

FROM COLONIAL DEPENDENCE TO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL BASED ACCOUNTABILITY FOR EDUCATION IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Peter Nung Kants, Assistant Secretary - Standards and Guidance Division, Standards Wing, National Department of Education, Fin Corp Haus, P. O. Box 446, WAIGANI, National Capital District, Papua New Guinea.

E-mail: Peter_Kants@educationpng.gov.pg

INTRODUCTION

The paper briefly explains the geographical, cultural, language and historical context of Papua New Guinea (PNG) before detailing the theoretical rationale for the current changes. The practical issues faced in managing such significant change to produce sustainable activity across 8000+ schools - with many being remote, in difficult terrain and with poorly developed communications and transport infrastructure – is then discussed.

PNG occupies the eastern half of the island of New Guinea, situated south of the equator and 150 kilometres north of the tip of Australia. PNG has more than 600 islands but 85% of the landmass of 263,840 square kilometres is the mainland. Due to the nature of our geography natural disasters like earthquakes and volcanoes, landslides and floods are common. Much of the country is very rugged and that contributes with a limited road network and poor communication infrastructure. The country is rich in minerals and marine resources, however 75% remains as rainforest. This has attracted global attention to assist in the preservation of natural resources while at the same time exploring for resources.

PNG has over 800 unique languages. This contributes to the cultural diversity that can be seen between the provinces and between districts within each of the 20 provinces. Many of these languages are not yet in the written form so are not used as the medium of instruction. However, it means that our student begin their elementary schooling in more than 250 written languages. Elementary education recognises and respects the language and culture of the community. It helps students develop pride in their culture and language. Elementary Education consists of three years of education using a language that the students already speak. Students learn the knowledge, skills and attitudes that are important in that community. English is introduced when students transition to primary schooling at the ages nine or ten.

THE NATIONAL EDUCATION SYSTEM

The colonial administration system and a number of church run systems that started in the 1940s ran independently until the early 1970s when the current national education system was established. In 1973 the PNG education system had approximately 1,050 institutions, 9,060 teachers, and 254,000 students. By 2007, the system had grown to one employing around 38,000 teachers, and almost 1.2 million students in 5000 elementary schools, 3500 primary schools, 200 secondary schools and 121 vocational schools. Today there are six prominent church agencies operating the schools. Educational services are supplied to a population of approximately 6 million people with 85% living in rural areas. The population is growing at a rate of about 2.7 per cent per year. There are also a small yet growing number of privately run autonomous schools throughout the country (State of Education, 2007).

PNG had a highly decentralized education system following the establishment of the provincial government system in 1978. All schools are governed by the 20 Provincial Education Boards (PEB) and managed by the 20 Provincial Education Divisions. The National Education Board (NEB) oversees policy matters and the overall management of all the institutions in the country. The provinces responsibilities include planning, financing, staffing and maintaining general education institutions up to Grade 12. This includes pre-school, elementary, primary, secondary and vocational schools. The National Department of Education (NDoE) retains overall responsibility for curriculum and standards. A reform curriculum which is the Outcomes Based Education (OBE) is being developed up to Grade 12 that is more relevant to village life through commencing in vernacular education and with a focus on life skills, but then allows students to pursue a range of post Grade 8 pathways.

90% of our schools are located in the rural areas of PNG where the terrain makes it very difficult to move from one location to another. Access to basic education is very difficult but this is very slowly improving due to some improvements in the infrastructure development. Thus, many school aged children find it extremely difficult to attend classes. For those who attend classes many do not make it to the end of the terminal points (grades 8, 10 and 12) due to poor health, no ability to pay school fees, female students becoming pregnant, tribal conflicts, natural disaster and other issues associated with a developing country.

THE INSPECTORATE REVIEW

In 2004 the National Government directed the education department to review the whole function, structure and the organisation of the NDOE. Concurrent with this a review of the Elementary, Primary and Secondary Inspectorate was undertaken between September 2004 and March 2005 through the Education Capacity Building Program (ECBP) funded by AusAID. The review based on the work of Tololo (1995) and Grant (1997). They had both recommended updating the duty statements of Inspectors and Head Teachers/Principal giving greater involvement to head teachers/principals in the writing of teacher appraisal reports and school performance reports.

