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Evaluation of SPSN Classroom Projects

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ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Description
CB	Capacity Building
CBO	Community Based Organization
CDO	Community Development Officer
CDW	Community Development Worker
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DCDO	District Community Development Officer
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade
DSIP	District Services Improvement Program
ENBP	East New Britain Province
EoI	Expression of Interest
FBO	Faith Based Organization
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GoA	Government of Australia
GoPNG	Government of Papua New Guinea
IB/GA	Implementation Briefing/Grant Agreement Signing
KPP	Komuniti Prosek Plen
LLG	Local Level Government
M & E	Monitoring & Evaluation
NCD	National Capital District
NDoe	National Department of Education
NGI	New Guinea Islands
NGO	Non-Government Organization
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PWD	Person with Disability
SPSN	Strongim Pipol Strongim Nesen
WDC	Ward Development Committee

ABSTRACT

This evaluation study was carried out on sixteen classroom projects of Strongim Pipol Strongim Nesen's (SPSN) Component 2 small grants program. The small grants program aimed to promote all of the six SPSN democratic governance (DG) principles to support successful project completion and outcomes. The DG principles are Participation, Responsiveness Accountability, Transparency, Equality and Legitimacy.

The three key outcome areas of the SPSN theory of Change are capacity building, democratic governance and access to services. The SPSN theory of Change is a hypothesis that increased capacity and democratic governance will result in increased access to services in the communities where projects are funded. The purpose of this study of a sample of 16 of the 33 SPSN funded classroom projects was to investigate i) the implementation of the democratic governance principles and ii) whether the communities were able to have access to and use of the services through the process of the grant and project management cycles of implementation.

The results of the study showed that these SPSN Classroom projects did promote the six democratic governance principles through the Komuniti Prosek Plen (KPP) and Implementation Briefing and Grant Agreement (IB/GA) processes. Further the implementation of the projects contributed immensely to the application of these DG Principles in the projects.

It was found that 8 projects – half of the sample – achieved well on all three outcome areas – capacity, democratic governance and access to services.

Particular highlights were:

- Achievement in capacity building were moderate with more attention needed to the supporting organisation executives to transferring their new capacities and skills to the community and community empowerment being stronger
- At least 3 or more of the 6 Democratic Governance principles were being promoted and practised by 80% (13) of the projects – a very good result
- 75% of projects were using the buildings for the intended purpose – school classrooms, and they had both trained maintenance teams and an agreed maintenance plan in place for sustainability.

With the SPSN intervention, grantees were well informed on the six democratic governance principles and the benefits they can have within the community. In the most successful projects, project executives together with parents and community are constantly working together to bring about change. They are informed of their obligations to each other and how they can co-exist and bring about change while maintaining their status. The community is knowledgeable on how to seek assistance and continue to demand answers from government officials as it is a right and not a privilege. Women, children and disabled now understand that they are also equal and can take part in decision making process.

1 INTRODUCTION

Providing a safe and conducive learning environment for children is a challenge in communities especially in rural areas of Papua New Guinea. This can be said as well for urban centres as maintenance for permanent classrooms remains an issue that seldom receives much attention. In rural communities, children rarely complete a full week's lessons due to interruptions caused by a leaking classroom roof, floods, or the lack of resource materials. This prompts communities to take ownership of schools whether it is permanent, semi-permanent or bush material and maintain the classroom the best way they can. Building of permanent classrooms was a priority for many communities and a total of 33 classrooms were funded under SPSN

The SPSN Component 2 small grants program supports activities that:

- promote Democratic Governance (DG) (linking citizens, civil society groups and government for public decision making);
- increase capacity for government, community organisations, and communities;
- leading to improved service delivery.

Projects needed to promote and demonstrate the DG principles of participation, responsiveness, accountability, transparency, equality and legitimacy. These principles were promoted during initial planning stages of SPSN Komuniti Prosek Plen (KPP) and Implementation Briefing and Grant Agreement (IB/GA) processes for projects, with SPSN providing the training and materials to community members and project executives on how SPSN would like to see democratic governance promoted and practised in all of its projects.

The study covered classroom projects managed by a recognised school (government or private) as well as those managed by Community Based Organisations (CBOs). The report presents key findings around the six principles of democratic governance, capacity building, and access to services. The findings were based on observations and focus group discussions held with individuals that were direct and indirect beneficiaries to the project.

