

BACHELOR OF EDUCATION (EARLY CHILDHOOD)

CONVERSION DEGREE PROGRAM

# MILESTONE 6

PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

Presented to:  
GRM International Pty Ltd

By:  
World Wide Project Management Services

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**Australian Government**

**AusAID**

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## ***Abbreviations and Acronyms***

ADS	Australian Development Scholarship
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
BECE	Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood) Conversion Degree Program
ETESP	Elementary Teacher Education Support Program
GAD	Gender and Development
GoPNG	Government of Papua New Guinea
GST	Goods and Services Tax
IAP	Introductory Academic Program
ICC	In-Country Coordinator
LEP	Less Experienced Professional
MBCE	Bachelor of Early Childhood Education
NDoE	National Department of Education
PATTAF	PNG Australia Targeted Training Facility (2002- 2005)
PEA	Provincial Education Authority
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PNGEI	Papua New Guinea Education Institute
POM	Port Moresby
QA	Quality Assurance
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
TDT	Teacher Directed Training
UniSA	University of South Australia
VCP	Virtual Colombo Plan
World Wide	World Wide Project Management Services Pty Ltd

## **1 Summary**

The Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood) Conversion Degree (BECE) was an AusAID funded project designed to strengthen the skills of 40 elementary teacher trainers from the Papua New Guinea National Department of Education (NDoE). The BECE was a 2-year program, which involved eight courses of study delivered over four semesters. The program commenced in March 2002 and was successfully completed in December 2004. The program was implemented by World Wide Project Management Services Pty Ltd (World Wide) in association with the University of South Australia (UniSA) and supported in PNG by Dotaona Consultants Ltd. The contract for the program was originally signed between AusAID and World Wide, then novated to GRM International for management through the PNG Australia Targeted Training Assistance Facility (PATTAF). Key dates for implementation of the program can be found at Annex 1.

The Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood) Conversion Degree program has been an outstanding success. Of the 40 participants who commenced the mixed mode degree, 33 are now eligible to graduate. In addition, it has been reported from a number of sources that many of the participants have been applying their new knowledge in early childhood in their provincial locations. They have also conducted numerous in-service training sessions focussed on early childhood teaching practices, thereby ensuring that the benefits of the program flow on to their colleagues, and the children in PNG classrooms.

## **2 Project Description**

### **2.1 Background**

The BECE was a program funded by AusAID and designed to upgrade the qualifications of a group of 40 elementary teacher trainers in PNG to bachelor degree level. The goal of the conversion degree was for a target group of pre-selected, professional PNG teacher trainers to gain an additional tertiary qualification in early childhood teaching methods as well as the necessary skills for them to more effectively train PNG elementary teachers. The program was also intended to equip the participants to assume more senior management roles in the education sector across PNG. The program commenced in March 2002 and was completed in December 2004. The BECE was a 2-year, mixed-mode, part-time program involving eight courses of study over four semesters. The 40 participants were selected by the NDoE and were drawn from 19 provinces across PNG providing a wide geographical spread for dissemination of early childhood methods throughout the nation. Each of the participants held a Certificate of Elementary Teaching and a Certificate of Elementary Teacher Training. These awards were pre-requisites for entry to the program and the means through which UniSA was able to grant recognition of prior learning for units in their early childhood education degree. This credit arrangement meant that the participants were required to complete eight units from the 4-year early childhood degree offered by UniSA. Upon completion of the program of studies participants graduate with a Bachelor of Early Childhood Education. The 33 participants graduating from the program will form a critical mass of educators in PNG who have been trained in early childhood methodology and will be able to transfer their knowledge to their colleagues through in-service workshops and policy development and implementation.

### **2.2 Project Details**

#### **2.2.1 Staff Assigned to the Program**

Staff from World Wide, UniSA and Dotaona Consultants were involved in implementing the program. Certification of personnel inputs can be found at Annex 2 and key staff are listed below.

### **World Wide Project Management Services**

Mr Paul Tippett, Program Director March 2003 – June 2003

Ms Cathy Deane, Program Director June 2003 – December 2004

Mr Pat McKeen, Project Manager March 2002 – July 2003

Ms Donna Broadhurst, Project Manager August 2003 – December 2004

### **University of South Australia**

Professor Wendy Schiller, Technical Director, Lecturer and Program Coordinator (replacing Mr Feder August 2003 – December 2004)

Ms Anne Glover, Specialist Adviser and Lecturer

Dr Elspeth McInnes, Lecturer

Dr Sharon Russo, Lecturer

Ms Elspeth Stevenson, Lecturer

Mr Jeff Meiners, Lecturer

Mr Trevor Feder, Lecturer and Program Coordinator (March 2002 – July 2003)

Ms Anne Carrington, Lecturer

Ms Valerie Aloa, Lecturer

Dr. Victoria Whittington, Lecturer

Ms Donna Broadhurst, LEP and Project Officer (July 2002 – March 2003)

### **Dotaona Consultants Limited PNG**

Mr Lima Dotaona CBE, In-Country Project Management and Logistics Support

Ms Denia de los Reyes, In-Country Coordinator

## **2.2.2 Course Delivery Modes**

The Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood) Conversion Degree utilised mixed mode delivery and was taught by specialist academic staff from UniSA in Adelaide. The program commenced with a one week Introductory Academic Program (IAP). Students were introduced to the units of study for each semester through completing an interactive two-week residential intensive workshop held at the beginning of each of the four semesters. This was followed by independent study using distance education materials. Participants were supported in PNG by the In-Country Coordinator (ICC) who was responsible for overseeing student welfare and for monitoring student / assignment progress. Independent study during the semester was supported by tutorials conducted by the In Country Coordinator.

