

Papua New Guinea
Labour Market Survey:
Earnings, Gender, and Ambitions

Findings, Analysis, and Policy Implications

November 2024
PNG Business Coalition for Women (BCFW)



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Introduction

If you are interested in labour market policies and Papua New Guinea – we think this report is for you.

Our report – based on a **nationally representative survey** involving 2,026 respondents (42% women and 58% men) – provides insights on Papua New Guineans work conditions, ambitions, challenges, and opinions – and what it means for government policy.

Our report is the **first in recent years to collect data on earnings of Papua New Guineans**, and the **first to estimate the gender earnings gap in PNG**.

We help answer these questions, among others:

- How much do Papua New Guineans **earn**?
- What is the **gender earnings gap** in PNG?
- What are Papua New Guineans' **work ambitions**?
- What do Papua New Guineans **need** to achieve their work ambitions?
- What do Papua New Guineans believe about **roles and capabilities of women** at work?
- How do these findings differ for **men and women**? What about **young people** – both urban and rural?
- What does this mean for **public policies** the government should explore?

Whether you are a policymaker, researcher, member of civil society, or interested member of the public – we think you'll learn something new.

Prepared by the Business Coalition for Women (BCFW), with support through the PNG-Australia Partnership Building Community Engagement in Papua New Guinea (BCEP) program, and with technical support from the World Bank Pacific Observatory. Survey data collected in collaboration with Digicel.

Summary of Key Findings

Overall earnings in PNG

1. Overall, we estimate **median earnings of Papua New Guineans to be PGK 763** per month; and **mean earnings to be PGK 1,564** per month (among Papua New Guineans with monetary earnings). These figures are relatively low by international comparison.
2. Nearly half (44%) of Papua New Guineans work in **types of employment without monetary pay or do not work at all**.

Gender gap in earnings

3. On top of the low overall earnings, there is also a **large gender earnings gap** – which we estimate to be **13.7% on average**.
4. This gender gap largely stems from the **earnings gap among self-employed Papua New Guineans** (the most common form of employment) – estimated to be 23.1% on average.
5. **Women also lag men in labour force participation**. In particular, fewer women work in salaried jobs, which have higher earnings compared to self-employed jobs.

Summary of Key Findings (*continued*)

Ambitions and challenges

6. **Family and household care is the main reason** preventing Papua New Guineans from working (or working as much as they would want) – especially among women, but **also for men**.
7. Men and women in PNG have similar **work ambitions**. Papua New Guineans say the top barriers to achieving their ambitions are a lack of access to finance and safety concerns.
8. Papua New Guineans place responsibility on themselves to achieve their own work ambitions, but **hold government responsible for job creation** generally. Papua New Guineans are optimistic about achieving their ambitions, but generally rate government's job-creation performance lowly.

Opinions on women

9. Papua New Guineans – both men and women – have **overwhelmingly positive attitudes towards women's roles and capabilities** at work.
10. Papua New Guineans – both men and women – strongly believe that greater work opportunities for women and having more women in politics **would be good for PNG**.
11. A strong majority of Papua New Guineans – both men and women – say they are **more likely to vote for a woman** in an election.

Summary of Key Findings (*continued*)

January 2024 riots

12. A sizable number of Papua New Guineans – including a majority of urban young people – **think the January riots will likely happen again**. Papua New Guineans identify economic concerns as a main cause of the riots.

Policies and support needed

13. To help create jobs, Papua New Guineans think members of parliament (MPs) should improve local infrastructure and expand health or education services. Papua New Guineans also **support government job creation policies targeting women**.
14. Many women would be **willing to work in physically arduous, underground, or night shift work** – if there were no legal prohibitions preventing them from doing so.
15. There is high demand among Papua New Guineans for **digital literacy and other skills training** to help achieve their job ambitions.

Summary of Policy Implications

1. Government **job policies targeting women will be popular** – including supported by a *strong majority of men*. The forthcoming **Government Jobs Strategy** is an opportunity to act on this priority.
2. To support women at work (and thus support the PNG economy), government must focus on **two broad priorities**: (i) support self-employed women to increase their earnings; and (ii) support more women to obtain salaried jobs.
3. Addressing **family and household care** is perhaps the *key policy lever* to address those two priorities for women. Additionally – perhaps surprisingly – *care policies are also key for men*.
4. Women and men in PNG **share similar work ambitions**. Policies to support job ambitions for Papua New Guineans – including to improve **access to finance** and to **enhance skills** – must cater to both women and men.
5. In the immediate term, **amending the Employment Act** – to introduce care policies and remove provisions that limit women's work – would be a *quick policy win*.
6. Policymakers should note that Papua New Guineans *do hold government responsible* for job creation – **especially MPs and provincial government**.
7. Policymakers must show *urgency* in improving jobs – which is crucial for political **stability**.
8. Political parties should strategically increase the **number of women candidates** in elections.

Survey Methodology & Demographics

Methodology note

Survey design: Survey questions designed to be comparable with prior PNG surveys where applicable, and with advice from the World Bank Pacific Observatory.

Survey sample: Sample frame constructed based on Digicel's nationwide database, spread across all PNG districts and to be representative across the Digicel customer cohort (based on phone usage patterns) – following sampling methodology used by the World Bank Pacific Observatory in PNG.

Survey implementation: Data collected between July to September 2024. Survey tested with a pilot sample, and conducted in both English and Tok Pisin. Prior to receiving a call from enumerators, respondents were sent a text message introducing the survey and noting the small incentive offered (phone credit) to participate.

Gender representation: Anticipating that more men than women would answer calls from enumerators (the gender of respondents are not known prior to calling), we took steps to obtain an adequate number of women respondents. While collecting data, once a threshold number of men respondents was reached, enumerators focused exclusively on obtaining more women respondents (by continuing with calls only if respondents were woman).

Data re-weighting: The dataset was re-weighted to better approximate the PNG population (based on various demographic data) – with guidance from the World Bank Pacific Observatory. Priority was given to sufficiently weighting gender.

Median earnings estimates: Medians calculated from salary ranges using linear interpolation, using the following formula: $\text{Median} = L + ((N / 2 - F) / f) \times w$; where L = lower boundary of the median class, $N/2$ = 50% of the population, F = cumulative frequency before the median class, f = frequency of the median class, w = class width.

Methodology note (*continued*)

Mean earnings estimates: Means calculated from salary ranges by first calculating the midpoint of each salary range. Each midpoint was then multiplied by the corresponding percentage of respondents in that range to obtain a weighted value. These weighted values were summed to find the total, which was then divided by 100 to yield the mean earnings.

Classification of groups:

Formal / informal: Formal employment was categorised as respondents who indicated that their place of work (either salaried employment or self-employed) was a registered business or received employment benefits (retirement contributions or paid leave). To note: all respondents indicating they received employment benefits also indicated they worked in a registered business. Informal employment was categorised as those working in a non-registered business (either salaried, self-employed or non-paid family business contributor).

Urban / rural: We referenced prior World Bank Pacific Observatory surveys, where respondents were asked about their ward, and to self-identify as rural or urban. We then assigned each ward (or where not possible, each district) as rural or urban, based on the majority response for that ward. We then assigned each of our respondents as urban or rural based on their ward.

Not working: Respondents were categorised as not working if they neither worked in a salaried position, nor were self-employed, nor were a family business contributor. A small number of respondents (n = 14) who indicated they are retired are included.

Young person: Below 30 years old used, to match World Bank classification of young adult, where the upper limit is 29 years old.

Visualisations: Produced with Datawrapper.

Demographics of the sample (unweighted)

Sample size	Total	2026
Gender	Men	58%
	Women	42%
Age	18-25	24%
	25-34	33%
	35-44	20%
	45-54	14%
	55-65	6%
	65+	3%
Under 30	<30	41%
	30+	59%
Gender & Age	F <30	19%
	M <30	23%
	F 30+	23%
	M 30+	35%
Disability	Disabled	7%
	Not disabled	93%
Long-term illness	Long-term illness	3%
	No long-term illness	97%

Regions (provinces combined)	Highlands	33%
	Niugini	15%
	Momase	28%
	Southern	11%
	Capital	13%
Urban/Rural	Urban	33%
	Rural	66%
Education	Less than primary	10%
	Primary	35%
	Secondary	39%
	Tertiary	13%
	Vocational	3%
	Other	0%
Flooring	Natural floor	16%
	Rudimentary floor	40%
	Finished floor	40%
Bank Account	Yes	57%
	No	43%

Demographics of the sample (re-weighted)

Sample size	Total	2026
Gender	Men	51%
	Women	49%
Age	18-25	22%
	25-34	29%
	35-44	20%
	45-54	15%
	55-65	8%
	65+	5%
Under 30	<30	37%
	30+	63%
Gender & Age	F <30	20%
	M <30	17%
	F 30+	29%
	M 30+	34%
Disability	Disabled	2%
	Not disabled	98%
Long-term illness	Long-term illness	3%
	No long-term illness	97%

Regions (provinces combined)	Highlands	21%
	Niugini	23%
	Momase	21%
	Southern	20%
	Capital	15%
Urban/Rural	Urban	32%
	Rural	68%
Education	Less than primary	10%
	Primary	39%
	Secondary	38%
	Tertiary	10%
	Vocational	3%
	Other	0%
Flooring	Natural floor	17%
	Rudimentary floor	46%
	Finished floor	32%
Bank Account	Yes	57%
	No	43%

Key Findings & Analysis

FINDING 1

Overall, we estimate median earnings of Papua New Guineans to be **PGK 763 per month**; and mean earnings to be **PGK 1,564 per month**.

Among Papua New Guineans with monetary earnings, we estimate median monthly income to be PGK 763, and mean monthly income to be PGK 1,564. This is low by international comparisons.

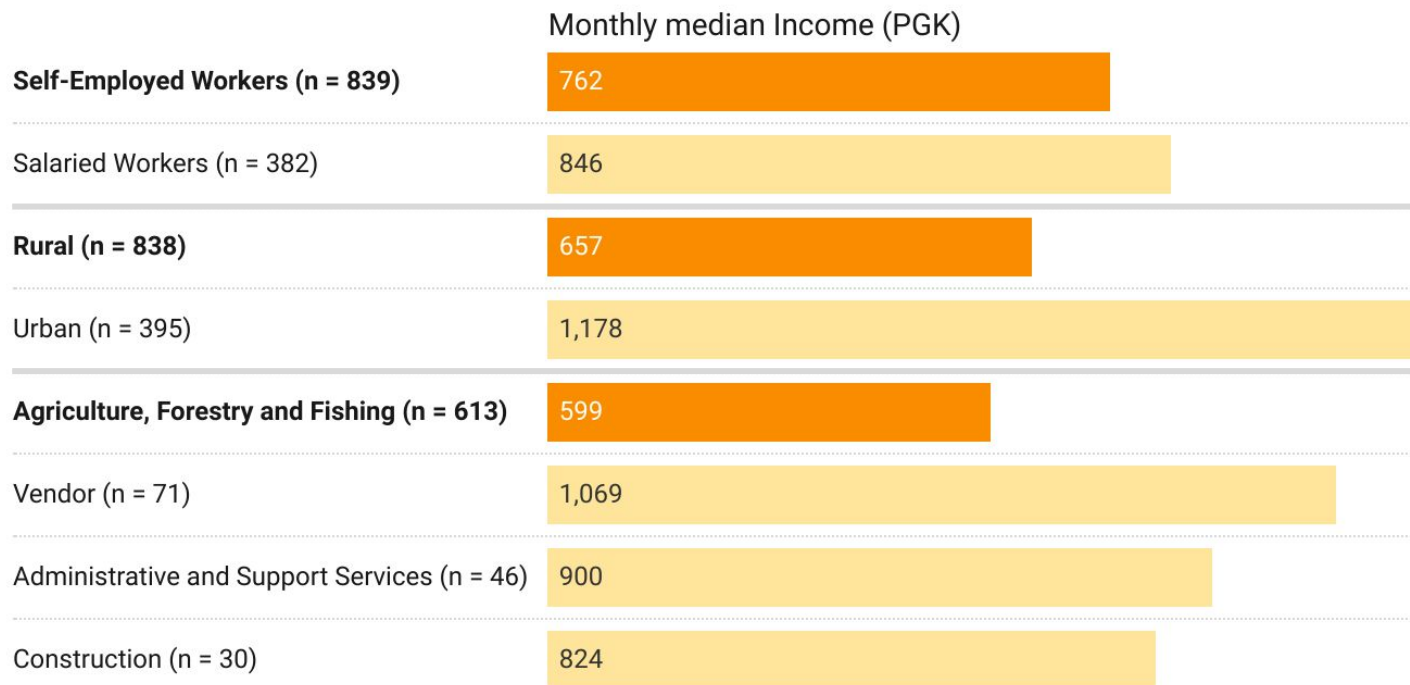
Earnings for Respondents With Monetary Pay

Monthly earnings in PGK:



Papua New Guineans tend to work in *employment types with lower earnings*: more are *self-employed* than salaried; more are in *rural work* than urban; and more are in *agriculture* than other sectors.

Median Income, Selected Comparisons



FINDING 2

Many Papua New Guineans work in types of employment **without monetary pay** – or **do not work at all**.

Many Papua New Guineans (44%) work in types of employment *without pay* (subsistence/barter or work without pay for a family business) or *do not work at all*.

Employment Type

■ Employed with monetary pay* ■ Employed without monetary pay** ■ Not working

All Respondents

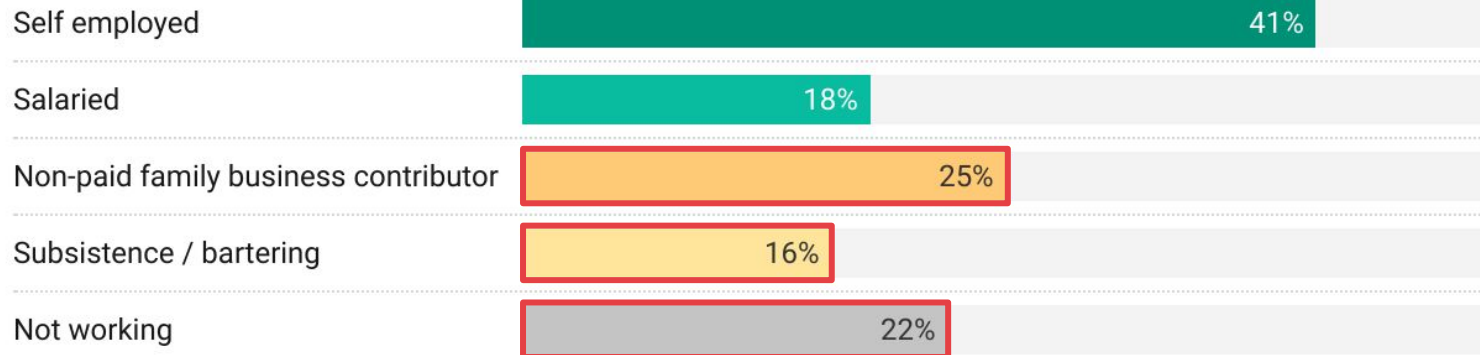


**Those receiving a salary or are self-employed and earning money. **Those working for subsistence/barter or are non-paid family business contributors – and do not receive monetary pay from employment.*

Breaking down the chart in the previous slide, we observe a fuller picture of the employment types among Papua New Guineans.

