

Papua New Guinea

The Integrated Community Development Project

This brief document outlines a major project of CARE International in Papua New Guinea (CARE PNG), the Integrated Community Development Project (ICDP). The ICDP works in close partnership with government, communities, and local organisations to address poverty and social injustice in three of PNG's most remote, rural districts: Obura Wonenara District in Eastern Highlands Province, Menyama District in Morobe Province, and Gumine District in Simbu Province. Research over the past four decades has consistently shown that PNG's highest levels of poverty are found among the country's twenty most remote, rural districts where more than one million people reside. The ICDP's approach centres around building an enabling environment for rural service delivery by facilitating Ward Development Planning capacity and awareness, brokering linkages between government, communities, and local organisations, and modelling ways to support and deliver services and community development activities as identified in Ward plans.

What are the policies?

The Organic Law on Provincial Governments and Local Level Governments (1995) devolves responsibility for service delivery down to the sub-national levels of the Provinces and Local Level Governments (LLGs). The Organic Law further mandates that planning for service delivery should be bottom-up. This means that development priorities must be identified at the Ward level, through the Ward Development Planning (WDP) process facilitated by the lowest levels of government, the Ward Development Committees (WDCs), then communicated up to the LLG and District levels in the form of Ward plans for further prioritisation and budget allocation. The National Department of Planning has a clear process of how this planning process should flow, and its Office of Rural Development supports the management of the numerous pots of funding to improve rural service delivery. Further, the Department for Provincial and Local Level Government Affairs (DPLGA) was established to ensure a coherent approach to WDP. Other key national policies like the Department of Community Development's (DCD) Integrated Community Development Policy (2007) reflect this new mandate to strengthen community learning, livelihoods, and development through bottom-up approaches.

What are the implementation issues?

Despite numerous national policies and legislation in support of improved rural service delivery, such development continues to be lacking, particularly in the remote areas of the country where the most marginalised communities live. As their lives are further impacted upon by the gender inequalities institutionalised in many of PNG's households and communities, women suffer disproportionately from this lack of development in being the ones who are most affected by weak service delivery. Reaching the poorest in remote areas is logistically difficult and responses must be simultaneously top-down and bottom-up, requiring proactive changes in government policy and action to provide an enabling environment.

What is the approach?

In effect, the Integrated Community Development project (ICDP) implements an approach which combines the DPLGA WDP process with the DCD's ICD policy, through a focus on key government relationships. In late 2009, CARE PNG began to pilot the ICDP, which seeks to make lasting and measurable impacts on the lives of remote, rural communities, in close partnership with government, communities, and local organisations. By facilitating WDP capacity and awareness-raising, brokering linkages between government, communities, and local organisations, and modelling ways to support and deliver a range of services and community development activities as identified in Ward plans, the ICDP is strengthening communities and building a more enabling environment for rural service delivery.

The ICDP addresses poverty and community needs through several interrelated processes and components:

1. **Strengthening local organisations and institutions** by building the capacity of WDCs, LLGs, Districts, and local NGOs to facilitate the WDP process and develop Ward and LLG plans ("Lead" component).
2. **Strengthening formal and non-formal learning environments and opportunities** through engaging with the Provincial Department of Education on literacy programs, teacher training and certification, building and registering schools ("Learn" component).
3. **Improving household food security and income** through trainings in fish farming for subsistence, improved methods for coffee and potato production for income generation, and climate change and drought-tolerant crops ("Earn" component).
4. **Improving social services and physical environment** through strengthening health services, law and order, and small-scale community infrastructure ("Live" component).
5. **Ensuring effective program learning and management** through effective M&E systems and processes, research for generating lessons learned to improve next steps, and information sharing ("M&E" component).

The first component focuses on identifying community needs through WDP, and the other components focus on "kick-starting" service delivery by linking Ward plans and priorities to existing sources of support (e.g. government departments, private sector, local organisations) in order to trial models for delivery of a range of services, assess them, modify them, and then bring them to scale.

What is emerging?

- **Enhanced engagement at all levels** – The ICDP is a mechanism for dialogue and facilitates interactions and connections between multiple parties and across sectors, bringing the Province, District, LLGs, WDCs, and communities together. The ICDP creates opportunities for Members of Parliament and staff, as well as District Administrators and officers, to engage with Provincial technical departments to coordinate inputs and actions in their Districts. The ICDP, through WDP and its Lead component, also reconnects government and communities. WDP necessitates that District and LLG officers go down to the Ward level in order to facilitate, implement and oversee WDP processes. This re-engagement is rebuilding trust, as well as breaking down fears communities have had in government.
- **Spaces for planning and dialogue through WDP** – The WDP process carves out a space for communities to discuss and plan together, as well as talk with LLG and District staff about development needs and issues. This creates a more formal opportunity to engage, rather than trying as individuals to get a meeting with the District Administrator or Member of Parliament.
- **Growing social accountability** – With an emphasis on WDP, the ICDP is laying the foundation for increased social accountability in the future, whereby Wards can monitor the progress of implementation against their plans.
- **Increased government ownership and accountability** – From LLGs and Districts counter-funding WDP trainings, to Provinces funding service provision as per Ward plans, government at all level is starting to support, own, and lead efforts to become more responsive to local needs.
- **Growing community empowerment through community-identified development** – Through the ICDP, communities are becoming increasingly knowledgeable about the WDP process and their rights to participate in decision-making processes. As well, they are beginning to see the benefits of such participation, whether in the form of a fish farming training, a new literacy classroom, or a footbridge. Communities are coming together to identify, debate, and prioritise issues, and agree on courses of action to improve their lives and communities, including what communities can do for themselves. This offers local leaders greater direction and it gives communities the power to drive their own development.
- **Increasing awareness, dialogue and action to address gender issues** - Government and local partners are slowly coming to see the importance of women’s more equitable participation in decision-making for more effective service delivery. In Obura Wonenara District, where CARE PNG has spent the most time working on building an enabling environment for service delivery and women’s meaningful participation in its planning, women now make up 36% of the WDC members. Women’s participation in WDCs and in bottom-up planning is on the rise in all areas of ICDP’s focus.
- **Ward plan-driven funding streams** – WDP is increasingly becoming an avenue for various government funding streams and donors to counterpart and match-fund District and LLG funds tied to activities in Ward plans. This pooling of resources from among government streams and other sources is helping to overcome rural service delivery barriers, as can be seen in the improvements in education access, livelihoods and food security, small-scale community infrastructure, and law and justice.
- **ICDP-driven funding streams** – The ICDP model, itself, provides a good opportunity to leverage multiple funding streams and engage with donors and government on ways to overcome rural service delivery barriers.