The Inspections and Guidance Division (IGD) is one of the nine divisions of the NDOE and operates nationally and had a staff of 225 persons working across the country. The inspectorate had become increasingly focussed on teacher appraisal at the expense of whole school improvement and system planning (MacBeath, 2006). There was an inability within the inspectorate as a whole to provide effective quality assurance for a rapidly expanding school system with the resources available to the division. There had also been a decline in community confidence in the quality of student learning outcomes because of weak school leadership, poor supervision, ineffective resource management, and lack of coordinated professional development support for teachers. The inspectorate nationwide was overworked, under-resourced, and lacked focus so there was a need to find strategies to address the issues identified.

The review team of three Superintendents and an external consultant visited 17 of the 20 provinces conducting focus groups meeting and wide consultation with over 870 stakeholders. There was an overwhelming consensus from respondent in all sectors that quality assurance functions should remain a central function. However, there was also wide recognition that teacher appraisal processes should be school based with school improvement and accountability the function of the work of inspectors.

The review found that over 95% of respondents believed that Quality Assurance of the education system should remain a National function. Standards officers comprise approximately 30% of the total national department workforce. It was widely seen that they are the “eyes, ears and mouth of the Secretary for Education.” They provide quality assurance through staff professional development and the monitoring and evaluation all aspects students learning, curriculum implementation and other management aspects in schools.

The final report contained 23 recommendations and was accepted by the Top Management Team (TMT) of the NDOE in June 2005 when it was presented by the review team. The recommendations in the Inspection Review Report focussed on moving accountability to the school level for teacher appraisal and wider involvement of all stakeholders in school planning and improvement processes. It was also recommended that the Inspections and Guidance Division should be renamed Standards and Guidance to signal the proposed change in focus.

SIGNIFICANT CULTURAL CHANGE

Given the long history of inspectors being responsible for the appraisal of individual teachers, it was necessary to start a change to the culture of the system. In the SGD alone the following initiatives have taken place as a huge cultural shift or change to achieve the goals of the National Education Plan and these are:

- *Shift from Teacher Appraisal to whole School Improvement and Accountability*
- *Restructure and the Regionalization of the Inspectorate*
- *School Based Teacher Appraisal (SBTA)*
- *Supervision and Management Reform (SMR)*
- *School Learning Improvement Planning (SLIP)*
- *Teacher Inspections ,Provincial Ratings Conference (PRC) and Regional Ratings Conferences (RRC)*
- *School Based Counselling*

The major shift in the delivery of advisory, supervision and appraisal services to teachers in the elementary, primary and secondary required the division to support the schools with appropriate training, mentoring, documentation and other administrative functions under the Supervision and Management Reform (SMR) and School Based Teacher Appraisal (SBTA). The first priority was to train the head teachers and the senior staff to write reports the way the Standards Officers or Inspectors would write. After two major workshops, the Standards Officers trained their head teachers in 164 different locations training about 5,200 participants in 20 provinces of the four regions. The workshop were designed for the head teachers who for the first time starting in 2006 shared with standards officers (previously inspectors) the responsibilities for teacher appraisal - a very significant shift in practice. The workshop were outcomes based and covered SMR initiatives, 2002 Performance Based Duty Statement (PBDS), and important issues in the National Education

Plan (2005-2014) affecting the nation such as HIV/AIDS policy (2005), gender equity policy (2006), elementary education issues and the alleviation of poverty. The workshop also covered Outcomes Based Education (OBE) and the introduction of School Learning Improvement Planning (SLIP) to enhance SBTA, SMR and other reform initiatives to look forward to the introduction of Universal Basic Education (UBE). School Based counselling conducted various workshops separately by the Guidance and Counselling Branch on behaviour management, student support, social skills training and critical incident management to name a few.

