



Australian Government

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

DFAT MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO THE PNGAUS PARTNERSHIP SECONDARY SCHOOLS INITIATIVE REVIEW

In April 2021, DFAT commissioned a review of the progress made to date by the PNGAus Partnership Secondary Schools (PASS) initiative, implemented by Australia Awards Papua New Guinea (AAPNG) from 2019 to 2021. The review also looked at adjustments for a second two-year phase and possible future Australian investments to support improvements in secondary education in PNG.

Despite the challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, the PASS initiative was able to make progress towards all three of its objectives: (1) improved capabilities— individual and organisational—of secondary schools; (2) strengthened leadership qualities of students and educators; and (3) strengthened people-to-people links between PNG and Australia. The review found the initiative became increasingly focused on strengthening individual capabilities of students and educators in PNG in addition to the initial focus on strengthening the people-to-people links between Australia and PNG.

The PNG National Department of Education and DFAT welcome the review findings and provide a response to the recommendations for the next phase and the future of secondary education support by Australia below.

Recommendations for the next two-years of implementation

No.	SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS	RECOMMENDATIONS	RESPONSE (AGREE/PARTIALLY AGREE/DISAGREE)	ACTION PLAN AND TIMEFRAME
1.	The absence of a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework with specific performance indicators is a critical limitation on determining the extent of progress for the PASS initiative.	Revise the PASS initiative theory of change (ToC) and the monitoring and evaluation framework (MEF) and Plan to provide guidance to activity design and measurement of progress.	AGREE	September – October 2021 AAPNG will provide DFAT with a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework with Theory of Change for -PASS

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				deliverables for the next two years (2021-2023).
2.	Some PNG schools prefer partnering with an Australian school that share a similar demography and school context; and some Australian schools would like to exit the program due to limited engagement with their partner school since 2020.	Conduct a review of current school partnerships to assess interest in continuing and to seek closer matching to the needs of PNG schools prior to additional school partnerships being established.	AGREE	September – December 2021. AAPNG to audit the partnership schools and put forward options for NDoE and DFAT to endorse.
3.	There is a high level of interest in sharing the knowledge and learning from PASS schools to other PNG secondary schools. Implementation of the proposed provincial learning network will require: (i) a high level of knowledge and skills of the PNG coaches from the 'hub' school that will support other schools in the 'cluster'; (ii) additional resources and mechanisms to support the participation of cluster schools, including costs for possible travel, connectivity, teaching and learning resources, and release/substitution time of the hub.	Determine operational requirements for supporting the 'hub and cluster' model – the approach being proposed to extend the knowledge and skills gained by the 12 PASS initiative schools (hubs) to other secondary schools within their area (cluster).	AGREE	October – December 2021. AAPNG will identify cluster schools and develop a cluster model plan. DFAT and NDoE to endorse the proposed cluster school plan and schedule.

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4.	Formation of additional partnerships with PNG-based organisations that have specialised knowledge and skills will increase value for money and cost efficiency. Collaboration with PNG organisations would serve to strengthen capacity to support secondary education within PNG.	Identify and establish links between the PASS initiative and PNG-based organisations to enrich the delivery of activities in specialised knowledge and skills.	AGREE	October 2021 –January 2022 AAPNG to approach PNG based organisations to participate in delivery of selected activities.
5.	The PASS initiative successfully promoted gender equality through a twin-track approach of: (i) integrating gender equality as part of all activities; and (ii) providing dedicated activities to improve the participation of women – e.g. the Women in Leadership activity.	Continue to promote gender equality through the twin-track approach of mainstreaming and provision of dedicated activities.	AGREE	Ongoing (2021-2023) AAPNG to develop a gender workplan to be endorsed by DFAT and NDoE. Gender activities should be clearly identified and have a specific target. Conduct a rapid gender review and engage a gender advisor to guide the design of future activities.
6.	Limited progress is observed for disability inclusion in the investment. This is in part explained by the perception that there are no students or teachers living with a	Implement Disability Inclusion awareness activities.	AGREE	Ongoing (2021-2023) AAPNG to develop a disability awareness activity for students and educators.

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	disability in the selected PNG schools.			
7.	PNG and Australian teachers and principals expressed interest in co-teaching/teaching and collaborate to facilitate learning of students and themselves.	Pursue opportunities for co-design and co-delivery of activities between AAPNG and NDoE, including co-teaching/team-teaching and learning facilitation at the school level.	AGREE	Ongoing (2021-2023) Assess level of interest and level of support required to implement. AAPNG to work with schools, PEAs and NDoE to identify aspects of the curriculum that can be delivered in a co-teaching or learning facilitation method.
8.	There was improved understanding of leadership concepts. Two activities specifically targeted leadership skills – ‘Women in Leadership’ and ‘Leading Learning’. The Leading Learning activity has contributed to building and strengthening the capabilities of education officials, school leaders and teachers.	Continue the Leading Learning programming and open participation to additional PNG educators.	AGREE	Ongoing (2021-2023) Incorporate Leading Learning activity in the implementation plan.

