KNOW-HOW 3000

Experience

IN DETAIL

Capacity Building
for School Management

HORIZONT 3000

AUSTRIAN ORGANISATION
FOR DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

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List of Abbreviations

CEA	Catholic Education Agency Bougainville
FHC	Financial Health Check
LEA	Lutheran Education Agency
PLWHA	People living with HIV/AIDS
PNG	Papua New Guinea
SMPB	School Management Project Bougainville

1. General Information

The experience was made by HORIZONT3000 Papua New Guinea, together with the Catholic Education Agency (CEA) Bougainville. CEA Bougainville looks after approximately 155 of 220 primary schools in Bougainville. Its responsibilities include the posting of teachers and ensuring the well-running of the schools through appropriate infrastructure, teachers' presence in the school ans training for teachers. Nevertheless, CEA does not provide funding to schools.

Within this documentation, the Catholic Education Agency of Bougainville wants to present its experience with the "Three Step Approach of Capacity Building to improve School Management", consisting in (1) Workshops/ Trainings, (2) Mentoring/ Monitoring School Visits, and (3) Office Based Support. The experience was made in two provinces, in Bougainville (eastern-most part of PNG) since 2007, and was replicated in Western Province (in the west) in 2012.

Chart 1: Localization of the Experience

A similar experience was made prior to 2007 with the Lutheran Education Agency (LEA), supporting schools in the Highlands and Momase Region. This experience, realized with the support of HORIZONT3000 development worker Matthias Benkovic, led to the wish of the Catholic Education Agency of Bougainville for a similar program, which was developed by HORIZONT3000-staff Carsten Klink, Andi Siedersleben, and later Alex Käfer and Kerstin Rotter; as well as Catholic Education Secretaries Simon Koraikove, John Narebo and their successors Eugene Moses and Samuel Ephrem. An Arawa-based government officer, primary school inspector Robert Nomonu, had first requested a finance-training support

program. For a detailed description of the evolving process, please refer to Annex 1: History of the Evolving Process.

2. Context of the Experience

Financial management, transparency, and reporting of funds in the education sector in PNG for many years have been a concern for government, donors and local communities alike. Despite nation-wide training programs the situation has apparently deteriorated over the years. In 2007 almost no school had the required bookkeeping and reporting formats were not used. School based officers, like teachers and board members, as well as provincial and district officers had little financial skills and requested trainings in key areas of their work (use of reports and planning tools). Frequent trainings in financial management were conducted by different players but were not followed up, so the learned was rarely implemented.

In order to better understand the circumstances, in which the experience is embedded, please notice the following clarifications:

- Generally speaking, in PNG there is a strong sense of ownership of schools by rural communities; Though this is often disregarded, the communities by law have a strong role in the management of their school and almost all schools have a management-board made up by men and (fewer) women of the communities.
- Parts of the "first contact" generation are still alive, having low literacy and numeracy levels. These villagers sometimes feel "stupid" and have little confidence in their school management skills.
- Headteachers change schools on an average of every three years, contributing to a lack of continuity in the management of the schools.
- Theres a shared responsibilitiy of the government (teacher salaries, curricula and the general funding of schools) and church agencies (e.g. religious education, capacity building and supervision of schools).
- Church agencies are generally underfunded and understaffed, and rely on their schools for support.

- In Bougainville approximately 155 out of 220 primary schools belong to the Catholic Education Agency.
- In PNG a matrilineal society is predominant and landownership connected to the female line of families.

Despite high rates of sexually transmitted infections even among primary school students, Bougainville had a slower spread of the HI-virus compared to other provinces. But after the end of the civil war rising HIV prevalence rate was widely expected. It was therefore decided to use the program's outreach to motivate teachers to include HIV/AIDS into their own programs. HIV/AIDS (and over time other topics such as gender, conflict mediation and disability) were included as afternoon sessions into the course program. The sessions were facilitated by trained social workers and nurses of the diocese's HIV/AIDS team. But the participants of the sessions seemed being bored from the topics ("We know all this already!"). After discussing the lack of interest by teachers and school-community members the team trialled a new approach:

- Offering voluntary counselling and testing during daytime session (not so successful) and night sessions (successful – up to half of the participating school leaders participated). This was a good icebreaker to overcome fears.
- Giving HIV-positive men and women the chance to talk openly with the participants. At the time that was a new experience in Bougainville, and the two willing PLWHAs had to be nurtured carefully. But the response was overwhelmingly positive and possibly contributed a little bit to lower levels of discrimination. CARE and other agencies later copied the approach.

3. Main Characteristics of the Experience

The main purpose of the practice is to improve the management of mostly remote primary and vocational schools in one province of PNG, assuming that this will lead to better spending, better education and a better education system in general. It was expected that eventually there will be enough local people capacity on all levels of the education system to lead to lasting improvements.

