Access to Quality Education Program (AQEP) – Fiji

6th Six Monthly Report

1 January – 30 June 2014

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLES

ANNEXES

Abbreviations

AMU	Asset Monitoring Unit
AQEP	Access to Quality Education Program
AHT	Allied Health Team
AVID	Australian Volunteers for International Development
A$	Australian Dollar
BACC	Budget Aid and Coordinating Committee
CBA	Classroom Based Assessment
CDU	Curriculum Development Unit
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australian High Commission
DIS	Disability Inclusion Strategy
DPO	Disabled Persons Organisation
EAU	Examination and Assessment Unit
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ECE	Early Childhood Education
EIE	Education in Emergencies
EMIS	Educational Management Information System
EO	Education Officer
ERC	Educational Resource Centre
FEMIS	Fiji Education Management Information System
FENC	Foundation for the Education of Needy Children
FESA	Fiji Education Staff Appointment
FHSSP	Fiji Health Sector Support Program
F$	Fijian Dollar
FNCDP	Fiji National Council for Disabled Persons
FNU	Fiji National University
FTA	Fijian Teachers Association
HR	Human Resources
ID	Identity
IEP	Individualised Education Plan
IT	Information Technology
ITC	Information Technology Centre
ITS	Information Technology Services
JAWS	Job Access with Speech
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
LANA	Literacy and Numeracy Assessment
m	million
mm	millimetre
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation

MoE	Ministry of Education
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
OER	Open Educational Resources
PCC	Program Coordination Committee
PCN	People's Community Network
PEMAC	Physical Education, Music and Art & Craft
PEO	Principal Education Officer
PTD	Program to Date
QLST	Quality Learning Support Team
RAD	Rapid Assessment of Disability
SC	Save the Children
SCC	School Community Coordinator
SEO	Senior Education Officer
SMC	School Management Committee
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
STA	Short Term Adviser
TOC	Theory of Change
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USP	University of the South Pacific
VAT	Value Added Tax
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

AQEP Background

The Access to Quality Education Program (AQEP) commenced in mid-August 2011. It consists of a package of bilateral assistance worth up to A$50 million to the Fiji education sector over six years with an expected end date of 30th June 2017. AQEP is funded by the Australian Government through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and implemented by GRM International. The goal of the of the Program is to work with the MoE and other education service providers to improve the ability of children from very poor communities, including those with a disability, to access a quality school education. The Program objectives are:

(a) **Component 1:** reducing financial and other barriers to accessing a quality school education. This involves mitigating the effects of political instability and the global recession on the most vulnerable children;

(b) **Component 2:** investing in school infrastructure in the poorest communities to ensure that facilities are adequate and safe and contribute to improved student learning outcomes; and

(c) **Component 3:** conducting targeted research and analysis on the systemic challenges to achieving improved education outcomes in Fiji. This activity will involve a range of short-term, demand-driven technical assistance and the provision of flexible and outcome-driven support to MoE priorities.

AQEP Background

Executive Summary

This is the sixth progress report for the Access to Quality Education Program (AQEP) covering the six month period from 1 January – 30 June 2014. It reports on the progress and achievements of the Program against the Year 3 Work Plan and discusses issues and challenges encountered in the reporting period as well as some analysis around key issues/risks, risk management and sustainability.

> **Relevance**: The Theory of Change exercise recently undertaken by the Program has confirmed that the AQEP goal, objectives and intended outcomes are still relevant today despite the late start of Component 1 Social Protection, which has just completed one year of activity implementation, and a budget reduction of A$4m in Year 2 and A$1m in Year 3.

In terms of AQEP's targeting approach in the selection of new primary schools to support in Years 4 and 5, the Program has not deviated from the poverty and geographical disadvantage criteria so that the poorest students in the poorest schools in the most disadvantaged communities in urban, rural, remote and very remote Fiji continue to be targeted. Budget permitting, it is expected that approximately 139 primary schools (excluding those that have been assisted following an emergency) will benefit from the Program as shown in the table below:

Year	Category	Number of Primary Schools Assisted	Details of Assistance
1	Infrastructure only	24	Infrastructure support only – includes renovations to school facilities, water, sanitation and hygiene
2-5	Full package of support: 49 Cohort A and 31 Cohort B schools	80	Includes social protection, infrastructure support (as shown in the row above), provision of teaching & learning resources and a computer package for FEMIS purpose
2-5	Disability inclusive demonstration schools	5	Disability support in Year 2 and full package from Year 3 as defined in row above
4-5	Infrastructure only	30	Includes renovations to school facilities, water, sanitation and hygiene
	TOTAL	**139**	

A key issue identified in the report, which is beyond the control of the Australian Aid Program and AQEP, is that a budget reduction in February 2014 of A$1m and a request to redirect funds to increase Program engagement with the Ministry of Education, resulted in AQEP putting 17 activities on hold and scaling back on other activities. When considered together with the A$4m budget reduction mid-way through the Year 2 Work Plan implementation, this has the potential risk of reducing the ability of the Program to satisfactorily achieve its outcomes and/or meet its targets and therefore may impact on the Program's effectiveness. For example, the budget reductions have meant that AQEP is not likely to reach the initial intended target of 25% of Fiji's primary schools or the targeted 180 primary schools in five years. However, when AQEP's emergency support is considered, then these targets will be

reached with coverage extended to Kindergartens/Early Childhood Education Centres, secondary schools and special schools.

An operational issue that impacts on the ability of the Program to adequately report on its high level outcomes in this six monthly report is the fact that AQEP is just in the process of finalising the Program Baseline Report, the Monitoring and Evaluation Implementation Plan and the Theory of Change analysis. While the Program is not yet in a position to provide sufficient credible or robust evidence to track our progress in attaining the outcomes, we will be able to do so in the next six monthly report.

A fiduciary issue experienced in the reporting period is the discovery of two cases of mismanagement of AQEP grants despite stringent measures taken by the Program and despite the Program regularly sending out a clear message to AQEP supported schools that the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Ministry of Education and AQEP have a zero tolerance to any form of fraud or corruption. One case has been closed by the Australian Fraud Control section while in the second case, the teacher who committed the theft has been suspended by the MoE, the matter has been reported to the police and the money has been recovered. The mitigation strategies to prevent fraud and financial mismanagement include:

- Regular monitoring by AQEP and MoE – checking acquittals.
- Clear accountability procedures and support for school committees.
- Clear grants implementation guidelines including anti-fraud strategies.
- Annual external financial audit to be conducted.
- Clear separation of powers for all financial and other key approvals.
- Undertaking regular fraud training with AQEP staff.
- Recruitment of District based Bookkeepers to assist with monitoring of school finances.
- Clearance with bank for AQEP to have full access on school AQEP bank accounts.
- Training for new Head teachers and School Management Committees at the start of each year.
- Involvement of MoE district staff in mentoring visits.
- Alignment between AQEP and MoE Grant acquittal procedures to reduce confusion in the school acquittal process.

Despite the issues discussed above, AQEP has made some good progress against some of its 10 high level outcomes in the reporting period as shown below:

Achievements

Some of the achievements of the Program in the reporting period include:

- 27 more children with a disability have enrolled in the five disability inclusion schools bringing the total number of children with disability at AQEP supported schools to 82 (56 Boys; 26 Girls);

- Over 3,200 (60% Female) parents and community members attended community training in 50 Cohort A schools – they included traditional leaders/chiefs, mothers and fathers, and youths;

- 4 disability inclusive demonstration schools made disability accessible bringing the total number of schools with disability access to 27;

- 1,932 Head Teachers, Principals, Managers and Treasurers (26% Females) were trained on Financial Management of the government Free Education Grants in 34 clusters in all 9 education districts;

- Approximately 206,000 students are now enrolled in FEMIS which is 100% of the national student population;

- Greater Involvement of women in school decision making process;

- Hygiene training and monitoring for 43 schools that have received infrastructure assistance in Years 1 and 2. A total of 229 teachers (118 males, 111 females) were trained in the 43 schools;

- 20 school maintenance plans that would guide their school maintenance activity in 2014 using the funding allocation from MoE's Free Education Grant were completed;

- 98% of 2013 LANA results were successfully migrated into FEMIS. Schools were granted access to on-line LANA reports for all years;

- EAU used FEMIS student data for 2014 LANA, saving the MoE approximately 3,800 hours of data entry work as LANA registration used to be manually entered at the EAU.

1.0 Key Program Results

1.1 Outcomes

The Access to Quality Education Program (AQEP) has 10 high level outcomes expected to be achieved by the end of the Program. As the Program has just finalised the draft versions of the Baseline Report, the Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) Implementation Plan and the Theory of Change activity in the reporting period, the evaluation side of our M&E system has only just commenced. It is therefore not possible at this stage to provide an analysis of the key factors, both facilitating and inhibiting, that account for the degree of progress towards the 10 outcomes. It is expected that more information and a better analysis will be forthcoming in the next six-monthly report.

However, what is reported here is either based on monitoring data collected to date or our professional judgement on the progress of the Program against the 10 high level outcomes.

Outcome 1: Improvements in school access, retention and completion rates for children including those with a disability

- Over 3,200 community members (60% Female), including traditional leaders or chiefs, church leaders, parents and youths attended community meetings/trainings focusing on changing behaviour and attitudes towards education.
- 40 children with disabilities enrolled in 5 Disability Inclusive Demonstration schools in the reporting period. (27 newly enrolled and 13 currently enrolled students identified as having a disability).
- A total of 82 (56 boys and 26 girls) students with disabilities currently enrolled in five Disability Inclusive Demonstration schools.
- Three students with disabilities in AQEP Disability Inclusive Demonstration schools have transitioned into secondary school.

The Program is currently building datasets on student enrolment and attendance in the Fiji Education Management Information System (FEMIS) to track improvements in school access, retention and completion rates but AQEP officers are reporting encouraging changes in community support towards school initiatives to improve school access. For example, in Mataso Primary School, a remote boarding school in the province of Ra, the value of community support has exceeded program expectation. As part of its efforts to improve access by making boarding life more enjoyable for the children and reduce boarding costs for the parents, AQEP is piloting commercial farming as a sustainable source of food and income for the school. The community provided 20 acres of farmland around the school for the school farm and the 3 villages that send their children to the school provide 540 hours of labour a month.

Vegetable garden for Mataso Primary managed by youths from the nearby village.

Outcome 2: Reduction in any disparities in student access to schooling by virtue of location (urban, rural, remote and very remote)

As the Baseline Report and M&E Implementation Plan have only just been finalised, it has not been possible for the Program to undertake any subsequent data analysis or any trend analysis for this outcome.

The Access and Quality Grants given to schools take into account the additional costs for rural and remote schools to purchase and transport goods by providing a larger base grant to these schools. The scaling of the grant based on the number of students also decreases the differences between funding for large schools and small schools with large schools predominantly found in urban areas. The narrow cast items[1] target disadvantage, for example urban schools receive more funding based on the number of children attending the schools from informal settlements. In addition, AQEP-supported schools in remote areas which received under $10,000 of the Access and Quality Grants were provided additional teaching and learning materials. The deliberate approach to target disadvantage by virtue of location will contribute to the reduction of disparities in the rural and urban areas.

Outcome 3: Adoption of an inclusive approach to the education of children with disabilities in mainstream schooling

The AQEP Disability Inclusion Strategy is paving a way towards a more inclusive education in Fiji. The Ministry of Education (MoE) has emulated part of the AQEP disability inclusion model by taking on the responsibility of training head teachers of mainstream schools across Fiji including high school principals. So far a total of 250 Head teachers 40 Principals and 5 District Education Officers have gone through inclusive education training conducted by the Ministry of Education in partnership with AQEP and many school leaders are now promoting disability inclusion in their respective schools. Disabled Persons Organisations (DPOs) are

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[1] Narrow cast items are used to target a specific set of the population. For the Access and Quality Grant it is to target disadvantaged school children. Schools that have a higher level of disadvantage need more funding to provide an equitable level of education. The items used are children in the lowest quartile for the Literacy and Numeracy Assessment, children from informal settlements and children who are boarding at the school.

also very supportive of the inclusive education program and readily release their members to participate in any AQEP/MoE Disability Inclusion Training and activities.

- As reported above, 27 out of school children with disabilities enrolled in the reporting period; a total of 82 currently enrolled in five Disability Inclusive Demonstration schools
- ***Number of in-school students referred for diagnosis or services:*** Two students with vision impairment were referred for specialist vision assessment in the reporting period. A total of 20 students have been referred for diagnosis or services to date.
- ***Devices and learning supports provided for students, disaggregated by type of device and support***: The Program did not provide devices during the reporting period. Through the life of the Program, 10 Braille Machines, 5 laptop computers installed with JAWS[2] Software and 15 white canes have been provided to the 5 Disability Demonstration Inclusive schools.

Outcome 4: Improvement in physical infrastructure which enhances access for students with disability

All infrastructure work was completed in four of the five Disability Inclusive Demonstration schools, including construction of ramps and railings into classrooms and toilets in the reporting period. The fifth school was rehabilitated in Year 2 so all the disability demonstration schools are now disability accessible in line with the Australian Government Accessibility Design Guide.

In addition to disability accessibility in the five Disability Inclusive Demonstration schools, 22 more schools have been made accessible to students with disabilities, bringing the total number of schools with disability access to 27 (out of 39 Cohort A and disability inclusive schools) since the Program began which is 69% of the Cohort A and disability inclusive schools.

The improvements have included:

- Construction of pavement with minimum 900mm for a wheelchair to pass.
- Ensuring that classroom doors are a minimum of 900mm wide for a wheelchair to pass through.
- Ensuring floor surfaces are firm, durable, slip resistant and smooth.
- Construction of ramps with 1:20 – 1:10 gradient.
- Renovation of existing toilet blocks to allow for minimum of one wheelchair-accessible toilet per school. Wheelchair users will be able to approach, enter, transfer to and also use sanitary facilities provided within the school grounds.

The remaining 12 Cohort A schools did not make their schools disability accessible either because they are located on a steep slope making it unsuitable for the construction of such facilities or if the work involved structural alteration to 'illegal buildings' which had been constructed without appropriate building approvals.

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[2] JAWS stands for Job Access with Speech – a screen reading software for children and persons with vision impairment.

Outcome 5: Reduction in any observed gender disparities in both access and quality

The Baseline Report, as indicated earlier, is just being finalised so the Program has not had the baseline information long enough to develop program strategies targeting gender disparities in both access and quality.

Outcome 6: Improvement in student learning outcomes in AQEP targeted schools

- Coaching provided for teachers in 50 Cohort A schools on the analysis of the Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (LANA) results and how to use LANA as a diagnostic tool.
- Coaching provided for teachers in 50 Cohort A schools on new teaching strategies in literacy and numeracy.
- Awareness programs for parents on how to incorporate literacy and numeracy outside the classroom during community meetings/trainings.
- During the next reporting period AQEP will analyse in detail the LANA results for Years 4, 6 and 8 for Cohort A schools for 2013 to measure and analyse any changes since the 2011 baseline data.

Outcome 7: Strengthening of school management in Fiji's poorest schools to plan and deliver programs to support school attendance, retention and opportunities for quality teaching and learning

- Greater Involvement of women in school decision making process.

It has been identified that women contribute a lot to school activities but are hardly involved in the decision making process. The Program has deliberately introduced strategies to encourage greater involvement of women in the decision making process. This includes getting a Mothers Club representative to be a signatory on the AQEP school bank account and actively promoting their inclusion in school activities. An outcome of this strategy for instance is the empowerment of women - two Mothers Clubs have been established for the first time in two schools with the concurrence of the school management. A shift in attitude in male dominated school management is beginning to occur in recognising the contributions that women and mothers make to their children's education.

- Involvement of Community

Over 3,200 community members which include traditional leaders, church leaders, fathers and mothers, youths – especially in rural, remote and very remote schools – have attended community training conducted in all 50 Cohort A schools. The support and involvement of the communities is crucial to the sustainability of program funded initiatives planned and implemented by School Management Committees (SMCs). A change in attitudes towards education has been noted after the community engagement. For example, as a result of this training coupled with the ongoing close engagement AQEP has with school communities, the community have been involved in building literacy and numeracy centres to make learning exciting and interactive for children both on the school premises and at home.

Outcome 8: Improvement in the quality and safety of school buildings and associated infrastructure supporting student learning and welfare

- The Maintenance Manual for schools was completed and launched during the reporting period. The manual is the first for the MoE and it provides technical guidance on school maintenance work and how to prioritise and manage infrastructure repairs using the government free education grants for schools. The manual was developed by the Program and the Asset Monitoring Unit of the MoE.

- All renovation works completed during the current reporting period has already been reported in the previous report.

- Since Year 1, rehabilitation works in 63 Schools (24 Year 1 infrastructure schools, 34 Cohort A schools, and 5 disability schools) in Ra, Tavua, Macuata, Ba, Suva, Lautoka, Nadi, Cakaudrove and Lau were completed. The details below show the output of the repair works and new installations through infrastructure interventions:

  o 630 classrooms (10.5 % of National Total), 55 library buildings, 25 kitchen and dining facilities, 86 teachers offices, 39 Early Childhood Education rooms/buildings, 78 teachers quarters, 4 boarding facilities, 8 generators, 69 school toilet blocks, 79 staff toilet units, 36 water tanks, 26 water harvest systems, 5 water pumps, and 28 septic tanks rehabilitation/installation.
  o A total of 17,252 students (8,138 girls and 9,114 boys) have benefitted from this infrastructure assistance.

- Hygiene training and monitoring for 43 schools that have received infrastructure assistance in Years 1 and 2. A total of 229 teachers (118 males, 111 females) were trained in the 43 schools.

- The Head Teachers and Managers of 20 completed Cohort A schools have been trained on the school maintenance manual that includes management and technical components of the maintenance works. At the end of this workshop 20 school maintenance plans that would guide their school maintenance activity in 2014 using the funding allocation from MoE's Free Education Grant were completed.

Outcome 9: Strengthening of MoE and Schools EMIS to support evidence based policy, planning and resource allocation

The program continued its technical support in the development of FEMIS and financial support for training of teachers, districts and MoE staff.

- Schools have completed the once off job of entering approximately 206,000 student records in FEMIS, representing 100% of the expected national student roll. In future schools need only to roll student data over into new classes, amending as appropriate, with no requirement to re-enter student data.
- 65% of student citizenship data has been entered into FEMIS. Citizenship determines eligibility for grant funding.
- 60% of birth certificate identification have been entered into FEMIS. The Birth Certificate ID is used to identify students out of school and prevent schools claiming the same student twice to attract additional funding.