The four intensive workshops were designed to introduce each of the two courses that participants would study during each semester. Materials provided to every participant for each course included the following;

- Course Information Booklet
- Study Guide
- Book of Readings and reference materials
- Textbook (s)

In addition to the above, “value-added” modules were included to supplement the compulsory courses and covered:

- Child Development
- Drama and Dance
- Reflective Practice
- Child Protection
- Leadership and Management

These value-added modules were non-assessable components of the program and were designed to develop to a greater depth the early childhood knowledge base of the participants within a collegial and non-critical forum. For example, the Child Protection module, while non-assessable, contained up-to-date information for reporting of child abuse, the role of the teacher and school principal and the PNG policies on child protection. Thus, the value-added modules led to positive 'up skilling' of the PNG cohort and strengthened their understanding (and capacity) to deal with problems and issues as they arise. The modules were seen by students to contribute to their "personal and professional growth and development, ... to the Reform agenda, ... to promotion of gender equity and to the training of future teachers" (comments made by participants during evaluation).

The table below outlines the program as delivered.

Semester	Content	Participating UniSA academic staff	Participating guest lecturers
1	<i>Courses</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing a Play Curriculum</li> <li>Health Safety Nutrition and Physical Education</li> </ul>	Ms Anne Glover Prof. Wendy Schiller, Mr Jeff Meiners	Ms Mary Kililo
	<i>Modules</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introductory Academic Program</li> </ul>	Mr Trevor Feder, Ms Donna Broadhurst	
2	<i>Courses</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Language Literacy &amp; Mathematics (1)</li> <li>Music, Visual Art and Media, 0-8</li> </ul>	Ms Anne Carrington Prof. Wendy Schiller	
	<i>Modules</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Child Development</li> <li>Drama and Dance</li> </ul>	Ms Valerie Aloa Mr Jeff Meiners	
3	<i>Courses</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Language Literacy &amp; Mathematics (2)</li> <li>Children Making Sense Conceptually</li> </ul>	Ms Elspeth Stevenson Dr Victoria Whittington	Mr Andrew Ikupu
	<i>Modules</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leadership and Management in Early Childhood</li> </ul>	Ms Anne Glover	
4	<i>Courses</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public policy and Advocacy</li> <li>Science, Environment &amp; Technology, 0-8</li> </ul>	Dr Elspeth McInnes Dr Sharon Russo	Mr Cherian Lukose Ms Bernadette Aih
	<i>Modules</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Child Protection</li> <li>Reflective Practice</li> </ul>	Dr Elspeth McInnes Ms Anne Glover, Prof. Wendy Schiller	

### 2.2.3 Intensive Workshops

At the beginning of each semester, participants attended a two-week residential intensive workshop. These workshops were held in Madang, and utilised the teaching and computing facilities of Divine Word University. Each intensive workshop was based around the delivery of two courses and

comprised an introduction and overview for each course. In addition, students commenced work on at least one of the assignments that was required for each course during the workshop.

#### **2.2.4 Assessment**

Participants were required to complete two assignments per course for formal assessment. A range of assessment methods was used and included: short tests, case studies, portfolios, oral presentations and performances, curriculum plans and student generated materials. Multifaceted assessment tasks including group performance, development of an individual journal, a sequence of individual lesson plans to capture both the theoretical and applied components of the topic. On a number of occasions, students were required to relate the assessment task to their current work role, contributing to the authenticity of the content and the assessments in the program.

Flexibility in delivery approach was a key element in customising the BECE content and methods for the PNG context. Accordingly, where necessary, changes to assessment were made to accommodate the PNG cohort of students and their work environments. For example, a flexible approach to assignment deadlines had to be taken to allow time for the very remote students in PNG to receive and send assignments, and for different approaches to be used in assignments, based on cultural contexts and appropriateness of curriculum units of work and excursions. Assessments were adapted to encourage students to use their extensive background knowledge of PNG cultural practices and community participation in completing course work. This ensured that an authentic assessment process was embedded in the program.

#### **2.2.5 In-Country Coordinator**

The ICC, Ms Denia de los Reyes was employed through World Wide's local PNG associates, Dotaona Consultants, and operated from their office premises in Gordons, close to the PNG Education Institute (PNGEI). She was a well qualified and experienced Philippino expatriate educator who had previously worked in the PNG National Department of Education (NDoE) for a number of years and was therefore well placed to assist students in their studies. She was well respected and had experience with the ongoing GoPNG education reforms, being closely involved with the AusAID-funded Elementary Teacher Education Support Program (ETESP). The ICC's role involved assisting participants with their studies by offering tutorials for groups of participants in a region and also individual assistance through telephone contact and /or face-to-face support where possible. Ms de los Reyes also maintained regular email contact with World Wide (for operational issues) and with UniSA (on academic matters).

All participants in the early childhood conversion degree were senior educators and held responsible positions with substantial workloads. The ICC understood their work, location and personal (ie family) constraints and was instrumental in assisting students to complete their studies by maintaining ongoing and regular support and contact. Face-to-face tutorials were conducted where necessary using two approaches whereby the ICC either:

- travelled to provincial locations to provide "cluster" support to several participants; or
- provided support to individual students in the project office in Port Moresby if they had already travelled to the capital on other work-related matters.

In each case, the ICC arranged for students to be released from their duties for short periods so that they could work on course assignments.

The ICC was also responsible for tracking assignments received from participants for subsequent marking by UniSA staff in Adelaide. She also monitored individual student progress and reported monthly to World Wide and UniSA in relation to academic or student welfare matters. The ICC was also able to provide timely advice on contextual issues and challenges to World Wide and UniSA staff.

Due to an unavoidable rescheduling of the participants' work commitments, a 6-week extension to the semester was negotiated with UniSA. In order to support students in their final weeks of study, an extension to the ICC's contract by one month until June 2004 was sought and subsequently approved by AusAID. Ms Denia de los Reyes completed her contract extension in June and left to take up a teaching position in the United States. Arrangements to cover the contract extension past her departure from PNG are discussed in Section 3.5 Risk Management.

## **2.3 Implementation Arrangements**

### **2.3.1 Inception**

The project was originally due to commence with a residential workshop in March 2002. However, the commencement was slightly altered to accommodate the negotiation and signing of the contract with AusAID.