The annual Provincial Ratings Conference (PRC) in each province and the Regional Rating Conference (RRC) in each of the four regions due to the restructure and the regionalization of the inspectorate late in 2006 indicated how well the workshops achieved their outcomes. Data gathered from the conferences are used to plan for improvements while maintaining the strengths in this huge change management process.

SMR has its origin in the Inspection Review Report of 2005. The report suggested that the head teacher and the senior staff of the school to take greater responsibility for the school supervisory and appraisal processes. It called for the supervision process to be institutionalized so that it could be implemented by the school hierarchy.

The NDoE has made this significant move to transfer supervisory and the appraisal functions to be undertaken by the school authorities in May 2002 but did not strengthen and sustain it. The SMR initiative challenges the school heads to make sure that change happen. SMR focuses on a holistic view to develop excellent schools with proactive and visionary leadership that can be measured through:

- *the quality of curriculum implementation;*
- *the sense of purpose focussing on the delivery of quality learning - a school culture that is conducive to learning;*
- *an environment of harmony peace and order;*
- *the induction of new staff and the mentoring of inexperienced staff with agreed staff supervision and monitoring processes;*
- *a culture of evaluation to leads improvement;*
- *good governance in all aspects of school functioning; and*
- *self- reliance and efficient use of resources to sustain school function.*

Ultimately, the overriding purpose of SMR is to change each school into a school of excellence that gives our young people quality education (Amstrong, 2006).

An essential part of the change in focus of Standards Officers work was the gradual transfer of responsibility for teacher appraisal to school leaders. It was evident at 2007 Provincial Ratings Conference that this proving to be successful. The quality of reports written by head teacher was adequate and will improve as time progresses. The number of school based reports exceeded the number written by Standards Officers in 2006. There was an increase of 16% in Inspection reports and an increase of 25% in the number of personal reports. In 2005 the four regions rated 4,767 reports, 2006 rated 4,026 reports and in 2007 rated 5,043 reports.

SCHOOL LEARNING IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Accordingly to the School Learning Improvement Planning (SLIP) Guidelines (2005) are a statement of the key things, which the school wants to change or improve (objectives); how these things are to be achieved (strategies); and what the impact will be (outcomes) to improve education for students. SLIP planning process provides a purposeful and efficient way for all schools to improve:

- *the effectiveness of classroom practice on students learning outcomes*
- *the management of the whole school*
- *decisions about the allocation of resources.*

Purposes of School Learning Improvement Planning

SLIPs are set within a broader context that is described by a school's statement of purpose, vision, or mission statements (Caldwell, 2006). They may be thought of as providing a public statement of how schools are attempting to address specific issues within the overarching goals contained in their statement of purpose. A SLIP enables a school to make a brief and concise public statement outlining the proposed major themes for development within a school. The processes by which the SLIP objectives are identified, implemented and reviewed are critical to the success of the plan. These objectives must be designed to promote increased education outcomes for students. The processes associated with the SLIP will assist schools to:

- *identify the focus and boundaries of change*

- *direct their efforts more effectively to relieve the pressures that arise from many competing priorities*
- *be efficient in the use and deployment of resources*
- *further strengthen staff, student, parent and community teamwork*
- *raise public awareness of what schools are doing and how they plan to achieve their objectives*
- *communicate progress and the achievements of schools to the wider public.*

A SLIP is only one aspect of a school's total planning process. It pinpoints the school's priority areas for development, but it does not encompass the on-going maintenance activities of the school. The objectives for development that are identified in the SLIP arise from two sources: the programs and policies, which the NDOE wishes to implement in schools, and the particular aspirations of schools and communities. NDOE has established their priorities and strategies within the National Education Plan (2005-2014) for the provision of resources allocation and support to schools.

Components of School Learning Improvement Planning

SLIPs will vary according to the size and complexity of individual schools. Manageable and achievable objectives must be set for each year of the plan. These will reflect the system and school's priorities. It is recommended that schools work through the management and organizational implications of a limited number of their high priority objectives (Hopkins, 1994) before expanding the number that they plan to address in any year. A small number of objectives often appear to be a relatively limited task. These objectives, however, fan out into a larger number of strategies, which must all be managed.

