Analysis

Ringing the church bell

The role of churches in governance and public performance in Papua New Guinea

Volker Hauck, Angela Mandie-Filer and Joe Bolger

A case study prepared for the project 'Capacity, Change and Performance'

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Study of Capacity, Change and Performance

Notes on the methodology

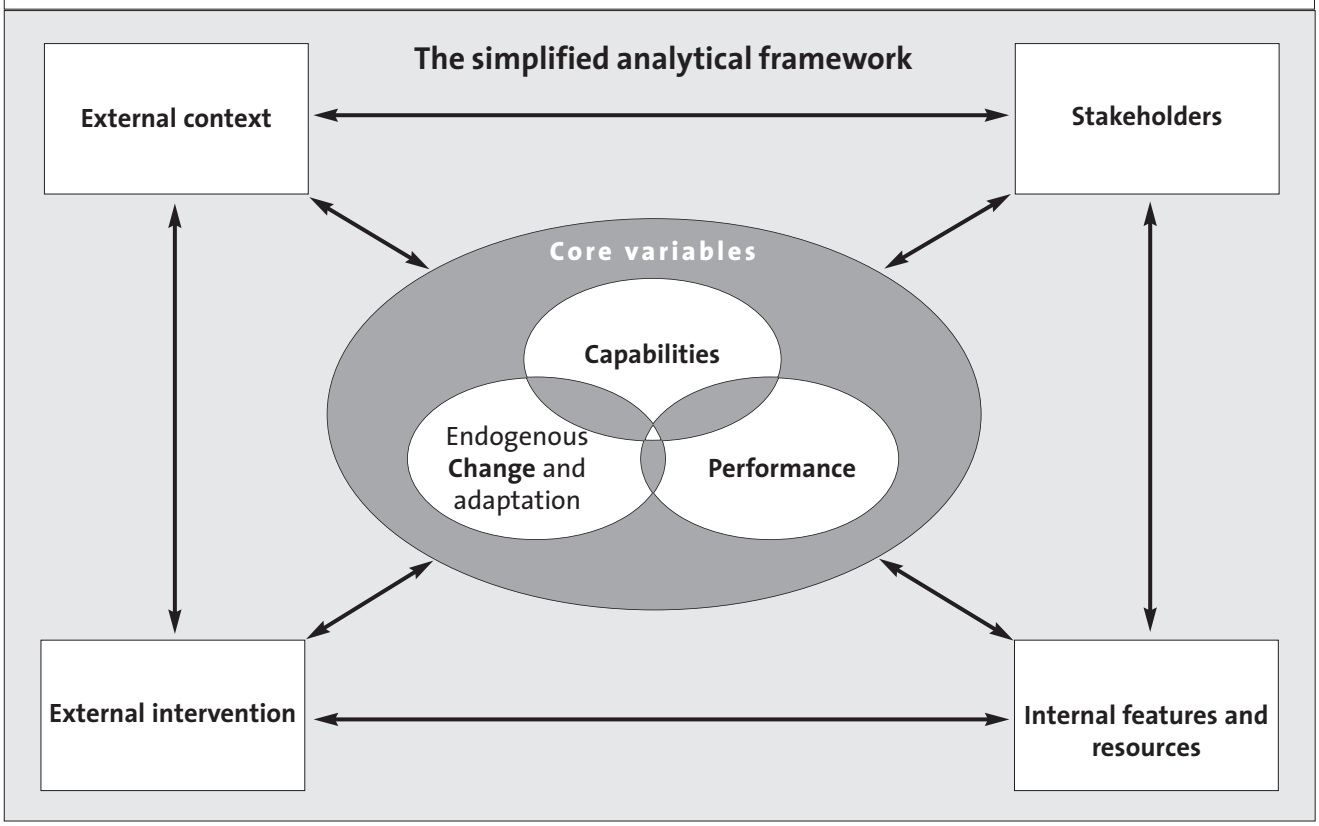
The lack of capacity in low-income countries is one of the main constraints to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Even practitioners confess to having only a limited understanding of how capacity actually develops. In 2002, the chair of Govnet, the Network on Governance and Capacity Development of the OECD, asked the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) in Maastricht, the Netherlands to undertake a study of how organisations and systems, mainly in developing countries, have succeeded in building their capacity and improving performance. The resulting study focuses on the endogenous process of capacity development - the process of change from the perspective of those undergoing the change. The study examines the factors that encourage it, how it differs from one context to another, and why efforts to develop capacity have been more successful in some contexts than in others.

The study consists of about 20 field cases carried out according to a methodological framework with seven components, as follows:

- **Capabilities***: How do the capabilities of a group, organisation or network feed into organisational capacity?*
- **Endogenous change and adaptation***: How do processes of change take place within an organisation or system?*
- **Performance***: What has the organisation or system accomplished or is it now able to deliver? The focus here is on assessing the effectiveness of the process of capacity development rather than on impact, which will be apparent only in the long term.*
- **External context***: How has the external context - the historical, cultural, political and institutional environment, and the constraints and opportunities they create - influenced the capacity and performance of the organisation or system?*
- **Stakeholders***: What has been the influence of stakeholders such as beneficiaries, suppliers and supporters, and their different interests, expectations, modes of behaviour, resources, interrelationships and intensity of involvement?*
- **External interventions***: How have outsiders influenced the process of change?*
- **Internal features and key resources***: What are the patterns of internal features such as formal and informal roles, structures, resources, culture, strategies and values, and what influence have they had at both the organisational and multi-organisational levels?*

The outputs of the study will include about 20 case study reports, an annotated review of the literature, a set of assessment tools, and various thematic papers to stimulate new thinking and practices about capacity development. The synthesis report summarising the results of the case studies will be published in 2005.

The results of the study, interim reports and an elaborated methodology can be consulted at www.capacity.org or www.ecdpm.org. For further information, please contact Ms Heather Baser (hb@ecdpm.org).



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The European Centre for Development Policy Management
Onze Lieve Vrouweplein 21
NL-6211 HE Maastricht, The Netherlands
Tel +31 (0)43 350 29 00
Fax +31 (0)43 350 29 02
info@ecdpm.org **www.ecdpm.org**

Australian Agency for International Development
62 Northbourne Avenue
Canberra ACT 2601
Australia
Tel +61 2 6206 4000
Fax..+61 2 6206 4880
infoausaid@ausaid.gov.au **www.ausaid.gov.au/**

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Bernadette advised the team on the substantive focus of the two studies and AusAID's interest in sponsoring this research in the context of the broader ECDPM study on *Capacity, Change and Performance*. Donna-Jean Nicholson, of AusAID's Policy and Multilateral Branch, ably guided us through the final stages of this process.

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A final word of thanks goes to the ECDPM core team for the wider study on Capacity, Change and Performance, especially Heather Baser, ECDPM Programme Coordinator, and ECDPM Associates Peter Morgan and Tony Land who provided stimulating comments and reflections prior to and during the writing of this report.

While this study contains many inputs from various stakeholders and the study team, sole responsibility for the interpretation of data and the analysis rests with the authors.

Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADRA	Adventist Development and Relief Agency
ANGO	Australian non-governmental organisation
ANU	Australian National University
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
CCAC	Community Coalition against Corruption
CEC	Churches Education Council
CMC	Churches Medical Council
CPP	Church Partnership Programme
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DWU	Divine Word University
ECDPM	European Centre for Development Policy Management
GDP	gross domestic product
HSSP	Health Sector Support Programme
IDS	Institute of Development Studies (UK)
MP	Member of Parliament
NDoE	National Department of Education
NDoH	National Department of Health
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NSA	non-state actors
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PNGCC	Papua New Guinea Council of Churches
SDA	Seventh Day Adventists
SWAp	sector-wide approach
TA	technical assistance
UCOA	Uniting Church Overseas Aid
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UPNG	University of Papua New Guinea

Summary

This case study examines the role of the Christian churches as institutional actors within Papua New Guinea's governance and service delivery landscape. The research for this case, and the parallel study, *PNG's Health Sector: A Review of Capacity, Change and Performance Issues* (Bolger et al., 2005), were generously financed by the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) and are part of a wider study on *Capacity, Change and Performance* being coordinated by the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) under the aegis of the Govnet, the working group on governance and capacity development of the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC).

The community of Christian churches in Papua New Guinea (PNG) is very diverse, ranging from mainstream churches, such as the Catholic, Lutheran and United Churches, to others with smaller congregations, such as the Baptists and Anglicans. The Seventh Day Adventists form an important church community in PNG, and there has been an increase in the number of Pentecostal and Evangelical churches across the country. In total, PNG has approximately 150 different missions, sects and free churches. These church groups entered PNG in several waves since the late 19th century, and an estimated 99% of the population now identify themselves as Christians. While PNG has had relatively long contact with various church groups, some remote communities had no contact with the 'outside world' as late as the 1950s.

There is a widespread recognition that the churches play a very important role in PNG society. Collectively, they provide about half of the country's health services and - in partnership with government - co-manage some 40% of the primary and secondary education facilities. Churches also run two of the country's six universities and are responsible for training many of the country's teachers and health workers. A number of church groups are also involved in peace and reconciliation activities in areas experiencing tribal or other types of conflict, while others speak out on the governance situation and the lack of basic government services in parts of the country. Such problems have worsened in recent years, leading the government to declare restoration of 'good governance' as one of its key priorities.

The churches are seen as having made a significant contribution to development and modernisation, and the introduction of values and morals which are now recognised in the country's Constitution. They have deep roots in PNG's diverse communities and can draw upon considerable social capital to influence change processes at various levels. Many of the country's leaders have been trained in church institutions and continue to play a prominent role in shaping PNG society. However, there are some who believe that religious organisations have also contributed to the decline of PNG's traditional cultural practices and values.

PNG's Christian churches contribute to governance and public performance in various areas:

- *public policy and decision making:* e.g. supporting electoral processes, participating in and liaising with political commissions and councils, promoting transparency and information sharing through the media, public workshops/conferences, or speaking out on governance issues;
- *social justice and the rule of law:* through involvement in organisations such as the Community Coalition against Corruption or through consultations between church leaders and government officials on public affairs;
- *supporting enhanced public performance in the health and education sectors:* working through the Churches Medical Council and the Churches Education Council; and
- *facilitating and supporting reconciliation and peace building:* e.g. in response to tribal disputes and the Bougainville crisis in the 1990s.

This report observes that some of the church activities in PNG are well structured and incorporated into change strategies of individual organisations or networks. However, there are also many contributions to improved governance that have emerged out of individual initiatives of church leaders, church-based NGO representatives and academics, which are not as well coordinated, and are often *ad hoc* or responsive. On this question, the report concludes that there are no broad, endogenous church-based strategies aimed specifically at enhancing or improving governance or public performance in PNG.

To discuss the churches' capabilities, the report draws upon a conceptual model by Woolcock (1999) dealing

with 'networks' and 'social capital' at the community level. The model highlights four specific capabilities: bonding, bridging, linking and the use of space. These are seen as cross-cutting, and aspects of each one are linked to the various areas of governance and public performance noted above. It is suggested that while these capabilities have emerged on a relatively *ad hoc* or pragmatic basis in recent decades - less so in the case of the Catholic Church, given its more extensive involvement in governance and public sector matters - the increasing threat posed by poor governance in PNG has provided a motivation for more focused engagement. In turn, this has prompted churches to increase inter-church exchanges and cooperation, and to give more serious consideration to their own internal management and governance.

In terms of underlying factors explaining performance, the report suggests that the authority and legitimacy of churches, their national networks with other institutions, international links, individual skills and capacities are particularly pertinent.

Furthermore, the interplay of the four capabilities described above, supported by incremental, locally based change processes and external support, have led to a discernible 'capacity' of the church community in PNG, which is influenced or triggered by six factors: leadership; religious interpretations and orientation (values); a shared conceptual base and faith-based mandate; appropriate communication channels; legitimacy through resilience, knowledge and service delivery; and the important role of the churches' intermediary structures and organisations.

The report concludes that given the historical and ongoing involvement of the churches in so many spheres it is difficult to imagine PNG society without them. Despite their broad presence and strengths though, there is a risk of overestimating their potential to play a greater role in supporting improved governance and public performance in the country. The authors conclude that their future engagement on such matters should be considered objectively in light of various considerations, including the diversity of the church community, the breadth of their current mandates, their absorptive capacity, and the churches' own internal management and governance capabilities.

1 Introduction

1.1 About this study

This case describes the role of churches as an institutional actor within the governance landscape in Papua New Guinea (PNG). It discusses the existing capabilities within the church community to engage in advocacy and policy-related work, and highlights the existing capabilities which are in place for it to continue functioning as a partner of government in the delivery of social services. The overarching objective is to look at the interplay between endogenous change processes and the development of capabilities within the churches and to see how this has translated into the performance of various church-based institutions and the capacity of the church sector as a whole. To that end, the case looks at the factors underpinning the participation of church organisations in strengthening 'governance' in PNG, and how they have contributed to social service delivery throughout the country.

In relation to the latter, the study considers, to the extent possible, the 'management capacity' of churches in order to understand why and how the churches have been relatively successful in the delivery of services. Finally, it discusses the challenges and opportunities facing the churches in PNG in the current context. The broader church community and its networks are taken as the 'unit of analysis', but with a particular focus on those church groups which are active in different areas of 'governance', including the enhancement of public performance in health and education. The issue of 'governance' is discussed in more detail in section 1.2.

This case study was undertaken in parallel with a study on *PNG's Health Sector: A Review of Capacity, Change and Performance Issues* (Bolger et al., 2005), which examines the experience of this sector in recent years from a capacity development perspective. Both of these studies were generously financed by the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) and are intended to contribute to international policy dialogue on capacity development, drawing specifically on lessons learned from AusAID-funded programmes. The two studies also contribute to a wider study on *Capacity, Change and Performance* that is being coordinated by the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) under the aegis of the Govnet, the working group on governance and capacity development, of the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC). The wider study, grounded in some 18 case studies from across the globe, seeks to provide insights into how external partner organisations can support endogenous capacity development processes. Through experiences from the individual cases, the wider study also seeks to facilitate a better understanding of the meaning of capacity, the complex relationship between capacity and performance improvement, and the processes through which capacity is developed.

