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Papua New Guinea

Linking Livelihoods & Food Security improvements to Ward Development Planning

This brief document outlines how CARE International in Papua New Guinea (CARE PNG) through its Integrated Community Development Project has linked Ward Development Planning to improvements in livelihoods and food security for remote, rural communities in Obura Wonenara District, Eastern Highlands Province. This approach centres on bottom-up planning processes, strong partnerships, community mobilisation and participation, and modelling of interventions.

What are the policies?

There are a number of government departments and agencies each with their respective policies that are directly related to food security and livelihoods. Some of these are given below.

- The National Department of Agriculture and Livestock's (DAL) National Agriculture Plan 2007-2016 outlines strategies for improving food security and linkages with health, productivity and marketing, income generation and poverty reduction, and improving women's contributions to rural productivity.
- The Coffee Industry Corporation (CIC) sets standards that regulate the industry, and that include freight subsidisation programs and extension.
- The Fresh Produce Development Agency (FPDA) supports the fruit and vegetable industry and provides market information and technical extension services to growers.
- The National Agriculture Research Institute (NARI) works through community-based approaches to deliver extension to farmers on improved and alternative varieties, cropping methods, and appropriate technologies.
- The National Fisheries Authority (NFA) regulates the marine resources industry and promotes fish farming as a key component for food security and improving the rural diet.
- The Office of Climate Change and Development is the coordinating body for all climate change related policies and actions in PNG, including the Climate Compatible Development Strategy for Papua New Guinea (2010) and the Climate Change Authority Act (2012)
- PNG's Medium Term Development Strategy (2011-2015) and Vision 2050 both have a focus on food security and income generation as part of improving human development.

What are the implementation issues?

Despite the numerous policies and agencies, their reach into remote, rural communities is minimal due to low numbers of government staff, limited information flow and few opportunities to engage with communities. Without their implementation, food insecurity and serious economic poverty can result. In Obura Wonenara District, food insecurity linked to climate change (usually prolonged drought), gardening practices, and depleted soil nutrition is a major issue. Most households consume 1-2 meals a day comprised of only one staple crop (sweet potato), and most do not consume animal or vegetable protein. As well, the majority of households earn very little income from the sale of their agricultural products. The main and often only cash crop is coffee, however coffee gardens are usually not well maintained and processing is of low quality, decreasing the yield of marketable coffee. Further, given the lack of road access, households have to depend on air transport to get their cash crops to market, making returns very low. With a lack of reasonable income, other costs become difficult to meet, such as school and medical fees. Women suffer disproportionately from such poverty due to entrenched gender inequality that results in lower literacy levels, lack of skills, heavy workloads, poor reproductive health, little access to cash and land, and lack of participation in decision-making.

What is the approach?

In 2009, CARE PNG launched its Integrated Community Development Project (ICDP) in Obura Wonenara, which combines governance strengthening for service delivery with community development activities to improve lives and livelihoods in remote, rural communities. The ICDP works through partnerships with government, local organisations, and communities to identify and act on local development priorities. Under the ICDP, the approach to improving food security and livelihoods has the following components:

- **Understanding local needs** – This is done through Ward Development Planning (WDP), a bottom-up planning process mandated by the Organic Law on Provincial Governments and Local Level Governments (1995) which devolves responsibility for service delivery down to the sub-national levels of the Provinces and Local Level Governments (LLGs). The Organic Law stipulates that development priorities must be identified at the Ward level, through the 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. To better understand local needs, WDCs, and LLG and District officers, are trained to be able to facilitate WDP processes and develop Ward plans with communities. In the case of Obura Wonenara, Ward plans listed improvements in food security in times of drought, improved nutrition through fish farming, and improved potato and coffee farming methods for increased income generation as main areas for action.
- **Linking Ward plans to service providers, and establishing partnerships** – Once Ward plans are drafted and priorities made clear, linkages are made with appropriate service providers to work in partnership to develop and deliver the required services and interventions. In this case, it meant engaging with local NGOs, government agencies, and in some places local primary schools to bring trainings to communities on potato, coffee, and fish farming, climate change, and drought tolerant crops.
- **Community mobilisation and participation** - The participation of local leaders, local institutions such as primary schools, and WDCs (and in this case, especially the Agriculture Representative on the WDC) is key as they help to mobilise people, as well as community contributions towards development interventions, such as identifying land for demonstration plots, distributing seeds and equipment, building structures to store crops and equipment, and selecting model farmers to participate in trainings and later teach their new learning to family and neighbours.
- **Integrating CARE's Women's Empowerment Framework** – This means ensuring that women and girls are also able to access training opportunities (**Agency**); focusing on husbands' support for their wives' attendance of training and implementation of learning (**Relations**); and requiring 50 percent of training participants to be women (**Structures**).
- **Modelling interventions** – This is the implementation phase where government agencies, local partners and communities trial the interventions, feedback on their effectiveness, and modify as needed.

What is emerging?

- **Increased engagement** – This approach helps to reconnect communities and government, as 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. Further, this approach also brings numerous parties together – Districts, LLGs, WDCs, communities, local NGOs and national agencies – for the planning and implementation of interventions, and thus improves coordination and efficiency.
- **Growing community support for bottom-up planning** – Communities are experiencing firsthand the benefits that the WDP process can bring, from the expansion of fish farming and increased nutrition, to growing incomes from the selling of better quality coffee and potato crops. Such results motivate communities to continue to participate. However, WDP is not only about what “outsiders” can do for wards. As these communities are learning, WDP is also about what communities can do for themselves, such as planting demonstration gardens at schools and family plots and hosting open days on climate change that can prove commitment, as well as trigger and leverage other support.
- **Gender-sensitive training** – Women’s participation in agriculture has the potential to increase farm production and household income. However, women’s heavy workloads are a frequent barrier that often prevents them from participating in trainings that can equip them with improved skills and knowledge. Thus, it has become essential to restructure the training design to include longer training trips (3 weeks or more) in order to accommodate for the hours and venues that allow women to more easily participate, as well as more one-on-one time with trainers. In addition to role-modelling, gender-balanced teams also encourage women’s participation as many women feel more comfortable talking with other women.
- **School-driven initiatives** – Unlike groups of model farmers, schools have a mandate for spreading knowledge and students absorb information quickly and communicate it widely. The linking of development initiatives to schools should be explored further.

