

BOUGAINVILLE AUDIENCE STUDY

NIUPELA WOKABAUT BILONG BOGENVIL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

JUNE 2017



Bougainville Audience Study - Niupela Wokabaut Bilong Bogenvil, Executive Summary (June 2017)

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The full report can be downloaded at www.abg.gov.pg/reports



FOREWORD

Good decision-making requires good information. That was the basis for the production of this research report – to improve how government delivers information to people based on a good understanding of how Bougainvilleans, from Kessa to Siwai to Panguna and the islands, currently access media and other information sources. We also need to know what people understand of the three pillars of the Bougainville Peace Agreement as we prepare for the 2019 Referendum.

The community response to these two questions contained within this report provides decision-makers and our communications experts with the feedback to adapt and improve our current approaches. Because the report makes clear that large sections of our population still have very little understanding of the Bougainville Peace Agreement, the basis for our government today, and the future choices that they will soon be asked to make about our political status. It is critical that this be addressed if we are to have a fully informed Referendum vote.

The report demonstrates Bougainville is a challenging place to provide information and undertake awareness. Our geography of islands and mountain ranges means traditional media has limited penetration beyond the main urban areas. The cost of producing information materials and conducting face-to-face awareness is also high.

But we must overcome these challenges to provide people with the information they crave: what is autonomy, what is independence, what about weapons disposal, the economy, are we ready, what must we do to prepare ourselves, what will happen after and what will the consequences be to any choices we make? This report provides some guiding light to how we can begin to provide information on these many questions.

We must be more strategic and more creative. We must go to communities prepared with information that is clear, simple, visual and consistent. We must explore new ideas and new technology such as mobile and video to help overcome our geographical barriers and need to engage people where they live with information that is powerful, engaging, memorable and appropriate. We must provide opportunities for government to listen to our citizens and respond, and we must make a special effort to reach underrepresented populations such as women and youth.



Joseph Nobetau

Chief Secretary

Office of the President and Bougainville Executive Council

But overall, we must coordinate our efforts within government. The ABG's recent restructure to bring together all Bougainville Peace Agreement responsibilities under the one department, the Department of Peace Agreement Implementation, signals one such move to help drive a coordinated response to address the needs raised by this report.

It is my hope that this report will be the basis for good decision-making about the information, communication and awareness activities of the future – not just among government but among also our media, civil society and development partners – so that we can work together to provide access to information that is people's right to have.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge the ongoing assistance of the four governments of Bougainville, Papua New Guinea, Australia and New Zealand who supported the production of this valuable report on how people in Bougainville access information, and what they know of the Bougainville Peace Agreement.

INTRODUCTION

The Bougainville Audience Research Study is a comprehensive baseline study on the media and communication landscape in Bougainville. It offers key insights into the access and ownership of media and communication channels, and provides an in-depth picture of the audiences' views and aspirations in relation to the Bougainville Peace Agreement.

BACKGROUND

A 10-year civil conflict (1988-1998), caused by disputes over Panguna mine, has shaped the history and identity of Bougainville. In 2001, in response to the civil war, the Bougainville Peace Agreement (BPA) was created, designed to resolve the Bougainville conflict and secure lasting peace. The BPA allows for a referendum to be held between 2015 and 2020, to determine the political status of Bougainville.

The Bougainville crisis had left a gap in information systems and information dissemination. Due to the destruction of much of the infrastructure, rebuilding information systems and providing the population with access to information has been challenging for the government. Awareness among the population about key political processes is therefore one of the key strategies of the Joint Autonomy Review (2013) that guides the process of the Bougainville Government towards the referendum. Research on the current knowledge levels and understandings of the BPA among the population is an important component to the preparations for the referendum and the development of further communication strategies.

METHODOLOGY

The study was undertaken by the Centre for Social and Creative Media (CSCM) at the University of Goroka. As part of the study 16 field researchers from Bougainville were engaged in a participatory design process and trained in data collection. The design process took into account the geography, population structure, audience segmentation, community relations and languages of various regions. The Bougainville Audience Study was conducted in 2015 in all three regions of the Autonomous Region of Bougainville - North, Central and South Bougainville.

The study used a quantitative survey (n=1114) and one-on-one interviews (n=203), as well as community mapping and field researchers' notes from respondents across all 42 Councils of Elders (CoEs) of Bougainville. The results of the study provide an understanding of media access and use, current knowledge levels of the Bougainville Peace Agreement, and people's aspirations that support key recommendations for communication strategies to be developed by the Autonomous Bougainville Government.

Ensuring populations have access to information and are informed about decision-making processes is key to further development, and forms the foundation of a functioning democratic society. With this background, this study presents a comprehensive and in-depth investigation, and serves as a baseline study in order to monitor program implementations and changes in the communication landscape in Bougainville.