Schools are encouraged to be innovative and develop a SLIP, which is responsive to the Department's legislative requirements and policy priorities, and to the needs of their community. Schools therefore will need to ensure that the processes used to develop their plans are inclusive of all groups in the school community. The choice of the strategies to address individual objectives should be informed by knowledge of effective practice in schools, but these strategies also provide the basis for innovation and new thinking in schools.

A three-year time horizon provides an overview of a school's identified areas for major growth and development over the next three years and includes objectives, strategies and verifiable outcomes.

Objectives need to be expressed in a way that clearly indicates the nature of the planned improvement. This should not be global or general ideals, which can only be aspired to. Outcomes need to be stated so that their achievement is easily recognizable. One-year action plans are more detailed descriptions of the strategies to be implemented to achieve the objectives as stated in the three-year plan. The breath of specific strategies will vary according to the size and complexity of a school and nature of the specific objective being addressed.

Review of School Learning Improvement Planning

SLIPs are tools to facilitate change and development rather than ends in themselves (MacBeath, 2006). Review processes within a school consist of three strands:

- *continual monitoring of the effectiveness of the strategies within a SLIP,*
- *an annual internal review of the SLIP, and*
- *an external review by the SGD every three years.*

The annual internal review will be conducted by individual school administration using the internal review guidelines provided by the NDOE. Similarly, the three yearly external reviews by the SGD and others of the SLIP will focus on the progress that the school has made towards achieving its stated outcomes and will result in the production of a public report that will be shared with the community and the appropriate authorities.

This will involve a review of:

- *the effectiveness and inclusiveness of the planning process which resulted in the production of the SLIP*
- *the management of the change process associated with the implementation of the SLIP*
- *the effectiveness of the strategies employed by the school in implementing the yearly action plan.*
- *The extent to which the school has achieved its objectives and stretched its performance in improving outcomes for its students.*

Valued Partners School Learning Improvement Planning Responsibilities

Students, parents, Head Teachers/Principals, teachers and the school support staff, Boards of Management/Governors, local community, Standards Officers, Provincial/District Education

Advisers, Provincial/District Administrators, and Church Education Secretaries are valued partners in all the schools, districts, provinces and regions for any change and development initiatives of our school system. Working together in partnership is to ensure enhanced students learning, whole school improvement, the confidence of parents and community, and ensure a high quality education and a better future (MacBeath, 2006) for the children of PNG. For example, close, regular liaison between standards officers and district education officials, including joint school visits if possible, and careful study of school reports at the districts and provincial levels is required. Careful advance planning and adequate resourcing of new schools or the expansion of existing schools, and careful attention to teacher appointment especially at the senior levels. For SBTA, SMR, and SLIP to be successful and stable school management teams are needed.

SUSTAINABILITY: What will SLIP do for the school system in the future?

There are some new cultures that SLIP should develop are stated below. These have been thought of for years but have achieved little since the introduction of the formal schooling system in PNG. SLIP are vehicles that will drive all the reform initiatives in our education system for enhanced students learning and school performance and ensure ongoing and continuous improvement for all-round excellence is the goal (Schomoker, 1996 and Pollock, 2007).

Effective SLIP leadership is an ultimate goal of SLIP. Students, Head Teachers, Principals, teachers, Boards of Management (BOM), Boards of Governors (BOG) and Governing Councils (GC) Chairpersons and others will become more effective and efficient in their leadership roles when SLIP is grounded and functioning well. School community stakeholders, especially students and teachers, require effective leadership, but in many schools this has been missing for a very long time. The responsibilities of the school administration include overall school supervision, management (Kolant and Pettit 2003) and teacher appraisal.

Ownership is one of the ultimate goals as well, through the collaboration, participation and involvement of all school community stakeholders in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of SLIP. Successful outcomes with high achievement for students and teachers will be a reason for the whole community to celebrate and embrace (Katzenbach and Smith 1993).

Accountability will be enhanced through the regular interaction among stakeholders in the planning, implementation, evaluation and reporting of SLIP processes. Transparency will become a reality through the open collaborative processes, and corruption will also be minimized.

