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Papua New Guinea



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Country snapshot

- Population: 5.9 million**
- Achieved Independence: 1975*
- Life expectancy at birth: 60.7 years*
- Adult literacy rate: 57.8%*
- Access to improved water source: 40%*
- Under five mortality rate: 54 per 1000 births*
- Maternal mortality rate: 470 per 100,000 live births*
- HIV prevalence (15-49 years): 1.8%*

* Source: United Nations Human Development Report 2009/10
**Source: CIA

Program overview

CARE has worked in Papua New Guinea (PNG) since 1989, implementing long-term development projects and responding to emergencies including the El Nino drought and frost in 1997, the Aitape tsunami in 1998, the Manam Island volcanic eruption in 2004 and floods in the Oro province in 2007. CARE continues to assist during emergencies, most recently supporting remote communities in Wonenara Sub-district of the Eastern Highlands Province with emergency water, sanitation and hygiene training and provisions after a severe outbreak of dysentery in the area.

CARE has a lasting commitment to PNG, now employing over 40 staff in the country. Since the establishment of a CARE Office in Goroka in 2006, CARE has improved the quality of life of more than 13,000 people in 20 villages by addressing the challenges identified and prioritised by the communities themselves.

CARE is also supporting remote and disadvantaged areas with improved governance, agricultural practices, water, sanitation and hygiene, education and HIV prevention and care. CARE is also providing support for disaster risk management, working to address gender-based violence and providing women with increased opportunities to generate an income.

Community development

CARE is working with disadvantaged groups such as rural women and children on an integrated poverty alleviation program. Communities are now working with CARE to access opportunities such as non-formal education, innovative income generating activities and small grant schemes. CARE is supporting activities that focus on water supply and sanitation, nutrition, reproductive health, and HIV initiatives. CARE also provides training and support in areas such as governance, gender awareness, health and nutrition.

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In late 2009, a new initiative was developed for CARE to work in partnership with disadvantaged communities in remote rural locations in the Eastern Highlands Province. The project will improve access to key services through enhanced governance and will later move to incorporate remote parts of the neighbouring Gulf and Morobe Provinces.

Water and sanitation

As most government investments in PNG occur in and around urban centres, people living in rural areas have limited access to basic water, sanitation and hygiene systems. CARE assists people in PNG's Eastern Highlands, and Autonomous Region of Bougainville, with access to safe water and improved sanitation including toilets, showers, taps and facilities for washing clothes. In conjunction with these activities, health and hygiene education sessions help to further prevent the spread of disease.

Education

Only 57 per cent of the population in PNG is literate, leaving PNG with the lowest literacy rate in the Pacific. CARE aims to increase the number of adults participating in literacy training in the least developed district in the Eastern Highlands by 20 per cent over a 10 month period. With a special focus on women, CARE is raising awareness about the importance of adult literacy training and working to establish training venues and culturally-appropriate lesson tools.

Agriculture and natural resource management

PNG is richly endowed with natural resources, but their use has been hampered by the rugged terrain and the high cost of developing infrastructure.

CARE is working with communities to increase the diversity and yield of agricultural production and improve access to support from government and local services. CARE provides communities with seeds, farming equipment, training in farming techniques

and financial management, as well as support to develop local farming networks and agricultural plans.

HIV/AIDS prevention and care

With an estimated 1.8 per cent of the adult population HIV positive, PNG has the highest prevalence of HIV in the Pacific. Recent data suggests that HIV prevalence in rural PNG has outstripped urban prevalence, and yet rural communities lack adequate access to HIV prevention and treatment services.

CARE's activities improve awareness and education and help to address the underlying causes of vulnerability to HIV, with a specific focus on out of school youth. CARE supports affected families by strengthening the capacity of civil society organisations and empowering vulnerable communities to take greater control over their lives and the risks they face.

CARE also works to reduce the stigma and discrimination associated with HIV. Activities will ensure HIV affected families have improved access to mobile treatment and support services, as well as increased access to income-generating activities. In addition, CARE aims to address gender-based violence and gender inequality surrounding the issue.

Major Donors

The Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), AusAID NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP), European Union (EU), PNG-Australia HIV/AIDS Program (Sanap Wantaim), NZAID and various private and corporate donors.

CARE International members supporting current programs

CARE Australia, CARE Deutschland & Luxembourg, CARE Netherlands

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