Partnership Agreement

Between

Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) Public School System (PSS)

and

College of the Marshall Islands (CMI)

This Partnership Agreement sets out the partnership terms and understanding between PSS and CMI whist engaging in the Improving the Quality of Basic Education (IQBE) in the North Pacific Project 2017-2023.

Background

RMI recognizes the need to improve the quality of basic education, even with the gains made in increasing access to education. Student performance is alarmingly low, with only 20% of sixth graders meeting or exceeding proficiency levels in mathematics and 19% meeting or exceeding proficiency levels in reading.

Weak education outcomes stem from many factors, notably poor teacher quality. The minimum qualification for teaching, the 2-year associate's degree, has not been met by 38% of teachers in the RMI. In addition, only the second year of the associate's degree focuses on teacher education courses, and professional learning opportunities are not continuous or necessarily coherent. Urban teachers and schools receive more support than rural and remote teachers and schools. Low student learning outcomes at the primary education level become magnified and more expensive to resolve at higher levels of education, when disenfranchised youth create larger societal issues. A young population in both countries offers a substantial labor force that must be capitalized on to maximize potential growth.

A major challenge for RMI is adjusting to regular cuts in the US Compact of Free Association grants, which fund most of the operating budgets in education. The urgency of improving education is heightened by the end of the Compact and the US supplemental education grant funds in 2023, which compromise about 69% of the national education budget in the RMI.

The project will build on the previous TA, which worked in a small number of schools, and will be most effective where supportive institutional backing exists. The project will focus on Majuro, Ebeye, Jaluit and Wotje outer islands.

Primary partners and stakeholders include CMI and USP the tertiary institutions responsible for educating RMI teachers and principals; the RMI Ministry of Education (MOE) particularly the PSS which is responsible for educational outcomes in elementary schools where the project is focused; relevant nongovernment organizations; and above all, parents and community.

Purpose

This agreement confirms the commitment by PSS and CMI to work in partnership to achieve the performance targets, against each of the 4 outputs of the project, as set out in the Project Design and Monitoring Framework (DMF) attached as annex one.

Improving the quality of basic education in the RMI requires all educational stakeholders (including PSS and CMI) working together more effectively and efficiently. Collaboration and collective effort by all stakeholders across all outputs will amplify the results of the project.

PSS and CMI have collaborated in the design of the project. While the Ministry of Finance is the executing agency of the project and the Ministry of Education, through the PSS, the implementing agency; CMI will be service providers to improve pre-service, in-service and related project activities. The PSS and CMI, will both benefit from consultant experience in gap areas of technical expertise.

PSS and CMI currently both operate within the education sector with a shared interest in improving the quality of education, and educational standards, in the RMI. With an ultimate objective of improved educational outcomes for students, the PSS and CMI both recognize the IQBE project as an opportunity for both institutions to improve collaboration and ultimately strengthen their professional relationships. Both PSS and CMI are committed to working together – through enhanced coordination, collaboration, and sharing of good practices between themselves and with other education stakeholders in the project. Both the PSS and CMI recognize the six-year nature of the project as an opportunity to transform current educational practice in schools and embed quality educational practice in a sustainable manner throughout the RMI education sector. The PSS and CMI are committed to working together to achieve the outcome set for the project.

Outcome

The project will have the following outcome: improved primary education learning outcomes in literacy and numeracy, with 50% of grade 6 students meeting or exceeding the minimum competency for reading and mathematics.

Outputs

The project will deliver four outputs:

1. teachers in primary education are better prepared

2. capacity to use student assessment to improve learning strengthened

3. access to and usage of teaching and learning resources and materials for literacy and numeracy expanded

4. educational leadership and management of schools, including parent and community engagement, strengthened.

Collaboration

The PSS and CMI (and other stakeholders) will commit to a professional partnership based on enhanced coordination, collaboration, and sharing. The partnership approach will occur in part through the channels below:

Joint representation on the governance of the project on the Project Steering Committee Working representation at the technical committee level to co-ordinate joint activities which form part of the IQBE project.