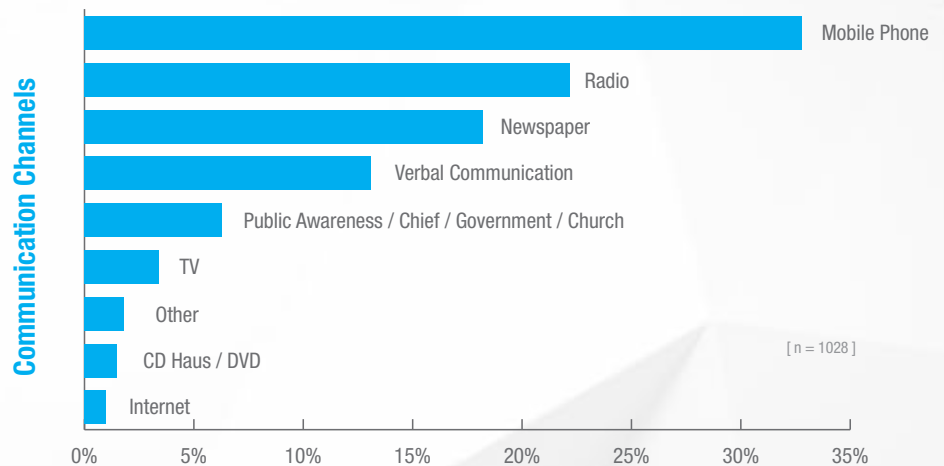
MEDIA ACCESS & OWNERSHIP

The Bougainville Audience Study captured people's access, ownership and use of media. We asked what communication channels people preferred and what sources of information they trusted to receive information from the government.

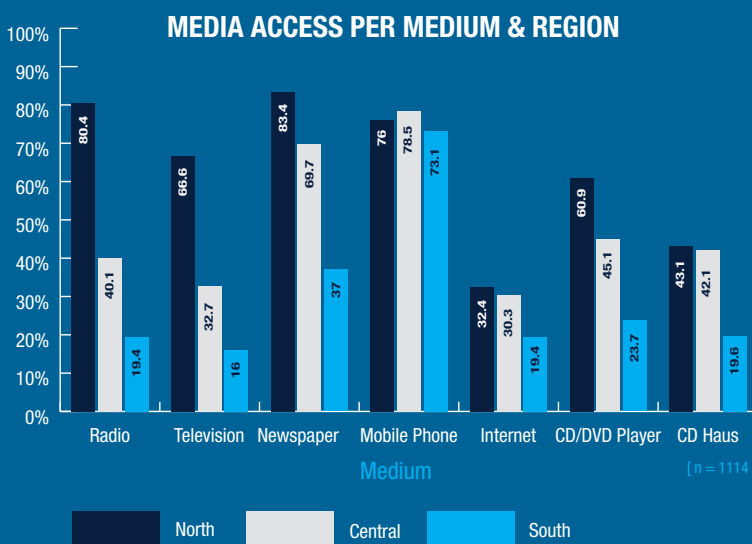
THE MOST USED COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

are mobile phones as they transcend geographical boundaries. While radio and newspapers are frequently accessed, verbal communication and word of mouth are the main forms of communication - considering that both mobile phone and face-to-face public awareness rely on verbal communication.

MOST USED MEDIA & COMMUNICATION CHANNELS



“It is different now compared to before. By having access to phones we are learning more, and people are receiving more information.” (Male, 37, North)¹



REGIONAL DIFFERENCES:

Traditional mass media (radio, television, newspapers) are much more accessible in the North, and somewhat in Central, but much less in the South, with under 20% access to radio or television among the population. There is however over 73% of access to mobile phones in each of the regions.

“There are the big meetings, like church or school, where they pass on information. That is good, but we would like better ways, more proper ways to get information, like the towers, to disseminate information.” (Female, 42, South)²

RADIO AND NEWSPAPERS

Across Bougainville, 47% of respondents had access to radio and up to 63% accessed newspapers, albeit irregularly.

MOBILE USE HIGH ACROSS BOUGAINVILLE

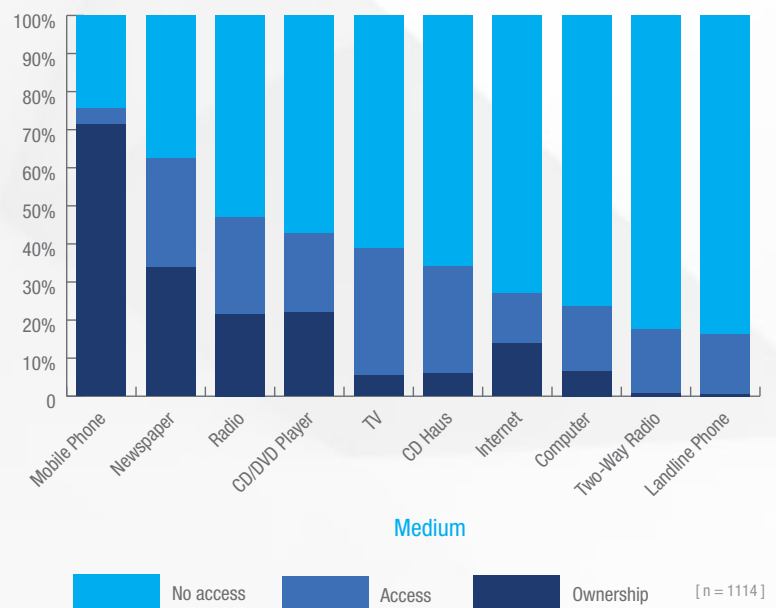
The mobile phone has become the most accessible tool for communication with three quarters of respondents stating that they have access to a mobile phone (76%).

