Education in PNG

In PNG more than 46% of the population is under the age of 18. Although education is free, many children do not go to school or drop out before completing primary school. Levels of literacy and numeracy are low so the Government of PNG is introducing a new national curriculum to raise standards. The impact of low educational standards is high youth unemployment. Young women and girls are at a particular disadvantage. School enrolment rates for girls relative to boys are amongst the lowest in the Pacific.

VSO’s priorities in education

We believe the priority is to improve the quality of teaching and learning in early childhood, elementary and primary through improving teacher training and curriculum. We work alongside schools, teachers’ colleges, standards officers and provincial divisions of education to improve school management and the teaching of literacy and numeracy. We focus on supporting long-lasting reforms in teacher education and curriculum. VSO looks for innovative research, solutions and collaborations and works closely with the Department of Education. As a long term partner we champion reforms such as phonics, scripted lessons, decodable readers and improved teacher training.

How VSO volunteers improve education in PNG

Our experienced international volunteers share knowledge and skills which are not available locally. Working closely with their PNG colleagues, they identify problems and find practical and sustainable solutions to improve the quality of education in Papua New Guinea.

We do this in a number of ways:

- Providing long term support and professional development for education professionals
- Providing technical advice on improving education quality
- Coaching and mentoring of teachers, lecturers and headteachers
- Managing research
- Role-modelling positive behaviour and project professional standards
- Linking with other NGOs and church education agencies

Impact of VSO volunteers in PNG

In the last twelve months VSO volunteers have been improving teaching and learning in many ways:

- The new Standards Based Curriculum elementary English syllabus, teacher guides, 450 scripted lessons, 120 songs and 26 readers
- Seven new teacher training units for primary English including video lessons and training for over 100 lecturers (www.youtube.com/pngteachingvideos)
- A national review of the elementary teacher training system in PNG (using a phone bank for the first time)
- SMS Story, an innovative research trial of mobile technology to improve reading in remote schools (www.vsointernational.org/Images/sms-story-impact-assessment-report_tcm76-41038.pdf)
- Testing the English proficiency of over 700 elementary teachers using a computerised test in collaboration with the British Council
- Developing national early childhood diploma
- Technical advice to the Prime Minister’s OBE Exit Task Force
- Research on pregnancy in schools, secondary transition, early childhood centres and national exam data analysis
- Support for inclusive education and counselling services
Most VSO volunteers work on Department of Education projects funded by a range of donors such as DFAT, UNICEF and the PNG government.

**How do VSO volunteers work in PNG?**

Usually VSO volunteers are managed directly by their partner organisation. In cases where VSO manages projects on behalf of a partner or donor, we use steering committees and regular monitoring and evaluation to ensure maximum ownership and sustainability. We have extensive experience of project management and have international-standard financial management systems.

**Summary of education projects for 2013/14**

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<thead>
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<th>Project</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Donors</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language Support Program</td>
<td>2012-2014</td>
<td>DFAT</td>
<td>Seven updated English teacher training courses for primary diploma Videos Professional development National conferences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Every Child Reading</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Australian Aid</td>
<td>Elementary English syllabus, Teacher Guides, scripted lessons, classroom library kit</td>
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<td>Inclusive Education Quality Project</td>
<td>2013-2014</td>
<td>DFAT &amp; UNICEF</td>
<td>New special education pre-service course &amp; professional development</td>
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<tr>
<td>SMS Story</td>
<td>2013</td>
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<td>Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elementary Teacher Training Reform</td>
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<td>DFAT</td>
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<td>Grade 8 exam analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elementary English Teacher Development Pilot</td>
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<td>DoE &amp; DFAT</td>
<td>Research</td>
</tr>
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<td>Early childhood facilities survey</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>Research</td>
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VSO Papua New Guinea

Physical Address
Lot 10, Section 31
Binnen Road
Madang
Papua New Guinea

Postal Address
PO Box 1061,
Madang, PNG.

(+675) 4221924/4221925
vsopng@vsoint.org
www.vsointernational.org

VSO is the world's leading charity that fights poverty through volunteers.
Registered charity number: England and Wales 313757, Scotland SC03911