

EXAMPLE NEEDS STATEMENT

Need Statement – Example 1

The Problem: The FSM and Its Schools—distance, languages, and cultural diversity impede students' ability to enter mainland universities – Thus, teachers need to be trained to maintain the wealth of diversity and languages while at the same time adapting a more uniform approach to teaching so that students can be competitive in being admitted to universities in the mainland.

The Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) is a former U.S. Trust Territory which is composed of the States of Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei, and Yap. The FSM is spread over 2,500,000 square kilometers of the Northern West Pacific. Comprised of 607 different islands, the FSM has seventy-one islands which are inhabited. From the lush, green high islands of Pohnpei and Kosrae to the outer island atolls of Pohnpei, Chuuk, and Yap, the islands of the FSM are dots in the immense expanse of the Pacific Ocean. The State capitals are connected by Continental Air Lines service—five to six flights weekly—which also allows access to international destinations. While a few of the outer islands are connected by small commuter planes, most of these islands are connected only by oceangoing ships. Normally, it will be a month or more between visits to the islands with only a few hours stop at each island. Given this extreme level of geographic isolation, formal economic and educational development is retarded by lack of both economic and experiential resources.

The size of the FSM can be seen in the map on the following page, which superimposes the continental United States on to Micronesia. This map gives an indication of the distances involved in providing educational services within the FSM in general and Pohnpei State in particular. The second map on the page also shows its distance—and relative isolation from support services—from Hawaii and the Mainland U.S.

One of the major obstacles in the teaching approaches is that teachers adopt their teaching to the existing cultures and languages, which handicap students to be able to advance their study in universities abroad and thus, augment the economic well-being of the island upon their return. Specifically, during the past five years, only 5% of the graduating high school seniors were able to enter universities in the U.S. This has created a stagnant economy for the FSM for few are able to return with the learning capital to make an economic difference for their islands.

As a consequence, the FSM is requesting the funds to train teachers to maintain the rich cultural and linguistic understanding of their classrooms while at the same time

teach students in 21st century technology, and course content. This would create a broader uniformity between the teachings throughout the islands.