Prior to the face-to-face delivery of the academic program in PNG in July 2002, an intensive 5-day workshop for UniSA staff to be involved with the BECE program in PNG was conducted in Adelaide from 15-20 April 2002. This workshop was attended by the UniSA staff participating in the delivery of the program in PNG and relevant support staff. World Wide also arranged for the attendance of the ICC, Ms Denia de los Reyes, and (importantly) a senior representative from the PNG (NDoE), Mr Andrew Ikupu, who is Superintendent, Elementary Teacher Education. The purpose of the workshop was to brief UniSA staff on issues pertinent to working in PNG and to begin the process of adapting course materials for the PNG context. Additionally the ICC was briefed on the relevant UniSA policies and procedures applicable to the program. The workshop proved invaluable as an opportunity for academic staff to better understand the issues and context in PNG, as well as receive detailed briefings in security, logistics and management arrangements from experienced World Wide staff.

The next major activity undertaken was the first 2-week residential workshop, which was held in Madang from 15th – 26th July 2002. As part of the risk management approach, the project team (especially the support staff in PNG) monitored the situation in PNG at this time very closely as national PNG elections were underway, and delayed the delivery of this workshop by two weeks to avoid possible civil unrest during this period.

### **2.3.2 In Country Support**

In-country logistical and local management support was contracted to Dotaona Consultants Ltd to provide ongoing in-country security and logistics support to both staff and participants involved in the program. When working in or visiting Port Moresby, World Wide and UniSA staff received security, technical and operational support from Dotaona Consultants. A trust account was established at the Bank of South Pacific, Port Moresby, PNG, under the management of Dotaona Consultants. Based on a regular analysis of cash flow requirements, sufficient funds were transferred from World Wide in Australia into the account on a regular basis to cover all local expenditure requirements.

### **2.3.3 Procurement of Goods and Services**

Procurement of all goods and services proceeded according to the Technical Proposal, with World Wide, UniSA and Dotaona Consultants implementing the project as planned. Procurement of goods proceeded according to Commonwealth Procurement Guidelines and an asset register for the project was established. Formal handover of the project equipment, library materials and furniture took place in Port Moresby on November 26, 2004 and was reported to PATTAF under separate cover.

### **2.3.4 Monitoring Framework**

The basis of reporting for the project was as follows:

#### *Deliverables*

- Inception Report
- Training Plan
- 6-monthly Report x 3
- Project Completion Report

#### *Management Reports*

- Monthly ICC reports to World Wide and UniSA
- Exception Report (as necessary)
- Quarterly Cashflow Report and Reimbursable claims

World Wide has submitted all reports as required on this basis, with only one Exception Report proving to be necessary over the duration of the project.

## **3 Project Achievements**

### **3.1 Project Outcomes**

#### **3.1.1 Students Successfully Completing Degree**

Of the 40 participants who commenced, 33 have completed all of the requirements of the program and are eligible to graduate. This is a success rate of over 82%. The remaining seven participants will each receive certificates of attainment. Of these seven, three students have incomplete requirements for the last semester only. UniSA will allow these students to submit their assignments to finalise their studies should they choose to do so. Annex 3 provides a full list of students eligible to graduate, eligible to receive a certificate of attainment and those eligible to submit final assignments (whose academic status is currently listed as incomplete).

#### **3.1.2 Career Enhancement**

Undertaking the program has provided students with career enhancement through:

- Upgrading of qualifications to degree status thus providing improved analytical capacity and provide access to higher degree studies
- Enhancing of training skills
- Providing the qualification, qualities and technical / professional skills to assume senior management roles in the education sector
- Furthering the participants' professional development

#### **3.1.3 Access to Further Study**

With the completion of the conversion degree program participants are now eligible to apply for admission to higher degree programs. A number of participants have requested information from UniSA regarding these courses.

#### **3.1.4 Improvements to Teacher Education**

Anecdotal evidence supports the view that the participants are now more effective teacher educators and that the improved quality of the delivery of the district teacher education program is linked to quality

improvements in the classroom. Extracts from comments transmitted to the ICC highlight key areas where change has occurred<sup>1</sup>:

#### *Colleagues' comments*

"...took the lead in the training and injected their newly acquired skills and knowledge of early childhood education in the TDT [teacher directed training] curriculum."

"...marked difference on TDT content between provinces with BECE students and provinces without them."

"...amazed with the new concepts the BECE students were dishing out to the students...he learnt a lot...wished he had the opportunity to enrol in such a program."

"...this year's TDT surpassed all the TDT ever conducted..."

#### *Students' comments*

"...first time she was satisfied with her performance as a trainer. She felt like a real college lecturer. "

"...undertook the TDT workshop single-handedly...She attributed her success to her newly acquired knowledge..."

In addition the graduating cohort will be key agents for training other educators in PNG in early childhood concepts and practices. This is linked to improvements in teacher education as educators throughout PNG integrate their new knowledge about child development and developing child-centred curriculum into their practices in village classrooms. Children will be the beneficiaries of curricula that meets their educational needs more effectively. While this process would be strengthened if there were a greater number of personnel trained in early childhood methods, the graduating cohort represents a significant step towards imparting a deeper understanding of children's ways of being amongst educators in PNG.

## **3.2 Monitoring, Evaluation & Quality Assurance**

### **3.2.1 Participant Feedback**

Participant feedback was an integral part of monitoring the delivery of the BECE academic content and ensuring that it was as contextually appropriate as possible. This feedback was gathered using the following methods:

- individual course evaluations (using the standard UniSA Student Evaluation of Teaching instrument),
- informal and formal group discussions,
- individual interviews (structured and semi-structured),
- conversations, and
- ICC reports.

Overall, the feedback indicated a high degree of satisfaction with the program and with the individual courses. Participants made many unsolicited positive comments such as: "the program made my future brighter and made me strive for more knowledge"; "this program takes us beyond the basics of teaching and puts children at the centre of the reform agenda. It teaches us how to make the reform agenda work for children, teachers, parents and communities"; "it has been helpful in promoting gender equity across all areas of elementary education, especially in understanding roles of girls in education". At the end of each semester a 6-monthly report was prepared for PATTAF that included both the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the evaluations of teaching for the semester.