2 METHODOLOGY

A sample size of 16 projects was selected from the 33 small grants projects funded under Component 2 to build or upgrade classrooms in 9 provinces. **The list of schools in the sample is in Appendix A.** The Monitoring and Evaluation team worked together to identify and develop key questions, and with the assistance of Community Development Workers, conducted the evaluation with field visits to collect quantitative and qualitative data. These visits were conducted in the months of April and May 2015. The data was analysed and presented in this report to SPSN and key stakeholders.

The evaluation had a participatory mixed method approach to collect the data. The participatory methods included focus group discussions, story gathering, transect walks and general observations. The interviewed sample comprised project executives or Board of Management (BOM) members, teachers, students (school children) and parents. Table 1 below gives a summary of the sample and the questions.

The key guiding questions included asking the participants how they promoted democratic governance principles that were important to the project. Questionnaires were used to find out how the community worked together, and how information was shared from the start of the project and how the principles were applied and demonstrated by the project executive and the community. Equality was measured by the extent to which women, men and children, including people from marginalised groups such as people with disabilities or HIV, gained benefit from the project activities, and whether this project also met the need through the principle of responsiveness. The principle of accountability was explored by asking project executives about their reporting system to SPSN and the community. Legitimacy questions focussed on how they exercised their authority during and after implementation of project.

Table 1 Summary of Focus Group Discussion Questions

Focus Group Discussion Groups	Questions
Project Executives or Board of Management (BOM)	Questions asked related to the practice and application of the six DG principles during construction; and changes observed after usage of the classroom. How could SPSN support the planning and construction of the project
Teachers	Asked about their involvement in the planning and construction of the classroom They were also questioned on the use and maintenance of the classrooms including learning outcomes of their students
Students (school children)	Students were asked general questions about the project executives, their learning outcomes and the parents input into the classrooms
Parents	Parents including community members were questioned on their participation during KPP, construction and decision making within the school. They were also asked about their observations of the classroom maintenance.

On the basis of the data collected on the field visits to the 16 classroom projects, each project was scored on a range of items for each of the outcome areas of:

- Increased capacity
- Promotion and demonstration of democratic governance
- Improved access to services.

3 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

For each of the three SPSN key outcome areas a number of aspects were measured, scored and tallied out of possible total scores. This enabled the study team to identify what results projects had achieved for each of the three outcome areas. The three outcomes areas are covered in section 3.1 to 3.3 below.

3.1 Increased capacity

In this study there were 5 key capacity result areas for this outcome:

- Project and financial management
- Governance
- Cross-cutting issues and child protection
- Project executive capacity
- Community capacity

Figures 1 and 2 show the results calculated for 2 of the capacity areas – these are both capacities that are important for sustainability as well as implementation of the projects.

