



PAPUA NEW GUINEA

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Introduction

This report provides an overview of the Papua New Guinea education system and the entrenched challenges and affirmative action taken by the government in addressing them. Premised on this scenario, COL could have an idea on how specific assistance could be accorded in the medium and long term.

Background

Papua New Guinea has a population of 7.5 million people with a bigger education system compared to other smaller Pacific Island states. There are 3,561 Primary Schools, with an enrolment of 946,320 and 129 high schools with an enrolment of 52,787 in 2014. Only a percentage will be selected for continuation into Secondary Schools to continue to Grades 11 and 12. Papua New Guinea has 136 Secondary Schools with the current enrolment of 21,000 confirmed registered students in 2014.

The number of Grade 12 completions in the last decade has increased dramatically. In 2013 there were about 18,000 completions; however, only 5000 entered tertiary institutions.

The Higher Education Sector consists of 31 approved institutions: 6 are universities, 6 technical colleges, 3 business colleges, 8 teachers colleges and 8 nursing colleges.

Both the lower and higher education sectors are bigger and come with major challenges in the aspects of access, equity, quality and financing. The Government, conscious of entrenched issues, made major decisions to address some of these issues and will address them through Open, Distance and Flexible Learning (ODFL).

Key Highlights and Challenges

1. Institutional incapacity (expertise, ICT-enabled learning).
2. Shortage of academics and trained teachers for delivery of distance education.
3. Content development (Instructional design).
4. ODFL Policy Implementation (in tertiary institutions).
5. Resource Rich Projects (LNG, Mining, Fisheries and Oil).
6. Government Policy on increasing access to education including fee free education up to Grade 12.

7. Quality assurance and control over cross border education.

Status of ODFL in PNG

Policies:

- 1) ODFL Policy in Papua New Guinea has been developed incrementally for both higher and lower level education.
- 2) Tuition Fee Free Policy embarks on increasing access and addressing equity challenges.
- 3) Policy implementation is peaking in higher education but gathering momentum at lower education.

Institutional Capacity:

- 1) Staff in ODL institutions is drawn from the conventional education system and need training in ODFL. In-country capacity for ODFL training needs to be developed. COL conducted workshops on quality assurance and instructional design.
- 2) Specialised consultants may be employed to conduct a study on training needs of ODFL staff of various institution and make recommendations on the steps to be taken.
- 3) World Bank (WB)/ National Department of Education (NDOE) / Flexible, Open and Distance Education (FODE) Project have provided inputs for training of FODE staff and ICT development. COL needs to field a specialist to identify the areas of cooperation to complement project activities for capacity building.

Teacher Training:

- 1) Government policy on Education for All and fee free primary and lower secondary education will require new teachers for increasing enrolment. Untrained teachers are to be trained to upgrade teaching qualifications and content knowledge.
- 2) Conventional teacher training is not adequate to meet teacher training needs and the Government is looking for alternatives to train teachers.
- 3) COL Education Specialists need to visit PNG to promote ODL teacher training within the NDOE.

ICT Enhanced Learning:

- 1) Low level of infrastructure and shortage of skilled manpower are two important impeding factors for development of ICT enhanced learning in PNG.
- 2) There are initiatives for development of infrastructure but progress has been slow or frustrating (UPNG, UOT, DWU institutions). The WB / NDOE / FODE Project provides an ICT consultant for the development of a data base.

- 3) COL may consider providing specialist services to study interfacing different ICT needs with WB project input.

Content Development:

- 1) A workshop was conducted by the COL Consultant to develop instructional design capacity. The workshop was a success as the participants were involved in providing training to course writers in their respective institutions.
- 2) Workshops were also conducted locally with assistance from PNGADE to train course writers for content development.
- 3) Lack of understanding and access to Open Education Resources and capacity to adapt in local context.
- 4) WB / NDOE / FODE Project has input for specialist services to develop capacity in content development.
- 5) COL to promote OER movement in PNG in collaboration with local counterpart.

Framework to ODFL in HE:

- 1) The Commission for Higher Education approved a submission to the National Executive Council for the establishment of the PNG Open University.
- 2) COL assistance will be required as and when NEC approves the establishment of PNG Open University.

Top Priorities for 2014-2016

1. Establishment of the PNG Open University.
2. Institution capacity building in instructional design and collaboration for content development and development of capacity through training and attachment/study visit.
3. Promote Open Education Resources movement.
4. Development of in-country capacity for ICT enhanced learning.
5. Development of a policy framework for teacher training through open and distance learning.

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