- 98% of 2013 LANA results were successfully migrated into FEMIS. Schools were granted access to on-line LANA reports for all previous years.
- The Examinations and Assessment Unit (EAU) used FEMIS student data for 2014 LANA saving the MoE approximately 3,800 hours of data entry work as LANA registration used to be entered at the EAU.

Outcome 10: Increased capacity within the MoE to assess student learning outcomes

Psychometric support for LANA development was ongoing from January to June 2014 focussing on two critical initiatives:

- Streamline and improve the operations of LANA

During January to June 2014, software support was provided to enable more timely and efficient development of LANA benchmarks, and to support improved LANA reports to schools, students and parents. This was a pre-cursor to further psychometric support which will also be provided to develop planning to support the preparation of further system wide LANA reports. This will allow districts and MoE to analyse comparisons between schools, districts and regions and also for schools to analyse their own results over time more easily.

- Development of LANA benchmarks

The development of LANA benchmarks was supported by providing technical advice on benchmarking options. To consider such options and plan how national LANA benchmarks may assist in establishing standards for student, school and education system performance, MoE established a Steering Committee of key stakeholders to provide direction and oversight on the development of LANA benchmarks, with psychometric support from AQEP.

- Evidence-based and data-driven teaching and learning planning

Improvements in LANA as a diagnostic planning tool for teachers and schools are mirrored in the way that the Component 1 School Community Coordinators (SCCs) and the Component 3 Quality Learning Support Team (QLST) align school literacy and numeracy strategies to the diagnostic information provided by LANA results. This process is designed to improve the teaching and literacy strategies being developed by schools and encourages evidence-based and data-driven teaching and learning planning.

1.2   Outputs

Table 1 contains a summary of key AQEP activities and outputs in the six month period from 1 January to 30 June 2014.

Table 1: Summary of AQEP Activities and Outputs 1 January – 30 June 2014

ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS
Component 1: Social Protection	
Social protection implementing in 50 Cohort A schools in 7 clusters	10,744 student beneficiaries from Kindergarten to Class 8
Access Activities	50 schools implementing a total of 75 activities[3] in Terms 1 and 2 to improve access for disadvantaged children 50 Access groups activated in schools in partnership by Teachers, School Management and the community
Quality Activities	50 schools designed and implemented 100 activities[4] in Terms 1 and 2 to improve student learning outcomes 50 Numeracy and 50 literacy groups activated in schools in partnership by Teachers, School Management and the community
Cycle 1 Access and Quality Grants distributed to 50 Cohort A schools	F$751,745 distributed in grants to 50 Cohort A primary schools in disadvantaged areas
Access and Quality Training	73 New Head Teachers and School Management trained on the Access and Quality Approach[5].
Mentoring visits	150 school visits (half a day session each with 2 School Community Coordinators (SCCs), Literacy and/or Numeracy Coordinator (QLST) and 1 District Education Officer) completed
Education Outreach Centre established and running	• Homework Centre running 5 days per week • Repairs to Centre completed by the community • Tutor and Community Facilitator hired • 109 primary School students and 79 High School students attending regularly[6] • 2 community awareness events • 32 family visits per month[7]

[3] Access activities include uniforms, solar light & homework, breakfast, lunch & gardening, stationery.

[4] Quality activities for literacy include remedial reading, LANA outcomes focus, literacy improvement. Examples of numeracy activities include Number sense & Algebra, understanding the Numeration System, simple & Enjoyable Maths.

[5] The Access and Quality Approach includes an understanding of risk factors for students in access, literacy and numeracy, identification of challenges in the school, planning activities to improve access, literacy and numeracy, and finance acquittal.

[6] Two sessions are run daily after school at the Homework Centre – the first for lower primary and the second for upper primary and secondary school students.

[7] 32 families whose children attend the Jittu Estate Homework Centre are visited monthly by teachers of Arya Samaj and Pt Vishnu Deo Primary Centre; by the two teachers of the Homework Centre; by,four volunteers from the Jittu Community; visits by PCN to the community and the Centre and visits by the AQEP team.

ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS
	• Women's Club volunteering at Centre
Community Workshops	• 50 Community Workshops completed • Over 3,200 community members participating (60% Female)
Boarding school improvement	• 2 pilot school farms established • F$36,000 disbursed to and acquitted for 2 pilot schools
Teaching and Learning Resources	• 15 numeracy Kits • 15 kindergarten Kits • 50 schools received ECE Curriculum, Literacy Strategy, Numeracy Strategy, Class 1 to 4 Curriculum. • Locally themed Alphabet Cards developed • Short Films of Lana Situations developed, • Translation and Graphic Design of Access and Quality Manual
Component 1: Disability Inclusion	
Capacity Development	• Inclusive Education Training for 32 teachers from 19 AQEP schools, 8 AQEP SCCs and 1 district official 295 persons (250 head teachers, 40 Principals, 5 education officers) from 5 education districts trained on Inclusive Education through financial and technical support from the Program. • 71 participants including 61 teachers and support staff from 6 special schools in the Western Division, 8 parents and 2 District Education officers attended an Allied Health Team conducted-training and ongoing technical support for utilisation of Individualised Education Plans (operational expenses covered by AQEP).
5 Inclusive Education Demonstration Schools supported	• 27 newly enrolled children with disability since Jan 2014 (bringing total to 69 since AQEP inception). 13 existing students were recently identified to have disability, bringing total children with disability to 82 (56 boys / 26 girls)
Resource development to support Disability Inclusion	• Disability Referral Manual developed and currently being reviewed by stakeholders
Early Childhood Development strategy development	• Draft ECD strategy completed
Involvement of Disabled People's Organisations	• MoU signed with the DPOs for roll out of AQEP funded roadshow activities and activities commenced.
Component 2: Infrastructure	
Hygiene Training and Monitoring	• Hygiene Education Handbook for teachers and students endorsed by the Permanent Secretary for Education. • 229 Teachers (118 male, 111 female) in 43 AQEP beneficiary schools trained on the implementation of Hygiene in schools. • Hygiene practices in 43 AQEP beneficiary schools monitored and assessed by the implementers (Fijian Teachers Association Sanitation and Hygiene group)
School Maintenance Manual	The School Maintenance Manual was officially launched on 28 May 2014 by the Permanent Secretary for Education.
Implementation of school maintenance training and handing over of completed projects	• 20 Cohort A schools head teachers and managers trained on the school maintenance planning and techniques. • 20 draft maintenance plans formalised after the school maintenance workshop • Signing of Infrastructure Renovations Completion

ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS
	Certificates for the 20 schools trained.
Procurement of contractors for 9 Cohort A schools	22 prequalified contractors were invited and 19 contractors attended the contractor tender briefing in early June 2014.
Completion of school improvement work in 20 Cohort A schools	A total 4,073 student beneficiaries (1,923 girls and 2,150 boys) have improved learning environments through improvements to: • 155 repaired classrooms (2.6% of national total) • 18 library buildings • 7 kitchen and dining facilities • 20 teachers' offices/staff rooms • 12 early childhood rooms/buildings • 21 teacher housing units • 3 generators • 22 school toilet blocks – 82 girl pan and 75 boy pan (3.1% of national total) • 23 staff toilet units • 21 water tanks • 19 water harvesting systems installation • 3 water pumps • Ramps and special toilets in 18 schools.
Component 3: Building Education Support Structures and Systems	
Fiji Education Management Information System (FEMIS) development	• AQEP funded server hardware successfully installed and currently in use • National FEMIS policy was approved and is now available on the public ministry website • 1,076 teachers (10% of all teachers) and 95 district officials trained for the second time on FEMIS • 206,000 students enrolled in FEMIS for 2014 which is 100% of the national student population
Effect size pilot study in 5 schools – investigate use of class and school CBA scores and graders and LANA results to measure the impact of school activities and interventions	• Effect size pilot study commenced: 5 schools and 30 teachers identified • 180 CBA tasks collected and logged • Effect size calculations made • LANA testing planned
LANA benchmarking options identified	Establishment of LANA Benchmarking Steering Committee
Support to improve LANA processes and systems	• New LANA student response sheet developed for 2014 LANA round
Quality Learning Support Team	• 120 quality learning programs and plans enhanced and supported – leading to best practice implementation of literacy and numeracy strategies in 54 cohort A schools • Professional development materials for teachers and schools developed for the 120 quality learning programs
Financial Management Training for School Heads and their Management to better manage the Free Education grant to schools	• One day training (second round) for 1,932 Head Teachers, Principals, Managers and Treasurers (26% Females) on Financial Management in 34 clusters in all 9 education districts
RAD survey in households around 5 Demonstration schools Stakeholder consultation to discuss approach to	• RAD data collection and entry is complete. Data is currently being cleaned and analysed. • 18 stakeholders attended consultation, including

ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS
disability disaggregation of FEMIS	representatives from MoH, USP, Disabled Persons Organisations, disability service providers and MoE.
Emergency Response	
No emergency occurred in the reporting period.	Not relevant.

Details on the key activities, achievements and issues/risks around social protection and disability inclusion (Component 1), infrastructure (Component 2) and building education support structures and systems (Component 3) in the reporting period are provided in Annexes 1 – 3.

The section below provides a quick update on key outputs in the reporting period.

1.2.1   Component 1 Social Protection - Key Outputs

Resource Development Activity
The activity changed from poster and child development cards to meet the requests of teachers for locally themed alphabet cards and short films to introduce situations to children in the remote areas and maritime zone to LANA situations such as using the post office and catching the bus.

Grant Disbursement for Component 1 Activity
Activity completed with F$751,745 disbursed to 50 schools for access and quality activities.

School and District Mentoring Activity
District Resource Centres – One such centre was established in Ra. However, three were cancelled due to budget cuts. The centre in Ra provides computers with internet access to allow teachers to access online teaching and learning resources, enter FEMIS data and generate reports. It also puts much needed resources at the district level and provides a positive link between the districts and the schools.

Education Outreach Centres
Activity ongoing – Centre was established in September 2013 in an informal settlement in Suva and runs after school five days per week through a Centre Coordinator and a qualified teacher. It provides homework support, visits to parents and identification of children who are out of school.

Cluster Activities
Cluster Activities for Labasa, Lau and Ra were completed. The remainder of activities were cancelled due to budget cuts. Activities provide professional development for teachers in the clusters on topics identified by the school clusters. Examples include synthetic phonics training.

Sustainability & School Income Generation Activity
This was deferred due to budget cuts. The school income generation activities are community run and are designed to provide money to continue the access and quality activities as the funding is removed.

Boarding School Improvements
Activity Completed – Two schools in Ra are implementing the boarding school improvement where AQEP provides an additional grant to schools to improve the boarding facilities for children and to remove the financial pressure to families when sending children to board. Children are expected to supply mattress, sheets, pillows, cutlery and crockery when boarding. However, the schools are now buying these goods to ensure that all children can attend. Communities are also establishing farming projects to feed the children and to create an income stream to make boarding sustainable in the school.

1.2.2   Component 1 Disability Inclusion Strategy – Key Outputs

Five Inclusive Education Demonstration Schools established and supported
Progress against this indicator is on track with support for the five Inclusive Education Demonstration Schools continuing during Year 3 through the provision of ten Teacher Aides skilled in Braille, sign language and general inclusion support. Reports from monitoring visits

have demonstrated that the role of Teacher Aides in the inclusion process is fundamental, in particular for the ongoing needs of children with intellectual disabilities.

Infrastructure support, particularly at Ratu Latianara Primary School has led to an increasing number of enrolments of children including 20 students with a disability now attending the school. While this is a positive outcome, the AQEP team is looking at the challenges associated with large increase in enrolments, such as increased class sizes which affects the ability of teachers to undertake quality differentiated learning for children with special needs. AQEP is addressing this issue in Year 4.

Each of the 5 schools have accessed funding through the Inclusive Education Small Grants scheme to enable newly enrolled, or newly identified, children with disability to access disability-specific services and assistive devices; and to cover the costs of community disability awareness raising activities that the schools undertake. Some challenges have been identified with both the mechanism for accessing the small grants fund and clarity on eligible costs (specifically ongoing costs of transport and incontinence aids). AQEP has worked with the MoE and the schools to clarify usage and improve the mechanism to increase accessibility of the funding. In the reporting period, small grants have been used to purchase equipment and materials specific to increasing outcomes of the children's Individual Educational Plans (e.g. fine motor skills and life skills-based literacy and numeracy activities) and to equip the five schools to train teachers from other schools in inclusive education.

Upon finalisation the Disability Toolkit and Disability Referral Directory will be key resources for teachers, DPOs, disability services providers, government, families and civil society organisations in Fiji to increase access to quality inclusive education and other services. These will both be formally launched on the 3rd of December 2014 to coincide with the International Day for Disabled Persons.

Research into barriers to inclusion of CWD in Fiji
The final draft of the report "Barriers and Enablers to education for children with disability" from the qualitative research was presented to the Program Coordination Committee (PCC) during the reporting period.

Other research activities undertaken during the reporting period have included the completion of data collection for a household survey using the Rapid Assessment of Disability (RAD) in the communities around the five Demonstration schools to identify out-of-school children with disability and to determine baseline levels of participation in and barriers to education and a range of other domains. Data entry, cleaning and analysis is in progress. The RAD survey will be repeated as an endline evaluation tool in AQEP's final year.

Awareness training provided to teachers, students, Teacher Aides, SMCs, parents, volunteers and districts
Raising awareness about disability inclusion is an ongoing activity through the Program and there has been a focus on discussions through regular monitoring and mentoring visits to build on the inclusive education training provided by AQEP during the first half of the year. The program has also continued to build relationships with Disabled People's Organisations to support planning and implementation of the Disability Roadshow activities which are

designed to raise awareness about disability and inclusive education in the communities surrounding the Inclusive Education Demonstration Schools.

In addition to this high profile activity, DPO representatives have also been co-trainers within all capacity development activities and role models within the communities for the benefits of ensuring that people with disability have access to education.

Teachers and Teacher Aides in Inclusive Education Demonstration schools and mainstream AQEP schools provided with training in inclusive education
Capacity development activities within AQEP schools included one training workshop for Inclusion Coordinators in January 2014. Feedback informed a revised approach to the broader rollout of training, with a focus on providing training for Head Teachers as a first step, to build their understanding and support for Disability Inclusion, followed by training for the Inclusion Coordinators.

Teacher Aides from the 5 Demonstration schools as well as other special schools in Suva participated in a three day workshop to continue building the knowledge and skills and to enable them to share their experiences and strategies.

Partnerships established with DPOs and teacher and other training institutions including USP and FNU
Progress towards the achievement of this indicator has been steady during Year 3, with MoUs signed between AQEP and DPOs to undertake a range of community based awareness raising activities through the Disability Roadshow. Potential opportunities to engage with Fiji National University (FNU) and University of the South Pacific (USP) around support for research activities associated with Early Childhood Education (ECE) and learning disabilities respectively have commenced.

Capacity development and support for special schools and support to enable Special schools to become capacity development partners
AQEP provided financial support to the Allied Health Team (three volunteer therapists) in the Western division to strengthen the capacity of special schools, with a focus on skills in developing and implementing Individualised Education Plans.

10 year implementation strategy for the MoE inclusive education policy
Through formal meetings and other communication with the MoE, the plans for AQEP to support the development of the Inclusive Education Policy Implementation Strategy have been refined and confirmed. This activity will happen in Work Plan 4.

Increased capacity in inclusive education in MoE schools and districts
AQEP has supported MoE Inclusive Education training across 5 of the 9 Education Districts with AQEP Disability Inclusion Coordinator as co-facilitator. 295 persons made up of 250 Head Teachers, 40 high school Principals and 5 education officers were trained in the reporting period.

1.2.3   Component 2 Infrastructure – Key Outputs

Implementation of School Improvement Program

Component 2 has three main activities:

1. School infrastructure rehabilitation works
2. School maintenance training
3. Hygiene education training and monitoring program.

The key outputs in the reporting period have included:

- The delivery of infrastructure assistance to 20 Cohort A schools.
- After the completion of the rehabilitation works, school head teachers and managers in the 20 Cohort A schools were trained on School Maintenance Management and Techniques and 20 school maintenance plans have been developed in accordance with their MoE Free Education Grant allocation. The District Education officers have taken the maintenance planning and will follow up on the implementation of the school maintenance plans for all other schools in their districts.
- The Hygiene Education Manual was developed by AQEP and a technical working group and was endorsed by the Permanent Secretary for Education. The first round of training in 43 AQEP supported schools was carried out in partnership with the Fiji Teachers Association (FTA).

Emergency Response

There was no emergency in this reporting period.

1.2.4   Component 3 Building Education Support Structures & Systems – Key Outputs

Research and Evaluation Studies

An external formative evaluation of Component 3 was undertaken in the last two weeks of June 2014 with a view to advising how the Component 3 approach, strategies and activities can be more cohesive and better aligned to the anticipated outcomes and to identify any other key implementation issues and risks requiring the attention of the AQEP management. The draft report is expected to be finalised in July 2014.

School case studies of the overall AQEP intervention (M&E led and supported by Component 3) will be undertaken in Year 4. A Technical working group has been established to advise on research design and research methodology, sample size and characteristics and scope of research.

Disability inclusion research studies completed and described in Component 1 outputs above.

A pilot study investigating the use of teachers' Classroom Based Assessment (CBA) tasks and normal grade collection processes as a way of measuring school access and quality interventions and activities developed by the school was commenced. Data was collected from 5 schools and 18 teachers, and their CBA tasks were collected and analysed. Student scores on these tasks will be analysed to track student learning and achievement growth.

The research focuses on Years 3, 4 and 6 over a two year period from Term 2 2013 to Term 2 2015. This project will also collect evidence on using LANA results to measure the impact of Component 1 interventions and activities, and is correlating LANA with these CBA scores.

Coordination and consultations

Steering committees were established to support the development of LANA benchmarks by MoE in the Fijian education system and the implementation of FEMIS. Other coordination and consultation avenues were ongoing in seeking and responding to MoE priorities with the regular attendance of the AQEP Team Leader at senior MoE meetings, regular meetings between AQEP/MoE Liaison Coordinator and between the Deputy Secretary Corporate Services and the AQEP Quality Learning Adviser.

Support for MoE priorities

LANA

Psychometric support for LANA development was ongoing from January to June 2014. LANA Benchmarking options were identified and considered by a newly established MoE steering committee. The new LANA test software installed in late 2013 was linked to SPSS and other databases in 2014 to generate graphs and tables for future LANA reports as a way of improving the data analysis processes. Preparation for FEMIS to include LANA results and operations was carried out. Already new student response sheets have been prepared for LANA 2014. In addition AQEP planned investment in two scanners to replace LANA data entry by hand (17.6 million items) and speed up the production of LANA reports for the education system.

