

Counselling Standards Best Practice

Counselling Best Practice in Basic Counselling (CBP-BC) is a project initiated by the Milne Bay Counselling Services Association (MBCSA). MBCSA has been conducting training on basic counselling for village based volunteer counsellors (VBC) for three years now. Training covers basic counselling skills to equip the VBC to assist persons seeking emotional assistance for problems or issues they encounter that affects their lives. VBCs are also trained to deal with conflicts (conflict resolution and mediation) in the rural areas to ensure that peace and justice is upheld and maintained in their communities.

The counsellors who conduct the training have put together training notes and handouts that have been developed by other organisations, notes from the colleges where they were trained and handouts from counselling workshops attended in past years. MBCSA has realised that most counselling service providers in PNG relied on their own internal materials when providing training to their workers because of the lack of standardised counselling training materials. This resulted in a wide variety of counselling practices and quality standards in counselling care to affected clients. The level of impact is not known but it can be assumed that their impact is variable as they are not necessarily based on any agreed national best practice standards. There is also no national level network to facilitate sharing of ideas and expertise amongst counselling service providers.

Most of the training provided by the various counselling organisations is not recognised nationally and certificates given to participants after the workshop are not recognised by the National Training Council. MBCSA saw the need to bring together counselling service providers and partners to discuss and explore ways of improving the quality of counselling services through improved training that would be based on a nationally accepted “counselling competencies standard”. Trainers completing such training courses would also receive national recognition.

This also meant that all partners needed to meet and discuss at a national workshop and agree to a process for developing best practice standards in counselling. This process began with the convening of a national workshop at which current counselling practices and training were appraised and needs/gaps were identified. A Task Committee was formed at the workshop to be responsible for managing the process for developing a nationally recognised set of basic counselling competency standards. A Training Manual was then developed. A Training of Trainers (TOT) is anticipated to be conducted once the standards are accepted and endorsed by national level authorities such as the NTC and NATTB.

MBCSA has provided the coordination and management of the project from 2007 to 2009.

Community Development Worker Accreditation

The PNG Community Development Scheme (CDS) set up a competency-based training and accreditation system to support professional development for Community Development Workers (CDWs) associated with CDS. Under this system, over 100 CDWs were trained and recognised as competent by CDS. In due course, the community development industry recognised that a national training and accreditation system to support the professional development of CDWs was a pressing need. In response CDS helped set up and support a Panel of experienced PNG CDWs to develop a National Standard for CDWs, under the auspices of the National Apprenticeship and Trade Testing Board (NATTB). The Democratic Governance Program - Transition Phase (DGTP) continues to provide support to roll out the National Standard for CDWs. Twenty three assessments conducted against the units of the National Standard have resulted in 10 CDW's accredited as competent. This brings to 26 the total number of accredited CDWs (16 CDWs were accredited through a 'ruling of industry equivalence' submitted by CDS).

The Panel members who developed the National Standard for CDWs were assisted by a group of 16 CDWs. These 16 CDWs are now the first workplace assessors for the National Standard for CDWs. At a meeting in early 2006 the members of the Panel and the 16 CDWs identified the need to set up an association to support the professional development and occupational health and safety of CDWs and to house the National Standard for CDWs. A working committee was elected to pursue this goal.

A strategic planning workshop was held with key stakeholders in June 2009, at which participants identified the core functions and target membership for the PNG CDW Association (CDWA). A second workshop was held with key stakeholders in September 2009 to review the draft strategic plan. This second workshop also served as the first PNG CDWA AGM.

The PNG CDWA was incorporated as an association on 7 September 2009. The interim PNG CDWA Board was endorsed at the first PNG CDWA AGM in September 2009.

DGTP Grants Demand and Supply Funding Analysis

The distribution of approved grants is the result of a lengthy assessment process and can be influenced by a number of factors. The regional distribution of grants for DGTP Rounds 1, 2 and 3 is as follows:

- Southern 75
- Momase 30
- New Guinea Islands 32
- Highlands 45

This report assesses demand and supply with respect to Expressions of Interest (EOIs) and Komuniti Prosek Plens (KPPs) and some factors that may have an influence on distribution.

At the regional level, Southern and New Guinea Islands have submitted EOIs roughly in proportion to their population. By contrast, Momase's submission rate is significantly below its relative population (16% of EOIs for 28% population), whilst the Highlands is above (47% to 38%).