TELEVISION AND THE CD HAUS

are mostly used communally, with ownership of both under 7% but access being much higher, with 39% for television and 34% for the CD Haus.

INTERNET was accessed by less than a third of all respondents (27%), mostly via mobile devices.

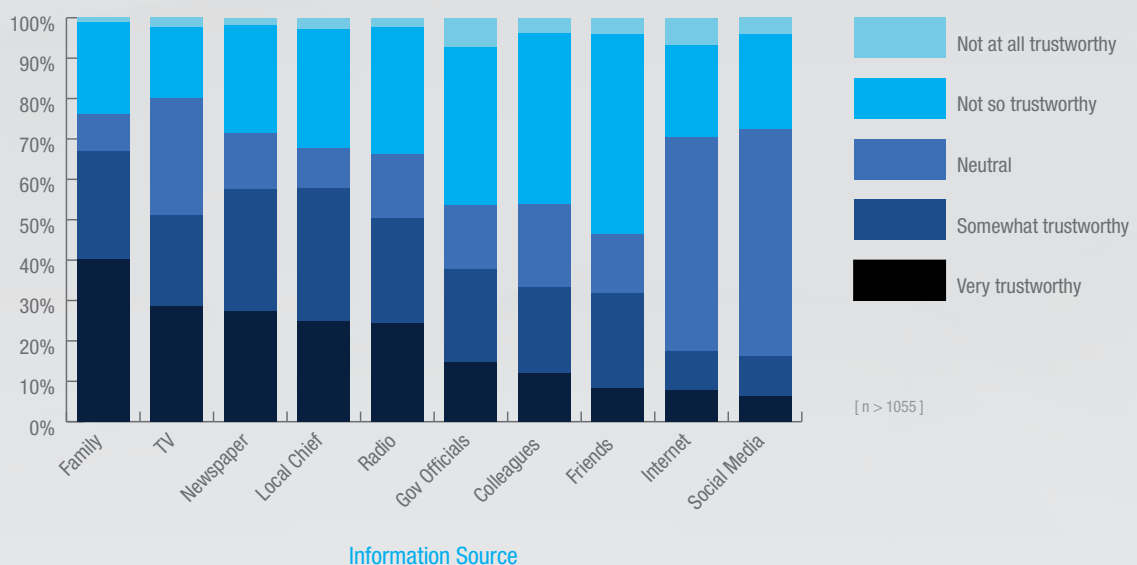
MEDIA OWNERSHIP & ACCESS



MASS MEDIA INFORMATION TRUSTED FOR NEWS

Respondents stated that they trust information received from their immediate community, especially from family or their local chiefs. While people expressed doubts about the efficiency and reliability of current media channels (radio, TV, newspaper), over half of the respondents felt that traditional mass media channels provide a reliable way to receive accurate information, as everyone listens to or sees the same information.

INFORMATION SOURCES - LEVEL OF TRUST





National Broadcasting Corporation Bougainville, Radio Studio Buka

“ Maybe the first thing would be to bring awareness to the villages, because lots of people cannot read and write well, some can’t understand English or Tok Pisin. All the people would understand well if someone were to come straight to their village and talk to them, or if they were to hear on the radio. ” (Male, 25, Central)³

► LEVEL OF MEDIA ACCESS RELATED TO INCOME

Financial constraints and access to power were frequently mentioned as barriers to accessing media. People with higher incomes generally have better access to media. Radio is considered the most affordable of all media.

► AGE GROUPS

There is higher access to radio for people under 34 years of age with 54% access, compared to 43% for those over 34 years. The age group of 14-24 year olds have the highest access to television with 49%, compared to 36% for those aged above 24. Mobile phone access is highest among 35-44 year olds with 82% access in that group. Overall, younger people have higher access to media; this is most visible among those aged under 35.

► WOMEN HAVE LOWER ACCESS TO MEDIA

Women have lower access to media than men, across most media. Radio is the medium that shows the most significant gender disparity in terms of access, with 51% of men having access to radio compared to 42% of women. By contrast, men and women equally access mobile phones.

► LANGUAGE PREFERENCE

Almost half of the respondents said that they are comfortable consuming media in English (47%); however, the majority preferred the language to be Tok Pisin (87%). About a third expressed that they would like media to also be in local language, *Tok Ples* (34%).

KEY FACTS PER MEDIUM

Understanding the advantages and disadvantages of each medium and communication channel is key to designing a comprehensive communication strategy. Following is a list of the key features of each medium in Bougainville.



