



► Papua New Guinea Project Brief:

Employment-intensive Recovery and Reconstruction Response (E3R) 2019

SUMMARY

This project brief describes the Employment-Intensive Recovery and Reconstruction Response (E3R) project to mitigate the impact of a series of 7.5 and a 6.7 magnitude that hit the Highlands of Papua New Guinea, between the 26 of February and 8 of March 2019.

By using a local-resource based strategy, the ILO was able to assist successfully in the construction of gravity fed water supply systems and contribute to the transition towards livelihoods recovery.



Papua New Guinea has more languages than any other country (12% of the world's total), over 820 indigenous languages, most have fewer than 1,000 speakers.

There are four official languages: English, Papua New Guinean Sign Language, Tok Pisin and Hiri Motu.

English is the language of government and the education system, but it is not widely spoken.

Between the 26 of February and 8 of March 2019, a series of devastating earthquakes of 7.5 and a 6.7 magnitude followed by strong aftershocks, hit the Highlands of Papua New Guinea. These events affected over half a million people, causing fatalities, damaging homes and key infrastructure, (bridges, community access roads, houses, power supply, telecommunications), generated landslides, and affected water sources. Hela and Southern Highlands were the worst affected areas.

The government approached the United Nations to assist with the restoration efforts, by providing early recovery and reconstruction support to help the affected people to restore their livelihoods. This included short-term emergency employment support and longer-term assistance in restoring the damaged infrastructure. The ILO participated in the coordination efforts led by the Government's National Disaster Centre (NDC).

Constituents requested the ILO to provide technical assistance in designing and implementing employment-intensive infrastructure-based livelihood recovery activities and support the development of a longer-term employment-intensive reconstruction strategy also including disaster mitigation elements.

Background

During the post-disaster needs assessment water supply was identified as a priority for the region affected, the Nipa-Kutupu district where five different clans share the territory (Kipil, Kim, Hor, Epelem and Usi in the Komea wards, one and two). With funding support of Japan of US\$ 120.000, the ILO implemented the Gravity-fed water supply constructing two dams and installing nine tanks of 9000 litres each. With the limited resources, the project has made a huge impact implementing the project successfully over a space of two and a half months (September – November 2019). The project generated 60 workdays for 500 local people, 25% of them women. To date, this water supply project is the only tangible/visible infrastructure on the ground after the earthquake.

The Project

The overall development objective of the project was to enable livelihood recovery support to the earthquake affected-communities of the Nipa-Kutupu district, to generate decent jobs and income, improve access and use of basic infrastructure. By developing technical and other skills and promoting social cohesion through local resource-based approach to enhance the capacity of affected population to rebuild their lives and peaceful co-existence.

As direct result of the project, women and men on the project site and in neighbouring communities are now able to derive health and economic benefits from improved access to clean and safe drinking water.

Appropriate planning and consultation procedures:

- The population was informed that the project was funded under ILO/Japan in response to the earthquake.
- Announcement was made using different sources and local languages, including communications with and through village chiefs, pastors, local elites, councillors, and family ties.
- A feasibility study developed to determine the scope of the project.
- Due to high incidences of tribal conflicts in the highlands region, especially in the earthquake-affected areas, safety was considered a priority. With constant guidance from UNDSS, project staff had to use military escort in all the missions.



A local based structure managed the process:

- A Project Coordination Committee (PCC) with representatives of all interests (youth, disability, woman and girls, aged, etc.) was set up. This group was trained to manage the project and sustain its operation.
- The implementing agency Southern Highlands Technical College – SHTC, the only Technical Vocation Education Training (TVET) institution close to the project site, acted as implementing partner (IP) to provide technical assistance to the PCC when required. Its proximity guarantees project sustainability.

- The IP was instructed to utilize available local labour and natural resources to develop the water supply project to provide technical assistance to the PCC when required.
- A Local Expert was engaged as he understood the local context and was able to relate well, even in the face of pressures.
- The skilled labourers were selected from past graduates of SHTC (IP) from around the area.
- A Memorandum of Understanding of Statutory Declaration for the people of Komea was signed by the five-clan leaders to take ownership *and care takers of the project. Any deliberate damage cause is liable for both legal proceeding and person to rectify the damage caused.*



Achievements

- The project has promoted infrastructure development for peace. Under UNDAF, the project has contributed directly to peace and prosperity.
- The project generated 60 workdays for 500 local people, 25% of them women
- 11 skilled workers were employed, 9 men and 2 women, plumbing (5), masonry work (3) and carpentry (3).
- The workers were paid within the PNG minimum wages at the rural rate: skilled K5.00 per hour and the unskilled and casuals were paid K3.00 per hour. This rate is
- There is greater social cohesion now than ever before and therefore promoting peace in the communities surrounding the project site. The water supply has become the source for unity amongst the once warring clans



Basic skill training	No. trainees
Coordination committee and contractor	20
Skilled workers trained	11
Semi-skilled workers	21
Operation and maintenance committee	15



Water Supply Maintenance tools



The Technical Officer Officially handing the tools to the village leader.

The approach relies on all elements that are available at the local level, including local training institutions, skilled technicians and professionals.

The combined use of local resources and local participation from planning up to implementation, operation, and maintenance, has proven to be a technically efficient and economically viable way for local infrastructure works in developing countries. Besides

optimizing the socio-economic returns, the approach contributes to ensuring that infrastructure investments are directed to the local economy thereby creating job opportunities, stimulating the market, improving skills, entrepreneurship, and addressing local needs while safeguarding social and environmental aspects, cost-effectiveness, and maintaining quality and asset delivery.

Lessons learnt

- An important lesson learnt during this project was that not everyone tolerates change; therefore some opposition is expected. Even cultural norms can hinder progress; hence some understanding and tolerance can go a long way. Cultural and political sensitivities are worth paying attention to so as not to cause any inconveniences.
- The cargo cult mentality. People are dependent on their political leaders for goods and services. When the project was first announced, there were mixed feelings by the communities surrounding the project. Many arguments popped up because other wards and villages thought they missed out on a project delivered by their politicians.
- We had to educate the PCC, IP, Local Contractor, Local Leaders, Pastors and the beneficiaries to better explain the source of funding and the support provided by ILO/Japan.
- Project implementations, materials storage site has to be located in the vicinity of the project for safe keeping as well as easy handling.

Key ILO resources

- https://www.ilo.org/suva/public-information/WCMS_730848/lang--en/index.htm
- Video Documentary: https://www.ilo.org/suva/public-information/WCMS_730848/lang--en/index.htm
- Water Supply Story and Video: https://www.ilo.org/suva/public-information/videos/WCMS_732398/lang--en/index.htm
- ILO YouTube: <https://youtu.be/6WSsuTyIkIE>
- Promoting decent work for indigenous and tribal people through employment and investment programs, Employment Policy Briefs 2018
- ILO 2019 Local Resource-based approaches in water Works https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---emp_policy/---invest/documents/publication/wcms_719955.pdf