AusAID also welcomed this initiative as a contribution to an internal reflection process that could feed into deliberations on programming in PNG in the areas of civil society and health. Both topics, 'health' and 'the churches', were suggested by AusAID. The research team has already produced two short reports containing preliminary observations and issues arising in relation to AusAID's support for health sector reforms and the churches in PNG.

While this case study reviews the contributions of the churches to governance and service delivery in PNG, it is important to note that it is not an evaluation and does not seek to pass judgement on any of the organisations or networks referred to in this report. This initiative was also undertaken, to the extent possible, from the perspective of various PNG stakeholders, including church leaders, members of church organisations, government officials and civil society leaders. As such, the report attempts to tell 'the capacity development story' in PNG from an insider's perspective, and envisages contributing to the learning and reflection of internal and external church actors about their role in shaping governance and enhancing service delivery (for the methodology of the study, see Annex 3).

Notes

1 This section draws on the work of the Institute on Governance (www.iog.ca) and the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) programme on governance and civil society (www.ids.ac.uk/ids/civsoc/)

1.2 Framing governance

Before looking at the contribution of churches to governance[1] in PNG, including their role in enhancing service delivery, we first discuss the term governance. Although there is no agreed definition of the term, it is widely used in relation to the spheres of government and non-governmental organisations, as well as individual organisations and looser associations. For purposes of this study, governance is defined as: '... how governments and other social organisations interact, how they relate to citizens, and how decisions are taken in a complex world. Thus governance is a process whereby societies or organisations make their important decisions, determine whom they involve in the process and how they render account' (Graham *et al.*, 2003).

This 'process of governance' can work through *formal elements*, such as constitutions, bylaws, policies, etc., as well as through *informal traditions,* accepted practices, or unwritten codes of conduct. It is not synonymous with government and state institutions.

In this report churches in PNG are understood to be organised entities of civil society. The report identifies how churches and the state relate to one another, how this relationship changes, and how it contributes to change, capacity development and improved governance and public performance. Civil society organisations can make various *types of contributions* to good or improved governance[2]. These might include advocacy, but can also relate to the provision of services for which the state has primary responsibility.

We distinguish the following five areas in which civil society organisations contribute to improved governance:

1. *Public policy and decision making:* by mobilising their constituencies to engage or participate in politics and public affairs, such as encouraging them to participate in electoral processes, or to become involved in policy dialogue, etc.
2. *Transparency and information sharing:* by providing information themselves, or via the media, or engaging in activities such as public hearings, investigations, etc., through which information can emerge;
3. *Social justice and the rule of law:* by acting as a 'watchdog' of the state, or engaging in a broad range of advocacy activities, from monitoring theapplication of existing laws and procedures, to human rights activities, includingproviding assistance for individuals involved in legal processes.
4. *Enhancing public performance:* by playing a role in the provision of social services, and thereby helping to strengthen public performance, through involvement in policy design, financing or the delivery of services. Successful involvement in public service provision also requires sound *internal governance* (including strategy development and management) of civil society organisations.[3]
5. *Reconciliation and peace building:* by engaging in areas of a country where there is a need for peace building and where the state has no or limited presence and access. These may be in areas in conflict, or in regions abandoned by the state, where civil society organisations often take up a mediating, bridging or facilitating role.

PNG churches engage in a variety of activities that can be grouped within this framework. The framework will help to clarify the extent to which churches are involved in different types of development policy and governance processes, and the capabilities that are required to perform effectively. The report relies on this framework in sections 5 to 7.

1.3 Structure of this report

Following this introduction, sections 2-4 describe the external context in which PNG churches presently function, the composition of the church community and its internal features, the stakeholders, and external contacts and networks. Section 5 highlights the endogenous change processes that the churches rely upon to shape governance and enhance performance in the social sectors in general, and specifically in the health sector. These are discussed in relation to the five *areas of governance* presented above. Section 6 reflects on the emergence of particular capabilities among churches in PNG.[4] Section 7, entitled 'ringing the bell', discusses the performance of PNG churches in terms of their contributions to shaping governance and enhancing state performance through service delivery in the social sectors.[5] Finally, section 8 highlights some critical issues that the churches have identified and have started to address in order to enhance their performance.

Notes

2 Good or improved governance is understood here to include transparency, effectiveness, openness, responsiveness, accountability, the rule of law, etc., all of which aim to maximise the common or public good.

3 In our analysis of church performance, this aspect is dealt with as an integral part of 'enhancing state performance'.

4 The term 'capacity' is used here to refer to the ability of the organisation or system as a whole to perform. As such, it is not equated with any subsidiary element such as a particular 'capability'. That term refers to a specific ability of the organisation to do something in particular such as to facilitate or to learn or to manage projects. Finally, 'performance' is used to mean accomplishment or execution or delivery (Morgan, 2003b). For a glossary of terms used in this report, see Annex 2.

5 The title of this report refers to the practice of churches in many countries to use the church bell to alert their congregations to important social events such as public meetings, to announce changes in government, or to warn of emergencies such as fires, natural disasters or war.

2 The external context in which PNG churches operate

2.1 Country background

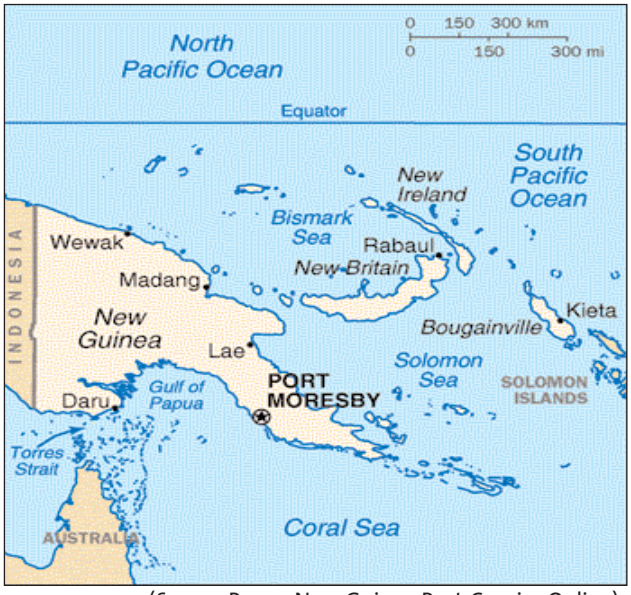
Papua New Guinea is one of the world's most diverse countries - geographically, biologically, linguistically as well as culturally[6] Located to the north of Australia, PNG is made up of the eastern part of the island of New Guinea (the Indonesian province of Irian Jaya occupies the western half) and a series of islands to the north and east - Manus, New Britain, New Ireland and Bougainville (see figure 1). Nearly 85% of the main island is covered with tropical rain forest and vast areas of wetlands, which are home to around 6% of the world's flora and fauna. The central part of the main island, known as the Highlands, rises into a wide ridge of mountains, up to 4500 metres high, a territory that is, in parts, so densely forested and topographically forbidding that some indigenous groups remained isolated for millennia, each shaping its own culture, language and rules.

While today English is the main medium of government communication (especially at the national level and for educational instruction), there are three official languages - Pidgin, English and Motu. There are also more than 700 distinctly different languages and over 1000 dialects spoken by many tribes, sub-tribes, clans, sub-clans and family groupings. The country has approximately 5.3 million people, 52% of whom are female. The population has grown rapidly since independence in 1975 at an average annual rate of 2.5%. Half of the population is under 19 years of age, and over 85% live in isolated rural areas with limited or sometimes no access to basic services and income-generating opportunities. The average life expectancy is 54 years and adult literacy is estimated to be 52%.

The eastern part of New Guinea was first visited by Portuguese and Spanish explorers in the 16th century. A permanent European presence followed in the 1880s, when missionaries and traders began to settle in accessible coastal areas. In 1884, Germany declared a protectorate over the northeastern part of New Guinea and several nearby island groups, and Britain declared the southern coast (the area called Papua) and adjacent islands a protectorate. In 1902, British New Guinea was placed under the authority of the Commonwealth of Australia; the formal Australian administration of the Territory of Papua started in 1906. During World War I, Australian troops entered German New Guinea and retained control under a League of Nations mandate. The Highlands region, thought by outsiders to be too hostile for habitation, was only 'explored' as of the late 1920s by prospectors searching for gold. Astonishingly, they found over one million people living in fertile mountain valleys whose cultural traditions had remained virtually unchanged for thousands of years. During World War II, PNG was invaded by Japanese forces and, after being liberated by the Australians in 1945, it became a United Nations trusteeship, administered by Australia. PNG gained limited home rule in 1951, became self-governing in 1973 and achieved complete independence in 1975.

From a geo-political perspective, PNG is the geographic interface between the Australian continent and Indonesia, the most populous Muslim country in the world, and has experienced increased militant threats and terrorist activities in recent years. PNG is endowed with rich renewable and non-renewable resources, and provides a buffer between the two countries whose relations have been strained at times.[7]

Figure 1. Map of Papua New Guinea



(*Source*: Papua New Guinea Post-Courier Online).

Notes

6 Economic and other data in this section have been compiled from various sources, including PNG's National Statistics Office, the Australian government (Foreign Affairs and Trade) and the CIA World Factbook.

7 The East Timor crisis showed that internal conflict in Indonesia could have a negative effect on the relationship between the two countries.

Subsistence and small cash crop farming are the main modes of economic activity and means of sustaining the majority of the people. However, PNG also relies substantially on exports of non-renewable resources (copper, nickel, gold, silver, natural gas) as well as fish, timber, coffee, copra, palm oil, cocoa, tea, coconuts and vanilla for foreign exchange and government revenues. PNG's economy averaged real annual GDP growth of 3.4% between 1978 and 1998, led by growth in the mining and petroleum sectors. However, the economy suffered a setback during the financial crisis of the late 1990s, including three successive years of contraction, although the economy grew by 1.4% in 2003, due largely to higher international commodity prices. It is expected that the mining sector will decline over the next decade as a result of the scheduled closure of a number of mines. PNG's per capita GDP in 2003 was around US$647.[8]

While the abundance of resources provides PNG with great potential for economic diversification, growth and self-reliance, it has not resulted in economic well-being for the majority of the people. In fact, the level of poverty in PNG, as measured by social indicators, has increased faster than in neighbouring countries in recent years. According to the UNDP Human Development Index, PNG today ranks 133 out of 175 countries. High levels of international aid, approximately US$100 per capita per year, help to sustain public services, but broad-based, sustainable development remains elusive.

2.2 Political situation and governance in PNG

PNG has a parliamentary democracy based on the Westminster model.[9] According to the 1975 Constitution, executive power rests with the national executive council (cabinet), which is headed by a prime minister. The head of state is Queen Elizabeth II, represented by a governor general who is normally elected by the parliament. The country has a single-chamber national parliament and provincial assemblies in each of the 19 provinces,[10] which are made up of national politicians and leaders of local governments. The parliament - consisting of 109 members elected for a five-year period - has traditionally been made up of a relatively large number of parties and numerous independents.[11]

Political involvement in most rural areas is limited for various reasons. The political parties do not have a significant rural base, in part because of their limited organisation outside urban centres. Another reason is that government is perceived as very distant in remote areas of the country as it is neither seen nor felt.

While PNG has had regular elections since independence, the state is becoming increasingly weak with institutions of governance often described as politicised, corrupt and/or dominated by personalities. Observers of the political scene talk of PNG as a country in the midst of a constitutional crisis. According to Okole (2002) and Reilly (2001: 61), the roots of the problem lie in the way the country's democratic institutions operate. Standish (2002: 2) noted that 'Representative democracy in PNG has increasingly come to be characterised by a diffuse and fragmented party system, high candidacy rates, very low support levels for some successful candidates, vote splitting, low party identification on the part of the electorate, high turnover of politicians from one election to the next, frequent "party-hopping" on the part of parliamentarians and, as a consequence, weak and unstable executive government'. As a consequence, a very limited 'national consciousness' has emerged in PNG, and there is limited debate on national issues, such as how to strengthen central institutions or make government more accountable to the people. This has left the doors open for high levels of corruption, nepotism and mismanagement of government resources, all of which contribute to the worsening capacity situation, the relatively poor performance of the state and its services, and the deteriorating national economy.

Despite various attempts at institutional reform prior to and since independence, no solution has yet been found to the problem of how to deal with clan-based politics, which is seen as an underlying cause of many of the country's governance problems. In a rapidly changing and modernising society, which for many contributes to a sense of insecurity and cultural dislocation, the clan remains the primary unit for mobilising support, for dealing with customary land rights, hereditary wealth, mobilising labour, and generating resources for survival and business development.

By the 1980s, national members of parliament (MPs) had come to resent provincial politicians' control of local development funds, which led to the creation of new 'development funds' to be controlled by national MPs. These funds grew from a modest Kina 10,000 per

Notes

8 Exchange rates as of November 2004: US$1 = 0.76 = AU$ 1.27 = Kina (PGK) 3.05.

9 For a discussion on state and society in PNG from independence to 2000, see May (2004).

10 PNG has 19 provinces, plus the national capital district.

11 This has changed with the introduction of the Integrity of Political Parties Bill prior to the 2002 national election, as a result of which the number of independent candidates has decreased.

annum in 1984 for each MP (about US$4500 at the time) to Kina 1.5 million (US$500,000) per annum by 2004, so that huge state funds are now in the hands of (often) inexperienced leaders who fre_quently allocate those funds on the basis of localised or personal interests rather than according to national development priorities. Power shifted further from elected provincial assemblies to MPs in the mid-1990s as provincial elections were done away with and provincial assembly members were drawn from the ranks of national MPs and local government representatives, which gave the national MPs additional discretion for the distribution of funds (Standish, 2002: 3-4).