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<sup>1</sup> ICC Report May/June 2004

### **3.2.2 Quality Assurance**

A Quality Assurance Reference Group (QARG) was established which comprised key stakeholders. Although the group composition varied for each meeting, independent representatives from the National Research Institute or NdoE were in attendance at each meeting, as well as representatives from UniSA. The QARG was convened on three occasions: 2 August, 2002; 19 July, 2003; and 27 March, 2004. The meetings occurred after completion of Intensive Workshops 1, 2 and 4. The purpose of the meetings was to engage in formative evaluation of the workshops by reviewing the student evaluations of teaching. After the final QARG meeting, a summative evaluation of the whole program was undertaken. Recommendations from previous QARG meetings were acted on by UniSA and reported to the following meeting. This was an effective strategy for continuous improvement in the delivery of the program.

Persons who attended the various QARG meetings included:

Dr. Joe Pagelio, Deputy Secretary, NDoE  
Mr Andrew Ikupu, Superintendent, Elementary Education, NDoE  
Dr. Beno Boeha, Director, National Research Institute  
Mr Cherian Lukose, Acting Assistant Secretary, TES&SD  
Ms Patricia Paraide, National Research Institute  
Ms Denia de Los Reyes, In-Country Coordinator, Dotaona Consultants  
Professor Wendy Schiller, Technical Director, UniSA  
Ms Anne Glover, Specialist Advisor, UniSA  
Dr Sharon Russo, Lecturer, UniSA  
Mr Trevor Feder, Academic Coordinator, UniSA  
Ms Donna Broadhurst, Project Coordinator, UniSA (former role)  
Ms Libby Macmillan, PATTAF Facility Manager, GRM  
Ms Cathy Deane, Project Director, World Wide

### **3.3 Training and Capacity Building**

The program has significantly increased the competencies and capabilities of participants, who are key change agents in the GoPNG education reform. As graduates of the program, participants now have increased skills in working autonomously and collaboratively; increased communication skills; have competencies in advocacy and ethical action and have a strong body of knowledge (in child development and curriculum) necessary to actively support the elementary education program.

Participants now have the skills to better carry out their educative roles, tackle problems and help colleagues implement the new reform structures and systems. This has contributed to a broader capacity building outcome at the provincial and district levels.

### **3.4 Risk Management**

The Technical Proposal outlined a number of potential risks to the BECE program. Of those identified, the following list outlines risks that proved to be issues that needed to be dealt with.

#### *Disrupting process of institutionalising Elementary Education Program*

During the program, some participants attended tutorials without first seeking release from their duties. There was a perception that the program was “taking people out of their roles” and that this was affecting the implementation of the elementary reforms. These issues were addressed through an informal meeting and subsequent follow-up with management in PNGEI and NDoE.

#### *Cannot secure access to phones, fax, computers and facilities for students*

The Scope of Services for this project was somewhat naïve in suggesting that linkages could be established to access internet and computing facilities. No such infrastructure is in place for this to happen in many parts of PNG. Where these facilities might have been available, other barriers such as a lack of technicians to service equipment, or unpaid phone bills or telephone network overload limited communication options available to students.

#### *In-Country Program Coordinator Leaves*

The academic program was due to finish in June 2004, with the ICC's contract due to expire on 15 May 2004. An extension to both was negotiated to accommodate the students' unforeseen additional training obligations in May-June in the GoPNG elementary teacher training program. The final semester was therefore extended to August 2004 and the ICC's contract extended to 15 June 2004. When the ICC left the program, World Wide provided further in-country support during June and July and Dotaona Consultants during August and September. All except three students were able to finalise their assignments under these extended arrangements.

#### *Students fall behind in their work and cannot meet the courses/assignment deadlines*

The limited duration of the project meant that timely submission of assignments was critical to students completing their degree studies within the two-year timeframe. Throughout the duration of the program, a number of students had difficulties meeting assignment deadlines. This was mainly due to their competing priorities and timing issues. UniSA supported students by extending assignment deadlines and with this support most students were able to complete a semester's work prior to the commencement of the next semester.

Some students however, were unable to meet the deadlines and were consistently late. By the final semester, it became necessary to address the issues from both a fairness and an individual commitment perspective. World Wide therefore imposed a management deadline and advised students with outstanding assignments that those unable to meet the deadline would not be funded to attend the final intensive. All except one student managed to meet this deadline.

## **4 Evaluation of Performance and Outcomes**

### **4.1 Assessment of Performance against Objectives**

The project goal, as outlined in the Scope of Services was as follows:

*To train a target group of pre-selected, dedicated professional PNG teachers in early childhood teaching methods so as to provide them with the necessary skills to train other teachers in these skills and to take up senior management roles in the education sector in PNG.*

The project has been highly successful in achieving this goal. A high percentage of the cohort are now eligible to graduate, and in addition, participants have been sharing their newly acquired early childhood knowledge when implementing their in-service training sessions with elementary teachers in PNG. Further more, a number of participants have been promoted during the time of the BECE program and have had their performance during TDT sessions observed and favourably commented upon by their colleagues and managers.

The mixed mode approach to distance education appears to promote a higher degree of success than stand alone distance education. UniSA has provided a comparison of grades for students studying the 4-year Bachelor of Early Childhood Education degree program by distance education and the students

in the PNG Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood) Conversion Degree program by mixed mode. At a surface level, the comparison appears to show that the PNG program participants received better results in the middle grade range (Credit, 65-74% and Pass 1, 55-65%) particularly. However, the two courses are not directly comparable, as the students in the Australian MBCE program do not have the same level of support (i.e. an in-country tutor that travelled to provinces to conduct tutorials; pre-semester intensive residential workshops) that was provided to the PNG BECE program.

Course	Grade						
	HD	D	C	P1	P2	F	Other
MBCE External (2003)	1%	9%	26%	26%	10%	4%	23%
PNG Mixed mode	1%	10%	44%	36%	5%	3%	N/A

## 4.2 Financial Performance

The project has been completed within budget and with a small amount of funds remaining (approximately 4% of original contract price). An outline of the financial performance is below.

### Overall Performance

Total contract price (excludes GST)	\$1,463,700
Less	
Total expenditure to 31 December 2004 (excludes GST)	\$1,239,994
Total anticipated further expenditure (excludes GST)	\$102,450
Graduation ceremony in POM April 2005	\$59,000
<hr/> Total Estimated Unspent Funds	<hr/> \$62,256 <hr/>

A ceremony to present testamurs to graduates has been approved by AusAID and will take place in Port Moresby on 28 April 2005. The figures above therefore do not represent the final expenditure for the project. A final report will be submitted after the graduation ceremony in April that will provide an updated financial report.

