

PEPE team revisits surveyed provinces to share preliminary findings

By Colin Wiltshire
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When presenting findings on service delivery performance in PNG, it is critical to engage those responsible for bringing about practical change. Provincial and district officials can make important differences to improving the effectiveness and quality of health and education services on the ground. For this reason, the PEPE project team at NRI and ANU went back to surveyed provinces to present preliminary findings from our expenditure tracking and facility health and education surveys conducted late last year. Over the last three weeks, we managed to visit seven of the eight provinces surveyed (East New Britain, West New Britain, Morobe, Eastern Highlands, Enga, Gulf and NCD).

The PEPE project team presented our findings to Provincial Administrators (Secretary level), their Deputies and Sector Managers in Education, Health, Budget and Planning as well as District Administrators. Most provinces allocated two hours for our presentations but subsequent discussions and interest saw these sessions continue for up to four hours on some occasions. We verified much of the data with the help of the provinces who also assisted us to interpret some of the results, and worked through with us the implications of the findings.

Engaging with provincial and district level officials is essential for improving education and health services in PNG. Most provinces and districts have experienced large increases in recurrent and development funding for improving service delivery in their respective provinces and have a high degree of autonomy in prioritising and deciding how these funds are spent and monitored. But they are normally starved of basic data to gauge effectiveness, and to base decision-making on. The sort of data we collected was at a very practical level: things like the status of teacher and health worker housing, the conditions of classrooms and clinic rooms and whether there are adequate supplies of textbooks for students and drugs for patients visiting health centres and aid posts.

Feedback from the provinces on the utility of systematically collecting this sort of data was extremely positive. It is early days, but this engagement may be a practical way of supporting provinces to take ownership of their service delivery challenges and identifying opportunities for raising the level and quality of service provision.

Preliminary survey findings will be publically presented for the first time at our next budget

forum on Thursday, 19th September at PNG's National Research Institute. A similar NRI/World Bank survey was conducted in 2002. We'll be asking the question of whether PNG has experienced a 'lost decade' in terms of translating increased public expenditures into better health and education services.

The budget forum is open to the public and all are most welcome to attend. Program details are available [here](#). Contact Andrew Mako: amako@nri.org.pg or Eunice Kivan: ekivan@nri.org.pg or 326 0300/0061 ext.331 to register.

Presentations, podcasts and video clips from the forum will be posted on-line shortly after the event.

About the author/s

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Colin Wiltshire is a Research Fellow at the Department of Pacific Affairs at the Australian National University. He conducts research on political economy aspects of development in Melanesia. Prior to completing his PhD on the politics of service delivery in PNG, he worked at AusAID where he served in Timor-Leste and PNG.

Link: <https://devpolicy.org/pepe-team-revisits-surveyed-provinces-to-share-preliminary-findings-20130916-1/>

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