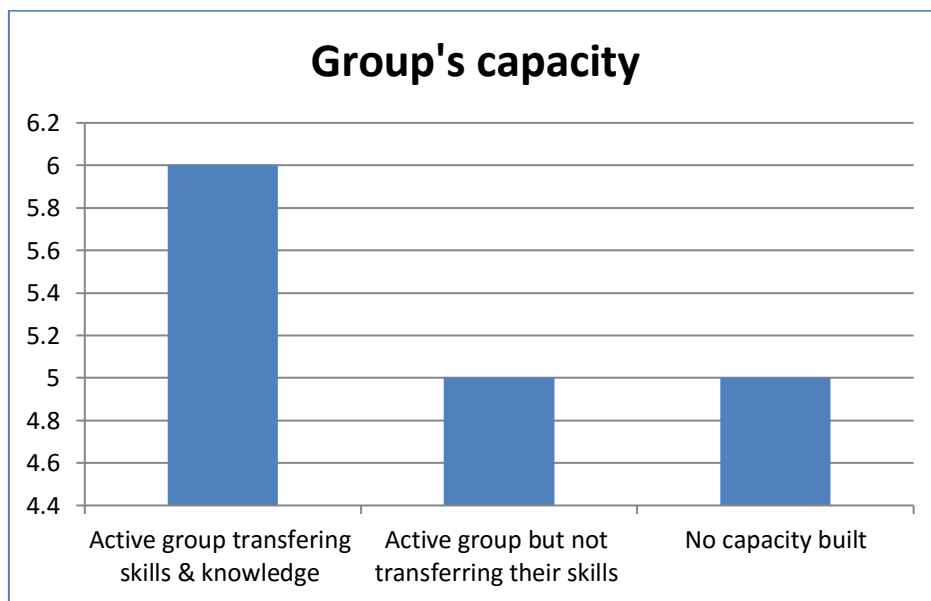


Figure 1: Capacity of the group as measured in the capacity of its executives

Figure 1 shows that 6 out of the 10 projects (37%) were assessed as having an 'active group transferring skills and knowledge. In a further 5 projects the executives were active but not transferring. In total 11 projects (69) were using the skills but the focus of support would need to be on transfer of skills in the future.

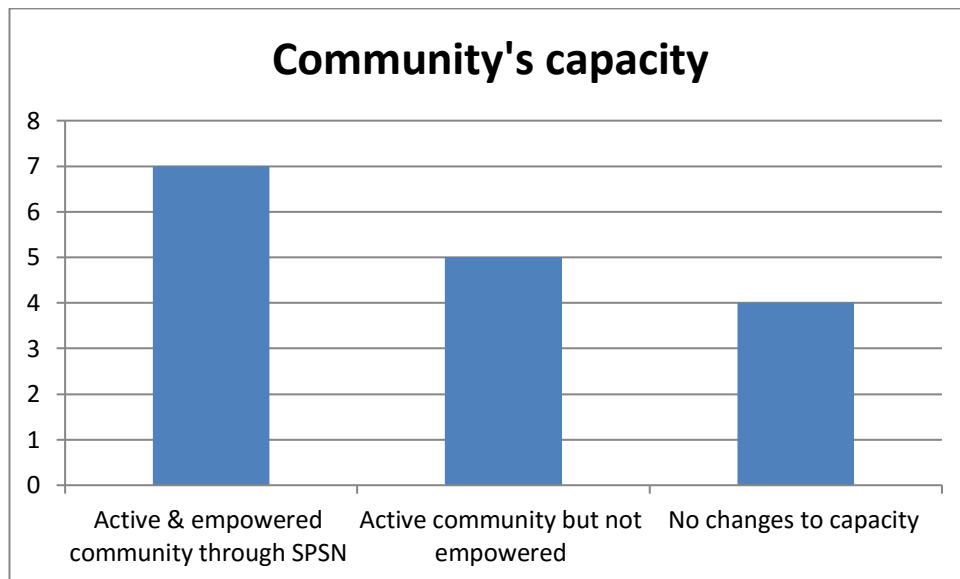


Figure 2: Capacity of the community

Seven out of 16 projects (43%) were assessed as being 'active and empowered communities with 5 being active but not empowered. A total of 12 projects (75%) were using their skills but with 9 projects (56%) not empowered or with no change to capacity this identifies the area where support would be important. Empowered communities are knowledgeable on how to seek assistance and continue to demand answers from government officials as it is a right and not a privilege.

As will be seen in comparison with the other two key outcomes areas capacity building needs more attention especially given the importance for sustainability.

3.2 Promotion and demonstration of democratic governance

There were two key result areas for this outcome:

- Promoting and demonstrating democratic governance principles
- Use of existing and new linkages with government and/or other CSOs and communities

Results for the first of these is shown in Figure 3 on the promotion and demonstration of DG principles.