The expenditure and cashflow record is appended at Annex 4 and indicates expenditure per reimbursable line against budget per reimbursable line. During implementation of the project, it was necessary to transfer funds between lines to account for changes in the delivery of the program. The largest transfer of funds (\$46,000) was required to supplement the per diems line (from lines 2.8 and 2.9 to line 2.2) to allow for the increased meal costs resulting from the change of location of the intensive workshops. This necessitated a reassignment of funds between budget lines, which was approved by AusAID. These and other smaller reassignments (all approved) are identified and detailed in Annex 4.

The process of providing access to tertiary level study using a mixed mode approach based in PNG has proven to be extremely successful, both in terms of completion rates and in terms of the unit cost as compared to providing scholarships for students to study in locations outside of PNG. The cost per commencing student for the BECE program was \$35,036. The cost for PNG nationals commencing as students under the ADS program for 2005 is an average of \$42,477<sup>2</sup>. This figure is not directly comparable because it is an average cost per annum for all types of study in Australia (TAFE, undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral studies) for students commencing in 2005.

<sup>2</sup> Figure provided by PATTAF ADS Manager March 2005

Another way of looking at the cost per student is to average costs based upon numbers of graduates from the program. Using this as a basis the average cost per student rises to \$42,468. It should be noted however, that this average includes the costs for students who commenced but who withdrew during various stages of the project and inflates the cost per student markedly.

### **4.3 Sustainability**

The BECE was a one-off program and as such was not designed to be sustainable as an ongoing course delivery program. Sustainability pertains, however, to implementation of the GoPNG education reform agenda. Participants in the BECE will be key agents in fostering the continuing impact of the conversion degree as they engage in their substantive roles (i.e. as teacher trainers and inspectors). They will have the ability to impart early childhood knowledge and practices to their fellow educators and in this way maintain an ongoing influence on teaching practices in PNG. The impact of the program will be enhanced if the graduates are supported through promotion and/or strategic deployment to key positions within the education sector in PNG.

In-service training of teachers under the elementary education reform program has been donor-funded. A loss of, or reduction in, funding will negatively affect the sustainability of the BECE program as the participants will have avenues of and opportunities for dissemination of early childhood knowledge and practices markedly reduced. The reform of elementary education in PNG is the largest program currently being undertaken by the NDoE and the BECE program, as an adjunct to this, represented a significant investment in the human resources of the NDoE and members of the teaching service. It therefore will require ongoing internal support if the benefits are to continue to accrue across the teaching service personnel and for the nation.

### **4.4 Development Impact**

The BECE program will have an ongoing development impact as the graduates from the program continue to train elementary teachers in early childhood methods. Children's attendance at school is critical for nations intent on raising the educational levels of their populace, and attendance is more likely when children feel valued in the classroom and school environs. Teachers trained in early childhood teaching practices and child development will be more likely and able to implement curriculum that is appropriate to the needs of the children in their classroom, school and village. As classroom activities and methods take account of children's ecological and developmental spaces, it is likely that children will enjoy and engage with school, and school-based learning, more deeply. This has the potential to encourage children to stay at school longer and pursue their learner through to the tertiary level.

## **5 Evaluation and Lessons Learned**

### **5.1 Evaluation**

Although no formal evaluation of impact was planned for this project, the feedback received to date from various PNGEI Elementary Unit Monitors has been most encouraging. They have reported marked improvements in TDT content and training strategies for those provinces where students undertaking the early childhood conversion degree conducted the training. Some took the time to write to the ICC to express their satisfaction with the training conducted in their province.

The early childhood conversion degree students themselves also expressed increased levels of satisfaction with their performance and abilities as trainers. From the first semester, participants took their newly acquired knowledge and shared this with teacher practitioners during in-service training. This was an immediate benefit of the program to a wider audience of educators in PNG and to the

GoPNG's education reform. These benefits will be maintained in the foreseeable future as participants continue to train others and pass on their new knowledge in early childhood methods.

Participants also report that the program has given them renewed confidence and the skills to critically reflect on their practice and implement improvement. In times of major reforms, the development of a critical mass of capable, competent and reflective practitioners is necessary to ensure that new initiatives, such as elementary education, are sustained. For further insight into the changes at the individual level, recent testimonies of two of the participants are included at Annex 5.

## **5.2 Compliance with AusAID Gender and Development (GAD) Policy**

The BECE program participants were pre-selected by NDoE and the group included an almost equal mix of both females (18) and males (22). Teaching staff from UniSA also included both males and females, with the most senior staff member being a female at the professorial level. This was applicable to the women and leadership aspect of the GAD policy, as participants saw a female role model in the academic arena. Early childhood as a professional field, however, has a gender bias, with females making up the majority of practitioners. UniSA included qualified and experienced males in the teaching program, thereby providing role models and examples of male early childhood practitioners for the PNG cohort.

Women who had recently given birth were encouraged to attend the intensive workshops, as the program adopted and modelled a family friendly approach. Participants with young babies were supported through agreement that they could attend the workshops with their babies, and where appropriate the babies were included in the teaching program (particularly relevant when talking about child development).

The issues of safety and security of participants, and women in particular, was of paramount importance. Hosting the residential workshops at the relatively secure location of Madang meant that the families of the female participants felt more comfortable about their safety while away from their villages and thus did not prevent them from attending.

The graduating cohort from the BECE program includes 15 women. This provides a pool of degree qualified women available for positions at higher decision-making levels and for promotion within NDoE. It also contributes to raising the status of women in the education sector due to increased qualifications held by the graduating group of females.

