



EARLY YEARS

Response to Equity Economics' Project Evaluation: May 2022

4 June 2022

Introduction

Equity Economics conducted an external evaluation of KTF's Early Years project between February and May of 2022 to examine the impact and effectiveness of the project against six evaluation criteria. Upon analysis of the evaluation's findings, several recommendations were made to improve the project's overall effectiveness and address areas for improvement. This document outlines KTF's responses and proposed actions to the evaluation to ensure continued success of the program and improve overall program design.

Recommendations and KTF actions

EE Focus – Go Wide: KTF should broaden the reach of its education program to a wider audience that includes community leaders and parents.

KTF agrees that further engagement with community members and parents is critical to ensuring adequate support for the implementation of early years education programs. KTF recognizes that often members of the community are confused and have questions about the future restructure of the education system by the PNG government and that further explanations and clarity will play a major role in the development of the project.

Communities need to understand the roll-out of the new 3-6-6 structure and the importance that early childhood education plays in meeting long-term development outcomes in children and adults. KTF plans to continue working with the National Department and Provincial Divisions of Education as this system is further implemented and will continue to hold training workshops in provinces across PNG to better inform teachers, trainers, parents and members of the community about key features of this structure.

KTF will ensure its training continues to closely align with the PNG Department of Education's policies and will work towards their outlined desired outcomes. In order to reach a wider audience and improve overall understanding of the new educational system, KTF will adapt the current EC program into a delivery model harnessing the success of the place-based programme in regions with hubs that allow more naturally for greater outreach into communities allowing a wider reach and deeper understanding of the content with repeated and extended engagement. More audio visual engagement will be considered and developed for tablet based programming as the program engages the teachers to utilise the technology in a stepped and targeted approach.

As suggested in the EE recommendations, Provincial trainer partners will be supported (through resources for travel, logistics and the hosting of communications and awareness events) to visit schools and conduct awareness to the broader community (not just the teachers) which will catalyse local conversations on ECE and improve attendance among children aged 4 to 5 years.

EE Focus – Go Deep: KTF should become more involved in the selection of the ECE pilot program locations.

Moving forward, KTF will adopt a place-based, intensive partnering and resourcing approach to the Early Years work in remote schools and locations. Key areas with KTF presence and strong partnerships will be prioritised moving forward including bases in Kokoda (associated with the Kokoda College) and Balimo (associated with the Balimo College). This emerging model will focus on a broad schools network across these regions to engage teachers, community members and endorsement of the senior educational staff members. This allegiance of each area will feed into a holistic approach to rural communities under the restructure, working on creating pathways for teachers to reach NDoE minimum qualifications and schools to strengthen the teaching and learning engagement across the span of EC to Senior Primary.

This holistic approach will speak to each layer of the Early Childhood emerging into communities. From support with educational staffing to collaborate on framework, curriculum and guidelines to pedagogical strategies and theories with teaching teams and awareness and construction support for parents and community members.

As per the recommendations, in the target regions, KTF will establish criteria to determine which schools to set up as “best practice” ECE schools including space to run ECE program, logistics and ease of transport for installation of equipment, passionate and qualified teachers who could champion ECE, ease of transport for other community leaders/teachers/provincial authorities to visit the pilot school for information gathering and learning.

EE Focus - Go Deep: KTF should check-in with schools at quarterly intervals.

KTF understands the importance of having adequate monitoring systems in place and the value that this brings, particularly in newer/pilot programs. We will aim to have quarterly check-ins with all schools in which the ECE training has been delivered and ECE resourcing, equipment and infrastructure established to give teachers the opportunity to ask any questions and to collect data on the impact that this project is having.

While the long-term outcomes will take place over a greater period of time, these check-ins will allow us to determine if any changes need to be made to any current or future building sites and better help us better align our curriculum with ways in which the equipment is being utilised.

A facebook page to share resources and ideas can be developed with the facilitators, trainers and teachers. We have a current facebook page to share ideas between Elementary trainers we have worked with closely and can adapt this model for the group.

EE Focus - Go Deep: KTF should build on its ECE foundations.

Recommendation 1. Use these pilots as demonstration programs and arrange transportation for school teachers and community leaders to come and see them work in practice.

The pilot EC classrooms and practices will be brought into the communities in an informal capacity until the NDoE policy, framework and curriculum are formally launched. This will set up strong awareness for communities and agency around the set-up of the school and school readiness pathways and programs for young children. Best practice demonstration schools will serve as an opportunity to build scale, support broader piloting of ECE programs, and for the large network of elementary teachers across each target region to access training and example ideas to get starting in their schools.

Additional professional development and training opportunities will be made available to teachers as the project expands across the target catchment areas.

Recommendation 2. Evaluate the success of the ECE pilot program after 12 months of operation to identify the impacts on children, carers and the community. This will help identify what is working and what obstacles remain. It will also ensure the quality of the program is at the expected level and KTF is comfortable that it is being run consistent with its training.

KTF will undertake an evaluation of the ECE pilot program with the purpose of analysing specific outputs, including whether the program is still consistent with the initial training that was provided, any challenges faced, aspects of the program that are succeeding, and determine the impact the program has so far had on children, carers, and the community. KTF will use these findings to adjust the program components as needed to better meet the intended outcomes.

Recommendation 3. Support other communities to establish programs in their schools, including through teaching relevant skills such as carpentry for construction of swings and seesaws and other child-centred infrastructure.

As we move into the place based approach to Early Years programming, KTF will support other communities to establish ECE programs in their schools including the teacher training component and upskilling of community members in carpentry, construction and development of child-centred infrastructure. The Early Years manual has been used across a range of schools and P&C groups and is easy to understand and implement the relevant infrastructure tasks.

Recommendation 4. Ensure other members of the education system are instructed in ECE, such as school inspectors.

The ongoing model of the EC program will incorporate the engagement and training across senior education members, including school inspectors and senior standards officers, and cross cutting agencies, such as Community Development. KTF will ensure senior education members are also invited to attend. They original delivery started with a higher level presentation to senior education officials to discuss framework and curriculum but the practical aspect of the manual for educational benchmarking and construction can be added into the wider audience. KTF can organise a tiered approach to the delivery with senior officials in the initial day and then teachers and community members through the body of the training and collaboration.