Employment Types

All Respondents



**Respondents could report more than one employment type*

Without monetary pay

FINDING 3

On top of the low overall earnings, there is also a large *gender earnings gap* – which we estimate to be 13.7% on average.

We estimate the *mean gender gap in earnings* to be 13.7% (among Papua New Guineans with monetary earnings) – a relatively high figure among lower income countries. (This is an “unadjusted” gender gap.)

Mean Earnings of Respondents With Monetary Pay

Monthly mean earnings in PGK:



Mean gender pay gap = 13.7%

Median Earnings of Respondents With Monetary Pay

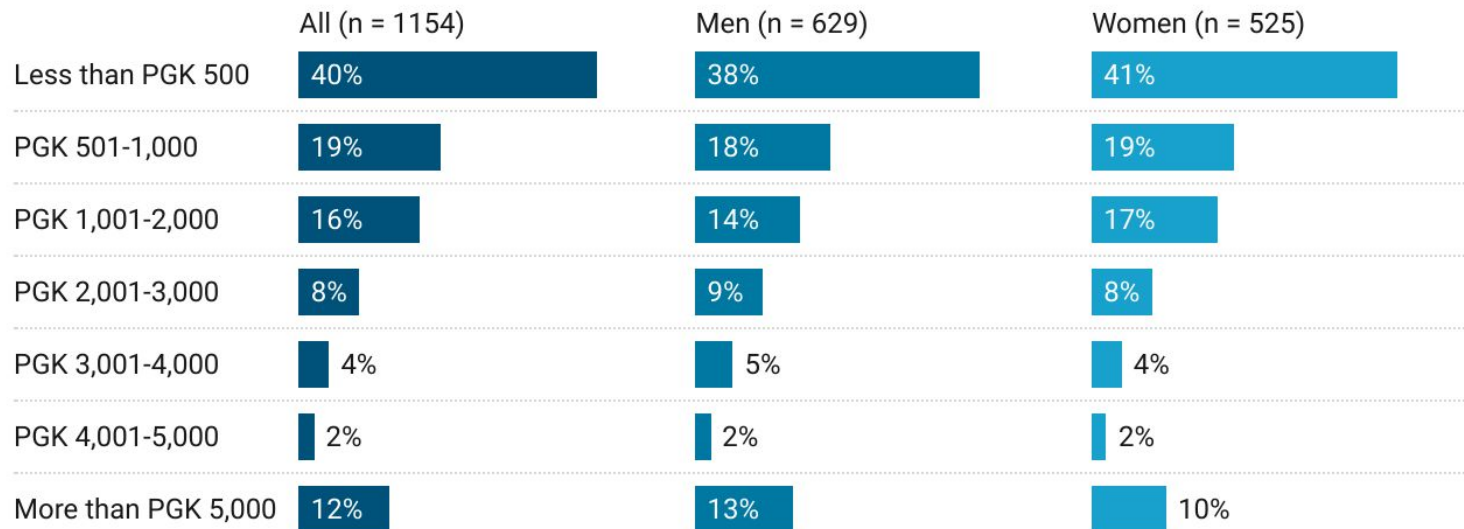
Monthly median earnings in PGK:



Median gender pay gap = 11.5%

Here, we present a more detailed breakdown of monthly earnings, by earnings bracket.

Overall Pay Distribution (Salaried and Self-Employed Workers)



FINDING 4

This gender gap largely stems from the gender earnings gap among *self-employed* (the most common form of employment) Papua New Guineans – estimated to be 23.1% on average.

We estimate average earnings among *self-employed* Papua New Guinean women to be 23.1% lower compared to self-employed men.

Mean Earnings of Self-Employed Workers

Monthly mean earnings in PGK:



Mean gender pay gap = 23.1%

Median Earnings of Self Employed Workers

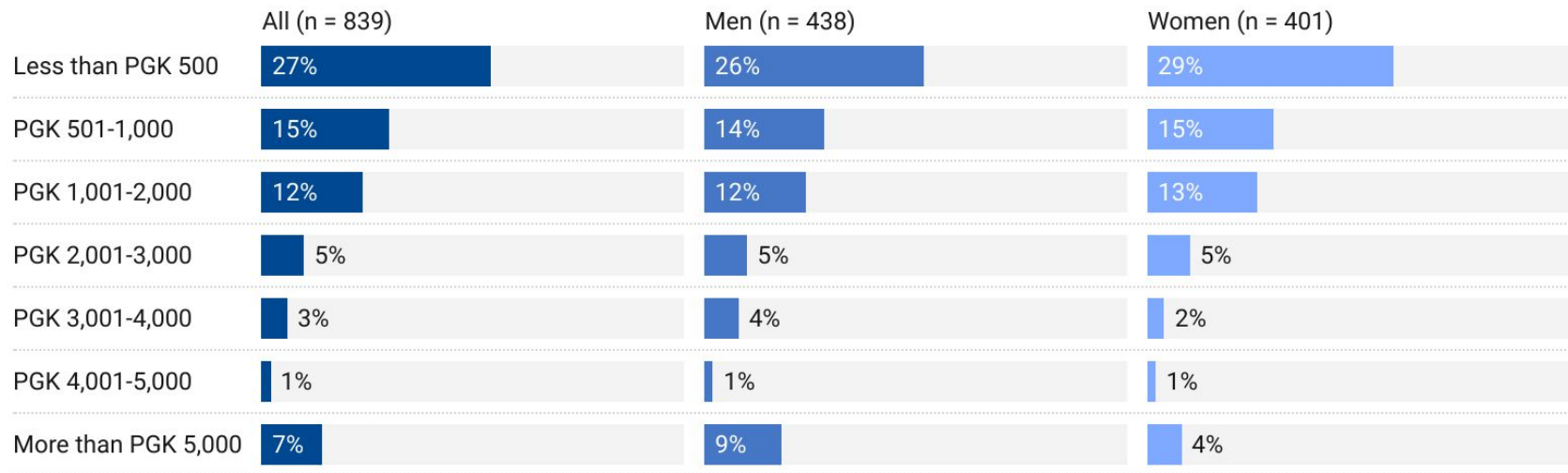
Monthly median earnings in PGK:



Median gender pay gap = 19.8%

Here, we present a more detailed breakdown of monthly earnings among the self-employed, by earnings bracket.

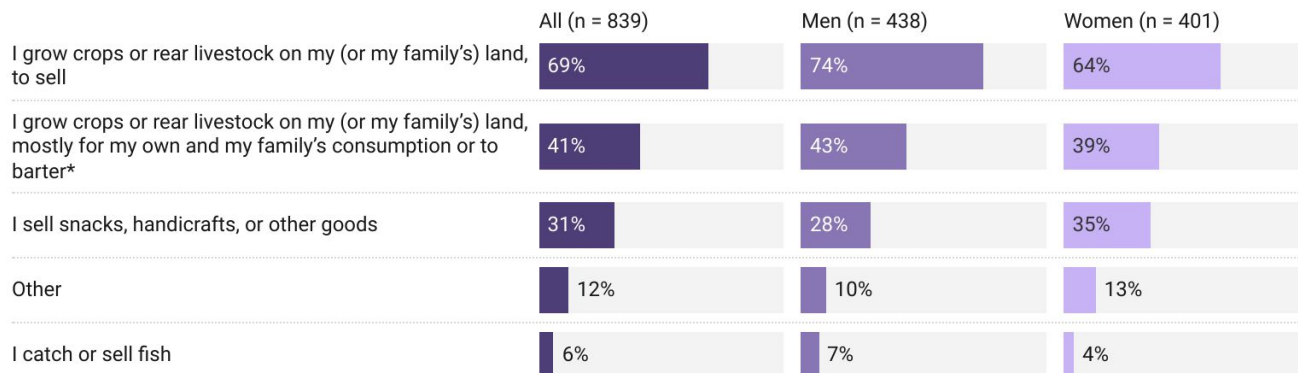
Self-Employed Workers Pay Distribution by Gender



Compared with men – a higher proportion of women are *vendors* (selling snacks, handicrafts, etc.) and a lower proportion of women are in *agriculture* (grow crops, rear livestock). Vendors typically *earn more* than those in agriculture. So, at first glance, the gender earnings gap is *not explained* by headline sectoral differences between men and women.

Self-Employed Sectors by Gender

Self-employed workers with monetary earnings



*Respondents could select more than one sector; majority of "Other" category is trading/selling miscellaneous goods. *In this chart, respondents who selected this option but also reported monetary earnings, are included.*

Median Income, Self Employed Respondents



Conversely, we estimate that *women in salaried jobs earn more than men (by 14.2%)*. This does not necessarily mean women are doing better than men in salaried positions. Rather, it could relate to an “under-representation problem”. There is a relatively low proportion of women (vs men) in salaried jobs, which could mean women with lower earning potential tend to be *left out of salaried positions altogether* – hence women’s average earnings appear high.

Mean Earnings of Salaried Workers

Monthly mean earnings in PGK:

All Salaried Workers (n = 382)

1,860

Men (n = 249)

1,764

Women (n = 133)

2,015

Mean gender pay gap among
salaried workers = -14.2%

Median Earnings of Salaried Workers

Monthly median earnings in PGK:

All Salaried Workers (n = 382)

846

Men (n = 249)

750

Women (n = 133)

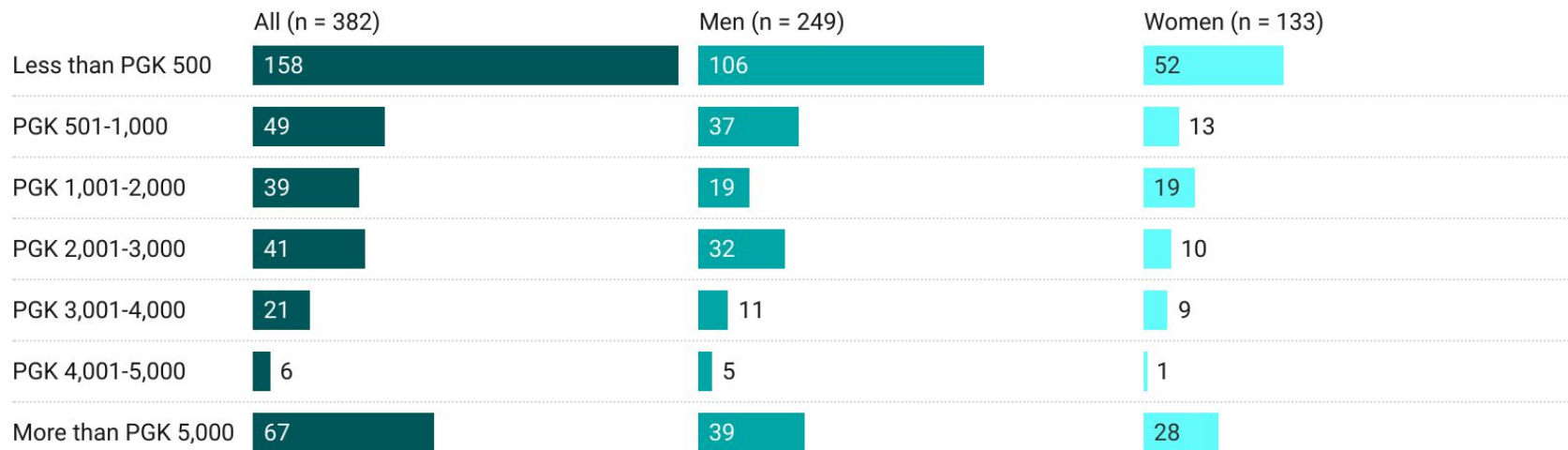
1,066

Median gender pay gap among
salaried workers = -42.1%

A headline look at the *number* (not percentage) of women vs men in salaried positions demonstrates this potential “under-representation problem”. Though women’s average salaries are higher, there are still *fewer women in higher earning brackets compared to men*.

Salaried Workers Pay Distribution by Gender

Number of respondents per income bracket:

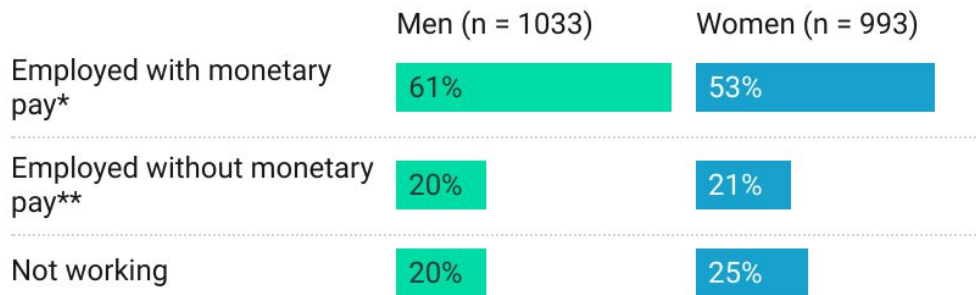


FINDING 5

Women also **lag men in labour force participation**
– particularly in higher quality jobs.

**A lower proportion of women (vs men) work for *monetary pay*.
Conversely, more women are *not working*.**

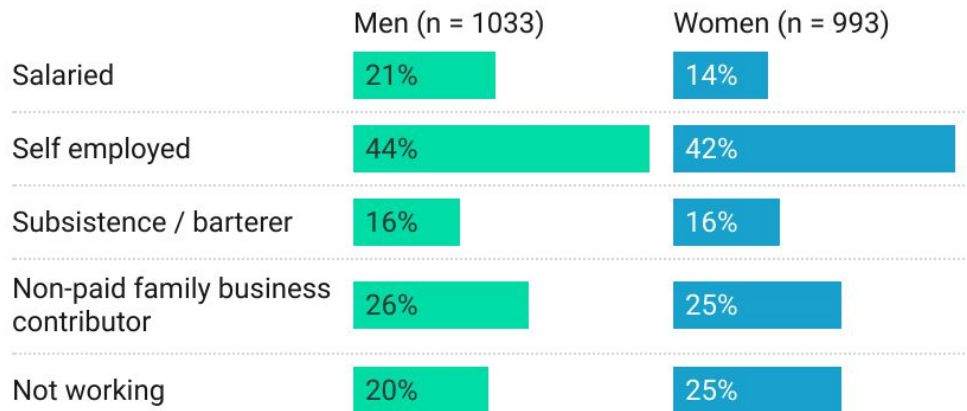
Employment Type



**Those receiving a salary or are self-employed and earning money. **Those working for subsistence/barter or are non-paid family business contributors – and do not receive monetary pay from employment.*

Within work with monetary pay: fewer women (vs men) work in *salaried jobs* (where earnings are greater), whereas a similar proportion of men and women are self-employed (where earnings are lower).