## **5.3 Lessons Learned**

Experience with the BECE program and through other distance education programs delivered in PNG (and elsewhere) by local and international universities has shown that time management and prioritising tasks are major issues for students. Students begin with enthusiasm and sincere intentions, but as the semester progresses their priorities switch for various reasons. Our research on the evaluation of the frontline management training conducted under the PATTAF has revealed that participants found the module related to prioritising their workload and time management to be of immense value. This suggests that it would be a useful strategy for institutions delivering distance education programs to build in a module some weeks prior to the start of the full academic program which is related specifically to time management and prioritising skills. Preferably such a module would be competency based in order to prepare students for the rigours of studying by distance education. Alongside this, reports from students in the BECE program and the PNG Nurse Conversion Degree programs have shown that institutions do not always recognise that people are studying and that they need some form of accommodation / strategies to allow time for their study.

*Time management / Prioritising*

The major issue for this program was ensuring that students submitted assignments on time. For many students this was not the case and the ICC had to spend a great deal of time encouraging them to work on their assignments and submit. There were a number of reasons why participants found it difficult to dedicate time to their studies, but the main reason appeared to be shifting priorities. Participants had obligations to the PNGEI arising from implementation of the elementary reform program, which is a major policy thrust for NDoE; they had obligations to their Provincial Education Authority (PEA) and they had village and family obligations. None of these obligations could be ignored and may have crowded out their time for study.

Due dates were extended for a number of students each semester and this may have exacerbated the problem by creating the expectation that due dates could be ignored without consequence. Building in a transparent procedure for the application of penalties for late assignments may assist in managing this issue for any future programs.

### **5.3.1 Competing Demands**

The greatest challenge for participants in this program was balancing competing priorities. All of the participants were senior educators in PNG and had a sizeable workload associated with their standing. In addition, they were involved in a range of GoPNG and donor activities throughout the period of their study program and at times these factors compromised their ability to concentrate on their studies. In future programs it would be beneficial to students to have some time release negotiated with their employing agency in order to be able to attend to their studies.

### **5.3.2 Pastoral and Academic Support**

An In-Country Coordinator with extensive PNG experience and local networks is essential to program delivery. The In-Country coordinator appointed to the program was critical to the successful delivery of this program in PNG. She had had extensive professional experience in PNG, was aware of the problems individual participants faced and had developed extensive networks to compensate for the poor communications systems throughout the country.

The support of a dedicated in-country coordinator is invaluable in assisting students to maintain their motivation, monitor assignment submission and resolve difficulties with understanding academic requirements, particularly if it is a first exposure to academic writing in English. When students are located in different provinces, a roving ICC is an essential strategy for success. The tyranny of distance means that students are isolated in terms of communication with other students and often local infrastructure may be lacking. This makes regular contact with support structures and their peer group difficult. A roving ICC can visit students in situ, make an assessment of their situation and provide appropriate assistance with minimal disruption to the students' regular activities and duties. Additionally, students studying under a program such as this have a single opportunity to complete the program and do not have the chance to repeat units at a later date once the program has ended. The support of the ICC in encouraging students to keep up with their studies means that assignment submission is more timely than might otherwise be the case. This contributes to the overall success rate of the program and ultimately increases the developmental impact of the program.

### **5.3.3 Isolation**

Systematic monitoring of student progress and a high degree of individual contact is critical in supporting students in remote geographical areas. Participants in this program were drawn from 19 provinces across PNG. This meant that most were working on their study program in isolation once the intensive workshops had been undertaken for the semester. For students at risk, regular contact is essential. In-situ tutorials by the ICC assisted in maintaining student morale, encouraging them to work steadily on the coursework and enabled a dialogue about the current units of study to assist with understanding. It allowed students some undisturbed time to concentrate on their studies and

complete the requirements for the units being studied, and thereby directly contributed to the success rate of the program.

#### **5.3.4 Protocols Relating to Release from Duties**

There was some uncertainty about appropriate approvals for study release for participants in this program. This was related to the legal and administrative framework of their line management. There is no uniformity in reporting relationships and participants sometimes had multiple reporting relationships. This meant that participants were (and are) affected by a range of competing obligations. At the national level, they were responsible to PNGEI as the overseeing statutory agency for the implementation of the elementary reform program, of which they were part an integral part. At the provincial level they were responsible to their PEA as the agency paying their salary and from whom they would need permission to be released from duties. Some participants were public servants and governed by Government Orders, others were members of the teaching service and governed by the Teaching Service Act. Overlapping this at the provincial level was Organic Law. This lack of uniformity and uncertainty is ongoing and has the potential to impact adversely on donor-funded programs that require release from duties, particularly if the various agencies have conflicting priorities.

#### **5.3.5 Flexibility in Implementation**

Flexibility by all parties and a back-up plan/or alternative strategies that can be brought into play are needed for effective management of projects under these circumstances. As an example, unforeseen changes due to political instability necessitated a late change of workshop location from Port Moresby to Madang for security reasons at the commencement of the program (See End of Semester 1 Report; 2002, page 2). Another example was that as part of their work commitments for the NDoE, most participants in the PNG cohort were required to conduct six-week teacher training workshops in their regions shortly after attending Intensive 4. An extension to assignment deadlines and semester end was negotiated and allowed students to finalise their program of study and conduct the required TDT workshops for NDoE.

#### **5.3.6 Local Input**

Professional and contextual input from local lecturers is invaluable. When the program was planned there was local input scheduled for each of the courses by local lecturers so that cultural and social sensitivities were respected. This also allowed participants to relate to local policies and contexts and to discuss their experiences openly in relation to issues such as HIV aids and the spread of diseases (See End of Semester 3 Report). Collaboration with local lecturers also provided opportunities for capacity building and 'both ways' transfer of knowledge and skills. While this worked well on an individual basis, better institution to institution and the collaborative development of courses and shared program delivery would be an appropriate direction for future projects. This joint arrangement would support institutional strengthening and overall sustainability. Future externally funded courses should also aim for a stronger partnership as with other PATTAF VCP programs.