WORD OF MOUTH

- ▶ People rely on receiving information through word of mouth and communicating with people in popular gathering places in their community, such as markets or at church. These communication spaces are particularly important for those in the South region.
- ▶ Respondents had mixed reactions to information provided through the CoE and said that CoE channels of communication do not always function.
- ▶ People were aware of the limitations of word of mouth as subjective, out-dated and often unreliable.
- ▶ Respondents said that they trust information received from family and their local chief, and generally from traditional mass media such as TV, radio and print, with over half the population considering traditional mass media trustworthy.

“ On the side of information, sometimes we get it from the people who do market on the roadside. And sometimes we get information when people come to the aidpost. And sometimes, we get information from people who walk around and chat. ” (Male, 45, South)⁴



RADIO

- ▶ Radio was accessed by 47% of the Bougainville population with about 22% owning radios. Most accessible and popular was NBC Radio Bougainville, confirmed by 88% of radio listeners, followed by New Dawn FM and Yumi FM.
- ▶ Radio is the most popular medium for information to be received from the government, as it provides a regular information source to both literate and illiterate audiences.
- ▶ It is considered one of the most affordable media, however, limited reception is one of the main constraints.
- ▶ People would like to receive regular and up-to-date information. Radio Ples Lain, the mobile radio run by the ABG, is considered less regular, and NBC Bougainville preferred for broadcasting.
- ▶ Most listened to the radio in the mornings and evenings. Most popular content areas are news & current affairs, music, sports and talkback shows.
- ▶ Radio programs are preferred to be in Tok Pisin by the majority of listeners (92%).

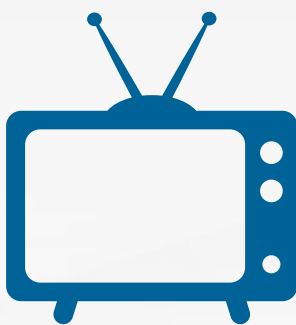
“ The Government must circulate lots of awareness, and it must fix this Radio Bougainville to let us know about the peace agreement. ” (Female, 42, South)⁵



NEWSPAPERS

- ▶ The Postcourier was accessed by over half of the respondents (58%), and the National by just under half of all respondents (47%). The Bougainville Bulletin was the third most accessed newspaper (16%).
- ▶ The national newspapers are predominantly accessed via urban centres in the North and Central regions.
- ▶ Newspapers are an important medium for the educated population due to the potential for more in-depth and analytical information. High levels of illiteracy among the population present a constraint.
- ▶ There are frequent delays in the delivery of newspapers; at times up to one month, which results in scepticism and a perceived disconnection towards the medium, particularly in remote areas.

“ Newspapers cannot reach all people, because lots of people here, half of Kongara is illiterate. They cannot read. ” (Male, 25 Central)⁶



TELEVISION & CD HAUS

- ▶ Despite people's low ownership of televisions (6%), as a medium it is very popular. It is mostly used communally, with 39% saying that they had access to a television, and many respondents requested for information to be received via television.
- ▶ The CD Haus is popular in communities. It is used mainly for entertainment and less for information. However, the CD Haus acts as meeting place where information is passed on through word of mouth.
- ▶ Those with access to broadcast TV accessed mostly EM-TV (97%), with less viewers accessing NBC TV (22%). Signal and costs were mentioned as the main constraints.
- ▶ Audience's tastes for foreign movies include action movies and romances. Bougainville productions, including music videos, are extremely popular and audiences strongly identify with local production values.