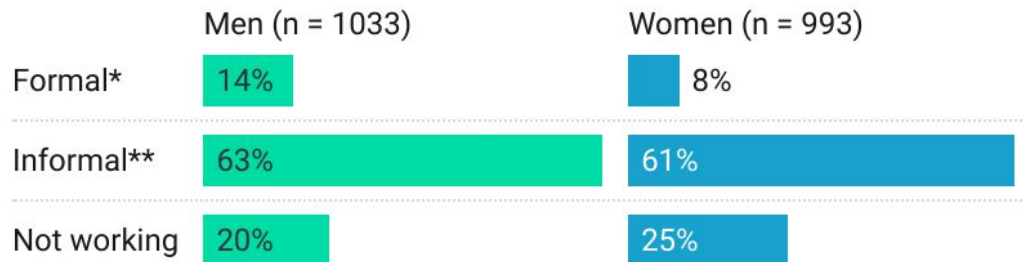
Employment Types (Detailed Breakdown)



Respondents could report more than one employment type

Additionally, a lower proportion of women (vs men) are in the *formal* sector.

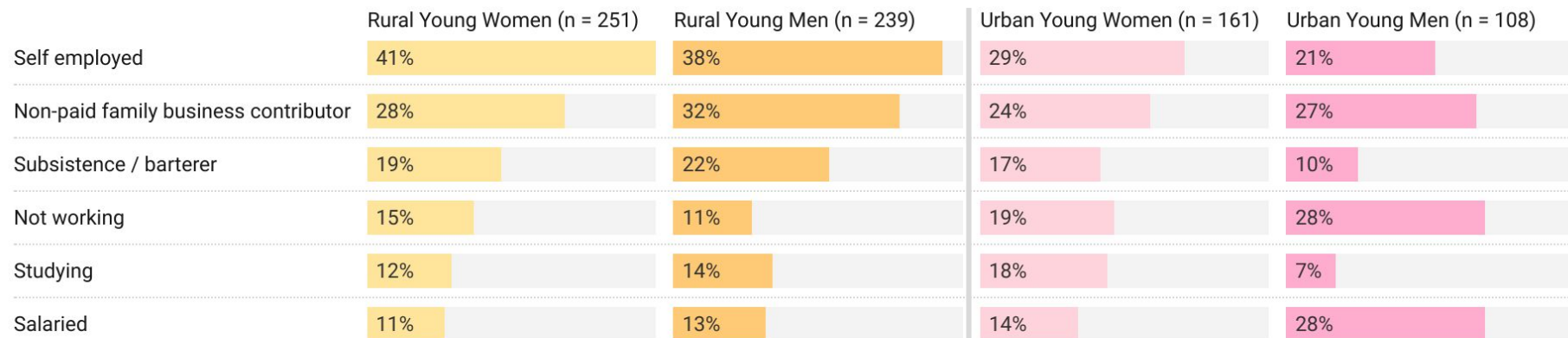
Employment - Formal/Informal



**Formal defined as working for a registered business or receiving employment benefits (retirement or paid leave) **Informal defined as working for a non-registered business*

Urban young men (<30 years old) are *more likely to be without work and less likely to be studying* – compared to other young persons.

Employment Types, Under 30 Urban/Rural



Not working category does not include those who report studying

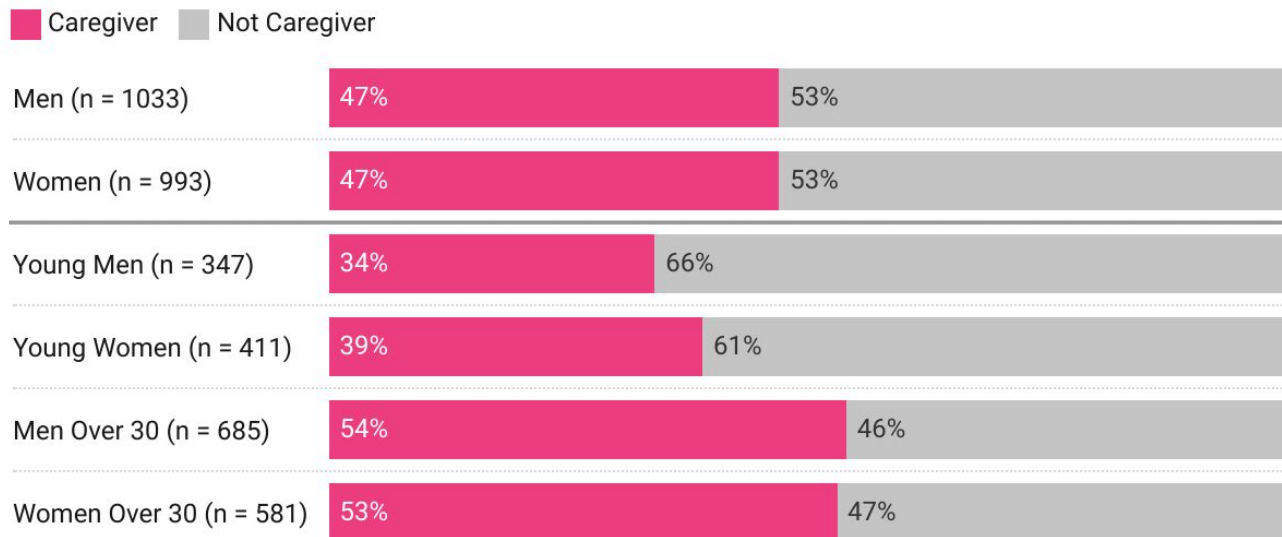
FINDING 6

Family and household care is the main reason preventing Papua New Guineans from working (or from working as much as they would want) – especially among women, but **also for men**.

Around half of Papua New Guineans report being a primary caregiver. Men and women identify themselves equally as primary caregivers.

Caregiver Status by Age and Gender

Are you a primary caregiver to any of the dependents above?

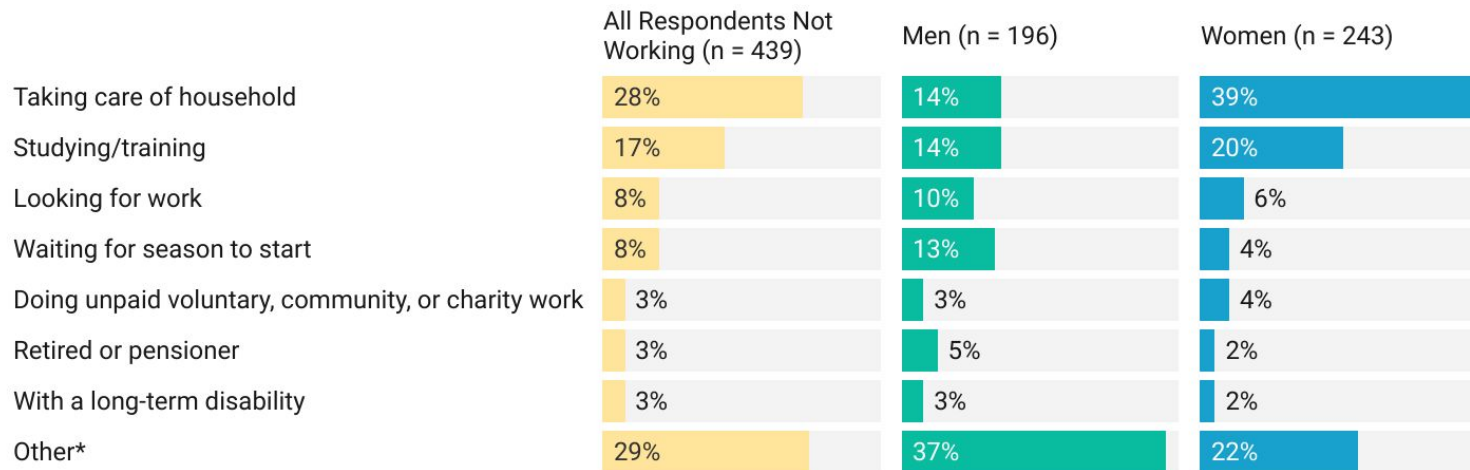


Household and family care is the *number one* challenge to *labour force participation* – especially for women, but also for men. For women (who do not work), 39% say care is the main reason for not working (14% for men).

Main Reasons For Not Working (Among Respondents Not Working)

The main reason you are not currently working – or are not working as much as you want – is you are:

■ All Respondents Not Working (n = 439)
 ■ Men (n = 196)
 ■ Women (n = 243)



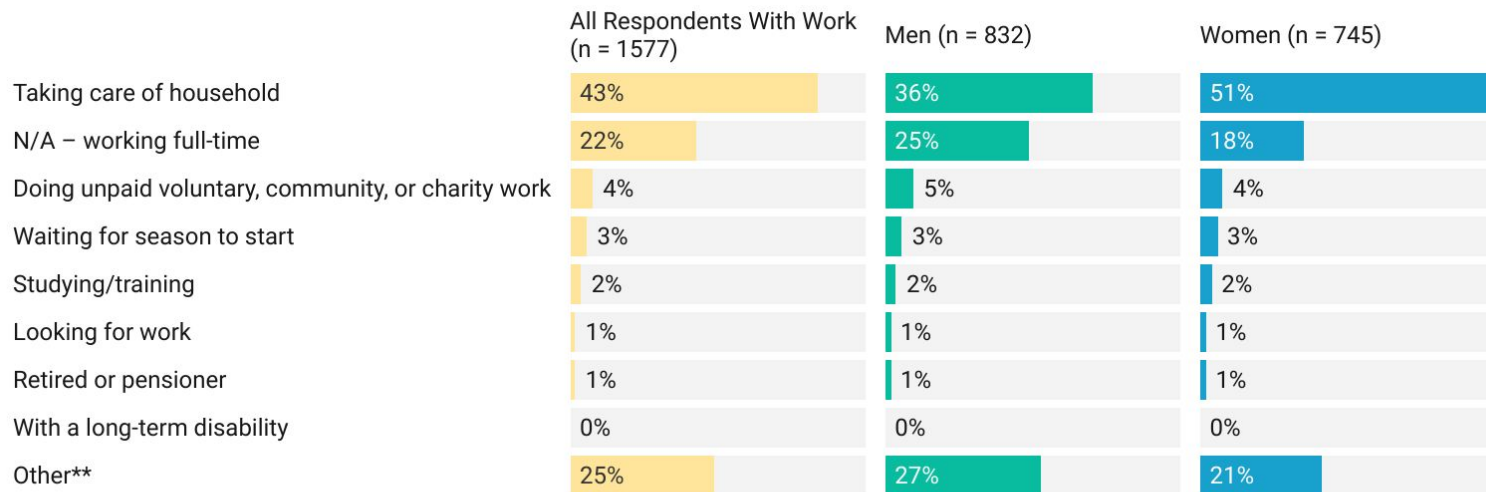
*Top responses for 'Other' is nothing/none, prefer not to say.

Household and family care is also the main challenge to *underemployment* – for both women and men. For women (who work), 51% say care is the main reason for not working as much as they want (36% for men).

Main Reasons For Not Working More (Among Respondents With Work*)

The main reason you are not currently working – or are not working as much as you want – is you are:

■ All Respondents With Work (n = 1577)
 ■ Men (n = 832)
 ■ Women (n = 745)



*With any work, whether with or without monetary earnings. **Top responses for 'Other' is nothing/none, prefer not to say.

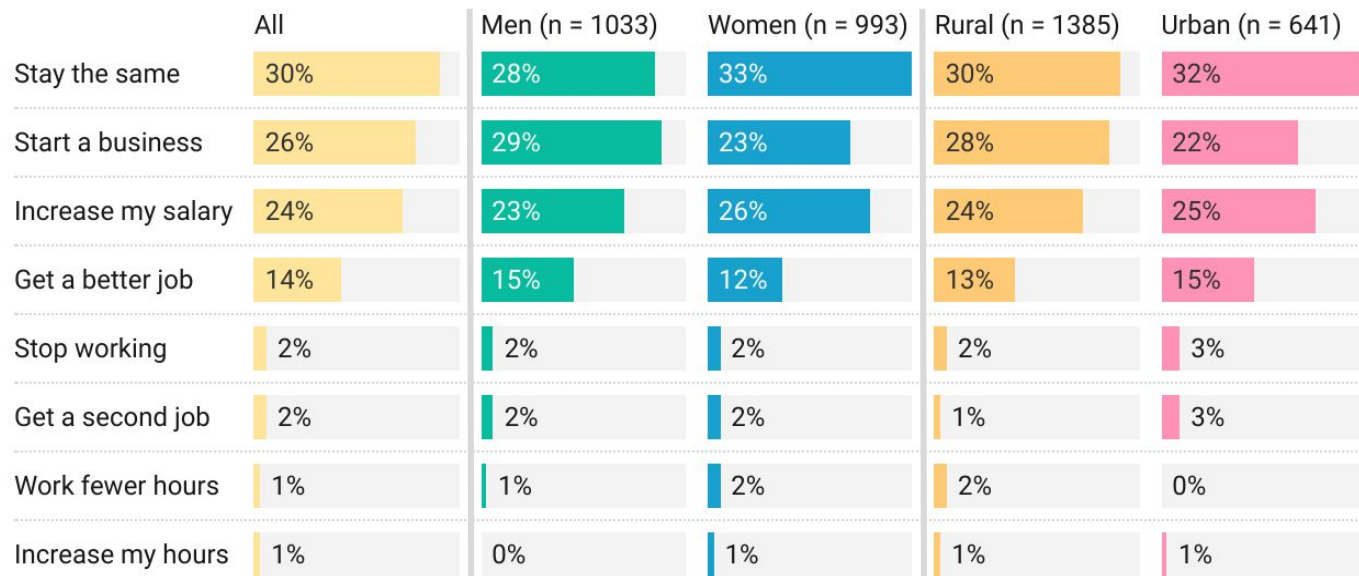
FINDING 7

Men and women in PNG have **similar work ambitions**. Papua New Guineans say the top barriers to achieving their ambitions are access to finance and safety concerns.

While there are some variations, overall, men and women – both rural and urban – have similar work ambitions.

Work Ambitions

Thinking about the next 12-months, what is your biggest ambitions for work?

