



BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL WOMENS CLUB OF PORT MORESBY

P O BOX 2652, BOROKO 111

Papua New Guinea

8th May 2007.

BRIEF REPORT PREPARED FOR OCEANIA SUB REGIONAL IBPW MEETING ON THE CLUB ACTIVITIES OF BPW PORT MORESBY, PNG.

Papua New Guinea is an independent island nation just north of Australia – sharing the island with West Papua aka Irian Jaya – Indonesian. The country has been independent since September 16th 1975, previously it was Australian territory and as such receives vast amounts of aid from Oz. Sadly, corruption and poor governance since independence has resulted in exceedingly high unemployment, lack of medical and education facilities - combine this with the high mortality rate from TB, malaria and now the HIV epidemic – the rate of poverty is escalating despite the international banking community telling us that the economy of PNG is on track: parents simply cannot find the money for school fees.

The BPW POM club feels that the only way out of this – albeit long-term – is via education, in particular the education of young women and so to this end we choose to assist young women with education fees. Each applicant is assessed on an individual basis – the criteria being grades, family financial status and recommendation from teachers. In the last financial year we assisted some 44 girls with education fees and aim to equal that number this year, depending on the success of our fund-raising. As this is election year most funds will be channelled toward prospective MP's for their campaign expenses – this will impact on us as well as many others so we will need to work even harder to raise money to continue our scholarship scheme.

Our aim this year is to not only continue the scholarship scheme but to educate and empower young women by conducting training sessions for young ladies who are about to finish their studies – we feel it is vital that we assist by demonstrating basic such as how to write a CV that will stand out, how to conduct oneself during an interview, personal presentation and what to expect in the work-place. We also hope to establish some sort of network where employers will contact us for prospective employees.

As a club we have approx 40 members, with our membership fee at K35 (AUD13.00) an affordable amount for the majority of members. We meet once a month on a Saturday lunch time. Members bring a plate of food to share and contribute K2 towards the cost of the room hire. We invite a speaker and we run a raffle of donated items. Our major fundraiser is held annually – funds generated from this and other donations provide the finance for the scholarship scheme, raffles and membership fees cover our ordinary expenses.

Also this year we have decided to try to make the club a little more fun for the members, with this in mind we will be organising some smaller fundraising activities to complement the monthly meeting where we invite speakers to talk to us on women's issues.

In summation, we are a small club but we do make a difference and hope we can continue to increase the number of scholarships we award and therefore empower more young women.

Thankyou,
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