ERC Printer

The Education Resource Centre (ERC) printer was purchased in late 2013 and installation proceeded in 2014. Initial use of the printer has been delayed due to some delays in training the identified staff at the MoE. One concern is that the MoE does not have adequately qualified personnel within ERC to manage the printer. AQEP is working with the provider and the MoE to have this training program completed. AQEP plans to invest in desktop-publishing software to enable printing from desk top file to printed high quality learning materials.

Financial Planning and Consultation

AQEP funded two rounds of national training and professional development workshops to assist schools with implementation of the Free Education Grant system introduced by MoE (1,719 Head teacher, Principals and Treasurers).

Quality Learning Support

The Component 3 Quality Learning Support Team supported Component 1 by reviewing 120 quality learning programs and plans developed at the schools level. These literacy and numeracy programs were then enhanced and supported by the QLST – leading to best practice implementation of literacy and numeracy strategies in 50 Cohort A schools. Professional development materials for teachers and schools were also developed for the 120 quality learning programs.

Fiji Education Management Information System (FEMIS)

Server Upgrade

Two servers were procured by AQEP last calendar year and delivered to the government IT data centre in December 2013. An office relocation by the government ITC resulted in significant delays in preparing the hardware for use by MoE. Testing in the FEMIS training/Quality Assurance environment was carried out in May to ensure the machines were capable of supporting the load generated by up to 200+ simultaneous users. Live FEMIS was switched over to the new hardware mid-June without incident and FEMIS received an immediate 500% boost in performance. The hardware upgrade was used as an incentive to upgrade the software running LANA and Fiji Education Staff Appointment (FESA). An officer in the IT Unit was responsible for upgrading FESA and an officer from EAU was responsible for upgrading LANA. Capacity was built in both officers.

FEMIS Policy

The FEMIS policy was approved with only one amendment to refine dates for exam processing. At the time of writing the policy is visible on the main FEMIS home page without logging on. http://www.femis.gov.fj/femis/

FEMIS Training at All Schools and All Districts

AQEP initiated and funded two rounds of national FEMIS training for all schools with Internet and at all district offices. 1,076 teachers and 95 district officials were trained for the second time on FEMIS. Training was carried out by officers from the MoE IT Unit and focused on completing class rolls and ensuring accuracy of data. Schools received instruction on how to run data quality reports and correct as required. Once data was cleaned, schools were trained in how to use FEMIS as a monitoring tool, avoiding the notion that FEMIS is a data entry system.

All districts also received training from the IT Unit officers on using FEMIS as a monitoring tool beginning with monitoring of attendance. Incidental to the FEMIS training, all trainees improved their basic computer skills.

Institutionalisation of FEMIS

The Application Development Specialist made a number of presentations to senior staff throughout the year on FEMIS as a monitoring tool and the need to embrace change. The Specialist also worked with the recently reorganised senior staff to increase staffing resources in the IT Unit and further familiarised senior staff with the various tools in FEMIS that would improve the processing of the bus fare subsidy and the free education grant. The Specialist also visited district offices for informal discussions on using FEMIS as a monitoring tool with apparent good effect. The Lautoka / Yasawa District Education Office is evolving a monitoring plan using tools in FEMIS in June.

The Specialist also:
- Refined the grant allocation calculation to take into account students attending only part of a term,
- introduced several new reports into FEMIS, most notably attendance reports and reports on data quality,
- introduced assorted changes in FEMIS to simplify data entry for schools,

- improved the resources area with Pacific Open Educational Resources (OER) material supplied by USP,
- introduced a forum in the resources area where schools can collaborate.

1.3   Aggregate Development Results

AQEP's achievements against the Australian Aggregate Development Results are summarised in Table 2. The first set of indicators in each row of the second column refers to the reporting period while the second set of indicators provides a consolidated result since Program inception.

Table 2: AQEP Aggregate Development Results - Reporting Period and Consolidated Results

AUSTRALIAN AGGREGATE DEVELOPMENT RESULTS	AQEP RESULTS
Number of children enrolled in school	538 students (287 boys; 251 girls from 7 schools through TC Evans emergency assistance) – NO CHANGE 39,523 students (Boys 20,213; Girls 19,310) in 162 schools[8] - NO CHANGE
Percentage Grade 3 students reading to national standard	Nothing to report yet
Number of high quality learning materials supplied to schools	No change 90,546 textbooks (68,780 to selected schools and 21,766 to emergency schools) – NO CHANGE
Number of students provided with financial or nutritional support	No change 4,165 students (Boys 2,209; Girls 1,956) from 36 schools benefited from school feeding programs via AQEP's emergency assistance – NO CHANGE
Number of classrooms built or upgraded	161 classrooms upgraded and or constructed (155 renovated and 6 newly built) which is 2.74% of primary school classrooms - NO CHANGE 846 classrooms upgraded (638 in selected schools and 208 in Emergency Schools) which is 13% of primary school classrooms - NO CHANGE
Number of children able to access more schools that have been made more accessible to children with disabilities	3,731 children (1,949 boys and 1,782 girls) from 19 schools attending schools made more accessible to children with Disabilities - NO CHANGE 5,785 children (2,986 Boys and 2,799 Girls) from 27 schools (26 selected school and 1 through emergency assistance) - NO CHANGE
Number of children with disabilities enrolled in school	27 children newly enrolled in 5 disability pilot schools in the reporting period; plus 13 existing students identified as having disability, totalling 40. Adi Maopa: 2

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[8] This is the total number of existing students in the 162 AQEP supported schools and not additional enrolments as a direct result of AQEP assistance.

AUSTRALIAN AGGREGATE DEVELOPMENT RESULTS	AQEP RESULTS
	Arya Samaj: (9 + 13)=22 Ratu Latianara: 9 South Taveuni: 4 Tavua District School: 3 Total enrolled since Program began: 82 (56 Boys; 26 Girls)
Number of school officials trained	1,171 teachers and MoE officials trained on FEMIS; 1,932 Head Teachers, Principals and Treasurers trained on financial management; and 229 teachers from 43 AQEP beneficiary schools trained on School Hygiene through AQEP funding. 73 new Head Teachers and SMC members were trained directly by the Program. A total of 3,405 officials trained in the reporting period. 3,706[9] teachers, MoE staff and School Management Committee members trained through AQEP funding
Number of additional children enrolled in school	27 children with disabilities newly enrolled in 2014 82 students enrolled in 5 disability pilot schools (24 Boys; 12 Girls)[10]
Number of textbooks provided	No change 90,546 textbooks (68,780 to selected schools and 21,766 to emergency schools)[11] – NO CHANGE
Humanitarian and disaster preparedness and response (Number of schools)	7 additional supported schools in cyclone Evans – NO CHANGE 92 schools supported in 2 floods, 1 fire and 1 tropical cyclone – NO CHANGE
Humanitarian and disaster preparedness and response (Number of student beneficiaries)	538 students: 251 Girls and 287 Boys benefited from AQEP's emergency assistance – NO CHANGE 21,919 students: 10,840 girls and 11,079 boys have benefitted from AQEP emergency assistance. NO CHANGE

2.0 Monitoring and Evaluation

2.1 Baseline Report

The draft baseline report was completed in February 2014 and forwarded to DFAT after a period of data collection and analysis from October 2013. The data for the report was drawn from various sources including the Ministry's own information system, Exams and

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[9] This consolidated figure is low due to the same School Committee members and head teachers undergoing new training; they are counted only once.

[10] This is also reported under number of children with disabilities enrolled in school.

[11] This is also reported under the number of quality materials supplied to schools.

Assessment Unit records, School records and Program reports and studies. DFAT has recently approved the draft report and a final report addressing comments raised will be forwarded in early July 2014.

2.1 Formation of Technical Working Group

A Monitoring and Evaluation Technical Working Group was formed in April 2014. The group included representatives from DFAT, Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics, USP, FNU, Secretariat of the Pacific Board for Educational Assessment, UNICEF and the Statistics, Asset Monitoring and Exams and Assessment units of the MoE. The initial task for the Group at the April 2014 meeting was to review the findings of the draft baseline report. The report was very well received and it was felt that the findings will be of considerable use and interest within the education sector. The group will meet again in August 2014 to review the Terms of Reference for the School Case studies and Formative Evaluations.

2.2 Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

The draft Monitoring and Evaluation Plan was completed in June 2014. The report outlines the specific M&E activities for Years 4 and 5 of AQEP and the methods of data collection and analysis. It also outlines the design and indicative terms of reference for specific studies and evaluations to be undertaken.

Four formative evaluations scheduled to be conducted from June to September 2014 are included in the M&E Plan. The evaluation will review progress with the implementation of School Based Management, the Disability Inclusion Strategy, the implementation of FEMIS and the objectives and structure of Component 3.

The review of Component 3 is being conducted by an external contractor representative with the report expected to guide improvements in the structure and operations of Component 3.

The Program Logic is also been developed to link Interventions and Outputs to Intended Program Outcomes. Theory of Change workshops were conducted in May 2014 with different components. The M&E team is currently working on an outcomes framework for each component that will feed into the overall AQEP program logic framework. The Program logic/Theory of Change is expected to be completed in August 2014.

3.0 Key Program Issues

3.1 Key Issue 1: Uncertainty in budget allocations affect planning and ability to implement effectively

A key issue that has impacted greatly on program planning and implementation has been the uncertainty and lack of clarity around budget allocations for the Program. Against the backdrop of the policy changes associated with a new Australian Government since September 2013 and the integration of the aid program into the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, in late January 2014 AQEP was requested to revise/reduce our Year 3 budget by A$1m as part of the wider budget cuts required by all Australian Aid programs internationally. AQEP was also requested to make adjustments to the Year 3 Work Plan in light of the MoE's emerging needs arising from the new Free Education Grants introduced by

the Fiji Government in January 2014. Additionally, in May 2014, AQEP was requested by DFAT to spend an additional A$1m in Year 3. Moreover, AQEP was not able to get clarification on its Year 4 budget allocation until May 2014.

These external factors, beyond the control of Suva Post and AQEP, have had the following repercussions on the Program:

- Scaling back or putting on hold 17 Year 3 activities and the funding of six MoE emerging priorities in the reporting period;

- Postponement several times of AQEP's internal planning meeting to workshop the Year 4 Work Plan;

- Postponement several times of the 6th Program Coordination Committee meeting to approve the Year 4 Work Plan;

- Programming based on head contract upper limits in the preparation of the draft Year 4 Work Plan - many activities in the Year 4 Work Plan draft had to be scaled back when notified of the Year 4 allocation in May 2014. The Annual Plan is due on 31st March annually.

A lesson learned arising out of these complications is the need for DFAT and AQEP to be clear about budget assumptions prior to the development of new work plans. In regard to the delays in key activities around planning and the PCC meeting, the likely embarrassment to the Program and reputational risk to DFAT was minimised by clear communication on the changes and the reason for the changes with key stakeholders.

On the positive side, the MoE was pleased to have its emerging priorities around the Free Education Grants funded by the Program. This included two national trainings on financial management of these grants for close to 900 primary and secondary schools and nine education districts as well as support for monitoring and evaluating the use of the grants by the schools.

However, the budget reductions have the potential to negatively affect the ability of the Program to satisfactorily achieve its anticipated high level outcomes, the expected outputs and the stated goal and objectives. This is particularly when we add the cumulative effect of the budget reduction in our Year 3 Work Plan by A$1m to the budget reduction in our Year 2 Work Plan by A$4m. AQEP will be undertaking some formative evaluations over the next three months and will be in a position to provide more information on the effects of the budget reductions on a number of Program outcomes.

The budget reductions have meant that AQEP is not likely to reach the initial intended target of 25% of Fiji's primary schools or the targeted 180 primary schools. AQEP has helped or is able to support (budget permitting) only 139 primary schools, as shown in Table 3 below, which is 19.5% of all primary schools in Fiji. A revised target may need to be agreed consistent with the new budget parameters.

However, if AQEP's emergency response since early 2012 is taken into account, then AQEP will meet its target of 180 schools and more with reach and coverage extending beyond AQEP's focus on primary schools to include Early Childhood Centres / Kindergartens, primary, secondary and special schools for children with disabilities.

AQEP 6TH SIX MONTHLY REPORT, 1 JAN – 30TH JUNE 2014

Table 3: AQEP Targets, Years 1-5

Year	Category	Number of Primary Schools Assisted	Details of Assistance
1	Infrastructure only	24	Infrastructure support only – includes renovations to school facilities, water, sanitation and hygiene
2-5	Full package of support: 49 Cohort A and 31 Cohort B schools	80	Includes social protection, infrastructure support (as shown in the row above), provision of teaching & learning resources and a computer package for FEMIS purpose
2-5	Disability inclusive demonstration schools	5	Disability support in Year 2 and full package from Year 3 as defined in row above
4-5	Infrastructure only	30	Includes renovations to school facilities, water, sanitation and hygiene
	TOTAL	**139**	

3.2 Key Issue 2: Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system and processes only now being finalised

Over Years 1 and 2 the M&E focus within AQEP was primarily on output reporting as each of the respective components became operational. An overall M&E framework for AQEP was also developed and approved by DFAT.

Early in Year 3 a new M&E specialist was appointed to the Program and an immediate priority task was the preparation of a baseline study addressing the situation at program commencement in terms of each of the high level AQEP outcomes. The draft baseline study report was submitted to DFAT in February 2014 and a final version is now being completed. The baseline study has been extremely useful within AQEP in assisting AQEP senior management and Component leads to raise their focus beyond the output to the overall outcome level. This focus on outcomes has also been more explicit in the restructured six monthly progress reports. This is still very much work in progress and future reports will give greater attention to an analysis of the operational context impacting on AQEP and the various factors within this context which are both facilitating and inhibiting progress towards the overall AQEP objectives of improving access and learning outcomes for children from Fiji's poorest communities.

AQEP has also prepared a detailed M&E plan for Years 4 and 5 of the Program with an emphasis on evaluation, both formative and summative. The plan also includes the collection and analysis of data each year for each of the baseline outcome indicators. The timing of a number of the proposed evaluations may need to be reviewed if and when the sixth year of the program is forthcoming. A Program logic/Theory of Change (TOC) is also part of the Plan and following internal workshops in May the TOC is now nearing completion.

A Technical Working Group with broad stakeholder representation has been established for M&E and a very successful initial meeting of this group was held in April to review the

findings of the baseline study report. A further meeting is scheduled for the first quarter of Year 4.

Representatives of AQEP have been attending the M&E capacity building workshops arranged by DFAT. These workshops have been useful and have confirmed the time and effort involved in building robust M&E systems and processes.

AQEP is confident that the work and initiatives undertaken over the last 12 months in M&E have laid strong foundations for enabling key stakeholders to make appropriate judgements regarding the progress of AQEP and its achievements towards the intended objectives and outcomes.

3.3   Key Issue 3: Financial Mismanagement of AQEP Grants

AQEP provides assistance to schools in a number of forms including training, mentoring, infrastructure renovations and the provision of grants. Access and Quality Grants are provided to the schools in two to three tranches throughout the year. Grants are to be used to implement the AQEP approved Activity Plans with the aim of improving access and quality at the school. Following the School Based Management Approach the School Management Committees and Head Teachers are responsible for managing and implementing these grants in line with the approved Activity Plans.

AQEP supported schools are required to set up an AQEP Access and Quality Grant account in order to receive the funds. The signatories for the account include the School Manager, the Treasurer and a representative from the Mothers Club. AQEP requires the Head Teacher to approve all payments prior to cheques being drawn up. The MoE does not allow Head Teachers, or any other civil servant, to be a signatory on school related bank accounts. Providing schools with the opportunity to manage the finances related to the direct assistance they are receiving assists with building capacity in the area of effective school financial management.

The associated risk to the Program in providing these funds to the schools is the potential for fraud or misuse of AQEP funds by the School Management Committees.

AQEP has put together a comprehensive mitigation strategy to help identify and reduce the probability of this risk occurring. The strategy includes significant collaboration with the MoE on all activities that are undertaken at the school level. The Memorandum of Agreement for each school is signed by AQEP, MoE and the school and it clearly outlines that the MoE and the school have a responsibility when it comes to managing any occurrences of fraud. AQEP has provided substantial financial management training to the schools and to the District MoE staff. AQEP has full access to the school Access and Quality Grant Accounts and undertakes regular monitoring of school acquittal folders.

During this reporting period AQEP has experienced two cases of fraudulent activity related to the Access and Quality Grants despite the comprehensive mitigation strategy already in place.

Dogotuki District School – an Assistant Teacher was helping the Treasurer and School Manager with the financial management of the Access and Quality Grant. Through manipulation of the signatories the Assistant Teacher was able to obtain a number of blank

cheques that he was then able to cash at a supermarket. As a result of this fraudulent activity the total loss to DFAT at this school was FJD2,200. However the school Mother's Club decided that they would pay back these funds in order to ensure continued support from AQEP. The Assistant Teacher has been suspended by the MoE and police action is still pending.

Naselesele Primary School – the Head Teacher needed FJD400 to pay for some medical expenses and asked the School Manager for the funds. The School Manager decided to approve the funds as they would be paid back as soon as the Head Teacher received his salary. This fraudulent use of funds was picked up by an AQEP member of staff during a monitoring visit. The Head Teacher was able to pay back the funds within a few days of the incident occurring. The MoE provided the Head Teacher with a warning and on DFAT's approval police action was not taken.

AQEP will continue to carefully and regularly monitor the financial acquittal documentation for each of our schools to ensure that early signs of possible fraud are picked up and acted on immediately.

4.0 Risk Management

The process to identify any new risks is undertaken by Component leads and management and the risk matrix is systematically reviewed every six months. The revised risk matrix is attached at Annex 5.

The issues raised in the preceding section pose some risk to the Program. For example, the first issue on budget reductions and lack of clarity on budget allocations, which is beyond the control of both DFAT and AQEP makes it challenging for the Program to plan and implement identified activities in a systematic way and has the potential of inhibiting the Program from meeting high level outcomes and key targets. To mitigate this, AQEP will communicate regularly with DFAT to work through budget assumptions and issues.

AQEP has invested significantly in FEMIS. Chronic understaffing of the MoE IT Unit remains a key risk in the sustainability of FEMIS. AQEP, through the Application Development Specialist, has persistently advocated for more staff at the IT Unit. At the time of writing, a staffing paper is being drafted for presentation to Cabinet.