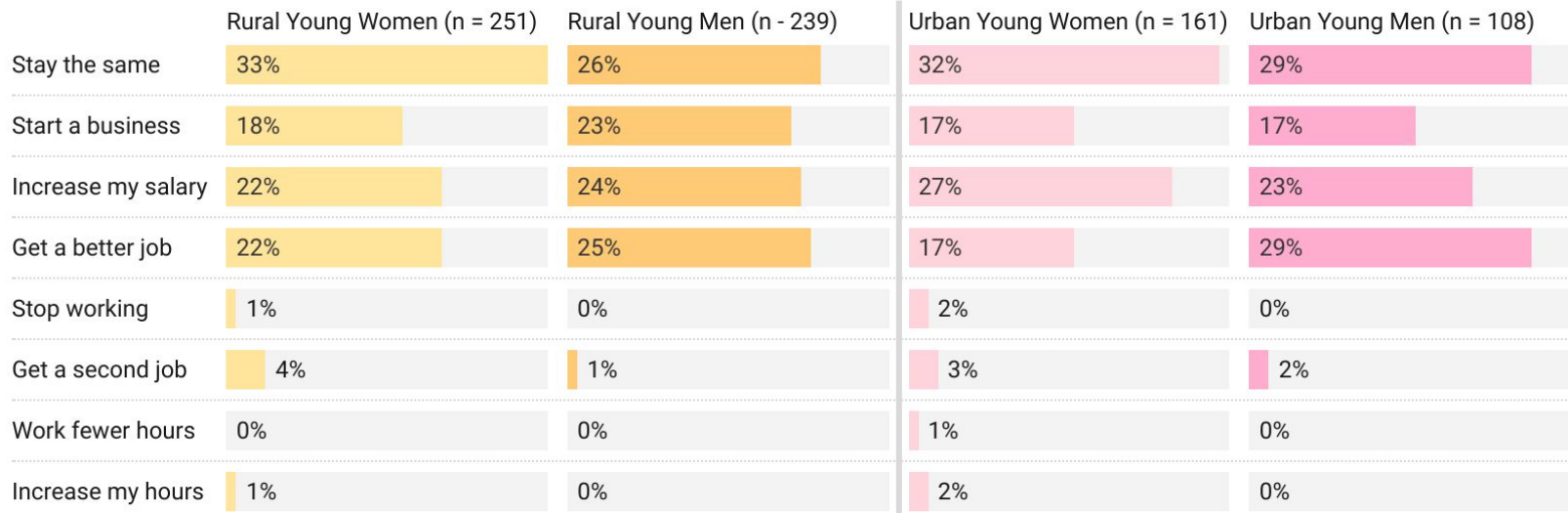


Options not read out to respondents. Best fitting option chosen based on response.

Ambitions are also similar among young people (below 30 y/o). One starker distinction is that more urban men aspire to *switch* jobs, vs urban women who may prefer to increase their salaries in the *same* job.

Work Ambitions, Urban/Rural Young Persons (<30 Years Old)

Thinking about the next 12-months, what is your biggest ambitions for work?

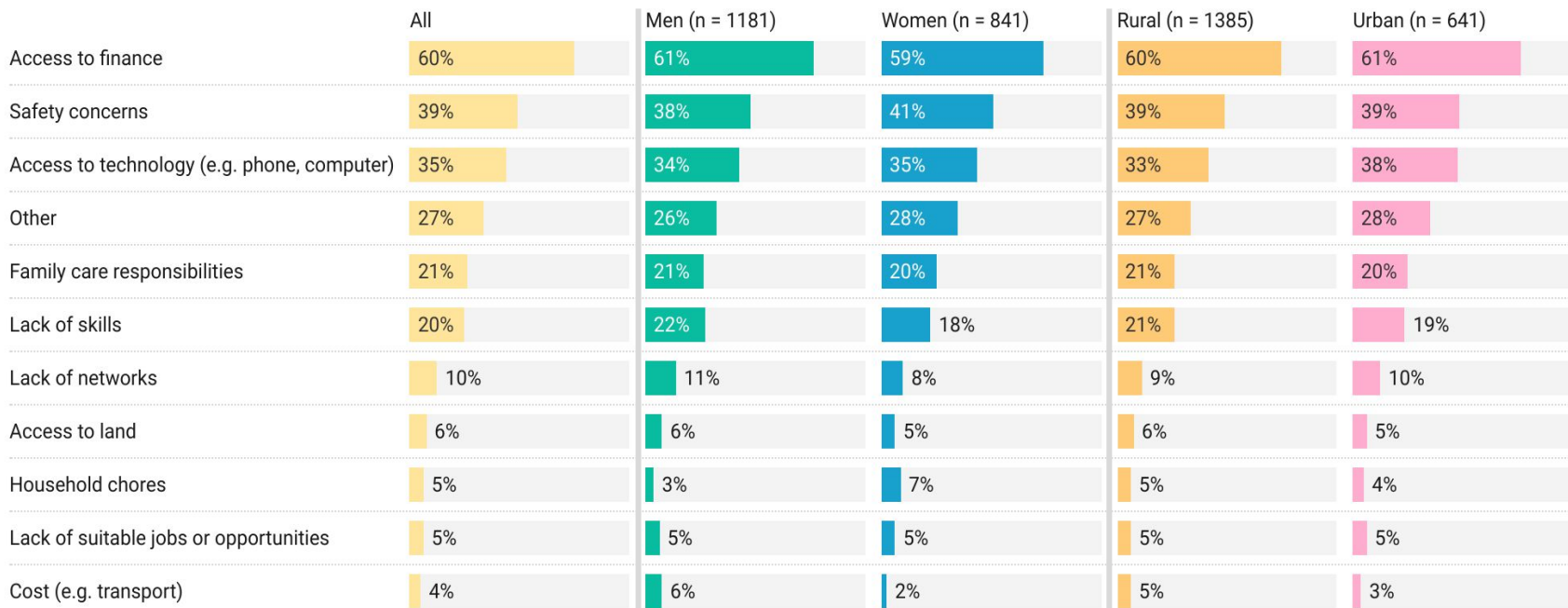


Options not read out to respondents. Best fitting option chosen based on response.

The main barriers to achieving these ambitions are access to finance, safety concerns, and access to technology. Barriers are similar across men vs women, and rural vs urban.

Barriers to Work Ambitions

What are the main barriers preventing you from achieving your ambitions above? Name up to three.

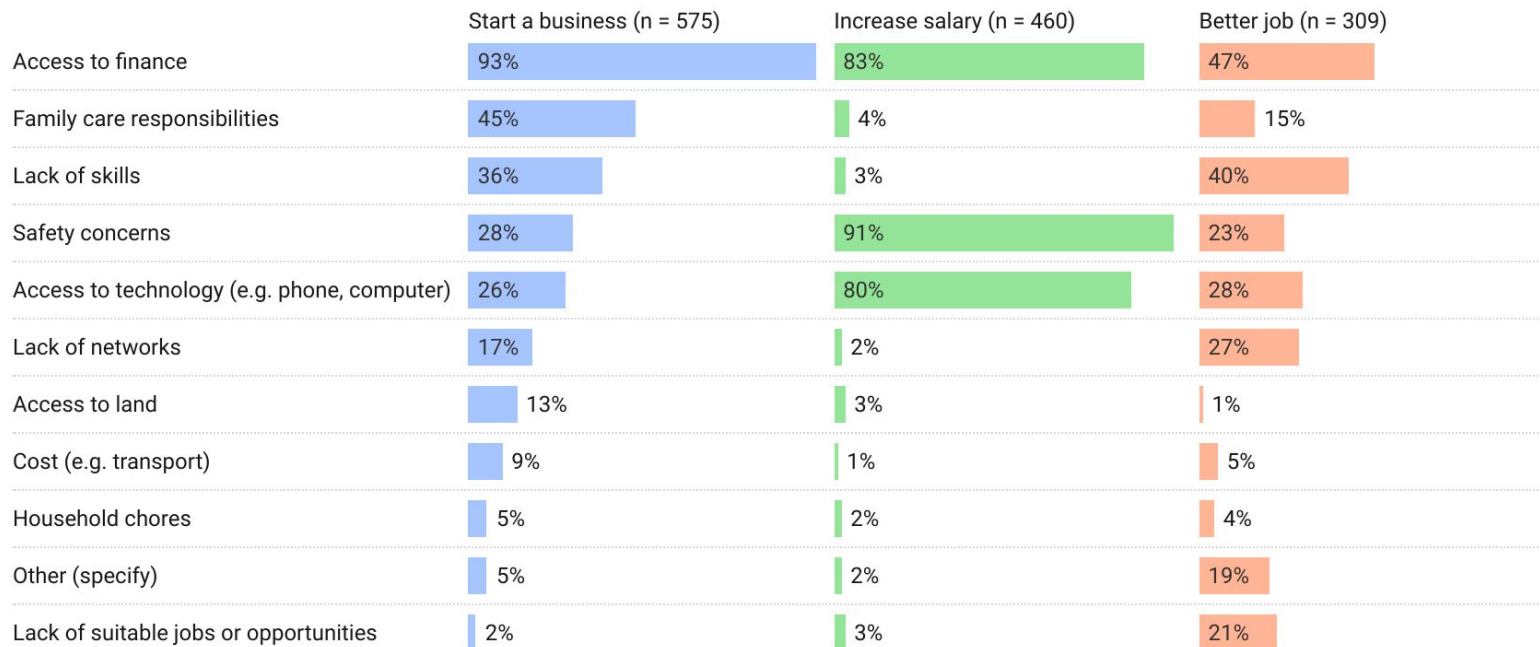


Options not read out to respondents. Best fitting option chosen based on response.

Across ambition, access to finance is a main barrier. Among those aspiring to increase their salary, safety concerns and access to technology are equally large barriers.

Barriers to Ambitions, by Top Ambitions

What are the main barriers preventing you from achieving your ambitions above? Name up to three.



Options not read out to respondents. Best fitting option chosen based on response.

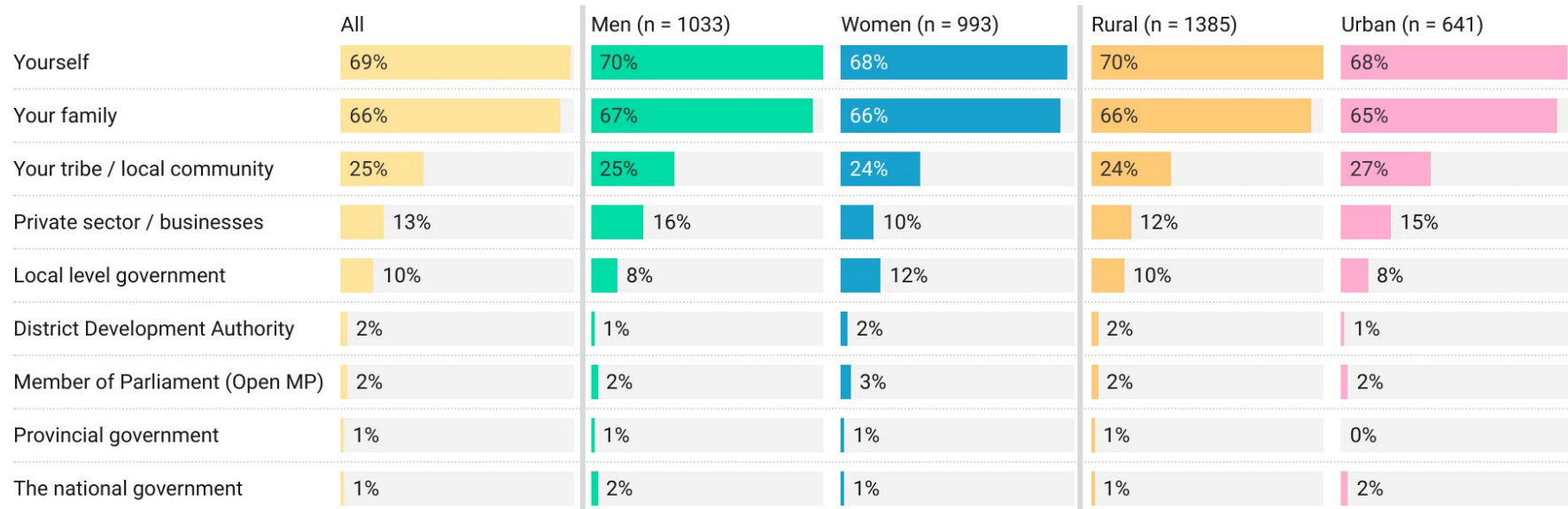
FINDING 8

Papua New Guineans place **responsibility on themselves to achieve their own work ambitions**, but **hold government responsible for job creation generally**. Papua New Guineans are optimistic about achieving their ambitions, but generally rate government's job creation performance lowly.

Papua New Guineans see themselves (and their families) as responsible for achieving *their own* work ambitions.

Perceived Responsibility for Ambitions

Who do you think is most responsible for helping you achieving your ambitions above? Pick top three.

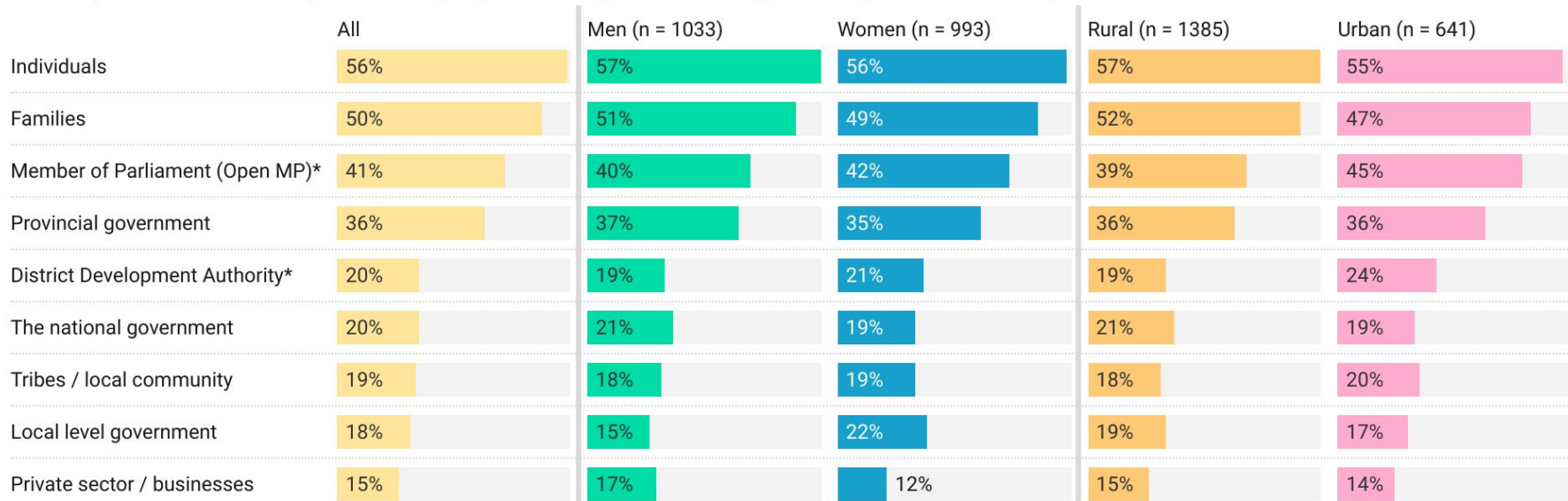


Options read out to respondents

For job creation generally, Papua New Guineans also place responsibility on government (in addition to individuals and families). Among government entities, Papua New Guineans view MPs and Provincial Government as most responsible.

