



**New Guinea Islands Regional Development Forum
Recommendations**

Kimbe Catholic Archdiocese

West New Britain

7-9th June, 2012

*This forum was made possible by the Department of National Planning and Monitoring
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Introduction

The Consultative Implementation & Monitoring Council (CIMC) Regional forums have been an avenue for people and stakeholders from all sectors to attend and channel their recommendations/ideas, through the secretariat to the Department of National Planning & Monitoring (DNPM) for the purposes of improving public policies. It is an avenue often used by LLG officers, private sectors, and women/men/youth groups to air their experiences and raise issues faced often in their community. The forums include three (3) day consultation activities where experts and participants take part in informing and discussing specific concerns based on the themes of the forums. In which case the theme for this year (2012) is *“Improving Access to Quality Health & Education Services”* Experts and officers with various health and education backgrounds are invited to speak and share information that will help or educate communities and sectors to improve delivery of health and education services and lift their status. This year the National Department of Education, the National Department of Health, selected tertiary institutions and colleges were selected and invited to present at the forums.

Purpose of Forum

The purpose of the forum is simple yet very important and captures views, valuable experiences and recommendations from Papua New Guineans who are at the heart of development in the country. Ordinary citizens and community based workers (teachers, ward councillors, youth representatives, LLG Managers, Administrators) as well as other stakeholders such as the private sector and NGO’s are provided an advantageous avenue having a face to face dialogue about Health & Education issues in their province, LLG and Council Wards. It is a chance for teachers, medical officers, NGO and community representatives to gain knowledge and insight into each other’s health and education service status.

Key Issues

Education

During the NGI forum, the Department of Education was the first to present on the first day of the forum. The presentation indicated that the department’s vision was integral human development achieved through an affordable education system that appreciates Christian and traditional values, and prepares literate, skilled and healthy citizens by concentrating on the growth and development of each individual’s personal viability and character formation,

while ensuring that all contribute to the peace and prosperity of the nation. Also in accordance with their Mission Statement, they are to;

- facilitate and promote integral development of every individual.
- develop and encourage an education system which satisfies the requirements of Papua New Guinea and its people.
- establish, preserve, and improve standards of education throughout Papua New Guinea.
- make the benefits of such education available as widely as possible to all of the people.
- make education accessible to the poor and physically, mentally and socially handicapped as well as to those who are educationally disadvantaged.

Currently the Department of Education has 17 impact projects that have been implemented in 2011-2012 among them is a commitment to provide School Development and Maintenance Grants (SDMG), Enhancing Quality in Teaching Through Television, Flexible Open and Maintenance, Inspectors Housing & Transportation, and establishing Libraries in every school.

However, other presenters specifically the implementers of the above plans and strategies namely the Principal of Kabaleo Teachers College, Gaulim Teachers, the Acting Principle Advisor Education – Manus, Leonard Johnli, Church (Catholic) representative, Bernard Rutmat, and Youth perspective representative, Community Development Officer, Philbert Vitata, shared similar challenges and issues.

Kabaleo & Gaulim Teachers Colleges face the following;

Staffing

- high rate of staff migration from Secondary to Primary colleges
- lack of staff commitment
- high lecture loading for staff – 24- 30
- staff-student ratio at 1:54 or 1: 56
- staff accommodation
- staff cross lecturing
- some evidence of staff absenteeism and punctuality
- no common criteria for the appointment of professional staff

Curriculum

- curriculum is over- crowded (repetitions & not allowed for study periods)
- incomplete coverage of course content due to shorter time frame

- new courses taught by untrained lecturers
- agency inclusion of own courses
- lack of funds to support staff professional development
- insufficient funds for effective supervision for students block teaching
- limited study resources ie: Library, IT
- assessment policy requires improvement

Student Behaviour

- students selection does not include students character
- not screened through entry test
- high rate of alcohol consumption
- high rate of pregnancy
- students lack of interest to study
- cult practices
- overcrowding in dormitories
- high demand for enrolment vs limited space available

Education Division, Manus Administration faces the following:

Many parents in the Province do not enroll their school aged children in early age schools. For the want of numbers, and larger class sizes to justify the allocation of a teacher, many children are denied their right to enroll at the correct age. Unfortunately this will remain the norm, until appropriate class sizes do not become a prerequisite to creating a class. It is our view that irrespective of size, let alone the economics of cost, where there are students available at the correct age to enter school, a teacher must be made available to teach that class. Education at the correct age must be made compulsory.

