

Final Report

Kiribati Education Improvement Program (KEIP) Independent Evaluation 2018

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2. LIST OF ACRONYMS

CDRC	Curriculum Development and Resource Centre
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia)
DOP	Divisional Operational Plan (Ministry of Education)
DRR	disaster risk reduction
EAU	Examinations and Assessment Unit
ECCE	Early childhood care and education
EGMA	Early Grade Mathematics Assessment
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
EMIS	Education Management Information System
EOPO	End of Program Outcome
EPIK	Education Partners in Kiribati
EQAP	Education Quality and Assessment Program (of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community)
ESPPA	Education Strategic Planning and Policy Adviser
ESSP	Education Sector Strategic Plan
FMU	Facilities Management Unit
GEDSI	Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion
GoK	Government of Kiribati
IEC	Island Education Coordinator
IMO	Intermediate Outcome
JSS	junior secondary schools
KEIP	Kiribati Education Improvement Program
KEF	Kiribati Education Facility
KIT	Kiribati Institute of Technology
KSCCSN	Kiribati School and Centre for Children with Special Needs
KEMIS	Kiribati Education Management Information System
KTC	Kiribati Teachers College
KV20	Kiribati 20-Year Vision 2016-2036
KWinS	Kiribati Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) in Schools Program
LLL	Leading, Learning, Instructional Leadership
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MISE	Ministry of Sustainable Infrastructure and Energy
MoE	Ministry of Education
PacTAM	Pacific Technical Assistance Mechanism
PILNA	Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment
PPD	Policy, Planning and Development
SIU	School Improvement Unit
SIP	School Improvement Plan
SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
SSS	senior secondary school
STAKI	Standardised Test of Achievement in Kiribati
TA	Technical Advisers
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
TSIMU	Technology Support and Information Management Unit
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WASH	water, sanitation and hygiene

3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The **Kiribati Education Improvement Program (KEIP)** is the vehicle through which Australia supports the Kiribati Ministry of Education (MoE) to implement its Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP). KEIP seeks to ensure all I-Kiribati children complete at least nine years of schooling and acquire the foundational skills to build happy, healthy, fulfilling and productive lives. It focuses on strengthening sectoral governance, leadership and management; improving all children's access to high-quality education; and driving improvements in student learning (particularly in numeracy and literacy). Implemented by a managing contractor in three phases since 2011, KEIP is valued at approximately \$70 million and scheduled to conclude in December 2019.

Purpose, scope and methodology

This independent evaluation – commissioned by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and the MoE – assesses whether KEIP is on track to achieving and securing its goals. The key evaluation questions sought to describe achievements and progress, assess whether implementation activities and approaches offered the best chance of the program's ambitions being met and sustained, and consider implications for future interventions in the Kiribati education sector (over and beyond the balance of KEIP Phase III).

While the scope of the evaluation was limited to KEIP Phase II and Phase III, it included a brief assessment of the effectiveness of other Australian investments in support of education reform in Kiribati. The evaluation team drew on both qualitative and quantitative methods, combining document reviews, data analyses, interviews, focus group discussions and site visits. The team visited seven primary schools on South Tarawa; four primary schools and the junior secondary school on Abaiang; and three primary schools, a junior secondary school, a senior high school and a pre-school on Buitaritari.

To what extent are KEIP's end-of-program outcomes on-track to being achieved?

Progress toward end of program outcomes is mixed, with learning outcomes not yet showing any consistent upward trends and MoE management reforms at various stages of implementation and institutionalisation. Successes achieved by KEIP include improved harmonisation between MoE planning, the ESSP and education partners in Kiribati (EPiK) development funds through the divisional operational plans (DOP) process; strong MoE leadership on agreed priority areas; close and collaborative relationships between technical advisers (TA) and MoE counterparts; the iterative and adaptive approach of KEIP; and continuous efforts to equitably distribute KEIP support.

Nevertheless, certain challenges constrain success. These include limited access to timely and accurate sectoral data and inconclusive Standardised Test of Achievement in Kiribati (STAKi) results, which are affecting MoE's ability to undertake evidence-based decision making and resource planning (some complementary KEIP reporting has, however, been useful for these purposes). In addition, distance and logistical issues continue to be burdensome for the sector, as do unresolved policy matters (including arrangements for the maintenance and rehabilitation of schools).

Lessons learned from KEIP include the value of a partnership approach to planning, decision making, and implementation; there is a willingness by MoE (and financial capacity) to take on funding of KEIP interventions over time; the need for constant evolution and adaption in the rehabilitation of facilities; and the devolution of in-service training back to schools has reduced costs and provided a more effective and efficient approach to professional development.

To what extent have other Australian-funded interventions supported the achievement of KEIP outcomes?

Other Australian support has included deploying senior education management specialists (under a number of titles); financing the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation Institute for Statistics (UIS) to support the ministry improve data collection and management; placing long-term volunteers in the MoE; awarding Australian Awards Scholarships to teachers and ministry personnel; and providing core funding to the Kiribati School and Centre for Children with Special Needs (KCSSN). During the early parts of KEIP Phase II, Australia also financed the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and UNESCO to participate in KEIP.

The Education Strategic Planning and Policy adviser (ESPPA) has played a key role in contributing to End of Program Outcome (EOPO) 2 by supporting MoE to improve budgeting and planning, the development of a standardised approach to policy development, the review of the National Teacher Service Standards Framework, and the development of the National Executive Leadership Standards Framework. MoE is keen to ensure gains are not lost, and support for the ministry's executive continues under new management arrangements for this position.

SPC and UIS support to the Technology Support and Information Management Unit has improved school census collection and validation through the use of tablets by Island Education Coordinators (IECs) but a lack of technical support in country, or a common long term vision between development partners and MoE, has impeded progress toward other recommended activities related to the Data Quality Assessment Framework¹ that sought to improve data management and inform MoE decision-making (related to EOPO 2).

How well have financial and non-financial resources been used to achieve KEIP's outcomes?

KEIP activities and outputs have been delivered on time and within budget, and distributed equitably, and the Kiribati Education Facility (KEF) has worked closely with divisional heads to integrate KEIP planning and budgeting processes with those used to develop DOPs. The managing contractor has ensured a strong focus on budgeting, planning and reporting, and interventions have been routinely assessed to establish whether they are adding value. An assessment of expenditure found that most activities have been appropriately resourced, however there are activities that will need to continue in the second half of KEIP that have spent their allocation. At the time of the evaluation, there was a perception within the MoE that budgeting and planning processes were not as transparent as they could be, and this perception needs to be urgently addressed.