Sustainability (Caldwell, 2006) of improvement becomes possible because SLIP is about ownership and shared goals and objectives; and success breeds success – it is incremental. Previous school plans, programs and initiatives have rarely followed the principles embodied in the SLIP Guidelines Of 2005. SLIP principles are SMART – in the sense of Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time Related (Reeves, 2006). SLIP also encourages schools to be more self-reliant and self sufficient, to promote a spirit of independence of action and thought.

SLIP supports ongoing school development plans but gives them more focus and through insistence on reliance on available resources minimizes an often ingrained culture of dependency. Improvement is incremental, but ongoing and continuous; and the annual management of the successes and failures of the SLIP improves the capacity of a school community to plan strategically.

SLIP enables teachers with talents and potential to use and develop them to improve the school in both the short term and long term with maximum benefit for the students. SLIP furthermore enables teachers to be creative and innovative.

MONITORING STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

As we redeveloped our curriculum we saw the need to have more data about actual student learning outcomes. Our national examination system at years 8, 10 and 12 provides a snapshot of student achievement but fails to give us vital information about learning in the key primary school years. This is the essential learning that provides the foundations for success in secondary schooling.

A key part of moving from objectives based curriculum to an outcomes based curriculum is having reliable information on what the students can actually do. To provide an objective, scientific picture of actual standards in learning as opposed to intended standards embodied in curriculum syllabuses, quality data must be collected from students, teachers and schools (Marzano, 2007). These data need to be analysed appropriately to reveal how actual standards differ from intended standards. A well designed monitoring program applied regularly will reveal trends in actual measured standards.

This provides valuable information to facilitate planning, policy formation and teacher in-service programs.

In 2003-4 we undertook a pilot Curriculum Standards Monitoring Test (CSMT) study. It was the first large scale educational survey of literacy and numeracy standards in Papua New Guinea (Freeman, Anderson & Morgan, 2005). Samples of primary students in grades 3, 4, 5, and 8 across the country were tested in basic literacy (reading and writing tests) and numeracy (mathematics tests). Curriculum standards embodied in our redeveloped outcomes-based curricula were embodied in the tests by mapping items to outcomes in the syllabuses.

The CSMT also collected information on a number of student background variables, including variable measuring students' attitudes to learning, schooling and the community. This data set provides our base data against which we will measure learning improvement.

A new CSMT is being developed this year and will provide the first snapshot of progress. It is proposed that the items will be released in October after the testing has been completed. Inspectors will then use the items to assist teachers across the country test their students, mark the items and then compare their student's results with the results from the national sample. Through SLIP individual schools will try to improve the performance of their schools and the students learning outcomes.

CONCLUSION

PNG continues in its endeavour to sustain the institutions with in partnership with all our valued stakeholders to improve educational standards where students learning outcomes are constantly occurring as a key factor in the growth and development of our nation.

Nevertheless, planning, implementation and monitoring educational goals and outcome became a serious problem. This was due to the lack of manpower, cultural diversity, difficult terrain, lack of basic resources and more importantly the shift from traditional cultural way of life to a more western life style. Nevertheless we are trying to run school systems that can survive on their own (Caldwell, 2006) with the SLIP. The rationale behind SLIP is supporting the implementation of the NEP, Provincial Education Plans (PEP) and District Education Plans (DEP) at the school level for the enhancement of (improve) students learning (Marzano, 2007) using wisely the scarce resource available within the school community and to effect whole school improvement.

Finally, SLIP transformation is rapidly being understood and adopted by all levels of community, school and leadership in the education sector as being the critical school planning, management, quality and engagement tool. This is already translated in outcomes such as improved retention, improved behaviour management, accountability and local ownership. In other words, individual schools are able to attest to their value and impact in improving learning and are a significant contributor to the UBE that is cost effective and that is being delivered in a geographically hostile environment.

REFERENCES

Amstrong, T. (2006). *The Best Schools*. Virginia: ASCD Books

Caldwell, B. J. (2006). *Re Imagining Educational Leadership*. Australia: ACER Print

Department of Education (2006). *Curriculum Standards Monitoring Test (CSMT) Study Report*. Measurement Services Unit, Department of Education: Port Moresby.

