voting for, what will happen and what is that independent Bougainville that we are talking about? So a clear awareness and explanation to the people, so we build that confidence in them and become united and we just go for a decision and know after the referendum, and that is the Bougainville we voted for. (Female, 35-44 North, rural) <sup>115</sup>*

*That is my question. In order for any country to be independent, it has to have these three big things like currency, defence and foreign affairs. Before we become a country, we need to have those things in place. (Male, 25-34, North rural) <sup>116</sup>*

### Requests for reassurance

Respondents repeatedly asked questions about whether Bougainville would be okay, reflecting their feeling of vulnerability and need for reassurance. These questions were often linked to concerns about possible violence erupting again:

*One thing I want to ask ABG, my question is if we are serious for independence, what will ABG leaders like the president do for a better outcome, what better and peaceful means will happen in Bougainville? (Male, 25-34, South rural) <sup>117</sup>*

### Requests and challenges

Respondents made very practical requests for support and intervention from the ABG. They requested more information; better services, in particular in remote areas; educational institutions; and more broadly, for the Bougainville government to be closer to its people. Some examples of questions and comments that respondents made in the interviews are outlined below.



## More information

Can you give us more information and the means to access it? Can you improve the radio network? Can you provide more awareness sessions and visits to our remote area, and more printed reference materials?

*My other question is: can ABG find a way to help us communication wise, what ABG has created in the government in terms of awareness and communication. How will they communicate with us in the village? I want ABG to look for ways, like we already have ward members, if they can use our ward members to carry out ABG's awareness so we can have access and know what is happening within ABG. (Male, 18-24, North, rural) <sup>118</sup>*

## Provide more services

Other respondents' questions referred to basic support that the community needed. Can you help with water supply (islands), food (islands), roads, and education/colleges? Can you support small businesses? Can you fix the radio network?

*What I want the government to do is to build schools, build factories to make money and schools to improve the mindset of people, especially our future generation, instead of unnecessary spending on tangible items. The important thing is to build hospitals, schools and factories. (Male, 25-34, Central urban) <sup>119</sup>*

## Educational institutions

Young people in particular requested that tertiary education institutions be available within Bougainville.

*My question goes like this; Bougainville does not have colleges or universities. So we are preparing for referendum and, at the same time, are they going to build colleges and universities? (Female, young, North rural) <sup>120</sup>*

*I think that, when going towards referendum, ABG must have plans in place for schools and colleges for our children to remain back here in Bougainville to be educated, rather than looking elsewhere. (Female 25-34, North rural) <sup>121</sup>*

## Inclusivity, and for the ABG to be closer to its people

Overall, these requests echoed the main request to the ABG: "Be closer to us and show that you care for us". Requests for closeness and visible support were made particularly by

respondents living in remote areas, but we also heard similar requests from the war widows, another group that said they felt overlooked:

*I want them to help us with our kids, especially widow mothers. We can't afford school fees for our children. Some mothers don't earn enough income. We lack funds to access medical services in the hospitals. We don't have enough money. How will you help us with those issues? (Female 45-54, South rural) <sup>122</sup>*

*They have to come down and help at the grassroots level so they can be as the ones above them. They can't mistreat the grassroots, we want all to be on the same level. (Female, 55 and over, South urban) <sup>123</sup>*

Some of the respondents' questions to the ABG were clear challenges, made in somewhat exasperated or defiant tones. For example, they questioned the ABG's commitment to preparing people for the referendum, and to clarifying Bougainville's financial position.

## Clarity and commitment about finances

Respondents requested clarity about the money allocated to MPs and questioned the ABG's commitment to be free of corruption.

*We heard that every year the [MPs] receive fifty thousand Kina referendum grant. What are they doing with this money? That money they should bring it down to the community government members and they will go into their communities and make people ready for referendum day. (...) From time to time we hear about all kinds of funding, but every time they come down to us and tell us: "we don't have money". (Female, 45-54, South rural) <sup>124</sup>*

## ABG's position on independence

Respondents wanted to know if all ABG members supported the referendum and if most of them supported a vote for independence?

*All of you ABG members, are you united to bring about that referendum to the people of Bougainville? If you are united together, I want you to understand because some members have shown that they are not ready for referendum. They are causing problems, they are leading the way of separating people. That is why I am asking the ABG government of today. Are you well informed of your members? Are you all united? (Female 34-45, Central remote) <sup>125</sup>*



### Questioning the presence of foreign advisors

Access to independence was seen by respondents as an opportunity for Bougainville to “do things by themselves”. The presence of foreign advisors within the ABG was often criticised.

*My question is: can they remove the foreign advisors, more than 30, who are now in ABG? We don't need foreigners, that's all. (Female, 18-24, Central remote)* <sup>126</sup>

### The ABG's commitment and people's hope for a peaceful outcome

Respondents' first priority was peace. While they made many requests for addressing law and order issues in the community, their focus was often on reconciliation and preparing everyone to work towards a peaceful outcome of the referendum process. Respondents expressed a sense that much had been achieved and that Bougainville would move forward if a strong commitment was shown.

*In regards to the referendum, I would like to say that we, the women, want a free and fair referendum. We don't want another fight to happen. So, all these factions, they must reconcile and don't make their issues become excuses for the outcome of referendum. (Female, 45-54, South rural)* <sup>127</sup>

*Their issues cannot become their excuses. Issues like weapons disposal and all that. Bougainville must be clean and ready for referendum. Because we have come so far. This far we have come and now, we are at the point of no return. We are already seeing the light at the end of the tunnel. (Female, 45-54, South rural)* <sup>128</sup>

Towards the end of the interviews, a few respondents acknowledged the veterans and the police, and **thanked the ABG** for the services it had provided and for getting Bougainville as far as it had.

*I would like to say thank you to ABG for fighting very hard for a better government. I want to thank our president, Momis, for fighting hard to ask the National Government to grant us our wish. A very big thank you to ABG. (Male, 35-44, South, remote)* <sup>129</sup>

*I would like to acknowledge the work of the Police and the combatants, for working together to bring some change. A kind of move that is empowering our government. (Male, 25-34, Central, rural)* <sup>130</sup>

In summary, respondents across Bougainville appreciated the opportunity to provide feedback to the ABG. While some individuals were more vocal than others, all respondents demonstrated a strong sense of solidarity and loyalty to Bougainville and the ABG. Part A of this audience study, focused on respondents living in Bougainville, has highlighted key audiences and key concerns mentioned by respondents that are important to take into account in preparing for the referendum and the post-referendum period.

Part B of this audience study focuses on non-resident Bougainvilleans. This group has not received much attention in any previous studies. In the next section, we discuss the results from engaging this group to provide their thoughts on the available referendum information and their perspectives on the BPA implementation.



This second phase of the research study captured responses of Bougainvilleans who resided outside of Bougainville. This group's links and contributions play an important role in Bougainville's development and representation, and some of these respondents will also participate in the Bougainville referendum<sup>5</sup>. There is currently no statistical data available about how many people who identify as Bougainvillean live outside of Bougainville. This research was interested in capturing some of their perspectives, primarily to understand what might need to be addressed to engage and communicate with members of this population in relation to the referendum.

### Respondents' profile

Respondents included focus group participants and online survey participants.

Ten focus group discussions were facilitated in towns in PNG (Port Moresby, Goroka, Lae and Rabaul), as well as two focus groups in Brisbane, Australia. More than 60 people participated in the focus groups, with an almost equal number of men and women. The backgrounds of people were varied and the focus groups included students in many of the locations.

For the online survey respondents, 56% were men and 44% were women (n=166). More than half of these respondents (58.5%) had a university degree. Most (82.5%) resided in PNG, 11.4% in Australia, 2.4% in the Philippines and 1.8% in the Solomon Islands.

Data from respondents outside of Bougainville should not be directly compared with data from respondents within Bougainville. This is because the demographic profile concerning education levels and respondents' access to information sources was very different to those living in Bougainville. This was largely due to the data collection methods used to collect responses from NRBs.

### RELATIONSHIP TO BOUGAINVILLE, STATUS AND IDENTITY

The focus group participants identified as Bougainvilleans through family ties, whether directly by descent or indirectly through marriage to a Bougainvillean. Most participants were either born in Bougainville, or born outside Bougainville with at least one Bougainvillean parent. Their reasons for living away from Bougainville included leaving because of the crisis, marriage, work or study opportunities.

*We left because life was hard, some people are good with earning money, some of us are not. We left our village to live in a town, so we could find work and earn enough money for our children's school fees. (Female over 35, Rabaul Focus Group) <sup>131</sup>*

*Many of us left, because there are no higher education institutions in Bougainville. (Female over 35, Rabaul Focus Group) <sup>132</sup>*

Family ties included being in contact through visits, telephone, internet and social media. Visits were more regular for some respondents and less regular for others, but were reported as being especially important for funerals. Respondents said they found it easy to identify themselves as Bougainvilleans because it was "home". Importantly, the feeling of warmth and closeness to Bougainville became more pronounced as the focus group discussions unfolded. Distinct feelings of belonging and root connections were invoked. Even the word "patriotism" was sometimes used:

*Most of the Bougainvilleans who live outside of Bougainville, we are so patriotic about our island and we will all, I am pretty sure, vote for independence, not higher autonomy. (Female over 35, Port Moresby Focus Group)*

Feelings in relation to Bougainville identity often included trauma, anxiety, fear and regret linked to personal and family experience. History still had an impact on the respondents' situations and attitudes, and some expressed feelings of being uprooted, almost in exile. In parallel to this, however, the physical distance also gave some respondents a feeling of comparative safety.

*The only connection is social media and phone. My husband and them, they were all born during the crisis, so I think there is fear to go back to Bougainville. (Female over 35, Goroka Focus Group) <sup>133</sup>*

*I think that because we live outside, at least we are safe. And for some who live on the Island they are worried. (Female over 35, Goroka Focus Group) <sup>134</sup>*

<sup>5</sup> The process for their participation in the referendum will be jointly decided by the PNG and Bougainville governments and implemented by the Bougainville Referendum Commission. Also see: Regan (2018).



The trauma of the crisis was still felt by NRBs, and they often projected their own fear on their village counterparts:

*My in-laws, they live in the village and they don't talk to about it. Every time we start talking about home or the crisis, it is painful, we don't conclude the story. They feel the pain again and we end our stories in tears and silence, until another time when we meet again and someone tells another story on a different topic. And from there we start rebuilding again. There is never an end to our story. Our story never finishes because we always end up crying. (Female over 35, Goroka Focus Group) <sup>135</sup>*

*To some people it's still fresh. So, it's repeating again for their children you know, I mean for us who live outside of Bougainville I'd say we wouldn't be so affected. But for those people who have lived and have tried to rebuild their lives again, having to go through this again is just torment (...) our people at home, they don't want to talk about this. (Female over 35, Goroka Focus Group)*

One respondent mentioned feeling safer living anonymously outside of Bougainville because of his personal experience during the crisis. Respondents often spoke about how history had shaped today's Bougainville, and how the crisis had shaped the population's responsibility towards the region.

*Because it's been a cry from our forefathers that we would have independence, and we lost lives and the blood of these people are still crying, and we have to put to rest their cries by voting for independence. (Male over 35, Port Moresby Focus Group)*

We noted significant differences between the respondents in PNG and in Brisbane. The Brisbane groups featured a certain material comfort and a position as expatriates who depended neither on Bougainville nor on PNG. By contrast, the Bougainvilleans in PNG all shared the same concern about a possible change in their status if Bougainville became independent.

*What is this referendum going to bring for us as Bougainvilleans living in Papua New Guinea? Is it going to impact me with my job, living as an overseas person, like a Bougainvillean living in Papua New Guinea. Will we be treated as overseas contractors? (Female over 35, Port Moresby Focus Group)*

Links to the Bougainville territory were real and tangible for respondents. These links might take the form of financial support for school fees, health expenses, or simply living allowances to older family members. Respondents said they sent money regularly or for a particular occasion. More than two thirds of online respondents (68.4%) said they supported people living in Bougainville. Most of these (60.1% of all online respondents) provide financial support, ranging from less than 100 Kina to 5000 Kina per month.

For some, the home region is also perceived as a place of opportunities, particularly in business. Some respondents are involved in transport and trucking businesses, stores, or projects such as setting up schools. Because of their ongoing commitments and relationships, they feel close to the region. Yet, those living outside of PNG said they felt ignored by the ABG. In particular, the fact that they wouldn't – at this stage – be allowed to vote, brought up feelings of resentment:

*We are ignored by ABG: we can't vote; yet, we participate in the economy. (Female under 35, Brisbane Focus Group)*

*We are studying here to go back and help the place. But we can't vote while we are here, we cannot express our support. (Female under 35, Brisbane Focus Group)*

It should be noted that the Brisbane groups did not mention the PNG Government nor bring it into the discussion. They addressed only the ABG and the Bougainville population. However, other NRBs perceived the PNG government as one key to a peaceful outcome – as was the case in the analysis of BiBs in Part A.

*It's now in the hands of the National Government. If they want to see a peaceful outcome then they need to ensure that there is a good process in place. Have dialogue and listen to each other, then we will have a good understanding about the referendum. (Male under 35, Port Moresby Focus Group) <sup>136</sup>*

Among all respondents was a strong sense of identity as Bougainvilleans and a strong link to family and relatives in their home region, whom they communicate with on a regular basis.

## HOW NON-RESIDENT BOUGAINVILLEANS ACCESS INFORMATION ABOUT BOUGAINVILLE

All respondents were easily able to list their multiple sources of information. While the sources listed were similar, they were sometimes mentioned in a different order and depended on respondents' physical location and the locally available media. For instance, printed newspapers were more readily mentioned by PNG participants than overseas ones; the internet was used by all overseas, but only some (or irregularly) within PNG. Respondents had different opinions concerning the media's credibility. Unlike the data captured within Bougainville, for NRBs, social media occupies a more prominent position in respondents' information landscape; however, levels of trust in social media varied.

*It would be nice to bring all this information through the news, Post Courier or newspaper, because a lot of us don't listen to radio. (Female over 35, Goroka Focus Group)*

*We usually use our internet in the library, and in most cases some of us use Facebook to get just a bit of updates on what's going on in our island Bougainville but that's not quite reliable, most of the times we are left out or we are way behind in getting up to date information from Bougainville. (Student under 35, Rabaul Focus Group)*

*For us living outside, most of us we are on Facebook. I think some of the members in the ABG, they created a page for ABG or something like that. So sometimes, we go out there and find out the updates and happening in Bougainville. (Student under 35, Rabaul Focus Group)*

Social media provide respondents an immediate feeling of connectedness, of involvement. Members of social media groups said they belonged to a tangible group, and were given opportunities to interact, ask questions, make comments and receive answers.