While KEIP initiatives have contributed to making the system more efficient, both at the systems level, for example through the DOP system, and at the school level, through the Leading, Learning, Instructional Leadership (LLL) process, there have been unanticipated events. These have included confusion in all schools visited about the status of KEIP-supported activities, where schools distinguished between responsibilities related to what they see as their core mandate and responsibilities that come with activities facilitated by KEIP. This is despite the ministry informing schools that such activities were part of their core mandate, and that their content and purpose was checked by IECs and assistant lecturers and endorsed by the ministry prior to delivery. It is too early to tell whether the confusion we noted was a result of schools taking time to adjust to a new initiative, or whether it was symptomatic of a deeper implementation issue.

More than half of activity costs in both KEIP Phase II (58 per cent of the budget for program activity costs) and KEIP Phase III (also 58 per cent of program activity costs) have been directed toward infrastructure. Future design decisions will need to consider whether this is sensible, especially without clear policies and arrangements for maintenance. More value may be created by investing in other activities that are more likely to affect learning outcomes.

To what extent are KEIP and the Ministry of Education securing the sustainability of progress made?

The evaluation team found that the Government of Kiribati has shown a strong commitment to creating a strong policy environment for KEIP. It has demonstrated its commitment further through increasing recurrent budget allocations, absorbing successful KEIP-initiated interventions, particularly in key positions (for example, IECs), and supporting ambitious reforms in the Kiribati Teachers College (KTC), which has significant budget implications for the MoE. Although the MoE has steadily increased its recurrent budget allocation over recent years, much of this increase has been a result of consumer price inflation, and with high population growth there is a need for additional resources to accommodate more students and to support ongoing education sector reform.

Site visits to schools revealed high levels of community engagement. KEIP Phase II contributed to this engagement through its 'education is everyone's business' initiatives (such as radio advocacy campaigns, community consultations and support for the MoE's Community Consultation Team). This high level of community engagement provides an opportunity for a more sustainable local model for improving schools on outer islands. The high levels of community engagement also offer an opportunity to help improve learning outcomes (by, for example, tracking school performance and holding schools to account, supporting the implementation of the language policy, and collaborating to improve the attitudes and behaviour of learners). Site visits also found good monitoring of behaviour change of teachers in classrooms (as a result of LLL promoting the use of classroom observations). It is too early to tell, however, the extent to which changes in pedagogy will be sustained. Additionally, while the new curriculum has been adopted, this process has not yet been fully supported by necessary changes in the MoE to ensure ongoing curriculum professional development, curriculum renewal and replacement of materials that have disappeared from schools.

Are cross-cutting issues such as gender, disability inclusion and the environment being adequately addressed?

KEIP has made a concerted effort to incorporate cross-cutting issues into the design and implementation of activities, guided by a Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion Strategy. Approaches to supporting children with disabilities met with some success but broader traction with regard to inclusive education across all schools and MoE appears

¹ *A Framework for Assessing the Quality of Education Statistics*. World Bank Development Data Group and UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2004.

nascent. Gender stereotyping, climate change and disaster risk reduction (DRR) have been considered in the revised National Curriculum and Assessment Framework and ongoing curriculum roll out. Recent reporting² shows high levels of gender-based violence and disturbing attitudes toward girls and women. This justifies KEIP's ongoing focus on incorporating positive discipline, respectful relationships and visionary messaging about girls into the curriculum and as part of teacher professional development. DRR principles and climate change have strongly influenced the school rehabilitation program, promoting adaptations to design and collaboration with the Ministry of Sustainable Infrastructure and Energy (MISE).

Recommendations

In summary, KEIP has made good progress overall toward achieving its expected outputs, and the performance of the program has been both effective and efficient. The evaluation team did however identify issues worthy of further attention which they believe need to be addressed in the remaining period of KEIP III and/or considered during the design of the next phase of KEIP. These issues are linked to a set of fourteen recommendations including ensuring a better alignment between KEIP and the ESSP, promoting a stronger partnership between the MoE and KEIP, addressing the data challenges in the sector, rethinking the scope and pace of reform in the sector, reflecting further on current policy implementation to enhance penetration of policies, and continuing to address gender equity challenges in the sector.

² Ending Violence Against Women and Girls: Pacific Regional Scan, A. Bishop, S. Finucane, M. Finucane (2002)
National Approach to Eliminating Sexual and Gender Based Violence In Kiribati Policy and Strategic Action Plan 2011-2021
Kiribati Family Health and Support Study, Ministry of Internal and Social Affairs, Secretariat of the Pacific Community, Noumea, New Caledonia, 2010, Menstrual Health Hygiene Report: Breaking down barriers, UNICEF, 2018.

4. INTRODUCTION

Kiribati Education Improvement Program (KEIP)

Improved basic education is a priority of the Kiribati-Australia Partnership for Development and the Aid Investment Plan Kiribati: 2015-16 to 2018-19. The Government of Kiribati and the Government of Australia are committed to improving the quality of basic education through the Kiribati Education Improvement Program (KEIP).

KEIP is the vehicle through which Australia supports the Kiribati Ministry of Education (MoE) to implement its Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP). The ESSP reflects the MoE's commitment to Sustainable Development Goal 4 and the Kiribati Development Plan. KEIP focuses on improving the basic education subsector of the ESSP, with a focus on access to quality education and improved learning outcomes.

KEIP is a nine-year program (2011-2019) that operates at various levels (MoE, school leaders, teachers, community) to support systemic change. KEIP is being delivered over three phases:

- Phase I (Jan 2011-Feb 2013, \$13 million): focused on building the enabling environment/policies for subsequent phases;
- Phase II (Mar 2013-Mar 2016, \$25 million including a \$2.2 million contribution from New Zealand): focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning in years 1-4.
- Phase III (Apr 2016-Dec 2019, \$32 million): focuses on consolidating previous reforms and extending reforms to upper primary school (years 5-6) and into junior secondary schools (years 7-9).

The goal of KEIP Phase III is for young I-Kiribati to finish basic education with the knowledge and skills to contribute to a productive and resilient Kiribati community by pursuing two end of program outcomes (EOPO):

- EOPO 1: Improved learning outcomes in basic education (years P-9) for I-Kiribati girls and boys, including children with disabilities; and
- EOPO 2: MoE effectively plans, resources and manages sector priorities.

Key interventions and activities under KEIP Phase II included supporting curriculum development and implementation, strengthening the capabilities of teachers (content, pedagogic and language), and improving school infrastructure (in the outer islands and South Tarawa). Phase II also provided assistance to enhance school-community partnerships, and strengthen MoE capacity to plan, monitor and improve subsector performance. Meanwhile, key interventions under KEIP Phase III include curriculum reform and assessment; teacher professional development; school leadership; inclusive education; school infrastructure rehabilitation (South Tarawa only); and strengthening MoE institutional capacity.