PSS and CMI are committed to working together along with the other stakeholders in the project, namely schools Principals, teachers and communities (through NGOs) to achieve the outcome of the project.

Meetings

- The PSS and CMI representatives will commit to regular meetings to develop new systems, share progress and address any barriers to the project.

- Meetings will occur at several levels.

    o PSS and CMI nominated representatives will attend and contribute to all quarterly Project Steering Committee (PSC) meetings.

    o The PSS Technical Committee and CMI representatives will meet monthly, along with RMI USP representatives, to update each other on progress against the outputs. Any implementation barriers will be identified and addressed.

Activities

CMI will undertake the activities listed in the CMI implementation plan, with each activity being matched to specific outputs. The MOE (PSS) will provide sector support so that CMI can carry out the activities as specified. CMI will in turn inform the PSS of their progress towards the outputs. Any barriers to implementation that arise in the sector will be addressed by the PSS in partnership with CMI.

PSS and CMI will work collaboratively with each other, USP and other identified stakeholders, including community members and ADB consultant experts to:

Output 1: Better prepare teachers in primary education

1.1   Develop a sector wide new Professional Learning Framework (PLF) agreed to and actioned by all.
1.2   Train teachers according to a collaboratively developed and agreed Quality Pedagogical Framework (QPF) focused on literacy and numeracy across the curriculum.
1.3   Ensure improved alignment between Pre-service Teacher Education and In-service Teacher Education.
1.4   Establish a New System of Lead Teachers with agreed induction procedures.
1.5   Develop career pathways for teachers developed.

Output 2: Strengthen capacity to use assessment to improve learning.

2.1   Develop a sector wide new National Student Assessment Framework agreed to and actioned by all.
2.2   Train teachers on alternative assessments for learning.

Output 3: Expand access and usage of teaching and learning resources and materials for Literacy and Numeracy.
3.1   Increase the access to teaching and learning resources.
3.2   Increase the number and quality of resources increased.
3.3   Increase community/school partnerships to produce better and a greater number of resources.
3.4   Support and run teacher/community workshops on newly developed resources and materials.

Output 4: Strengthen educational leadership and management of schools, including parent/ community engagement.
4.1   Strengthen Principal performance standards to an agreed level.
4.2   Train school leaders to agreed educational leadership and management levels.

4.3   Establish a Parents as Partners Program.
4.4   Work collaboratively to ensure the school-based development project changes from 1.1 to 4.3 are sustainable.

Important point

Although CMI will not work directly in all the sub output areas above it should be aware of updated teacher practice and ensure its overall engagement with the project aligns to and supports the changes the RMI education system is making.

Where new agreed frameworks are developed, all stakeholders should ensure their practice changes over time to reflect the intent of the new frameworks. For example, a shared Quality Pedagogical Framework (QPF) will be developed drawing on several evidence-based factors that reflect quality teaching[1]

These new key components will need to be understood and modeled in all lessons, where practicable, in CMI and USP teacher educator courses and by all trainees in their classroom practice, so that the processes become internalized. The framework is also central to all professional learning offered by the PSS and explicit in all materials and templates used for preservice and in-service teacher education.

Reporting

CMI will comply with all requests for information from PSS (specially their progress against the outputs for the activities they have contracted to carry out) in a timely manner for quarterly progress reports, annual reports, as well as mid-term and final reporting requirements.

Scope of Service

CMI is the only community college in the Republic of the Marshall Islands. The plan will draw on academic and training resources from all CMI campuses and centers[2]. The high standards stated in our Mission and set for the quality in its research, academic programs and student support will be applied to the activities for the IQBE.