*All the information gets circulated through the social media, especially Facebook and the Bougainville Forum. It is a space and opportunity for any Bougainvillean to share his or her opinion. (Female under 35, Lae Focus Group)*

Some respondents discussed the reliability of social media, and the necessity for critical awareness.

*Not every information is correct. The information provided on Facebook is not always correct, the full content is not provided with regards to the referendum, so sometimes I am not really satisfied with that. (Female over 35, Brisbane Focus Group) <sup>137</sup>*

For the majority of online respondents, accessing Facebook and social media was an everyday activity, and their preferred way of receiving information, as well as print media, online news media and the ABG website (see Fig. 12 and Fig. 13). Facebook is appreciated because it affords opportunities to respond and ask questions. The most mentioned Facebook groups were Bougainville Forum and Bougainville Voice. Newspapers and ABG media are appreciated for providing reliable information. Respondents requested regular updates and responses from ABG media to strengthen dialogue. They considered information about the referendum and the related processes as most important, and, more broadly, updates concerning the well-being and activities of people in Bougainville.

In all cases, any information respondents accessed about Bougainville was then further shared through social media, emails, telephone calls and meetings.

*For me, the information disseminates mostly via email, Facebook, phone and What's App. To connect with the people back at home is currently not the problem because they are having access to mobile phones, so they normally update me every now and then. I go to Facebook because I'm registered to Bougainville Forum, all the information that we disseminate is in the Bougainville Forum. (Student under 35, Lae Focus Group)*

Two fifths (40%) of online respondents stated that they were formally part of a Bougainville group. These include Bougainville community groups or associations in all focus group locations, as well as student groups at all PNG universities. Respondents said that many of these groups held regular, semi-formal meetings where information was shared and discussed. This was reported as a way for everyone to access information, whether they could connect to the internet or not.

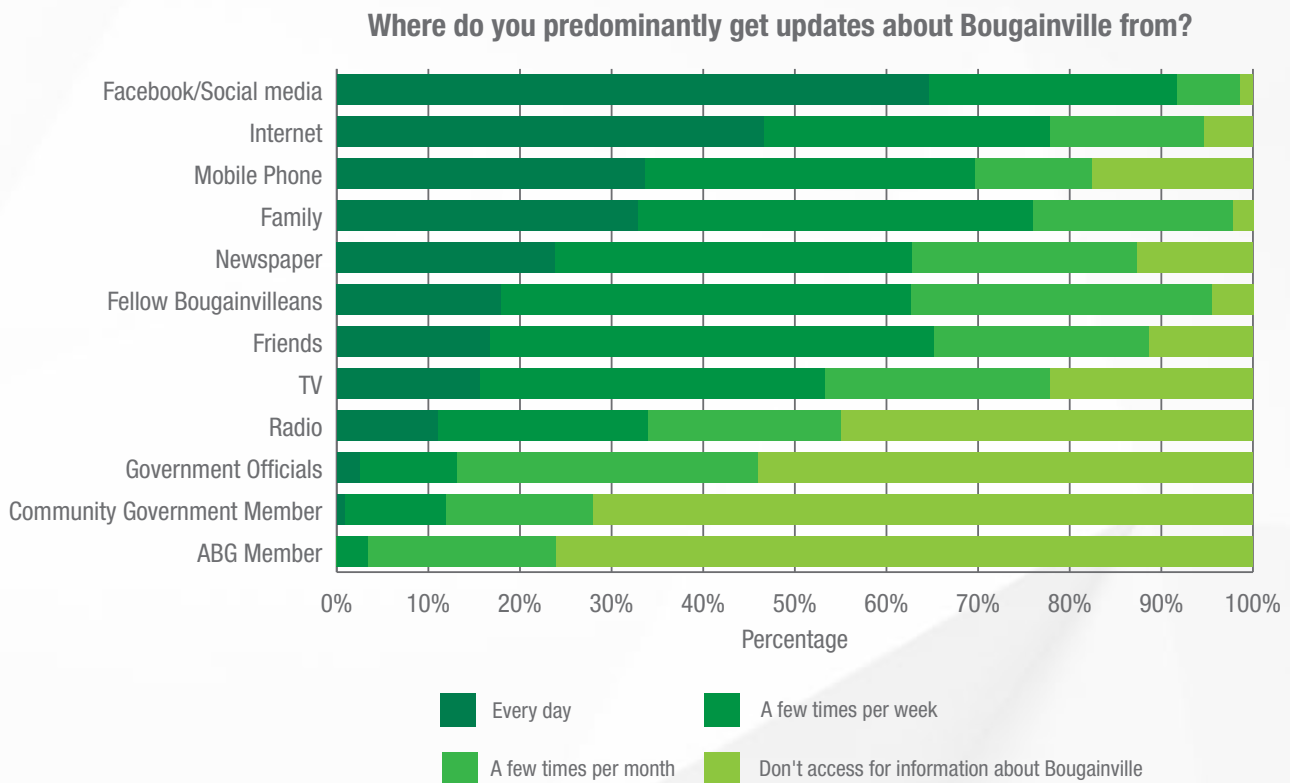


Fig 12. Where do you prodominantly get updates about Bougainville from?

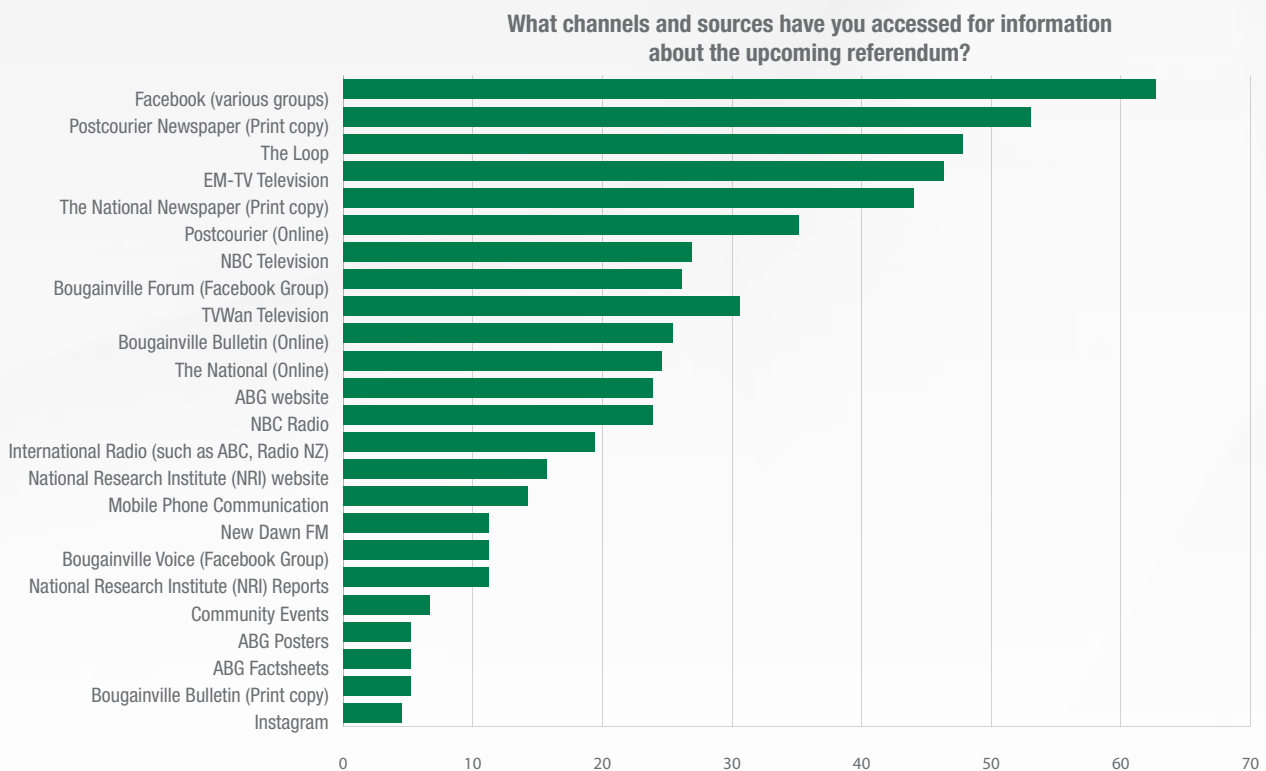


Fig 13. Channels and sources accessed for information about the upcoming referendum (NRBs online respondents)



Student respondents mentioned the information sessions organised at their university, including those organised by the PNG National Research Institute. The students appreciated the quality of information and informants, and the possibility given to them to ask questions and get satisfactory answers.

*We have a group from the Autonomous Region of Bougainville, some they are volunteers, they are from a group call East New Britain Bougainville Association so we use to get some information from them. (Female student under 35, Rabaul Focus Groups)*

*We also have another group, they came into our school and gave us some pamphlets about the referendum. There is information and questions inside these pamphlets, so it gives a clear meaning of what is happening or what will happen in Bougainville. (Student under 35, Lae Focus Group)*

Focus groups inside PNG appeared to be conscious of the awareness-raising efforts within Bougainville:

*In my opinion, there has been a lot of good information about the referendum, and some good discussions have come up (...). The awareness around this has been clear and all understand it. Most of them are supportive and happy about the referendum. (Male under 35, Port Moresby Focus Group) <sup>138</sup>*

Mobile phones were not always mentioned spontaneously, but were perceived by all respondents as a very useful and important way of communicating with people and receiving regular updates.

*Now people at home they have mobile phones, so the only way we can communicate with them is through the mobile phone. That way we get information on what is happening, especially with regards to the referendum. (Student under 35, Lae Focus Group) <sup>139</sup>*

While some NRBs said they could be reached via mass media, including social media, they expanded their reach by linking to locally organised social networks and groups. This practice is important in terms of reaching those who do not regularly access mass media sources or the internet. It also provides people with locally accessible spaces to discuss ideas and ask questions. These support networks could be harnessed to ensure that NRBs are informed about the various processes involved before and after the referendum.

## PERCEPTIONS OF CURRENT AWARENESS LEVELS

Unanimously, respondents wanted clear, reliable and updated information offering a complete picture of the current situation.

*An honest information on the advantage and disadvantage of both (1) the autonomous arrangements and (2) the independence of Bougainville. (Male, over 55, online respondent)*

*The most important element in the referendum is to let the people be aware of the different scenarios that may arise after the outcome is known. How the ABG intends to handle the outcome must be made known to the people to prevent misunderstandings that may lead to confusion, frustration and eventual division, key ingredients of a conflict. (Male, 25-34, online respondent)*

### Autonomy versus independence

When asked what they knew about the BPA and the referendum, the answers differed according to their groups: students and overseas residents often communicated quite sophisticated knowledge, while others were more hesitant in talking about this. The majority of online respondents felt knowledgeable about the referendum: 82.1% said they understood the difference between autonomy and independence.

Most respondents in the focus groups said the concepts of autonomy and independence were fairly familiar to them. However, respondents had some hesitations about the accurate meaning of 'greater autonomy'. They often asked whether that referred to the present situation, or if there was an extra step from the present situation to reach greater autonomy.

*I don't quite understand but from my understanding, it's the process towards independence, right? So, first step is like Autonomy governing. Looking after yourself. Okay Greater Autonomy is a bigger step from autonomy, next is referendum right, after that is independence. That's how I understood it but someone who is clear about the concepts can explain Autonomy and this process. (Female over 35, Port Moresby Focus Group) <sup>140</sup>*

In particular, respondents wanted practical information about the voting options and asked questions about the consequences of their vote and possible post-referendum scenarios.

*What is the difference between that greater autonomy and the independence? We know simply what they all mean, but deep rooted we do still not understand what they are and what they mean and what's going to happen to us if the Independence takes place. (Female over 35, Port Moresby Focus Group)*

*There are two options for the vote: independence and higher autonomy. So, if we vote for 'higher, greater autonomy' what is going to happen? And when we vote for 'independence' what is going to happen? (Female over 35, Port Moresby Focus Group) <sup>141</sup>*

These expressed uncertainties about 'greater autonomy' and different possible post-referendum scenarios are similar to those expressed by the respondents in Bougainville (discussed in Part A).

### **Voter eligibility and registration**

Most respondents were aware that the referendum voting age is 18, although some overseas respondents suggested that it could be lowered to 16. Most respondents were aware of the change of date to October 2019 – but then asked whether this would affect the deadline to register for the Common Roll. Similarly, respondents were aware of the change in referendum question (concerning the original explanation of having to vote by writing the words “yes” or “no”).

All respondents knew about registering on the Common Roll; some said their relatives at home could help with that, while others wondered where or how they would go to register.

*I also found out by asking my relatives that the people in the village who know us would have listed us on their roll. Because they fear that, if they let us enrol ourselves from outside, other people may also give their names. If our own relatives at home enrol us, I think that's the safest thing to do because they know us, they know that their children are outside. (Female over 35, Port Moresby Focus Group)*

Respondents in the Brisbane focus groups expressed disappointment that, at this stage, they could only vote while in PNG; they requested a process that could allow them to vote from their current location. Student respondents who are only temporarily in Australia were particularly vocal on this matter.

### **'Referendum-readiness'**

The expression “referendum-ready” was interpreted in different ways by respondents, often with statements or with questions:

*It means that the peace agreement has been implemented fully. (Female, 35-44, online respondent)*

*ARoB must have a good law and order, peace and reconciliation, full weapons disposal and a stronger economy. (Male, 25-34, online respondent)*

*It means people are having reconciliations among themselves and handing over their weapons or arms, and getting ready to vote for referendum without any divisions or hatred. (Male, 25-34, online respondent)*

*It means: are we really ready to have a referendum? Do we have everything in order that will help support this stand we are about to take? Are we capable? Can we do this as a people? (Female, 25-34, online respondent)*

Responses related to both people and the government being ready, and mostly focused on peace and reconciliation processes, or the Bougainville economy.