Since Phase II, Australia has provided its financial support to KEIP through the Kiribati Education Facility (KEF). The KEF is based in the MoE and managed by a managing contractor. Through the KEF, the managing contractor mobilises and manages locally engaged staff and international TA to support MoE with the implementation of the planned activities under each component of the KEIP.

Since the latter half of KEIP Phase II, Australia has also supported the placement of four senior education management advisers in MoE under the Pacific Technical Assistance Mechanism (PacTAM). The most recent of these advisers was known as the education strategic planning and policy adviser (ESPPA). He stepped down in December 2017 and the position has been vacant since this time. The role of these education advisers has been to work directly with MoE executives to implement and manage the ESSP 2016-2019. The key focus includes strengthening capacity in policy planning and development across all subsectors of the education system in Kiribati, sector performance management and development partner coordination. The work conducted by the education management advisers complements and supports the KEF work in the basic education subsector of the ESSP.

Australia has also provided funding to UNESCO and UNICEF for specific activities as part of curriculum and teacher professional development under KEIP Phase I. It has also supported the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) through regional funding in KEIP Phase II and III to improve data collection, quality and availability in the Kiribati Education Management Information System (KEMIS) in the MoE.

The scope and nature of KEIP support has been ambitious considering the comprehensive reform agenda, absorptive capacity within MoE, logistical constraints and allocated timeframe. This has been demonstrated by the requested extensions to KEIP Phase I (14 months) and Phase II (3 months). Emerging challenges include stagnating results in the Standardised Test of Achievement in Kiribati (STAKi), limited capacity for school maintenance in Kiribati Government systems; and the challenges faced by the Kiribati Teachers College (KTC) to effectively support professional development of in-service teachers in line with national requirements (such as those set out in the National Language Policy, Inclusive Education Policy, and National Curriculum and Assessment Framework). As KEIP Phase III progresses to junior secondary schools (JSS), increasing attention is being focused on ensuring appropriate learning pathways for students and clarifying the role of faith-based schools. KEIP is trialling tablet use in year 4 classrooms to provide evidence about the extent to which tablets are an effective teaching and learning tool (for both teachers and students).³

Evaluation Purpose

The main purpose of the proposed evaluation is to assess overall program performance toward achieving planned program outcomes. The findings of the evaluation will inform the design of further Australian aid investment in the education sector and improvements to program delivery through the remainder of KEIP Phase III. Evaluation findings will be presented at the biannual Education Partners in Kiribati (EPiK) forum and published on the DFAT website.

Specifically, the terms of reference specified that the evaluation should address the following five key questions:

- 1 To what extent are the KEIP end of program outcomes (with reference to those listed in the Phase II and III Investment Design, Program Logic, and M&E framework) on-track to being achieved?
- 2 To what extent have other Australian-funded interventions supported the achievement of KEIP outcomes?
- 3 How well have financial and non-financial resources been used to achieve KEIP's outcomes?
- 4 To what extent are KEIP and MoE securing the sustainability of progress made?
- 5 Are cross-cutting issues such as gender, disability inclusion and environment issues being adequately addressed?

Methodology

The evaluation followed the approach outlined in the evaluation plan (submitted 29 June 2018). The evaluation used a mixed methods approach, involving qualitative evaluation methodology and quantitative data. For a full list of the documents reviewed see Annex 2, and for a full list of people interviewed see Annex 3.

In the evaluation plan, the team proposed visiting about 12 to 13 schools, of which 2-3 would be JSS. In the end, the team visited:

- 7 primary schools on South Tarawa (including KSCCSN)
- 4 primary schools and the JSS on Abaiang
- 3 primary schools, a JSS, a senior secondary school (SSS), and a preschool on Buitaritari.

Criteria used to select schools included whether it was logistically feasible and effective to visit the school, that the selected school fell into the different bands used by the MoE to rank schools based on STAKi assessments; that the sample reflected a mix of different size schools; and that the schools were recipients of a range of KEIP activities.

Limitations and Constraints

In the evaluation plan, the evaluation team provided an indicative workplan, which it followed. Nevertheless, the team faced several constraints that should be considered when reading the report. First, because of complex logistical arrangements and the limited time available for the in-country visit, we had to follow a very tight schedule, which did not allow for follow-up interviews. It also meant that certain areas for analysis had to be prioritised at the expense of others. Second, and linked to the first point, limited flights in and out of Kiribati (including domestic connections) meant time spent on Buitaritari was shorter than planned.

³ This will be covered in another independent evaluation and outside the terms of reference of this evaluation.

Third, although the team managed to visit more schools than planned, our sample is still relatively small. We have triangulated data as much as possible, but some of our findings may not always be truly representative of the majority. Fourth, wherever possible we conducted interviews face-to-face, but in the case of some of the TA this was not possible. We did, however, mitigate this constraint by conducting interviews remotely or via email. Finally, some development partners did not respond to requests for interviews, and therefore the team were not able to canvas their views on either the sector and/or KEIP.

5. FINDINGS

In this section of the report we respond to the evaluation questions individually to ensure that the report answers all the questions that the terms of reference posed. Where applicable, the evaluation report has summarised progress against the EOPOs by highlighting significant outputs at the component level, referencing the relevant immediate outcomes (IMOs). However, for the sake of brevity (the terms of reference specify that the 'the report should be no more than 30 pages, plus annexes') progress per component (with IMOs referenced) is provided in Annex 4. Progress is based on available evidence and KEIP reporting, triangulated with data collected by the evaluation team from interviews and focus group discussions with stakeholders.

Effectiveness

1. To what extent are the KEIP end of program outcomes on-track to being achieved?

Summary response to the evaluation question:

Progress toward EOPOs is mixed, with learning outcomes not yet showing any consistent upward trends and MoE management reforms at various stages of implementation and institutionalisation. Successes achieved by KEIP include improved harmonisation of MoE planning, the ESSP and EPiK development partner funds through the divisional operational plans (DOPs) process; strong MoE leadership on agreed priority areas; close and collaborative relationships between TA and MoE counterparts; the iterative and adaptive approach of KEIP; and continuous efforts to equitably distribute KEIP support.

Nevertheless, certain challenges constrain success. These include limited access to timely and accurate sectoral data and inconclusive STAKi results, which are affecting MoE's ability to undertake evidence-based decision making and resource planning (some complementary KEIP reporting has, however, been useful for these purposes). Further, distance and logistical issues continue to be burdensome for the sector, as do unresolved policy matters (including arrangements for the maintenance and rehabilitation of schools).