In order to implement the practice, a three-step approach of capacity building is used:

- **Workshops and Trainings** as *„entry point"* to establish a relationship with the target schools; Trainings are scheduled for one week and organised for several neighbouring schools at a time; in Bougainville schools are already divided into *"clusters"* and school inspectors and other education officers already use these clusters for the organisation of trainings and meetings, making it easier for the project to blend in.
- **Mentoring and Monitoring School Visits,** consisting in mentoring school staff and board-members, supervising and controlling if gained knowledge is being implemented and data collection (e.g. of performance indicators).
- **Office based support and process accompaniment** ("Wanbel Haus", education resource centre): offering different attractive services for schools, open to all education agencies (The Catholic Education Secretary offers advice and supervision; Project Sankamap displays curriculum materials and runs different programs; SMPB offers cheap copy-services and advice); pffering support in annual planning, finance management and problem solving; facilitating a distribution centre for information.

Addiitonally, the cooperation with stakeholders on provincial and district level is an important factor: Goodwill is created through the inclusion of requested new topics; Logistical support is provided in both ways when travelling or running courses in remote areas; and some motivated officers even become multiplicators.

Since School Management involves different levels – (1) the school itself, (2) its church and government supervisors, (3) the administration in the provincial headquarter – the different levels had to be involved appropriately, with each level having its own needs and influences:

- Participation on school level was fostered through the inclusion of board members from the communities surrounding the

schools through course evaluations, and regular exchange with the people being involved. This assured that the role of the local community in running the school was acknowledged, while the ability to manage the school and their commitment to the school was increased.

- As to the participation on provincial and district level, regular reporting and transparency towards different church and government agencies and agents, as well as cooperation and joint activities, where possible, were crucial elements. Especially the involvement of "frontline government officers" (District Education Officers, Standard Officers/ Inspectors) was important.

After a year in operation, course contents were adjusted, and focused more on areas that were difficult for participants and on topics requested by local authorities (e.g. financial reporting using the official report forms and school planning using the tool "School Learning Improvement Plan")

4. Stakeholders and Partners – Roles and Responsibilities

The main beneficiaries of the experience are the following:
- School leaders, like headteachers and teachers on government payroll as well as voluntary members and office bearers of local school boards (community members);
- Members of supervisory bodies (school inspectors/ standard officers, district education officers);
- Eventually the entire primary school student population

Furthermore, the following parties/ institutions are mainly involved:
- School based people on payroll (headteachers as the legally responsible "accountable" officers)
- School based people on voluntary basis (board-members and office bearers such as treasurers and chairmen, often with little formal education, e.g. grade 6 to 10 leavers). They manage their schools and are often overwhelmed by the task. Many feel they have little training/ capacity to deal

with money, reports and/ or administrative requirements.
- Middle-level administrative bodies, such as government officers (inspectors, administrative staff) and church agency officers – some, but not all see the opportunity to receive support.

As to the relationship between men and women involved in the experience: primary school headteachers are more or less equally women and men (depends on the appointments by the Catholic Education Agency), but the majority of board members are male. Nevertheless, there are some female "money handlers" (treasurers, school secretaries) chosen by their communities or by (often female) headteachers.

5. Resources

The following resources are required in order to carry out the practice:

Resources for Mentoring School Visits:
- Human: In order to visit all 220 schools more than the current 2 project staff members would be needed. Improving the participation of school inspectors could be a solution.
- Time: ½ day per school is required for a visit and ideally several follow up visits are conducted. The better accepted the project's office became, the more site visits can be replaced by office-based "mentoring on demand

Resources for Courses and Workshops:
- Human: 2 trainers per one-week-course is a minimum, especially if more than 30 participants are attending the course. This allows for sufficient recovery-time and interaction during group works. Additional external facilitators are helpful.
- Financial: Costs for workshops vary according to circumstances. In most cases courses were organised in remote schools, with accommodation and venue provided for only a nominal fee and participants contributing either garden foods or course fees.

Other Resources:
- Knowledge: Understanding of bureaucratic/ management procedures is needed. Formal knowledge of rules and procedures specific

to PNG schools can be obtained from available course materials. But "informal" rules are sometimes also important.

- Financial: Administrative costs of the program need to be covered from external sources. Costs, related to courses (e.g. food, printouts, accommodation) can be covered by the participating schools, who are mostly willing to pay.

6. Impact of the Experience

If financial reports are not accepted by the government, subsidies to schools are not being paid in PNG. Therefore, an improved reporting of funds use leads to an increase of school subsidies, released by the provincial and national governments. In addition, the better understanding of management and planning processes leads to more spendings on priority areas (e.g. on school books). This has been observed in some cases, while reliable and complete data is not available. There is also no data available on the impact on the livelihoods of the population of Bougainville. The final beneficiaries' level is quite far from the level of intervention. Evaluations so far did not attempt to assess the impact of improved school management on improved education and livelihoods.

By law elementary and primary schools are run under the supervision of the board of managements, consisting of community members (e.g. respected elders, church, women and youth representatives – often with little formal education themselves). These boards are often unable to fully fulfil their responsibilities, because of lack of training and understanding of formal procedures. The program systematically included the board members to increase their ability to effectively work together with their respective headteachers, and to achieve their goals when dealing with the government and church administrations.

