



KOKODA COLLEGE

Response to Equity Economics' Project Evaluation: December 2021
4 February 2022

Introduction

Equity Economics conducted an independent evaluation on KTF's Kokoda College project between October - December 2021, assessing the effectiveness of the project against its main objectives over five criteria. As a result of their findings, a number of suggestions were made to continuously improve the project's design to achieve long-term outcomes and impact.

This document covers KTF's responses and proposed actions to the evaluation for continued and improved success of the program.

Recommendations and KTF actions

EE: KTF should conduct a commencement survey to capture student's intentions and ensure courses are aligned to student goals.

KTF will strengthen its current student enrolment processes by expanding its student commencement survey. Whilst we currently collect data on students' desire to become teachers or health workers after they matriculate, we will expand this process to understand in more detail the pathways and support mechanisms that will be required to enable students to graduate, gain entry into tertiary studies, and find meaningful, paid employment in the delivery of teaching or health work.

EE: KTF should conduct a student leaving survey to identify where students intend to go the following year, what they intend to study or where they may work.

KTF agrees that this is an important additional process to be included into our Monitoring & Evaluation processes and will conduct an exit interview with all matriculating Grade 12 students upon presentation of their final results and GPA. In 2021, our partners at the Kokoda College received new advice on the calculation of final results and our recording systems are subsequently being improved to ensure these calculations can be performed automatically at the end of each academic year. In 2021, we have worked with our Kokoda College partners to liaise with National FODE to follow up on a significant number of missing examination results; a process which has been manually case managed across the student cohort.

In 2022, we will add to these case management processes, exit interviews with the students to determine where they intend to enrol in tertiary studies, what assistance they require to make these applications, and where they hope to eventually work. This will enable us to undertake greater needs analyses across the region, and to ensure that a cohort of students is on a pathway

into teaching and community health worker roles for remote communities that desperately need these professionals over the next 5 years (due to vacant teaching and aid post posts; and retiring teachers and health workers in remote areas).

EE: To gain insights into how the College supports students through their academic journey, it would be useful to conduct cohort analysis over multiple years.

We will endeavour to undertake cohort analysis over the next 5 years of the Kokoda College operations and will commence tracking a group of Grade 12 matriculating students in 2021 as they progress through their studies and placements into work. We will work with our partners at the Kokoda College, as well as other partners that KTF works with in Oro and Central across other projects including the Northern Provincial Health Authority and the Central and Oro Departments of Education. We will liaise with our key partners at the St Margaret's School of Nursing, where a number of graduating students will seek entry to the Diploma of Community Health Work; and we will work with the Departments of Education to support the teaching students gain entry to Teachers College. Unfortunately, there is no Teachers College in Oro Province and most graduates will need to apply to Sacred Heart Teachers College in Bomana in Port Moresby.

EE: Subject to available resources, a follow up survey or "check-in" with graduates of the College at least 1-year after course completion will provide further insight into program effectiveness.

KTF will endeavour to complete the 1-year follow-up survey with the cohort of Grade 12 school leavers from 2021 whom we will undertake the ongoing cohort analysis on. We are mindful of the difficulties of retaining access to students once they leave and embark on the next chapter of their journeys, including mobile phone changes, moving to new areas, and the remote locations of many students; however, with the additional case management support we will provide students moving forward, we hope to have a cohort that we can follow up within 12 months of graduating.

EE: The College should clarify expectations around teacher support.

KTF will address the issue of maths expertise in 2022 by recruiting a maths specialist lecturer and additional maths tutors. KTF will also work with National FODE to discuss what also seems to be a major lowering of maths standards across the board as evidenced by multiple years of low maths results across KTF and other peers' Colleges. KTF will present curriculum areas that can be strengthened in mathematics across Grades 9 – 12 to National FODE and work with experts to identify the teaching and learning mechanisms that need to be strengthened in order to improve maths outcomes. Performance in mathematics exams also appears to be lower than performance in mathematics assignments so this will be explored in more detail, including an analysis of the recent national maths examinations.

EE: Ongoing close consultation and relationship building with local district education officials as well as national department heads.

KTF is proud of the partnerships and relationships it has built with the various PNG Government bodies including the National Department of Education, National FODE, Provincial Departments of Education and Health and local schools and aid posts. KTF will continue to prioritise relationship building with these partners and will apply a capacity building lens to further strengthen their capacity in the areas of curriculum, assessment, administration and student support services.

We will continue to foster the relationship with the local Kou Kou community including payment of rent for the land, ongoing infrastructure expansion, resourcing for the community services including the aid post and Kou Kou Infants school, and solar lighting and energy resourcing.

EE: KTF should explore further through a separate review other funding models and options.

We agree that we need to prioritise the identification of other funding models for the long term sustainability of the Kokoda College. In 2022, the Marape Government has announced a tuition fee free subsidy that will extend to FODE in 2022 so we will endeavour to access this financial support; however the long term sustainability will be influenced by numerous factors including the outcomes of the 2022 election. Whilst tuition fees could be charged, the large majority of students attending the College come from disadvantaged backgrounds and the charging of tuition will become a major barrier for them accessing this second chance education pathway. We will commission a review into the financial sustainability of the Kokoda College in due course.