Lessons learned from KEIP include the value of a partnership approach to planning, decision-making, and implementation; there is a willingness by MoE (and financial capacity) to take on funding of KEIP interventions over time; the need for constant evolution and adaption in the rehabilitation of facilities; and the devolution of in-service training back to schools has reduced costs and provides a more effective and efficient approach to professional development.

a. To what extent does valid and reliable data exist to track progress of KEIP, and if so what does the data tell us about the progress being made by KEIP?

The MoE Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) systems alone are insufficient to report on the progress of KEIP. KEIP's implementation progress is tracked against the KEIP Phase III Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (currently being reviewed by KEF) and feeds into six-monthly KEIP progress reporting to DFAT, MoE senior management and the EPiK Forum. KEIP was designed before the ESSP priorities areas were finalised, so uses different terminology (for example, intermediate outcomes (IMOs)) to that of the ESSP. The 2018 KEIP Annual Plan also included targets that were reported alongside DFAT indicators and the KEIP IMOs in the June 2018 Progress Report. Other reporting on KEIP that complements MoE data includes KEF research, and other donor/projects' assessments or research reports, such as the following:

- *English Language Proficiency, and Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) Development of Kiribati Teachers College (KTC) Staff, In-Service and Pre-Service Teachers: Review and Recommendations (2016)*
- *School Maintenance Report (2018)*
- *Review of the Implementation of the Year 1 to 6 Curriculum: Implications for Improving Literacy*
- *A Cross-Cutting Issue: Update on Progress Toward Gender Equality (Internal) (2018)*

KEIP progress reporting is predominately at the output level, with reporting against EOPOs where data exists (for example, for learning outcomes, STAKi and other assessments (Pacific Island Literacy and Numeracy Assessment, Early Grade Reading Assessment, Early Grade Mathematics Assessment are used). Progress reporting since inception shows that all planned KEIP activities are in progress or completed (the majority of planned KEIP activities have been delivered, or are on schedule

to be completed). A few activities have been delayed, several of which relate to the sudden and unexpected departure of the ESPPA in 2017. These include delays in coaching of the executive management in planning, implementation and regular reporting on progress against the ESSP. Other KEIP activities delayed at the time of the mission had valid explanations and included:

- Implementation of the priority recommendations from the *Review of the Implementation of the Year 1 to 6 Curriculum: Implications for Improving Literacy* to allow time for MoE to consider findings and establish action plans;
- A survey of reporting to assess whether information was meeting MoE demands has been delayed until December, to capture recent reporting;
- A review of KTC policies with a gender and inclusion lens, because of executive absences; and
- KTC Education Quality and Assessment Program (EQAP) accreditation, which has been delayed because of MoE internal discussions.

The M&E Framework for KEIP has undergone several iterations since the commencement of Phase III, currently the EOPOs are as follows:

- EOPO 1: Improved learning outcomes in basic education (years P–9) for i-Kiribati girls and boys, including children with disabilities
- EOPO 2: MoE effectively plans, resources and manages sector priorities.

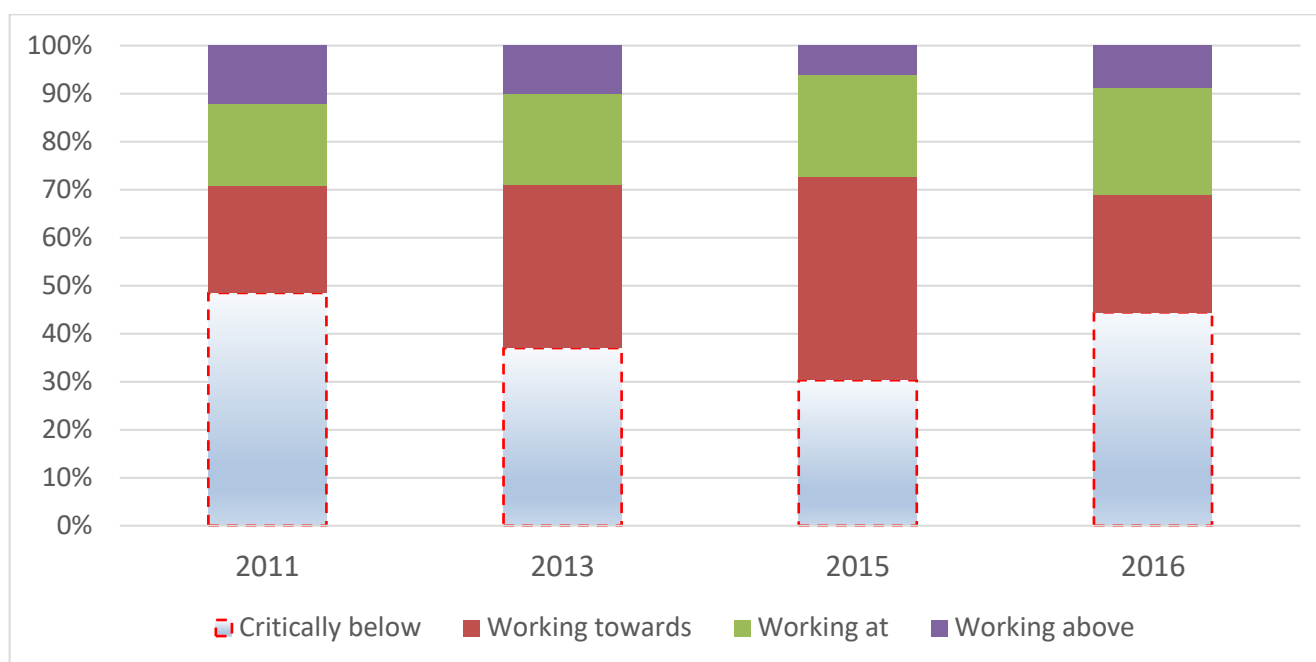
Progress toward EOPOs

Progress toward EOPO 1 can be assessed by the trend in learning outcomes since 2013, when the new curriculum was introduced in years 1 and 2. An analysis of longer term STAKi trends since 2013 shows little change in the number of students achieving the expected standards in numeracy and literacy. While not measuring the same cohort, the KEIP Phase III Design⁴ anticipated the 2017 STAKi results for year 4 (the cohort who entered year 1 in 2014) would demonstrate whether KEIP reforms were improving student learning outcomes. The 2017 results show the proportion of students achieving expected standards for te-Kiribati declined from 59 per cent in 2013 to 44 per cent. Meanwhile, the proportion of students meeting numeracy standards improved from 27 per cent in 2013 to 64 per cent in 2017. There were some fluctuations in numeracy results between 2013 and 2017, and English was not measured in year 4 in 2017. While a baseline survey for year 7 performance was conducted in 2016, the new year 7 curriculum was only introduced in 2018, so there is no data available to assess its effectiveness or changes in learning outcomes.