### **Post-referendum decision-making process**

It is known by many that, after the vote, the final decision has to be ratified by the PNG Parliament (40% of online respondents say that the final decision is with the PNG parliament), though there is some discussion as who has the final say:

*It's not clear right, like after referendum then I think we'll wait again. They will table it [in the PNG parliament]; it's another long process again before we actually receive the final stage of referendum. (Female over 35, Goroka Focus Group) <sup>142</sup>*

*The National Government might handover some power to Bougainville, to give some power to run the province. An example I mentioned is, for example, that they would give some power around mining so Bougainville would be the ministry of mining. (Male under 35, Lae Focus Group) <sup>143</sup>*

In one of the focus groups respondents discussed the worry that Bougainville only had four MPs in the PNG Parliament that would ratify in favour of independence. However, the focus group reached the consensus that, “if there is a massive vote for independence, non-Bougainville MPs will not vote against the population's wishes” (Male over 55, Brisbane Focus Group).

Most respondents thought that greater autonomy was Bougainville's present status; therefore, only a vote for independence would bring about change. All focus groups often spontaneously started discussing possible post-referendum scenarios: positive visions were detailed as a landscape "at the end of a long road" that honoured the past, and calls for "patriotism" were heard.

### Post-referendum period

Some respondents said that, for them, the issue was not autonomy or independence, but whether Bougainvilleans were ready for the vote.

*I think the people probably do not need much information as far as I am concerned. What they probably need to be assured of is that our government, the ABG, is doing enough to prepare us for independence. The issue is not so much about that we want independence or not, the issue is: are we ready for it because we are going to vote, is the government ready, are our people ready? (Male over 35, Port Moresby Focus Group)*

Concerns were expressed regarding the early days, the start and initial phase of the potential independence period, and the relationship between Bougainville and PNG:

*How will we get started? My fear is, are we going to have the basis to start, are we going to rely on the PNG government, or are we going to rely on foreign aid? We can't do that, and that's my fear. (Female over 35, Lae Focus Group)*

*My main concern is PNG Government will not give his blessing to give us independence despite the results showing majority or all of us voted for independence. (Male, 25-34, online respondent)*

Some respondents voiced doubts or reservations, particularly about Bougainville's "independence-readiness" on an economic or financial level.

*Financial stability for a new emerging country, that's one of the big issues. Because we never know. What if we go 'yes' and then we move forward but then PNG withdraws its services. Where do we get aid from? (Female over 35, Goroka Focus Group) <sup>144</sup>*

Bougainville's resources were often described as "young", not developed enough yet, or only exploited on a small scale and therefore insufficient to ensure revenues at a national level:

*People are very active in running their small businesses (...) but big businesses, they are not there, big institutions they are not there, so there is little money going around. But for us to be self-sufficient, we need more money there on the island to help us do a lot more. (Rabaul Focus Group)*

Another concern was the security aspect, the maintenance of peace and the need to avoid the much-dreaded return to violence. Respondents preferred the word "hope" to the word "confidence". Fears brought back ghosts from the past: for older respondents, their own experience, and for younger ones, what they grew up hearing around them.

*I am concerned that some areas might not take part and that might lead to factions being formed amongst clan, tribes or even the province as a whole. (Male, 25-34, online respondent)*

*We are hopeful. We are just hopeful that whatever the decision, whatever the outcome is come the referendum we are only hoping for peace, that's all. Like just peace, there can't be arguments. We don't want history to repeat itself. (Female over 35, Goroka Focus Group)*

A concern specific for the NRBs inside PNG was how independence would change their status, and how this might affect practical issues such as passports and citizenship, position within PNG and work permits.

*I'm a woman from another province married to a Bougainvillean - will they allow me in? For us women to gain access, because according to their custom women own the land, and not men. But our custom in the Highlands is different. So, will their government allow women from different provinces in PNG to gain entry into Buka or not? That is one of my question. (Female over 35, Goroka Focus Group) <sup>135</sup>*

NRBs appeared somewhat more sceptical than BiBs with regards to Bougainville's economic readiness and the processes involved. At the same time, most NRBs expressed confidence and hope in Bougainville's future.

### Hopes for a peaceful outcome

More than half of online respondents (56.8%) said they were either very confident or confident that a peaceful outcome would be achieved in the process of the referendum.



*We are ready... I believe that the work that is done on the ground, it has progressed, and weapons disposal has been done, reconciliations, a lot of reconciliations in the clans, in the families has been done as we were informed on the social media and yes, we believe in ourselves that things will go well. (Male over 35, Port Moresby Focus Group)*

*My hope is for Bougainville to be a strong and Independent Island nation. Our people have struggled in the past, it is our time to show that we cannot take their fight for granted. (Female, 25-34, online respondent)*

*I'm hopeful that Bougainville can one day be like other small island nations such as Fiji, Vanuatu or New Zealand. To be the global world leaders that our forefathers and foremothers envisioned for us. To see improvement in infrastructure, easy access to basic services, finances and security. (Female, 25-34, online respondent)*

Independence was also seen by respondents as a way to mend the relationship with PNG, a way of solving old disputes, or of honouring a long-time relationship:

*There should be peace. The people of Bougainville should be happy that Papua New Guinea government is giving independence to Bougainville. This process will give peace to the men who fought in this civil war. (Female over 35, Goroka Focus Group) <sup>146</sup>*

*It doesn't mean that, when we get independence, PNG will cut off its services to Bougainville, no, we will still have that relationship where they come and help. And we look up to PNG as our father or mother something like that. (Male over 35, Port Moresby Focus Group)*

Overall, NRBs said they kept up to date with information as much as they could and were invested in Bougainville's future. There were differences, however, in how respondents perceived the quality of information they received.

## PERCEPTIONS OF INFORMATION QUALITY

NRBs' perception of the quality of the information appears to depend on the audience segment, as well as the location of the focus group. For instance, in Rabaul, the groups of students said they felt well informed, while the other group, composed of Bougainvilleans in search of better work opportunities, did not.

*I only heard about the referendum when I went for holidays in the village and that's when they made a verbal declaration regarding the referendum. That's the only time I got information about the referendum, but in Rabaul there has not been any information provided for the referendum. (Male over 35, Rabaul Focus Group) <sup>147</sup>*

Some respondents were not really satisfied with the information received, either for themselves, or on behalf of their village counterparts within Bougainville:

*In my opinion, during my last visit to the village, information about referendum, about independence and higher autonomy - I was not that satisfied with the information, some of the information has not reached especially those living in the villages. I blame the committees carrying out the awareness on the referendum - I don't think a lot of people have received information. (Female under 35, Port Moresby Focus Group) <sup>148</sup>*

Suggested improvements included better targeting the content and the media type. For content, we heard requests for a complete, accurate picture.

*Nobody has seen a document outlining the pros and cons of independence and autonomy. (Female over 35, Brisbane Focus Group)*

*The picture is not complete, it is fragmented; we are not sure that we know enough, all of us. (Male over 35, Rabaul Focus Group)*

*Otherwise the forms of media that we are getting information from, when we read it like 'okay, so what about this?' You see, we don't have anyone there to answer our questions. We are asking ourselves, we are assuming a lot of things and we don't want to assume. We want straight answers. (...) Yes, so Google is okay. It's just telling us what it is. But Google cannot answer our questions. (Female over 35, Goroka Focus Groups)*

Suggestions for improvements to media included updating the ABG website and ensuring that people could send questions and get responses. Respondents said they thought the information level was different for people inside and outside of Bougainville. Most respondents outside of Bougainville, in particular, the online respondents, felt that they had better access to official information, for example, through the ABG website, social media that circulate information, and newspapers. This data may be biased due to the distribution of the survey via these channels, and the fact that we accessed focus group respondents predominantly in urban areas.

*What happens is that, the ones living in towns, we receive information about referendum through social media and telecommunication, and we go back with this information to the communities and update our people in rural villages on what is currently happening in the region. (Male under 35, Port Moresby Focus Group) <sup>149</sup>*

*I have friends that I discuss this thing with; referendum. And from our discussions we found out that a lot of Bougainvilleans who live outside of Bougainville, we are well aware of this referendum, and it's a challenge just for those who are back at home whom the awareness about referendum has not reached like people in the rural areas. (Male under 35, Port Moresby Focus Group)*

The level of education is mentioned as an issue for those in Bougainville. Respondents expressed concern that people might be provided biased information, and be told to vote for independence, contrary to the understanding of a fair and free voting process.

*The information on the voting process being fair and free must be made known. We say fair and free but what exactly do we mean? What will make it fair? What will make it free? Do people in the villages know the meaning of this? (Female, 25-34, online respondent)*

Some NRBs kept speaking up for their village counterparts rather than for themselves, wanting to pass on the message to the research team on their behalf. However, some NRBs were particularly focused on their status after independence and therefore did not agree that they were better informed than those in Bougainville:

*I think the families or relatives living on Bougainville, they are more informed than those of us who are living outside Bougainville. I can understand from my own family's perspective that every one of them are*

*for the referendum. But I for one not having enough information, it is quite confusing to know whether I am for the referendum or not. (Female over 35, Port Moresby Focus Group)*

Information was perceived by respondents as available inside Bougainville, such as radio, mobile phones, the **Bougainville Bulletin** or factsheets. However, respondents also commented that not all areas received the same amount of information and that many individuals and communities relied on word of mouth and information relayed informally by family and friends.

*When I come to visit, they ask me for information, they ask me questions. (Female over 35, Brisbane Focus Group)*

*They don't know, they ask me as a visitor. We need awareness to go deeper. It depends on the local member, some take it seriously, to inform their people. (Female over 35, Brisbane Focus Group)*

All respondents agreed that young people needed more information: both older and younger respondents said the younger part of the population was less informed, but also less able to process the concepts and information to form their own opinion. Arguments put forward for this concern were the lack of education opportunities, lack of prospects that generally demotivate young people, and cultural attitudes that young people's opinions are subordinate to their elder's opinions. When asked what respondents thought young people were feeling, the general answer was "confusion" because young people found it hard to make sense of present situation.

The following suggestions with regards to information access were made by respondents:

- Use existing networks: church works well and gathers people; priests know their people and can reach them effectively, including identifying who is not getting the information.
- Train the people who will pass on information well, so that they can answer questions, and train them in how to best present the information.
- Fix radio and mobile networks, and radio towers; and make mobile phone and internet more affordable.
- Use radio to communicate real-time, complete information, as "warm" media with trusted voices; all Bougainvilleans, even those living elsewhere, should hear the same message.

*Identify Bougainvilleans in each PNG province, for example, they should be time allocated for them to go to 'Radio Goroka,' 'KBK'. If that person is here, then the government of Bougainville must appoint them to talk on behalf of the Bougainvilleans. (Male over 35, Goroka Focus Group) <sup>150</sup>*

*We need to increase the network coverage area to places where there is no coverage. (Male under 35, Port Moresby focus Group) <sup>151</sup>*

*I think we need to drop our data rates in terms of video call rates. We should see more communication about the referendum in Buka. (Female over 35, Port Moresby Focus Group) <sup>152</sup>*

The suggestions made by NRBs about media and communication resonate with those of the BiBs: both groups of respondents expressed the need for more in-depth information that targets specific key audiences, such as youth, and makes media more accessible for people where possible.

## COMMENTS ON BOUGAINVILLE'S PERCEIVED STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

Respondents found it easy to comment on the current referendum process, on Bougainville's perceived assets and weaknesses, and on the ABG. Most respondents agreed that the start of independence would be hard work:

*A lot of things need to change for a brand-new nation to progress. Law and order, urban drift, education, health, infrastructure. The core developments need to be priority for real progress. (Female, 45-54, online respondent)*

The NRBs within PNG seemed to share the view that the PNG government was not honouring the financial part of the peace agreement:

*The failure of the PNG Government to provide the necessary funding needed to conduct the referendum and not ratifying the final outcome of the referendum. (Male, 35-44, online respondent)*

*The funds, which the National Government is supposed to give to ABG to run this process, are being delayed.*

*Ministers of the National Parliament assigned to work together with ABG are still requesting the government to speed up process to allocate or release these funds quickly to ABG so they can do their work. (Male under 35, Port Moresby Focus Group) <sup>153</sup>*

Perceptions of Bougainville's strength and weaknesses were mixed and demonstrated the changes Bougainville is undergoing, with respondents commenting on both hindrances and opportunities in the implementation of the BPA.

### Perception of Bougainville's assets

Respondents unanimously agreed that Bougainville had access to varied and proven resources, though most still needed to be developed; they also acknowledged sensitivities around mining and discussed possible alternatives.

*Bougainville is very rich. That we can't deny. We have so many opportunities apart from mining. We can look to agriculture and there is a lot of potential, a lot of opportunities on the land that we can use. (Female over 35, Port Moresby Focus Group) <sup>154</sup>*

*Panguna mine is a sensitive subject to many people in Bougainville and to myself too. I feel that a good way in getting revenue for the country is through tourism, we have a lot of sites and places that can be used to generate a lot of revenues. (Student under 35, Lae Focus Group)*

Other opportunities were seen by respondents as waiting to be further developed: tourism, agriculture, sustainable farming and stock/chicken/fisheries. Some respondents mentioned that they wanted the cocoa industry, a new-found source of pride, to be strengthened.

*We have the best chocolate in the world. (Female under 35, Brisbane Focus Group)*

*Bougainville has the resources to produce and earn its own income, like cocoa, copra, marine resources like sea cucumber, Bougainville has resources like mining, we can be fully engaged in mining which are Bougainville resources. (Male under 35, Port Moresby Focus Group) <sup>155</sup>*







From the perspective of respondents, reopening the mine should be done by Bougainvilleans alone, and must be done on acceptable negotiated terms:

*Share fairly: not just landowners, not just government. It needs to be done with structure, plan, leaders. Involve all stakeholders.” (Female over 35, Brisbane Focus Group)*

*With regards to finance in Bougainville, when the copper mine was operating, we did not benefit from it, so if we achieve the referendum, we would like a share in the mine profits among all Bougainvilleans. (Female over 35, Brisbane Focus Group) <sup>156</sup>*

An issue important to most respondents was securing government income, by creating taxes for example, to equitably share the benefit from Bougainville’s natural resources.

*To me the government is struggling, it cannot establish schools too. It cannot build roads, it cannot build houses for teachers and nurses in rural areas. If it did that, it should be very nice. But at the moment ABG is unable to because there doesn’t seem to be money. They must work in a way that money comes into Bougainville. (Student under 35, Rabaul Focus Group)*

*Bougainvilleans would be able to benefit fully from their natural resources if the ABG would be able to generate enough revenue to fund its public service machinery. (Male, 35-44, online respondent)*

Some respondents said they thought that financial support from the international community and donors could be positive because the money might go straight from PNG to Bougainville; such funds were viewed as an asset to “kick start independence”. Some mentioned the danger of mismanagement of funds and the need to not rely on donations.