The CMI Mission
The mission of the College of the Marshall Islands is to provide access to quality, student-centered, post-secondary educational services to the Marshallese people. We provide selective higher education programming, intellectual resources, and research specific to the needs of the nation and the larger Pacific community. (Revised February 2017)

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[1] These features will include: evidence-based factors required for improving student learning: social interaction, prior knowledge, learning outcomes and success criteria, time and varied opportunities for learning, active processes, relevant and meaningful activities, assessment for learning, reflection, and teacher expectations.

[2] Uliga and Arrak campuses and Ebeye and Jaluit centers.

To address the IQBE outcome of improved basic education learning outcomes in primary (elementary) education, CMI has proposed a scope of services comprised of the following tasks as documented in Table 1. CMI will collaborate with PSS, USP and IQBE consultants across the project to ensure collective impact that improves student learning outcomes, especially in literacy and numeracy (in the language of instruction). Furthermore, the introduction of emerging pedagogies and new learning technologies through Blended learning will provide, for the first time in the RMI, intensive and Education sector-wide training and development in twenty-first century educational theory and practice.

CMI Implementation Plan 2017 - 2023

TASKS	PROJECT YEAR	TIMELINE	ACTIVITY	OUTPUT
CMI SCOPE Planning	Pre-project	Feb-March 2017	Meetings: PSS, USP & CMI	Project-ready CMI Education Department
Planning	Pre-project	March-April 2017	Learning Designer Job Description NOTE: Recruitment of the Learning Designer will commence once the project has been approved.	- Job Description. - Draft advertisement.
Budgeting		March 2017	Preparation of budget	- Budget submitted.
Planning		April – June, 2017	Preparation of implementation plan	- Implementation Plan completed by mid-May.
Mobilization		July – September, 2017	Recruitment: Learning Designer; and Translator (Output 1.2)	- Learning Designer appointed; - Translator appointed.
Course design and development portfolio. ACCJC substantive change application		October – December, 2017	- Confirmation of course design and development (CDD) process. - Identification of relevant Open Education Resources (OER) - Each course in the Education program will be scheduled for Blended Learning design and development in the next 36 months. - Assignment of CDD team. - CDD training of Faculty schedule.	- CDD Portfolio - CDD Teams - OER program repository - Training Plan. - Translator Work Plan.

TASKS	PROJECT YEAR	TIMELINE	ACTIVITY	OUTPUT
			- Develop Translator Work Plan (CLLC)[3].	
Output 1.2	Year 1	January-July, 2018	- Blended CDD I: 5 courses - Prepare Substantive Change	- Phase 1 CDD: 5 Blended courses.

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[3] Customary Law and Language Commission

TASKS	PROJECT YEAR	TIMELINE	ACTIVITY	OUTPUT
			application for submission to the Accrediting Commission for Community & Junior Colleges (ACCJC). - OER training for Faculty - Translation of core courses I - Translation of learning support materials I.	- Faculty trained to use OER. - Substantive Change application prepared and submitted to ACCJC.
Output 1.2	Year 1	August-December, 2018	- Pilot of first 5 blended learning courses. - Blended CDD II: 5 courses. - Translation of elective courses I - Translation of learning support materials II.	- First pilot of Blended learning students.
Output 1.2	Years 2 - 6	January-December, 2019 - January-December, 2023	- Blended CDD III – IV. - Course evaluations. - Course revisions. - OER integration with CDD. - Blended learning program design and development. - Ongoing CDD training. - Translation of core and elective courses III.	- Blended learning Education program. - Evaluation cycle of blended learning program.