Perceived Responsibility for Job Creation

Who do you think is most responsible for job growth and job creation in general in your area? Pick top three.

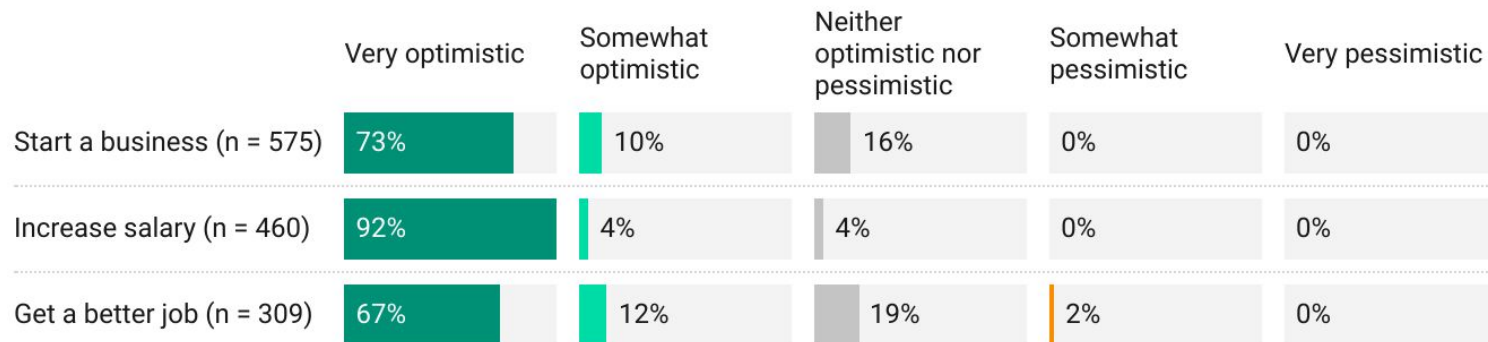


Options read out to respondents

Papua New Guineans are largely optimistic about achieving their work ambitions.

Optimism Toward Work Ambitions

How optimistic are you about achieving your ambition above?



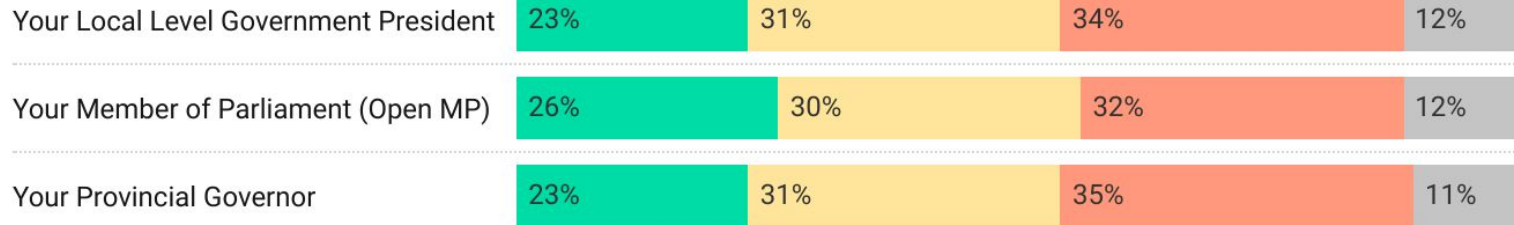
Options read out to respondents

However, Papua New Guineans generally have low ratings of government's performance in creating jobs in their area.

Perception of Government Performance

How would you rate the performance of the following government entities, in creating jobs in your area?

■ Good ■ Neither good nor bad ■ Poor ■ Don't know

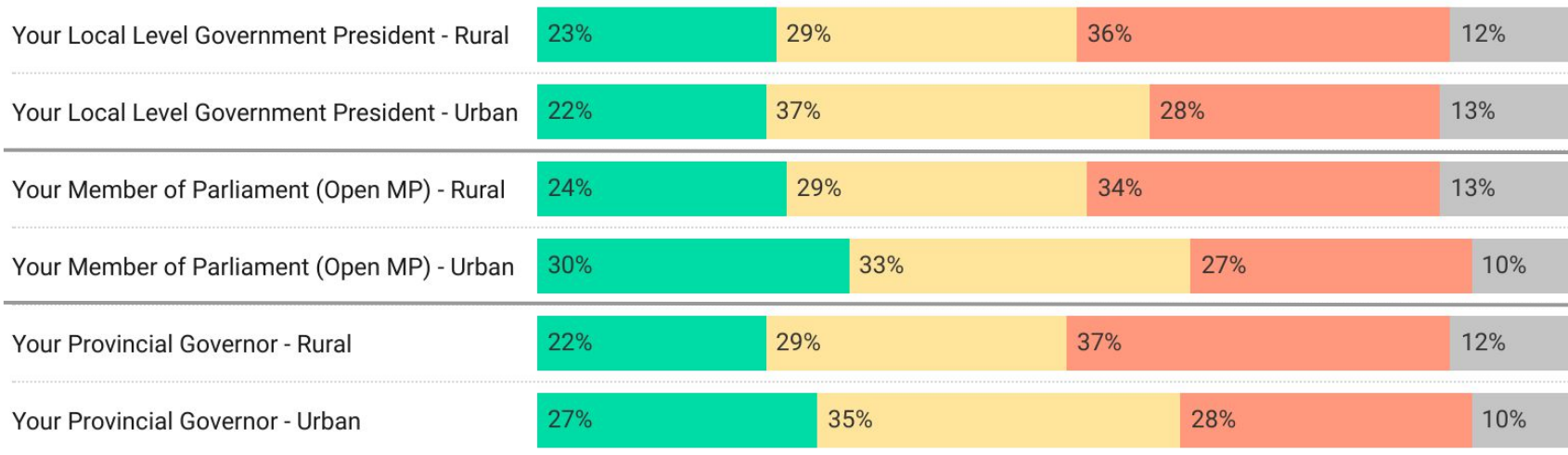


Rural Papua New Guineans (vs urban) generally have lower perceptions of government's job creation performance in their area.

Perception of Government Performance, Urban/Rural

How would you rate the performance of the following government entities, in creating jobs in your area?

Good Neither Good nor Bad Poor Don't know



FINDING 9

Papua New Guineans – both men and women – have overwhelmingly **positive attitudes on women's roles and capabilities** at work.

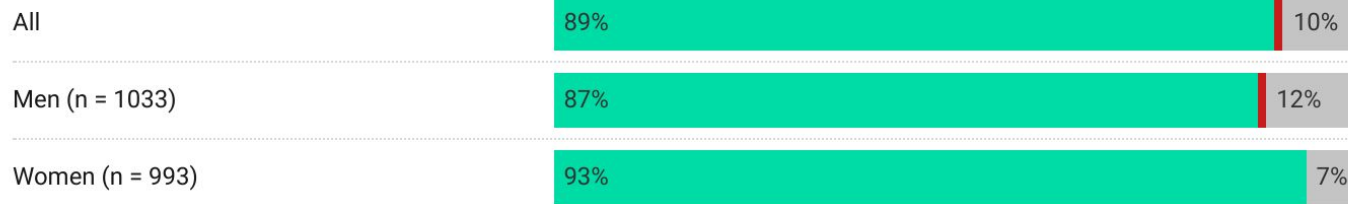
Papua New Guineans strongly believe that women and men are *equally suited to do work, and are equally capable at work.*

Gender Inequality In Work

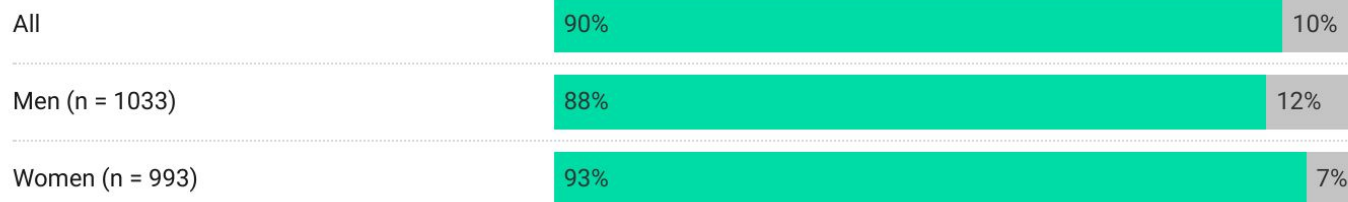
In your opinion, do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Don't know

Women can generally do the same kind of paid jobs that men can do.



It just as appropriate for women to do paid work, as it is for men.



Options read out to respondents

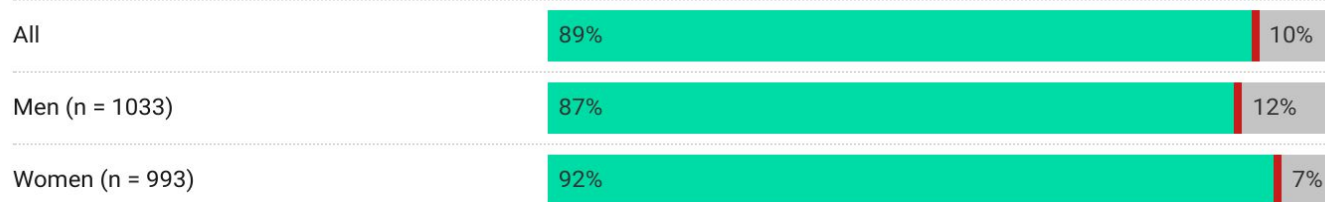
Papua New Guineans also believe that women and men should be *equally paid for work of equal value*, and that *marital status* should not affect salary.

Gender Inequality in Salaries

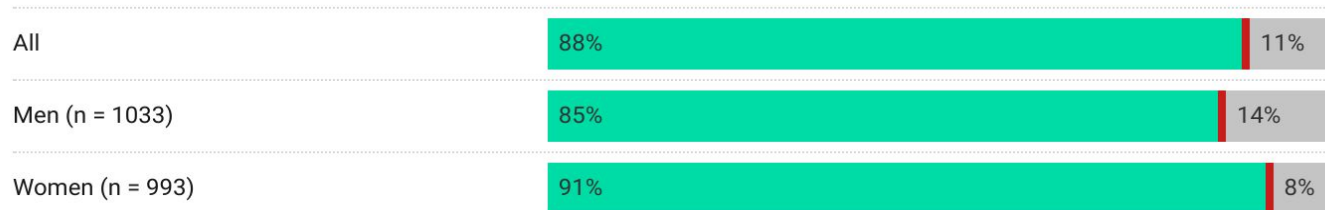
In your opinion, do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Don't know

Women and men should be paid the same salary,
for work of equal value.



Marital status should not affect salary.

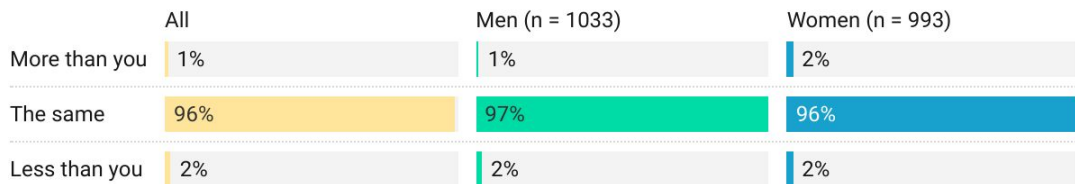


Options read out to respondents

Papua New Guineans perceive that women and men get paid equally (for equal work). However, for *treatment at work generally*, most (72%) believe women are treated *unfairly*.

Perceived Gender Pay Gap

"Think of someone you know – who is the opposite gender as you – who does the same kind of work, in the same level position as you. In your opinion, do you think they get paid:"

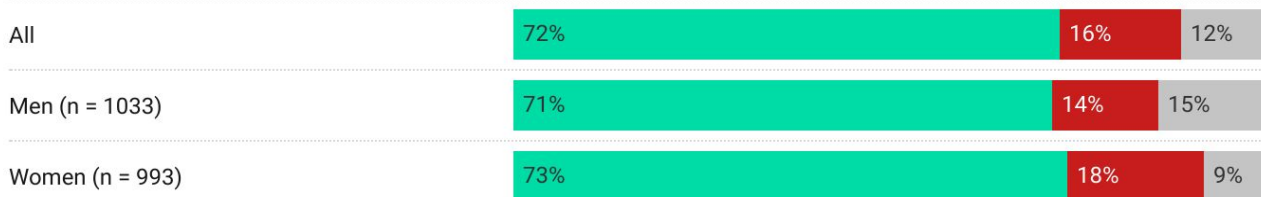


Gender Discrimination at Work

In your opinion, do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

■ Agree
 ■ Disagree
 ■ Don't know

Women are unfairly treated at work compared to men? For example, in the hiring process, or in salary level.



FINDING 10

Papua New Guineans – both men and women – strongly believe that **greater work opportunities for women** and **having more women in politics will be good for PNG.**

Papua New Guineans – both men and women – believe that *greater work opportunities for women* would be good for PNG.

Opportunities for More Women to Work

Do you think the country would be better off or worse off if more women in PNG had the opportunity to work.

■ Better off ■ Same ■ Worse off



Papua New Guineans – both men and women – believe that *having more women political leaders* would be good for PNG.

Opinions on Women Leaders

Do you think the country would be better off or worse off if PNG had more women leaders – for example MPs and Ministers.