The Bougainville population was seen by respondents as having proven its resilience and resourcefulness during the crisis. Repeated suggestions were made about the need to tap in to this resource, to channel its energy, for great results. An important component of the Bougainville identity that was mentioned was self-confidence and the strong sense of culture, which was partly traditional and partly reinforced at the time of the crisis: “We can use the experience of the crisis as a strength: we fought for our place” (Male over 35, Brisbane Focus Group).

In that view, the local population was seen as Bougainville’s main asset.

*Even when we had blockades during the crisis, people were creative, so I strongly believe that people will come up with something to support Bougainville’s economy. (Male over 35, Port Moresby Focus Group) <sup>157</sup>*

*There are so many ways that we can make money, we just need to pull the right people together so we can capitalize on them. So, I don’t doubt Bougainville will do well after the referendum. We have the financial capacity because we have powered Papua New Guinea from the 70s, 80s, 90s until the crisis. (Student under 35, Lae Focus Group)*

Fears of resurging violence were balanced by the “reality of Bougainville’s love for peace”. Indeed, the experience of the crisis was seen by some respondents to offer a guarantee for peace:

*I don’t think Bougainville will have any problems after the referendum because they are peace loving people; the crisis happened because there was a reason. We cannot repeat another crisis; the reconciliation process which is going on has set a pathway for the people to recognize themselves as united people. (Student under 35, Lae Focus Group)*

Some respondents said Bougainville’s past made it a leading province in PNG; however, Bougainville’s present made it an emerging province that “just” needs to get back to its “former glory”.

*That brand Bougainville. When someone says ‘Bougainville,’ they think of the ‘Panguna Mine.’, but the positive side is now cocoa. We have the chocolate festival and the ‘Queen Emma chocolate. (...) So now when you say ‘Bougainville’, people are thinking chocolate (...) I think that’s one of the strengths. (Female over 35, Goroka Focus Group)*

Historically, the crisis started because of Panguna, but, for some, “it was just a catalyst, because of the artificial bond to PNG and the old colonial heritage” (Male over 35, Brisbane Focus Group).

*We wanted independence in the 1970s and in 1974 they gave us provincial government and then we still cried for it and in 2005 the national government gave us autonomous government. There is nothing*

*else after autonomous government. The only thing is independence so we don't want higher autonomy, we want to be independent. (Male over 35, Port Moresby Focus Group)*

Bougainville was seen by some respondents as path-breaking: it was an example of the practice of greater autonomy and the ABG's ability to run a government.

Scholarships, for example, were mentioned as a Bougainville asset that supported tertiary education:

*I am happy with one of ABG's programs, ABG liaised with an Australian University through a scholarship program where, every year, four students go to the university to study. ABG is investing in human assets for them to come back and educate the people. (...) That is a strength for Bougainville and I am happy. (Male under 35, Port Moresby Focus Group) <sup>158</sup>*

Many NRB respondents commented on Bougainville's strength and expressed their confidence in Bougainville being able to stand by itself, with the necessary experiences and skills to be successfully independent.

#### **Perceived weaknesses in Bougainville**

Visible examples of Bougainville's weaker points mentioned by respondents were the lack of infrastructure, schools and health facilities, and the poor condition of the roads. Respondents said Bougainville's image, particularly the image of its politicians and public servants, was tarnished by rumours of corruption, misuse of funds and financial mismanagement. Respondents underlined the need for transparency and for accountability to donors and citizens.

Many respondents wanted to raise the bar in the fight against corruption and wanted public servants to be role models. While respondents acknowledged that Bougainville's leadership in the past 15 years had focused on restoring and keeping peace, they wanted further improvements, with a focus on building the economy.

Comments about the breakdown of law and order linked concerns about proper weapons disposal with idleness and substance abuse due to poor education levels and work opportunities.

*Main concern is that many people have limited understanding of the decision that they are to make. The implementation of the peace agreement has been slow moving with many factions still to make amends with each other. (Male, 35-44, online respondent)*

*Are we really, really sure that our people back home do not have any more grudges against each other, or don't have any grudges against the PNG government? Are we really sure that all the weapons have been disposed? (Male over 35, Goroka Focus Group)*

A large majority of respondents said they regretted the perceived lack of "respect" – for people, for institutions, for values – that they saw as the consequence of the lack of infrastructure and opportunities. Some respondents told their own stories of leaving Bougainville to find work as examples.

*Our youth is bored, helpless, hopeless: they resort to drugs and violence out of frustration; they need to be put back on tracks towards hope, self-esteem. (Male over 35, Brisbane Focus Group)*

*They say those people are taking drugs and alcohol too because government is not motivating them to be active that's where they go into those things to keep themselves busy. (Male over 35, Rabaul Focus Group)*

Anxiety over law and order issues extended to questions about the relationship with the PNG government, or even within Bougainville itself, because of "small-minded regionalism", which, exploited by trouble-makers, could lead to "intra-Bougainville" violence:

*In the event that it doesn't go as some major groups plan, full Independence, my concern is that those who are dissatisfied with the result may disturb the peace by using firearms and harassing the communities. Reconciliation and arms disposal in all areas must be achieved. (Female, 25-34, online respondent)*

*We need to work together when it comes to addressing law and order in Bougainville, and better awareness and information must reach some of those people for them to change so that there is peace. (Female over 35, Goroka Focus Group) <sup>159</sup>*

Some respondents said they hoped for a better level of teacher training and resources. They thought teachers should be good role models, but some were perceived as lacking standards, and needed to be better supported and monitored. Respondents acknowledged that there was more work to be done, and investment in education and young people was seen as one key component that needed to be addressed.



## PERCEPTIONS OF THE ABG'S PERFORMANCE

Most respondents found it easy to comment on the ABG's strengths and weaknesses. About half of the online respondents (49.1%) said they were not, or not at all, satisfied with the ABG. NRBs were more critical of the ABG's performance than BiBs were, but many NRBs also remained neutral in their comments (28.4%) (see Fig 9).

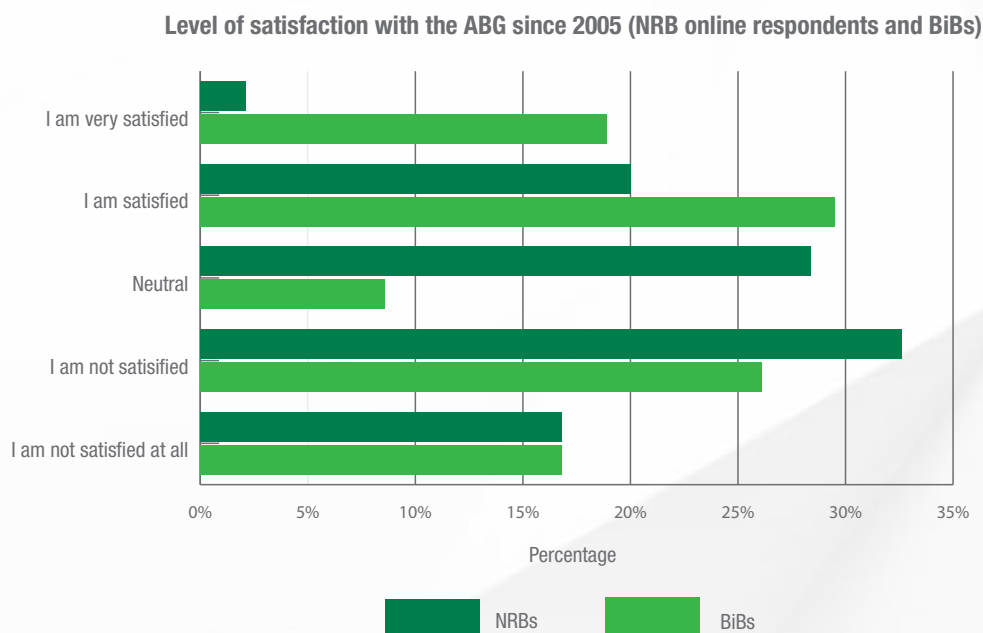


Fig 14. Level of satisfaction with the ABG since 2005 (NRB online respondents compared to BiBs)

NRBs' positive points about the ABG were similar to the points made by respondents in Bougainville. The common narrative was one of ABG having the momentous task of re-establishing peace and helping the region to recover from a time of trauma and destruction; the ABG started from scratch in a place in ruins, physically and emotionally, in difficult circumstances, with no perceived real good support from PNG. Respondents' spoke about the ABG being helped by great people, among whom Momis is a "Founding Father" figure. Beyond all that, respondents saw the ABG as "our own government", better than any outside government.

*I'm satisfied to a certain extent for example - we have our own Parliament House, parliamentarians, mining laws, Bougainville police force, referendum office, no riot in parliament. (Female, 35-44, online respondent)*

*There are no tangible evidences of the funds from the PNG national, as to how and where ABG spent the money which amounts to a couple of billion kina. (Male, over 55, online respondent)*

*There are some setbacks in all the different governing bodies but Bougainville have actually displayed a strong governing leadership. (Female over 35, Goroka Focus Group) <sup>160</sup>*

*To me there is not enough money circulation and government doesn't have money, and government resources are poor. That's the one that hold people down. We want government to be more active to uplift the people. (Student under 35, Rabaul Focus Group)*

On the side of weaknesses, respondents listed perceptions that the achievements to date were not enough: more efforts were needed and expected. Respondents said rumours of mismanagement and misappropriation of funds were widely circulated:

The ABG at times was perceived as "too remote from the population", not putting enough pressure on its members for local actions. Some respondents were suspicious about nepotism and corruption:

*They need to get out of their offices, get to the people and explain to them in the simplest way what the referendum is, how it will affect the people or if they say 'yes' and if they say 'no.' They need to tell them if Bougainville is stable enough to go ahead. All that kind of information. They need to get out. (Female over 35, Goroka Focus Group)*

The confusion in information and the gaps in communication were often interpreted as reflecting the way the ABG functioned:

*The information circulates, but never complete, always in little pieces. You are never sure you know everything. Even for NRBs with access to social media: information coming from ABG is not regular, not complete, it gives you the feeling you don't know it all. And you don't know about rumours, are they true?" (Female over 35, Brisbane Focus Group)*

*It's the duty of the ABG people to come outside to the provinces and do their work. If you get outside and do your work, you get good result. (Female over 35, Goroka Focus Group) <sup>161</sup>*

Generally, respondents wanted to see the ABG be closer to people and be as transparent as possible about its various processes. Communication and information were key components noted, including the need to provide ways for people to give feedback, have dialogue and provide comments to the ABG.

## QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS TO THE ABG

Respondents were eager to pass on comments and questions to the ABG. The main questions were variations on the theme of: What will happen to Bougainville? Give us information. Respondents said they wanted some form of reassurance about the future.

**What are the assurances for safety during and after the referendum? What is in place? How credible are the present reconciliations and initiatives of weapons disposal?**

*[Can] ABG look for some funds and a good way for weapons disposal, instead of allowing people to surrender their weapons; because we are not sure if the weapons are real or homemade weapons they just*

*built them and come to leave them. (Male under 35, Port Moresby Focus Group) <sup>162</sup>*

*I don't think we are ready to receive the referendum, not until a lot of reconciliation takes place. There were reconciliations that took place in South Bougainville, Central and North. But are we truly reconciled with one another? There are still a lot of families that I know that are not fully reconciled. (unknown, Port Moresby Focus Group)*

**Can you do better on the level of infrastructure and tertiary education?**

*For the economy of the country, I think ABG must first carefully consider raising its economic status to an expected level agreed with the National Government, and to a point where it can sustain itself, and that it can hold a referendum and support itself as a country (Male under 35, Port Moresby Focus Group)*

*The big thing our members need to focus on is educating young kids or supporting them onto higher institutions where they are at the moment. They have to engage them in tertiary institutions so that, with the knowledge gained, they can go back and support the development in Bougainville. (Male under 35, Lae Focus Group) <sup>163</sup>*

**What will happen to NRBs within PNG, practically?**

*When I'm living outside Bougainville, the ABG needs to come up with some ways on how I will go back or stay where I am now. For example, if I become a citizen of Bougainville after gaining independence, ABG will need to arrange for me to go back or to stay here in Goroka. (Male over 35, Goroka Focus Group) <sup>164</sup>*

*What will happen to our spouses and our children? Are they going to break us away? Those of us that are married outside? (Female over 35, Goroka Focus Group)*

**How can we vote?**

NRBs overseas reiterated their request – or demand – to be allowed to vote, invoking their economic participation, or their status as students and their future value for their region. Student respondents saw themselves as a resource for their country.



*Make sure we overseas can vote. Especially students, we are outside of Bougainville temporarily, as an investment for the future. (Female under 35, Brisbane Focus Group)*

*I hope there are some possible ways the government of Bougainville can arrange for us to vote just like Papua New Guinea citizens vote or arrange specific locations for Bougainvilleans living within PNG to cast their votes and send back the ballot papers. (Male over 35, Goroka Focus Group) <sup>165</sup>*

*How would the votes be tallied? Who will be responsible for tallying the votes? Who will be supervising the counts? Who is eligible to vote? How do we vote if we are not in AROB? (Female, 18-24, online respondent)*

The online survey featured numerous specific questions about the voting process, including the vote modalities for NRBs. The large majority of online respondents (95.8%) said they planned to vote in the referendum.

In summary, NRBs demonstrated a strong loyalty to Bougainville and they maintained their connections to their home region. Some of their responses resonated with the responses from people residing in Bougainville, while others, such as questions about their status, were distinct for this group of respondents. NRBs provided support mechanisms to people residing in Bougainville and are a key group that needs to be considered with regards to the dissemination of information and the referendum process. Their responses in this research study provide some indication about how they would like to receive information and the mechanisms for further disseminating information among this group.



# DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this study, we have discussed Bougainvilleans living inside and outside of Bougainville. While our focus was on people living in Bougainville, the ABG recognises the strong connection and contribution of those Bougainvilleans living outside the region to Bougainville, and this study has attempted to uncover their unique access to information channels and information needs. This is in particular the case for those currently studying outside of Bougainville, as they provide an important human resource for the province.

## KEY INFORMATION AND KEY AUDIENCES

Within Bougainville, information and access to information channels are considered an important component for a democratic and peaceful Bougainville. The research demonstrates that there is a concern among respondents for everyone to be informed and to make an informed choice during the referendum. 'Leaving no one behind' is an important part of Bougainville's ongoing peace according to respondents.