# Annex 1

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## Key Dates in Chronological Order

# Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood) Conversion Degree Program 2002-2004

## Chronology of Major Events

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event / Activity</i>
<b>2002</b>	
April 2002	PNG Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood) Conversion Degree Program contract awarded to World Wide, in association with UniSA and Dotaona Consultants Limited
April 2002	Inception workshop and project briefing for UniSA staff
July 2002	Semester 1 commenced with workshops at Divine Word University, Madang
	QA Reference Group meets to review student evaluations
	UniSA enrolment details finalised
August 2002	Contract novated to GRM International
<b>2003</b>	
January 2003	Semester 1 results finalised
March 2003	Semester 2 commenced with workshops at Divine Word University, Madang
July 2003	Semester 2 results finalised
	Semester 3 commenced with workshops at Divine Word University, Madang
	QA Reference Group meets to review student evaluations
December 2003	Semester 3 results ratified by UniSA
<b>2004</b>	
February 2004	Semester 3 results finalised and advised to participants with all work completed
March 2004	Semester 4 commenced with workshops at Divine Word University,, Madang
June 2004	In-country Coordinator departs
August 2004	Extension to in-country support for final semester approved
October 8 2004	Final date for receipt of assignments
November 2004	Student results ratified by UniSA
December 2004	Graduation proposal submitted to GRM
December 2004	Final Course Report submitted to GRM
<b>2005</b>	
January 2005	Students notified of graduation arrangements
March 2005	Revised Final Report submitted to GRM
April 2005	Students graduate in absentia at official University of SA Graduation ceremony
April 28 2005	Testamurs Ceremony (Graduation) in Port Moresby
May 2005	Graduation Report submitted to GRM
	<b>Project Completion</b>

# Annex 2

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## Certification of Personnel Inputs

## Certification of Personnel Inputs - TA Days in PNG

Name	Position	Activity	TA in PNG	Notes
Wendy Schiller	Technical Director and Lecturer	Intensive 1 (Jul 02)	11	
		Intensive 2 (Mar 03)	8	Schiller replaces McDowall (5 days Aust, 7 days PNG)
		Intensive 2 - counsel students	4	
		Intensive 4 (module) (Mar 04)	9	Replaces Broadhurst
		Schiller sub-total	32	
Anne Glover (5 Aust, 43 PNG)	Specialist Advisor and Lecturer	Intensive 1 (Jul 02)	15	
		Intensive 3 (module) (Jul 03)	17	
		Intensive 4 (module) (Mar 04)	7	
		Glover sub-total	39	
Trevor Feder	UniSA Program Director	Intensive 1 (Jul 02)	15	
		Feder sub-total	15	
Donna Broadhurst	Lecturer (IAP) and Project Coordinator	Intensive 1 (Jul 02)	22	
		Intensive 3 (module) (Jul 03)	0	Not replaced in Intensive 3
		Broadhurst sub-total	22	
Anne Carrington	Lecturer	Intensive 2 (Mar 03)	9	
Elsbeth Stephenson	Lecturer	Intensive 3 (Jul 03)	10	Replaced Hill
Victoria Whittington	Lecturer	Intensive 3 (Jul 03)	9	
Elsbeth McInnes	Lecturer	Intensive 4 (Mar 04)	8	Replaced Ebbeck
Sharon Russo	Lecturer	Intensive 4 (Mar 04)	9	
Andrew Ikupu	Pre-project briefing	Instead of Glover to PNG	4	Substituted Uni SASStaff for in PNG for 4 days PNG-based staff travelling to Australia for 6 days. Count as PNG days for costing purposes
Denia de Los Reyes	Pre-project briefing	Instead of Feder to PNG	4	Substituted Uni SASStaff for in PNG for 4 days PNG-based staff travelling to Australia for 6 days. Count as PNG days for costing purposes
<b>Total days</b>			<b>161</b>	

# Annex 3

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## Summary of PNG Graduates for the Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood) Conversion Degree

**Summary of PNG Graduates  
for the Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood) Conversion Degree**

Student Name	Eligible to Graduate	Certificate of Attainment	Incomplete
Vavine Alu	✓		
Hindrel Alois		✓ (4 units)	
James Anda	✓		
Daniel Aselai	✓		
William Aua	✓		
Theresa Billy	✓		
Jerry Bobora	✓		
Virgil Bonga	✓		
Robert Bulmaris		✓ (7 units)	✓
Philippa Darius	✓		
Michael Dua	✓		
Mary Endiken	✓		
Kelly Ephraim	✓		
Theodore Gilmai		✓ (2 units)	
Consolata Goaman	✓		
Elsie-Hapare Iko'o	✓		
Thomas Kari	✓		
Joseph Kaukebia	✓		
Wilson Kawas		✓ (2 units)	
Daniel Koro	✓		
Rose Marsipal	✓		
Beata Meta	✓		
Lynne Mova	✓		
Karen Mondo	✓		
Petra Nobin		✓ (6 units)	✓
Peter Oa	✓		
Bagara Pala	✓		
Dorcas Paraia	✓		
Samuel Paulon	✓		
Mary Potikwo		✓ (7 units)	✓
Philip Serere	✓		
Wesley Siangat	✓		
Dongau Singin	✓		
Joel Sive		✓ (2 units)	
Regina Tugan	✓		
Lazarus Ufrafo	✓		
Cyril Unam	✓		
Oneau Vagi	✓		
Eroni Vaiva	✓		
Nagute Zaipo	✓		

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# Annex 4

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## Project Expenditure and Cashflow

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## Explanatory Notes on Under-expenditure of Project Funds