7. Lessons Learned and Recommendations

Trainings are only one part of capacity building, but ensure an important entry strategy. A mentoring & tutoring strategy that follows up on course contents ensures the implementation of the learned.

Even not fully literate community members can share the responsibility in managing their school. Especially in the PNG-system, where communities have a role in the management of their schools, and headteachers frequently change, those need to be included in training and mentoring activities.

8. Challenges

The main challenges encountered when applying the practice are:
- Low accessibility of remote schools (access by boat, by foot or limited public transport);
- Lack of consistency in schools due to the frequently changing of headteachers and boardmembers, which also impedes the mentoring of managers;
- Bureaucratic hurdles, making school management unnecessarily difficult. Some schools need to spend up to a quarter of their budget on travel cost to get the permission to access their funds (specific challenge for Bougainville schools).

So far, these challenges have been addressed by cooperating with as many stakeholders as feasible.

9. Sustainability

For the practice to be institutionally and economically sustainable, the following two aspects must be considered:
- The willingness of the church and government administration or individual staff (inspectors, education officers) to share activities, information, and resources has to be guaranteed.
- The development of a business model for the project will be necessary, if donor funding is not a long-term option. In cases where schools have control over their own budget, fees can be asked from schools. Governments would usually only provide long-term-funding for projects owned by themselves. Therefore, transferring the ownership to the government might in some cases be an option.

10. Experience Sharing/ Up-scaling

This experience could serve as a reference for education and health agencies (faith-based or government agencies on national or provincial level), NGOs (local/international, in the area of education and health) – in a system where local ownership is stressed, but not (yet) fully functioning.

In order to be able to replicate the experience, the following is recommended:

- Identify who are accepted decision makers and authorities. Good school management does not only take place on school-level, but also needs to be demanded or supported from above.
- Seek close cooperation with a supportive government administration.
- Attach a capacity building program to a strong partner, such as an existing authority to facilitate the entry into the education system. In PNG this would usually be government or church agencies on provincial level.
- In PNG attaching such a project to a church agency does help the implementation, as churches have a relatively strong role as education service provider, and have the advantage of being less reliant on bureaucratic procedures, and work with less administrative restrictions.
- In other settings, attaching the project to an independent education NGO or service centre could be appropriate, if the support by the respective authorities can be achieved.
- It must be possible to reach a majority of schools with given travel infrastructure, funds and personnel.

11. Bibliography

LEA. (kein Datum). *Lutheran Education Assoication*. Abgerufen am December 2015 von http://www.lea.org/Home.aspx

12. Appendix: History of the Evolving Process

Before 2007	- HORIZONT3000 had prior, but less successful experience, with a school finance management program with the Lutheran Church on the New Guinea mainland. - Problems that arose were low levels of literacy, lack of English and even Tok Pisin skills of some course participants, no follow up due to remoteness of many schools and little cooperation with government officers leading to a lack of support.
2007	- Feb.: Arrival of HORIZONT3000 Technical Adviros Carsten Klink; close attachment to Assistant Catholic Education Secretary John Narebo, who facilitated contacts and mentored the SMPB-team during school visits. - Sept.: Start of the program; first school visits and first 4 courses based on materials used by the Lutheran Church program ("Financial Management for Primary Schools" materials)
2008	- Official opening of "Wanbel Haus", office and education resource centre jointly constructed and shared with the Education Support Program "Project Sankamap". - The SMPB photocopier became the main source of income and still attracts almost all Central Bougainville schools; it contributed to the acceptance of the program with the schools and made contact for schools easy, as school board members and teachers combine copy business with asking for quick or longer advice from the Sankamap- and SMPB-teams. - Development of a *"Financial Health Check"* to be used as a mentoring and monitoring tool during school visits;
2009	- Attempts to establish district based trainer groups called "Finance Resource Groups" in cooperation with the respective primary school inspectors. Unfortunately the groups did not exist for long; later attempts were little more successful.
2010	- After 3 years an external evaluation showed good improvements in schools, and an overall good picture of the program - Handover from HORIZONT3000 staff Carsten Klink to Alex Käfer; Local (Ass.) Training Coordinator Peter Kabui left shortly after, and Hubert Pinah took his place
2011	- After contact with Alex Käfer, the Catholic Education Agency in Western Province requested support for a similar program: "SMP-Western" under Coordinator Kevin Joseph, with support of HORIZONT3000 staff Valeria Ciocco
2013	- The national Education Department started a cooperation with church education agencies: Church agencies have the task to run "whole school quality assessments" and "rapid audits" until early 2014 - Jan.: Alex Käfer left and Hubert Pinah took over most management roles in SMP-Bougainville. In June, HORIZONT3000 staff Kerstin Rotter arrived for support - Oct.-Nov.: in cooperation with other agency staff a baseline study of more than 60, approx. ¼ of the 220 primary schools in Bougainville was conducted – using its own FHC-format, as well as the government's new "Tuition Fee Free Rapid Audit Form"