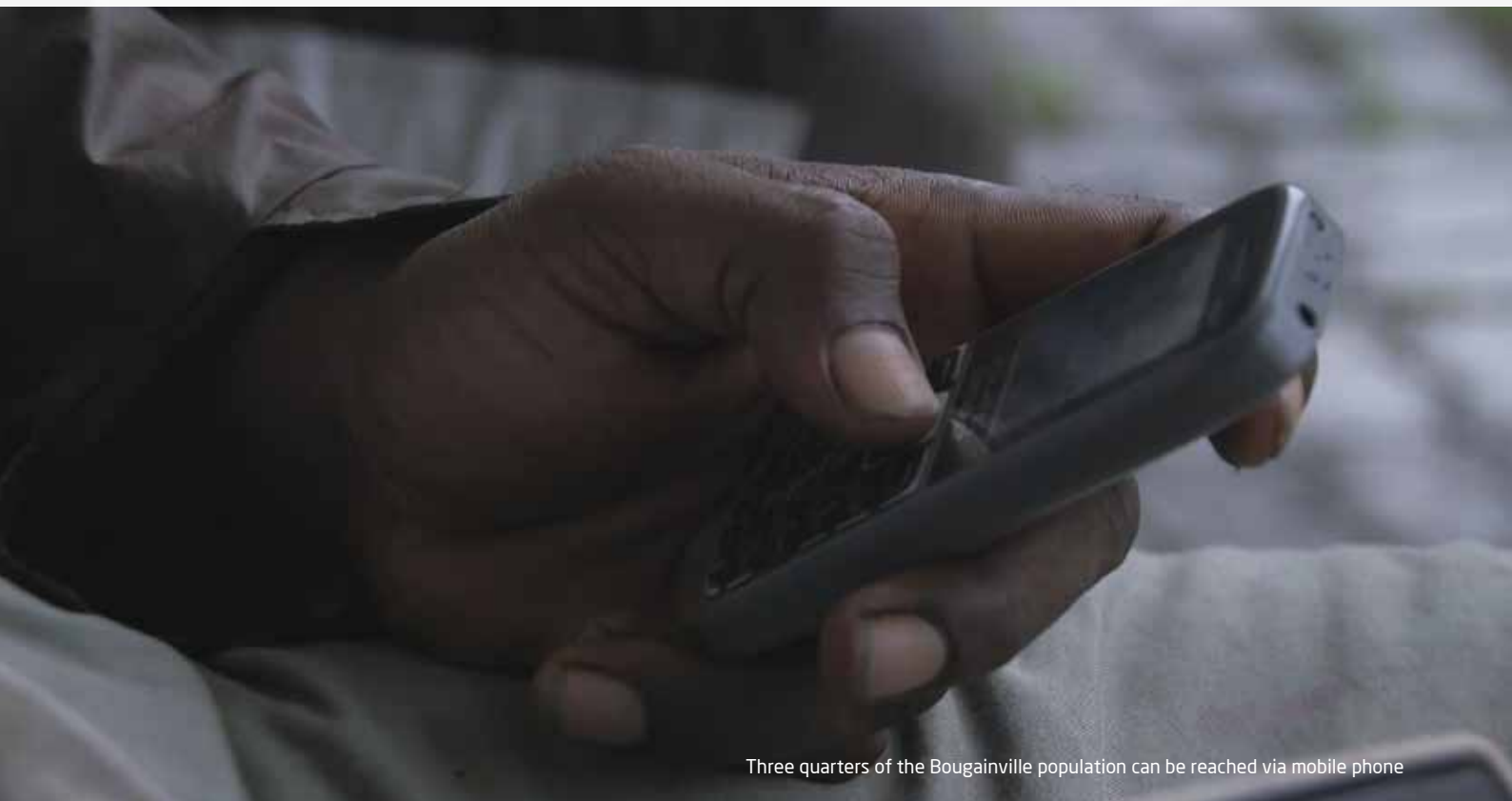
“ We can't access TV; we have a screen, but we use it to watch CDs. ”
(Female, 55, North)⁷



MOBILE & INTERNET

- ▶ Across Bougainville, mobile phones have become the most accessible tool for communication across regions, age groups and gender (76%). The majority of phones in use are 2G phones (81%).
- ▶ The mobile phone relays and magnifies word of mouth communication. About a third of respondents said they use their mobile phone to receive news (37%). Most used their phone to text and talk to family and friends (over 90%).
- ▶ Mobile phones are also frequently used to listen to radio.
- ▶ One fifth used their mobile phone to access Facebook/internet (20%), suggesting that the majority of those owning a 3G phone are connecting to the internet.
- ▶ Internet was accessed by less than a third of all respondents (27%). Those who know how to use it and can afford it, see internet as source of up-to-date, reliable, in-depth information.
- ▶ Two thirds of mobile phone users said they spent up to 10 Kina per week on mobile communication (67%). People with higher income spent more money on mobile communication and internet.

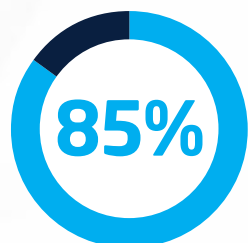
“ I have a phone, it is just to get text messages, from the family, the friends. Not the kind to go to internet or stuff like that, just to text. ” (Male, 52, North)^a



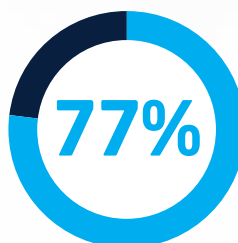
Three quarters of the Bougainville population can be reached via mobile phone

KNOWLEDGE LEVELS OF THE BOUGAINVILLE PEACE AGREEMENT

Knowledge levels of the Bougainville Peace Agreement and political processes in Bougainville are low across all regions.



said they have heard about the **Bougainville Peace Agreement (BPA)**, including its pillars 'Autonomy', 'Weapons Disposal' and 'Referendum'



said they are not sure or do not know much about the **BPA**. Only 6 out of 100 people said that they are clear about the Referendum and its processes.



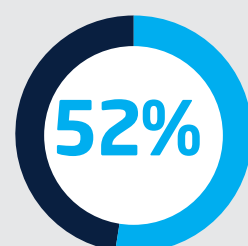
Four out of five respondents said that **they do not know who the signatories to the BPA are**.

The figures around how much people feel they know about the political situation in Bougainville are similar across the North, Central and South regions. Even when awareness has taken place, people expressed uncertainty.