■ Better off ■ Same ■ Worse off



FINDING 11

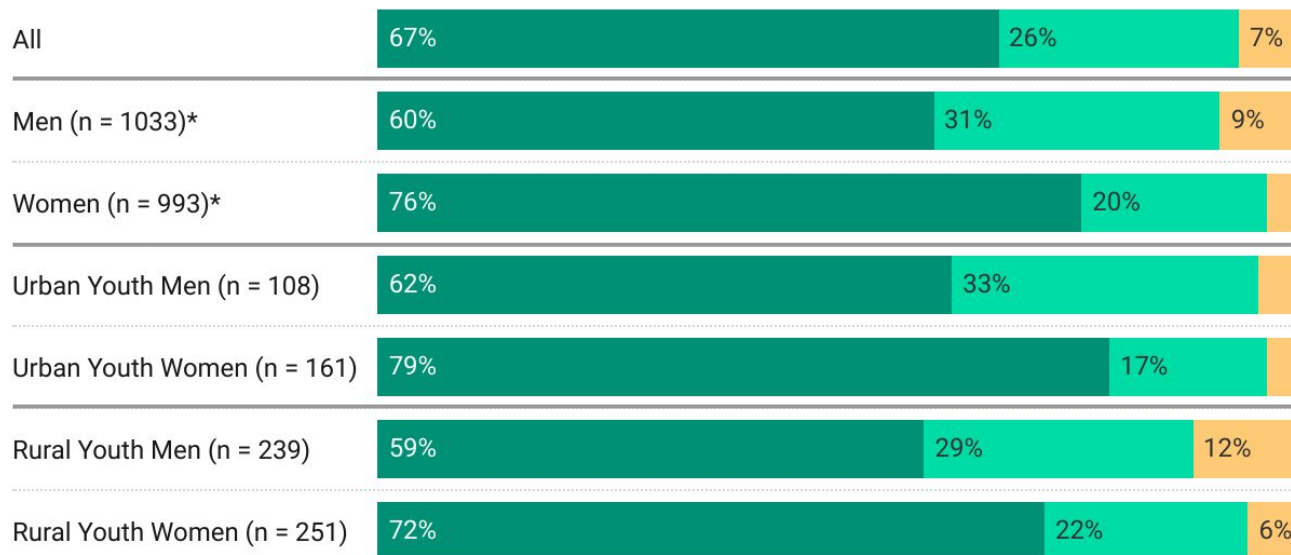
A strong majority of Papua New Guineans – both men and women – say they are more **likely to vote for a woman** in an election.

Papua New Guineans – both men and women – say they are more likely to vote for a woman in an election.

Likelihood of Voting for Woman Candidate

All things equal, would you be as likely to vote for a woman political candidate – versus a man candidate – in an election?

More likely Just as likely Less likely



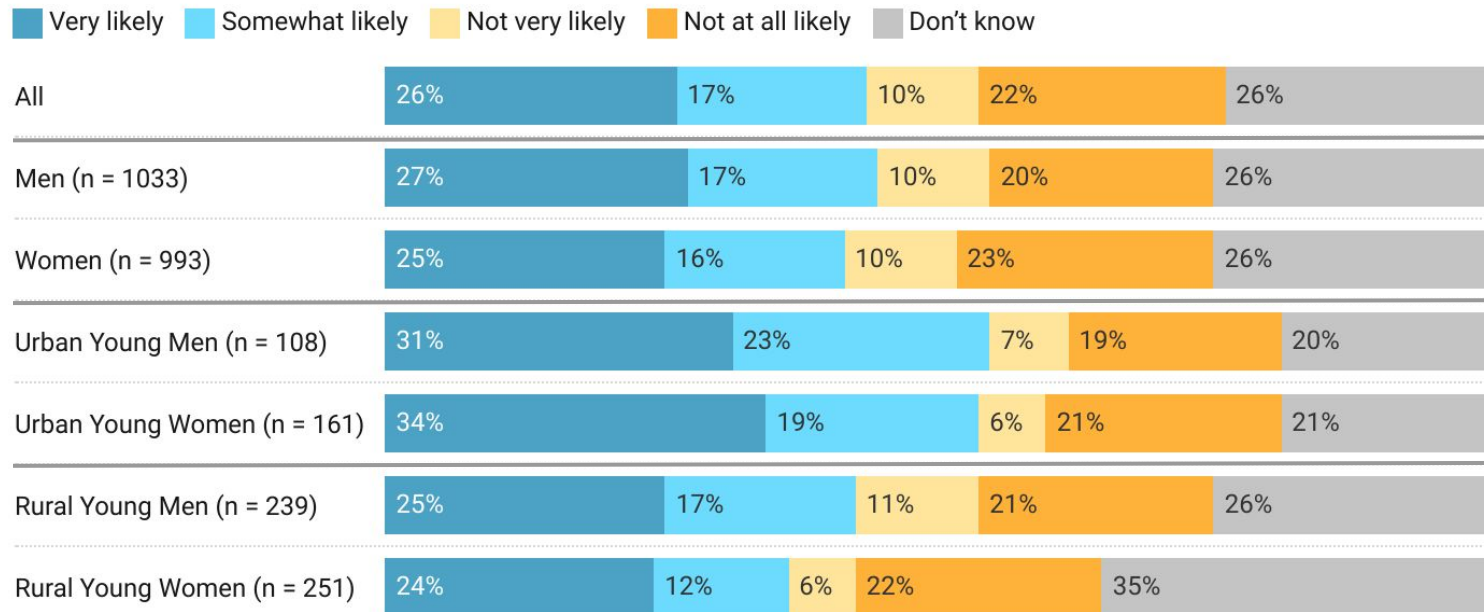
FINDING 12

Many Papua New Guineans – including a majority of urban young people – think the **January riots will likely happen again**. Papua New Guineans identified **economic concerns** (cost of living and jobs) as one main cause of the riots.

Many Papua New Guineans think riots are likely to happen again. This view is particularly strong among *urban young people* (age <30): where over half think the riots are likely to repeat (including a third who think riots are *very likely* to repeat).

Perceived Likelihood of Riots Repeating

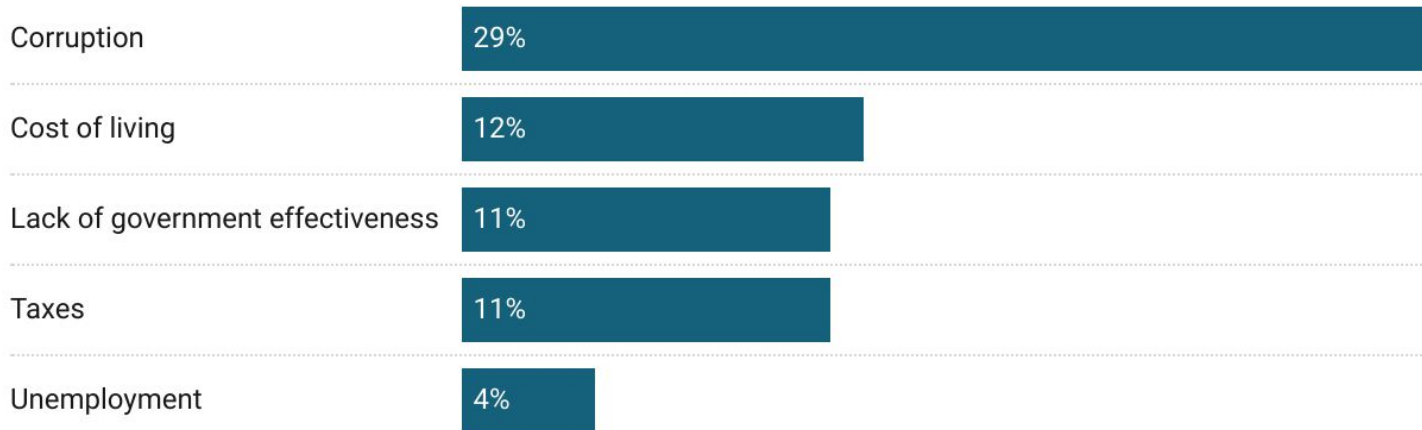
How likely do you think there will be a repeat of the riots and looting that occurred in January 2024?



Papua New Guineans identified corruption and economic hardship (cost of living and jobs) as the main underlying causes of the January 2024 riots.

Perception of Cause of Riots

Thinking about the riots and looting that occurred in January 2024 in Port Moresby and other cities, what do you think was the main underlying cause?



Open-ended responses coded into overarching themes

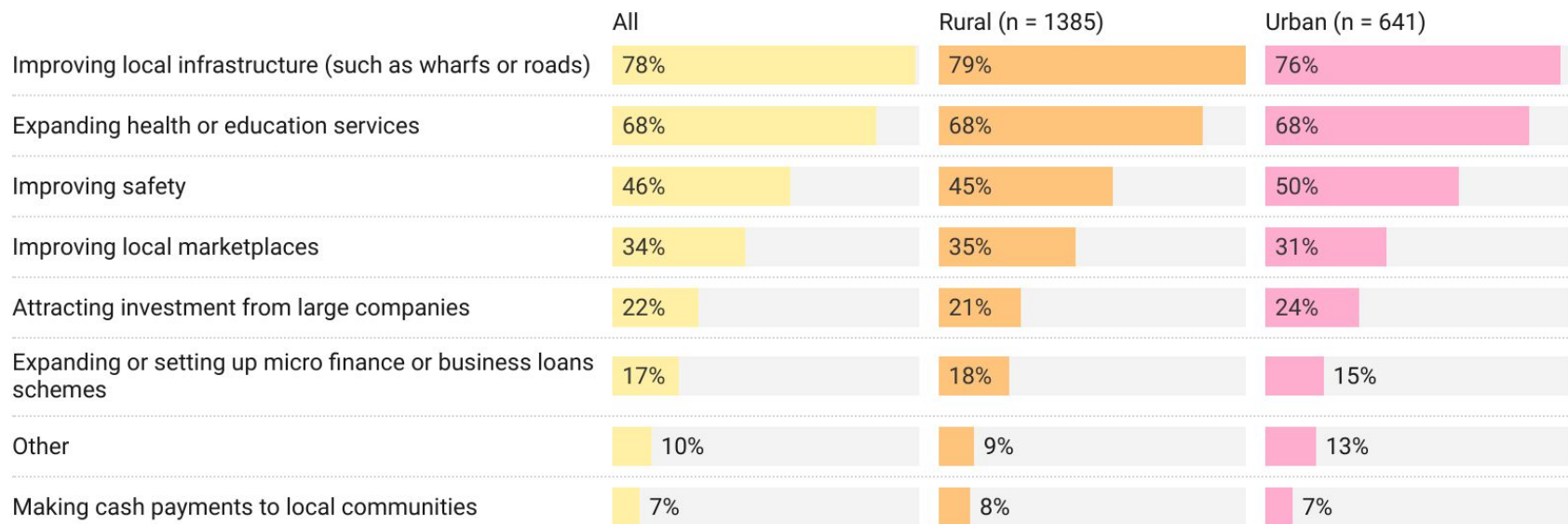
FINDING 13

To help create jobs, Papua New Guineans think MPs should improve local infrastructure and expand health or education services. Papua New Guineans also **support government job policies targeting women.**

Improving local infrastructure and expanding health or education services were Papua New Guineans top picks for MP job creation priorities.

Desired MP Priorities

Thinking about your member of parliament (Open MP), what do you think they should prioritise to support job creation in general? Name up to three.

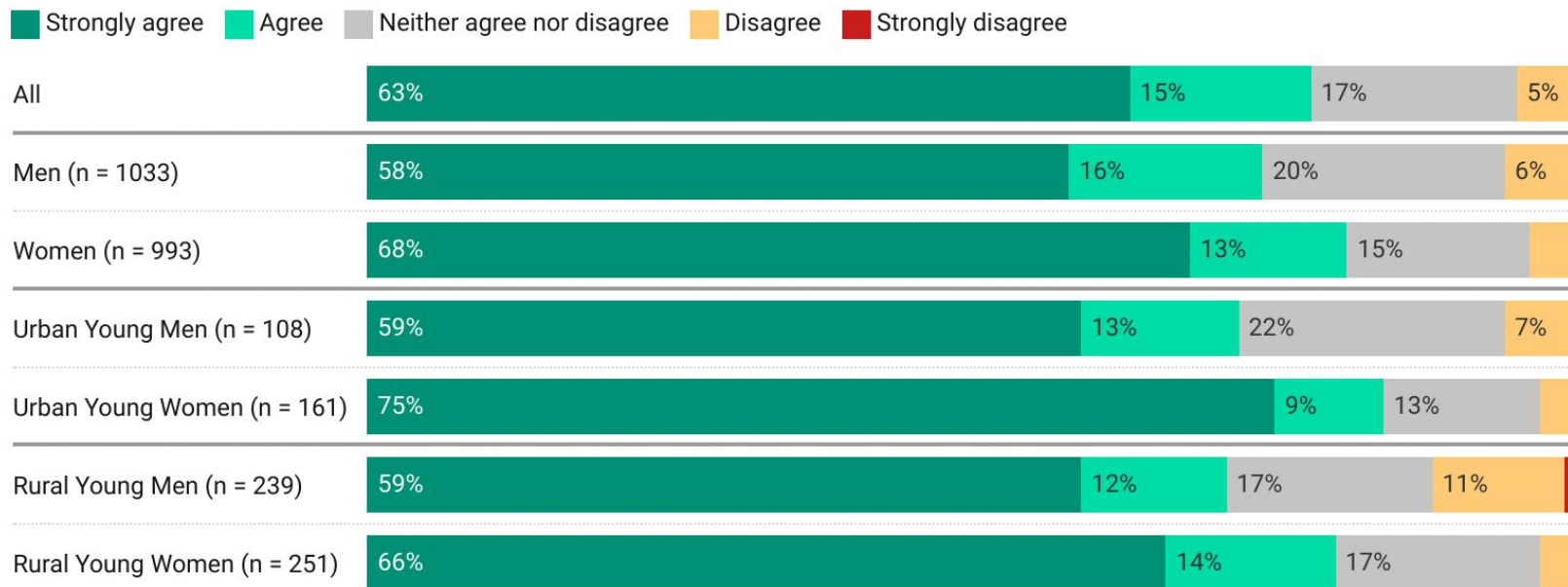


Options not read out to respondents. Best fitting option chose based on response.

Papua New Guineans support government job-creation policies specifically *targeting women*. This includes a *strong majority of men*.

Support for Government Job-Creation Policies for Women

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "Government, whether central government, sub-national government or local government – should develop job-creation policies and projects which specifically target women"



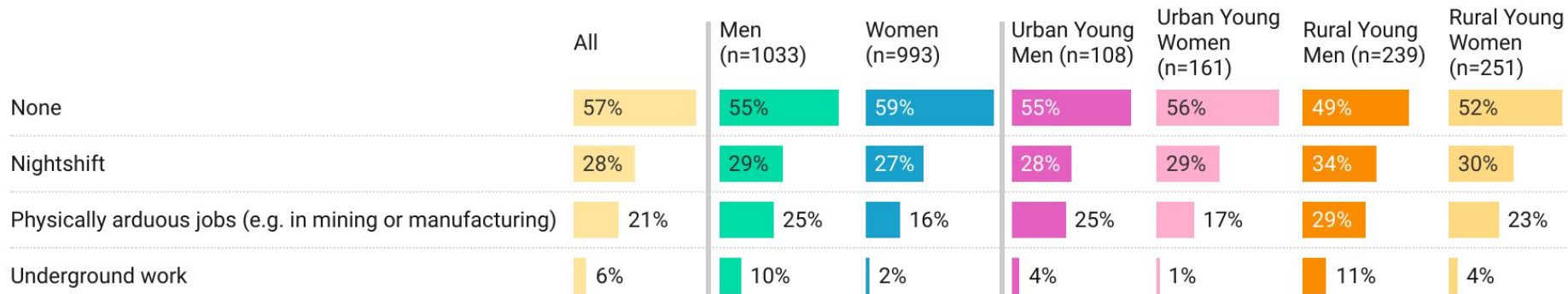
FINDING 14

A sizable number of women would be willing to work in **physically arduous, underground, or night shift work** – if there were no legal prohibitions preventing them from doing so.