The risk of fraud and mismanagement of funds by School Management Committees has escalated from a 2 (Unlikely) to 4 (Likely) and rated as a high risk after the Program has experienced two cases of fraud. The mitigation strategies of this fiduciary risk as well as other risks to the Program are outlined in the Updated Risk Matrix attached at Annex 5.

5.0 Sustainability Analysis

Since inception, the sustainability of AQEP's activities, outputs and outcomes has been an integral part of our approach to program conceptualisation, planning and implementation. For example, while Component 1 Social Protection had a late start due to the shift in design focus from targeting individual students to using a school based management approach (SBM) and the addition of 'quality' to the initial 'access' objective and outcome, on reflection, this shift is conducive to leaving positive footprints in schools and the education system. Even though Social Protection has only been under implementation now for just a year, the positive changes in what the schools are doing to improve learning outcomes in literacy and numeracy, in integrating out of school children and reducing absenteeism, thereby improving both quality and access, have already begun to emerge.

Students that received stationery as part of the school's access activity are collecting coconuts that the school sells to allow the purchase of more stationery.

This is reflective of the innovative approach, strategies and sustainable practices that have been embedded in the Social Protection work to ensure that the message that the education of children is everyone's business is reinforced at all levels – schools, parents and communities, education districts, MoE and AQEP. With a greater sense of ownership and a more fully engaged community then the access and quality interventions to improve both access and quality at the school level are sustainable after the Program comes to an end. The innovative approach taken has included:

- Schools and Communities uniting to improve education for their children.
- Teachers involved in Access and Quality activities in the 50 Cohort A schools are making learning interesting and interactive in the classroom and inspiring children to learn.
- A sustainable model for education is built by drawing upon locally available resources – land, people, goods.
- Out of school children are gathered back to the heart of education.
- Children with a disability are joining schools where they are valued for their ability.

Details on sustainability measures, approaches and activities for each of the program components are discussed below.

5.1 Sustainability: Social Protection

The design of the Social Protection component builds in sustainability through:

- Building upon existing practices in high performing Fiji primary schools;

- Awareness raising about effects of current MoE policy and practice;

- A capacity building approach for school management, teachers, MoE officials and community members that addresses knowledge, skills and attitudes;

- Looking at the impact of cultural concepts such 'solesolevaki'[12] and 'kerekere'[13] on social protection and in schools and communities;

- Using a three year cycle supported by a scaffolding approach. As each school capacity is built the scaffolding is reduced over time, such as decreased mentoring visits;

- The grants have taken into account the financial absorption capacity of the schools;

- Having a diverse approach to access and quality in schools that is led by the school community, as opposed to a one-size-fits-all program;

- Linking to existing MoE systems across multiple areas – school management, school leadership, curriculum, child protection;

- Every activity includes a sustainability element, for example for school uniforms, stationery, good program, literacy activity;

- Inclusion of the wider school community to ensure that the knowledge continues if a change of Head Teacher or School Manager occurs;

- Design of interlinked support activities to extend the emphasis on quality and access into the schools; and

- Strong relationships and inclusive approach to ensure ownership by the MoE, Districts and Schools.

5.2   Sustainability: Disability Inclusion Strategy

Within the Disability Inclusion Strategy, there are a number of activities and approaches which contribute towards sustainable practices in inclusive education in Fiji.

Capacity Development: The strong focus on Capacity Development and particularly the collaboration with the MoE to train the Head Teachers and Inclusion Coordinators in both AQEP's Cohort A schools and MoE schools will ensure that there is both increased support and an increased level of skill to support children with disability to transition into mainstream schools. This partnership between AQEP and MoE has also been extended to co-monitoring and mentoring visits to support these schools undertaken by the Disability Inclusion Coordinator in partnership with the District Education Officer. The selection and training of Master Trainers in Work Plan 4 will build on this foundation of people skilled and accessible to schools to support in-school training and support.

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[12] *Solesolevaki* refers to the communal approach taken to resolve challenges such as fundraising and building projects.

[13] *Kerekere* is a communal borrowing system that is commonly practised in villages and informal settlements.

Contribution to MoE policies and systems: AQEP continues to support the MoE to develop a strategy for implementation of their inclusive education policy and related systems and processes. While the main activities to support the strategy development will take place in Year 3, AQEP has continued to work with the MoE to contribute to planning and process discussions. Examples of this include the work undertaken by the AQEP program to support the MoE to develop and implement a process to identify children with disability and establish their learning support needs. A disability stakeholder consultation was held in May 2014 to discuss issues related to systems, processes and issues related to identification of children with disability and disaggregation of the Fiji Education Management Information system by disability.

Resource development: Another key element of sustainability for inclusive education is the progress made on two key resources for Fiji:

- The Disability Inclusion Toolkit for Fijian Schools is in its second draft form and is being used as the key training resource for the Inclusion Coordinators, both in AQEP schools and in the MoE schools. The toolkit has recently been reviewed by a range of key stakeholders and the feedback is being incorporated into a final version which is likely to be released in the third quarter of 2014.

- The Disability Referral Directory has also been work-shopped with key stakeholders including service providers and DPO representatives. It is currently being prepared for printing and will be launched on the Fiji National Council for Disabled Persons (FNCDP) website. AQEP has supported the costs of development and distribution. However, once complete FNCDP will the owners and maintainers of the directory for the longer term.

5.3   Sustainability: Infrastructure

The following approaches and activities under Component 2 will encourage sustainability of inputs and impacts:

- AQEP has developed a school infrastructure maintenance manual in collaboration with the Assets Monitoring Unit (AMU) of the MoE. The MoE has endorsed the Maintenance Manual handbook and its introduction to the schools is timely as a percentage of the Free Education Grant allocation to the schools is to be used for infrastructure improvement. At the end of the June 2014 School Maintenance Training workshops, 20 Cohort A schools had developed their own school maintenance plans for the year 2014 in accordance with their Free Education Grant Allocation. The District Education Officers have taken on board the school maintenance planning and will follow up on the implementation of the school maintenance plans for all other schools in their districts.

   The MoE is aiming to change the mindset of schools and communities from unplanned maintenance to a comprehensive planned maintenance of the school infrastructure. The Infrastructure Maintenance Manual is the first stepping stone for both AQEP and MoE in promoting self-maintenance activities and putting an end to deferred maintenance activities at the school level. This will ensure a consistently good standard in the learning environment for the children.

- AQEP has adopted and enhanced the existing MoE direct procurement procedure to ensure that the most efficient and cost effective approach is being followed to get best value for money. The MoE is in full support of the enhanced approach by AQEP and works closely with AQEP in the procurement process.

- AQEP has utilised a participatory planning approach for its school planning workshops. The participatory planning approach has generated a two-way learning process which matches project interventions to school needs, opportunities and constraints. In the long term, this learning process should lead to local empowerment and effective support at the school level. With this additional knowledge AQEP expects that SMCs will have the basic skills to better manage their own school's maintenance work.

- AQEP has adopted the concept of 'build back better' and disaster risk reduction for the school renovation work. This approach is reflected in the use of high quality building materials and good construction practices that will prolong the life span of the buildings up to 10 years before requiring "heavy" renovation. Heavy renovation includes "roof frame renewal, ceiling frame, wall frame and all roof covering".

- From Year 3 onwards, AQEP and the Fijian Teachers Association (FTA) are conducting routine awareness training for AQEP's beneficiary schools on the importance of school maintenance and hygiene practices. This collaboration with FTA will ensure that the knowledge on school maintenance and hygiene are available locally and these activities should continue at the end of the program. This approach was acknowledged and welcomed by the Permanent Secretary for Education in the June 2014 PCC meeting.

- AQEP is promoting close cooperation with the MoE in all facets of the rehabilitation process – procurement, formulation of the school rehabilitation priorities, co-signing the grant agreements and joint monitoring of the projects. This strategy allows for a smooth transfer of knowledge from the program to MoE that would ensure sustainability and continuity after AQEP ends.

- AQEP is utilising small and medium scale contractors for the school rehabilitation works. The small and medium scale contractors are more affordable than large scale contractors as their overhead costs are lower and it is highly likely that the beneficiary school may engage them again for future rehabilitation works.

- AQEP infrastructure assistance has significantly upgraded the condition of school infrastructure in the 20 Cohort A schools. The assistance has positively impacted on the reduction of annual maintenance costs for each AQEP supported school.
  With reference to the school maintenance plan that was developed by 20 AQEP infrastructure beneficiary schools in Year 3, it is clear that the infrastructure maintenance cost has been greatly reduced and further maintenance works would be covered by the Free Education Grant allocation from MoE.

5.4 Sustainability: Component 3 Building Education Support Structures & Systems

During the 6 months January to July 2014 three key processes underpinned the sustainability approach of Component 3. They were:

- *Supporting* long term MoE and education system policy initiatives that aligned with AQEP objectives and priorities so that these MoE initiatives are strengthened and are likely to have greater long term impact (see Free Education Grant support below);

- *Capacity building* by transferring long term knowledge and skills to the education community of the MoE, schools and districts. In the last six months the QLST team provided enduring learning in regards to developing professional development sessions to assist teachers and schools to use LANA results in a diagnostic way to determine students' prior knowledge as the core of new literacy and numeracy strategy planning. The subsequent planning and learning activities in the schools are providing a light house model observed by other schools and districts that can inform and guide future evidence based educational practices; and

- *Strengthening* current best educational practice through research and provision of data – though supporting the development of improved national testing processes (through LANA); and the research into use of Classroom Based Assessment scores to investigate the impact of school activities and interventions funded by AQEP. Sustainability is encouraged by providing new tools and insights for future long term MoE use.

Sustainability: Research
The new data instruments being developed and refined by AQEP are being "normed" and validated for future use in the Fijian education context. The learning disability research will provide new models of how to support such students, not only in the present, but in the future.

The research undertaken (when completed) will assist in building capacity for schools and teachers to measure and evaluate the impact of literacy and numeracy and access interventions on student learning achievement. MoE and schools are being provided with new tools and methodologies to provide long term insights on learning and achievement in Fiji schools.

Sustainability – Quality Learning Support
Already the learning resources that are featured in the photographs of the activity report document the new literacy and numeracy strategies developed by schools with support and assistance jointly provided by Components 1 and 3. The provision of this quality learning support ensured that the development of new materials to promote quality education and learning for the future will be widely observed and shared by other schools and within districts. The design of best practice material was supported by teacher professional learning to accompany literacy and numeracy interventions in the schools. This teacher capacity development improves and enhances teacher expertise and quality teaching – leading to improved student learning and achievement in the long term. AQEP is showing that best practice in literacy and numeracy quality education interventions makes a difference to the students, the teachers and the schools – and the district and MoE.

Sustainability – MoE Priority Support

AQEP support allows MoE to build capacity in nominated priority areas, deepen and strengthen forward planning and contribute to the provision of long term sustainable quality education. The AQEP support provided to the professional development required to implement the Free Education Grant sustains the implementation of this key MoE priority and assists in its long term sustainability. The further development of the FEMIS database also allowed more sophisticated data collection to support the long term MoE planning and strategic initiatives in financing schools and building increased financial accountability into MoE operations. This more systematic collection and use of data provide new insights to guide future MoE utilisation of data in evidence focused decision making.

Regarding FEMIS, adequate staffing levels are critical to its sustainability. In addition, the MoE needs to continue to provide training for all schools on an ongoing basis after the conclusion of AQEP. While this training is not essential, data quality would suffer if training was discontinued. AQEP is supporting the MoE in the preparation of a staffing resource paper to be presented to cabinet.

6.0 Cross Sectoral Liaison

The Team Leader, Dr Priscilla Puamau, accompanied by the DFAT Senior Program Manager Bilateral Education Mr Padric Harm, provided an update on the Program to the GoF Budget & Aid Coordinating Committee (BACC) on 1st May 2014. This Committee is comprised of the Permanent Secretaries of four Government Ministries – Finance, Strategic Planning, Foreign Affairs, Public Service and Deputy Secretaries of two Government Ministries – Finance/Budget Section and Prime Minister's Office (Policy). The last time that AQEP had been invited to provide a progress report was October 2011, only two months after the Program commenced implementation. Two positive outcomes arising out of the May 2014 BACC presentation is the request for AQEP to present regular progress reports and to share lessons learned that would be useful for government's strategic planning process in the education sector.

The Disability Inclusion team has initiated a number of meetings and workshops with cross-sectoral partners mainly in relation to: early identification of children with disability through existing health providers, referral options for services, means of diagnosing disability, strategy development of AQEP's Early Childhood Development and Education strategy, strengthening the role of DPOs in the communities surrounding the AQEP schools and the links between DPOs and education stakeholders, and options for scaling up the screening for vision and hearing impairments in AQEP schools. Cross-sectoral agencies include: Ministry of Health, Tamavua Rehabilitation Hospital, Project Heaven, Save the Children, Fiji Disabled Persons Federation, Fiji Association of the Deaf, United Blind Persons of Fiji, Fiji Spinal Injuries Association, Fiji Psychiatric Survivors Association, Fiji National Council for Disabled Persons, Early Intervention Centre and Fiji Society for the Blind. Stakeholders within the higher education sector include Fiji National University and the University of the South Pacific.

AQEP also convened a one-day Stakeholders' Meeting in June 2014 to provide key stakeholders with an update on the progress of the Program and to discuss the Year 4 Work Plan. 31 representatives from various government ministries participated at the meeting – Education, Finance, Prime Minister's Office, Social Welfare, Rural and Maritime

Development, Health, iTaukei Affairs, Poverty Alleviation Unit and Bureau of Statistics; faith based organisations – Anglican Diocese of Polynesia, Catholic Education, Methodist Church of Fiji, Salvation Army, Seventh Day Adventist, Fiji Muslim League, Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of Fiji, Shree Sanatan Dharm Pratindhi Sabha of Fiji; tertiary and professional organisations – USP, FNU, Fiji Head Teachers Association, Fiji Teachers Union, FTA; NGOs/CSOs – People's Community Network (PCN), Ecumenical Centre for Research, Education and Advocacy, Foundation of the Education of Needy Children (FENC), Save the Children Fiji, Fiji Women's Crisis Centre, Soqosoqo Vakamarama; disability providers – FNCDP, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat; regional/international organisations – UNICEF, WHO; and the Australian Aid Program.

7.0   Development Cooperation

The Disability Inclusion team continues to work closely with the Australian Volunteers for International Development (AVID) program to support the growing shift from special schools to inclusive education within the MoE and strengthen the capacity of these schools to act as specialist resource centres where mainstream schools and non-specialist teachers can learn about and receive support for inclusive education.

AQEP continues to ensure that the tools developed by the Program (such as Individualised Education Program formats and guidance) are consistent with MoE approaches and that training packages and resources such as the Disability Inclusive Toolkit and Disability Referral Directory are accessible to all relevant stakeholders working in the Disability Inclusion, Health or Education sectors in Fiji.

The AQEP Disability Inclusion Coordinator attended a meeting in Nadi in April 2014 run by the Australian Development Research Awards Scheme research programs funded by DFAT titled "Developing and testing indicators for inclusive education in the Pacific" where stakeholders from Fiji, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu participated in reviewing and critiquing indicators for inclusive education.

The disability stakeholders meeting in May 2014 to discuss approaches to identifying children with disabilities included representatives from the Fiji Health Sector Support Program (FHSSP) as well as Ministry of Health, plus other disability stakeholders.

AQEP was approached by Save the Children Fiji (SC Fiji) through the Education Cluster to fund two positions from 1 March – 30 June 2014: Disaster Management Officer and SC Fiji EIE Technical Assistant to the Ministry of Education. SC Fiji has been working with the MoE to implement the project, Education in Emergencies (EIE), since February 2012. Working closely alongside the Education Cluster, this capacity building project has aimed to ensure that the MoE and key stakeholders in the wider Education Sector have the capacity to respond to the educational needs of children affected by emergencies across Fiji. The United Nations Development Programme will take over the funding of these positions from 1 July 2014.

8.0   Organisational Chart

The organisational chart for the Program is annexed at Annex 6.

ANNEX 1

Activity Report Component 1: Social Protection and Disability Inclusion

Component 1: Social Protection

Key Activities

Access and Quality Approach in Schools (Components 1 and 3)
The Access and Quality Approach is a targeted approach to improve access for disadvantaged children and quality in schools and is jointly implemented between Components 1 and 3. The School Community Coordinators and the Quality Learning Support Team (QLST) work collaboratively as catalysts for change in the school.

Development and Provision of Teaching and Learning Resources
The following teaching and learning resources have either been developed by the Program or procured for AQEP-supported schools:

(1) Numeracy Kits – 15 Cohort A schools that received grants of less than FJD10,000.00 received numeracy kits with concrete manipulative tangible objects including scales, measuring jugs, counters and blocks that can be used for numeracy concepts. Each school was asked to obtain a number of locally available items to complement the kits such as reeds, buttons, stones and empty containers.

(2) Kindergarten Kits – 15 out of 50 Cohort A schools with kindergartens attached received kindergarten kits containing early learning equipment and resources to assist with the delivery of a play based curriculum.

(3) Teaching and Learning Equipment – procurement commenced for textbooks, Science kits and PEMAC kits for all 31 Cohort B and 4 disability inclusive demonstration[14] schools.

(4) MoE Curriculum Documents – Literacy Strategy, Numeracy Strategy, Years 1 – 4 Curriculum, Kindergarten Curriculum and teachers' works books were provided to all 50 Cohort A schools.

(5) Graphic Design and Translation of Access and Quality Manual – Some revisions to the Access and Quality Manual were completed. Translation of the manual into iTaukei Bauan and Fiji Hindi were completed as well as graphic design to the make the manual more appealing to the user.

(6) Alphabet Cards – locally photographed alphabet cards were created under the Year 3 budget and will be printed and distributed under the Year 4 budget. The alphabet cards that are available in Fiji are made outside the country and feature items that are not familiar to children in Fiji. On the other hand, the new alphabet cards feature items that are known across the country and are therefore more relevant for Fiji classrooms.

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[14] Arya Samaj Primary School is both a disability inclusive demonstration school and a Cohort A school. It received a full set of teaching and learning resources in Year 2.

(7) Educational Videos – A series of short films that feature situations that are not common for children in very remote, remote and rural areas are currently under development. A challenge identified by teachers in LANA is that it features situations that some children have never experienced. This adds extra stress to the testing environment as children grapple with unfamiliar circumstances such as posting a letter, seeing a fire engine or catching the bus. The new series will feature a variety of situations identified by children and teachers with the objective of being a teaching resource that can be used to better prepare children for LANA.