Some features of EOI submission rates by Region include:

- Milne Bay is the most populous province of Southern Region (although it is surpassed by NCD) yet it provides only 5.5% of the Region's submissions (and only 1% of the total);
- In Momase, Morobe Province provides low numbers of EOIs relative to its population size;
- In NGI (New Guinea Islands), Manus consistently submits high numbers of EOIs relative to its population size; and
- In the Highlands, Enga is the lowest performer relative to population size.

The data also illustrates a clear trend in relation to the location of regional workshops. Funding Round Three was supported by public advertising and a series of regional workshops in the following locations:

- Port Moresby
- Kiunga
- Mt Hagen
- Wewak
- Kimbe
- Buka.

When compared with the data for Rounds One and Two, Round Three demonstrates an increase in EOIs submitted for those provinces where workshops were staged.

In relation to approved KPPs, at the regional level, Southern has significantly more approved KPPs relative to its population size (40% of approved KPPs for 20% of the population). Over half of the approved KPPs for Southern Region are with NCD based organisations, some of whom are headquartered in Port Moresby but deliver

projects across various provinces (and in other regions). Moreover, a number of NCD funded projects involve national level organisations engaged in policy and advocacy initiatives that are undertaken with and on behalf of PNG's citizenry.

Two regions, viz, Momase and Highlands appear to be under-performing relative to their population size. In Momase (17% approvals to 28% population), Morobe is the most underfunded province relative to population (3% to 10.4% of population). In Highlands (26% to 38%), Southern Highlands Province is the most under-funded province relative to population size (3% to 10.5%). This data however includes the national level grants awarded to a concentration of NCD organisations. Twenty-two KPPs were approved for such activities and are assigned the provincial location 'NCD'. If these are removed from the tabulation, the following distribution results:

- Southern: 31% of approvals for 20% of the population (down from 40% of approvals)
- Momase: 19% approvals for 28% population (an increase from 17%)
- NGI: 20% approvals for 14% population (an increase from 18%)
- Highlands: 29% approvals for 38% population (an increase from 26%)

Accounting for the national level organisations results in marginal improvements for Momase and Highlands, but still leaves them lagging relative to their populations. With the redistribution of data as described, the relative over-performance of NGI escalates.

A range of factors could have an influence on the distribution of approved KPPs (and the EOI screening process):

- A lack of consideration of population distributions in the screening and recommendation process (an emphasis on demand, rather than demography);
- The capacity of former-Core Groups and intermediary organisations in a given locale;
- The introduction of a new set of principles based on democratic governance could have been more readily absorbed by groups based in certain locations;
- The relative access (and the quality of access) that communities and organisations have to program staff and to CDWs; and
- Bias in the screening and appraisal process.

On available data, it is not possible to draw firm conclusions regarding these factors, with the exception of screening bias.

The issue of screening bias is explicitly dealt with in a number of ways. A large group of staff are involved and decisions are transparently discussed and debated. EOIs are ranked on the basis of pre-determined and clearly defined selection criteria and the process includes a mechanism for review and audit of assessments.

Highlands/Momase screening is undertaken by the Southern Regional Office (SRO) personnel and vice versa for the other regions. The SRO team in fact contains no personnel from the Southern Region, whilst the Highlands Regional Office (HRO) team comprises personnel exclusively from the Highlands. Across the staff team a wide range of provinces are represented.

In relation to the capacity of intermediary organisations, the cases of Morobe and Manus are relevant. In Morobe (3% approvals; 10.4% of population) the Core Group supported under CDS disintegrated and the small numbers of Community Development Workers (CDWs) dispersed. By comparison with many other provinces, the number of

intermediaries is low. In the case of Manus (remote, yet approvals more than 3 times its population proportion) capacity building of the local Core Group has resulted in significant capacity growth. The intermediary is not only well networked within local civil society but it is also formally recognised by Manus Provincial Government and has linkages to District and Ward levels.

The comparative data on approvals relative to population distribution does raise the question of regional or provincial quotas. Such quotas are not currently utilised but perhaps this is worth considering for the new program where the complexity of the allocation process will increase.

Analysis of EOIs and primary markers provides an illustration of the types of projects that are given high priority through the demand driven funding process. The results show that infrastructure projects (26.1% of EOI submissions) are the most frequently requested followed by community development (18.5%), organisational development (15.8%), agricultural and rural development (14.5%), enterprise development (9.2%), governance (3%), HIV/AIDS (2.4%), and gender (2.1%).