Many women (31%) would be willing to work in *physically arduous, underground, or nightshift work*. These forms of work are currently prohibited by the Employment Act.

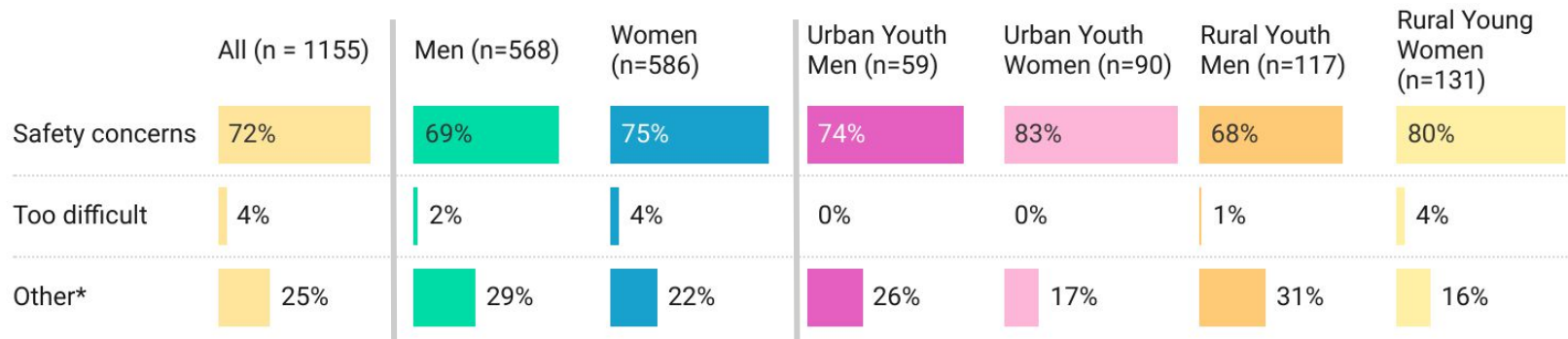
Willingness to Work in Harsh Conditions

If there were no legal prohibitions, would you be willing to work in: (select all that apply)



Of those who would not be willing to – many may change their mind, if safety were to be improved.

Why Not?



*Top responses for 'Other' are "nothing/none"

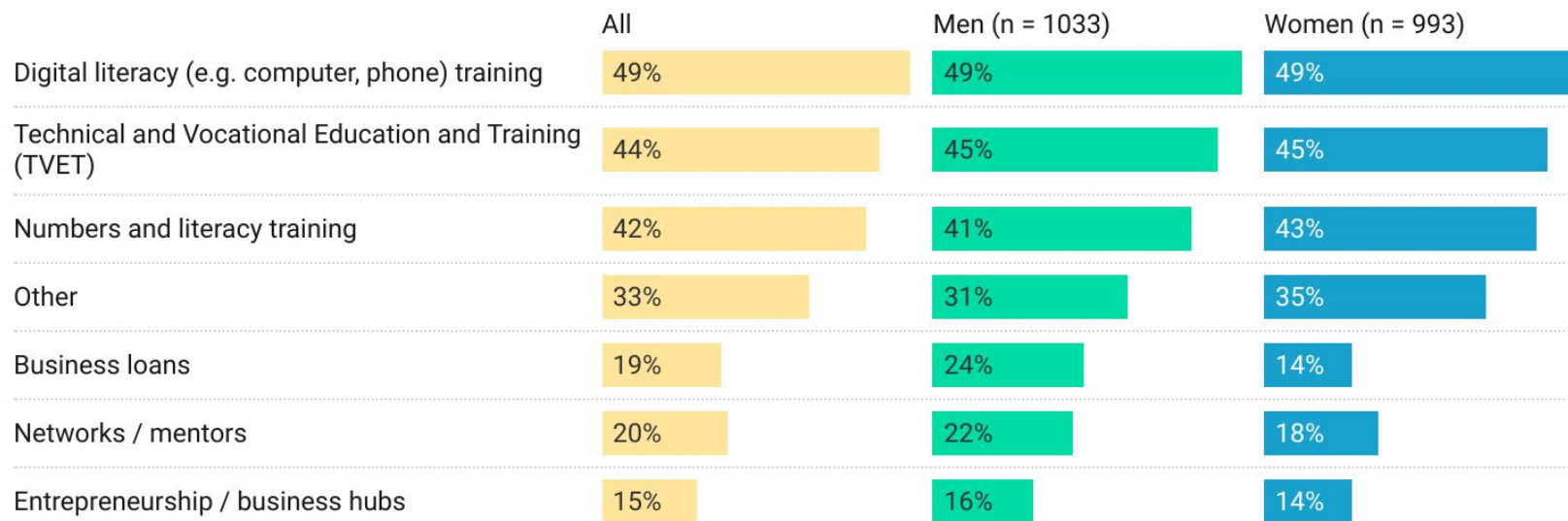
FINDING 15

There is high demand among Papua New Guineans for **digital literacy and other skills trainings** – to help achieve their job ambitions.

Papua New Guineans identified *digital literacy* as a key skill needed to achieve their work ambitions. *TVET training* and *numbers and literacy training* were also identified.

Desired Skills and Resources for Work Ambitions

What skills or resources do you need most, to help achieve your labour market ambitions? Name up to three.

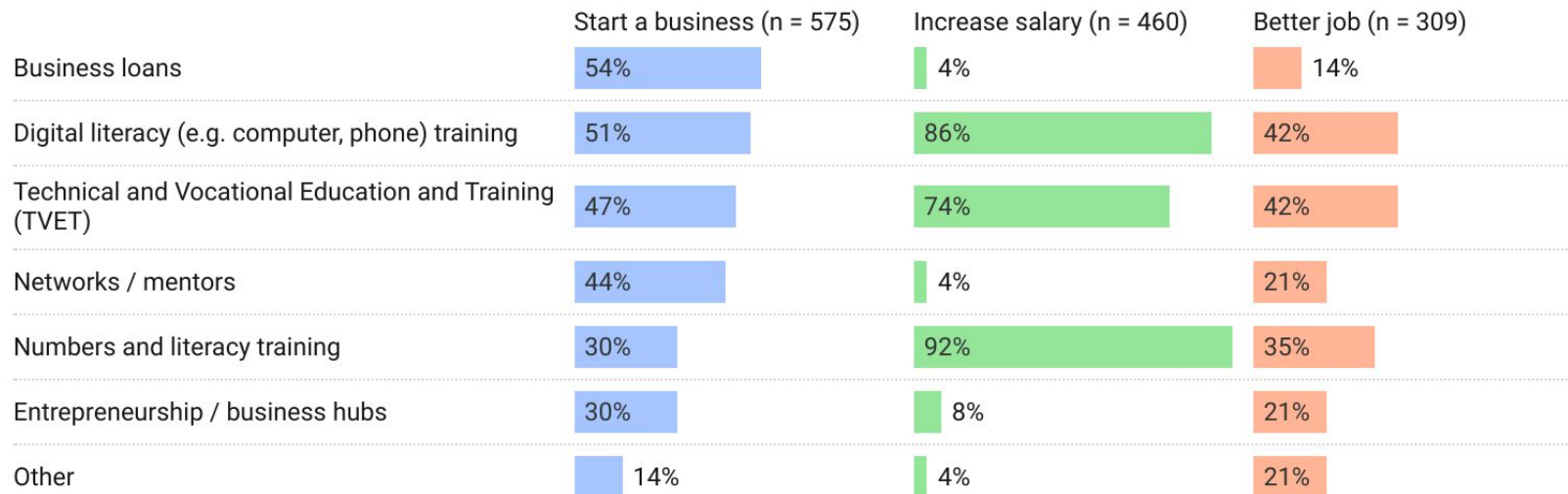


Options not read out to respondents. Best fitting option chosen based on response.

These skill needs are particularly important for Papua New Guineans who aspire to increase their salaries or get a better job.

Desired Skills and Resources for Work Ambitions

What skills or resources do you need most, to help achieve your labour market ambitions? Name up to three.

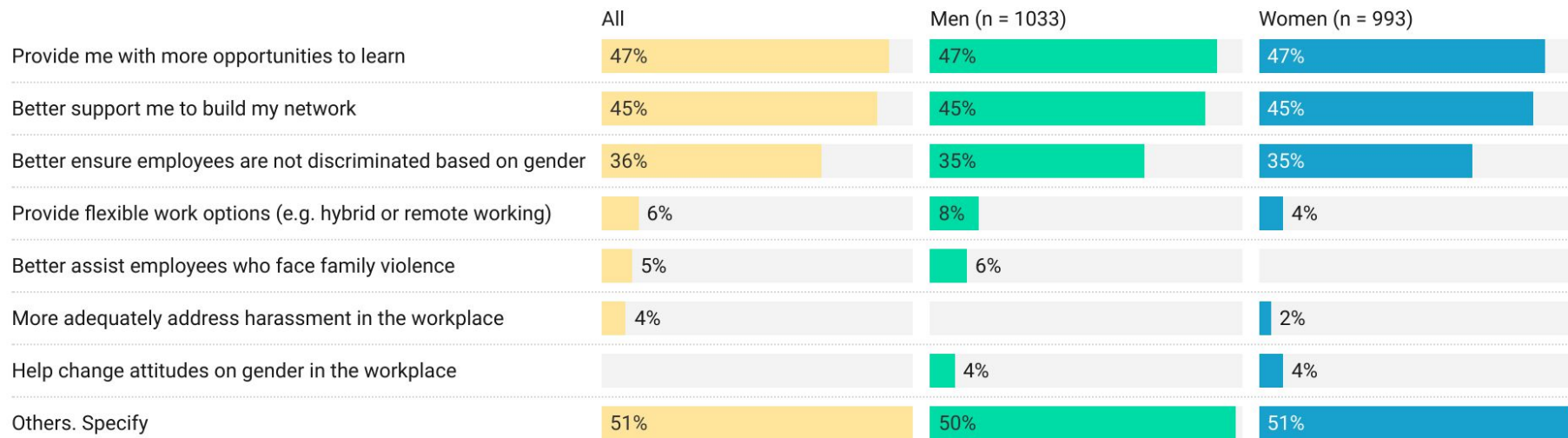


Options not read out to respondents. Best fitting option chosen based on response.

Employers can support Papua New Guineans at work, by providing learning and networking support.

Employer Actions to Improve Working Conditions and Productivity

What can my employer / workplace do, to improve my working conditions and productivity? Name up to three.



*Top responses for 'Other' category are nothing/none, or self-employed. Options not read out to respondents. Best fitting option chose based on response.

Policy Implications

1. Government job policies targeting women will be publicly popular – including supported by a strong majority of men. The Government's Jobs Strategy is an opportunity to highlight this priority.

Other analyses show that improving work for women will benefit PNG's overall economy. Our findings suggest Papua New Guineans agree with this notion – *69% say PNG would be better off* if more women had the opportunity to work.

We also find that Papua New Guineans *would support policies to promote women's work*. Around 90% agree that women and men have equal work roles and capabilities; and over 70% – including for men and young people – agree that the government should develop job policies specifically targeting women.

Opportunities for More Women to Work

Do you think the country would be better off or worse off if more women in PNG had the opportunity to work.

■ Better off ■ Same ■ Worse off



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Support for Government Job-Creation Policies for Women

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "Government, whether central government, sub-national government or local government – should develop job-creation policies and projects which specifically target women"

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree



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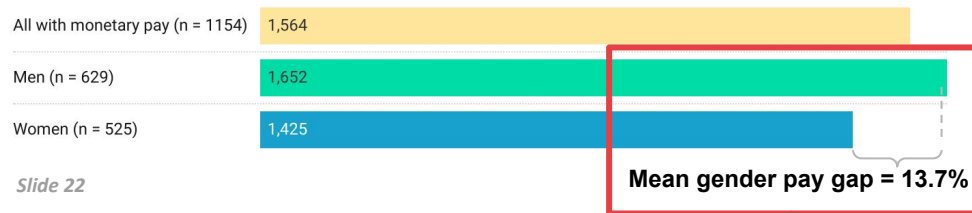
2. To support women at work (and thus support the PNG economy), government must focus on two broad priorities: (i) support self-employed women to increase earnings; and (ii) support more women to obtain salaried jobs.

Our findings suggest the 13.7% gender gap in earnings is explained by *two phenomena*, which policies must address.

Firstly, among the *self-employed* (the plurality of Papua New Guineans), women earn less (by 23.1%) compared to men. Secondly, among the *salaried* – where on average, earnings are higher (vs the self-employed) – fewer women are represented (just 14% of women have salaried jobs, vs 21% of men).

Mean Earnings of Respondents With Monetary Pay

Monthly mean earnings in PGK:



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Mean Earnings of Self-Employed Workers

Monthly mean earnings in PGK:



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Employment Types (Detailed Breakdown)

	Men (n = 1033)	Women (n = 993)
Salaried	21%	14%
Self employed	44%	42%
Subsistence / barterer	16%	16%
Non-paid family business contributor	26%	25%
Not working	20%	25%

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3. Addressing family and household care is the key policy lever to address those two priorities for women. Also – maybe surprisingly – care policies are also key for men.

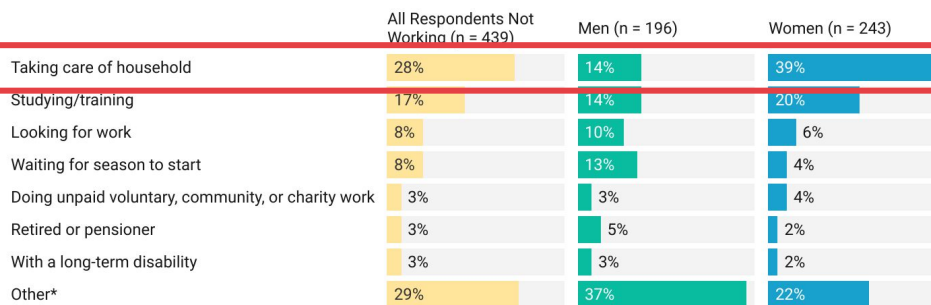
Our findings show that household care is *the main reason* Papua New Guineans do not work (39% of women who do not work, and 14% of men), or do not work as much as they want (51% of women who work, and 36% for men) – *both among women and men.*

Policies supporting care would thus address the two broad priorities for women (supporting women in work, and supporting women to enter work), and also benefit men. Bold policy thinking must be explored, to take on this challenge (and opportunity). The *Government Job Strategy* could be an avenue to do so.