This aspiration can only be attained through appropriate legislation designed to protect the rights of the children to enter school at the correct age and deal with defying parents.

Also education is not promoted well in the province. Albeit, having access to education through established schools that are commonly located in close proximity of communities, some children are still not going to school and end up as only functionally literate. Reasons for these may vary, but often these are the result of parental misconceptions and other economic and social demands. In simplicity, some people are content with life as it is, while for many, ignorance and the lack of adequate knowledge blinds them from the realities.

Then there's the issue shared by all sectors of development in a province – maintenance of infrastructure or the lack of it, as well as poor communication and scarce, unreliable transport

services have continued to affect the delivery of quality education services. As at the end of term one this year, several rural schools in Manus Province were still without teachers because there is absolutely no shipping service available to transport teachers. Mr Johnli also highlighted the poor quality of teachers that have taken up positions in his province. Many teachers passing out from colleges at all levels, need to be better prepared. Most teach only according to the books and cannot think out of the box. They have little motivation for work and have no passion for teaching. They lack innovation and creativity. They cannot interpret the curriculum, so ten years on and we are still in-servicing them on the curriculum. Give them a written passage and many of them will do no better than the students they teach. Amazingly even those that have attained qualifications at university level still cannot write. One should ask how they passed through the universities at the first place.

Youth perspective, Mr Philbert Vitata-WNBP Community Development.

Major Issues facing West New Britain Youths; Youth issues are cross cutting issues which call for immediate action from all stake holders to look into. Particularly, unemployment and lack of skilled manpower trainings are problems created by the education system in the country, where as in sufficient land space among children in oil palm blocks holders is an internal problem unique to the province due to the resettlement programs under the oil palm development scheme created by the national government some 30 years ago.

The Absence of a youth development plan of its own has created a situation whereby there is lack of co- ordination and co- corporation among various agencies especially churches and local level government who are doing their best to assist the youth in their respective communities and organizations.

Health

Ken Wai, Acting Executive Manager, Policy Planning, Department of Health was the first presenter on Health at the NGI Regional Forum; he highlighted the following health status and plans to strategically combat them.

1. Maternal Mortality – 733/100,000. 1300 Women die a Year
2. 15,000 CHILDREN DIE EACH YEAR IN PNG. 2 CHILDREN DIE EVERY HOUR. Most die from preventable diseases like pneumonia and malaria - 1/3 Die from Pneumonia.
3. Immunization coverage for children under 1 year is less than 60%
4. Incidence of HIV infections is still on the rise
5. 8-10 PEOPLE DIE A DAY FROM TB

6. Malaria is the major reason for outpatient attendances in rural facilities
7. Many Health Facilities have deteriorated. Only 46% of health centers & hospitals have running water to their delivery rooms.
8. As of 2011, only 67% of Aid Posts Remained open

There is a gross shortage of health workers in the country

But it the Health Department has counter-acted by way of the The National Health Plan 2011-2020:

- Provincial/Hospital Strategic Implementation Plans 2011-2015
- Strategic Priorities 2012-2015
- Health Sector Medium Term Implementation Plan 2011-2015
- Annual Implementation Plans at all Implementation Units including the churches
- Cost: K14.17 billion excluding the Human Resource component

The Department of National Planning & Monitoring

According to the Department of National Planning & Monitoring's Policy Planning Division the department's PNG Development & Strategic Plans for the country for 2011-2015 should be able to reduce and control both health and education problems within the New Guinea Islands Region. As is seen below;

- according to the PNG Development Strategic Plan 2010-2030 (DSP) provides the overarching strategy for PNG's development over the longer term (20 years)
- Medium Term Development Plan 2011-2015 (MTDP) is the first of 4 five-year plans to achieve the GOALS of the DSP
- MTDP is an action plan that will provide comprehensive guidance across sectors and agencies to achieve development
- the MTDP explains what will be done over the next 5 years in order to pursue the DSP Goals; and
- the MTDP is aligned to the strategies broadly outlined in the PNG DSP.
- Health: Achieve an efficient health system which can deliver an internationally acceptable standard of health services
- Primary and Secondary Education: Achieve a better future by promoting and enhancing integral human development

Higher Education: To develop the higher skills needed for PNG's prosperity through a world class tertiary education sector

However, the main issues raised during the NGI Forum were not reflective of the National Education and Health plans and policies. According to teachers, health workers and other

representatives, the lack of maintenance of health and education services and high rate of youth unemployment is due to a failed education system, high preventable infant mortality rates and other ailments in rural areas which totally contradict the Policies and Plans created by respective Departments.