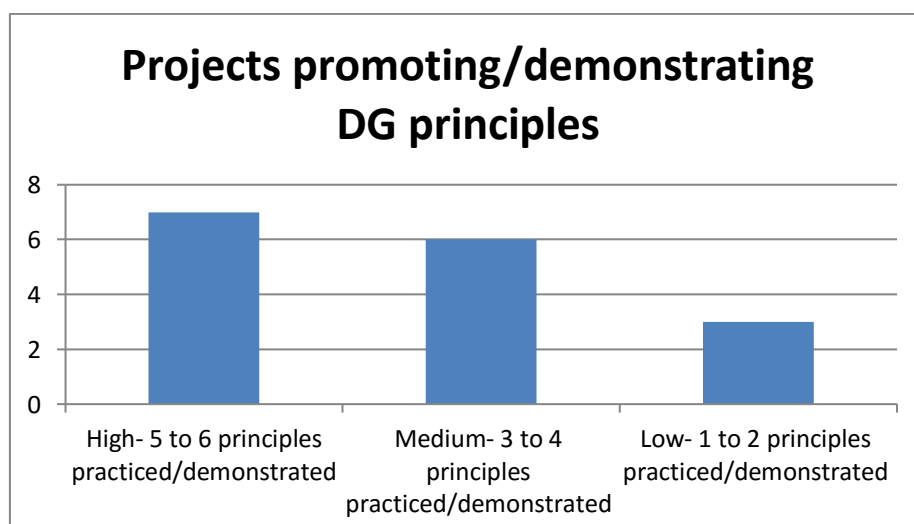


Figure 3 Promotion and demonstration of DG principles

As can be seen in Figure 3 a total of 13 projects (80%) were positively assessed in relation to 3 – 6 principles, with only 3 projects being positively scored for 2 or less principles. All projects promoted at least 1 DG principle and in fact 81% were promoting and demonstrating at least half of the Principles – i.e. at least 3 principles. As further information on DG principles, Figure 4 shows ‘the most to least practiced principle’

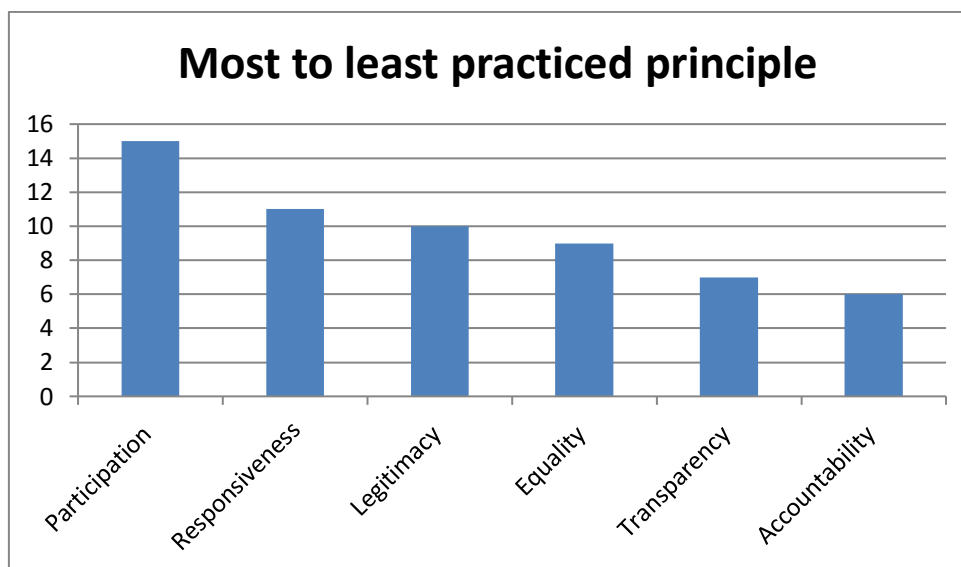


Figure 4: Most to least practiced DG principles

Participation and Responsiveness were highest with Transparency and Accountability the lowest. While these results show good progress, only 6 projects demonstrating accountability and 7 practicing Transparency indicates the need for more support on these issues.

In commenting on the findings the study team reported that because children had been in bush material buildings and there was an increased number of children in the communities, parents were prompted to participate in the project meetings for construction of new classrooms. The project executives organised male volunteers to help clear the land to build the classroom. While mothers and the womenfolk assisted to provide lunch for the carpenters, and other community members helped with the construction. Meetings were held and communities spoke highly of the good working relationship with the school. Women, children and disabled now understand that they are also equal and can take part in decision making process.

The second result area for DG was use of existing and new linkages with government and/or other CSOs and communities. Figure 5 shows the results.