Not surprisingly, politics has become an important part of the economic landscape in many parts of the country, as democratic elections have become a primary means of accessing state finances (Windybank and Manning, 2003). Almost 3000 candidates competed for the 109 seats in parliament in the 2002 elections, which were described as the worst ever held in PNG (Gibbs, 2004). They were accompanied by unprecedented levels of violence, kidnappings, intimidation and ballot rigging, as well as death and destruction. In some parts of the country (the Southern Highlands, in particular) voting could not be completed in time. Today, some 30% of PNG is considered to be in a 'state of anarchy' (Gibbs, 2004: 8), and the situation has the potential to deteriorate rapidly.

Despite this fairly negative picture, there have been some positive recent developments. A major reform, the *Integrity of Political Parties and Candidates Law,* was passed in 2001 to strengthen political stability. The new law prevents a new government being subject to a vote of no confidence during its first 18 months in office, and places restrictions on parliamentarians who might otherwise switch parties for opportunistic reasons. Another law which will come into effect before the next parliamentary elections in 2007 will do away with the 'first past the post' voting system in favour of a limited preferential voting system (candidates with the lowest votes will be successively eliminated from the count, until one has a majority of the remaining votes).[12] In addition, the government has made substantial efforts to support public sector reform over the long term (GoPNG, 2003), but the success of these largely foreign-funded initiatives will depend on the functioning of the overall PNG governance structure, which is beyond the influence of public sector reform strategies and programmes. Other positive elements in the realm of PNG's governance include the existence of a strong ombudsman system, free trade unions, an independent judiciary and the guarantee of basic civil and political liberties in the Constitution. A free and open press can speak out against mismanagement and corruption (see box 1) and civil society organisations are able to provide some checks and balances within the system.

Civil society organisations in PNG are diverse, including churches, business associations, labour unions, women's and youth organisations, policy institutes, NGOs, community-based organisations, and landowner groups. Many, however, are based in and around the cities, rely on external support and are so far poorly rooted in PNG society. More recently, this situation has started to change, with a steady increase in the number of community-based NGOs. The big church organisations are an exception and are the only actors in civil society that enjoy legitimacy and support from broad segments of the population, which enables them to make a difference in the areas of governance and public policy performance. Since about half of the country's health services and a substantial number of schools are operated by, or with the assistance of the churches, the government recognises churches as important civil society actors.

Box 1: Governance in Papua New Guinea today

Some headlines from *The Weekend National*, 30 April to 2 May 2004:

'Tribunal dismisses MP Nali from office' - The allegations against the leader related to the manner in which he dealt with public money ...

'Peace attempts in Madang fail' - Attempts to foster reconciliation between politicians and public servants in Madang (province) have failed.

'Soten suspended' - Trade and Industry secretary Jonathan Soten has been suspended following allegations of misconduct, mismanagement, maladministration and incompetence.

'Seminary accused of misadministration' - Four students, who were terminated by the Seminary Council for leading a student boycott, have alleged rampant corruption in the Martin Luther Seminary administration.

'Breakdown in law and order in Western Highlands province' - During a meeting hosted by the National Doctors' Association, it was revealed that many specialist doctors were reluctant to take up their postings because of insecurity prevailing.

Notes

12 Some political observers remain sceptical about the effects of this 'constitutional engineering', but agree that something has to be done to reduce political instability (Reilly, 2002; Standish 2002; Lea, 2004; Okole, 2004). For a political analysis, see Windybank and Manning (2003).

Despite this overall positive assessment, churches are not immune to the declining tendencies observed more broadly in PNG society. For example, many of those interviewed for this study highlighted that governance and management capacities in the church organisations need to improve significantly to enable them to respond to increasing needs, and to meet the accountability requirements of the government and other development partners, including donors.

3 The PNG church community and its networks

3.1 History

Some 130 years ago, the first missionaries arrived in the coastal areas of contemporary PNG. They came as part of the expansion of the British Empire on the southern shores of the main island, and with German rule in the northeast. In the context of French colonial activities in the Pacific, there had been attempts to bring Catholicism to the country as early as 1845, but these failed due to logistical problems and the hostility of local tribes. It was only after a second attempt in the 1890s that French missionaries were able to establish a presence through permanent missions. This first missionary wave, which lasted into the early years of the 20th century, thus had a British-Anglican and Methodist, a German-Lutheran and a French-Catholic character (see figure 2 and box 2).

During the second wave, which terminated with the end of World War II, many conservative evangelical and fundamental Christian missions penetrated, along with the established churches, the more remote parts of the country, along with the established churches,. The Highlands region, with more than one million 'pagans' or 'lost souls' (as they were perceived in those days), was explored by Australians and missionaries only in the late 1920s, and became a fierce battleground for different denominations competing for religious followers.[13] The third wave, after 1945, brought many Pentecostal churches to the then UN trusteeship under Australian control.

The stronger presence of Evangelical-Lutherans in the east, and of Anglicans, Baptists and United in the south, can be traced back to colonial times. Catholicism spread throughout PNG between the 1920s and 1950s, facilitated by a hierarchical church structure and support from Europe.[14] New or smaller church communities, such as the Seventh Day Adventists (SDA) or some Pentecostal groups, took advantage of the inaccessibility of the country, and the many 'blank areas' to be explored, and from the traditional regular splitting or breakdown of communities due to conflicts or tribal disputes. The new fragments of these communities then took on new beliefs and helped to nestle the newly arriving church groups within regions that had already been converted by the main churches, such as the Catholics, the Anglicans or the Lutherans. Information about the economic base of earlier missions and today's churches is scarce, but it is known that some missions purchased or acquired customary land and set up plantations. Some of these covered huge areas of land, such as in the Gazelle peninsula in East New Britain.[15] Today, PNG is a Christian nation; the preamble to its Constitution pledges 'to guard and pass on to those who come after us our noble traditions and the Christian principles that are ours now.'

Table 1. Religious communities in PNG (percentage of the population)

Roman Catholic	29%	Baptist	3%
Evangelical Lutheran	20%	Anglican	3%
United Church	12%	Salvation Army	< 1%
Seventh Day Adventists	10%	Other Christians	9%
Pentecostals	8%		
Evangelical Alliance	5%	Other religions	1%

Source: PNG Census (2000)

Notes

13 Tensions among church communities remained for a long time. A Lutheran publication, for example, characterised the Seventh Day Adventists as trying to increase the number of followers through polemics against Lutherans and Catholics because they do not respect God's law, the Sabbath (Missionswerk, 1995: 32). But Wilkinson declared 'that one of the SDA-principles is not to enter in the region of an existing mission, with the exception of being specifically invited by the people of this region' (R.K. Wilkinson, *Die Kirche der Siebenten-Tags-Adventisten,* cited in Wagner *et al.* (1989: 210). Rivalry and 'nasty sectarian sniping' that occurred between missions in the 1980s and 1990s is also recorded by Barker (2002: 2).

14 For more about the history of missionary activities in PNG, see Wagner *et al.* (1989) and Sillitoe (2000).

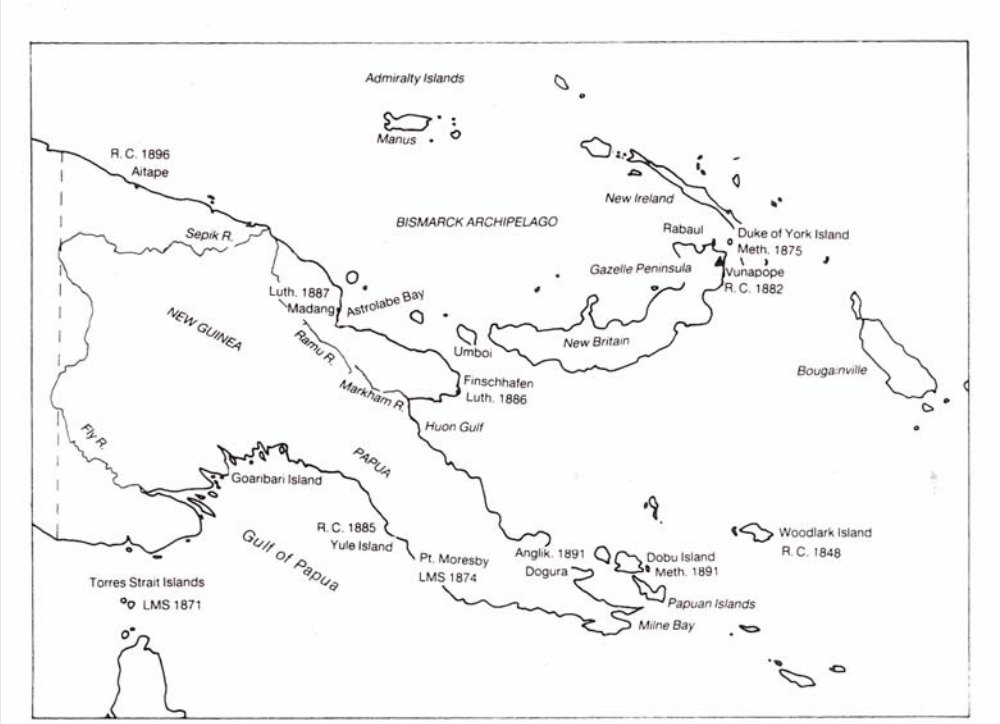
15 See P. Richardson (in Wagner *et al.*, 1989: 191), and the observations of Marie Tyler who lived for many years in East New Britain.

3.2 A myriad of church communities

PNG has a very diverse landscape of religious communities.[16] Some 96-99% of the population identify themselves as Christians,[17] and the rest belong to a handful of other religions, including Muslims and Baha'i. According to the 2000 census, Papua New Guineans belong to a wide range of religious communities, as shown in table 1.

According to Gibbs (2004: 3-4) the church sector consists of four separate blocks. He distinguishes the larger, 'mainstream' churches, including the long-established Lutheran, Catholic, United and Anglican denominations, which are reasonably well organised and pro-active partners of the government in social service delivery. They also speak out on issues relating to good governance in PNG society and influence external relationships, such as those with the government. While they cooperate amongst themselves in many areas and constitute the base of a modest ecumenical movement in PNG, they are themselves composed of different streams. The United Church, founded in 1968, for example, builds on the work of the former Methodist missionaries, the London Missionary

Figure 2. Early Christian missions in Papua New Guinea



Early Christian Missions PNG

1848	*Rom. Cath.*	*Woodlark Island*	*1885*	*Rom. Cath.*	*Yule Island*
1871	*LMA*	*Torres Strait Islands*	*1886*	*Luth. (ND)*	*Finschhafen*
1874	*LMS*	*Hanuabada/ Pt Moresby*	*1887*	*Luth (Rh)*	*Astrolabe Bay/ Madang*
1875	*Methodist*	*Duke of York Islands*	*1891*	*Methodist*	*Dobu Island*
1882	*Rom. Cath.*	*Gazelle Peninsula/ Vunapope*	*1891*	*Anglican*	*Dogura Plateau*
			1896	*Rom. Cath.*	*Aitape*

Source: Wagner and Reiner (1986: 34)

Notes

16 The role of churches in PNG society and their impact on governance and development is relatively under-researched and little secular analysis is available, although Stein-Holmes (2003), Luker (2004) and Gibbs (2004) have recently shed some light on this topic.

17 Stein-Holmes (2003) talks of 99%, and Gibbs (2004) of 96%, but whatever the figure, it is considerably higher than in Australia - in the 2001 census only 67% of Australians described themselves as Christians.

Society and the Presbyterians. The current Lutheran Church represents the Evangelical-Lutheran Church, the Lutheran Gutnius Church and the Lutheran Melpa Church, founded in 2000.[18]

Second, there is the Evangelical Alliance with missions and churches such as the Baptist, Liebenzeller, the Nazarene and the Salvation Army, which are all part of the larger Evangelical Alliance of the South Pacific Islands. The Evangelical Alliance is a member of the Churches Education Council (CEC) and a number of Evangelical groups are active in the Churches Medical Council (CMC). However, while they subscribe to the principles of good governance, the Evangelical churches are not active participants in debates, movements or advocacy activities supporting good governance in the country (see box 3).

The third group is made up of the growing number of Pentecostals that function under the National Council of Pentecostal Churches (Wagner *et al.,* 1989: 206). According to Gibbs (2004), and our own field observations, they do not appear as a formal bloc in public discourse. The group includes relatively smaller entities such as the Christian Revival Crusade, Christian Life Centre and Four Square Gospel Mission. Some Pentecostals are members of the CMC. One of their churches, the Assemblies of God, is a member of the Community Coalition against Corruption (CCAC).

Fourth, the Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) church constitutes a separate block as they have kept a distinct profile throughout their nearly 100-year-presence in PNG. They did not join the former Melanesian Council of Churches, founded in 1965 (now known as the PNG Council of Churches, PNGCC), out of a concern that they would be drawn into political debates and have to adopt positions not in accordance with their faith.[19] While they have joined the CMC (for funding reasons, as one observer assumed) they are still not a member of the PNGCC. They run their own primary schools and do not participate in the CEC. Gibbs (2004) sees the SDA as a church with political influence in PNG. Stein-Holmes (2003)[20] suggests they have some political influence in Parliament since one-third of MPs are members of this church

Box 2: Tedious beginnings of Lutheran missionary work in PNG

A first missionary station of the Lutheran Church in PNG was founded in October 1886 near the village of Simbang. The first missionaries, Flierl and Tremel, made the mistake of ignoring local customs by settling directly next to a village and without the explicit permission of the village leaders. How should they approach the people in this situation?'

