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**Analysing Project Management *culture* and *practice* of public managers
in Papua New Guinea
A case study of the National AIDS Council Secretariat.**

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in
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By

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Abstract

“Life is about managing the things that we tolerate. What are you no longer willing to tolerate? What is currently bad enough for your life that you are willing to let it go?” (DiPietro, 2008, p. 19).

This thesis analyses and explores the Culture and Practices of Public Managers involved in implementing projects in Papua New Guinea. Project Implementation is an integral part of the overall project management cycle that has received a great deal of attention as a major development problem. In order for us to gain an insight of the theme of the thesis, the National AIDS Council Secretariat (NACS) was selected as the site for this case study. To investigate ‘how things were done in NACS’, a variety of approaches were used to gauge the views, perceptions and experiences of programme and project managers in NACS, to help us understand the factors that affect staff practices.

Poor management practice and the lack of a sound management culture and work ethic in PNG, is often blamed for the break down in the state’s capacity to deliver public goods and services to its citizens. Performance culture and good practice by public managers employed in State Institutions to handle projects have regressed in the last three decades, and as a result, projects are seen as failing to meet the goals and objectives of the state. The research question which the case study had to answer was: “What is the nature of project management culture and practice among public sector managers in the National AIDS Council Secretariat? The study sought to investigate the extent to which the areas of command and control, project training, project knowledge and staff motivation were important integral managerial qualities in the attitudes and practice of public managers. The study showed that, of the four elements of managerial practices investigated, the inability of public managers to assume leadership, command and control and motivate their staff, were the most important elements missing among managers in NACS. Based on the findings and the evidence collected during the research, this thesis argues for substantial capacity building programmes to be designed and conducted around ‘programme and project management’ roles in state institutions and agencies in PNG, as the way to improve staff capabilities so as to enable project managers and their staff to efficiently implement projects.

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