



CARE Integrated Community Development Project (ICDP)

Papua New Guinea

EVALUATION SUMMARY August 2014



PROJECT SUMMARY

Approximately 87% of Papua New Guinea's (PNG) 6.5 million people live in rural areas, with about 40% of the rural population living in the highlands region. CARE's Integrated Community Development Project (ICDP) has been working in the highlands area since 2009 starting in Obura Wonenara District (Eastern Highlands Province) followed by Gumine (Simbu Province) and Menyamyam (Morobe Province) Districts in 2012. These three remote districts have an estimated population of 200,000 people most of whom are considered poor, with limited or no access to income, basic services, markets, transport, and experience seasonal food security issues.



Implemented as a 5 year, \$9 million pilot project, funded by the Australian Government, ICDP works in partnership with government, communities, and local organisations. The program goal is to bring about significant and sustainable improvement in the lives of people living in remote and disadvantaged areas of PNG, primarily through strengthening existing governance and planning processes at the local level, complemented by targeted community development support.

CARE's approach centres around building a supportive environment for rural service delivery by facilitating Ward Development Planning capacity and awareness, creating links between government, communities, and local organisations, and modelling ways to support and deliver services and community development activities as identified in ward plans. A particular focus is women's empowerment which is systematically advanced through all areas of the project work. ICDP aims to achieve:

1. Strengthened and better informed communities, government, and civil society organisations working more effectively in partnership to identify, prioritise, address, and advocate for development needs
2. Improved access to basic services
3. Improved and more secure and self-reliant livelihoods

THE EVALUATION

In June 2014 ICDP underwent an independent external evaluation. The evaluators were asked to assess:

What has been the effectiveness of ICDP in reducing extreme poverty in remote, rural target areas of PNG? What tangible improvements have been made in target communities as well as changes in areas such as governance, service delivery and gender norms?

THE INDEPENDENT EVALUATION HAS CONFIRMED THE ICDP PILOT HAS MADE REAL PROGRESS ON ACHIEVING ITS INTENDED IMPACT:

"The main conclusion of this evaluation is that ICDP is making a significant and tangible contribution to improving the well-being of disadvantaged communities living in remote areas of PNG".

THE EVALUATION STATES:

"ICDP has been effective in improving the well-being of targeted communities in Obura Wonenara (OW) District, particularly in Yelia LLG [Local Level Government], where most direct interventions have been focused. Access to education, village court services, information on improved health and hygiene practices, safer footbridges, sources of protein (namely fish) and improved coffee husbandry practices and marketing opportunities have been enhanced".

KEY PROJECT COMPONENTS*

ICDP works through four main components: LEAD, LEARN, EARN and LIVE.



LEAD

Objective: Strengthening local level organisations and processes that include women's meaningful participation

Results: More women are

participating in decision making at the household and community level. In Morobe Province 62 female Ward Development Committee (WDC) members have formed a network to foster collaboration and support female



LEARN

Objective: Strengthening formal and non-formal learning environments and opportunities

Results: The registration of 36 new elementary schools will allow around 2,790 more children to access education in their first year of operation.

Adult and child literacy levels have been improved where schools have been established, and thus their access to future educational and work / life opportunities. In Simogu where 113 (43 female and 71 male) children who graduated from child literacy classes in 2013 and are now enrolled and successfully participating in Wandakia Primary School.

EARN

Objective: Improved household food security and income

Results: Increased availability of protein through the establishment of 485 fish ponds by both men and women.

Better organised and informed coffee growers have benefited from marketing opportunities and returns. The Coffee Industry Corporation response has been to provide more freight subsidy assistance to fly-in sites, directly supporting 84 households in Obura Wonenara.



LIVE

Objective: Improved social services and physical environment

Results: With 96 village court magistrates now trained and sworn in (including 9 women) community members are better able to settle law and order issues through the recently established village courts. Women are actively engaging this service as 30% of cases brought to the courts are now by women.

Improvements have been achieved in basic health and hygiene practices in some communities, including an increase in assisted births and 9,453 babies have been immunised.

The construction of footbridges will benefit approximately 18,000 people (men, women, children, elderly) who will not have to risk crossing fast flowing rivers and will be able to access markets and basic services. Seven 7 footbridges are to be constructed (currently 3 out of 7 footbridges have been completed).



IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY

The long term impact and sustainability of the interventions piloted through ICDP are yet to be proven. However the initial results are encouraging. Improved ward level planning and targeted community support has resulted in:

- Changes to farming practices adding another protein source through the introduction of fish ponds
- Functioning and resourced village courts providing communities a law and order platform to voice and manage grievances
- Improved access to basic health information
- Leveraging of national and local government budgets which have funded necessary local infrastructure such as footbridges
- Better political accountability with the Eastern Highlands Provincial Governor investing more provincial resources through the LLG and ward levels, based on locally determined priorities. Similarly, over the past 2 years the OW District Administration has been using ward community plans to frame District plans and budgets expected to result in improved basic service delivery.

As local communities largely associate these improvements with CARE's work, direct government and community linkages still need to be strengthened. The sustainability of such impacts is fragile as they require increased government resources to maintain and build on the gains. These small but positive incremental steps will require continued testing and review to ensure sustainable impact.

CORE RECOMMENDATIONS GOING FORWARD

- Based on the achievements and lessons learned to date, initiate a design process for a next phase of ICDP.
- Continue to place gender equality and women's empowerment at the centre of all ICDP's work.
- Continue to explore opportunities to facilitate and co-invest with GoPNG in high impact infrastructure projects, and increase the scope and scale of ICDP's basic health service delivery support
- Continue the current phased approach of supporting the establishment of education opportunities to collaboration with communities/WDCs, LLGs, District and Provincial authorities.
- Continue to pursue an integrated approach, with support for enhanced local governance at its core continuing to build stronger links between ward level planning and local and national government planning.

*ICDP Evaluation and Project Findings, August 2014