In addition, this research demonstrates that while knowledge levels around the BPA and the referendum have increased over the past few years due to a variety of communications activities, there are gaps and uncertainties with regards to in-depth knowledge about the processes, including post-referendum processes. Responses with regards to reconciliations and weapons disposal in this study were mixed, and this is also evident in the uncertainties that certain key audiences expressed.

- ▶ As pointed out as a result of the 2015 study, the **engagement of key audiences** who might be more vulnerable and less included in the process continues to be important. Progress has been made with regards to the engagement of **women and youth, and this needs to continue**. But strongly highlighted in this study is the need to also engage **remote communities** in the ongoing dialogue and for everyone to be aware of these activities, so that everyone has confidence in everyone else's ability to participate in the political process. **Veterans** are an important group to engage to reassure ongoing peace.
- ▶ Rather than seeing these groups as key audiences it is important to consider the structural barriers and opportunities these key audiences might experience, and **consider media and communication strategies as part of a holistic approach, that enhances their visibility and inclusion**. This includes, for example, acknowledging the key role that women play in Bougainville's society and building on the matrilineal tradition (see Heathcote 2014).

- ▶ There is a need for the population to understand not just the basic concepts of the political process or the Bougainville Peace Agreement but also **possible post-referendum scenarios**. This finding confirms what has been proposed in recent studies led by the PNG National Research Institute (Bell & McVeigh 2018) and highlights the need for voters to understand the possible steps the governments might take depending on possible referendum outcomes. In addition, this approach to providing further information would clearly manage the risk of possible disappointment and therefore contribute to the aim of maintaining peace.

## INFORMATION MATERIALS AND MEDIA CHANNELS

The research demonstrates that printed materials such as factsheets and the **Bougainville Bulletin** have been well received by communities, and by all key audiences. These materials are often seen as useful support for face-to-face dialogues because they can be re-read and considered, and offer information in a format that is seen as credible and authoritative. As mentioned above, there is a further need to engage with information about possible benefits of voting for independence or greater autonomy and how the various post-referendum scenarios would be managed by both governments.

Radio remains one of the preferred media and there is much need to continue upscaling radio coverage within Bougainville and to increase awareness around accessing SW radio. This would provide opportunities for regular up-to-date information via a channel that the population trusts. Audiences note a preference for interactive talkback programming that offers the opportunities for questions. Radio, together with face-to-face communication and community awareness sessions, remain the preferred ways of receiving information.

- ▶ A key recommendation, supported by many respondents is **the need to engage local and existing networks more strongly**. This includes in particular **the ward members and the church groups**. Not only are they trusted by the community, they are also in a position to respond in local language and are closer to people; in addition, they can **create a safe space for asking questions**, an important feature in ensuring that key information is understood by people. This recommendation would also support the above recommendation of engaging with key target groups that can be accessed within their own groups within the communities.

- Overall, it is recommended to **use trusted media, such as print, radio and audio-visual media**, to communicate further in-depth information to people while considering presenting the **information in accessible ways and formats (simplified language, visual and mixed media concepts, and question and answer dialogues)**.

## EXPECTATIONS OF THE ABG AND CHANGE

Respondents clearly associated change with a possible majority vote for independence, and had expectations about a better future, including infrastructure development, education facilities and a locally managed economy. Those that were cautious spoke of the ABG as not yet ready due to the economy, the existing factions, and the lack of educational institutions. When asked about the Bougainville Way, almost all respondents mentioned clear strengths such as traditional leadership structure, inclusion of women, traditional reconciliation processes and a commitment to its people.

Respondents expressed, on a few occasions, their dissatisfaction with foreign advisors, and a strong sense for Bougainville to lead its own way. The history of the peace process, however, demonstrates that Bougainvilleans appreciate the contributions of those who work in supporting ways and are willing to listen and open to learn about Bougainville culture (see Boege 2019).

- When foreign advisers are engaged it is important to consider **how they are integrated in the Bougainville community** and how their role and contributions are communicated to the people.
- The contributions of the ABG were appreciated by respondents in this study because they expressed their loyalty to their government. However, they were also critical of the ABG's performance and vocal about their feedback.
- **Key questions raised to the ABG during the research should be addressed in future engagements**, and channels should be kept open for people to continue to ask questions and receive responses. Key information about the government's plans should be provided regularly to guide people's expectations.

Further, it is evident that the trauma of the past plays a significant role among Bougainvilleans inside and outside of Bougainville. This is not only for those who experienced the crisis, but also for young people who are impacted by the trauma their parents experienced and the stories they have been exposed to.

- Media and communication strategies must consider the way that the experiences of the crisis continue to impact on people. This might mean to include programs that contain personal **storytelling or the creative arts to generate a dialogue about the past** and bring out people's contributions. Creative processes offer strategies to engage key audiences, such as women, veterans or youth, by creating safe spaces for engagement (see Bräuchler 2019).
- A recent project example worth mentioning is Women's Wealth<sup>6</sup>, which was exhibited in early 2019 as part of the 9th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art (APT9) at the Queensland Gallery of Modern Art. The project combined creative workshops with women across Bougainville with engagement of Bougainvilleans living outside of Bougainville and overseas audiences. The project "emphasises the ways in which women's practices act as a quiet means of resilience in the face of major historical changes".<sup>7</sup> The project highlights, on one hand, the importance of the indigenous artistic cultures in Bougainville society and how they guide important social processes, and on the other hand, how such projects can strengthen connections with Bougainvilleans residing within and outside of Bougainville.

## ENGAGING NON-RESIDENT BOUGAINVILLEANS

The study found that NRBs can to some extent be reached via mass media and social media, and through their local social groups. Dissemination via internet clearly offers opportunities in terms of the immediacy and costs, but does not include everyone. However, many NRBs are part of local networks that need to be harnessed to disseminate information.

- **Social media and traditional mass media** (radio, television, newspapers) might be used initially to reach out to Bougainvilleans residing outside of Bougainville, but **locally organised groups are crucial** in reaching those who do not access media and in providing spaces for discussion and dialogue. In this sense, **those living outside Bougainville** should not just be seen as individuals, but as **part of wider communities outside of Bougainville**.

Further trust can be built with these groups by engaging in regular dialogue with them, such as through providing responses via the ABG website or Facebook site.

<sup>6</sup> <https://play.qagoma.qld.gov.au/womens-wealth/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.qagoma.qld.gov.au/whats-on/exhibitions/the-9th-asia-pacific-triennial-of-contemporary-art-apt9/artists/womens-wealth>

NRBs in the study reiterated requests by people within Bougainville to improve the radio network and, in some places, the mobile towers, to ensure regular communication. Many NRBs also felt that their understanding of the political processes was fragmented and they identified a clear need for the ABG and the PNG government to communicate how they plan to manage the post-referendum period. A key component mentioned by NRBs in this study was the **uncertainty of their status as either temporarily or permanently residing outside of Bougainville**.

- Many Bougainvilleans residing outside of Bougainville provide support to people in Bougainville and demonstrate a strong loyalty to their region. Considerations must be given to methods for integrating those residing outside of Bougainville in meaningful ways where possible.

## WORKING TOWARDS PEACE AND WELL-BEING

Bougainvilleans consulted in this research were unified in that they did not want another crisis, but to move forward towards a peaceful society. They expressed confidence that a peaceful outcome of the referendum would be achieved. Uncertainties and certain fears were voiced, but the overarching theme is that of solidarity among respondents and the desire to move forward as one society. While the general term 'awareness' has been used throughout this report, it would be more appropriate to use the term 'engagement' or 'dialogue' with regards to respondents' requests for education about referendum process, including those by young people. Respondents wanted to understand the role that they could play in this process and ensure that they were informed.

## CONCLUSION

With the date of the referendum confirmed for October 2019, there will be an increased engagement around the implementation of media and communication strategies and growing motivation from people to obtain information. The results from the research provide a current picture of information levels and information needs of Bougainvilleans who will be voting in the referendum. The research provides key information for the pre-referendum and post-referendum periods.

Respondents acknowledged that much has been achieved by the ABG and recognised the efforts that have been made to provide information to the people. While more work is to be done and challenges remain, many individuals and communities have made important contributions to this journey.

The ultimate goal supported by many of the respondents is that everyone who votes in the referendum can make an informed decision. A key component of this process is that no one is left behind and key audiences are reached and engaged. Maintaining dialogue and continuing to provide updates as regularly as possible is an important part of the ABG's mandate to build a peaceful Bougainville.



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# ENDNOTES

- 1 Mipla vote yes long referendum i gutpla bikos mipla Bougainville mipla i laik stap mipla yet. Mi no laikim tumas olsem bai yumi stap wantaim PNG. Mi minim olsem yumi ol Bougainville yumi mas break away from PNG.
- 2 Long mi yet, [...] olsem mi yet mi kisim olsem referendum em minim olsem yumi yet laik self govern Bougainville.
- 3 Ol i bin tok olsem, referendum em olsem eleksen. Vote long eleksen blong fiutsa blong Bougainville.
- 4 Taim ol man i save kam givim awenes long ples, ol bai tokim ol man tasol long ples ol mas bung, ol mas vote long referendum. Ol imas putim tasol yes long referendum long yumi mas bruk lus wantaim PNG. Long yumi mas stap yumi yet.
- 5 Long hia em olsem constituency member bilong mipela em declarim referendum ready pinis but normally long tingting bilong mi mipela ino referendum ready tumas. Bikos ol service delivery tu em ino flow down gut tumas, law and order tu, na rule of law, na respect bilong ol elders na kain olsem ward members nambaut em ino gutpela tumas.
- 6 Yumi mas rekonsail watem ol narapla na stretim yumi yet insait long ol wods blong mipla, rausim olgeta wanem samting i wok long bagarapim sindaun blong ol pipol, pipol insait long ples, displa em ol referendum redines, mipla wok long, long openim wei blong em na long stretim ples.
- 7 Disla mes rikonsiliesen we em samtin long ol toktok long em, that's not the way to do rikonsiliesen, ol samtin olsem hau ol rikonsiliesen program (...) disla ya oli no peim atensen tumas long filins blong ol pipol na olsem na ol man wok lo askim na wanem bai yu givim mi kompensesen.
- 8 Olsem mipla redi na redi long referendum bai mipla mas wokim clean up long komuniti o ples, femili na komuniti, wanem samting ol hevi stap yumi mas reconcile na stap gut na waitim taim blong vote long referendum.
- 9 Long lukluk blong mi insait long komuniti blong mi, long mi yet mi ken tok olsem mipla ino referendum [redi] yet bikos igat sampla isu we mipla i still nid long stretim befo mipla iken tok mipela i referendum [redi].
- 10 Olsem na em wanpela taim, em laspela taim bikos insait long konstituisen ol amendim bai luk olsem, sapos yumi failim dispela, bai nogat narapela moa dispela kain.
- 11 Bikos, long niuspepa o Post Koria o Boganvil Buletin mi save rid na mi save kisim infomesen olsem hau Boganvil Pis Agrimen save fom, hau ol man wok long redi long kisim vot long referendum na independens. (...) Mi save kisim liklik infomesen tasol em information about referendum and independent and go insait long olsem arms disposal, ol save text na tok nius kam long ples na yumi save lukim long mobile olsem.
- 12 Olsem ol lain go long Buka o Arawa o go long main taun ol save kam bek na ol save kam stori so mipela harim.
- 13 Nogut bai yumi kamapim disuniti long pipol bilong yumi na em no gutpela. Bikos yumi nid long yumi unit, yumi stap long uniti na yumi go insait long dispela.
- 14 Mi save long rid na em i orait liklik long mi na andastanim displa. But ol man tru wea ol ino inap long rid, mi laikim stret olsem ol igat tim kam wokim moa awenes long ol man long ples tru long ol komuniti wod memba.
- 15 Planti bilong ol youngpela man long hia, planti ol youngpela yuts, we bai ol kamap future generations, majoroti bilong ol ino skul bikos long kraises na sapos ol no save long ol infomesen na proses bilong yumi go long referendum, sam hau em ken kamapim bagarap. I mean, yumi ken kamapim hevi.
- 16 Em bai mi ken tok olsem ol man we ol i, ol igat sans tasol long save em ol man we bai mi ken tok olsem ol bikman, ol wokman na ol man igat eksles long atendum ol sampla training i save on, em ol tasol i save igat fair aidia.
- 17 Sampla long ol gavaman membas, they are doing their very best to disseminate o bringim infomesen igo daun long levul blong ol lain long ples ah. Ol narapla ol ino mekim displa wok, they just doing it in general. Mi harim long wanpela memba, how she does, em wanpela meri ah. How she has manage to hold through her electorate na make sure olsem em hau em mekim long ah konstituensi blong em.
- 18 If everybody is given the opportunity to olsem be given that awareness, honestly be given the pros and cons, gutpla blong greater autonomy, gutpla blong independens na nogut blong tupla sait, and then they will be able to give their vote.
- 19 Awenes oli kam wokim ya wanpela bikpla samting tru mi no, mi lukim em ino stret long mi taim ol leaders ikam wokim awenes oli no save simplifim ol English Terms blong ol ikam daun long grassroot level. So ol leaders taim oli kam daun long wokim awenes blong referendum oli mas usim ol simple terms wea bai ol illiterate ol mas understandim.
- 20 ABG i wokim gut wok blong em bat ol pipol tasol so nao ABG mas refocus na go insait long wanwan vilis, door to door long mekim awenes o karim aut displa vote ya long kamapim positive result.
- 21 Mi lukluk bek ken long ples yumi bin kisim displa gavaman, planti ol man meri insait long ples ya na ol yuts tu ol ino even save wanem samting em Otonomos Boganvil Gavaman,... nogat wanpela liklik awareness i bin ikam