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9.	The PASS focus on STEM influenced NDoE progress to approve the Schools of Excellence Policy and roll-out the STEM curriculum.	Align PASS initiative STEM-related efforts with the new PNG STEM curriculum.	AGREE	September - December 2021 AAPNG to identify STEM related activities for PASS aligned with STEM curriculum. AAPNG to support NDoE application of National Schools of Excellence (STEM) policy.
10.	The PASS Learning Bank (online resource repository of digital program activities and other websites) that provides teaching and learning resources for PASS schools should be expanded to wider PNG schools through handover of site management to NDoE following completion of PASS.	Engage in early discussions with the NDoE to sustain the Learning Bank to provide future access to PASS initiative teaching and learning resources.	AGREE	Develop a sustainable plan for the transition of Learning Bank from PASS to NDoE with sufficient time for handover.
11.	Observations made during the review by those interviewed and by the review team found that students who participate when in Grade 9 continued to be involved with PASS activities in 2020 and into 2021, while students who were in Grade 11 in 2019 had graduated by the	Engage younger students in school partnership activities where possible.	DISAGREE <i>PASS already works with the younger students in the partner schools at the commencement of each cohort. The six national high schools (NHS) are Grade 11-12 only, the six provincial secondary schools are Grade 9-12. The cohort was not refreshed in 2021</i>	

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	time of the review. The observation made was that by Grade 11 most students become increasingly focussed on academic and graduation requirements, as opposed to Grade 9 students.		<i>due to the program disruptions in 2020.</i>	
12.	The PASS initiative should avoid competing with school requirements and avoid teachers and administrators feeling 'overloaded'.	Schedule PASS initiative activities as much as possible during school breaks/holidays.	AGREE	April, July and September 2022 (School breaks) AAPNG to schedule PASS activities over school breaks and during teachers' in-service week where possible.

Recommendations for future investments by Australia in secondary education in PNG

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13.	<p>Australian support should adopt a long-term perspective to achieve sustainable improvements in secondary education.</p> <p>Australia will need to consider four companion principles: (i) achieving sustainable change within the secondary education system will take time; (ii) designing, testing, and learning from activities to inform change requires a consistent effort, guided by an unfragmented long-term plan; (iii) sustainable change requires a whole-of-system capacity development approach; and (iv) support provided must be aligned with and guided by the priorities and existing capacity of the Government of PNG.</p> <p>Australia should initiate dialogue with the Government of PNG to determine the type and scope of future Australian support to secondary education in PNG.</p>	Determine at an early stage the type and scope of future support by Australia to secondary education in PNG – guided by the following three recommendations (#14, #15, and #16).	AGREE	<p>April/May 2022</p> <p>Partnerships for Improving Education includes scope for future secondary design.</p>
14.	From a sustainable development perspective, Australia's investment in secondary education in PNG will need to adopt an approach that supports and builds sustainable capacity at all levels of the education system. This approach is consistent with the system strengthening priority of DFAT's PNG Education and	Shift from the current PASS initiative model to a longer-term, whole-of-system, capacity development model, in which lessons from implementation inform policy and systems reform.	<p>PARTIALLY AGREE</p> <p><i>Future secondary education investment is also dependent on the GoPNG priority identified in the PNG National</i></p>	<p>June/ July 2022</p> <p>Include secondary education in the Partnerships for Improving Education design.</p> <p>Internally discuss priority area of secondary education under overall</p>

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	Leadership Portfolio Plan 2018–2022. Australia’s support can and should be provided to build and strengthen PNG’s education system from a whole-of-system perspective – and this support will need a long-term commitment.		<i>Education Plan and in line with other investments in the ELPP including new Partnerships for Improving Education design.</i>	Education and Leadership Portfolio Plan including public diplomacy aims.
15.	PASS initiative focuses on ‘connections’ between PNG and Australian schools. There would be considerable benefit in extending the ‘connections’ in place at the school level to other levels within the PNG and Australian education systems.	Establish ‘twinning’ arrangements at different levels of PNG and Australia education systems.	AGREE	Q1 2023 A new design for future engagement in secondary should explore the value for money proposition of twinning arrangements as an activity to achieve end of program outcomes.
16.	The demand for quality secondary education in PNG outstrips the current ability of the Government of PNG to meet those demands. Population growth, economic imperatives for a knowledgeable and skilled workforce, and a government budget that is under pressure require that others be engaged in supporting the delivery of secondary education. Future Australian investments in secondary education should model engagement with communities, civil society, the private sector, church agencies, bilateral donors, and multilateral agencies potentially through the	Support the NDoE and PDoEs to engage with other organisations in PNG to support improvements in secondary education – expanding access to specialised knowledge and skills, as well as resources.	AGREE	Ongoing. Identify relevant organisations that can support quality secondary education delivery by NDoE and PDoE. Establish the PASS Stakeholder and Technical Working Group in October 2021 to model this collaboration.

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	Local Education Group (Global Partnership for Education).			