In 2017, girls continued to outperform boys in all STAKi tests (as well as in JSS and SSS certificates). Boys' performance compared to girls has declined in five out of the eight tests and increased in just one. The 2017 STAKi National Report notes that 'girls outperform boys significantly in all STAKi tests, as they have done in all past tests' (2018: 6). At all years, the gap between boys and girls has largely remained the same for those working at or above the expected level, but where there has been a decline in performance, this can be largely attributed to a decline in performance of boys. Conversely, where improvements have occurred, this has typically been due to an improvement by girls (except year 8, where the improvement in overall numeracy results can be largely attributed to an improved performance by boys).

⁴ <https://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Documents/kiribati-education-improvement-program-phase3-design-doc.pdf> (Accessed September 2018)

Figure 1: Year 4 English Outcomes (Source: STAKi data)



Notably, STAKi results from 2015 are better than all other years (including the 2016 results) in all areas of literacy assessment (both te-Kiribati and English). In the year of implementation of the new curriculum (such as year 4 curriculum in 2015) teachers are provided with an intensive training delivering the new curriculum. The 2018 KEIP *Review of the Implementation of the Year 1 to 6 Curriculum: Implications for Improving Literacy* suggests that this intensive training may positively influence the teaching and learning outcomes in the first year of the new curriculum but decline in later years. Decline in achievement thereafter could be linked to the movement of teachers to other year levels, for which they haven't received curriculum training or loss/deterioration of materials.

Other analysis from the 2018 KEIP Review of the Implementation of the Year 1 to 6 Curriculum: Implications for Improving Literacy (See) also shows that students introduced to literacy through the new curriculum (first language in early years and text based English in year 4) are developing English literacy skills at a faster rate and are performing better than students who began their school years through the bilingual instruction model (almost 60 per cent working toward, at or above expected level in 2016 in their first year of English instruction compared to about 50 per cent in 2011 after four years of English instruction).

A first step in determining whether learning outcomes have improved for children with disabilities requires students to be identified using a reliable methodology.⁵ KEIP has supported a trial training of teachers in the six Model Inclusion Schools in South Tarawa⁶ using the Washington Group questions.⁷ As yet, however, there is no consistent method being used to identify children with disabilities across schools in Kiribati.

Kiribati Education Management Information System (KEMIS) data lacks unique student identifiers, and this impedes the ability of MoE to disaggregate other data by disability. The small number of children reported in the latest *Digest of Education Statistics* (Draft, 2016) with a disability is likely a combination of under-reporting⁸ and barriers to children with a disability attending school.⁹ While STAKi reports at the student level, there is no process for STAKi data to be

⁵ <http://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/about/> (Accessed September 2018)

⁶ A two-page document with a description and a check list of characteristics for the six disability groups recognised by the MoE has been compiled and distributed to the six Model Inclusion Schools in South Tarawa. Training has been delivered to all six schools on how to use this resource to help more accurately identify students with a disability in these schools for MoE census data collection. If this proves to be successful, this will be rolled out throughout Kiribati with the resource attached to the census document and school leaders and IECs trained in use of the document.

⁷ Questions for Children, see <http://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/washington-group-question-sets/child-disability/>

⁸ The 2016 Digest states that 'instances of disability are likely to be under-reported due to cultural and enumerator training factors'.

⁹ Data relating to participation of children with a disability is not yet available in Kiribati. However, global estimates suggest about 10 per cent of children with disabilities do not attend school. See UN estimations of the participation in schooling of

disaggregated for children with a disability. For these reasons, the team are unable to assess whether learning outcomes for children with a disability have improved. However, with KEIP support, one student with a disability who was mainstreamed into SSS in 2017 successfully passed his (adjusted) examination. Results from other mainstreamed students are not available. It may be possible to examine school-based results but this would require a more complex assessment outside the scope of this evaluation.

With respect to EOPO 2 ('MoE effectively plans, resources and manages sector priorities'), KEIP does not yet provide outcome level data that would allow the measurement of progress toward this outcome (it does, however, report output level activity under EOPO 2 (See Annex 4). We explore this issue in more detail in part b) below, and also with regard to sustainability later in the report. In doing so, we note that through the divisional operational plans (DOP) process referred to above, the MoE has become more effective in planning and resourcing of these plans. Moreover, qualitative evidence suggest reporting against these plans has supported MoE to strengthen its management capacity. It has also demonstrated strong leadership in managing agreed priorities in the sector.

b. What factors have contributed to successes and what are the lessons learned?

Several factors have contributed to the successes of KEIP, where success is defined as positive behaviour and MoE systemic change likely to contribute to the outcomes of KEIP.

For KEIP support to be effective, it has been necessary to **align closely with the priority areas in the ESSP**. Alignment with the ESSP has become the filter for assessing what development partner support will be taken on board. Although KEIP was developed before the finalisation of the ESSP and uses different language to describe outcome areas, KEIP activities are well placed to support the ESSP. To demonstrate its alignment, KEIP has done some mapping to ensure MoE can understand how KEIP supports the implementation of the ESSP. The inclusion of some KEIP activity budgets in the DOPs has also been welcomed by MoE. By actively involving divisional heads in the KEIP annual planning process and ensuring KEIP resource allocations are included in DOPs, KEF has ensured KEIP planning and budgeting has been inclusive and transparent. That said, opportunities to ensure senior management (secretary, deputy secretary and directors) are directly and actively engaged in this process should continue to be pursued. For the next phase of KEIP support, it will be essential to line up contractual reporting with the ESSP priority areas to demonstrate clear alignment and avoid parallel monitoring and reporting systems.

Where there has been **strong MoE leadership on agreed priorities** there has been evidence of systemic and behavioural change. Although the ESSP provides an overarching framework, it remains quite high level and there is still a need to negotiate which activities should be supported, are likely to have the greatest impact on learning outcomes and/or improve MoE management. The development of the ESSP and the progressive introduction of the DOPs since 2016 (led by the deputy secretary and supported by the PacTAM education strategic planning and policy adviser and more recently KEF technical assistance) has resulted in improvements to the way MoE plans and budgets. With ongoing technical assistance from KEF, the introduction of the DOPs has been successful in aligning MoE support to the ESSP and gradually changing how MoE plans and budgets for its activities. The successful implementation of STAKi is another example where strong commitment by MoE has resulted in MoE funding these annual assessments with a view to informing MoE policy and planning. From our discussions, in many cases, MoE officials perceive the ability to lead a process that relates to their own priorities is much more likely to support transformational, systemic change.