Main Reasons For Not Working (Among Respondents Not Working)

The main reason you are not currently working – or are not working as much as you want – is you are:

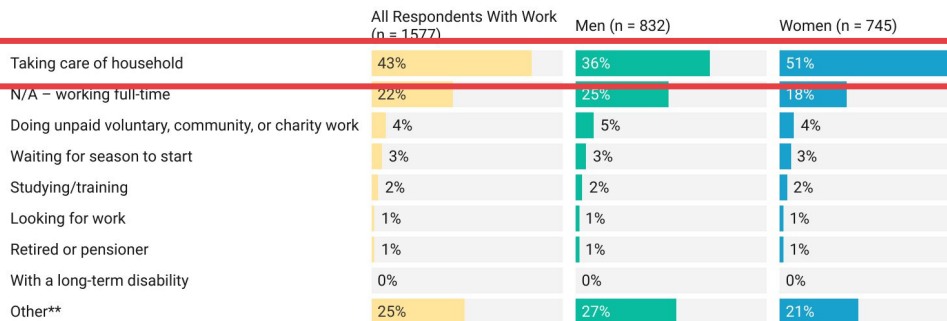
■ All Respondents Not Working (n = 439)
 ■ Men (n = 196)
 ■ Women (n = 243)



Main Reasons For Not Working More (Among Respondents With Work*)

The main reason you are not currently working – or are not working as much as you want – is you are:

■ All Respondents With Work (n = 1577)
 ■ Men (n = 832)
 ■ Women (n = 745)



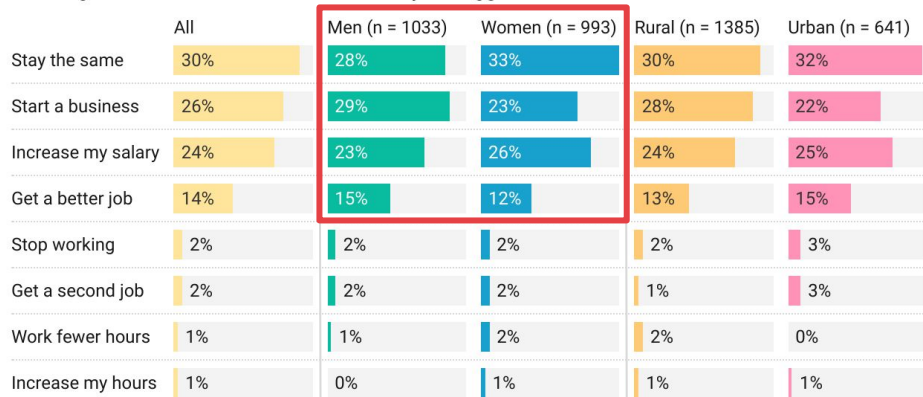
4. Women and men in PNG share similar work ambitions. Policies to support job ambitions for Papua New Guineans – including to improve access to finance and to enhance skills – must therefore cater to both women and men.

Our findings suggest that Papua New Guineans (men and women, rural and urban) largely have similar work ambitions – including to start businesses, increase their salaries, and get a better job.

Policies to improve *access to finance* is key – especially those who aspire to start a business. *Enhancing skills* – including TVET, digital-literacy skills, and number and literacy skills – are also key, especially for those who aspire to increase their salaries. The government should ensure *both women and men* benefit from these policies.

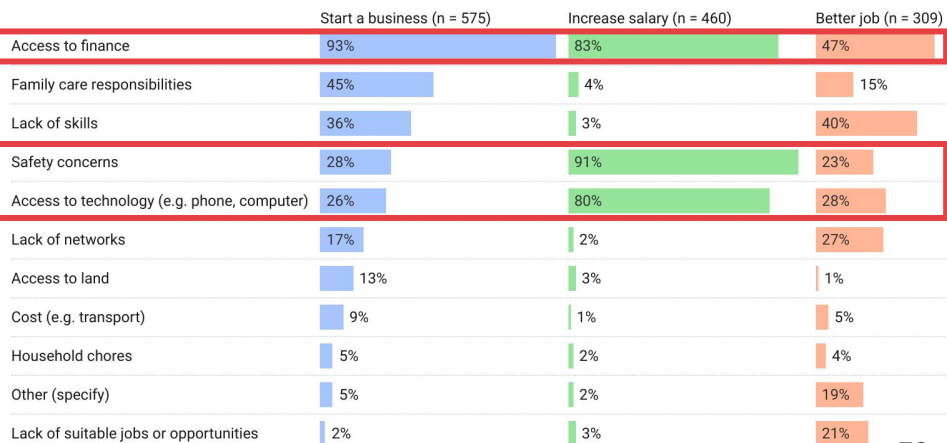
Work Ambitions

Thinking about the next 12-months, what is your biggest ambitions for work?



Barriers to Ambitions, by Top Ambitions

What are the main barriers preventing you from achieving your ambitions above? Name up to three.



5. In the immediate term, amending the Employment Act – to introduce care policies and remove discriminatory provisions – would be a quick policy win.

The government is already reviewing the Employment Act – a good step. Our findings support making key amendments being considered, including:

Amend the Employment Act to improve family care support:

- Introduce *paid* maternity leave (currently the Act includes a 6-week unpaid maternity leave).
- Introduce paid *paternity* leave for fathers (currently, there is no paternity leave).
- Strengthen anti-discrimination protection for pregnancy/maternity (e.g. prohibit dismissal of pregnant workers).

Our findings suggest that improving care policies (like the above) will help women *and men* enter work and work more – and that these measures will be *popular, including among men*.

5. In the immediate term, amending the Employment Act – to introduce care policies and remove discriminatory provisions – would be a quick policy win. (continued)

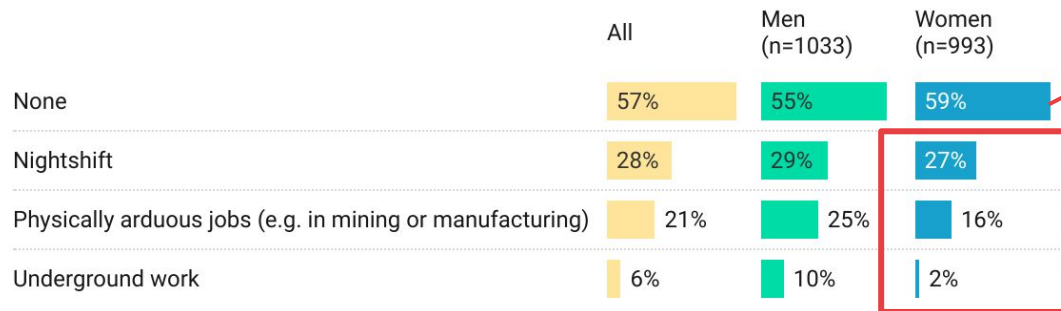
Amend the Employment Act to remove provisions limiting women's work:

- Sections 98 of the Act prohibit women's work in *underground* mining work and *heavy labour*.
- Section 99 prohibits women from *working at night* (between 6pm and 6am) in industrial work.
- These sections should be removed. (Simultaneously, employers should adequately guarantee safety of workers)

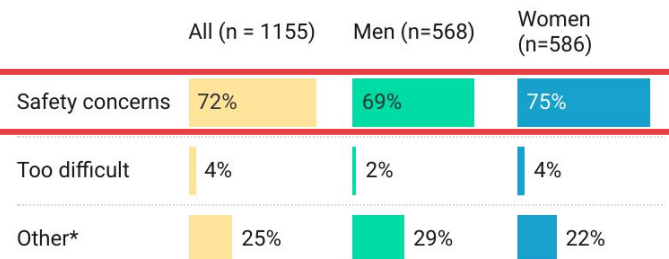
Our findings suggest that a sizable number of women (31%) *would be* interested in these jobs. For the remainder (who aren't interested), they would be interested – if safety concerns were addressed.

Willingness to Work in Harsh Conditions

If there were no legal prohibitions, would you be willing to work in: (select all that apply)



Why Not?



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6. Policymakers should note that Papua New Guineans do hold government responsible for job creation – especially MPs and provincial government.

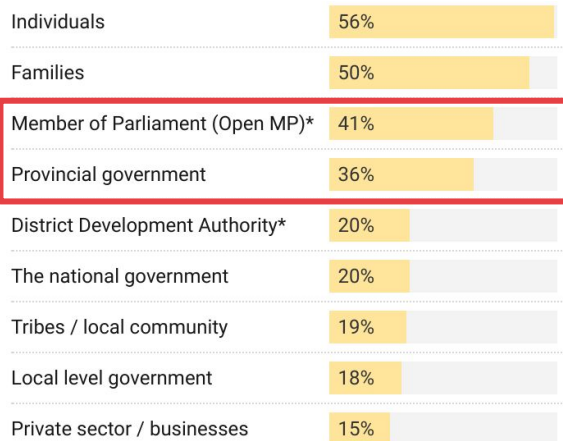
Our findings suggest that while Papua New Guineans emphasise personal responsibility for *their own ambitions*, they also believe government (especially MPs and provincial government) is responsible for *job creation generally*.

Our findings also suggest that Papua New Guineans generally have low ratings of government entities' job creation performance. It is also known that MP seats in PNG have a fairly high turnover rate.

This aligns with the thinking that MPs must focus on jobs – *both to support Papua New Guineans and to retain office*.

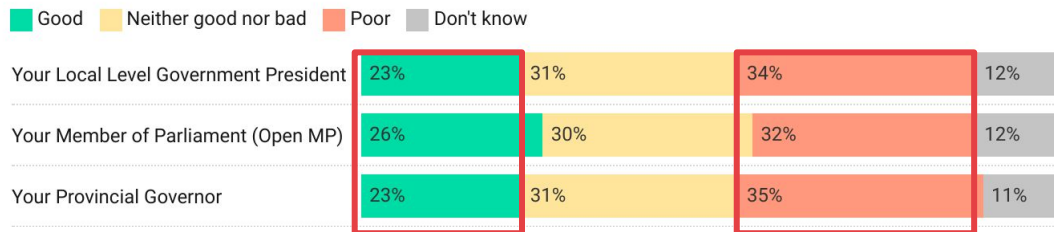
Improving infrastructure and health and education services are top among Papua New Guineans list of what MPs should do to promote job creation.

Perceived Responsibility for Job Creation



Perception of Government Performance

How would you rate the performance of the following government entities, in creating jobs in your area?



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7. Policymakers must show urgency in improving jobs – which is crucial for political stability.

Our findings show that many Papua New Guineans – including *a majority of urban young people* – think the January 2024 riots will likely happen again. We also found that Papua New Guineans think that *economic concerns* (along with corruption) were a main underlying cause of the riots.

Relatedly, our findings show that many Papua New Guineans feel the safety climate is hindering their efforts to achieve their work ambitions.

This adds urgency to job creation in PNG – highlighting the importance of efforts like the Government Jobs Strategy.

Perceived Likelihood of Riots Repeating

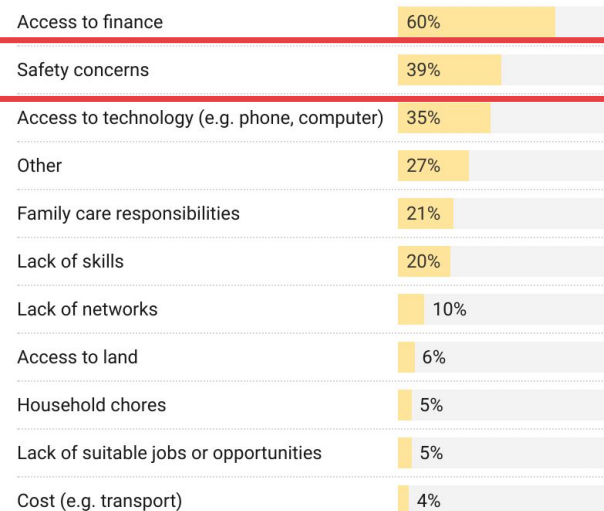
How likely do you think there will be a repeat of the riots and looting that occurred in January 2024?

Very likely Somewhat likely Not very likely Not at all likely Don't know



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Barriers to Work Ambitions



Slide 42

8. Political parties should strategically increase the number of women candidates in elections.

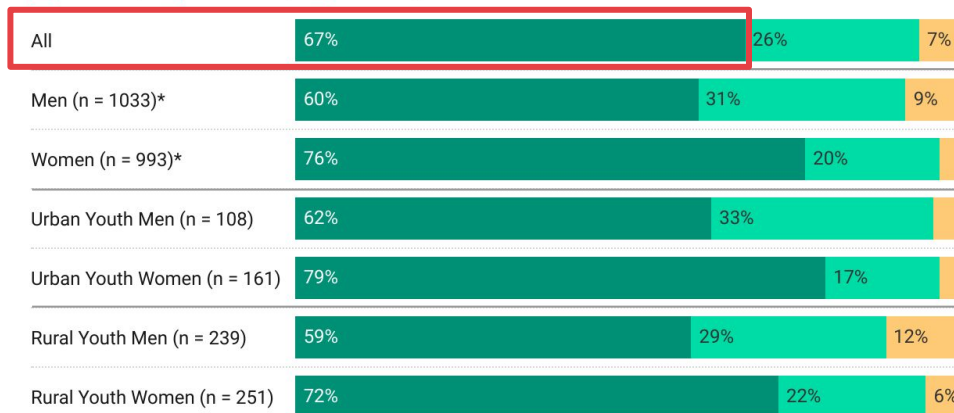
Our findings show that a strong majority (67%) of Papua New Guineans say they would be *more likely to vote* for a women political candidate. This sentiment holds for *men and young people*.

This could be advantageous to strategic political parties that field more women in elections.

Likelihood of Voting for Woman Candidate

All things equal, would you be as likely to vote for a woman political candidate – versus a man candidate – in an election?

More likely Just as likely Less likely



Next Steps

Policy engagement

Our findings have clear policy implications. Building on these implications, we hope to engage with policymakers and stakeholders to develop practical and impactful policies. Additionally, there are some policy recommendations that can be pursued right away.

Further analysis

Our findings are based on headline analysis of the data. Much more analysis can be done. For example, to explore further the gender earnings gap (What is the gap by sector, age, marital status, location, etc? What are potential causes? How to best address the gap?). Similar analysis could also be done for young people, and to get a clearer picture of earnings in PNG in general.

Data sharing

We plan to make our data available to policymakers, researchers, and others who are interested in improving labour market outcomes in PNG.

About BCFW

BCFW is a non-profit organisation that aims to help the private sector overcome challenges to women's participation in the Papua New Guinean workforce.

We do this through advocacy and prevention strategies to addressing violence, promoting women's leadership, and implementing human resources policies and processes to help companies recruit, retain, and develop their female staff.

More than 80 major PNG companies are members of BCFW.

Contact

To contact BCFW or to download this report, visit www.pngbcfw.org.