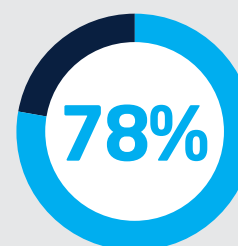
“ These three pillars, I heard about it through awareness, when they came and explained. I heard it on the radio; all were talking about it, what exactly are these “three pillars”? I heard about it, but what these three pillars are, I am not sure.” (Female, 24, North)⁹

WEAPONS DISPOSAL

Of the pillars of the BPA, weapons disposal, is most accessible to understand, as it is directly visible and relevant to people's lives.



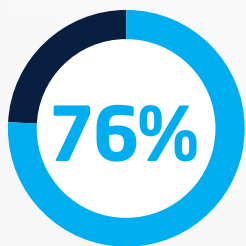
said that **weapons disposal had happened in their area**, however this varies significantly depending on the CoE.



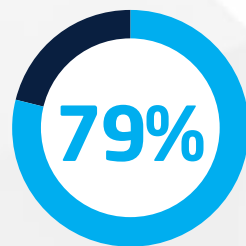
said they believe that **weapons disposal increases personal safety**.

“ Many of us women were scared of the weapons, the weapons that the BRA had. When we saw them disposing of their weapons, we felt free and less afraid. ” (Female, 55, North)¹⁰

AUTONOMY & REFERENDUM

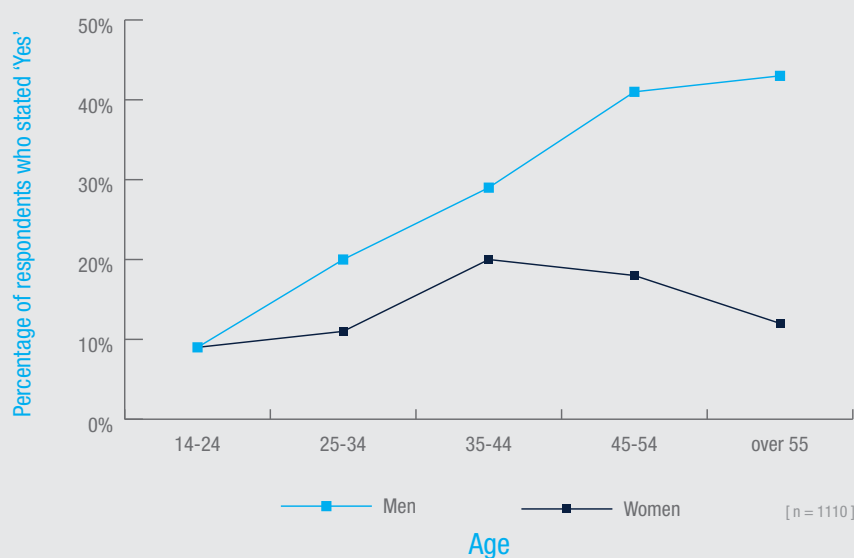


said that they do not know the **link between autonomy and independence**, and that they do not understand the requirements for independence.



said that they do not **understand the relationship between weapons disposal and referendum**.

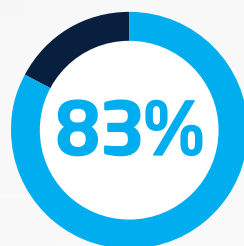
DO YOU UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AUTONOMY & INDEPENDENCE?



Young people are less informed, and knowledge levels are generally better in the higher age groups, but those over 55 also demonstrate lower knowledge levels. Knowledge is also higher for those with higher education levels. Women are generally less informed than men.

People regard the possibility for independence mostly as a possibility for change. While a third of respondents said they did not know what changes independence might bring, over one fifth of respondents thought that services would improve.

Despite low knowledge levels and uncertainty, most respondents referred to the BPA as symbolically important, as "niupela wokabout bilong Bougainville" (a new journey for Bougainville), through "gutpela sindaun", peaceful relations in communities.



felt that they do not **receive enough information on the topics related to the BPA**.

ASPIRATIONS FOR BOUGAINVILLE

- ▶ Respondents' perceived priorities are that they want change through progress, in a prepared and orderly fashion. They see unity and inclusion as a requisite for Bougainville to progress within its full potential. They wish to work towards economic self-reliance, directing individual efforts beyond government's actions and support through education and training, with particular emphasis on the youth and on remote areas.
- ▶ Respondents see access to information as a right that is not currently being met, and is expected as part of the government's "moral responsibility". This element seems representative of the Bougainville self-confidence that appears as a remarkable asset as yet untapped for the progress of Bougainville.
- ▶ People articulated a clear request to receive information about the Referendum, the Bougainville Peace Agreement and the political situation of Bougainville. Over half of all respondents listed 'Referendum' as one of three topics to receive information about.