- insait tu, o liklik tok klia olsem gavman blong yumi em wanem kain gavman, hau gavman blong yumi wok long ron o yumi wok long ron towards long kisim wanem kain samting.
- 22 Sampla hap long hia em olsem, taim ol i kol na toktok kam mi sai klia long toktok blong referendum ya, tasol sampla taim mi no sai klia tumas long wanem toktok blong ol long referendum.
- 23 Mi save tingim bek long kraises, taim blong kraises, nogut yumi tok yes nating na bai igat kraises bihain taim blong em. So em displa poret tingting save kam baksait long mi.(...)
- 24 Long displa kwesten em yet mi no ridim wanpela Bougainville Peace Agreement buk stret o mi no bin lukim long ai blong mi but ol man save kam wokim awenes nambaut em ol save toktok long Bougainville Peace Agreement.
- 25 Wanpela samting em olsem mipela kisim go long taun em nius ol fren save salim kam, ah. O ani infomesen ol save long em, ol save pasim kam long mipela.
- 26 Mi bin klia long what referendum na what is independent na em wanem samting mi no bin save bat fest, mi mi no bin ino klia tumas so the time mi save gut nao, na mi tok em gutpla. Mi go long ples tu mi bai edukeitim ol young ones, bai ol i save, ekspleinim what is referendum and what is independent because ol ino save long what is referendum na what is independent.
- 27 Yes, long post koria mi save intrest bikos taim mi lukim hao gavman i save toktok long referendum na autonomous , mi save intrest olsem tupla gavman, autonomous na national gavman, tupla bai olsem, mi save intrest bikos tupla bai wanbel long wanem samting bai mipla go tru long em na bai mipla i kamap.
- 28 Mi laikim, mi save kisim na mi save laikim tumas Boganvil Buletin bikos mi save kisim mo infomesen long referendum na independens.
- 29 Long fek sits, mi save lukim olsem mipela save kisim ol very, very important key messages (...) Long ol postas, em sampela taim especially aspesili long netwok bilong mipela ol Women's Federation, mipela save go long ol forums bilong mipela , mipela save kamap wantaim ol postas.Na planti taim tu mipela kisim ol postas long opis bilong referendum directory.
- 30 Hao mi andastendim em through readim long ol posta. Taim mi lukim poster, mi go sanap na mi ridim. Em samting i mekim mi andastendim moa long referendum. Mi no harim tumas long ol awenes.
- 31 Ol postas mi save yusim long givim infomesen long ol pikinini bilong mi tu, long ol famili membas. Mi save tokim ol, mipela no save stap long wanpela odinari taim, situasen, mipela stap long dispel kain situasen we mipela bin kam tru long em tru long dispela Boganvil kraisis.
- 32 Word of mouth em sampla taim ol poroman save toktok long we ol save kisim sampla nius long nius pepa o sampla ol save kisim long redio o sampla ol bai kam long maus blong sampla lain olsem ol memba nambaut, olsem na taim mipla sindaun na stori sampla ol poroman ol save stori long hau referendum na hau laif bai go. (...) Long displa word of mouth em mi laikim em bikos sampla samting em ol gavman wokus ol ino nap klarim tumas olsem na word of mouth em sampla taim man inap askim em, em bai bekim em.
- 33 Ol lain i kam toktok, ol i kam explainim tasol. Ol i kam askim mipela question olsem referendum em wanem samting na sampela bilong ol i explainim long mipela. Mi laikim bikos taim man i toktok na yu ino save gut bai yu askim em na em bai explainim.
- 34 Sampla samting igo nogut, em olsem, sampla komuniti membas, they didn't attend the awareness, long displa ABG i save mekim about displa Autonomy and independence. And wanpela samting em ino gutpla em olsem. Ol displa ol kam mekim awenes ya, ABG Ol no kam bek long mekim awenes gen, kain olsem.
- 35 Presentation blong ol man i orait. Planti samting wea mi lukim em ol pipol yet ol no save turn up long ol displa taim blong awenes long harim wanem samting ol man wok long kam givim. (...) Ol man ino save turn up. Attendance blong ol man i no orait.
- 36 Ol givim mipela planti infomesen stret. Sampela infomesen mipela no kisim long ol narapela soses mipela kisim long Paksia. Na dispela stile ol kondaktim dispela dailok em gutpela wei o bikos proses bilong ol em givim sans long olgeta man na meri toktok na askim. Em gutpela wei stret, bikos ol pipol tu ol ibin gat freedom long tok aut long ol tingting bilong ol.The only thing that mi no save wanbel tumas long em, olsem wanpela lida. Ol save kisim mipela long wanpela sentrol lokesen.
- 37 Referendum dailoks em memba I bin kam wantaim na I bin hevim. Mas wanpela kain wan hua tasol long skul so em bin dailok tasol. So disla taim, pekets blo referendum redines ino kam yet, so mipla I no bin klia yet tumas so mipla wok lo weitim tasol memba lo kam insait lo wod blong na bai mipla iken save long wanem samtin stret em referendum.
- 38 Taim ol wod memba na ol tim mipla save wok wantaim ol i save kam na mipla save ronim displa wanem ya blong referendum em olsem em givim mipela gutpla tingting long hao long vote na bai mipla vote gut long displa independens so em olsem so mipla givim displa awenes, ol lida blong mipla, tim lida blong mipla em save kam givim awenes mipela save amamas long kisim.



39 Mi lukim olsem ol awenes team oli kam wanpla taim tasol, na oli mas continue long givim moa awenes na poster long level wea mipla istap long en so that bai mipla iklia gut long wokabaut blong referendum; bai mipla kisim moa save hau bai mipla bihainim na kamap long referendum.

40 Em mi lukim olsem planti lain ino save kam long ol forums. Taim mipela singautim miting long wanpela lokesen, planti man meri ol no save kam. Sem pipol mipela save kam bung na mipela save harim ol infomesen. Ol sampela lain, ol ino ke na ol istap tasol long ples.

41 Ol wod memba, oli mas indaktim ol na oli mas karim wok igo daun long hamlets. Na tu olsem ol infomesen pepa ya printim long inglis na tok pisin wantaim.

42 Usim wod member lon toktok, bicos, mi ken askim bek sapos mi no klia long wanpla queston o toktok, mi ken askim (...) Wanpla samting, wod memba em i ples man yet na em isi [long] mekim awenes na sai yusim mada tan ah; tok ples.

43 Mi laikim redio bicos, mi no inap wokabaut long we long go kisim, long harim, long harim referendum awenes, bai mi stap tasol long haus na, mi can tiunim tasol raidio na harim.

44 Sampela ol awenes ol lain wok long ples lain redio wok long go karim aut. Em gutpela moa tasol mi laik bai mi wok long kisim ol kain infomesen olsem long regular bases, day to day, na dispela, em long dispela redio. Olsem em ken inpruvim kavarij [I kam long hia] na mipela tu long, ino ol Buka tasol, yumi tu long kain hap ples olsem isolate long, ol mas setim ap long kavarij em bai kisim mipela so mipela ken gat isi akses long ol. Mipela yet ken tuin in long redio na mipela kisim ol infomesen.

45 Long taim mi save harim long radio, mi save filim gut, but sampla taim mi no save, mi no save filim gut tumas, mi save laikim displa verbal ol toktok. Sampla man i mas, igat wanpla tim imas kam stret na konfemim long toktok long maus ah. Na long radio, sampla taim mi save dautim olsem, em toktok long samting i tru o, o giaman.

46 Redio ples lain, pes taim bilong mi long harim ol na lukim ol em long wanpela women's unification forum bilong mipela ol meri long Saut Bogenvil. That forum was organized by the women member bilong ABG. Na ol redio ples lain tu, ol ibin kam. (...) Na ol ibin givim mipela wanwan redio. Na mipela stap long ol hap mipela bin save slip, mipela Aran Siwai Distrik ol bin aksesim nau olgeta infomesen mi bin Kisim, mipela bin inap long kisim dispela wik. So mi lukim long hap na mi bin laikim stret. Na mi bin lukim olsem dispela sevis em gutpela stret long ol pipol insait long Bogenvil.

47 Ating em gutpela bikos mi save kisim ol first hand information long redio. Ino olsem ol man bai toktok nating na bihain bai yu harim. Redio em tingting bilong man stret em save toktok.

48 Oh wanpela samting wokim mi klia, especially long TV skrin long Buka ya, em save toktok long proses na integriti bilong yumi na hau ol wanwan grup imas be well prepared.

49 Mi em wanpla taim mi go raun na long bilbot ya, em mi lukim president na ol bikman blong ABG, ol wok long toktok long disla peketses insait long disla referendum ya. Em wok long stap tasol long skrin. Long mi long ridim na passim taim wantaim long taun, mi no bin kisim tumas so mi sa kisim tasol ol liklik infomesen blong referendum.

50 Em long bilbot ya, ino gutpla long ol putim tasol long taun, ol mas kam putim disla bilbot long ples bai etelist olgeta man save long wanem ol aweanes isa kam long ples lo ol bai klia gut.

51 Mi lukim tasol ol awareness especially ol awareness team olsem James Tanis ol record long CD. Ol wokim ol referendum awareness long ol arms disposal (...) Dispela yet em olsem taim em wok long explainim ol steps bilong referendum na hau em bai kamap em olsem (...) Wanem samting ino gutpela em yu ino inap askim ol question. Bikos once yu lukim em, em yet em bai toktok. Em one way information.

52 Na ol wok long toktok na givim mipla gut ol information blong referendum na mi klia. Sampla taim ol save soim mipla piksa.

53 Mi bin stap long skul na ol bin jas tokim mi olsem bai yumi kisim referendum. Ol bin ringim mi na ol tok 2019 bai yumi kisim referendum. (...) Em gutpela long pasim message hariap long sait long fon.

54 Mobile phone why mi laikim bikos em handy o kain olsem. Even yu stap long bus o wanem hap o yu go wei o wanem, em still bai yu harim nuis yet. Ok dispela em hau em save helpim mipela bikos long mobile phone yu ken askim question sapos yu ino klia gut long sampela samting.

55 Olsem bai mi, taim ol save rin, ol save salim meseg, ol meseg blong referendum ya, ol sai salim kam na tok olsem, bai yumi go insait long referendum (...) Long sait blong mobail taim ol save rin long, olsem mi save laik mobail, olsem mi save harim klia ol toktok blong referendum.

56 Ol samting mi ino laikim em igat sampela false information i save kamap long internet na facebook tu.

57 Mi no hamamas lon intanet because sampla taim network save pleap. Na tu usim intanet isave costim moni.

58 Mi laikim bikos taim man i toktok na yu ino save gut bai yu askim em na em bai explainim (...) Long sampela taim mi ino save laikim tumas bikos sampela taim ol man i bai hariap tumas ol ino save explainim gut samting.

59 Sampela posta mi lukim, mi ridim em toktok go mi olsem planti taim mi lukim go nau olsem mi wok long andasten isi isi ikam.

60 Bikos mi bin laik save long, mi bin laik save bikos mi no bin klia, thats wai mi bin ridim niuspepa long bai save long sampla samting blong referendum we mi no bin klia tumas.

61 Planti ol samting wea ino kamap, ol ino kirapim ol inap ol skul tu, blong ol mangi. Bikos planti mangi gen ol greid 8 drop aut. Ol i nidim moa skul. So gavman em i mas kirapim tu ol displa samting, kirapim planti ol skuls.

62 Long ABG, sins olsem em bin kamap ya, olsem em mekim na olsem planti development tu wok long kamap isi isi. Sapos yu go outsait bai yu lukim stret olsem development wok long kamap insait long hia. Yu stap long hia, yu no inap lukim tumas bat yu stap outsait bai yu lukim hao ABG wok long wok.

63 Ol man i wok long poreit long rectification time. They fear that although we, we'll vote for independence but PNG gavman em bai nokim off displa long rectification time long.

64 Sampela samting bai mi save filim na mi lukim i go bagarap em sait blong finance. Moni blong ol pipol i no save ritsim ol pipol long bus.

65 Sapos ol wokim guptla infomesin na ai blong ol i op na ol i lukim ol hao ol samting bai go, ol mekim rait disisen, em mi pilim olsem em bai mipla ron gut.

66 Ol i mas wokabaut kam, na ol mas klarim ol awenes na bai yumi luksave long hao bai yumi wokim vote blong referendum.

67 Gutpela infomesin in kam long redio, liklik tru I kam long awareness. (...) planti man tu I nogat redio long kisim rait infomesin. So taim planti man I nogat redio, I nogat gutpela infomesin. Sapos tawa I orait, long Citifon na Digicel, planti infomesin mipela inap kisim (..) tasol bicos tupela main nids I no orait, mipela I stap long tudak.

68 Nissan em I most disadvantaged area na ABG mas lukluk long em.

69 Mi laik kamapim strongpela appeal long man long Bougainville long holim han na kamapim pis insait long Bougainville (...) yumi mas soim piksa long nesinol gavman olsem yumi inap long kamapim gutpela Bougainville.

70 Sampela ol gutpla samting wea Autonomy ibin kamapim em olsem taim yumi stap long Autonomy gutpla samting em yumi gat 'peace na reconcilia-tion' wea mi pilim olsem em displa gavman imekim.

71 Sampla ol gutpla samting ibin kamap em long sait blong helt na education wea long education yumi gat ol skul ibin kirap bek na iwok long, ilainim ol mangi blong yumi long kamap literate mangi ah. Na sait blong hausik em yumi, mi hamamas long yumi gat autonomy, yumi kisim ah liklik ol marasin ikam insait.

72 Long lukluk blong mi emi wok long wokim wok tasol emi mas kam daun tru long pipol long ol ples. Long antap, yes. Mi lukim ol wok iwok long kamap, tasol long reachim pipol em ya mi tok ya, sampla hap em mi ken tok em sait blong communication, communication services yumi stap daun tru.

73 Ol no save fundim moni. Ol no save yusim gut long komuniti. Especially long taim em save kam daun long komuniti ya. planti pipol hia I save komplein about moni save kam lus nating.

74 Em pastaim COE, nau yumi gat komuniti gavaman we igat equal voice bilong man na meri Gender Equality em stap. Na dispela kain gavaman tu em givim pawa, sampela pawa igo bek gen long ol ples.

75 Ol i turango ol i wok long wokim gut wok blong ol. Ol wok long traim best blong ol long bringim infomesen kam daun long pipol long andastendim wanem samting yumi mas mekim long referendum.

76 Olsem mi wok long lukim ol liklik senis olsem ol i wok long putim ol pawa ikam long hia, ol pawa pol i wok long sanap. Ol i wok long pulim ol kebol o wanem samting, em blong pawa. Ol i kirapim skul, na ol narapla samting tu, mi no save long en ah. (...) No olsem ol ibin helpim skuls long ol sampla kain samting olsem klasrum. Na ol komuniti, ol sapot, givim ol tu ol i baim ol meteri-el, long ol komuniti, gavman tu i wok long baim ah, na i givim. So long ol wata saplai, ol tenk. Planti samting.