- *Reimbursable Line 2.14 Textbooks*  
The total amount budgeted for textbooks was \$31,980. Of this \$26,580 was expended at project completion. The savings mainly occurred as a result of discounts provided by the supplier. The savings from this budget line represent a total of \$5,400 of the unspent funds.
- *Reimbursable Line 2.13 UniSA Course Fees*  
The total amount budgeted for course fees was \$470,000. Of this \$448,125 was expended at project completion. Over the duration of the program, four students withdrew part-way through their studies and were, therefore, not enrolled for all four semesters. As a result, an aggregated saving for 14 units of study occurred, representing a total of \$21,875 of the unspent funds.
- *Reimbursable Line 2.11 Internet Access for Participants*  
The total amount budgeted for internet access for participants was \$9,600 of which nil had been spent at project completion. This line and line 2.9 were to be used to allow participants to access the internet to assist with their studies (through activities such as online research) and provide a forum for regular contact with other students and with UniSA staff. Communications infrastructure in PNG proved to be a major barrier to implementing this aspect of the program. Not only did some students not have access to a computer in their province, there were often issues with a lack of capacity of the communication network, unpaid telephone accounts at agency offices and technical support for using the internet effectively. As a result, in order to maintain equity within the group, no student was provided with internet access for study purposes. As students had extensive materials provided by UniSA for their home study component, and as the ICC maintained regular contact and tutorial support for students, this did not adversely affect their studies. This budget line represented \$9,600 of the unspent funds
- *Reimbursable Line 2.10 Courier*  
The total amount budgeted for courier costs was \$28,200. Of this approximately \$18,000 had been spent at project completion. The remaining funds in this line represent \$10,200 of the unspent project funds.
- *Reimbursable Line 2.9 Communications for Participants*  
The total amount budgeted for communications for participants was \$34,000 (and reduced to \$19,000 as a result of the reassignment discussed above). Of this nil had been spent at project completion. Originally it was intended that access to a range of communication facilities be provided for students by negotiated with local institutions such as hospitals or high schools. This proved unworkable, not least for the reason that in many cases, the local telephone accounts had not been paid and so institutions were often without telephone or facsimile access.
- *Reimbursable Line 2.8 Local Support for Students*  
The total amount budgeted for local support for students was \$52,000. This was reduced to \$6,000 as a result of the reassignment discussed above. Reassignment occurred because it became obvious that students would not have access to the type of IT or specialist local support as originally intended.
- *Final Milestone Payment*  
UniSA had some change of staff during the implementation of the program and this resulted in an overall reduction of their planned inputs of 8 TA days. The value-added module for Intensive 3 was taught by Anne Glover without any assistance from a LEP as was planned. An adjustment of \$3,200 to the final milestone payment will be made to take account of this.

# Annex 5

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## Human Stories – Participant Testimonies

*Participant A* – Interviewed 28 June 2004

Major changes for Participant A include:

- How he views children
- How he relates to children
- His understanding of children and their behaviour
- How he approaches his training
- Willingness to advocate for children, engages in advocacy for children

When asked what had changed for him as a result of doing the program the participant provided the following information.

He stated that his whole attitude to children had changed. He reported that he used to be “one of those very aggressive, short-tempered persons”. He recalled that as a baby he was “belted all the time”. So he had a lot of anger inside him because “you were powerless” – but as he grew older he exploded. He thought that this contributed to who he was as an adult. He had been a teacher for 15 years, but many children would run out of the classroom or jump out of windows when he was in the classroom teaching. He said he used to yell and physically punish them. He said he had the same approach to his own children.

He started changing when he came in for elementary teacher training (1998), with Anne Glover and the Elementary Teacher Education Support Project which was funded by AusAID. Anne Glover took a session at night with a few latecomers, which was focussed on child development. From then his whole approach to children changed. Now he says he “loves” the children. These days he said he likes playing with them and will stand up for them, recognising their behaviours as part of being children.

He would like to see teachers’ colleges focus more on understanding children. He considers that too many teachers in PNG “scream” at children and schools are often scary environments for children – they are often scared of teachers. He reported that he has addressed a village meeting expressing the view that “it is our approach to the children which is causing our children to be naughty in school”. After this meeting, the children told him that they were naughty because the teachers scream and swear at them, so they do likewise in retaliation. Another issue he mentioned to the assembled group was the difference between adult and child levels of understanding – he advised the meeting that “wrong behaviours are a learning process for them [children] and they need our guidance”.

Participant A said he has changed his approach to his training. The early childhood program approach – the staff approach on sharing knowledge and modelling teaching approaches has made a great change in how he goes about training. He used to use a didactic or transmission approach. Now he is using experiential learning so that trainees were engaged in activities. He reports that the trainees/students are very impressed with the new approach he is now taking. The trainees are getting a different view of what teaching can look like - he says it is like a flower blooming. But he stressed that it needs to be followed up and further guidance provided to ensure that it is being implemented.

*Participant B* – Interviewed 6 July 2004

“I am a different person after this program”. These were the opening words when Participant B was asked what had changed for her as a result of doing the conversion degree. She reported that the psychological aspects of child development caused her to think about who she was as a person. She developed an understanding of development processes and causes of behaviour. She said that now she sees that every person is unique and has their own point of view. Previously “I used to think my point of view was correct, the right way. Also, previously if two people were present and telling their story, then I would think that the first story I heard was ‘the truth’. I would not listen to the next story. Now I am much more tolerant of differing viewpoints”. She suggested she was less bossy, less dogmatic.

The program has taught her to question, investigate, get to the truth to help her work out what is pretending. When asked why this was important, she related that it was important in PNG because people can use deceit to get hold of land. She said it helps her in her role as a bone-keeper of her people. [A significant impact at the cultural level].

She revealed that she is called “Kedu” by her people now. The word “kedu” has two meanings:

- Old lady
- A woman with good ideas

She said initially when she was called Kedu she objected because she thought people were using it with the first definition, but they told her that they called her this title based on the second meaning. Her village people, families, co-workers all call her this. It is a high status title, bestowed on someone because they are considered to be an important person.

In terms of curriculum, prior to the program, she said she did not know why children played. She just thought they should work – around the house, at school, all the time. Now however she sees the value of play. She suggests that unless children play, there is a danger that the culture will die out – children learn their culture through imitation and play.

She had asked her mother to apologise to her – because as a child she had to work all the time. Her mother did so and this was a very emotional moment for Participant B. She says she has forgiven her mother.

Initially she found the study hard, but as she went on she read and shared and found she would refer back to the textbooks and materials to gather more knowledge. She now recognises that children have rights and now intervenes when she sees children being physically hit. She is very concerned about child abuse, but sees that it is difficult to stop because if a person refuses to give their child (to a wantok when asked) then perhaps this wantok will no longer provide for the child’s parents.

She reported that she is getting comments about her changed practices in elementary education. She is seeing a lot of changes in schools also. She considers that it is important that trainers make sure first that the teacher has changed – must understand what a child is - then how to provide relevant materials to extend them.

She reported that she is happier now, more fulfilled in her job, more approachable and more involved in counselling and giving advice now. She considers that the program has taught her to “think wiser” – more aware of the bigger picture now.