... the mistake of establishing the first station on village ground at Simbang certainly did not help. Flierl and Tremel ... faced the handicap of rejection by the village leaders. ... The only model for propagating the Gospel familiar to them was that of holding worship services similar to those at home. This, however, proved to be totally inadequate in New Guinea. Their invitations to services on Sundays at the mission were neither appreciated nor heeded. ... From the beginning, it was Flierl's idea to achieve a breakthrough with the people by approaching the youth. ... Yet even here he failed completely in the beginning. ... Within three months after their arrival, the missionaries tried to conduct classes, but the result was exactly nil. ... In 1889 [three years after starting] young men appeared at the missionaries' place, declaring themselves ready to learn and to work with the missionaries ... Normal morning school routine in the classroom was only part of it. The pupils regarded that as a necessary evil, through which they would obtain what they were really looking for: the use of iron tools in the afternoon work program. Quite accidentally, the missionaries had found an approach to the New Guinean people

. ...' These young men became the first connecting links between the missionaries and the local people. After 13 long years of work, the first baptism took place in 1899. During the next five years, 36 more people were added to their numbers. It was only years later, that crowds started to gather for baptismal celebrations.

Source: Wagner and Reiner (1986: 36-42).

Notes

18 From 'Lutheran World Federation President Krause visits member churches', *World Faith News Archives,* 5 April 2002 (www.wfn.org).

19 R.K. Wilkinson, *Die Kirche der Siebenten-Tags-Adventisten*, in Wagner et al. (1989: 210).

20 The report by Stein-Holmes (2003) contains a useful collection of material on churches in PNG and the Pacific region.

(1998 figures), but our research did not reveal any evidence in support of this contention.[21]

Despite this diversity, there is an ecumenical movement among a number of the larger churches, which has led to mutual agreements[22] and joint initiatives such as the PNGCC and the Melanesian Institute at Goroka, a research institute supported by Catholics, Lutherans, United and Anglicans.

3.3 Key characteristics of the church sector

Regional division: As noted previously, the Catholic Church is the largest church community in PNG, with some 1.5 million members in 19 dioceses. No other community is so well represented throughout the country. Approximately 50% of church-run health facilities are operated by the Catholics. Other churches have a strong regional focus with a substantial presence in particular provinces. In the southeast province of Milne Bay, for example, 62% of the population are members of the United Church, while in the province of Morobe in the Momase or Northern region, 72% are Lutherans.

Organisational structure: Church communities also differ significantly in terms of organisational structure and the location of their headquarters. Some - like the Catholics and Anglicans - have national representatives in Port Moresby, while others - such as the Lutherans, and the SDAs - run their affairs from Lae, the capital of Morobe, PNG's largest province. The bigger churches - in particular the Catholics, the Lutherans and the SDA - have relatively strong coordinating offices. Contacting the diverse and widely spread group of Evangelicals and Pentecostals, despite their grouping into alliances, is not an easy task, so less is known about their structure and organisation.

Different development agencies and divisions: Another factor that distinguishes the churches is the form and function of their development and service delivery agencies. Some have a variety of related entities, while others carry out functions, such as social services, through a single organisation. The Catholic Bishops Conference, for example, works through Caritas PNG, which engages in justice, peace and development activities. The Catholic Church also has agencies for education, health and family life. The Anglican Church, for its part, has the Anglican Health Service, the Anglican Education Division, the Youth Ministry and Anglicare - a trust of the Anglican Diocese of Port Moresby that engages in HIV/AIDS-related activities. The SDA operate through the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA PNG), which sees itself as a development agency operating independently of the church (Nichols, 2003). Other churches, like the United Church and the Lutherans, provide services directly under their own name.

Weak management: Church-based organisations are valued for the reliable services they provide, primarily in health and education, and they enjoy a solid reputation for high standards and efficiency compared with those provided by the government. However, church-based organisations now recognise that they need to address internal management and organisational issues,[23] in particular since they started to accept funding from external sources that require meticulous

Box 3: Evangelicals and Pentecostals

According to the World Evangelical Alliance, an evangelical is someone concerned with the gospel. The gospel of Christ is at the centre of his/her thinking and living and expressed through constant preaching. 'Evangelical' derives from *'evangel'*, or 'gospel', which is the unquestionable truth, or 'good' news, as expressed in the first four books (Mark, Matthew, Luke and John) of the New Testament.

Source:
www.worldevangelical.org/evangelical.html#top

Experience, rather than doctrine has often been noted as the principal determinant of Pentecostalism, yet there is no absolute consensus among Pentecostals on doctrine. But there is agreement that 'speaking in tongues' is a miraculous act in which a believer, with the aid of the Holy Spirit, speaks in a language without having knowledge of it. This distinguishes Pentecostals from other Christian groups and mainstream Christian denominations.

Source:
http://religiousmovements.lib.virginia.edu/nrms/penta.html

Notes

21 According to political observers there has been no statement or action in parliament in recent years that would suggest a particular SDA-led initiative. But this may not be the full picture, as there may be informal groups and networks of which the research team are unaware.

22 For example, the Lutheran, Anglican and Catholic churches recently agreed to recognise each other's baptismal status.

23 Reference to this was made in the presentation of the *Church Health Services Review* at the National Health Conference in 2003. Also, the independent peer review of church-based development organisations (Nichols, 2003: 13) recommended that Australian NGOs address the institutional constraints of partner organisations in PNG through capacity development support.

progress reports and financial accounts. In response, churches have started to strengthen their capacity with management and policy manuals for use in training sessions, meetings and day-to-day operations.[24] But they have a long way to go to improve on this front, partly because performance-based management is still not part of their organisational culture. As one respondent commented during an interview: 'We are not professionals, we are church workers and our strength comes from faith and motivation.

'*Secular versus spiritual orientation:* The character of the churches' involvement in social development varies widely, from spiritual and gospel activities among some of the Pentecostal communities, to spiritual, community development and social service provision by the more established congregations. The Catholic Church, which has the largest presence and breadth of initiatives, is engaged in spiritual work, social and community development, training of lay and professional leaders, peace and reconciliation, as well as anti-corruption and other advocacy campaigns. The role of church leaders in politics is another issue. During the 2002 elections, the churches tried to maintain their neutrality by banning all types of support that might suggest political ties. Priests who campaigned for a seat in parliament were suspended, but attempts at neutrality have not always been easy to sustain (Gibbs, 2004: 5).[25]

Attitudes towards Melanesian identity and culture: The churches have worked intensively in and with local communities for many years. This has led to the 'localisation' and indigenisation of their operations, or, as theologians refer to it, to 'inculturate' their work. Similarly, PNG cultural traditions have been adapted to include Christian values and beliefs, resulting in a synthesis of 'PNG and Christian ways' that is reflected in prayers, mission statements, songs, religious music, etc.[26] On the other hand, and despite broad acceptance of this dualistic approach, some 'old practices and behaviour' continue to exist. Baloiloi (2001: 29), for example, notes that 'negative attitudes towards indigenous cultures still remain in some churches in PNG today, who still hold on to outdated modernist beliefs which view western ways as superior ways. Many see indigenous values as unchristian and paganistic'.[27]

3.4 Networks

Churches and church-based organisations interact through a variety of formal networks and informal consultative mechanisms. This section highlights some of the most relevant exchange and networking mechanisms.

The PNG Council of Churches (PNGCC): Formed as a national ecumenical council in 1965, the PNGCC includes seven Christian churches: the Anglicans, Baptists, Evangelical Lutheran, Gutnius Lutheran, Catholics, the Salvation Army and the United Church. In 2003, a resolution was passed mandating the PNGCC to promote development and to engage in activities to foster peace and justice. Despite its potentially strong role in facilitating coordination among church organisations and promoting policy dialogue, the PNGCC still has to prove itself as a viable mechanism in these areas.[28] The PNGCC is also a member of the Community Coalition against Corruption, but there is little evidence that it has adopted a particular stance on 'peace and justice', corruption or policy dialogue with government or donors.

The Churches Medical Council (CMC): The CMC was established in 1972, and now has 27 members.[29] The Council was set up to coordinate the health work of the different churches and to ensure that while maintaining their individual identities, they speak to government with one voice. The CMC is an important mechanism, as churches run about half of the country's health services, as noted above, as well as six of the

Notes

24 The national coordinator of the Catholic health services showed the research team a draft management training manual which will be used in courses for Catholic health workers.

25 Clerical engagement in politics in PNG is not a new issue. The 'priest-politician' John Momis publicly defended the view that there is no contradiction in the parallel execution of a ministry and a political mandate to respond to the needs of the people (Momis, J. *Politisches Engagement*, in: Wagner *et al.*, 1989: 415-425), reprint from Melanesian Institute Point Series No. 8: 'Living Theology in Melanesia: A Reader'.

26 K. Görner, *Evangelium in melanesischer Kultur*, in Wagner *et al.* (1989: 279-293).

27 Douglas (2003: 3) also described the attitude to local customs of the more evangelical churches, in particular the SDA, the Assemblies of God and the more recently arrived Evangelical and Pentecostal groups, as 'extreme fundamentalist intolerance'.

28 For example, the PNGCC does not have a coordinating role in the Church Partnership Programme (CPP), funded by AusAid. The SDA is part of the CPP through ADRA, but it is not a member of the PNGCC.

29 Other Evangelical and Pentecostal groups also work among local communities, including in the area of health. Many would like to become members of the CMC because it would provide access to state funding for health activities. The CMC has closed admission to new members in order to keep the Council manageable.

nine training schools for nurses[30] and 14 training schools for community health workers. Most of the financing for church-run facilities originates from the state. But churches and church-based organisations manage health facilities on their own in terms of financial and human resources management, and regularly engage with the government on policy and operational issues. The CMC is discussed in more detail in section 5.

The Churches Education Council (CEC): The CEC functions under the umbrella of the PNGCC. The member churches are the Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran, Evangelical Alliance, Four Square and United Churches. The CEC constitutes a platform to discuss education issues of concern to church-run schools (most of which are financed by the state) and teacher training colleges.[31] It provides an interface with the National Department of Education (NDoE), but it does not have a secretariat in the NDoE, as the CMC does in the National Department of Health (NDoH). The CEC is discussed in more detail in section 5.

Christian women's associations: Of the various Christian women's networks, the United Church Women Fellowship, founded in 1968, and the Catholic Women's Federation, formed in 1984, are the most prominent national bodies (Dickson-Weiko, 2003; Douglas, 2003). Both are part of the PNG National Council of Women. While their original goals were to promote Christian ideals and values, they have incorporated issues such as women's rights and social development.[32]

Consultations and informal exchanges: There are a number of consultation circles on church and religious affairs (not related to governance), as well as various informal exchanges amongst PNG church leaders. A more regular mechanism is the Ecumenical Dialogue, in which Catholic and Anglican leaders participate (the Lutherans are gradually joining the dialogue), and the Ministers Fraternal, where the Pentecostals have taken a stronger lead.[33]

4 In-country stakeholders and international partners

4.1 In-country stakeholders

Since more than 96% of the population identify themselves as Christians, the citizens of PNG can be regarded as the churches' major stakeholders. Given the well-attended church services and the numerous well-maintained (and sometimes new) church buildings seen by the research team, it appears that the local members do have an interest in the effective functioning of their churches, which are seen as the carriers and teachers of moral standards and values.

The people also depend significantly on the services provided by the churches. Our interviewees confirmed the widely held perception of the 'good work' of the churches and the quality of the services they provide. Government officials also speak very highly of church service delivery and indicated during interviews that they would send their families to a church-managed health facility rather than to a government-run clinic or health centre. The government also recognises that the national health sector depends heavily on the long-standing contribution of the churches (Mann, 2003). Church organisations involved in social service delivery - particularly in the health sector - enjoy greater legitimacy and recognition than other state and non-state actors.

As carriers of moral standards and values, some church organisations also work with other civil society groups on issues relating to the governance of the country. A number of church leaders speak out on governance and other development issues, and this is appreciated in various sections of society (see section 5). Many non-religious advocates interviewed for this study expressed their high regard for those leaders. They also indicated their interest in cooperating with church-based organisations and in inviting them to take a more active role on various issues and movements.

Notes

30 These are: St Mary's School of Nursing, Kokopo, East New Britain province, and the St Barnabas School of Nursing, Alotau, Milne Bay province, both run by the Catholic Church, the Lutheran School of Nursing, Madang (now affiliated with the DWU), the Nazarene School of Nursing, Mt Hagen, Western Highlands province, run by the Evangelical Alliance, Sopas School of Nursing, Wabag, Enga province, run by the SDA (now merged into Adventist University) at Mt Diamond in Central province, and the Aitape School of Nursing, Aitape, Sundaun province, run by the Catholic Church.

31 Four teacher training colleges are sponsored by the churches (one by the United and Anglican church, one by the Lutherans, and two by the Catholic Church) and one by the government.

32 Limited material was found on women and Christianity in PNG, which reinforces Douglas' observation that the topic is under-researched and largely ignored by aid organisations (2003: 14).

33 Information provided by Archbishop Brian Barnes.

Table 2. Relationship between PNG churches and Australian church-based NGOs.

PNG church	Accredited Australian NGO	Link between Australian NGO and churches
Anglican Church	Anglican Board of Mission	Anglican Church organisation linking Australian Church with Anglicans around the world
Baptist Church	Baptist World Aid Australia	An activity of, and accountable to the Baptist Union of Australia
Evangelical Lutheran Church	Australian Lutheran World Service	Principal channel for overseas aid for the Lutheran Church of Australia governed by an appointed board
Roman Catholic Church	Caritas Australia	Catholic Aid and Development Agency
Salvation Army	Salvation Army Australian Development Office	Salvation Army Church Development Office
Seventh Day Adventist Church	Adventist Development Relief Agency	Seventh Day Adventist Church Development Relief Agency
United Church	Uniting Church Overseas Aid (UCOA)	Agency of Uniting International Mission under the Uniting Church in Australia

Source: AusAID (2004b).

4.2 External stakeholders and partners

Churches in PNG have well-established international networks, many of which can be traced back to the colonial period when funding originated from the overseas churches.[34] Today, contacts with external partners can be grouped into three broad categories: peer organisations in the region, (financing) partner churches and alliances, and non-religious development agencies.