Infrastructure includes water supply systems, small scale resource centres, education facilities, feeder road maintenance and footbridges. The high level of demand for projects of this type continues the pattern observed under CDS. The strong demand for community development, agricultural and rural development, and enterprise development (combined 42.2%) is expected yet noteworthy. Experience suggests that the large majority of these projects involve income generation and/or food security (the two are often inter-related) and considered collectively this may represent the single largest area of demand. The application of secondary markers would facilitate a more accurate analysis, however these have not been applied due to the time required to undertake a detailed analysis of over 1500 EOIs.

Analysis of approved KPPs by province and by primary marker can be considered more accurate than those made with respect to EOIs (discussed above) because in this case more information is available and more time is invested in the allocation process. Notwithstanding these remarks, it is worthwhile comparing indicative EOI demand with actual funded projects.

For the latter, organisational development (23% cf 15.8% by EOI demand) is the most commonly funded project area, followed by community development (14.3% cf 18.5%), governance (13.7% cf 3%), education (12% cf 1%), and infrastructure (7.7% cf 26%). Comparing the data suggests that funding has not directly followed demand. In the screening process staff take into account program goals and objectives in relation to civil society capacity building and support for good governance initiatives. The relative disconnect between demand and projects funded (with the exception of 'community development' which rates highly in both demand and supply data sets) may also be a reflection of the superior quality of proposals and/or perceived capacity of organisations proposing organisational development and governance activities (combined 36.7%). This pattern should perhaps be monitored as it may suggest, over further funding iterations, the need to find new ways of working with community groups that are demanding in the areas of agricultural and rural development, income generation, food security, and infrastructure.

Bogia Ward Planning Pilot Democratic Governance Program Transition Phase

This pilot was conducted under the Democratic Governance Program – Transition Phase (DGTP) which is a joint initiative of the Governments of Papua New Guinea and Australia. Following a request for support for a ward planning activity from the Bogia District Administrator under its small grant program, DGTP began to work with a number of national government departments to determine interest in this activity. These departments urged DGTP to develop a planning process based on existing government systems and requirements. The justification for ward planning came from the Organic Law on Provincial Governments and Local Level Governments (1995) which requires a bottom-up planning process to ensure better delivery of goods and services.

Initial workshops with government and Civil Society Organisation (CSO) representatives developed the planning process which covers seven steps: i) awareness; ii) information; iii) village planning meetings; iv) ward plan preparation meetings; v) development plans; vi) implementation and monitoring; and vii) evaluation.

DGTP conducted a Training-of-Trainers (TOT) course in ward planning with district staff, Local Level Government Council Executive Officers (CEO), local resource people and CSO representatives as the trainees. This TOT group developed a training manual used in training Ward Development Committee (WDC) members. The TOT group trained three persons from each of the 91 wards in the district in eight training courses scattered through the district. The practical training had trainees preparing ward profiles and plans in nearby wards. After the training, the TOT teams provided support to the WDCs by visiting each ward to assist with profiles and plans. WDCs completed profiles and plans and submitted these to the Local Level Government (LLG) Presidents. With DGTP support, the TOT team developed a transparent process to aggregate and prioritise ward plans into LLG plans which were endorsed at LLG Assembly meetings before being submitted to the Joint District Planning and Budget Priority Committee (JDP&BPC). The District Plan was then prepared by the District Administrator supported by the TOT group.

The pilot has resulted in the following outcomes:

- a bottom-up planning process that can be managed and done by district, LLG and ward officers and elected officials;
- 91 ward profiles and ward plans done and owned by WDC members and representing the prioritised needs of the people;
- three LLG plans made from aggregated ward plans in a process that all Ward Councillors understand and can explain what is in the plan and why;
- one district plan comprising the three LLG plans, sectoral support activities and enabling support for the district and LLGs to support implementation;
- empowered ward, LLG and district officers and leaders who have prepared plans themselves and now have responsibility for seeking funding for the plans and accountability for implementing the activities;
- a core group of trainers who are government and CSO staff; and
- consideration by national government to use the pilot process throughout PNG as the means to develop local level plans according to the Organic law.

The pilot has developed a process needed to meet a legal government requirement and has field tested this using government systems and government people collaborating with CSOs. It has empowered government staff and ward officers by making them competent to do the work that is their responsibility and mobilising the community to implement activities either funded externally or from their own resources.