TASKS	PROJECT YEAR	TIMELINE	ACTIVITY	OUTPUT
			- Translation of learning support materials III.	- Evaluation results. - OER repository expanded. - Translated course and learning support materials III.
Output 1.2 Trial and finalize different Blended	Years 1 - 6	Year 1 Qtr. 4	- Revised Blended learning I courses. - Blended learning training plan in operation. - Ongoing OER training.	- Cycle of blended learning improvements based on evaluations at the end of each

learning approaches			- Translation of course and learning materials IV.	semester. - Blended learning training schedule. - Translated materials IV.
		Year 2 Qtr. 1 – Year 6 Qtr. 3	- Cycle of new and revised Blended learning courses. - Research projects designed to better inform blended learning designs. - Blended course design and development IV: 5 courses. - Blended course design and development V: 5 courses. Blended course design and development VI: 5 courses.	- Revised Blended learning program II & III. - Research results. - Translated (Marshallese) learning materials.

TASKS	PROJECT YEAR	TIMELINE	-	ACTIVITY	-	OUTPUT
Output 1.2 Implement blended approaches for IQBE activities	Years 2 - 3	Year 2 Qtr. 1 (Ongoing. Amended from Quarter 2 to Quarter 1 which was stated in the initial IQBE submission).	-	Blended learning 'train the trainers' program: option for teacher graduates from the Blended learning program to be taught to design and teach Blended learning courses. - Translation of course and learning support materials V. - Scheduled meetings between PSS, USP and CMI.	-	Train the trainers' schedule. - Meeting minutes. - Translated course and learning support materials V.
Output 1.4 Develop and trial online learning for Lead Teachers	Years 2 - 5	Year 2 Qtr.1 - Year 5 Qtr. 3.	-	Design and development of Blended learning program for Lead Teachers. - First pilot of the Blended learning program for Lead Teachers. - Design and development schedule for improvements starting with the evaluation of the pilot Blended learning program for Lead Teachers. - Translation of course materials.	-	Blended learning program for Lead Teachers. - Potential Lead Teachers identified by PSS/USP. - Lead teacher training in Blended learning. - Lead teacher training through Blended learning. - Revised Blended learning program for Lead Teachers. - Translated course materials.

TASKS	PROJECT YEAR	TIMELINE	ACTIVITY	OUTPUT
Output 1.4 Implement learning package (Majuro)	Years 2 - 5	Year 2 Qtr. 2 - Year 5 Qtr. 3.	**MAJURO** 1. First offer of Blended learning courses. 2. Evaluation of first offer. 3. Simultaneous research project to inform improved learning designs.	- First cohort of Blended learning students in **Majuro**. - Revised Blended learning courses. - Research project update: **Majuro**.
Output 1.4 Implement learning package (Ebeye)		Year 2 Qtr. 3 – Year 5 Qtr. 3.	**EBEYE** 1. First offer of Blended learning courses. 2. Evaluation of first offer. 3. Simultaneous research project to inform improved learning design.	- First cohort of Blended learning students in **Ebeye**. - Revised Blended learning courses. - Research project update: **Ebeye**.
Output 1.4 Implement learning package (Outer islands)		Year 2 Qtr. 4 – Year 5 Qtr. 3.	**OUTER ISLANDS** 1. First offer of Blended learning courses. 2. Evaluation of first offer. 3. Simultaneous research project to inform improved learning design.	- First cohort of Blended learning students in the **outer islands**. - Revised Blended learning courses. - Research project update: **Outer islands**.
		Year 5 Qtr. 4	1. Integrate research materials and compile research report.	- Research report for CMI Blended learning first offer.

TASKS	PROJECT YEAR	TIMELINE	ACTIVITY	OUTPUT
Output 3.4 **Trial offline workshops for outer island**	Year 2 - 3	Year 2 Qtr. 3 – Year 3 Qtr. 3.	1. Training materials reviewed for offline workshops. 2. Schedule Majuro, Ebeye and Outer Islands'	- Offline training modules. - Implement the Training program