Peer organisations in the region: Caritas PNG is a good example of an organisation which values the exchanges with regional brother and sister organisations in the region through the Caritas Oceania Council. The Council itself is a forum for discussing issues of common interest, formulating work plans and agreeing on peer reviews. This mechanism has shaped commitment among the respective organisations, and has underlined the need for transparency and accountability in order to trigger change.

(Financing) overseas churches and alliances: Most of PNG's church communities have strong links with international partner organisations, church federations or alliances. Cooperation with external contacts takes various forms, ranging from the provision of spiritual support or guidance to access for funding. Some strong bilateral partnerships can be traced back to the early missionary days - the Lutheran Church, for example, continues to maintain strong ties with Lutheran communities in Germany. Then there are partnerships between networks, as is the case between the PNGCC and the National Council of Churches in Australia. The SDA PNG Union Mission is strongly bound into an international network and is one of five Union Missions that form the South Pacific Division, based in Sydney, and reports to headquarters in Washington DC. The President of SDA PNG regularly attends the international SDA General Conference, which makes decisions for the SDA worldwide.

Ties with Australian church organisations are particularly strong. Table 2 summarises the relationships between the six major PNG congregations, and the smaller Salvation Army, with their Australian sister organisations and their development agencies.
The research team did not come across any studies examining the financial and economic situation of churches in PNG, past or present. It was also not easy to obtain details of church finances, including arrangements between PNG churches and external partners.[35] A recent report by the Asian Development Bank, how-

Notes

34 This funding came from partner churches in the then industrialising countries and from their colonial governments. Missions also had land and plantations, a path which the early Anglican missionaries did not follow (they considered themselves socialists), which explains the continuing dependence of the Anglican Church on outside sources (P. Richardson, *Die anglikanische Kirche*, in Wagner *et al.*, 1989: 191).

35 For example, one church representative refused to share information about their external funding sources during one of our interviews. Such behaviour has been criticised by some government agencies, which see some church-based service providers as not sufficiently transparent.

ever, underlines a concern that in PNG's health sector 'the only summary of church health expenditures shows amounts paid over to churches' with 'no summary of actual expenditures, balances remaining, etc.' (ADB, 2003). The same report also notes that provinces and hospitals do not report health expenditures on a regular basis either. This could simply be due to the poor quality of financial management and reporting within the churches, or the desire, on the part of the churches, to maintain an arms-length relationship with the government, in order to avoid opening themselves up to greater financial scrutiny, with the attendant risk to their public funding base.

From the information the team was able to gather during interviews, a picture emerges of diverse financing arrangements, reflecting, in part, the nature of the services provided. For example, while the former Health Secretary has stated that the government provides over 80% of the financing for church health facilities through grants (Mann, 2003), Caritas PNG indicated that it relies on external sources for 99% of the funding for its activities related to peace, justice and reconciliation (including funding from non-religious sources). The Lutherans indicated that some 30% of their overall funding comes from outside the country.[36]

International partners also provide spiritual leaders, missionaries, teachers and technical assistance (TA), which can range from long-term volunteers (as is the case with the Adventist Development and Relief Agency, ADRA), to short-term senior experts from Australia, New Zealand, North America, Europe and neighbouring Asian countries. Consolidated figures are not available. Some missionaries are engaged in preaching the gospel as well as community work.

While many churches have had intense expatriate inputs in the past, the overall trend has been towards 'localisation' and 'indigenisation', with expatriate staff now recruited for shorter periods than their predecessors. The experience of the Catholic Bishops' Conference, however, is somewhat different. Of its 27 members, six are from PNG, and many of the others have spent long parts of their life in PNG and are considered 'locals' by Papua New Guineans.

The faith-based higher education institutes, such as the Melanesian Institute or the Divine Word University (DWU) rely strongly on expatriate staff. The DWU currently recruits some 30% of its teaching staff from abroad but would like to increase the figure to 40%. They view this as a means of giving students more international exposure - a plausible argument in view of the relatively limited ties many PNG students have with the rest of the world.

Non-religious development agencies: AusAID is the major non-religious funding agency for churches in PNG. It has recognised the prominence and importance of churches in PNG's development, and their potential to contribute to strengthening governance. Churches can access financing through various funding facilities or programmes available in PNG under the AusAID-administered country programme.[37] A new funding source recently created, the PNG Church Partnership Programme (CPP), is based on twinning arrangements between seven churches in PNG and their Australian partner churches, mediated by seven accredited NGOs which are the recognised overseas aid and development arms of the Australian churches. The CPP is seeking to reinforce the internal management of PNG churches, and their development agencies, to increase the participation of churches in policy dialogue, improve public sector management of service delivery, contribute to peace and reconciliation activities, and strengthen acceptance of the rule of law (AusAID, 2004b).[38]

Given the substantial amounts of direct external funding, as well as the government funding received by some churches, effective financial management and reporting is critical to securing support for future cooperation. The church leaders interviewed for this study fully appreciated the importance of this issue.

Notes

36 The diversity of information and the lack of data on financing suggest that a specific review could be undertaken to get a better picture of the financing, financial management and reporting of the different church organisations.

37 These include the PNG Incentive Fund, the Community Development Scheme, as well as the HIV/AIDS, Law & Justice and Electoral Support Programmes. Churches also receive funds for health service delivery as part of the AusAID-funded Health Sector Support Programme (HSSP).

38 Under the programme agreement between the government of PNG and AusAID, funding will be channelled through the Australian partner organisations, but operational details are still being worked out. At the time of the study, discussions were ongoing within PNG churches, as well as between them and their Australian partners, about the types of projects and programmes this fund will support. Some church representatives expressed concern during interviews that this fund might tie them too strongly to outside partners, at the cost of cooperation among churches, while others welcomed it as a mechanism to strengthen internal management and governance.

5 Endogenous change processes for improved governance and public performance

5.1 Reasons for change

Churches and church-based organisations in PNG are widely recognised for their spiritual work and the social services they provide. Their contribution to the development of PNG society has evolved from their close relationships with communities. The churches' work, including youth work and community development, was seen as a direct way to link God's preaching with the needs of the population and gave churches a mandate and - based on good performance - legitimacy to further reinforce their core activities and train future leaders. Even today, spiritual activities aside, church representatives see 'social work' as their primary strength in working with communities, and an area where they have a comparative advantage in relation to other non-religious organisations.

Recent years have brought changes in the pattern of church engagement. A number of church organisations have gone beyond their 'traditional' involvement and have intensified activities aimed at improving governance in PNG,[39] for three reasons:

- It is recognised that a number of reforms being introduced in the social sectors pose new challenges to the churches and church-based organisations. One example is the sector-wide approach (SWAp) in health.[40] Some churches were concerned that the SWAp would have negative impacts on their role in service delivery, as funds for service delivery are supposed to be channelled from national to local government institutions under a SWAp arrangement. This approach alarmed some churches, prompting them to engage in policy dialogue with the government on issues such as funding, accountability and personnel management, as well as their independence and identity.
- The increasingly violent ethnic, tribal and other types of conflict are affecting church congregations. Church-based organisations came to realise that prayer and community work alone will not help to solve what are often deeply rooted patterns of conflict, leading them to engage more actively in peace building and inter-tribal reconciliation processes. The Bougainville crisis in the 1990s, during which as many as 15,000 people died, showed what devastating effects a conflict can have on an entire island society. Today, conflicts between tribes on parts of the mainland threaten to substantially set back many of the churches' achievements over the past decades.[41]
- Some churches realise that the decline in government services has wider systemic causes (see box 4), but that these causes can best be addressed by supporting mechanisms to strengthen accountability, such as public hearings on issues of common concern; participating in anti-corruption campaigns; or using the media to alert the public to undemocratic or inappropriate pratices.

5.2 Church contributions to governance and public performance - some highlights

This section highlights some examples of church-based involvement in governance-related activities,

Box 4: Voices from the Catholic General Assembly, 11 July 2004

Catholic bishops, priests, brothers, nuns and lay missionaries who met for the general assembly called for political leaders to work together in the development of the people and the country. Representing all Catholics nationwide, the assembly members said they have had enough and were 'thoroughly disgusted' at the confusion arising from the current political games in Waigani, the Port Moresby Government Quarter.

Source: Papua New Guinea Post-Courier Online, 12 July 2004

Notes

39 The Catholic church-based Commission for Justice, Peace and Reconciliation has a longer tradition of working against disparities and injustice. It was founded in 1974 and renamed 'Caritas PNG' when it became part of the international umbrella network 'Caritas Internationalis'.

40 A SWAp is a method of streamlining development assistance by improving coordination, reducing fragmentation, moving towards broader government-formulated policy frameworks, and achieving better service delivery. Participation by non-state actors has proven difficult in all countries where SWAps have been introduced.

41 Most tribal conflicts are in the Highlands, where tribes now use modern weapons to resolve often century-old conflicts. In Enga province, a hospital run by the SDA had to be closed in early 2001 when tribal fighting reached the hospital compound, leading to the attempted murder of the hospital's director of nursing (from *Adventist News Network*, 2004).difficult in all countries where SWAps have been introduced.

including their contribution to improved public performance. The overview is illustrative and does not purport to be fully representative of experiences in PNG. Using the governance framework introduced in section 1.2, these contributions can be grouped under five headings, as follows:[42]

1. *Public policy and decision making*

Supporting electoral processes: Prior to the 2002 national election,the churches supported various information and outreach programmes, but the Catholic Church was the only one to design and carry out a specific community training programme throughout the country. This programme was seen as one of the factors contributing to the high turnover of MPs in the 2002 election (i.e. 80%, compared with 65% during the previous election in 1997).[43] The Catholic and United churches also supported an awareness-raising campaign prior to the Southern Highlands supplementary elections in 2003 (Stein-Homes, 2003: 36).

Participating in and liaising with political commissions and councils: Church-based and other civil society organisations participate in numerous councils and committees. Examples include the Consultative Implementation and Monitoring Council (which channels the inputs of different groups into the budget formulation process), the National AIDS Council and the National Disaster Committee, which counts World Vision and Caritas among its members. A number of church-based organisations are also members of the Peace and Reconciliation Committee, which is driven by church organisations. During the Southern Highlands supplementary elections in 2003, it actively engaged with the PNG election council to ensure that information and instructions to prevent corruption were disseminated to the electorate (Stein-Homes, 2003: 36).

2. Transparency and information sharing

Church leaders expressing their views on governance issues in public: The Secretary of the Catholic Bishops' Conference speaks out on behalf of the Catholic Church, and several Catholic bishops regularly express their opinions on issues relating to governance and public affairs (see box 5). Leaders of the United Church, the Anglican Bishop and the Bishop of the Lutheran Church occasionally deliver public speeches to express their discontent with the governance situation in the country.

Using the media: In a weekly radio programme, 'Catholic insights', which is broadcast country-wide, Archbishop Brian Barnes of Port Moresby addresses sensitive political matters, as well as corrupt practices in government.

Public workshops/conferences: The Divine Word University (DWU) in Madang is an ecumenical private university with strong links to the Catholic Church. It was established as an institute in 1980 and upgraded to one of PNG's six universities in 1996. In March 2004, it organised a workshop entitled 'Foreign policy, governance and development: challenges for PNG and the Pacific Islands.' This was a joint activity of the DWU with the Australian National University project, 'State society and governance in Melanesia', funded by AusAID, and provided a platform for exchange amongst the country's intellectuals.

3. Social justice and the rule of law

Community Coalition against Corruption (CCAC): The CCAC, which was formed in 2001, is an informal network of some 39 organisations that aims to form a broad front against the worsening governance situation in the country. The Coalition has organised public hearings (to which representatives of the government's law-enforcement agencies were invited to respond to critical questions) and - together with the University of PNG (UPNG) - it organises workshops on governance to raise public awareness. Five church-based organisations are members of the CCAC - the Catholic Bishops' Conference, Caritas PNG, the Divine Word University, Assemblies of God and the PNG Council of Churches. The fact that Caritas PNG co-chairs the CCAC underlines the important role of the Catholic Church.

Informal consultations of church leaders on public affairs: Government representatives consult church leaders informally on issues they have addressed in public. Catholic leaders play a bigger role than leaders of other congregations in these consultations, which can be on a range of topics. During the stay of the research team in PNG, the appointment of a Governor General was a highly debated issue on which several church leaders voiced their views (see box 5).

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42 This categorisation is based on the characteristics of an activity; some activities have elements which would justify putting them into another category.

43 These results suggest a desire of the electorate to get rid of often corrupt politicians, but also displays the fragility of the democratic process in PNG, as inexperienced individuals are often elected to replace those who have been 'booted out'.

Box 5: The Archbishop's Easter message

In his 2004 Easter message, Brian J. Barnes, Archbishop of Port Moresby, commented:

'... Parliament's record so far in attempting to choose a successor to our Governor General is embarrassing, and even pitiful for such a select body. Perhaps the system needs to be changed. The nature and dignity of the Governor General's position is such that a worthy and capable candidate would best be invited by government to accept the position. The unseemly scramble which we have been witnessing would seem to indicate that ex-politicians should normally not be considered. ... Leadership tribunals continue to be set up as the need arises, some leaders continue to be found wanting, and dismissals continue to be linked with the sanction of being barred from public office for three years. We have former leaders, having served their time, making new bids for responsible public positions. Three years is a joke! Perhaps ten years out should be the minimum penalty, with a life ban for disgraced leaders the better option for our legislators. ...'

4. Enhancing public performance

Churches and health: The Churches Medical Council (CMC) provides an interesting illustration of the role PNG churches can play in enhancing public performance in a particular sector. The CMC was founded in the early 1970s to improve coordination of the health work of the different churches and to ensure that they speak with one voice to government and international stakeholders. After independence, the CMC continued as the church-government interface, mainly to negotiate funding arrangements while maintaining their theological identity. As of 1998, when salaries and operating costs for church health services were funded through the CMC budget, the Council became more active, and provided a crucial forum for joint church-government policy dialogue. The CMC's liaison office, based in the National Department of Health in Port Moresby, plays various administrative and interfacing/platform functions.