Training, Mentoring and Grants

Training
Due to the transfer of Head Teachers and the high turnover due to the annual general meeting elections of School Management Committees, 33% of the people trained last year have left the Access and Quality supported schools. The reasons for leaving have included retirement, transfers and people leaving the area. The new members participated in handover sessions in the schools and a training workshop was conducted by AQEP at the end of Term 1.

Mentoring
A total of three mentoring visits per cluster were undertaken in the reporting period. The focus for Terms 1 and 2 was improving the literacy activities and this was led by the two AQEP Literacy Specialists. They are using the MoE literacy strategy as a basis for coaching to help teachers. Teachers have been supported to conduct pre -test and post-test in literacy and trained also on how to analyse the results to feed back into the teaching and learning process.

In Term 3 2013, only 4 schools were implementing numeracy activities. However, at the end of Term 1 2014 all 50 Cohort A schools were working to improve numeracy in the schools. The two AQEP Numeracy Specialists have provided coaching to analyse LANA results and pre testing to identify gaps in basic number facts. Basic number facts provide the foundation for learning mathematics.

Access mentoring for 2014 has focused on chronic absence, specifically targeting children that are absent more than 7 days in the term. If children are away for 10% or more of the teaching days, it has a detrimental impact on their ability to catch up in class. Children with patterns of chronic absence also have an increased risk of being pushed out of school. Therefore, early identification and assisting these children are more effective strategies than programs for "drop outs" after they have left school.

Grants
The amount disbursed in the reporting period was FJD189,723. The total grant amount disbursed for Access and Quality Activities in Year 3 was FJD751,745. The majority of schools have acquitted the grant at a steady pace. The exceptions are the Suva schools with large grants that were slow to get started and they were also more overwhelmed by the increase in the MoE Grant.

Awareness Raising

Community workshops in AQEP's 50 Cohort A schools were held in the reporting period with over 5,000 participants in attendance. The community meetings are awareness raising activities and are built upon the current initiative of the MoE. Many schools were sceptical about having the meetings because their past attempts were unsuccessful. To mitigate this, AQEP implemented some changes in order to strengthen the approach:

- Delivering information in a format that was accessible to the community;
- Engaging the community in identifying the problems and finding the solutions;
- Including a diverse cross section of the community - everyone was invited and dinner was provided as an incentive to attend; and
- Having clear next steps for commitments and people identified to follow up on the next steps.

The turnout at the meeting and community participation has continued to exceed expectations. For example, at Nabua Primary school the community have volunteered to help the teachers by making literacy and numeracy stations at the school, Mothers Clubs were formed at Tamavua Primary and Pundit Vishnu Deo.

School Management, Teachers, Community Volunteers and AQEP showing an outdoor numeracy centre they developed as a team at Vunikavikaloa Arya Primary School.

Personal commitments were made by parents to assist with homework, and the parents were taught simple strategies to help children improve their literacy and numeracy at home.

More importantly parents that made commitments to assist the school during the April Meeting have started to fulfil their promises – as seen in the photo from Vunikavikaloa Arya Primary. This is all part of building the social capital[15], a key indicator of high performing schools.

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[15] Social capital refers to the strength of formal and informal partnerships and networks involving the school and all individuals, agencies, organisations and institutions that have the potential to support and be supported by the school (Caldwell and Harris, 2008, *Why not the best schools?* Published by ACER).

Educational Outreach Centre (Homework Centre)

Meetings with Schools

AQEP and the People's Community Network (PNC) meetings held with Arya Samaj Primary School have been productive with teachers and the Head Teacher giving feedback on the issues with the children. We have managed to deal with all the issues as per request and these have mostly involved trying to improve the children's attendance. We have found that there are other family issues that are sometimes the cause of this and have counselled and dealt with this accordingly. One student attending Arya Samaj was referred to Medical Service Pacific for sexual assault counselling.

To date there have not been any requests for follow up of students. We are at the moment reviewing the families affected by the floods and should there be any children attending Vishnu Deo needing assistance, they will be helped.

Community Awareness

Community awareness was conducted successfully in the Jittu Estate community in June and has also continued with the individual family visitations. Many students who had been attending the Centre last year have also returned and are doing well. For example, children who have previously failed their classroom based assessment (CBA) tasks are now getting full marks in schools and teachers of children who attend the Homework Centre are referring other children who are having difficulty at school to attend the Centre.

We are also encouraging other students to attend through the provision of computer facilities for their CBA task research. At the moment, there are not many students taking advantage of this as their tasks are only just being handed out at school.

Change observed in the children

The behaviour of students is slowly changing through motivation sessions that the children are having before the start of each session. They are also taking ownership of the Centre and are beginning to do tasks without being told. It is reassuring to seeing their motivation to attend the classes even in bad weather where the students are packing their books into plastic bags to attend the classes. They are also encouraging their neighbours to attend the classes and the news of Centre is being spread through word of mouth. One noticeable change is that all students are now able to complete their homework by the end of the sessions.

Students are now showing initiative by arranging their tables and chairs properly and ensuring there is no rubbish on the floor at the end each session. A female upper level high school student has started to help younger children in primary school with their homework as soon as she gets to the centre. The teachers often have to remind her to complete her own work first before she helps others.

A class 3 male student of Arya Samaj Primary School had full marks for his wind chime made from curtain beads, plastic juice bottle and a piece of strings. His sense of creativity shows a very talented student and this was the first time he had excelled in a CBA.

A class six male student of Suva Methodist Primary School who previously did not attend but make fun of the students came in for help with a CBA task (Christmas card). He received full marks for the task and now has been attending every day and providing leadership for the younger children.

Change Observed in the community

There is a noticeable increase in the number of parents attending the classes to drop of their children. Many parents have expressed their gratitude to the teachers for the improvements that they have observed since the children started attending the Centre. They are also beginning to stay back on occasions to assist their children as well as the teachers in their tasks. For instance, there is a single mother who often brings her two children to attend the classes. She often gets them seated, opens up their books for them and ensures that they have their homework started whilst the teachers are attending to other students.

Boarding School Support

An additional grant amount of FJD36,000 has been disbursed to Mataso Primary School and Nasau District School in Ra to improve the situation of boarders in the school. The schools purchased beds, mattresses, sheets, pillows, mosquito nets, crockery and cutlery for student use. Nasau District School also purchased first aid materials and sports equipment for the boarders.

At Nasau District School, the dormitory has increased from 24 to 64 children and 4 children are on the waiting list. This is an increase to the boarders of 40 children. Last year these children were frequently absent because the road was being cut off by the heavy rain. On the days that the children were attending they would be getting up each day at 4:30am to be ready to commence the journey to school. The children were previously not boarding as the families could not afford the materials needed for boarding – mattress, sheets, pillows, mosquito nets, dishes and cutlery.

The community has organised a roster where a husband and wife team will come to the schools on a two-day roster to cook the food and to sleep in the dormitory to provide extra supervision for the children – fathers in the boys' dormitory, mothers in the girls' dormitory. The community is providing root crops and some vegetables for the meals. In Term 3 2013 the school was running a lunch program for all students but this has now transitioned to a school-run activity with no support from AQEP. The school has five acres of land that has been donated by the community and the farming is carried out by the village closest to the school.

Achievements

Achievements through interventions in Social Protection have included the following:

- Increase in Numeracy Activities - LANA results showed that the schools have lower Numeracy results compared to Literacy. However none of the schools had chosen to focus on numeracy as they were unsure how to identify specific problems. With the

assistance of the two numeracy specialists we now have 49 Cohort A schools[16] with numeracy activities in Term 1 and 2 2014. The focus has been on strengthening number facts – this is the basic knowledge that provides the building block for learning numeracy. This includes number partitioning, whole numbers and mental maths. The teachers are implementing pre-tests to identify the level of each student, accurately measure progress and identify students that need more help. The schools are also learning to use concrete manipulative which is using objects to teach mathematical concepts such as block, reeds and counters. This allows students to link the abstract concept of a number such as "4" to the four objects placed in front of them.

- Improvement in Literacy Activities – all of the 50 Cohort A schools commenced Literacy activities in Term 3 2013. When the literacy activities commenced teachers were replicating the same teaching strategies they had been using in the classroom and struggled with helping the children to improve. In Terms 1 and 2 2014 the Literacy Specialists assisted the teachers to use the MoE Literacy Strategy. This has assisted teachers in developing CBAs that allow them to diagnose problems and children who are reading below class level. At Narere Primary School in Suva, due to the new literacy approach they have been able to reduce the number of non-readers in the school from 27 to 19 and the slow readers from 28 to 24 in just one term. Children from the non-readers group have moved into the slow readers group and 25 children were moved out of the remedial class as they no longer need the extra support.

- Strengthened Social Capital – The turn out at the community workshops held in school was higher than expected for all the schools. The teachers, with the guidance of the AQEP Access and Quality Team, were able to present data to the parents and the community in a way that was easy to understand. Tamavua Primary School should be commended as all the parents whose students were assisted through their social protection grant and literacy support attended the community workshop.

As a result of these community meetings, each of the schools has formed three committees - Access, Literacy and Numeracy. These committees are made up of a teacher, a member of the school committee and people from the community. These committees are tasked with working together to address challenges identified in the community workshops, such as improving attendance, literacy and numeracy. The solutions focus not just on the school but what can be done in the home and the community. For example, for attendance – parents are committing to having school uniforms clean and ready for school each day, communities are organising a truancy officer that checks the village and ensures every child is at school and those children who are not at school are reported to the Village Council.

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[16] The remaining (50th) Cohort A school – Dogotuki District – has not participated in the Program since April 2014 due to the fraudulent use of AQEP funds by an Assistant Teacher. The teacher has been suspended from duties by the MoE. The school Mothers Club has repaid the money and AQEP is awaiting advice from DFAT about when to re-commence working in the school.

- Schools are making lessons more interesting so that children want to come to school. Two schools were able to achieve 100% attendance – Navitilevu Primary in Ra and Lavena Primary in Taveuni. For literacy and numeracy parents are learning how to incorporate learning into tasks at home such as counting as you walk, and embedding reading through the reading of signs, food packets, catalogues and sub titles on TV. Communities are providing space and set times for supervised homework to be completed. Schools are transforming their external environment into outdoor learning spaces through community volunteers who make signs and number games that allow teachers to take learning out of the classroom.

- Boarding School Sustainability – Mataso Primary School in Ra has excelled in the boarding pilot and has been reported as the most successful farming initiative by any primary school in the country. The School Manager and Head Teacher found a volunteer Farm Manager in the school community and they have divided up the land donated by the community between the three villages that send children to the school. Each village is responsible for farming their allotted piece of land. The food will be used to feed the children with any excess being sold and the profit returned to fund the needs of the boarders.

The school completed the improvement to the boarding facilities in January 2014. This included some minor repairs and painting; provision of beds, mattresses, pillows, sheets, mosquito nets, kitchen equipment, towels, recreational equipment and crockery.

The community has taken over the project and has full ownership. Participation has extended beyond those that have children in the boarding to the whole community, including the youths. To ensure the community also receives a benefit, excess seedlings are given to the community to plant in their own home plots.

They have also started a "rental" system whereby the community can use the school bullocks to plough their own land in return for giving a portion of their crops back to the school. The Head Teacher is already looking ahead to extending the school to be a technical and vocational education training (TVET) provider to provide courses for youths in the village. Primary Schools receive very little money and the need to supply all of the requirements for boarding means that the poorest children can be excluded and for those that attend the financial strain placed on the family is high. By having the school meet these needs means that children are able to attend school from the first day. The engagement of the school community is also improved.

Education Outreach "Homework Centre" at Jittu Estate, Suva.

- Education Outreach / Homework Centre – The attendance at the Jittu

Estate Homework Centre has continued to rise as children attend to get help with homework and also to participate in after school activities such as making Mother's Day cards, or Child Labour Day Poster competition. The teachers from Arya Samaj Primary School have reported that they can already see a difference in the classroom participation of the children that are attending the centre as they always have their homework completed and feel more confident about undertaking classroom activities.

- Improvements to School Based Management:
  - o Financial management is improving as people start to fulfil their roles. When AQEP first worked with the schools the finance files were sometimes kept in a plastic bag. However, now treasurers are keeping the records in a safe place and are able to organise the records and identify problems. Feedback from the RA District Education Office confirmed that the MoE Free Education Grant acquittals are more organised in the AQEP Access and Quality schools.
  - o Decision making – the School Management Committees have improved in decision making. They are now providing inputs into decisions about the teaching and learning process such as the need to flood the schools with teaching resources and not just providing basic stationery. They are also improving on prioritising and planning ahead. This has improved relations between the teachers and the management.
  - o Resource Mapping – School Managements are drawing upon the resources of their community to identify people with knowledge and talents that can be used by the school. They have also started connecting to other organisations that can assist the schools, such as Department of Agriculture and Duavata Jihpego. In terms of Social Protection the schools cannot solve all the problems of the most disadvantaged and they are providing referrals to Social Welfare and other organisations in the community.
  - o Understanding the strengths of the community – School Management Teams are making analytical decisions about what will work in their school and provide valid arguments to support a course of action.
  - o Visibility – The School Management and the community are now seen in the school. When AQEP first started working with the schools it was difficult to get people to come to the schools but now, for the majority of schools, they are taking an active part in the school.

Issues/Risks

- The new MoE Free Education Grants which commenced in January 2014 has created a number of challenges at the school level:
  - o There has been some confusion in the school about how this could be spent and the School Community Coordinators (SCCs) have devoted time to assisting schools to facilitate this grant.
  - o Some School Management Committees (SMC) are now feeling that they no longer have a role in the schools as the grants are more prescriptive in how they can be spent than previous years. This has resulted in a level of disengagement that the Access and Quality team have to overcome with

school management by helping clarify their role and looking at the impact that School Management can achieve.

- o The schools controlled by a central authority do not have bank accounts set up for each school. The Head Teachers do not have any influence over how the money is spent or know where the money is spent. Now that the sums of money are larger it creates a greater level of distrust between school staff and management in these cases. In these cases the SCCs are working to bring the Head Teachers and School Management together for shared decision making and to mediate between parties.
- o The removal of the school levy has meant that children are moving between schools as the levy is no longer a factor to be considered when choosing a school. The schools are not enforcing the cut off at 40 per class and classes are ballooning to up to 55 students. The Head Teachers are not turning the children away because they want the additional fee per student. The relevant District Education Office has been notified but at this stage no action has been taken. We have continued to raise the issue with the MoE.

- The amount of change (staffing/management/curricula/policies/funding/assessment) and the way the change is managed at the MoE means the schools are operating in a challenging environment. Teachers, School Management and communities are having difficulty understanding and implementing all the changes.

Component 1: Disability Inclusion

Key Activities

Inclusive Education Demonstration Schools

AQEP has continued to support three Teacher Aides to provide Braille, sign language and general disability inclusion support in the five Inclusive Education Demonstration Schools.

Each of the schools has had access to funding through the Inclusive Education Small Grants Scheme to enable newly enrolled or newly identified, children with disability to access disability-specific services and assistive devices; and to cover the costs of community disability awareness raising activities that the schools undertake.

During the reporting period some challenges have been identified with both the mechanism for accessing the small grants fund and clarity on eligible costs have been identified. The AQEP Disability Inclusive team is working with the schools and the broader AQEP team to formulate a policy for usage and are reviewing the mechanism to increase access to the funding during Year 4. Other issues identified through the monitoring visits such as the need for teacher engagement and feedback to develop and pilot a revised format for the Individualised Education Plan (IEP) have been incorporated into the Year 4 Work Plan.

The schools have continued to receive regular mentoring and monitoring visits from the Disability Inclusion Coordinator and other relevant members of the AQEP team. Some specific information related to the monitoring follow.

Ratu Latianara reported positively around the inclusion of children with special needs, although significant issues are visible in relation to the large increase in enrolment since the renovation of the school. Classrooms have up to 56 children, with no opportunity for increasing teacher numbers. This clearly has a significant impact on the ability of teachers to undertake quality differentiated learning for children with special needs.

Several opportunities have arisen for South Taveuni Primary since becoming an inclusive school (e.g. Rotary support for library, JICA building new classrooms, and a proposal for an 'eco-library-centre' seems to have progressed at JICA). School-wide use of Positive Behaviour Support strategies at South Taveuni has had a significant positive impact on the overall behaviour of the school students and staff attribute this to the training they received in their inclusive education training conducted by AQEP. They have used the Action Research processes to consciously identify, measure and address specific challenges they face.

It is clear from all three schools that the role of Teacher Aides in the inclusion process is fundamental, in particular for the ongoing needs of children with intellectual disabilities. The Individualised Educational Plans are being written and updated by Teacher Aides rather than teachers. This is an area that needs continued support and strengthening by AQEP.

Capacity Development

The Year 3 Work Plan marked the beginning of the formal expansion of the Disability Inclusion Strategy (DIS) into the Cohort A Access and Quality schools with the identification of an Inclusion Coordinator from the teaching staff in a number of the schools. Providing

training to the Inclusion Coordinators and the schools more broadly have been a key focus of capacity development activities during this reporting period.

A pilot training was delivered in January 2014 for Inclusion Coordinators from the Ra Cluster. Feedback from the training has led to a slightly revised approach to the broader rollout, with a focus on providing training for Head Teachers as a first step, to build their understanding and support for Disability Inclusion, followed by training for the Inclusion Coordinators.

Teacher Aides from each of the five Demonstration schools, as well as other special schools in Suva, participated in a three-day workshop to continue building the knowledge and skills of the Teacher Aides and to enable them to share their experiences and strategies used in supporting the education of children with special needs. The highlight of the training was the sharing of ideas and strategies on managing children with challenging behaviours using non-violent interventions.

Training packages for each of the above capacity development are also being finalised to ensure that these resources for disability inclusion are documented and available for further implementation within MoE schools and refresher trainings in the future.

The Disability Inclusion Toolkit and Referral Booklet have been reviewed through a process of stakeholder consultation during this reporting period. Once this feedback is incorporated these documents will be printed and distributed to both AQEP and MoE schools, as well as to key service providers and other stakeholders. The Referral Booklet will also be made available online through the National DPO's website early in Year 4.

AQEP has supported some of the operational costs of the work undertaken by the Allied Health Team (AHT) in the Western Division during the reporting period. The primary focus of this work is to strengthen the special schools so they can become resource centres for the wider process of inclusive education in Fiji. The Disability Inclusion team met with the Australian volunteers, Austraining and the MoE to review progress, discuss challenges and share current activities.