77 PNG gavman tu ino save givim moni tumas ikam olsem em i konstituensi, em ol konstituensi moni ah, em ol moni wea ol mas givim i kam. Ol mas givim i kam tasol ol no save givim ikam so autonomous gavman blong yumi em i no inap long wokim ol wok kamap bikos em inogat moni.

78 Long taim yumi kisim Independence em bai yumi gat ah own government blong yumi na em bai lukaumim yumi gut. Na tu sampla ol mi ken lukim nau ya taim yumi stap long Autonomy em mi no lukim ah gutpla senis tumas long ol development.

79 Normally ol save updatim mipela long wanem samting wok long kamap. Bikos sampela man ol ba wok long poretim mipela olsem bai pait kirap o kain olsem. So taim ol toktok ol bai explainim olsem em nogat. Bikos i bai igat kainkain rumor bai kamap. Olsem ol PNGDF wok long laik long train long kam pait sapos yumi vote yes long independence.

80 Yumi kam long fainol hap bilong yumi nau em dispela vot bilong referendum bilong yumi.

81 Tawa, network, helt senta, em ol kain samting ya em ol no, nogat gutpla development tumas kamap long hia.

82 Wanpla samting tasol mi bin lukim na mi no bin amamas long en em like wan, olsem yumi save transpot igo long taun em olsem rot blong yumi tu em olgeta taim bagarap.

83 Yumi redi tasol long kisim ah, long kisim, kisim displa referendum. Bikos yumi, yumi em yumi nogat ol planti samting tumas. Gavman ino kirapim ol planti samting. Yumi mas igat University tu long hia, ol college tu mas istap. Ol narapla provinces ol i winim yumi.

84 Mi long lukluk blong mi em yumi bin these fifteen years yumi bin silip tumas. Gavman ino bin wokim wok rerere blong em. Redim yumi long go long neks step. Nao yumi wok long wok like last minute long ol displa, rashim ol displa ol steps long achievim referendum.

85 Long lukluk na tingting blong mi, ating ABG i wokim wok bat ino, ino kam olgeta long ples. Ol i wokim wok insait long ofis bat long ol long kam aut long ol ofis blong ol na kam daun long ples na givim aut ol toktok o awenes long ples stret em nogat.

86 Wanem samtin nau i mekim long make sure olsem memba trutru emi spendim moni long displa. Em wanpla wei tasol yu ken sekem balens. Sapos yu go daun long ples na yu go kuestenim ol man na sapos man itok nogat, what are you going to do because the money is spent somewhere else. Emi bikpla samtin, honesty long pasin blo wok mas stap long ol memba blo ol ABG na ol lidas igo pas long mekim ol displa wok.

87 Bikos mi save harim. Planti taim mi save harim olsem igat korapsen insait long gavman. Planti samting olsem moni ol misyusim. Ol memba is still within the officers treasury office and that time mi harim olsem planti moni i lus.

88 Ol no save tingim ol lain long ples, ol save tingim ol lain ol save long ol tasol. Helpim tu ol lain isave wok long opis ol save helpim ol, ino olgeta lain. Sevis ino equally distributed long wanwan aria.

89 Sapos gavman ino soim gutpla piksa long ol pipol long ples, em i agarapim morol blong ol man, tingting blong ol man long ples long hao ol iken filim konfident long kam long vote long displa taim.

90 Olsem mi hamamas stret long yupla wok long raun wantaim ol disla samtin, ol risiets yupla wok long mekim we disla tu yupla wok long kisim ol tintin blong ol man long ples tuwods long disla samtin na ba yupla ken pikim aut weda bai yumi go tru o bai yumi nid long stret ol sampla weis blong go tru long disla referendum.

91 Samting ino gutpla em mi les pinis long yes masta. Yes masta, mi les pinis long displa. Nao mi yet. (...) Igat moa then tetipla (30) advaisa ol i stap long ABG, mipla rausim ol displa lain ya pastaim behain bai mipla toktok long referendum bikos mipla ino laikim ol foreina bai stap.

92 So mi save lukim olsem long ol disisens tu, in decision makings too, ol bai involvim tingting bilong mipela ol meri. Mipela tu mas take part in decision making. And that's Bougainville way. (...) That's why olgeta samting mipela wokim in Bougenvil, it's inclusive. Man na meri stap insait long em, disisen making.

93 Even constitution blong Papua New Guinea or Bougainville em i luksave long displa traditional chief system.

94 Pasin blo Boganvil em olsem, lo bifo taim em olsem yumi save stap gut, ol lapun blo yumi, ol no sa koros pait nau olsem ol man tu save koros long giraun, ol save koros pait igo kam.

95 Ol pait long indipendence na they lost their lives. They are heroes for Bougainville. Sapos Bougainville is not going to prepare itself, em bai failim ol these heroes that lost their lives. So em wanpela bikpela samting. Mipela no laikim narapela pait kamap.

96 Wanem samting ikamap yumi mas stretim long wei blong yumi yet ah. Em. Yumi noken ah example yumi noken waitim wanpla whiteman bai kam stretim yumi. Yumi yet mas sanap strong na stretim yumi yet, em.

97 Pasin blong Bougainville em olsem mipla save stap wantaim na narapla samting em olsem mipla ol resoses lain long ah human resos tu, mipla ol resos lain. Na mipla ol gutpla lain long lukautim ol man tu. Maski ol ken tok olsem em ol lain nogut ya ol Bougainvillians but what we have, the different character from others is to look after the people and resources.

98 Referendum em olsem em orait long kisim long vote bikos yumi nid long wokim sampla senis long Bougainville. Wokim sampla kain sevis long sait blong development, kisim sevis nambaut.

99 Long tingting blong mi, behain long referendum, planti, I think planti gutpla

sevis bai kamap. Ol manmeri o ol man insait long bus ol i free long muv around (...) Planti senis bai kamap. Ating, mi wanem, standard of living, ol nupla ol Bougainville laws we ol pipol bai andastendim lo na bihainim na olsem standard of living blong ol pipol ating em bai impruv.

100 Ok tingting blong mi mi lukluk long fiutsa sapos yumi kisim referendum bikpla senis stret bai kamap. Olsem yumi gat planti samting. Yumi gat ol kainkain ol samting stap long yumi, ples blong yumi. Stap long bus na kam daun long solwara. Yumi gat rich long ol displa samting.

101 Long afta long referendum long tingting blong mi mi save, sapos yumi independent, yumi bai free na stap, olgeta samting tu em bai blong mipla yet long hia, inogat narapla man hap man bai kam rulim mipla long hia. Bai mipla kamapim ol gutpla gutpla samting. Ol, like ol cocoa, olgeta samting blong mipla nao mipla bai factarim long hia, bai yumi gat ol displa skuls, olgeta everything mipla bai igat long hia yet. Instead long mipla bai igo nambaut nambaut.

102 Mi no laikim bai ol i diferim gen igo long narapla yia o wanem samting. Yumi mas wokim, so that yumi save long fiutsa blong yumi olsem politikal fiutsa blong yumi Bougainville. Mi amamas tasol long referendum em i mas kamap hariap. Na bai yumi stap long olsem tru trupla ol wok ah, bikos at the moment em olsem yumi temporari tasol.

103 Mi tu i poret liklik long displa referendum bikos lotu insait long Bougainville igat tupla grup laik gavman na narapla em Mekamui. Olsem na mi save poret liklik long displa tupla wanem gen ya gavman ya.

104 Ol igat poret long referendum. Ol tok olsem taim bilong yumi vote, na taim yumi lus nau, (...) sapos lida atonomi lain ol win na ol lain ol laikim indipendence. Em dispela tasol mi wok long pilim poret long dispela. Olsem na mi laikim ol mas explenim moa yet long dispela. Bikos yu save, taim ol man ilus, ol ino, pait bai nonap stat long bikpela grup, bai liklik go nau ol man bai bihain tasol.

105 Ating tupla kwesten tasol em ah ABG em inap wea long ol development blong em long sait blong human resource. Where human resource em i impotent stret long developim kantri o nation taim em i kisim independence so em inap o capacity blong human development resource blong yumi.

106 What will, what might happen, bikos long ol eksperiens long ol narapla kantris, onces ol vote independence ah, a month or some days later pait i buruk. Ah mi wok long urgim Bougainvillian people, em ples blong yumi stret, inogat man bai yu pait wantaim. We dont have any enemy here.

107 Mi em mi, samting mi laikim em olsem mipla ino gat strong yet long lusim Papua Niugini bikos olgeta samting em displa liklik Bougainville blong mipla ino gat. Olgeta skul o wanem wanem hausik em mipla go yet long Papua Niugini, ol traipala traipala skul, hausik. Mipla yet em mipla ino gat olgeta samting.

108 Long mipla i kamap independent em ya displa pablik servants tu, ol i mas stretim hariap na toksave long ol pipol tu. That's one of the fears ol pipol i gat. What will happen if PNG gavman i pulim aut ol pablik sevnt blong em.

109 Mi no bilip olsem wanpela senis bai kamap sapos Bougenvil kisim indipendence. Senis bai kamap sapos mindset bilong ol memba igo fowod long gutpela na positif wei.

110 Ah mi laik askim tasol ABG sapos em i gat wanem kain plen behain long referendum em i ken tokim ol pipol long en wea bai pipol i ken andastendim wanem samting ol wok long wokim na wanem plen wea ABG gavman i laik muv fowod wantaim.

111 Gavman I mas mekim samting long salim ofisas o whoever kam stret long komuniti na mekim klia ol pipol long hau long voting system, vot blong ol, ol mas explenim gut na klia gut long wei bai ol i vot, em displa em I impotent long, planti komuniti ol no klia tumas, planti taim ol ABG memba, ol no kiliarim ol.

112 Ah sapos mi vote, long taim blong mi long vote, ol bai lukim stret choice blong mi taim mi vote?

113 Kwesten blong mi em olsem ah sapos, sapos ABG nau em i kisim displa referendum blong em, kwesten blong mi em olsem, sapos em kisim displa referendum blong em na ah em i ah ol mine blong Bougainville em i open. Bai mipla olgeta pipol blong Bougainville i benefit tu long displa ol risoses blong Bougainville?

114 Askim blong mi em bai olsem. Sapos displa referendum we olgeta man isave toktok long em, taim yumi ino kisim, hau bai yumi stap. Bai yumi nonap kisim independens without referendum?

115 Sapos yumi vote for independence what is it that we are voting fo, wanem samting bai kamap and what is that independent Bougainville that yumi toktok long en so clear awareness explanation to the people so that yumi buildim displa confidence long ol so that yumi kamap, you know united and we just go for wan wan decision na yumi save after the referendum and that is the Bougainville that we voted for.

116 Em kwesten blong mi nao long displa. Na tu em olsem olgeta kantri em ol save sanap em husat gat displa tripla bikpla point em olsem karensi na defens na foreign affairs ah, em bifo yumi kamap kantri so ol displa samting mas igat.

117 Wanpla samting mi laik askim ABG, so mi laik askim ABG olsem referendum, sapos yumi, yumi minim independence na wanem ol ABG, ol lidas olsem president, em bai mekim wanem na wanem gutpla, wanem gutpla peaceful mins bai kamap long Bougainville.

118 Ok narapla toktok askim blong mi gen em olsem inap ABG i painim sampla wei long bai helpim mipla ol lain long ples long sait blong salim ol toktok o wanem wanem ol samting wee ABG i wok long kamapim insait long gavman o ol awenes o kain olsem ah, kominikeisen. Hao bai ol toktok wantaim mipla lain long ples. Mi laikim bai ABG i painim sampla rot, laik mipla i gat pinis ol wod membas ah, sapos ol i ken yusim ol wod memba blong mipla ah long wokim ol awenes blong ABG so that mipla olgeta ol lain long ples mipla ken gat access o save long wanem samting i wok long kamap insait long ABG.

119 What mi laikim gavaman bilong yumi long wokim, em mas buildim ol schools, em mas wokim ol factories bilong wokim moni na school bilong improvim mindset bilong ol manmeri long ples nambaut. Especially ol future generation instead long toromoi money long ol useless ol kaikai nambaut. Bikpela samting em mas wokim long buildim ol haussik, schools na factory.

120 Ok wanpla kwesten, em ol olsem ah, yumi Bougainville ya nogat, nao ya nogat planti em ya tumas, olsem college o universities, so yumi ol, sapos yumi wok long redi long referendum ya em ol bai hariap long wokim wanem gen ya, ol college ya wantaim ol universities.

121 Tingting bilong mi long olsem Bogenvil wei em ABG taim yumi go tuwods referendum ABG mas plenim olgeta samting olsem kain olsem skul o wanem kain kolige wei ol mangi save go aut long, go long narapela hap long kisim save, olgeta samting ya mas stap insait long Bogenvil.

122 Mi laik bai ol imas helpim mipla long sait blong ol pikinini, mipla ol sampla mama, mipla ol wido ya. Mipla ino nap long baim skul fii blong ol pikinini blong mipla. Na sampla ol mama tu, ol ino save kisim mani tumas. Long sait blong marasin tu mipla save sot tumas long go long hausik. Mipla nogat inap mani. Olsem wanem, bai yupla helpim mipla tu long displa sait blong ol mama?

123 Ol i mas kam daun na helpim ol pipol bilong Bogenvil, kam daun long grasrut levols, na helivim ol grasruts iken stap olsem ol lain i stap antap, ol noken stap antap na daunim ol grasruts, mipla laik mipla mas stap long seim levol.

124 Mipela save harim olsem everi yia ol [MPs] save kisim fifti tausend Kina referendum grant. Dispela moni, ol wokim wanem wantaim. That money they should bring it down to the community government members na ol komuniti gavaman membas ol igo insait long ol wanwan wod bilong ol na wokim wok bilong redines for that day, referendum day. From time to time, mipela save harim olsem ol gat dispela kain funding. But every time they come down to us na ol tokim mipela, nogat moni, nogat moni.

125 Yupela olgeta memba long ABG, yupela olgeta istap wankain? Are you united to bring about that referendum long ol pipol long Bogenvil? Sapos yupela stap wantaim, mi laik yupela mas kamap klia bikos sampela membas, ol no soim olsem ol redi long go long referendum. Ol wok long kosim yet sampela hevi stap, ol wok long go pas long seperatim pipol. Olsem na mi wok long askim gavaman bilong dispela dei long ABG. Yu well informed long ol memba bilong yu tu? Na yu save wanem, are you all united?