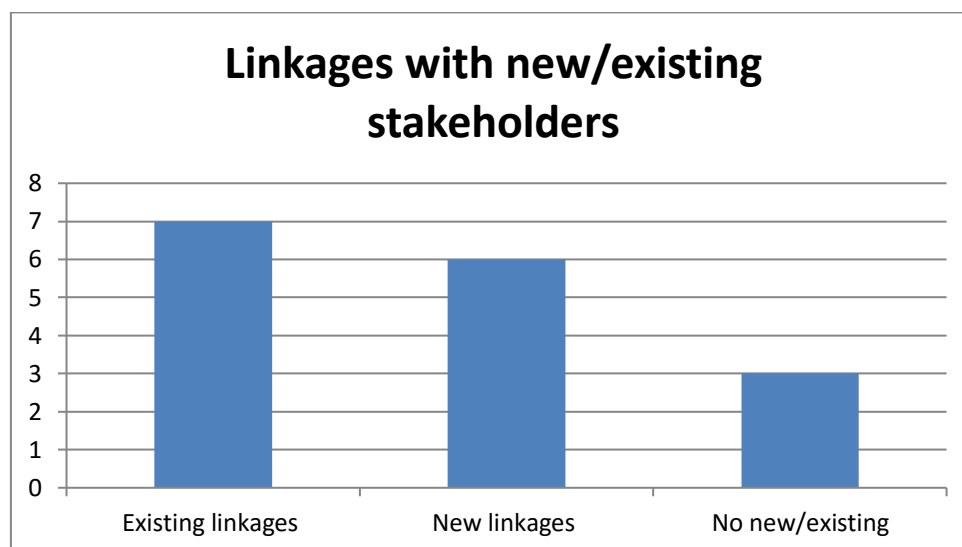


Figure 5: New and existing linkages with other stakeholders

In Figure 5 it can be seen that 13 projects (81%) were found to have new and existing stakeholder linkages. An important foundation of democratic governance, the creation of new linkages, was reasonably good (6 projects – 37%).

The study team had observed that SPSN's ways of working through their grantees improved the regularity of meetings. For example, parents and citizens had formal meetings throughout the school year as part of the school's obligation to the community, which indicated the community's participation. This in turn, allowed for the school projects to sustain and maintain their operations. The SPSN intervention also assisted to link the community with other government agencies and stakeholders to demand for services which greatly assisted in the completion and usage of the classrooms. The government collaborative efforts towards the classrooms project were technical advice, logistics and transportation of materials to the project site. Assistance came from different levels of the government (provincial, district and ward level)

3.3 Improved access to services

Results assessed in relation to the classrooms were:

- Coverage and accessibility
- Quality of classrooms
- Usage
- Learning environment
- Existence of a maintenance team
- Sustainability/maintenance plan in place

The total score possible for this outcome area was 21, and 10 out of the 16 projects (62%) achieved a score of 17 or more out of 21 – i.e. more than 80% success. The other 6 projects achieved between 57% and 75% success.

Use of the classrooms primarily for school activities once they are constructed is a key issue for SPSN and here in 12 out of 16 projects (75%) the building were primarily use for school. Four schools were using the buildings but not as a school. Maintenance of the buildings is vital and the 12 projects using them as a school (75%) were reported to have trained maintenance teams with a maintenance plan, which gives a good foundation for sustainability of this service.

Overall there are good results for improved service delivery.

3.4 Summary across the outcomes areas

Part of the summary of results for these classroom projects can be seen in Figure 6 below in that it was found that 8 projects – half of the sample – achieved well on all three outcome areas – capacity, democratic governance and access to services.