Over the past six months, the AHT has been trialling a team-based approach and provision of a range of mobile services to all schools, and have moved away from the previous model of basing volunteers within particular special schools. While there are benefits associated with this model, the change has impacted on both the ability to access the required range of volunteers, linked to less frequent advertisement of positions, and to the volunteer specialists spending significant time on issues related to sourcing funding for the various activities they are doing at the expense of time spent on providing their technical expertise. To support a model such as this over the longer term and continue to provide this level of specialist support, access to adequate operational costs and management support is required. AQEP has agreed to support a co-funding proposal for activities to be undertaken in Year 4 (albeit with a limited budget), and will work with the program to look at longer term sustainability strategies.

Early Childhood Development (ECD) Strategy Development
Following the strategy development and consultations on ECD in November 2013, the focus of ECE activities in this reporting period has been discussions between the Program and

MoE to confirm an agreed approach to implementation. The ECE centres within the five Demonstration schools are in the process of receiving a Resource Kit, which includes a range of equipment. Some funding has been made available to address particular issues facing some of the ECE centres to address safety of the children and space. For example, South Taveuni experienced a large jump in enrolment following the AQEP infrastructure work; the ECE room has 51 children enrolled. In order to address the problem, funding through the ECD strategy is being provided to install a raised veranda (to mitigate the effects of regular flooding in front of the centre) and a fence to enable children to work in the outdoor area without the risk of running onto the nearby road. Planning is underway to commence a range of community awareness and capacity development activities to strengthen ECE within the Year 4 Work Plan.

Inclusion of Disabled Persons Organisations
A budget line has been included for the costs of involving DPOs in AQEP programming. A range of activities have been planned, including bringing representatives from the national DPOs to the Demonstration Schools to: undertake community awareness raising in the surrounding communities; facilitate the establishment of disability support groups; monitor the progress of sign language and Braille skills being offered in the schools; set up community sign language groups; promote and provide information about the referral options available; be role models; and demonstrate successful outcomes of education for children with disability.

Achievements

AQEP Wins Inaugural DFAT Disability Inclusion Award
In December 2013, AQEP received the exciting news that the Program was the recipient of DFAT's inaugural 2013 Disability-Inclusive Development Award for Good Practice in the Australian aid program. There were 13 nominations from across Asia, Pacific and Africa so winning this award is an important achievement for AQEP. Of the nominated programs, AQEP's model of inclusive education was found to best meet the selection criteria including: the extent to which people with disability are involved in decision making; how well the program targets particularly marginalised groups of people with disabilities (including those with psychosocial and intellectual disabilities and the deaf); the contribution that the program is making to the evidence base on disability inclusive practice and examples of innovation within the program.

Handover of Ratu Latianara Primary School
The Deputy High Commissioner from the Australian High Commission in Suva Ms Karinda D'Aloisio had the honor of handing over the Certificate of Completion for the infrastructure work carried out at Ratu Latianara Primary School on May 14th 2014. It was a special day for the school management, teachers, students, parents and for the province of Serua as they celebrated the handing over ceremony. The paramount chief of Serua, the "Turaga Vunivalu" Ratu Peni Latianara was also present to witness the occasion. Hundreds of parents turned up and joined in the celebration. The MoE was represented by the Director Corporate Services, Mr Suliasi Turagabeci. The renovation work included construction of ramps and railings for disability access. A total of 20 students with special needs now attend the school.

Meeting with the MoE on Progress Update on Disability Inclusion

The purpose of the meeting held on 27th May 2014 was to update the Ministry on how the Disability Inclusion Strategy is progressing and to discuss issues/challenges arising. Present at this meeting was Deputy Secretary Professional Mrs Kelera Taloga, Mr Isoa Wainiqolo (HR), Mrs Jokapeci Kurabui (SEO ECE and Mrs Litea Naliva (SEO Special/Inclusive Education). Issues around sustainability of the five Inclusive Education Demonstration Schools were discussed and the ongoing role of the Teacher Aides beyond the life of AQEP; the choices around what disability-specific costs the AQEP disability grant can cover (e.g. exceptional and rare requests for support with transport and continence aids); and the timing and process of the Fiji Inclusive Education Policy Implementation Strategy development.

Issues/Risks

This section reports on risks identified in Work Plan 3 as well as one newly identified risk.

Risk 1: *Teachers in the Demonstration Schools are relocated to other schools in Fiji*

Report: Whilst some teachers are relocated, the schools have continued to enrol and support children with disability, and the opportunity for those teachers to take their experience and attitudes regarding inclusive education to new schools has been described as a positive outcome. The new Head Teachers in two of the schools has been an important factor, given the influence that Head Teachers have with decisions that affect inclusion. New Head Teachers and teachers are prioritised for participation in inclusive education training that is conducted by AQEP or the MoE (with AQEP) and the AQEP Disability Inclusion Coordinator has kept in close contact with the needs of the children with disability through discussions with the staff (in particular the Teacher Aides) about each child on each monitoring visit.

Risk 2: *Sign language and Braille trained staff in the Demonstration Schools are relocated to other schools in Fiji*

Report: Given that the Teacher Aides are from the local communities, they have not relocated and the risk has not materialised. Several of the schools are conducting in-house sign language training for all staff.

Risk 3: *Children with disability are identified and their needs for assistive devices and/or medical or rehabilitation services are not met, thereby limiting their chance to access education*

Report: Both the Demonstration Schools and the Access and Quality Schools have Small Grants Schemes for families to access funding to pay for the costs of services and assistive devices and other resources to support disability inclusion. The program has identified some challenges with the current mechanism for the Small Grants scheme which may have led to less utilisation. AQEP is currently working with the demonstration schools to both simplify the mechanism to access funds and also formulate a clear policy for use of the small grants to ensure that this is clear and consistent across the demonstration schools.

In addition to the small grants scheme, other risk management strategies have included engagement and funding for DPOs to visit the schools and conduct community awareness raising events, to increase knowledge of the services available. The Disability Road Show will be a key community activity that increases knowledge and awareness of both the services available and sharing resources.

The roll out of training for Inclusion Coordinators within the Access and Quality schools will also increase the capacity of these schools to identify children with a need for inclusion support.

Risk 4: *Community resistance to the activities and concepts of the AQEP Disability Inclusion Strategy*

Report: There has been no reported resistance to the activities and concepts within the Disability Inclusion Strategy.

Risk 5: *Children with disability experience abuse as a result of attending school*

Report: To the knowledge of AQEP staff, the issue of abuse has not arisen. Mitigation strategies mentioned in the Work Plan are in place.

Risk 6: *Teachers experience 'overload' as a result of increasing numbers of children with disability and/or special education needs in the school*

Report: This risk is the greatest and most relevant within this reporting period. Following infrastructure improvements, the enrolment rates have increased significantly and classrooms in some of the schools are overflowing and teachers are struggling to cope. AQEP has met with the MoE to discuss this concern and a mitigation strategy is in development. AQEP will continue to monitor this situation and act according to the options agreed with the MoE.

Newly identified risks:

Risk 7: *The request from the MoE for support from AQEP in training results in the Disability Inclusion team having limited time to focus on the inclusion within the AQEP cohort schools.*

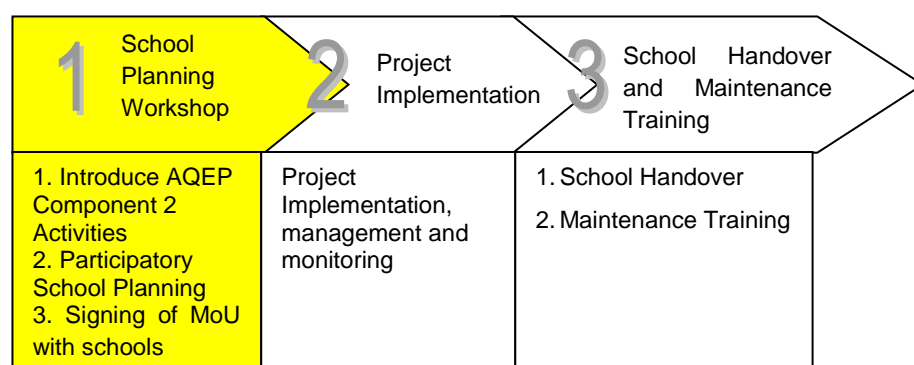**Report**: AQEP is recruiting a second Disability Inclusion Coordinator.

ANNEX 2
Activity Report Component 2: Infrastructure

Component 2

Key Activities

Rehabilitation Work for 20 Cohort A Schools

The three key steps in undertaking rehabilitation work for 20 Cohort A school is shown in this process flow diagram:

1 School Planning Workshop	2 Project Implementation	3 School Handover and Maintenance Training
1. Introduce AQEP Component 2 Activities 2. Participatory School Planning 3. Signing of MoU with schools	Project Implementation, management and monitoring	1. School Handover 2. Maintenance Training

School Planning Workshop

The first step – school planning workshop – was undertaken in the last reporting period in September 2013 where a total of 20 Head Teachers and 20 School Managers (and 8 MoE Officials) developed their school improvement plan within the limited AQEP grant budget ceiling allocated for each school. The grant budget ceiling for each school varied depending on the following factors: school roll, number of classrooms, whether urban or rural, boarding or non-boarding and condition of the buildings (good, moderate or bad).

The details of the repairs are as follows: rehabilitation of damaged/dilapidated building structures, repairs / replacement of building roofs, repair of toilet blocks, provision of water tanks and or water pumps, installation of ramps and special need toilets, provision of the fire extinguishers, provision of first aid kits, repair of doors and windows, and other infrastructure related works that are required by the school.

The AQEP and Assets Management Unit (AMU) signed an agreement with each beneficiary school after the detailed school rehabilitation plan (scope of works) was finalised. The agreement outlines the detailed rehabilitation plan, roles and responsibility of each party and the project timeframe.

Project Implementation

After the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the beneficiary schools, AQEP and AMU proceeded with the invitation to tender process to select the contractors to conduct the school rehabilitation works. AMU has the leading role in this process with AQEP's technical support.

The tender process was completed in the last reporting period in early October 2013 followed by the signing of contracts with 10 successful contractors for works in 20 Cohort A schools. Representatives from AQEP, AMU and the contractor signed the contract agreement and works started in the 20 Cohort A schools within 15 days after the contract

signing process. All school renovations were completed in the 20 Cohort A schools in the reporting period.

Progress Photos of Navatu Primary School

Before

After

During
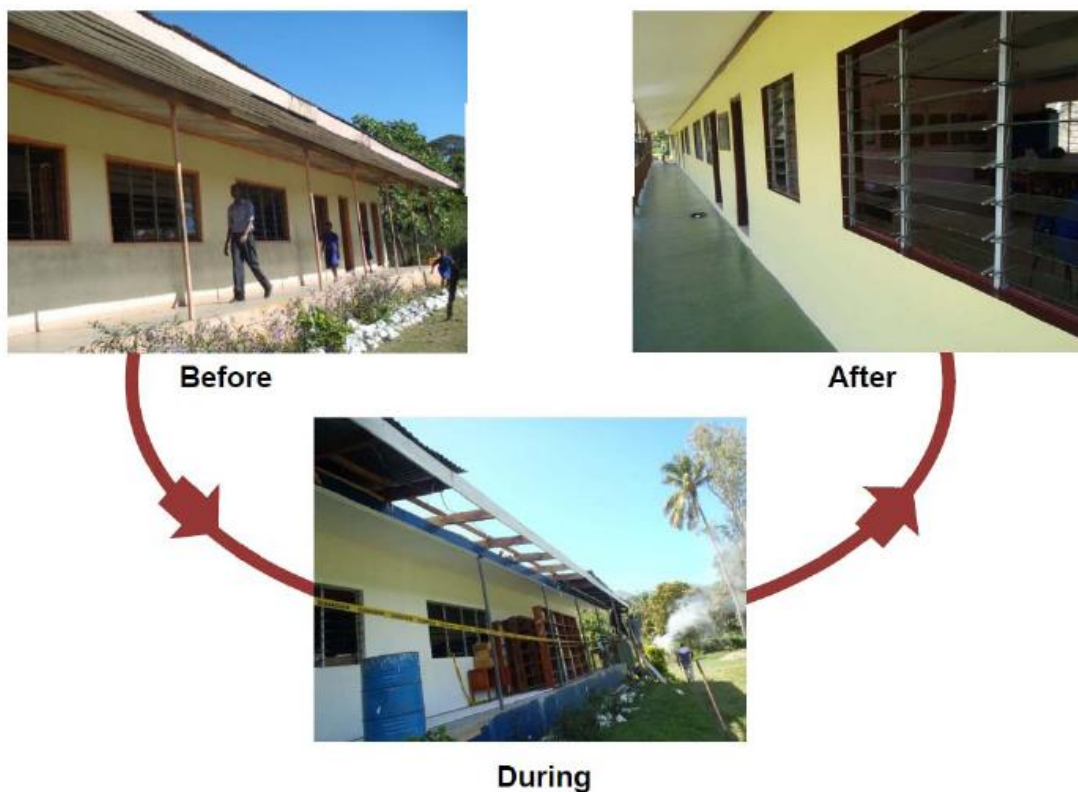
Infrastructure Assistance - 9 Additional Cohort A Schools

AQEP launched the procurement process of building contractors for 9 Cohort A schools in early June 2014. The list of schools is as follows:

1. Nasau Primary – Ra
2. Liwativale Primary – Ra
3. Namuaniwaqa Primary – Ra
4. Naroko Primary – Ra
5. Bucalevu Primary – Ra
6. Bureivanua Primary – Ra
7. Mataso Primary – Ra
8. Lavena Primary – Cakaudrove
9. Naselesele Primary - Cakaudrove

After the completion of the contractor procurement processes, the rehabilitation works should start in the third week of June 2014 and it should be completed within 150 working days from the signing of the contract agreement with the contractor.

Maintenance Training - AQEP'S Beneficiary Schools

The lack of planned school infrastructure maintenance remains a big issue in Fiji. Budgetary constraints are the main cause for the lack of school infrastructure maintenance. However in

January 2014, the MoE disbursed the first lot of Free Education Grants to all schools in Fiji and a percentage of this fund is allocated for school's infrastructure maintenance purpose. This new budget allocation requires proper guidelines to ensure that the maintenance works are managed properly by the School Management Committees (SMCs).

AQEP Component 2 and the Assets Monitoring Unit (AMU) of the MoE have been working together since early 2012 to formulate a practical maintenance manual for schools in Fiji. In the reporting period, the maintenance manual was endorsed by the PS for Education and the maintenance training for 20 Cohort A schools were conducted in Suva from 28-30 May, 4-6 June 2014 in Nadi and at Adi Maopa from 26-27 June 2014.

The objectives of the workshop were:

- To introduce the School Maintenance Handbook for Schools in Fiji;
- To train the school representatives (Head Teachers and Managers) on School Maintenance Planning and Practices;
- To hand over the completed AQEP Cohort A schools to the school management; and
- To formalise the school maintenance plan as a follow up to the funding allocation from the MoE's "Free Education Grant".

Adi Maopa Maintenance Workshop

The Head Teacher of Adi Maopa Primary School, Mrs Kiti Radravu and the School Management Committee members had a separate Maintenance training session in Vanuabalavu on 26-27 June 2014 as the school is isolated from the other 19 Cohort A schools.

The training at Adi Maopa Primary School followed the same maintenance training program that was conducted for the other schools. The highlight of the program was the symbolic handing over of the signed certificate of completion to the Manager of Adi Maopa Primary School, Mr. Latu Wainiqolo.

School Hygiene Monitoring - AQEP Beneficiary Schools

In response to the issues associated with lack of access to freshwater, inadequate sanitation and unhygienic conditions, AQEP engaged the Fijian Teachers Association (FTA) to provide hygiene and sanitation training and monitoring assistance for 43 AQEP Year 1 and Cohort A beneficiary schools that had received infrastructure support.

In the last reporting period in October 2013, the FTA signed a Memorandum of Agreement with AQEP to develop the modules for promoting and improving the quality of hygiene and sanitation amongst primary aged students and to facilitate sustainable sanitation practices in 43 AQEP supported schools.

In this reporting period, FTA provided hygiene training and monitoring to 43 AQEP beneficiary schools that had received infrastructure assistance in the first two years of program implementation. FTA has delivered the following:

WASH Training

- Hygiene Education Manual was endorsed by the Permanent Secretary for Education,

Dr. Brij Lal in January 2014.

- Completion of the first round of the hygiene monitoring visit to the 43 schools, training of teachers, demonstration lessons for students and the awareness program of the competition criteria.

Achievements

Rehabilitation of 20 Cohort A Schools

- The following buildings have been repaired or upgraded through AQEP's interventions in the 20 Cohort A schools: 155 classrooms, 18 libraries buildings, 7 kitchen and dining facilities, 20 teachers office, 12 ECE room/buildings, 21 teachers quarters, 4 boarding facilities, 3 generators, 22 school toilet blocks, 23 staff toilet units, 21 water tanks, 19 water harvest systems, 3 water pumps, 23 staff toilets, 23 septic tanks and installation of disability access ramps and toilet in 18 schools.

- A total of 1,923 girls and 2,150 boys have benefitted from the infrastructure assistance.

Maintenance Training

- After the completion of the rehabilitation works, school Head Teachers and Managers in 20 Cohort A schools were invited to attend the training on School Maintenance Management and Techniques. This training provided guidance for schools to maintain their infrastructure using their Free Education Grant from the MoE.

- 20 Cohort A schools have developed their own school maintenance plan for the calendar year 2014 in accordance with their Free Education Grant allocation. The District Education Officers have taken on board the knowledge of maintenance planning and will follow up on the implementation of the school maintenance plans for all other schools in their districts.

Launch of School Maintenance Manual

On 28 May 2014, the Permanent Secretary for Education, Dr. Brij Lal officially launched the first School Maintenance Handbook ever to be compiled and printed for schools in Fiji.

Hygiene Education for AQEP Beneficiary Schools

Output:
- FTA conducted a one day training session in each of the 43 schools for teachers on the hygiene education manual. A total of 229 teachers were trained (118 males; 111 females).

- 43 AQEP beneficiary schools have received one set each of the Hygiene Education Manual.

- 43 sets of sanitation demonstration kits[17] were distributed to the 43 AQEP beneficiary schools. The kit serves as a sample of things which the school management need to buy in order to enhance hygiene practices at their school.
- FTA has completed two hygiene monitoring and mentoring visits to 43 AQEP beneficiary schools in May and June 2014.
- Data on the school hygiene program and students' hygiene practices have been collected and analysed. FTA is in the process of preparing its final hygiene monitoring report that would describe the hygienic conditions (before and after results) in the schools of the hygiene training that was conducted.