Each year, shortly before the government's National Health Conference, the CMC organises its own annual health conference, which provides an opportunity for the CMC Board and its members to formulate their views and expectations so they can be conveyed to the government in a timely manner. The CMC Board meets four times a year, and is currently chaired by a senior staff member of the Lutheran Church Health Services who has been re-elected several times over the past 16 years. The CMC represents the interests of 27 churches that are involved with facilitation and delivery of health services. One of the principal tasks of the chairperson is to analyse, coordinate and integrate the interests of the various members, and to represent their views during negotiations with government on funding and human resource management issues. It is not an easy task, as church headquarters are based at different locations, and more importantly, the churches differ in their theological perspectives.

The CMC is a unique mechanism in PNG. In addition to negotiating funding and human resource issues with government, it provides a forum for a diverse group of church-based organisations to gather once a year to exchange views on health reforms, to disseminate information and to plan joint projects.[44] It is a flexible mechanism (in order to respond to the needs of members) and enables the members, despite their diversity and their differing interests and views, to speak to government with one voice. This difficult task requires well developed skills in facilitation and dialogue, as several interviewees noted. Given the strong role of the churches in the health sector, and the need to involve them in PNG's health reforms, the importance of such a mechanism, to contribute to policy dialogue and discuss implementation issues, cannot be overstated. This is despite the often tedious internal issues the CMC has to struggle with, and the relative slowness with which decisions are taken.

Churches and education: The Churches Education Council (CEC) works closely with the National Department of Education (NDoE). It provides a forum for policy dialogue with the government on education matters, but is seen as a less prominent interface than the CMC. All church-administered schools are fully integrated into the government system (with the exception of the SDA schools, as mentioned earlier), and the churches have little say in funding and personnel. Critical observers of this integration note that the performance of former church-run primary schools has declined significantly in recent years. On the other hand, there are four well respected church-

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44 Different church organisations are currently discussing the production of a joint management manual for church-run health facilities, another by-product of the CMC forum.

run teacher training colleges and two universities, the DWU and the Pacific Adventist University, which make significant contributions to public performance in the education sector. The private institutes also have a reputation for independence, quality and innovation, and are recognised as strong, viable partners for state actors in the education sector. For example, the ecumenical DWU recently issued a set of Guidelines for Institutional Accreditation for Higher Education in PNG, as a contribution to governance reforms in the education sector.

5. Reconciliation and peace building

In-country mediation: There is a real need for mediation in those areas of PNG prone to tribal conflicts and disputes that can not be reconciled using traditional processes, such as the Southern Highlands, which have experienced a high level of conflict of late. Caritas PNG has a programme to address this issue, which builds on its track record of involvement in peace building and conflict resolution in recent years.[45] Other churches are starting to explore this area - recently, for example, some six SDA staff members were sent abroad for training in peace building.

Bougainville: The church played a major role in re-establishing peace and in conflict resolution during and after the Bougainville crisis. In 1995, a number of women's church groups formed the Bougainville Inter-Church Women's Forum, which became an important body in supporting the peace process. Other groups, such as the Catholic Women's Association, provided humanitarian relief to districts controlled by the government as well as the Bougainville Revolutionary Army. Through their 'bridging function' they became key actors for peace building and helped to rebuild trust between communities.[46]

In summary, some church activities are well structured and incorporated into change strategies of individual organisations or networks. The work of the CMC, as well as the support for peace, justice and reconciliation provided by the Catholic Bishops' Conference could be characterised as such. The work of the CCAC is also notable as it has brought together many groups to fight corruption. It liaises with Transparency International's PNG network, and the Media Council - after three years of operation - has prepared an annual work plan to guide its actions. In addition, a myriad of contributions to improved governance have emerged out of individual initiatives of church leaders, church-based NGO representatives and academics. These initiatives are as yet not well coordinated, and are often *ad hoc,* in response to specific circumstances or opportunities as they arise.

As the preceding paragraphs suggest, the church sector comprises a number of key actors in civil society who undertake flexible, targeted and response-driven advocacy and policy work. But there are no broad, endogenous, church-based strategies in place aimed specifically at enhancing or improving governance or public policy performance in PNG. There is no definite pattern of activities amongst the churches, with the exception of some related to service delivery, and many emerge from relatively isolated concerns. There has been little sharing of information or lessons on good practices. The experiences documented so far suggest that they reflect the interests of leaders of individual church-based groups or organisations who either initiate or participate in governance-related activities with other civil society actors, as their mandates permit, while maintaining their own identity.

6 Capabilities shaping capacity

We now take a closer look at those church and church-based organisations in PNG which are involved in the five areas of governance and public service provision highlighted in the previous section. We introduce a model to help explain the capabilities that a number of these organisations have created and employed over the years to make meaningful contributions to a changing PNG society. We also explain how individual church organisations define their role in a continuously changing context, and how these capabilities bring changes to the functioning of a number of church networks.

6.1 What capabilities?

The model employed in this section is derived from Woolcock's conceptual discussion of 'networks' and 'social capital' at the community level (Woolcock, 1998, 1999). This conceptual model was used by Luker (2004) to study the role of the churches in fighting

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45 While this programme is a contribution to 'governance', Nichols (2003: 10) observes that 'the peace building and mediation work of Caritas appears to be seen in terms of the local impact at a community level, rather than the province-wide or national contribution that is, or could be made'.

46 For information about the Bougainville crisis, see Stein-Holmes (2003: 34-35) and Havini and Sirivi (2004).

HIV/AIDS in PNG and the factors that have made them more successful than other civil society organisations. We use this model and apply it to our identification of capabilities which explain how churches and church-based organisations contribute to governance and public performance in PNG.

Woolcock (1999) outlines a set of dimensions for mapping and comparing the 'social capital' of different networks - 'bonding', 'bridging' and 'linking'. While these dimensions are useful to identify the capabilities that drive a large number of governance-related activities of churches in PNG, they fall short of capturing all of them. Hence we have added a fourth dimension, which we call 'the use of space' (see figure 3).

The four capabilities provide a basis for understanding the different types of church involvement in governance and advocacy-related processes, as well as the churches' contribution to public performance in the social sector. They are cross-cutting and aspects of all *four, bonding, bridging, linking* and *the use of space,* can be found under what has been described in section 5 concerning the five areas in which the churches contribute to governance: *public policy and decision making, transparency and information sharing, social justice and the rule of law, enhancing public performance* and *reconciliation and peace building*. Section 6.2 discusses these four capabilities and relates them to examples emerging from our sample of endogenous change processes in section 5.

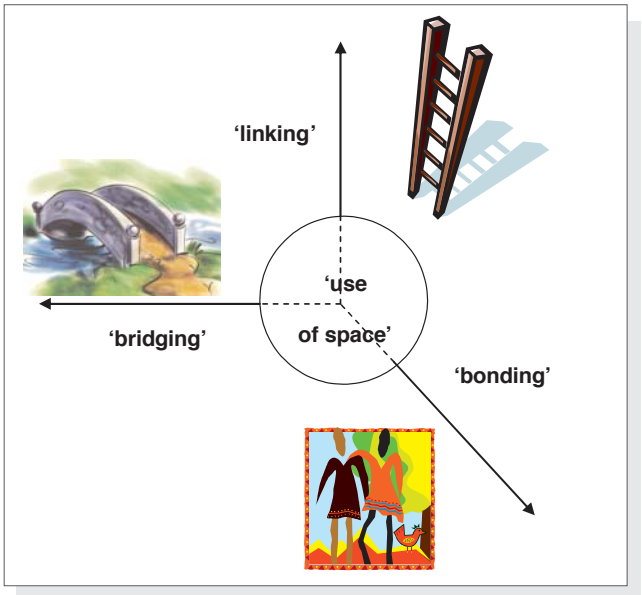
Capability to use space: Churches and church-based organisations have successfully opened up public spaces in order to:

- *Address issues of public concern.* The Catholic Church, in particular, has used the medium of radio and public speeches to address sensitive issues. According to one interviewee, these could be used by other church leaders much more effectively.
- *Invite different parties to share their views and opinions.* The DWU governance workshop, held in March 2004, is an example of an initiative which brought together various parties for the purpose of exchange and dialogue on foreign policy, governance and development. The workshop provided a platform to convey critical views to the government, facilitated by an 'honest broker' who expressed genuine concern about the state of governance in PNG.
- *Bring neglected or deprived groups into the public domain.* The churches have worked since the early days in different ways with women and, in the process, have gradually empowered them to participate more in public debates and social actions.
- *Address capacity gaps in the social sector.* The churches' investment in training institutes, for example, reflects their long-term commitment to the health and education sectors and highlights their partnership approach to government in supporting service delivery.

Capability to link policy and practice: Through their networks, churches have shown their ability to link policy dialogue at the national level with their involvement in service delivery at the community and household levels. Despite the difficulties in networking among church actors with different interests and backgrounds, these networks constitute mechanisms for ensuring that well-informed views and opinions from practitioners at the 'grassroots' level reach the negotiating and policy-making tables, and communicate policy messages down to the lower levels. The CMC, the most prominent example, has been successful in safeguarding basic standards of health service delivery in a difficult environment, and could be a model for other inter-church networks.

Capability to bridge across boundaries: Churches and church-based organisations in PNG exchange intensively with their peers and financing partners abroad.

Figure 3. Relationship between the dimensions - 'bonding', 'bridging', 'linking' and the 'use of space'. (Adapted from Woolcock, 1999, in Luker, 2003: 9.)



For many organisations, these exchanges were and still are essential for survival, as the high dependence of Caritas PNG on outside sources shows. At the same time, they provide a mechanism to improve intra-organisational management and governance.[47] While this situation suggests a high and sometimes negatively perceived dependence on external stakeholders, it also shows that these organisations are recognised as genuine partners by their overseas colleagues. Another important *bridging capability* is the work of the churches in the area of peace and reconciliation. As noted, during the Bougainville crisis, church-based women's groups managed to bring relief to the population on both sides of the conflict and formed the backbone for the reconciliation process.[48] In the tribal conflict zones of the Southern Highlands, church-based organisations are able to work in areas where government officials are not welcome, or where it may be impossible for them to visit.

Capability to bond with communities: Ancestral traditions and practices related to heredity, power and sorcery, and Christian values on sex, marriage, child-rearing and family are not always easy to combine. Nevertheless, as noted by Luker (2004: 8), churches are present and have a dynamic influence down to the clan, sub-clan, extended family and household levels - to the extent that they are often seen as indigenised institutions. Effective community work, including the provision of social services[49] combined with a rooting in society, has meant that the churches enjoy levels of trust and a legitimacy that no other civil society actors have achieved. While this work was done to build and strengthen Christian communities, with no particular strategic governance considerations in mind, it created the preconditions for governance-related activities, such as encouraging people to participate in elections. No other civil society groups or NGOs have comparable bonds with local communities.

Women and women's associations play a key role in bonding church structures and communities. Women have incorporated slowly, but steadily, into public life over the last 120 years or so. The organisation of women's sewing, weaving and quilting groups, combined with bible study and prayers, by the early missionaries all over the country provided space for women to organise beyond the family context. These initiatives marked the start of a long-term process which - combined with increased primary, secondary and tertiary education for women over the years - has resulted in the active participation of women in various aspects of PNG society.

Due to their central position in domestic life, as wives and mothers with responsibilities for households, extended families and raising children, women were and still are major stakeholders in PNG society and raise their voices on important issues. Providing the major channels for such engagement has, over time, enhanced the churches' internal capacity to organise and to strengthen its ties with communities. This 'bonding function' of women was increasingly recognised by largely male-dominated hierarchies in the 1960s and 1970s, as noted by Douglas (2003), and has translated into the endorsement and formation of women's federations and associations throughout Melanesia, including PNG. Although women are generally under-represented in management and decision-making processes in church organisations, these associations have enabled women to make important contributions to public life and peace building.

Taking our 'unit of analysis' - the church community in PNG - these capabilities are present and practised by different churches and church-based organisations to different degrees. Some of these capabilities stand on their own and do not contribute directly to better governance (e.g. the isolated work in a community of a small sect or a free church), while others do make a difference and are linked to improved performance and capacity development.

6.2 Emergence of capabilities

So what constitutes these capabilities, and how did they emerge? In the context of the broader study on *Capacity, Change and Performance,* which aims to explore the elements contributing to the creation of the overall capacity of systems and organisations, these questions merit closer examination.

The study has so far shown that the church community in PNG is highly heterogeneous. The main common denominators are that all are faith-based and work within the boundaries of an increasingly difficult country. The historical review has shown that different waves of new arrivals to PNG contributed to the organic growth of a distinctive 'sector' with

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47 The wish for peer-exchanges was also expressed by non-church actors interviewed for this study. Representatives of both church and non-church organisations in PNG often feel isolated and not sufficiently exposed to experiences of comparable countries.

48 Havini and Sirivi (2004) tell the story of the Bougainville war and the peace process that followed, through the eyes of Bougainville women who played a vital role in the resolution of the conflict.

49 See in particular the review of Nichols (2003: 5-6), which assesses the strengths and comparative advantages of three church-based organisations in community work.

strong links to communities throughout the country. Within this sector, an institutional landscape has evolved, with member organisations increasingly recognising, particularly over the last 20 years or so, the value of liaising and collaborating on priority issues - the CMC being the most prominent example.

Only some features in this institutional landscape have become organised in a more systematic way. Overall, the organisation of this landscape has been, and continues to be an evolving reality, with few distinct patterns, designs or strategies. Networking among the different entities, for example, emerged out of common concerns and threats, based, in part, on a deteriorating domestic context, compounded by unfavourable regional and global developments.