Close and collaborative relationships between TA and their MoE counterparts, involving mutual respect, regular consultation and focus on transfer of knowledge, has supported systems reform. Counterparts interviewed said they were much more willing to change systems and processes if they fully understood the rationale and could see the benefits from change. MoE noted that when TA with the relevant experience and soft skills had been engaged for extended inputs, that is, over several years, there was generally more chance of success. In these cases, TA were able to gain a better understanding of the political and cultural landscape, including the power dynamics and incentives for change within MoE. Similarly, TA reported that when coupled with long-serving, reform minded counterparts, the ability to get traction and demonstrate results was easier and should be a consideration of how requests for technical assistance are prioritised. MoE officers did, however, caution that TA need to be receptive to the skill transfer needs of counterparts and balance time allocated to capacity development with contractual obligations. TA highlighted the benefits of being co-located in MoE offices and alongside counterparts, which fostered good relationships and information sharing. MoE officers said that the ability to introduce wholesale changes to training at KTC was an example of good consultation

children with disabilities UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Some Facts about Persons with Disabilities - <http://www.un.org/disabilities/convention/facts.shtml> UNESCO. 2007. EFA global monitoring report: EFA. Strong foundations: Early childhood care and education. Paris: UNESCO. http://www.unesco.org/education/GMR/2007/Full_report.pdf.

between TA and KTC staff, which they said was characterised by open communication on plans and progress backed by a strong investment in using evidence to support decision-making. The mutual respect evident between the KTC TA and KTC leadership also facilitated an openness to discussing risks, challenges and weaknesses.

KEIP has adopted an iterative and adaptive model, which has enabled interventions and approaches to be trialled, learned from and adapted to suit context and maximise results. Approaches to professional development are being continuously refined based on evidence, with regular feedback sought from participants. Over the past 12 months, there has also been an increased focus on assessing the value for money of approaches and monitoring behaviour changes among teachers as a result of professional development training. Incorporation of these findings has the potential to ensure KEIP can maximise resources and achieve systemic change.

Lessons Learned

- A partnership approach to planning, decision-making and implementation in line with capacity constraints promotes MoE buy-in and uptake of reforms. Where MoE officials have felt part of the decision-making process in relation to KEIP support, there has been strong ownership of activities and more potential for uptake of reforms. Examples provided to the team included where TA presented the pros and cons of several options, including the opportunity costs, and left the decision-making up to MoE. KEF TA at the operational level have noted the need to adjust their plans and expectations around what is needed to reflect capacity constraints and other competing priorities of MoE officials.
- Where there is strong alignment of KEIP support with MoE priorities and evidence to support the success of KEIP interventions, through a process of negotiation, MoE has committed to system changes, including taking on the funding of KEIP interventions over time. There were several examples where originally KEIP-funded interventions demonstrated their value, including those related to new positions and operating costs, and were gradually budgeted and embedded within MoE systems (for example, Island Education Coordinators (IECs) or internet costs). This demonstrates officials' strong commitment to the MoE reform agenda, particularly given the tight fiscal environment and often considerable paperwork involved in getting proposals on budget.
- Infrastructure must continuously evolve based on lessons learned. Given the unique environment of Kiribati, it has been crucial for the KEF and the Facilities Management Unit (FMU) to continuously monitor and reflect on opportunities to improve design and approaches to construction. This has been evidenced by buildings becoming more robust and better suited to the Kiribati context, along with an approach that causes minimal disruption to school time (for example, through locally constructed kits).
- Given the wide geographic spread of teachers around the country, hosting in-service training in Tarawa for all teachers in support of the new curriculum roll out has been neither cost effective nor sustainable. As a result, new approaches – based on contemporary best practice for teacher professional development – are being trialled, including cascade training and the placement of KTC associate lecturers on large islands to support professional development and provide on-going mentoring and coaching to teachers in the field. Strong monitoring and follow up has been put in place to ensure trainings are not diluted through this model.

c. **Have outcomes been achieved equitably across the school system, particularly geographically?**

The importance of resources being shared equitably across the school system resonates culturally among I-Kiribati and is echoed in the government's development plan *Kiribati 20-Year Vision 2016-2036* (locally known as KV20).

The latest STAKi results¹⁰ show that girls continue to out-perform boys significantly in all STAKi tests, with boys' performance compared to girls declining in five of the nine tests and increasing in only one. Fewer boys compared to girls are continuing past primary school. The gender difference is especially noticeable in the Line Islands. The best performing district was the Southern District, followed by South Tarawa. The weakest district was the Line Islands, especially with respect to numeracy.

¹⁰ Kiribati Ministry of Education, Examinations and Assessment Unit, (2018), *STAKi 2017 National Report (Year 4,6 & 8)*

The evaluation team found that at the school level, there was a strong belief that all schools were treated equally and provided the same access to resources, although we did not travel to the Line Islands. The introduction of IECs (with KEIP support) has greatly assisted the MoE's ability to reach and monitor schools in the outer islands.

There was also evidence of KEIP actively reviewing its approaches to support equitable access to professional development on the islands. This was enhanced further by the recruitment of additional KTC associate lecturers that could either be based on large outer islands or travel more often, to provide access to KTC in-service training. Before the KEIP intervention, assistant lecturers were KTC 'coaches' who travelled from KTC to deliver professional development training to teachers on outer islands in support of the curriculum rollout. However, the demonstrator effect and benefit of the coaches was lacking, thus KEIP proposed deploying associate lecturers with greater input into their scope and activities. Effectiveness was further enhanced by the associate lecturers being based closer to the schools in which they worked.

At the Kiribati Government's request, KEIP Phase III infrastructure has focused on South Tarawa, whereas Phase II supported the rehabilitation of seven schools on the Line Islands (Teraina, Tabuaeran Island, Kiritimati Island) and five schools on Tarawa.

d. Has the observed progress of KEIP contributed to making the overall basic education sector more effective?