126 Em kwesten blong mi em, mi gat em inap ol i rausim bek ol displa foreign advisors husat nao ol i stap long ABG, more than tetipla foreign advisor. Tasol mipla ino nidim husat narapla i kam long narapla kantri. Em tasol.

127 Yes, em mi laik tok tasol olsem. In regards to referendum. Bikos mipela ol meri, mipela laikim free and fair referendum. Mipela no laikim bai narapela pait ikamap. So all these fact sheets, ol mas rekonsile. Na ol noken mekim ol issues bilong ol laik excuses for dispela autkam bilong referendum.

128 Em, their issues ol noken kamap olsem ol excuses. Ol mas klinim ples na mekim redi Bogenvil for referendum. Because we have come so far. This far we have come na now we are at the point of no return. Na mipela, we are already seeing the light at the end of the tunnel.

129 Mi laik tok tenk yu tasol long ABG long emi wok long pait hard tru long yumi kisim gutpla gavman blong yumi. Mi laik tenkim president blong yumi, Momis, long emi wok long fight hard long askim national gavman long emi mas givim yumi luksave. Em tenk yu stret long ABG.

130 Bai mi tok tenkyu tu long wok bilong ol polis. Na combatents tu. Long hau long ol iwok wantaim na wokim sampela kain senis, sampela kain mov ol wok long wokim, em wok long bringim pawa kam long gavaman bilong yumi.

131 Ples em mipla lusim ples bikos, laif had, sampla ol i fit long painim mani mipla sampla ino fit, wok foitnait tasol iorait. Olsem na mipla lusim ples long taun long painim wok blong wok moni blong ol pikinini long baim skul fii.

132 Bikos inogat gutpla edekesen long Bougainville, planti blong mipla lusim Bougainville long wanem bikos nogat gutpla skul, edukesen long ples.

133 I think the only connection nau em ya, social media na fone. Man blong mi wantaim ol em ol born long hap during crisis so I think fear em stap long go bek ken long peles.

134 So bikos I think mipla stap autsait ya em olsem mipla at least mipla gat sikiriti. Sikiriti blong mipla long; na ol lain stap long island yet ya ol tingting planti stap.

135 Ol tambu lain blong mi ya o ol lain long ples ol no save laik toktok long em. Every time the stori blong ples na crisis kamap em bai mipla sa' mipla no save concludim stori. Ol save pilim sua ken na em mipla save passim tasol wantaim ai wara na silence until next day o wanem nabaut nau em wanpla diferent man kam na stori long narapla topic nau em mipla sa stat re-build ken, so it's a, nogat ending blong displa stori. Em save end wantaim I mean bai mi tok ol save shot katim lo, wantaim ai wara.

136 Sait blong displa ating displa nau em bai stap long han blong National gavman a, sapos ol laikim pisful autkam then ol mas mekim gutpla process. Toktok wantaim ol lain long hap, kisim tingting blong ol nau bai yumi kamap wantaim gutpla aidia blong kisim referendum.

137 Not every information there is correct o em stret ah mi bai tok. (...) Facebook em sampla taim em ino raitpla samting ol bai givim ah. (...) Emi no content blong olgeta displa ass tingting blong referendum ah. So em sampla taim em mi tok ya em mi no sa, 'mi no bin satisfy yes.

138 Olsem how mi skelim em, yes planti ol gutpla toktok gutpla infomesen long ol samting about long referendum ya, planti ol gutpla toktok ikamap (...) Awareness long displa sait em ol klia gut tru na ol i understandim na ol i tok most of them to ol i wanbel na hamamas long referendum.

139 So nau olgeta lain long ples tu gat mobail fon so only way that mipla ba kominikeit wantaim ol em tru long mobail fon so only way mipla ba konekt wantaim ol long mobail. Mipla konekt wantaim ol long mobail fon nau, mipla bai kisim long wanem samtin wok long kamap long ples, espesli disla referend-um nau ya.

140 Long sait blong displa mino understandim tumas but long understand blong mi em olsem, em process towards independence ah? So fest step em olsem autonomy gavening, yu lukautim yu yet. Okay Greater Autonomy em olsem narapla bikpla long Autonomy next em Referendum ah, may be (inaudible), bihain nau bai independence. That's hau mi understandim but sapos usait iken klia gut bai iken explenim gut Autonomy na displa ol process.

141 Vote em oli putim olsem long tupla; independent and higher autonomy. So sapos mipla vote long displa 'higher, greater autonomy' what is going to happen? And when we vote for 'independence' what is going to happen?

142 Na it's not olsem klia ah, laik after long referendum nau I think we'll yeah, bai mipla another wait again. That's what I think. Ol bai tabolim nau mipla bai wait, it's another long process again for, to actually receive the final stage of referendum.

143 National gavaman by handim igo long probably Bougainville kisim ken sampla pawa, bai givim sampla pawa ken long ranim provins. Example mi tok pinis, may be bai ol givim power of mining so Bougainville bai ministry blong mining nau.

144 Financial stability for a new emerging country, that's wanpla bikpla issue wea mipla; because we never know you know; what if we go 'yes' and then yumi go na PNG em passim han nau. Where do we get aid from?

145 Mi meri long narapla hap mi kam marit long Buka so ol bai allowim mipla o? Olsem mipla meri long go insait bikos long kastom blong ol em meri save kisim graun, man em nogat. But long kastom blong mipla ol hailens em different. So olsem gavman bai allowim mipla ol olsem mipla meri long narapla hap ken go long Buka tu o nogat o? Displa em olsem wanpla askim.

146 Em shud gat peaceful bikos ol pipol long Bougainville mas hamamas olsem gavman blong Papua Niugini igivim independent long Bougainville. This is where em bai givim bel isi long ol man ipait insait long displa war.

147 Mi ibin save tasol long referendum taim bin go holiday long ples na ol bin dikliarim o mekim verbal declaration long displa referendum ya. Em that's the only time mi kisim information long Referendum olsem Referendum ol i kliarim olsem verbal declaration but, long hia lng Rabaul stret em nogat wanpla verbal declaration ol mekim long Referendum.

148 Mi lukim olsem last mi go long ples last visit na information about referendum about independence and higher autonomy mi no satisfied tumas long information o it's kind of em sampla ino reacivim information especially long ol peles. Bikos mi ken blamim ol komitee ol mekim awenes long displa. Ol go long ol ples long mekim awenes about referendum but I don't think ol planti bin kisim information.

149 So wanem samting em olsem kain usait lain mipla stap insait long taun, mipla kisim wanem kain infomesen about referendum through long social media na telecommunication, bikpla samting em olsem mipla save go bek na save bringim gut o save updatim ol wanem samting currently wok long happen nau insait long region back.

150 Makim Bougainville stap long wan wan province, for example imas gat taim blong ol olsem go long 'Radio Goroka,' 'KBK' ah, kain oslem. Em stap long hia em gavman long Bougainville mas appointim long toktok long hap long be half long ol man.



151 Yumi nid long inkreasm coverage area long sampla hap coverage ino save kisim long en.

152 Ating data rates blong yumi ating yumi dropim liklik long sait blong video, video call yumi dropim rate liklik long displa ating olain bai communicate more long sait blong referendum long Buka.

153 Planti funding tu we National Government sapos long givim ABG long ranim displa process ya em delei wantaim National Government. Every day bai yu lukim long National Government displa ol ministers blong National Parliament ya usat ol asainim ol long wok wantaim ABG, still ol requestim government of speedim up process long locatim o releasim displa ol mani go hariap long ABG so ol iken ranim hariap.

154 Bougainville is filthy rich. That we can't deny. We have uhm so many opportunities apart from mining, olsem mining em save bagarapim graun ah, but we can look to agriculture and there are a lot of you know potentials, a lot of opportunities on the land that we can use long olsem taim mipla kisim independence.

155 Bougainville em igat ol resources istap we ol iken produsim na enim inkaim as I have mentioned earlier on like cocoa, copra, marine resources istap olsem ailan which is sea cucumber na mi ting olsem Bougainville em i gat resources olsem mining. Mipla iken go insait tru long mining em ol displa em ol resource Bougainville igat.

156 Long sait blong finance long Bougainville em olsem, taim Kopa Maining bin open befo, long mipla yet mipla save olsem mipla ino bin benefit stret long displa kopa maining ya so mipola laikim olsem, sapos trutru, mipla vot long referendum na yumi kisim referendum, mipla laikim olsem at least mipla igat share namel long olgeta pipol blong Bougainville.

157 Even taim ibin gat blockaid during the crisis years you know people began to be creative so mi mi gat strongpela believe olsem ol man bai kamapim sampla samting long sapotim economy bilong Bougainville.

158 Na wanpla program blong ABG mi hamamas, em liaise wantaim wanpla uni daun long Australia we igat displa scholarship program we every yia ol salim fopla (4) pikinini go long displa uni em ABG i wok long putim tu long human asset long kam bek gen (...) displa em strength blong Bougainville na mi hamamas.

159 Em needim wok bung wantaim long sait blong law and order insait long hap na kain olsem ol gutpla information o ol toktok imas igo long kain ol man olsem long ol bai cheing ah, so that gutpla sindaun mas kamap.

160 Igat wan wan set back in all the different governing bodies but Bougainville have actually displayed a strong governing leadership.

161 It's the duty of the ABG people to come outside to the provinces and do their work. Get outside and you do your work, you get good result.

162 Sapos ABG ken painim sampla kain mani, sampla funds nambaut, wanpla gutpla wei long weapons disposal, instead long larim ol man ikam sarendarim ol wepons blong ol bikos yumi no save ol kam givim trutru gan or nogut ol givim homemade aste tasol ol sapim na kam lusim o displa kain.

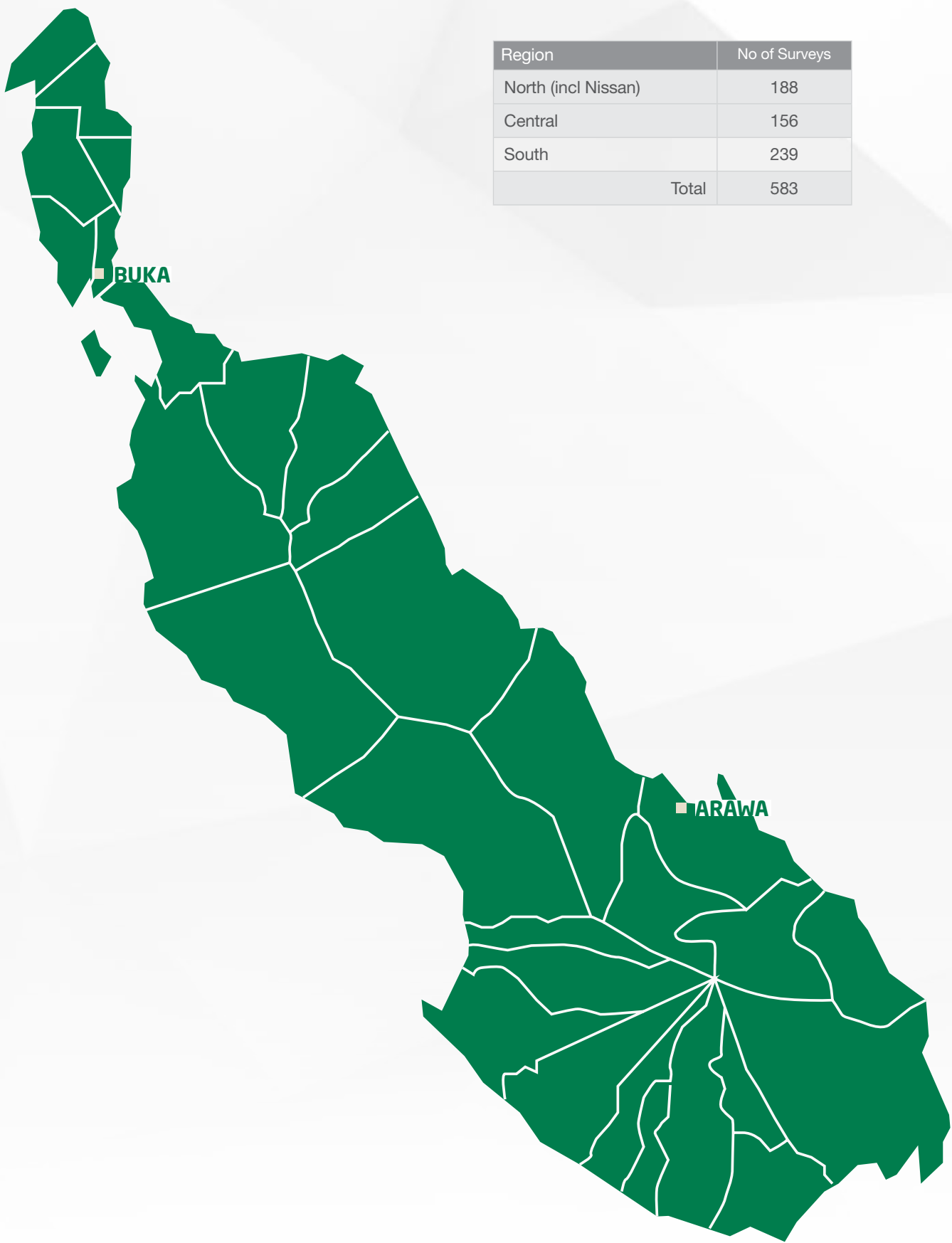
163 Bikpla samtin stret we ol members nid long tingting strong long em about educating young kids or supporting them on higher institution ol stap long em. They to engage them in tertiary institution that ol ba go bek na helpim knowledge blong ol long developim Bougainville.

164 Taim mi stap aut, em need long ABG long em mas givim sampla toktok, hau em ken mekim na mi ken go bek o mi ken stap long hia o kain olsem. For example, sapos mi kamap mi citizen blong Bougainville ah long displa taim bihain long independent em bai need long gavman blong mi long arrangim go blong mi o stap blong mi.

165 Mi hope igat sampla possible way wea gavman blong Bougainville ken wokim arrangement long mipla ken vote olsem nomol, hau yumi Papua Niugini citizen save vote long em ya ol ken arrangim olsem so that mipla ol Bougainville yet stap long wanem hap ya mipla bai ken makim sampla hap wea mipla ken go tromoi vote long em na bihain salim ol pepa go bek.

# TABLE OF SURVEYS & MAP

Region	No of Surveys
North (incl Nissan)	188
Central	156
South	239
Total	583









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