The combination of pragmatism and the 'use of space' has provided the impetus for the emergence of the churches' capabilities. Space, because the untouched nature of indigenous communities throughout the country provided many opportunities for church organisations to build intense relationships with the population and to flourish in the absence, or limited presence, of state institutions and regulations. Pragmatism, because the 'bridging' across different boundaries, the 'linking' of work from different levels in society and the 'use of public space' to speak out against bad government practices, were usually triggered at moments of downturns and threats to the foundations of the church sector as a whole. The health sector is the most prominent example in this regard. More recently, this approach can also be traced to church action related to reconciliation and peace building, as well as efforts to improve capacity and performance in the area of law and justice.

While these capabilities have emerged on a relatively *ad hoc* or pragmatic basis in recent decades - less so in the case of the Catholic Church, given its more extensive involvement in governance and public sector matters - the increasing threat posed by poor governance in PNG has also provided a motivation for more focused engagement. This, in turn, has prompted churches to increase inter-church exchanges and cooperation, and to give more serious consideration to their own internal management and governance. Without overestimating current developments, and while being realistic about the internal shortcomings of the churches, it can be said that modest efforts are slowly being made by a select group of church actors to find more systematic and conscious responses to the challenges at hand. However, it is still far from being a strategic 'sector' response - the church community is simply too diverse and remains characterised more by differences than by commonalities.

The churches in PNG have always had strong international links that have provided valued inputs to their development, particularly in the pre-independence period when education and health services were provided mainly by the churches. Current twinning arrangements with partner congregations outside PNG help to ensure that human resources and funds sustain and further develop the organisational base of local churches. This has been accompanied, however, by a need for the local churches to enhance their capacities for more efficient and transparent administration and to ensure external funds are properly accounted for. Arguably, a complementary motivation for enhancing capacity comes from the self-reflection and the daily awareness that conditions in the country are, in many respects, becoming more challenging.[50] The church is thus compelled to find new ways and means to engage, whether it be tackling the emerging AIDS epidemic, or responding to youth disenchantment and increasing levels of violence. It is the internally generated momentum associated with this process that needs to be carefully supported by outside interventions, based on a solid understanding of the internal dynamics of the and PNG's extensive but diverse church community.

7 Ringing the bell?

7.1 Evidence of performance

This report has described the role of churches as institutional actors within PNG's governance and service delivery landscape. They have built up a considerable record, and have a significant potential to contribute to wider societal change processes. The case has also highlighted the capabilities within the church sector to engage in advocacy-related work and to function as a partner to government in service delivery.

This report has presented considerable information on how churches are contributing to improved governance and social service delivery in PNG. But this contribution to building societal capacity is not easy to measure, as independent analyses of the extent to which churches do make a difference are limited, and

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50 Several church representatives made comments along these lines during interviews.

methodologically varied. Although it is widely accepted that churches have made a huge difference in PNG, a broad-reaching and systematic analysis of this topic has so far not been undertaken. Nevertheless, we can point to some evidence of performance changes, drawn from a range of sources referred to in section 5, as well as from interviews.

Public policy and decision making: The Catholic Church is repeatedly mentioned as a solid performer on governance issues. Through its established organisational base and widespread regional presence, as well as thematic engagement, it has a record of combining all four capabilities described in section 6. Its activities in supporting the electoral process are most notable on this score. They suggest a combination of 'bonding' (informing communities about the electoral process), 'linking' (encouraging their participation in elections), 'bridging' (working across communities with other religious and non-religious electoral activities, such as the design of electoral education material) and 'the use of space' (e.g. through public statements in the media).

Social justice and the rule of law: Further evidence of Catholic Church performance is the outspokenness and frankness of one of its leaders, Archbishop Barnes. He is highly respected in PNG and is seen as an independent figure who has contributed to the reconsideration and even reversal of decisions taken by government. This observation from interviewees, also underlined by Gibbs (2004: 4), suggests that the Archbishop's statement in 1999 on the personal conduct of many PNG leaders acted as a catalyst for change, and three months later led to the resignation of Prime Minister Bill Skate. The Catholic Bishops' Conference and Caritas PNG also participated in the 'war against corruption', as declared by the PNG Media Council in 2002,[51] a campaign that was described as a template for civil society involvement in a democratic system, and which has resulted in the toppling of some political leaders (Rich, 2003).

Enhancing public performance: This report has identified the CMC as an important interface for public-church-based policy exchange and dialogue on health. An important activity of the chair of the CMC Board is to represent the views of members in negotiations with government. This has led to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the National Department of Health and the CMC to ensure that church-run health facilities manage their financial resources independently, without interference from the national or provincial level governments. As a result of this understanding, funds are now transferred directly to the church health facilities, and not through the provincial administrations. While in some respects this goes against the spirit of PNG's decentralisation reforms, which envisaged channelling funds for service provision through the provinces, it provides evidence that church-based organisations have successfully stood their ground and protected a service area in which their important role is recognised.[52]

7.2 Underlying factors explaining performance

Some of the findings of this study are similar to those of other reviews of the role of churches in governance in Africa (Gibbs and Ajulu, 1999). The authority and legitimacy of churches, their national networks and links with other institutions, international links, and individual skills and capacities are noted as being particularly influential in determining their role and efficacy as advocates of change.

From our study, the interplay of the four capabilities described above, supported by incremental endogenous change processes and external support, have developed into a 'capacity' of the church sector. But how does this interplay, with all its frailties, trigger change and performance? Six factors emerge from our study:

Leadership. The relatively successful engagement of the churches in governance processes and social sector performance was attributed by our respondents, first and foremost, to effective leadership. Specifically, it is the combined mobilisation, by church leaders, of the four capabilities mentioned above that has made a difference. At the same time, a number of the churches and church-based organisations have a sound organisational base with seasoned and skilled leaders, but still do not make full use of these capabilities (e.g. the SDA or the Lutherans). So other factors must be at play as well.

Religious interpretations and orientation (values). The very different interpretations of the Bible has been a

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51 See 'PNG news media declares war on corruption', *Wansolwara Online*, 1 February 2002 (www.usp.ac.fj/journ/docs/news/wansolnews/2002/2002janfeb/wansol0102021.html).

52 The positive public assessment of church-based organisations was confirmed in the independent review of Nichols (2003). It analysed the community development work of Caritas PNG, the Anglican Church of PNG and ADRA PNG, and spoke very highly of these organisations and their Australian partners, Caritas, the Anglican Board of Missions and ADRA.

determining factor in the level and nature of engagement of the various churches in governance processes and public performance. During interviews, several leaders and functionaries of the Catholic Church and associated organisations in PNG referred to the social ethics and teachings of the church, which provide guidance on engaging in affairs beyond their spiritual mandate. Many of the other churches display varying degrees of involvement in and openness to participating in policy issues and governance. This is shaped by the interpretation of biblical texts, which in some cases require church communities to obey whatever government authority is in place. The engagement of the non-Catholic churches in PNG in fact ranges from primarily 'bonding' (by missions, or free churches), to the full-scale mobilisation of 'linking', 'bridging' and 'bonding' and the occasional 'use of public space' to express concerns about governance by the mainstream churches. The Catholic Church is most vocal on all four capabilities, while the Lutherans, Anglicans and the United Church are less so. At the other end of the spectrum are the Evangelicals who openly reject any form of political involvement.[53]

Shared understanding of a conceptual base and faith-based mandate. Effective work on policy processes and governance at different levels in society requires the organisations and individuals involved to have a well-understood and shared conceptual base that clearly stakes out their wider mandate and allows them to engage and contribute to change where necessary. Such a shared conceptual understanding is different from a strategy or work plan. Strategic documents may be formulated, or orderly work plans introduced that allow access to funding, but these strategies are not the essence. Rather, the representatives of Catholic organisations we interviewed referred to the above-mentioned social ethics and teachings, which open a window and permit them to see individual actions within a wider context. As one of them commented, 'It provides us with a conceptual base to guide our longer-term involvement in societal change processes'. Other denominations also show a shared understanding of their faith-based mandate, which can lead to varying degrees of involvement in governance-related activities - in some cases even to the extent of rejecting participation entirely.

Appropriate voicing mechanisms and communication channels. Organisations which have strong institutional structures and are clear as to who speaks on their behalf are, unsurprisingly, among the most effective in communicating their concerns or issues. Also important, however, is their reliance on formal and informal channels with and between different levels of society (national, regional, tribal, clan, extended family, household) and congregational units of the churches, depending on the issue. The Catholic Church is most 'effective' in this regard, as it has the advantage of a decentralised structure throughout the country (representing some 1.5 million people), combined with a strong presence at the national level which allows it to be attuned to change processes at multiple levels. Other denominations are less favourably positioned as they have more regional or local orientations, or are less likely to have access to the media, policy circles, or funding organisations at the central level.

Legitimacy through resilience, knowledge and service delivery. The legitimacy of churches and church-based organisations among the population is of prime importance to the acceptance of their governance-related actions. This legitimacy comes from their role in training generations of Papua New Guineans through formal and adult education, their record in staying on and persisting (even under difficult circumstances) and from reliable service delivery and long-term commitments in health and education. Their legitimacy also derives from organisational maturity and from 'knowing the game'. This is evident from the effectiveness of some church-based leaders who have functioned in civil society organisations for many years, or who have served in key government positions. In fact, the exposure of some of these leaders, both men and women, to different institutional environments has helped to build their reputations, and has opened up channels of communication which are indispensable for effective dialogue.

Giving importance to intermediary structures and organisations. The relatively successful contribution of the church sector to capacity development in PNG is also related to their shaping of an intermediary institutional landscape. Over many decades, a great number of higher level training institutes and universities have been set up to supply different sectors with qualified human resources. A wide range of inter- and intra-church councils, associations and networks have also been created with the aim of taking up social issues and advocacy, some of which date back to the pre-independence era. While these structures function as a kind of 'glue', bringing together stakeholders from

Notes

53 See, e.g., K. Kalmbach, *Die evangelikale Kirche von Manus*, in Wagner et al. (1989: 201-205).

different congregations and parts of the country, some have also demonstrated their potential to serve as hubs for policy dialogue or advocacy work.

Another underlying factor which might explain the performance of PNG churches is the *openness for cooperation and incorporation of external support,* although this research did not find sufficient evidence to support qualified statements in this regard. External support is likely an important element, but churches in PNG show very different approaches and attitudes to cooperation with their colleagues in other regions - some cooperate a great deal, while others are more passive or even hesitant to do so. Some church representatives also spoke openly about the type of cooperation and assistance they receive, while others seemed reluctant to share information, particularly on finances. This topic might merit further research, as it could reveal important lessons for future approaches to international cooperation with the church sector in PNG.

8 Issues and challenges for PNG churches

In looking at the churches as key players in civil society, we observed that they are more than just potential actors to contribute to improved governance and public performance. They are deeply involved in a variety of undertakings, ranging from peace building to service delivery, policy making and monitoring of government activities. Their historical and ongoing involvement in these areas makes it difficult to imagine PNG society without them. This point was stressed by all of the respondents interviewed in the context of this study.

While the work and intensive contacts with communities form the backbone of all church organisations in PNG - described above as 'bonding' - there are considerable differences between churches and their development organisations in terms of their involvement in 'linking', 'bridging' and the 'use of space'. The bigger churches have played an active role in 'linking' different levels of the public in order to enhance service delivery, but there are still considerable sensitivities which limit 'bridging', i.e. ecumenical work, between some of the congregations. However, some initiatives that have the potential to enhance governance work, such as the PNG Council of Churches, do merit attention and support. Also, lessons from the experiences of the CMC could be drawn upon and included under the heading 'unity in diversity' in other sectors and areas of work.

The 'use of space' is primarily a Catholic affair which has its roots in the Catholic social teachings and the nature of Catholic involvement in various societies throughout history. There are signs that other churches may be inclined to express their views in public more regularly, but it would be inappropriate for them to try to emulate the particular role of the Catholic Church as there are major differences in terms of mandate, experience, resources, scope of work and the type of communities with which they work.

Taking these various considerations into account, the church community can be seen as a partner in strengthening governance and public performance in PNG, but it is not always an 'easy' partner, given the diversity of actors, their backgrounds and history. Moreover, in working with churches, and for the churches themselves, there a number of challenges:

Absorptive capacity
Despite the generally positive picture of churches and church-based organisations as civil society actors in PNG, various independent observers, as well as church leaders, clearly suggest that their structures can only carry so much. During interviews, several church leaders expressed concern that loading additional tasks and responsibilities onto churches too rapidly and without proper support would likely lead to failure. Churches are aware of their strengths in working with communities, but underline that their capabilities with regard to policy engagement, networking, and even reconciliation and peace-building are not strongly developed.

Internal management and governance
A priority for the churches is to keep a strong membership, to manage their current activities effectively and to ensure that they can carry them forward in an increasingly difficult environment, which includes the deteriorating governance and security situation in PNG. Any diminution of their capacity for action or of their performance, in parallel with broader downward trends in PNG society, would be most injurious given the standards they have achieved and sustained for significant periods of time, and the extent to which

communities have come to rely on them. Thus, they see strengthening of their internal management capabilities and the governance of their own organisations as key priorities for the immediate future.

Towards a capacity development approach
Compared with other non-state actors, and even government, church organisations have demonstrated a tremendous level of engagement in 'capacity development'. Their involvement in primary and secondary schools, tertiary training institutes and vocational centres bears witness to this focus. But the notion of 'capacity development' is primarily interpreted by church actors in terms of human resource development, expressed, in part, through their running of various training institutes. It is much less related to higher-level capacity concerns. Issues like policy coherence, sector reforms, institutional incentives or strategy development appear not to be part of the regular frame of reference when plans for change are being considered. Rather, issues of this nature might be addressed within smaller groups, and responses to existing problems may emerge incrementally. A challenge, therefore, will be to engage the churches more systematically in capacity development, taking into account the multiple dimensions of the challenges and the benefits of shared understanding and common strategies. Such a focus might create opportunities for more strategic strengthening of capacities that some congregations currently do not regard as priorities, and hence do not actively seek to address.