Issues/Risks

(1) **Inconsistent building contractor performance**

The AQEP prequalified contractors are mostly medium or small and most are sole trader companies that rely on the owner for general management. After two years working with these contractors, we have found that some contractors are solely managed and this has affected their performance as some of their works were delayed due to lack of skilled personnel in the company. Another challenge that the contractors are faced with is the high turnover of labour depending on the number of projects that the contractor has secured and this has affected the quality of works they have produced in their school projects.

Mitigation Strategy:

- Since the beginning of the Program, AQEP has been enforcing a staged payment process for all sub-contractors to ensure that they complete all works prior to the release of the final payment from AQEP.
- AQEP has a routine monitoring system prior to the release of payment to the contractors which entails requesting them to rectify a defects list if needed.
- Underperforming contractors will be removed from AQEP prequalified contractors list.

(2) **Building materials supply issues**

To date AQEP's sub-contractors are still affected by building materials shortage due to the high demand from the building industry and insufficient supply from the suppliers. Building materials such as timber, plywood, roofing iron and other hardware materials were not readily available in the market for quite a period of time. The materials shortage has affected the timely completion of AQEP's Cohort A school rehabilitation projects.

Mitigation Strategy:

- AQEP facilitates the sharing of information between sub-contractors regarding building materials availability.

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[17] The items in the sanitation kits include: 1 mop and handle, 1 rake and handle, 1 scrubbing brush and handle, 1 toilet cleaning agent, 1 floor cleaner, 1 set of Gloves. 1 washing soap, 1 bucket, 10 packs of toilet paper, 1 rubbish bin, 1 sanitary bin, 1 set Dust pan and brush, 1 air freshener.

- Sub-contractors are allowed to propose alternative building materials to AQEP and AMU of MoE.

(3) **Project implementation vs school hours**

It has always been a challenge for AQEP's sub-contractors to implement their work in schools as the contractors have to readjust their work plan in accordance with the school timetable. This situation is reflected in their monthly work progress summary where many contractors have made significant progress in December when schools are closed for the end of year break.

Mitigation Strategy:

- AQEP's contract with sub-contractors does allow for a time extension where the reason for the delay is genuine.
- AQEP prefers to start the construction work early to ensure that all works will be completed before the end of AQEP's financial year.

(4) **Misunderstanding between the school and contractor**

The AQEP Component 2 team has undertaken several mediation meetings with the schools and contractors to resolve issues between them. These misunderstandings are usually caused by:

- The limited capacity of the SMCs in understanding the agreed scope of works.

- Over expectation by the school management about what could be achieved with the AQEP infrastructure grant.

Mitigation Strategy:

- Appropriate training has been provided to SMCs and sub-contractors outlining clear roles and responsibilities for each stakeholder in the project.
- AQEP and MoE are providing mediation support.
- AQEP and MoE have routine monitoring visits to identify all issues and resolve it on site.
- AQEP has adopted a participatory planning approach to ensure that the scope of works/rehabilitation plan is fully understood and agreed to by the school and MoE.

Despite the challenges above, AQEP has managed to complete all the Year 3 project activities as per approved work plan.

ANNEX 3

Activity Report Component 3: Building Education Support Structures and Systems

Component 3

Key Activities

Funding of MoE Priorities

Component 3 supports MoE priorities through funding, technical advice and support and development. In order to support these priorities AQEP has developed a collaboration and partnership process with MoE that allows priorities to be established and refined, discussed and funded. Between January and June 2014 the following MoE priorities and activities were funded by the Program.

Training in Financial Management

A one-day national training in May 2014, as a follow up to the first round of training funded by AQEP in December 2013, was conducted for school Head Teachers, Principals, Managers and Treasurers on Financial Management to assist them better manage the increased grants to schools as per the Government's Free Education assistance which commenced in January 2014. This was designed to ensure proper accountability in the utilisation of the grants. The capacity built in these officers will enable them to disseminate this to the schools with assistance from central office staff.

See Table 6 for a breakdown of number, type and gender. Of the 1,932 officers trained in this second round, there were 712 school heads and 1,050 committee representatives, of which 1,438 were males and 494 females (26%). 17 out of close to 900 primary and secondary schools did not attend and a schedule will be set up by the MoE training team and these schools visited individually.

Prior to the commencement of the school year, one-day training was conducted for school Head Teachers, Principals, Managers and Treasurers on Financial Management to assist them better manage the increased grants to schools as per the Government's Free Education increased assistance in 2014. The training covered all nine districts and was designed to ensure proper accountability in the utilisation of the increased government grants. Capacity to provide such training was first built in the districts by training all district officers, these officers then conducted training for the schools with the assistance of staff from central office.

Table 6: Summary of Finance Management Round 2 Training (As At 26/6/14)

District	Secondary Schools represented (P/VP)	Primary Schools represented (HT/AHT)	Management represented (Manager/ Treasurer/ Secretary)	Gender Breakdown		Total
				Males	**Females**	
Ra	7	42	64	83	30	113
Ba/Tavua	15	62	83	117	43	160
Nadroga/Navosa	16	62	105	145	38	183
Suva	32	71	136	162	77	239

Macuata/Bua	25	98	123	181	65	246
Cakaudrove	13	64	146	151	72	223
Eastern	14	116	170	236	64	300
Nausori	27	114	144	226	59	285
Lautoka/Yasawa	21	83	79	137	46	183
TOTAL	170	712	1,050	1,438	494	1,932

Purchase and installation of industrial commercial quality printer

A state-of-the-art printer was purchased for MoE by AQEP at the end of 2013 to assist MoE's ERC to enable development and production of high quality textbooks and teaching and learning materials to support the implementation of the new curriculum in 2014. During 2014 the Printer has been installed. Also training has been partially conducted for ERC staff. More training will be needed before ERC staff are able to operate the printer. AQEP is liaising with the provider and the MoE to rectify the training issue so that the printer can be used.

AQEP is also exploring relevant desktop publishing software to provide increased support for producing high quality teaching and learning and professional development materials.

LANA Development

During January-June 2014 AQEP further contributed to the enhancement and development of LANA, Fiji's national literacy and numeracy assessment system. In particular, AQEP through Component 3 provided psychometric assistance to prepare LANA benchmarking options for consideration by MoE and education stakeholders. The benchmarking options led to the development of the MoE steering committee to coordinate consultation and discussion.

In addition, psychometric support was provided to audit LANA systems and processes and to review LANA items being prepared for the 2014 round of LANA assessment. This psychometric support has identified LANA system improvements, such as investing in scanners to reduce the need for hand entry of 17.6 million data items arising from 50,000 students undertaking LANA evaluation. This investment will speed up the LANA process and allow LANA reports to be developed more quickly and effectively during the latter part of 2014. Also new student response sheets for the 2014 LANA have been developed to aid in this new process. Other improvements in LANA supported by AQEP include further refinement of LANA items for use in August 2014.

MoE Liaison and flexible response to MoE priorities

The appointment of Mr Apao Solomone at the end of July 2013 as Quality Education/MoE Liaison Coordinator, has improved channels of communication between AQEP and MoE and allowed for more effective planning, coordination and implementation of Component 3 activities between January and June 2014. This has resulted in improved coordination of quality education initiatives at system level, including student assessment and reporting, literacy and numeracy development, curriculum, school leadership, teacher development and quality standards.

In addition the MoE Liaison Coordinator has provided improved oversight for the work of the Quality Learning Support Team (QLST) during their visits to schools together with the Component 1 School Community Coordinators (SCC) on training and mentoring.

Establishment of a LANA Benchmarking Steering Committee
The MoE LANA Benchmarking Steering Committee was established in April 2014. Membership includes the Deputy Secretary Professional (Chair), Director Examinations and Assessment Unit, Director Curriculum, PEO Exams, PEO Primary CDU, SEO Information & Research, System Analyst, EO Statistic, LANA coordinator, AQEP Consultant / Psychometrician and AQEP MoE Liaison Coordinator. The second meeting was for EAU/CDU officers to understand the revised English and Mathematics syllabus so that they can check the alignment of the current LANA outcomes to which the LANA items/questions are targeted. The third meeting was also for EAU/CDU officers to clarify curriculum outcomes so that teacher analysis of their class results can lead more clearly to the development of teaching and learning strategies and lesson plans.

Weekly planning meetings also took place on FEMIS chaired by PEO (HRM) and attended by IT, AQEP and other MoE stakeholders.

Another Steering Committee to revise the MoE Leaders and Teachers Competency Frameworks was established. This committee is chaired by SEO (PDU) and attended by the UNESCO/JICA sponsored consultant, AQEP MoE Liaison Coordinator and other relevant MoE stakeholders.

Quality Teaching and Learning
A core activity in Component 3 was the provision of the Quality Learning Support Team (QLST) to assist schools to implement the school based quality learning interventions and activities that have been planned and supported, mentored and funded by Component 1.

The QLST was formed at the end of September, 2013 with the appointment of four officers to work with the AQEP schools to improve the quality of teaching and learning. During January and June 2014 they were able to work closely with the Component 1 SCCs in assisting the Cohort A schools to plan how teachers, managements and parents can work together to provide better and improved quality education to their children by targeting Literacy and Numeracy.

They assisted school mentoring by helping teachers to identify problem areas in teaching and learning and how schools can design quality learning interventions and activities to address them in all 50 Cohort A schools. (The pictures below demonstrate their work in best practice literacy and numeracy teaching and learning strategies). The QLST also designs and conducts professional development in best practice literacy and numeracy strategies to upskill teachers to implement the necessary quality activities to improve teaching and learning. The QLST also developed literacy and numeracy resources to support the teachers in implementing the necessary intervention activities.

Literacy and Numeracy teaching and learning resources developed by schools - in the picture on the right, the Mothers Literacy Group have made letters that student can use to make words and sentences; and the Fathers Numeracy Group have made snakes and ladders to assist in students learning to count. The picture on the left shows literacy signposts in a school compound.

Research

Component 3 conducts research to promote evidence based practice and data driven decision making.

Pilot study/research to utilise teacher and school CBA grades to measure the impact of access and quality school activities funded by AQEP

A pilot study involving five schools investigated the use of teachers' CBA tasks and normal grade collection processes as a way of measuring school access and quality interventions and activities developed by the school. It focuses on Years 3, 4 and 6 over a 12-month period from Term 2 2013 to Term 2 2014, and the next 12 month period Term 2 2014 to Term 2 2015. This project is also collecting evidence on using LANA results to measure the impact of Component 1 interventions and activities.

Meetings have been conducted with the Pilot Schools and they have been briefed on the data needed. The five schools are Arya Samaj Primary, Nabua Primary, Lami Primary, Davuilevu Methodist and Bucalevu District.

Establishment of Research and Research Ethics Process and Protocols
Planning and discussions with relevant stakeholders have been conducted towards the establishment of a Research and Ethics Review Committee for AQEP. Meetings were held with MoE and Ministry of Health (MoH) on their research processes and reference documents linking their research processes with the Immigration Department and USP were shared to assist AQEP align its processes. A major issue in the meetings was the reactivation of the Fiji National Research Council. It is important that this umbrella body be available to oversee and coordinate all national activities.

Achievements

- Analysis of 160 school based access and quality activities and interventions.
- Training and mentoring of these schools to enable them to improve Literacy and Numeracy and hence teaching and learning.

- Development of support plans by experienced literacy and numeracy specialists to make these access and quality interventions more effective.
- Development of teaching and learning resources to make these access and quality interventions more effective
- Development of professional development and professional learning modules for literacy and numeracy access and quality interventions to assist schools to implement these school based activities.
- Development of cutting edge measuring and evaluation systems designed to identify learning gains from intervention using effect size procedures.
- Improve research process through developing support protocols to support the development of research projects and research ethics applications.
- Improvements to LANA procedures and processes.
- Development of LANA benchmarks options.

Issues/Risks

Component 3 funds MoE priorities agreed to by AQEP and MoE as a result of a process of consultation, collaboration and agreement. Risks inherent in the process between January and June 2014 were mitigated by holding specific formal meetings with high level MoE staff to determine and articulate their priorities.

The physical re-location of the QLST team, AQEP-MoE Liaison Officer and the Quality Education Advisor to Marela House in 2014 assists in the communication process. In addition the formal steering committees established to monitor and assess investment in MoE priorities will be strengthened to mitigate risks.

To ensure alignment in MoE reporting with AQEP's reporting requirements, standard reporting templates are beginning to be attached to formal agreements to be signed by both parties. Additional mitigation strategies include regular communication and follow up with the coordinators of the MoE projects.

All research projects present risks in terms of expansion of scope, design flaws, developing reliable data instruments and collecting data that can provide findings and results to meet the requirements of evidence building to support insightful principled educational decision making and practices. These risks were mitigated through a number of strategies:

- review of the research plans and designs by the Quality Education Advisor who is an educational research professor;

- review of research plans and designs by the newly established AQEP Research and Ethics Committee that reviews, monitors and supports research development and assists in meeting ethics requirements and the research and ethics requirements of MoE, MoH and the recently reactivated Fiji National Research Council;

- strong research leadership, continuous monitoring of deliverables and milestones of the research will be carried out by the Component 3 staff.

Numeracy walkways and walls.

IT Distribution

The Program provided information technology packages to 54 Cohort A and Disability Inclusive Demonstration Schools in February 2014. The package included a laptop for schools without electricity and a desktop for schools with electricity, a multi-function laser printer and an external hard drive. AQEP officials delivered the packages to the schools and conducted training on the basic use and safe keep of the equipment.

Apart from helping the teachers with school administration and preparation of teaching and learning resources, the equipment will also assist the schools in accessing and updating student and school records in FEMIS.

Fiji Education Management Information Systems (FEMIS)
Key Activities

AQEP funded training was conducted by the IT Unit for all schools and districts covering how to use FEMIS as a monitoring tool, not a data entry system. Sessions focused on monitoring tools and data quality. Districts were instructed on how to use FEMIS to monitor schools.

FEMIS Servers were upgraded and numerous advocacy presentations were made to senior staff on FEMIS and embracing change.

Achievements

- The FEMIS policy was approved and released.
- Essentially all schools have entered class and student data. Data for many private schools and ECE centres[18] are not on the system yet.

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[18] Missing ECE data is primarily attributable to private ownership of ECE facilities and the significant time taken by the MoE to formally register ECE teaching staff. Private school data collection is hampered by these institutions hiring un-registered teachers although the teacher registration is a legal requirement. Un-registered teachers cannot log into FEMIS.

- The full student roll is now in FEMIS at approximately 206,000 students. Student numbers have fluctuated *downwards* briefly by one or two students, indicating schools refining their data.
- AQEP funded server hardware is now fully operational, supporting FEMIS, LANA and FESA databases.
- Lautoka district independently evolved their own monitoring plan using tools in FEMIS.
- The AQEP funded data quality officer continues to refine school information, assisting schools to de-register students that have transferred to another school. The free education grant places pressure on schools to inflate their student roll.
- Schools have acquitted FJD12m in free education grants using the FEMIS voucher module.
- 65% of student citizenship data is entered. Citizenship determines eligibility for funding.
- 60% of birth certificate IDs are entered. The Birth Certificate ID is used to identify students out of schools and prevents schools claiming the same student twice (to attract additional funding).
- 98% of **2013** LANA results were migrated into FEMIS. Schools were granted access to on-line LANA reports. This migration was a once off process. All future LANA data will come from FEMIS. EAU used FEMIS student data for 2014 LANA student registration. EAU will use also FEMIS student data for the Year 12 and Year 13 student exam registration in 2014. EAU no longer collects and enters this data manually.
- The MoE approved work to use FEMIS to reconcile the bus fare processes.
- The MoE is reviewing the use of FEMIS data to reconcile the free education grant mechanism.
- Senior MoE staff are gradually accepting FEMIS.

ANNEX 4
STA inputs (schedule)

AQEP Short-term Adviser Inputs: 1 January 2014 – 30 June 2014

Short-term Adviser	Jan 14	Feb 14	Mar 14	Apr 14	May 14	Jun 14	Days Remaining until 30 Jun 14
Ian Hind Monitoring & Evaluation Specialist	1-31 Jan 2.6 days	1-28 Feb 16.7 days	1-31 Mar 8.3 days	1-30 Apr 5.5 days	1-31 May 16 days	1-30 Jun 1.2 days	1.8 days
Alan Parkes Database Specialist	23-31 Jan 6 days	1-28 Feb 17 days	1-8 Mar 7 day				55 days
Beth Sprunt Disabilities Specialist	1-31 Jan 5.2 days	1-28 Feb 2.55 days		1-30 Apr 4 days	1-31 May 5 days		0 days
Colin Connelly Database Development Specialist			5-31 Mar 15 days	1-30 Apr 15 days	1-31 May 9 days	1-30 June 21 days	0 days
Mike Horsley Quality Education Adviser	18-31 Jan 13 days	1-3 Feb 3 days			19-31 May 8 days	1-30 June 8 days + 14 days (Nelson Ireland)	24 days

ANNEX 5
AQEP Risk Matrix

AQEP RISK MATRIX – 15 JULY 2014

Key: P = Probability (5=Almost certain; 4=Likely, 3=Possible, 2=Unlikely, 1=Rare); I = Impact (5=Severe, 4=Major, 3=Moderate, 2=Minor, 1=Negligible); R = Risk Level (H=High, M=Medium, L=Low)

Identified Risk	Impact on Services & Support	P	I	R	Mitigation Strategy	Entity(s)
Component 1 Risks						
Schools governance structures that include a central controlling authority have strict rules and are reluctant to relinquish control at the school level.	• Controlling Authorities reduce funds to schools receiving AQEP grants. • School Committee loyalty is to the central authority not the community, therefore attempts to involve the community in decision making is limited. • Social Protection will be unable to meet outcomes in these schools.	3	2	M [19]	• Briefing of school controlling authorities, as well as School committee members. • Development of different models that accommodate different management structures. • Nonnegotiable mechanisms for community consultation a precondition to funding. • Contractual requirement that school funding levels should be maintained whilst working with AQEP.	AQEP and MoE
The Education system is centralised and local schools have limited decision making power, restricting effectiveness of School Based Management approaches.	• Ability for the Program to influence access and quality at the school level is restricted. • School personnel become frustrated and don't engage fully with the Program. • Component 1 outcomes not achieved.	4	3	M	• Advocacy to MoE management about the scope of schools in decision making. • Strengthening of School Management Association to advocate on behalf of schools, and deliver training to school management. • Training and mentoring on teachers. Students, community, and SMC. • Training SMCs and HTs together. • Research and recommendations to MoE on decentralisation.	AQEP, MoE, School Management Association
Increased MoE 'Free Education' grant has potential to reduce effectiveness of social protection interventions. [20]	• Absorptive capacity of AQEP schools to manage AQEP school grants is reduced. • Gap between urban and rural schools will increase with removal of MoE differential funding mechanism.	3	3	M	• Strengthening training and mentoring of SMCs and community. • Consultations with MoE on support to provide small schools.	AQEP, MoE, SMCs

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[19] Risk level changed to M (Medium) from L (Low) – L was the incorrect level for the corresponding P and I.