Department of Education. (October 2004). *National Ratings Conference Handbook 2004*. Department of Education: Port Moresby.

Department of Education. (February 2004). *School Certificate (Grade 10) Examinations Report 2003*. Measurement Services Unit, Department of Education: Port Moresby.

Department of Education (June 2004). *First Annual Program Plan – PNG Education Capacity Building Program*. Department of Education: Port Moresby.

Department of Education. (2003). *2003 National Ratings Conference – Community/ Primary Schools Conference Reports*. Primary Inspections, IGD - Department of Education: Port Moresby.

Department of Education. (2006). *Regional Ratings Conference – Secondary Inspection results*. Secondary Inspections, IGD - Department of Education: Port Moresby.

Department of Education. (Jan 2007). *Secretary's Circular 2007:1 School Learning Improvement Plans*. Department of Education: Port Moresby.

Department of Education. (April 1995). *Inspections Review Committee Report*. - Review Committee chaired by the late Sir Alkan Tololo KBE. Department of Education: Port Moresby.

Department of Education. (May 2005). *The Review of the Elementary, Primary and Secondary Inspectorate*. Department of Education: Port Moresby.

- Department of Education. (June 2002). *Secretary's Circular 35 / 2002 – Policy on Carrying out Elementary Inspections and Regional Ratings Conference for Elementary Schools*. Department of Education: Port Moresby.
- Department of Education. (May 2002). *Secretary's Circular 32 / 2002 – Trial of School Based Supervision and Management Reform*. Department of Education: Port Moresby.
- Department of Education, (June 2005). *Review of Organisational Capacity*. Department of Education: Port Moresby.
- Department of Education. (2004). *The National Education Plan 2005-2014*. Department of Education: Port Moresby.
- Department of Education. (2005) *National HIV/AIDS Policy*. Department of Education: Port Moresby
- Department of Education. (2006) *National Gender Policy*. Department of Education: Port Moresby
- Department of Education (2007). *The State of Education*. Department of Education: Port Moresby
- Department of Education, (2007). *National Teachers In service Plan*. Department of Education: Port Moresby.
- Education Gazette. (October 2002). *Performance Based Duty Statements, Volume No 32, Issue numbers: 27A, 27B, 27C, 27D, 27E, 27F*. Department of Education and Teaching Service Commission: Port Moresby.
- Grant, Dr Bill, (November 1997). *Reform Implementation Adviser Consultancy report - The Inspectorate*. PNG Department of Education: Port Moresby.
- Independent State of Papua New Guinea. (1995). *Teaching Service Act 1998 (Consolidated to No. 20 of 1995)*. Official copy of the Act printed by Department of Education: Port Moresby.
- Independent State of Papua New Guinea. (1995). *Public Services (Management) Act 1995 (Consolidated to No. 24 of 1998)*. Official copy of the Act printed by Department of Education: Port Moresby.
- Independent State of Papua New Guinea. (1995). *Education Act 1983 (Consolidated to No. 13 of 1995)*.). Official copy of the Act printed by Department of Education: Port Moresby.
- Katzenbach, J. and Smith, D. (1993). *The Wisdom of Teams*. New York: Harper Business.
- Kolant P. & Pettit. J. (2003). *Effective School Management, Study Guide Unit 1 – Collegial Curriculum Leadership Program*. PNG Department of Education & Australian Government, AusAID: Port Moresby.
- MacBeath, J. (2006). *School Inspection and Self evaluation*. London: Routledge.
- Marzano, R. J. (2007). *The Art of Science of Teaching*. Virginia: ASCD Books.
- Pollock, J. E. (2007). *Improving Students Learning- One Teacher At A Time*. Virginia: ASCD Books.

Reeves, D. B. (2006). *The Learning Leader – How to Focus School Improvement For Better Results*. Virginia: ASCD Books.

Schmoker, (1996). *Results: The key to continuous school improvement*. ASCD: Alexandria, Virginia.