With some caveats related to efficiency and sustainability discussed in later sections, the team observed progress in certain areas that have contributed to the overall basic education sector becoming more effective. These areas included:

- The reform of the curriculum, the first since the 1980s, saw the introduction of a more contextualised curriculum suited to need of I-Kiribati children and a focus on literacy and numeracy attainment. In line with the new language policy and research, children are now starting school in their first language. Research¹¹ shows teaching foundational skills (early literacy and numeracy) is one of the most effective ways to reduce school failure and dropout in the early grades. These foundational skills significantly increase learning later on, through improved critical thinking skills, including the ability to acquire another language such as English. Early STAKi results in English support this claim.¹²
- KEIP support to EPIK has promoted information sharing around donor supported activities and contributions.
- KTC has undergone significant changes in its approach to pre- and in-service training. While early days, monitoring of some in-service programs has shown promising signs that teachers are changing their behaviour in the classroom, in particular, by trying to use more student-centred approaches.
- Through KEIP, the Examinations and Assessment Unit now requires little support to implement the annual examination and assessment cycle, including the administration of STAKi. As noted in the Phase III Design, routine examinations allow MoE to see trends in data over the years, and to support the identification of issues with curriculum and teaching.

e. If deemed necessary, are there any interventions that require any modification in order to support effective implementation and/or should be taken into account for future interventions?

Potential modifications include:

- Joint annual planning for KEIP activities and more emphasis on a partnership approach between KEF and MoE to prioritise KEIP support and agree on budgets. Although consultations on KEIP-supported activities are taking place at the operational level, MoE senior management reported they felt excluded from annual planning processes and decision-making related to KEIP activities, despite all divisional heads being part of planning discussions in October 2017.¹³ A MoE-led annual planning process, where all stakeholders discuss and agree on priorities, pressures and expenditure parameters may promote a more collaborative approach to KEIP activities. This could be followed by quarterly progress updates between MoE, DFAT and the KEF team. It is interesting to

¹¹ <https://www.globalpartnership.org/blog/power-mother-tongue-and-multilingual-education>

¹² See *KEIP Review of the Implementation of the Year 1 to 6 Curriculum: Implications for Improving Literacy, 2018*

¹³ The process was conducted over a 2-week period and culminated in the 2018 draft annual plan. Communication between senior MoE managers and their teams to develop these plans through their regular meetings was strongly encouraged.

note that a KEIP oversight committee was part of the governance arrangements in Phase II but appears to have been discontinued in Phase III.

- MoE officers overseeing KEIP interventions (based in Tarawa) have indicated a desire to be more involved in monitoring, rather than TA carrying out monitoring alone. Where there is a strong business case (including a consideration of the value such an officer would bring to the monitoring activity), more joint monitoring and evaluation of KEIP interventions would complement system-reform efforts and may promote opportunities for continuous learning and skills transfer.
- The recent activation of a research unit and establishment of a Research Officer position within the Policy, Planning and Development (PPD) Division provides increased opportunities for more routine involvement of PPD officers in KEIP research. An annual research agenda could be developed as part of the KEIP annual planning process and discussed at EPIK to coordinate research with other donors and avoid duplication.
- Additional support to consolidate fragile gains and allow time for systems and processes to be embedded before expanding scope. This is particularly necessary in relation to the implementation of the recommendations from the curriculum review, including support for MoE's curriculum renewal system and further awareness and support for the implementation of the language policy. Capacity development takes time and MoE sees lack of capacity as a major challenge in the sector.¹⁴
- Pace and sequencing of activities may require review to ensure quality, sustainability and systems strengthening, suggestions include:
 - Slow down the JSS curriculum rollout. For example, revise and implement new JSS courses over two years, with a focus on core subjects for year 8 in 2019 and non-core in 2020, to enable consultation, peer review and sufficient time for professional development, particularly in new subject areas.
 - Review the workloads of IECs and consider how Leading, Learning, Instructional Leadership (LLL)-supported interventions will be rolled out longer term, in light of MoE requirements and monitoring to avoid overlap and promote system strengthening.
- Continue to press for the development of a longer term, multi-stakeholder plan for improved data management to inform MoE decision making, clarifying the roles and responsibilities of MoE and development partners (including the Secretariat of the Pacific Community's EQAP). KEIP could use this as an opportunity to reassess its focus, identify its comparative advantage and resourcing gaps that KEIP could support.
- Build on existing momentum around community engagement in schools.¹⁵ School Improvement Plan (SIP) committees are actively involved in schools, focused predominately on water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) activities (through UNICEF/New Zealand support), attendance and cleaning the school grounds. Other areas for possible SIP committee and broader community engagement include supporting the maintenance of school buildings through the development of policy and guidelines for community support. Noting it was a focus of LLL activities, SIP committees could also be used for other messaging related to access, participation and learning, for example, promoting inclusion, creating opportunities to use English, reinforcing the value of school, and supporting the teaching-learning enterprise (directly and indirectly).
- Continue to develop and promote internal and external communication around what KEIP activities are working.¹⁶ Drawing on M&E results, use communications strategies at all levels to promote successful interventions and advocate for greater community and MoE buy-in for effective education reforms. For example, highlight evidence showing that use of first language in the early years is more effective than starting in English.

¹⁴ 9th EPIK Meeting Minutes, MoE presentation, 2018.

¹⁵ The need for stronger support from the community was raised by MoE in most recent EPIK meeting and documented in the meeting minutes.

¹⁶ See for example the video produced by KEIP that recounts the story of a young girl who has been integrated into one of the Model Inclusion schools.

2. To what extent have other Australian-funded interventions¹⁷ supported the achievement of targeted MoE outcomes?

Summary response to the evaluation question:

Other Australian support has included deploying senior education management specialists (under a number of titles); financing the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) and UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) support to the ministry to improve data collection and management; placing long-term volunteers in the MoE; awarding of Australian Awards Scholarships to teachers and ministry personnel, and providing of core funding to KCSSN. During the early parts of KEIP Phase II it also financed UNICEF and UNESCO to participate in KEIP.

The education strategic planning and policy adviser (ESPPA) has played a key role in contributing to EOPO 2 by supporting MoE to improve budgeting and planning, the development of a standardised approach to policy development, the review of the National Teacher Service Standards framework, and the development of the National Executive Leadership Standards Framework. MoE is keen to ensure gains are not lost, and support for the ministry's executive continues under new management arrangements for this position.

SPC and UIS support to the Technology Support and Information Management Unit (TSIMU) has improved school census collection and validation through the use of tablets by IECs but a lack of technical support in country has impeded progress toward recommended activities in the Data Quality Assessment Framework¹⁸ that sought to improve data management and inform MoE decision-making (related to EOPO 2).

a. To what extent have these interventions contributed to the expected outcomes?

