Papua New Guinea
Flexible and Open Distance Education Project

Increasing opportunities for out-of-school youth to gain recognised qualifications.

Background
The Flexible Open and Distance Education (FODE) centre is the only public distance learning institution serving Papua New Guinea's upper primary and secondary school leavers. It provides English, Mathematics, Science and Social Science courses that are primarily delivered through correspondence-based distance learning, supported occasionally by on-site tutors and teachers. FODE has 20 provincial centres that coordinate services provided within their respective provinces, as well as about 25 affiliated study centres. Although the institution has significant potential to support a relatively large, under-served and growing segment of out-of-school youth, it has suffered for many years from inadequate resources and technical support. At the same time, demand for FODE's programs continues to rise. Currently, FODE has an enrolment of about 46,000 active students, as compared to about 65,000 students currently enrolled in formal secondary education throughout the country.

About the Project
The development objective of this Flexible and Open Distance Education (FODE) Project is to increase the number of out-of-school youth who complete recognised secondary diploma and certificate equivalency programs. There are four components to the project.

Component one aims to improve the quality of distance learning curricula and the quality and availability of instructional materials. The project will support the development of new curriculum materials and/or upgrade existing materials for Grades 7 through 12, using FODE's standardised distance learning format.

Component two aims to improve the overall quality of services provided by FODE. Within the FODE central campus and the 20 provincial centres, interventions will be focused on improving performance through staff training, simplification of forms and procedures, establishing and implementing an Information Technology (IT) plan, and selecting and engaging subject tutors in the provincial centres.

Component three aims to expand FODE's existing Grade 11-12 enrolment program into at least one secondary school in each of Papua New Guinea's twenty provinces. Project support will reimburse secondary schools for the use of their facilities, provide classrooms with small equipment and instructional materials, and cover the cost of after-hours teaching by existing subject teachers in each school.

Component four aims to provide FODE with appropriate IT technology and train FODE staff to effectively operate that technology. It will provide funding for an IT needs assessment, procurement of IT equipment, establishment of an IT plan for FODE, and implementation of the plan to fully integrate the use of IT into the administration, curriculum development, materials production and teaching/learning activities conducted by the organisation.

Location: The project will be implemented using the 20 FODE centres based in the provinces.

Approval Date: 11 January 2011
Closing Date: 30 April 2016
Total Project Cost: US$6 million

Donors:
World Bank (International Development Association)—US$5 million
Government of Papua New Guinea—US$1 million

Implementing Agency: Papua New Guinea Department of National Education

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