“ I see how Bougainville politics are ignoring this principle that we have and that we have been fighting for during the Bougainville crisis, a bottom-up approach, that all ideas must start from inside the community and go upwards. ” (Male, 55, Central)¹¹

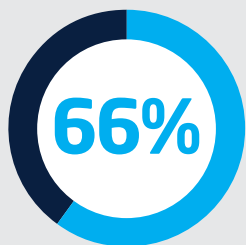


Boat stop, Buka

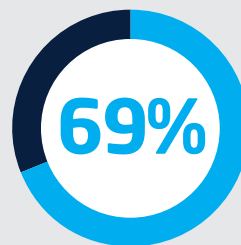


Fieldresearcher Bernadine Naviung, Central Region

VOICE IN THE COMMUNITY



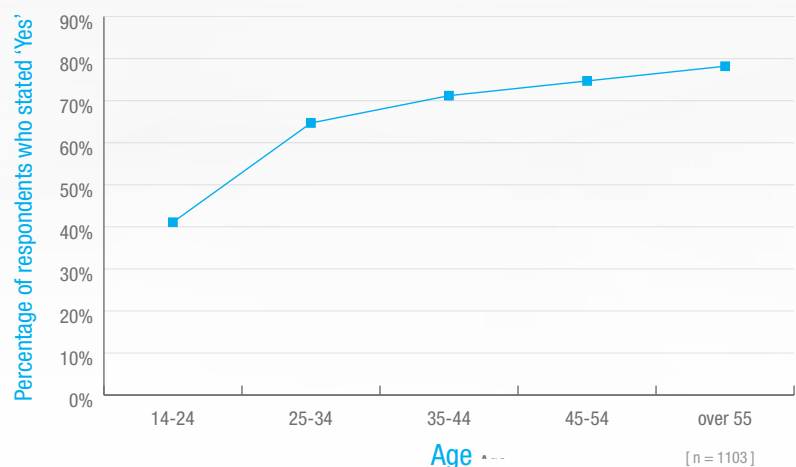
felt that they can freely express their opinion in their community. This is slightly higher for male respondents (70%) than for women (61%).



felt that there is a way for them to raise a concern in their community. This was again higher for men (72%) than women (64%). Younger people have less voice in the community.

DO YOU FEEL THAT YOU CAN FREELY EXPRESS YOUR OPINION IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

Responses show that freely expressing your opinion in the community is impacted by age. The more mature the respondents, the more they felt they have a voice in the community. Conversely, younger people traditionally have less say, and they perceive that their opinions are less valued. This has been reflected in the interviewers' difficulties in finding young people to interview, and them feeling confident to talk to researchers.



PEOPLE'S RECOMMENDATIONS ON IMPROVING COMMUNICATION

In the interviews, people expressed their suggestions what media channels would be preferred to receive information and updates from the government.



► **Improve Radio**

Radio information must be regular, well structured and easy to understand. For example, a regular radio program will convey continuity, reliability and show the government's commitment, which in turn, will make it credible.

.....



► **Use Face-to-Face communication**

The preferred channel by many, particularly in remote areas, is "face to face", in small groups, most often referred to as "awareness", to ensure that people at village level are reached. Respondents suggested using existing networks and groups, such as youth groups and women's groups to disseminate information.

.....



► **Provide printed information**

Printed material was repeatedly requested for use as education and reference material in schools, village assemblies and community groups. There were numerous requests to have access to hard copies of the Bougainville Peace Agreement, ideally in Tok Pisin.

.....



► **Improve Television**

Respondents understand the restrictions in terms of access to power and high running costs for television, but expressed that TV could create more trusting links between the people and the government by providing visual information and updates.

.....



► **Mobile Communication where suitable**

Respondents are familiar with bulk messages sent by Digicel, and perceive further potential for this medium. For instance, it was suggested that the government could use the network to send information as text messages that could be read immediately by all phone users.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM FINDINGS

The study found that the provision of 'awareness' as a key recommendation of the Autonomy Review (2013) has been insufficient. The crisis has left the information and communication landscape in Bougainville in a state that does not allow for regular information dissemination to people. Even

where media is available, messages have not been clear and there has been a limited focus on monitoring the understandings of the population. Based on the research, several components are considered key to a successful implementation of informing the population of the political situation in Bougainville.

▶ LOCAL STRUCTURES IN PLACE BUT LINK TO GOVERNMENT MISSING

At the very local level communication structures are in place and people trust the information within their circles and groups. However the link to government institutions such as the CoE is not functioning properly. Key strategies must be put in place to address the link between community and government. A clear communication strategy, outlining the content to be

made public to CoEs and communities, and processes and timelines for this information sharing, could ensure that all stakeholders understand the way information should be passed on. Further building the capacity of CoE members to establish clear communication channels with the communities would strengthen their engagement.

▶ INVOLVEMENT OF KEY GROUPS

YOUTH: Youth have a lesser voice within their community setting. They know less about the Bougainville Peace Agreement and need to be specifically targeted to overcome existing barriers within the community setting. The fact that many of them have had limited access to education also needs to be taken into account. Strategies that create safe spaces for youth to express themselves and build their knowledge and confidence are necessary to mediate their increasing participation and voice in society.

INVOLVEMENT OF WOMEN: Women's access to traditional mass media channels is generally lower than that of men. Women are less likely to raise their concerns at a community level but feel very comfortable raising their points within their specific groups, for example at church or women's group meetings. Women can be targeted specifically through these groups and play a key role to contribute to the education of all members of their families.