People see that churches involvement and support in health and education services has kept the two sectors running-rural, semi-rural, or urban areas rely on churches for health and education services.

Key Recommendations

While discussing the following issues after all presentations were completed on the second day, groups were asked to develop 3 priority recommendations that they thought was important to address the topics below:

1. improving/strengthening Governance and management processes

- direct funding to health & education sectors – funding the facility units, money must be tied to the specific facilities for implementation and reporting. Should be detailed in the budget books and must be accessed by public for monitoring by communities Public facilities like hospital boards need to present performances reports to public for public scrutiny. Is a motivation factor for staff
- fast track roll out of PHAs
- full financial autonomy to provinces (WNBP is an example, 3% sales tax collected at provincial level is retained here)

2. Revisiting and improving human resource capacity constraints;

- aging – an age limit for working people should be properly established and made known
- training (refresher)
- recruit successors

Recommendations;

- every province & service provider to identify aging workforce and plan for replacement program at the same time engage young ones to understudy
- teachers and nursing colleges conduct three programs instead of current while elementary teacher training goes for 2 years instead of 1 year

- government support literacy programs in every community in the country. Teaching programs must have specific aims and objectives. Curriculum must be integrated including personal development to improving the attitudes and character of the person
- overworked in the health sector – no improvement in the HR
- increase funding ceiling for all provinces to increase capacity to cater for increasing population – consult with provinces (DNPM to advice DPM)

3. Promoting coordination and partnerships within specific sector players, among key service providers, services providers and beneficiaries

- existing partnership mechanisms and identify gaps to improve
- service providers (government – health & education, private sector and churches)
- consultation of churches or partners before developing working policies
- wider consultation to community interest (must have interest in the project)
- leaders must know their areas of responsibilities
- Funding to be directed to each LLGs and not MPs
- We need to learn from the good old days (kiap days). Civil society used to take ownership of projects (community).
- Include private schools in the free education policy
- Promote ownership from all stakeholders including host communities of public services

4. Revisiting/developing legislations or policies to enable access to quality services.

- Make school aged children to enter formal education compulsory
- Other existing policies/laws that hinder service delivery

Recommendations

- compulsory education for both formal and informal
- enact law to make part time jobs for school leavers
- OLLPLLG to be abolished as it does not promote inclusion and partnership
- drug procurement – CSTB should include high calibre people from churches for proper screening
- National Health Act – Salary review for churches
- alternative service delivery model be carefully studied

- set up National Service Commission to cater for issues of HR (remuneration packages for church workers) and staff ceiling

5. Maintaining/restoring infrastructure

- access to information & communication
- operating facilities
- access to roads/airstrips/jetties
- electricity/water & sanitation, etc

Recommendations

- all forms of communication to be reintroduced to existing facilities eg, radios, mobiles, etc
- department should transfer funds to districts
- restore & maintain basic infrastructure

6. Improving motivation, attitude and performances

Recommendations

Health

- review remuneration to increasing including housing, transport/medical bills/school fees with a view to motivating incentive/commitment/improve performances
- refresher training
- regular appraisal and pay overtime
- medical Board (composed of different sectors or providers)
- medical Board to conduct regular debriefing meetings with nurses
- regular supervision and reporting
- all staff should know and understand organizational structure

Recommendations

Education

- process timely leave fares
- review teacher's current salary package
- housing
- school inspectors to be regular to monitor and pick up performances of teachers
- use of abusive languages in front of students
- dressing codes – teachers sometimes do not dress up properly including students themselves
- relevant authorities to revisit existing processes to improve performances

Attendance

The NGI forum participants ranged from ordinary residents of the town to local level and district government representatives, as well as community leaders (wards, councils, women, youth) totalling to approximately 200 participants by the end of the two days. As seen in previous forums in the year, many are very eager and willing to pour out their frustrations yet learn and take in information about how best to deal with issues at their level.

Conclusion

While health and education issues of the NGI Region was discussed and put to light by presenters, policy makers and, implementers during the three (3) days the fact remains, it is a slow yet progressive road to achieving all plans and strategies geared towards delivering quality health and educations services in PNG.