[20] Additional impact and mitigation strategy included.

Identified Risk	Impact on Services & Support	P	I	R	Mitigation Strategy	Entity(s)
	• Financial mismanagement and corruption by SMCs may increase. • Different acquittal processes reduces strength of AQEP acquittal process • School are over enrolling students to increase the funding under the per capita grant system. • Component 1 outcomes not achieved.				• Strengthening relationships with District Education Officers to work with schools. • Accelerating mentoring areas e.g. transparency, accountability, independent audits. • Development of FEMIS to strengthen monitoring of acquittal for all schools. • Alerting MoE to over enrolment and encouraging action.	
Improvement to access and quality approach is new to Fiji. [21]	• Low level of support from MoE for expanded role of school management committees. • Program will need an increased level of inputs to implement new approach. • Lack of school experience in developing initiatives to achieve quality education goals. • Lack of Commitment from teachers to improving literacy and numeracy – it is perceived as extra work	3	2	M	• Higher level of support to MoE from core team. • Use of interlinked funding system that encompasses grants to schools coordinated central fund to expand school based activities. • Advocacy for enhanced SBM based on regional experience and international research. • Utilise current MoE initiatives and materials that have yet to be implemented significantly to develop system capacity to promote quality education. • Support from District Offices to encourage teachers, Communities awareness activities to encourage parents to hold schools accountable.	AQEP and MoE
Program creates unrealistic expectations and adverse reactions in non-AQEP supported schools.	• Complaints and adverse publicity. • Unrealistic expectations from community. • Parents move children from non-supported schools to AQEP schools. This will disadvantage the non-supported school further.	3	3	M	• Clear communications strategy implemented. • Ongoing consultations with all stakeholders working in poverty alleviation. • Clustering beneficiary schools to share learning in districts to share AQEP school access and quality interventions. • Create model and resources for successful school support for access and quality interventions that can be used across schools districts in non-AQEP schools.	AQEP, MoE, and SMCs

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[21] Additional impact and mitigation strategy included.

Identified Risk	Impact on Services & Support	P	I	R	Mitigation Strategy	Entity(s)
					• Transparent targeting approach.	
The SBM approach will not guarantee that the poorest students are targeted as decision-making sits at the school level.	• Financial barriers not alleviated amongst the poorest students. • Complaints and adverse publicity. • Component 1 outcomes not being fully achieved.	3	3	M	• Ensuring that options are provided to SMCs outlining options for assisting the poorest students either individually or through a school based approach. • Clear communications strategy implemented. • Ongoing school planning support will be provided to SMCs, teachers and community members by AQEP. • Specific school funding will specifically target access programs.	AQEP and SMCs
Children may not go to school even with financial barriers reduced.	• Students attend school for a short time whilst there is a perceived advantage, e.g. school feeding. But they stop as soon as the advantage is removed. • Social Protection retention and transition outcomes are not met.	3	3	M	• The quality of education in the school is increased through the coordinated fund to expand school activities, for example – programs aimed at increasing school engagement, training and mentoring to increase the capacity of teachers to use CBA and LANA as a diagnostic tool. • Specific interventions in AQEP schools target literacy and numeracy achievement. • Awareness raising occurs in the broader community and the school about the value of education. • Specific interventions designed to target parental and community attitudes about the importance of students attending and engaging in school. • Improved infrastructure will change community, parent and student attitudes.	AQEP and SMCs
Lack of support from schools (in particular Special Schools) and communities for disability inclusion in mainstream schools.	• Delay in implementation of disabilities inclusion strategy. • Teacher and community perceptions that students with disabilities are burdens on classes, schools and communities.	3	3	M	• Community awareness meetings in collaboration with District Education Officers. • Close collaboration with disabilities stakeholders including Ministry of Health and suppliers. • Advocating to Special Schools the importance of disability inclusion in mainstream school. • Directing targeted funding through the AQEP school	AQEP, MoE

Identified Risk	Impact on Services & Support	P	I	R	Mitigation Strategy	Entity(s)
					grant index to support education of students with disabilities.	
Children with disability are enrolled in schools but schools do not yet have capacity or resources to support these children.	• Children experience failure, disappointment and drop out.	4	3	M	• Prioritise training of inclusion coordinators in all AQEP schools. • Employ second Disability Inclusion Coordinator • Prioritise training of SCCs and QLST in disability inclusion. • Training inclusive education master trainings so there are "specialists" in each district.	AQEP, MoE
Children with disability are at greater risk of abuse by being enrolled in school.	• Children with disability experience physical, sexual or emotional abuse.	1	5	M	• Inform school and community of the issues around child protection and special issues related to children with disability including child protection policy information. • Ensure police checks are undertaken for personnel working with children.	AQEP, MoE
Component 2 Risks						
Conflict between School Management Committee and Contractor due to poor communication and understanding of scope of work	• Delays in completion. • Incomplete works. • Component 2 outcomes not fully achieved. • Poor perception of AQEP by the school community. • Unrealistic expectations from the school management.	3	3	M	• Appropriate training provided to SMCs and contracts outlining clear roles and responsibilities. • Provision of mediation and issue resolution by AQEP and MoE. • Routine monitoring and site visits. • Clear and detailed scope to be provided prior to work commencement. • Appropriate guidance and mentoring to be provided to SMCs. • Provision of school planning session in the component 2 operational manual training workshop. • The Engineer Facilitators will follow a participatory planning approach during the formulation of scope of work with the school management. • AQEP will require the school to obtain the renovation work permit from local authorities before the	AQEP, MoE, SMC and Contractors

Identified Risk	Impact on Services & Support	P	I	R	Mitigation Strategy	Entity(s)
					commencement of any works in the school.	
Limited monitoring of schools due to poor access	• Limited monitoring of schools depending on weather conditions. • Safety risk to AQEP Staff. • Increased monitoring cost.	3	3	M	• Provision of Safety equipment including satellite phones. • No travel during bad weather. • Close collaboration with the District Education Offices and Schools. • Enforce remote management system for the non-accessible schools.	AQEP, MoE, and SMC
Building materials in short supply	• Delay in completion of works. • Increase in cost of building materials.	3	3	M	• Routine monitoring and site visits by AQEP's Engineer. • Sharing information between AQEP's sub-contractor regarding building material supplier and availability. • Work closely with AQEP's Engineers and MoE regarding alternative building material solutions.	AQEP, MoE, and AQEP's Sub-Contractors.
Frequency and scale of natural disasters diverts AQEP personnel from planned activities.	• Ongoing AQEP work activities delayed. • AQEP resources stretched.	3	3	M	• Close collaboration with DFAT and MoE in emergency response. • Outsource emergency response work where possible and appropriate. • Contingency planning.	AQEP, DFAT and MoE
Maintenance work undertaken by contractors is of poor quality.	• Defective school structure. • Reflects poorly on the Australian Aid Program.	2	4	M	• Routine monitoring prior to payment of contractors. • Staging payments. • Joint monitoring undertaken by AQEP and MoE. • Minimum Infrastructure standards are part of contractor agreements.	AQEP, MoE
Child is injured or hurt during renovation works.	• Negative perception of the Australian Aid Program. • Delay in completing program works.	2	3	M	• Public liability insurance is a requirement for all contractors. • Child Protection Policy in place. • Child Protection training provided to contractors.	AQEP
Component 3 Risks						
Lack of appropriate management support for implementation of FEMIS.	• Development work stalls and quality of monitoring and evaluation within the MoE suffers.	4	5	H	• Continued advocacy of the need to strengthen the IT unit. • Commitment by MoE to increase IT staffing level	AQEP, MoE

Identified Risk	Impact on Services & Support	P	I	R	Mitigation Strategy	Entity(s)
	• Reporting of utilisation of Free Education Grants potentially adversely affected.				which is vital to continuity and sustainability of FEMIS • Continued advocacy to, and increasing the awareness of, FEMIS to senior managers in MoE and management of districts • Continued AQEP support in terms of management, design and development of FEMIS.	
FEMIS is underutilized as a tool for monitoring, analysis, planning and management.	• Districts predominantly see FEMIS as a vehicle for entering data for the unconnected schools and do not realise its potential as a tool to monitor the performance of schools. • Efficiency gains and improvements in quality of M&E within MoE are not realised.	4	5	H	• Additional training of districts in solving staffing issues and use of FEMIS for school monitoring • The incorporation of more reporting tools for school, district and MoE into FEMIS to increase its utility for managers at each level. • Specific additional training for MoE as soon as point immediately above is addressed • Recognition of districts that are productively utilising FEMIS as a tool for monitoring.	AQEP, MoE
Delay in LANA feedback to the schools is a barrier to the use of appropriate and relevant teaching and learning strategies by teachers.	• Teachers are unable to address the students' specific weaknesses in literacy and numeracy. • Students continue to underachieve in literacy and numeracy.	4	4	H	• Specific training of teachers in LANS in AQEP supported schools. • Ongoing analysis of LANA results to review student performance.	AQEP, MoE
Data in FEMIS is of poor quality.	• FEMIS/LANA/FESA reports are unusable or unreliable. • Confidence in FEMIS deteriorates and FEMIS is not used as a management tool.	3	4	M	• Establishment of a permanent post for a data quality officer. • Repeated training at the school level to mandate the importance of data quality. • Train schools on how to use FEMIS as a monitoring tool.	AQEP, MoE
Lack of familiarity within MoE with evidence based research procedures to measure the impact of activities and interventions	• Schools are unable to identify the impact of their activities and interventions. • Ineffective use of resources at the school and ministry levels.	3	3	M	• Specific training provided for schools on collecting and analysing data. • Specific training provided for schools on measuring the impact of different activities and decision making that is evidence based. • Engaging ministry and district officers in the use of FEMIS as a monitoring tool.	AQEP, MoE

Identified Risk	Impact on Services & Support	P	I	R	Mitigation Strategy	Entity(s)
General Risks						
District Education Officers do not fully understand their roles and responsibilities within AQEP or feel excluded.	• AQEP activities are not monitored correctly leading to poor quality outcomes. • Lack of support from the Divisional and District Education Offices.	3	4	M	• Program will involve the MoE (including all District & Divisional offices) from the initial planning stages of the Program. • MoE Staff accompany AQEP on all school visits. • Provision of training to District and Divisional Education Officers on AQEP procedures that clearly outline the roles and responsibilities of each level of education administration in relation to SBM.	AQEP, MoE
Fraud/Mismanagement of funds by school management committees.	• Schools at risk of losing funding support and therefore students negatively impacted. • Program outcomes not being fully achieved. • Australian Aid Program reputation negatively impacted. • GRM financially at risk. • Negative impact on community support. • Delay in delivery of services. • Negative perception of school following incident.	4	4	H	• Memorandum of agreement in place with each school. • Regular monitoring by AQEP and MoE – checking acquittals. • Clear accountability procedures and support for school committees. • Clear grants implementation guidelines including anti-fraud strategies. • Annual external financial audit to be conducted • Clear separation of powers for all financial and other key approvals. • Undertaking regular fraud training with AQEP staff • Recruitment of District based Bookkeepers to assist with monitoring of school finances.[22] • Clearance with bank for AQEP to have full access on school AQEP bank accounts. • Training for new Head teachers and SMC at the start of each year. • Involvement of MoE district staff in mentoring visits. • Alignment between AQEP and MoE Grant acquittal procedures to reduce confusion in the school	AQEP, MoE and SMCs

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[22] The probability has increased from 2 (unlikely) to 4 (likely), increasing the risk from Medium to High. Additional mitigation strategies outlined.

Identified Risk	Impact on Services & Support	P	I	R	Mitigation Strategy	Entity(s)
					acquittal process.	
Program funds reduced part way through Financial Year.	• Work Plan compromised and activities reduced. • Program outcomes not being fully achieved.	4	4	H	• Regular communication with DFAT.	DFAT, AQEP, GRM
Delays due to political tensions.	• Delays in Program implementation. • Staff safety put at risk. • International staff evacuated.	3	4	M	• Maintain good relationship with MoE. • Coordinate safety evacuation plans with Australian High Commission. • AQEP Safety and Security procedures regularly reviewed.	AQEP, GRM
SMC/MoE/AQEP staff changes and/or turnovers lead to lack of continuity.	• Pressure on Program team to address systemic issues rather than concentrate on key Program outcomes. • Ongoing weakening of education leadership at the school levels that cannot be addressed through MoE and AQEP systems.	4	3	M	• Program will provide regular training on AQEP procedures to ensure current knowledge of the Program and activities. • Closer engagement with MoE senior staff.	AQEP
Confidential data on students is accessed by unauthorised persons.	• Delay in Program outcomes due to possible loss of data. • Breach of confidentiality. • Loss of trust from schools, communities and MoE.	3	4	M	• Training to be provided to MoE and SMCs on the proper handling of data. • Secure storage devices to be used by AQEP. • Compliance with Child Protection Policy. • FEMIS security of data.	AQEP, MoE and SMCs
AQEP used as an emergency response facility.	• Delays to AQEP achieving Program objectives. • Pressure on team to keep work plan on track.	4	4	H	• Regular communication with DFAT. • Clear Emergency Response Approach. • Inclusion of AQEP in the Emergency Education Cluster.	DFAT

| Identified Risk	Impact on Services & Support	P	I	R	Mitigation Strategy	Entity(s)
Progress reporting not adequately capturing outcomes[23]	• DFAT and MoE not able to gauge satisfactorily whether AQEP is on target to meet its objectives	3	4	M	• M& E Plan developed with very clear focus on outcomes and comprehensive evaluation studies • Baseline report prepared with baseline measurements for AQEP high level outcomes • Progress reporting restructured to give greater attention to outcomes and inhibiting/enabling factors within the AQEP delivery context • Theory of Change /Program logic in process of development	AQEP
Conflict of interest.	• Negative perception towards the Program. • Loss of trust and support from the community and other stakeholders.	2	3	M	• Clear conflict of interest policy. • Continuous guidance and direction provided to staff prior to field visits.	AQEP

NB: Cells shaded with pale green represent amended or additional risks added from the previous version of this matrix dated 15 May 2014.

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[23] New risk identified.

ANNEX 6
AQEP Organisational Chart
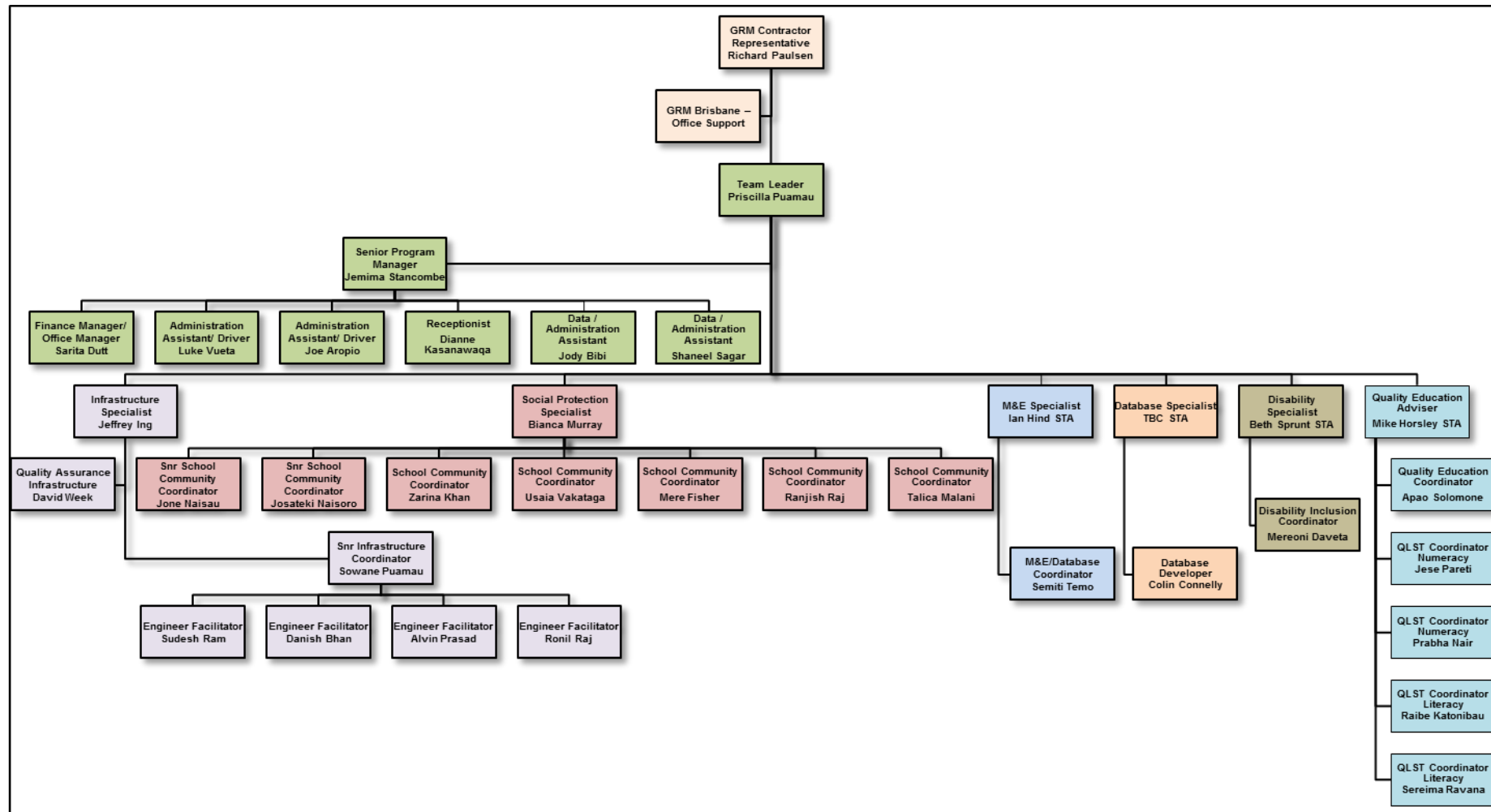
NOTES:
The M&E/Database Coordinator and Disability Inclusion Coordinator reports to STA Specialists on technical matters; however, they report to the Team Leader on a day-to-day basis from a management perspective.
QLST – Quality Learning Support Team