Becoming a learning network
The literature documenting organisational theory and experiences in the private and public sectors points to the importance of organisational and sector learning as an aspect of and contribution to capacity development. Such learning does take place within some niches of the church community in PNG - e.g. to a certain extent within the context of the CMC's annual health conferences, or through occasional study tours. Learning also takes place through traditional communication channels, such as meetings, songs, storytelling, etc. But a more structured learning process, aimed at the sharing of information and good practices across boundaries, is not widely evident within individual church communities. Very few experiences are written up and documented, and approaches to learning are not the specific subject of wider church interaction, or of any type of knowledge-sharing strategy.[54] The establishment of formal and informal learning networks around social service delivery, traditional knowledge systems, community work, governance, etc., in which different congregations collaborate, but which are not bound to specific religious doctrines and which are open to wider participation, could enhance the churches' internal capacities, as well as their contributions to wider development processes in PNG. Interviewees indicated that peer exchanges with colleagues from the South Pacific region are valued and could be explored further. There might also be a role for tertiary institutions, such as the Divine Word University, to initiate information networking and adult learning circles.

Balancing country internal with external dynamics
Similarly, it is important to find the right balance between engaging with external partners and reinforcing of intra- and inter-church exchanges and networks. The twinning arrangements between some major churches in PNG and their colleagues in Australia, financed through AusAID's Church Partnership Programme, for example, offer opportunities to strengthen the institutional base of churches. But these types of interventions should not be pursued at the expense of supporting inter- and intra-church mechanisms in PNG, and should not undermine existing (and greatly needed) public, church-based interfaces and platforms which can facilitate interaction with government, as well as with other civil society actors.

Finally, calls for a heightened educational mandate and role for the churches in PNG society, as Gibbs (2004: 9) has expressed it, should also be carefully balanced against the challenges noted above. Despite their strengths, there is a real risk that the churches' potential to play a greater role and deliver increased results in the areas of governance and public performance is overestimated. And claims that 'the mainstream churches need to recognise that they have a profound mission to speak out forcefully on issues of political ethics' (Patience, 2004) should be left to the churches in PNG to decide and should not be considered a given in national, regional or global strategies that seek to enhance governance in the country.

Notes

54 Factors at play might include the limited resources available in PNG for research, learning or dissemination, competition among groups for those limited resources, conflicting organisational priorities (e.g. training, building new facilities), and PNG's oral traditions which, for some, may mean formal research or documentation are of lesser priority.

Annex 1: List of interviewees and focus group participants

Many of the individuals listed below were interviewed both for this and the parallel study of the health sector in Papua New Guinea.

Interviews in Papua New Guinea

National Department of Health (NDoH)
Dr Timothy Pyakalyia, Deputy Secretary /acting Secretary (at time of interview), NDoH
Dr Gilbert Hiawalyer, Director, monitoring and research, NDoH
Pascoe Kase, Director, policy, legal and projects, NDoH
Peter Eapaia, Director, finance
Mary Kurih, a/principal adviser, pharmaceuticals
Lynda Koivi, a/principal adviser information, HRM
Mar Roiroi, principal adviser
Judah Eparam, health promotion
Dr James Wangi, disease control
Andrew Posong, a/Director, monitoring & evaluation

Government of PNG (non-health personnel)
Peter Tsiamalili, OBE, Secretary, Department of Personnel Management
Lari Hare, Deputy Secretary policy, Department of Personnel Management
Robert Yass, Deputy Secretary operations, Department of Personnel Management
Joseph Sukwianomb, social policy adviser, Public Sector Reform Management Unit (PSRMU)
Clant Alok, inter-governmental relations adviser, PSRMU

Provincial officials
Dr Theo, provincial health adviser, Morobe
Thomas Kalana, provincial health officer, Madang
Haru Yahamani, provincial treasurer, East Sepik
Dr Geoffrey Mataio, CEO, Alotau Hospital, Milne Bay
Steven Gibson, provincial treasurer, Milne Bay
Dr Festus Pawa, provincial health adviser (PHA), Milne Bay
Connie Mogina, health information officer, Milne Bay
Constance Marako, community health liaison officer, Milne Bay
Matilda Philemon, family health services coordinator, Milne Bay
Titus Stomley, HSIP coordinator (training officer), Milne Bay
Anthony Mala, CCLO southern region: WCH Project, Milne Bay
Agnes Tapo, nursing officer, Milne Bay
Jenny Dobadoba, f/planning coordinator EPI/CCL Radio network, Milne Bay
Esther Barnally, supervisor, oral health, Milne Bay
Wilson Napitalai, healthy life promotion officer, Milne Bay
Jack Purai, coordinator, health extension, Milne Bay

Australian advisers
Dr Maxine Whittaker, HSSP deputy team leader (technical)
Dr Alan Hauquitz, HSSP hospital adviser, Madang
Dr Tony Partridge, HSSP health adviser, Morobe
Andrew McNee, adviser, NDoH

Church health officials
Vincent Michaels, government liaison, Churches Medical Council (CMC)
Fua Singin, general secretary, Evangelical Lutheran Church of PNG
Nena Naag, Lutheran provincial health secretary, Morobe
Abraham Yapupu, national secretary, Lutheran Health Services
Don Kudan, Lutheran provincial health secretary, Madang, and Chairman, Churches Medical Council
Pastor Thomas Davai, President, Seventh Day Adventist Union Mission
Baltasar Maketo, Director, CARITAS-PNG, Catholic Development Agency
Raymond Ton, justice, peace & development officer, CARITAS-PNG
Sr Tarsicia Hunhoff, national secretary, Catholic Health Services

Civil society and academia representatives
Misty Baloiloi, Vice Chancellor, PNG University of Technology
Fr Jan Czuba, President, Divine World University
Br Andrew Simpson, Vice-president, Divine World University
Mel Togolo, Transparency International
Katherne Mal, representative of the Provincial Assembly of Women, Madang
Matricia Mari, Madang Provincial AIDS Committee
Judy Michael, Madang Provincial AIDS Committee
Elizabeth Andoga, Save the Children in PNG
Tamara Babao, Save the Children in PNG
Anio Seleficari, Madang Provincial Council of Women
Taita Ranu, Madang Provincial Council of Women
Gisele Maisonneuve, Madang Provincial Council of Women

AusAID-PNG
Jeff Prime, first secretary
Tracey Newbury, first secretary, health
Dorothy Luana, activity manager
Cathy Amos, civil society

Interviews in Australia

AusAID - Canberra
Bernadette Whitelum, executive officer, Corporate Policy
Kerrie Flynn, research programme officer, Corporate Policy
Peter Lindenmayer, acting director, Health & HIV Section, PNG Branch
Ian Anderson, senior adviser, design and programmes
David Hook, PNG civil society/churches
Robert Christie, manager, economic analysis, PNG Branch
Rachael Moore, policy officer, PNG Branch
James Gilling, senior adviser, policy and programs (economics)
Kirsten Hawke, PNG Branch

Australian National University (ANU)
Dr Hartmut Holzknecht, visiting fellow, resource management, Asia-Pacific Programme
Professor Donald Denoon, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies
Cathy Lepani, PNG PhD candidate
Ruth Soavana-Spriggs, PNG PhD candidate
Jennifer Letau, PNG PhD candidate
Ruth Turia, PNG PhD candidate

Other
David Syme, CEO, Adventist Development Relief Agency (ADRA) Australia
Peter Heijkoop, Executive Director, Universal Financial Management Solutions, Pty. Ltd.

Annex 2: Glossary

This glossary includes terms relating to the two case studies undertaken in Papua New Guinea. A full glossary will be included in the final report on the broader international study on *Capacity, Change and Performance* coordinated by ECDPM.

Capacity: The ability of individuals, organisations or systems as a whole to perform effectively, efficiently, and in a sustainable manner.

Capability: Specific abilities that individuals, organisations or systems develop to do something in particular, such as to facilitate, learn, or to manage projects.

Capacity development: Capacity development has to do with the process of change and adaptation at a variety of levels, including the individual, the functional, the organisational, the multi-organisational and the institutional.

Empowerment: This aspect of capacity has to do with learning, participation and access to opportunity. It stems from personal engagement, identity and availability of choice, qualities that enable people to participate fully as citizens in society.

Endogenous change: The strategies and processes of change that take place within local organisations and systems and the factors shaping that change, including those associated with political economy, institutional incentives, organisational processes and human motivation.

Hard capacities: The tangible assets and resources of an organisation, such as its land, buildings, facilities, personnel and equipment.

Impact: Any effect, whether anticipated or unanticipated, positive or negative, brought about by a development intervention. In some cases, 'impact' refers to the long-term effects of an intervention on broad development goals.

Institution: A socially sanctioned and maintained set of established practices, norms, behaviours or relationships (e.g. trade regulations, land tenure, banking systems, and an organisation's staff rules) that persist over time in support of collectively valued purposes. Institutions have both formal and informal rules and enforcement mechanisms that shape the behaviour of individuals and organisations in society.

Institutional rules of the game: The humanly devised constraints that structure human interactions. They are made up of formal constraints (such as rules, laws, constitutions), informal constraints (such as norms of behaviour, conventions, self-imposed codes of conduct), and their enforcement characteristics.

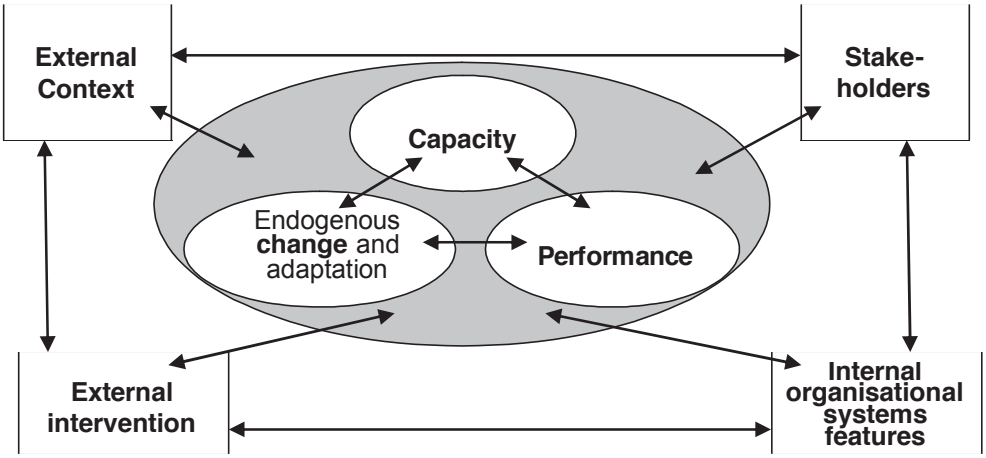
Organisation: A formal structure with designated roles and purposes; an entity composed of people who act collectively in pursuit of shared objectives. These organisations and individuals pursue their interests within an institutional structure defined by formal rules (constitutions, laws, regulations, contracts) and informal rules (ethics, trust, religious precepts, and other implicit codes of conduct). Organisations, in turn, have internal rules (i.e. institutions) to deal with personnel, budgets, procurement and reporting procedures, which constrain the behaviour of their members.

Soft capacities: The human and organisational capacities, or social capital of individuals, organisations and systems, including such things as leadership, trust, legitimacy, motivation, management knowledge and skills, systems and procedures (such as management information systems, and procedures for planning and evaluation).

Stakeholders: Individuals, groups or organisations whose interests and behaviours can, do or should affect the process of capacity and performance improvement.

Annex 3: Methodology

The analytical framework used for this case has been taken from the methodology developed for the wider ECDPM study on Capacity, Change and Performance (see inside front cover). A systems approach is used to yield insights into factors contributing to the functioning of churches and their contributions to governance and service delivery in PNG. The framework identifies seven independent dimensions: the external context, stakeholders, internal organisational features and resources, endogenous strategic management for change and adaptation, emerging capabilities, external interventions, and performance.



A desk study was undertaken prior to the fieldwork. The team relied on documentation from AusAID, ADB, the government of PNG and web resources. The principal sources consulted are listed in the references. Material collected for the parallel PNG health sector study was used for this study, and visa versa. The research team consisted of Joe Bolger, consultant and team leader for both case studies, Canada; Volker Hauck, Senior Programme Officer, ECDPM, the Netherlands; and Ms Angela Mandie-Filer, consultant and researcher, PNG. Research for both studies was carried out in PNG between 19 April and 4 May 2004, and entailed interviews and focus group sessions with stakeholders in Port Moresby, Milne Bay, Madang and Morobe. This joint field-work facilitated sharing of information and understanding of the processes that have shaped the capacities of PNG's community of churches, as well as within the health sector.

The team leader and the PNG consultant/researcher met with AusAID officials in Canberra at the outset of the mission. Along with the ECDPM staff member, all three participated in a debriefing workshop in Canberra immediately after the assignment. A workshop was also held at the end of the field assignment in PNG at which the study team discussed and sought to validate preliminary findings with various PNG stakeholders. A 'final draft' report was also sent to several interviewees for comments and to verify information and impressions articulated by the authors

Not surprisingly, there are limits to the study due to the time available, the breadth of the topic and the multitude of societal dynamics at play in a country as diverse as PNG. It was also not possible to contact the diverse and widely spread groups of Evangelical and Pentecostal churches. However, the methodology described above compensated for a number of these limitations. The findings can thus be seen as an aggregation and interpretation of different documents, data, views and opinions of stakeholders directly or indirectly involved with PNG's churches and the health sector. Having a research team with different backgrounds and the joint fielding of the researchers for the two case studies helped to create invaluable synergies.

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The European Centre for
Development Policy Management
Onze Lieve Vrouweplein 21
NL-6211 HE Maastricht, The Netherlands
Tel.: +31 (0)43 350 29 00
Fax.: +31 (0)43 350 29 20
info@ecdpm.org www.ecdpm.org

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The results of the study, interim reports and an elaborated methodology can be consulted at www.capacity.org or www.ecdpm.org. For further information, please contact Ms Heather Baser (hb@ecdpm.org).

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