▶ REGIONAL APPROACH TO INFORMATION DISSEMINATION NEEDED

It is evident that the different regions (North, Central and South) face different challenges when it comes to media access and ownership. In addition, geographical characteristics such as urban, rural or remote areas, as well as access to broadcast

signals and towers must be considered when designing media and communication strategies for the various regions in Bougainville.



Fieldresearchers Bernadine Naviung,
Rose Tove and Fabian Tsikama

► UTILISE THE STRENGTHS OF EACH MEDIUM

Mobile phones are widely used by three quarters of the population across Bougainville, but present limitations in terms of how much information can be disseminated. While radio is considered the best medium to reach the people and disseminate information from the government, face-to-face communication will not only significantly contribute to establishing trusting

relationships between the government and the people, but also ensure that information dissemination is undertaken within the specific context of the community and audience. Written information and films can be utilised as longer-term resources through schools and the CD Haus.

► PARTICIPATORY MESSAGE DEVELOPMENT & CONSISTENT MESSAGING

Despite higher levels of mass media access and use in the North region, understandings around the Bougainville Peace Agreement (BPA) are considerably low across all regions, suggesting that the issue is not necessarily access to communication channels but how information is being communicated to the public. Research findings identify the need for the development of consistent material that translates complex terms into simple language, ideally with visual

resources. This will require participatory message development and monitoring strategies to ensure that audiences understand messages and information. This might include participatory action research approaches to involve community members in the design and ongoing monitoring of political understandings in their communities.

► AN OPPORTUNITY TO WORK TOGETHER

One of the strongest assets revealed by this research is the people of Bougainville themselves. Expressions of their pride and belief in Bougainville, in addition to their willingness and determination to work with and support the government, are key strengths that seem underutilised. People want to be informed and they are waiting for the information to reach them.

To maximise popular understanding around the Bougainville Peace Agreement, participatory communication approaches and strategies will help facilitate initial message development.

To address challenges in dissemination, community advocates might then be trained in passing on information. Beyond providing wider dissemination, working with targeted groups within communities, would ensure utilising existing communication structures as a foundation and building the necessary networks for incremental dissemination. Systems must be in place where people can receive regular information while participating in open dialogue and discussion about Bougainville's political situation.



ABG's mobile community radio station: Radio Ples Lain

ENDNOTES

ORIGINAL QUOTES IN TOK PISIN

1. Nau emi ino olsem long bifo laka. Fone nau em kamap, na mi minim olsem yumi lainim planti, yumi kisim planti save moa nau iwok long kam insait long ol pipol.
2. Long dispela hap long kisim ol infomesin, I gat ol bikpela bung, olsem long sios o skul, ol save givim ol infomesin na mipela I save kisim. Em gutpela, tasol mipela i laikim beta wei, raitpela wei bilong kisim infomesin, like ol tawa nambaut long salim ol toksave.
3. Aiting nambawan rot ol inap wokim awareness raun, olsem planti man tu ol ino save gut long rit na rait, sampela I no inap harim gut ol inglis o tokpisin. Ol man na pipol ol inap harim gut sapos man ikam daun stret long ples na toktok long ol o ol i harim long redio.
4. Long dispela, sampela taim mipela save kisim long ol man I save maket long rot. Na sampela taim mipela save kisim ol infomesin long sampela taim ol man I save kam long liklik aid pos bilong yumi long Labalam. Na sampela taim, mipela I save kisim long ol man I save raun long rot na I save toktok.
5. Tingting bilong mi em gavman imas ronim planti awareness na em imas stretim tu dispela radio Bogenvil long givim toksave long dispela pis agrimen.
6. Long niuspepa tu, em bai ino inap richim olgeta man bikos planti long half bilong Kongara eria I illiteret. Ol ino inap long rit.
7. Em nogat TV, igat wanem screen but it's for only CD, mipela ino aksesim TV.
8. Mi gat fone, em I bilong kisim tekst tasol, ol lain, ol poro. Em ino kain fone we bai mi go long em long internet na kain olsem so em bilong text tasol.
9. Long tripela pillar, mi harim long awareness. Awareness, taim man I kam na tok klia long dispela tripela pillar, mi bin harim long radio, long ol man I wok long toktok na tok kilia long dispela pillar, em olsem wanem na. Em ol dispela tupela radio na awareness, ol man I bin kam mekim, em dispela tasol mi bin harim. Tasol tripela pillar em wanem, dispela mi no klia tumas.
10. Planti long mipela ol meri ibin save poretim ol dispela ol, mi ken tok ol guns. Ol gun we ol man ol BRA isave holim, so taim ol ibin disposim ol dispela nau mipela bin stap. Mipela i bin fillim olsem mipela i fri, poret ibin go daun.
11. Mi lukim olsem Bogenvil politiks em i abrusim dispela prinsipol yumi igat na yumi i bin pait long dispela Bogenvil kraisis. Em "bottom up approach", rot mipela i bin tingting na wokim dispela pait. Rot olsem olgeta samting em I mas stap long insait long komuniti na igo antap.





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