teachers			workshops. 3. Develop Evaluation template for the workshops. 4. Translate training materials.	and schedule. - Evaluation template. - Translated training materials. - Action plan for improvement.
Output 4.2 **Develop and implement modules for Principals**	Year 2	Year 2 Qtr. 3	1. Develop 'educational leadership and management' Blended learning modules. ***Collaborate with USP who are also training the Principals to avoid any overlaps or gaps.*** 2. Develop schedule for training the Principals. 3. Develop Evaluation template for educational leadership and management training modules.	- Educational leadership and management Blended learning modules implemented. - Program and schedule for training the Principals. - Evaluation template. - Action plan for improvement.
Output 4.2 **Complete credit courses in educational leadership and management.**	Year 1	Year 2 Qtr. 1	1. Identify credit courses required for the completion of educational leadership and management. 2. Develop the Implementation Plan for completing the program in educational leadership and management. 3. Develop the Evaluation template for educational leadership and management.	4. List of courses and Implementation Plan required for the completion of educational leadership and management. - Evaluation template. - Action Plan for improving education leadership and management.

TASKS	PROJECT YEAR	TIMELINE	ACTIVITY	OUTPUT
Output 4.4 Expand school readiness discussions to Ebeye, Jaluit and Wotje using Blended learning		Year 2 Qtr. 1	1. Meeting schedules for PSS, USP & CMI to direct the discussions. 2. Meeting schedules for engagement with the outer islands' schools and community. 3. Organize Roadshows to showcase the IQBE and Blended learning approaches in the outer islands. 4. Develop the outcomes and actions template for the discussions.	- Confirmed outcomes for the discussions with outer island education administration, schools and communities. - Meeting schedules with outcomes, timelines and responsible position/person for achieving the outcomes. - Implementation Plan for school readiness including resource implications.

Funding

An agreed indicative budget is provided as appendix two to enable the delivery of the services. The budget will be reviewed on an annual basis or as the need arises.

Payment for services, Reporting and Evaluation

The PSS will pay CMI one year in advance, as set out in appendix two, for satisfactory completion of the tasks outlined in the implementation plan above which contribute to the achievement of the principal performance targets as outlined in the Design and Monitoring Framework (DMF), attached as appendix one.

Subsequent payments will be based on the satisfactory completion of any activities and liquidation of earlier payments.

Contingencies will be utilized only with the prior approval of PSS and ADB's endorsement.

In terms of payments both the PSS and CMI will adhere to the procedures as set out in the Project Administration Manual.

Payment of expenditures such as materials, supplies, equipment (computers, projector, printer) office furniture, utilities (internet/phones/advertisements/miscellaneous items) are to be paid on actual basis (as spent with official receipt during liquidation).

CMI will submit monthly progress reports to the PIU at technical committee meetings outlining current progress towards achieving the outputs and any barriers encountered with potential actions to overcome these barriers. Any future risk can also be identified. Every 3 months a report on liquidation/use of the funds will be provided.

In the spirit of the partnership the PSS, PIU and CMI will work collaboratively to develop actions to address barriers to achieving the outputs and develop mitigation strategies to overcome identified risk.

CMI will also submit in a timely fashion quarterly reports which include:

- Progress achieved by output which the Project Implementation Unit can use to measure progress through the indicator's performance targets
- Key implementation issues along with solutions.

In the case of termination of the agreement by CMI any money advanced for uncompleted activities would be refunded to the PSS.

Duration
This Partnership Agreement may be modified by mutual consent of authorized officials from the MOE and PSS. This Partnership Agreement shall become effective upon signature by the authorized officials from PSS and CMI and will remain in effect until modified or terminated by any one of the partners by mutual consent. In the absence of mutual agreement by the authorized officials from PSS and CMI this Partnership Agreement shall end on June 30 2023.

Amendments

Either party may request changes to this Partnership Agreement. Any changes, modifications, revisions or amendments to this Partnership Agreement which are mutually agreed upon by and between the parties to this Partnership Agreement shall be incorporated by written instrument, and effective when executed and signed by all parties to this Partnership Agreement.
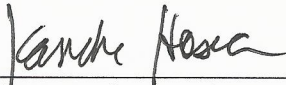
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