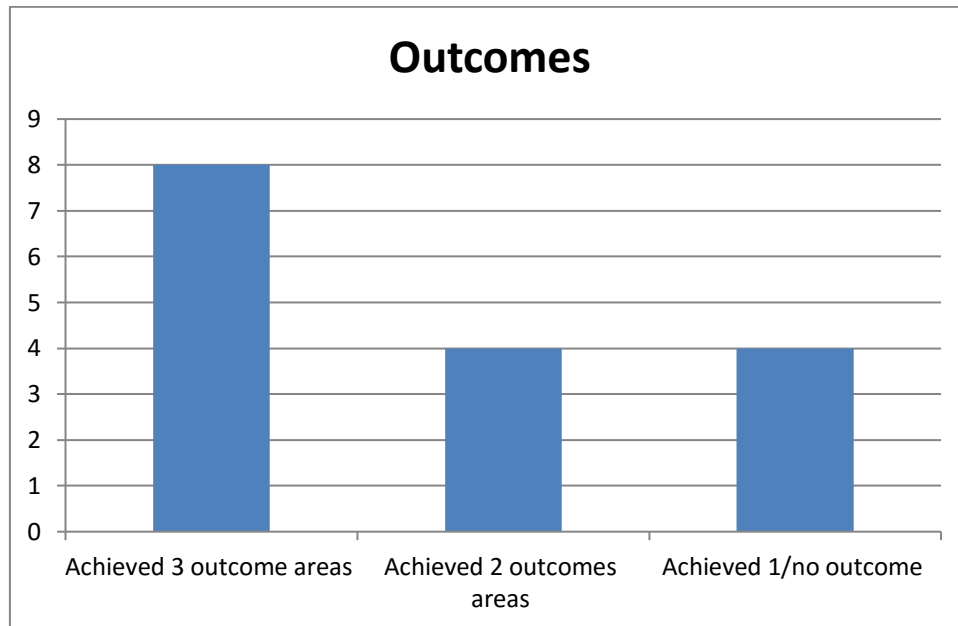


Figure 6: Achievements by outcome area for classroom projects

A further 4 projects (25%) achieved well in at least 2 outcomes areas but an equal number (4 – 25%) showed achievement on only 1 or no outcome areas.

Particular highlights were:

- Achievement in capacity building were moderate with more attention needed to the supporting organisation executives to transferring their new capacities and skills to the community and community empowerment being stronger
- At least 3 or more of the 6 Democratic Governance principles were being promoted and practised by 80% (13) of the projects – a very good result
- 75% of projects were using the buildings for the intended purpose – school classrooms, and they had both trained maintenance teams and an agreed maintenance plan in place for sustainability.

4 CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION

The study team reported that the classroom projects had proved to be good opportunities to foster and encourage the principles of democratic governance on the part of SPSN and that there had been good outcomes on access to services.

They further commented that as this is a learning environment, teachers are in the best place to promote and apply these principles daily to show and impress upon the young minds the values of Participation – where everyone is involved; Accountability – keeping honest records and reporting it; Responsiveness – a need identified is truly everyone's desire and not just a minority; Transparency – information sharing; Equality – men, women, children, disabled people are taken into account and treated equally; Legitimacy – all adhering to the law or authority that appointed by the people; in all these leaders can be born from instilling these great principles.

With the SPSN intervention, grantees were well informed on the six democratic governance principles and the benefits they can have within the community. In the most successful project executives together with parents and community are constantly working together to bring about change. They are informed of their obligations to each other and how they can co-exist and bring about change while maintaining their status. The community is knowledgeable on how to seek assistance and continue to demand answers from government officials as it is a right and not a privilege. Women, children and disabled now understand that they are also equal and can take part in decision making process.

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APPENDIX A: PROJECTS IN CLASSROOM STUDY

No	GA #	Project	Region	Province	District
1	S006	Asaro Elementary School	Highlands	Eastern Highlands	Daulo
2	S116	Papen Primary School	Highlands	Jiwaka	Anglimp/South Waghi
3	S135	Longkape Elementary School	Highlands	SHP	Imbonggu
4	S112	Koma Pang Community Base Association	Highlands	WHP	Tambul/Nebilyer
5	S134	Kuare Tinuda Association	Highlands	SHP	Ialibu/Pangi
6	S092	Kakai Elementary School	Highlands	Chimbu	Sinsina/Yongomugl
7	S171	Kalet Community Development Group	Highlands	Hela	Koroba/Kopiago
8	S019	Bravin Play School	NGI	ENB	Kokopo
9	S022	Ralalar Ward Development Committee	NGI	ENB	Kokopo
10	S100	Gelegele Elementary School	NGI	ENB	Rabaul
11	S104	Menabonbon Ward Development Committee	NGI	ENB	Kokopo
12	S054	Ngavalus Primary School	NGI	NIP	Kavieng
13	S108	Varzin Elementary School	NGI	ENB	Gazelle
14	S046	Rabaulu Primary School	NGI	ARoB	Siwai
15	S106	Napapar Elementary School	NGI	ENB	Central
16	S061	Kupiano Elementary School	Southern	Central	Abau District



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