Other Australian-funded interventions supporting KEIP have included the PacTAM education strategic planning and policy adviser (ESPPA) and, SPC and UIS support for data collection and management. The role of the ESPPA,¹⁹ contracted through PacTAM, has supported the ministry over several years through technical and advisory assistance, capacity development and institutional strengthening to support the MoE's implementation of its ESSP. The key focus has been on skills transfer in strategic planning and management, policy development and improving donor coordination. This support has been well received by MoE and despite the latest adviser having to leave early, there is strong evidence that the adviser has contributed to EOPO 2. Early achievements included establishing the PPD Division and driving organisational restructure, system reform and enhancing development partner coordination. Recent examples of progress toward EOPO 2 include:

- DOPs are now aligned with the ESSP and have improved planning and budgeting processes;
- The application of the reviewed national Education Policy Framework Policy Statement and Handbook, which has seen a more standardised approach to policy development; and
- The review of the National Teacher Service Standards Framework and the development of the National Executive Leadership Standards Framework, which has informed the LLL course.

The sudden departure of the ESPPA has unfortunately meant both the leadership and teaching standards are still in draft form. While KEF TA have stepped in to fill some of the gaps, particularly around supporting the DOP process, there are also other areas in the adviser's terms of reference that have been put on hold. These include support for the new research unit, and professional development assistance for the senior executive on systemic change, capacity to analyse data, monitor, evaluate and use results to inform the development of strategic interventions and activities. Coffey International Development is conducting the recruitment process for a replacement. When recruited, the new adviser should continue to focus strongly on tailored support and capacity development for the senior management team, in particular the director of PPD, who is leading a newly established division.

SPC assists MoE to improve data collection methods through the EQAP Regional Education Management Information System (EMIS) Facility. The UIS concentrates more on analysis and reporting of key information that is provided to the Kiribati Education Management Information System (KEMIS) database. Support to MoE from SPC and UIS has been

¹⁷ It was agreed with DFAT Post that this question would focus predominately on support from SPC/UIS and the PACTAM ESPPA role.

¹⁸ A Framework for Assessing the Quality of Education Statistics. World Bank Development Data Group and UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2004.

¹⁹ Previously known as the Senior Education Management specialist when the position was first created in April 2012. Four experts have been in this position under slightly different titles.

informed by findings from the Data Quality Assessment Framework Report produced by UIS following a fact-finding mission in 2016. While no timeframe was set for the achievement of recommendations from the report, all parties acknowledged there had been limited progress toward the list of activities aimed at improving the quality of education statistics in Kiribati. The production of the annual *MoE Digest of Education Statistics* remains behind schedule,²⁰ with ongoing concerns related to data accuracy.

A key achievement has been the training of IECs in the use of tablets and survey solutions to verify school level data. As a new initiative, however, it remains fragile. The new approach is more accurate but time consuming as the data is verified by IECs before being sent to KEMIS and uploaded to the server. The process worked successfully in 2017, with an almost 100 per cent return rate on the school census surveys. In 2018, the lower return rate of approximately 70 per cent was largely attributed to IECs not having sufficient time (and potentially motivation) to enter the data. MoE has also raised concerns about the data being directed to a World Bank cloud server before being made available to MoE and the need for stronger connectivity infrastructure at both the school and the Technology Support and Information Management Unit (TSIMU).

SPC highlighted the difficulties in taking forward the Data Quality Assessment Framework activities with limited technical support available in-country and local recruitment efforts unsuccessful. Additionally, stakeholders interviewed referred to the lack of a common long-term vision for data management, including a limited understanding of MoE immediate priorities, as hampering progress. Consultations are underway with Pacific Island Countries for the next phase of EQAP EMIS support, which is seeking to be more responsive to MoE immediate needs and priorities. This process, combined with the new phase of KEIP, provides an opportunity for greater alignment between regional and bilateral efforts in this area.

There are several other interventions funded by the Australian Government that are contributing to KEIP's expected outcomes. These include:

- Australia Awards Scholarships
- Australian Volunteers International providing volunteers at KSCCSN and for procurement in the FMU
- Grant funding for KSCCSN to cover operational costs and support children with a disability at the primary level
- Support to UNICEF during KEIP Phase II to help implement the WASH programme at the 12 rehabilitated schools
- Grant funding to UNESCO during KEIP Phase II for Kiribati to engage in UIS's regional Pacific initiative to support data improvement and policy analysis

Where relevant, the contributions of these investments to KEIP outcomes have been highlighted throughout the report. It was beyond the scope of the team to provide detailed analysis of the contributions of these investments to KEIP. However, many key informants showed interest in and saw value in these investments having a more direct relationship with KEIP in the future, and should therefore be considered during the next KEIP design phase.

b. What have been the strengths and weaknesses of these interventions, and unintended benefits, if any?

In general, collaborative relationships and complementary workplans have amplified the value of investments.

The strength of the ESPPA role has been its strong focus on enhancing leadership capacity within MoE and systems strengthening. This has been complementary to the objectives of KEIP while remaining independent of it. The adviser – like those that preceded him – has worked closely with the MoE senior executive on their reform agenda and been highly responsive to MoE needs. The ESPPA role has had a strong capacity development focus, which has been appreciated by the ministry. The role also appears to have provided a good bridge between the MoE senior executive, DFAT and KEF, which enhanced communication with KEF TA and supported alignment to MoE priorities in ESSP 2016-19. Moreover, the fact that the position was independent (the position is contracted outside of the remit of KEF) was also seen as a key strength by MoE. While respondents noted that the expertise of advisers has varied, they did not identify any specific weaknesses with the ESPPA role. It was noted that relations between KEF and the most recent adviser were collegial and there was a strong sense of frustration that the position has remained unfilled since December 2017.

²⁰ The 2016 report was in draft form at time of the mission.

The SPC/UIS partnership has brought a regional and global lens to support being provided to KEMIS. While the partnership has enabled cross-sharing of information among Pacific Island Countries and the opportunity to learn from others, there has been limited bespoke support in response to MoE immediate priorities. SPC/UIS support was introduced after KEIP Phase III was designed, affecting the ability of the bilateral and regional programs to align. Efforts to coordinate different partners have been unsuccessful. MoE has said SPC/UIS support has not met its expectations and shown limited responsiveness to its priorities. Many of the Data Quality Assessment Framework report recommendations from the 2016 fact finding mission remain unactioned, partly because of the lack of a dedicated in-country officer for this work. While a lot of SPC/UIS support has been provided for capacity development, MoE has commented that this does not always align with its immediate priority areas for support.

c. What changes to the delivery approach need to be considered to ensure targeted MoE outcomes can be achieved under KEIP Phase III and to support a future investment?

This question has been addressed under 1e above.

d. What factors, other than Australian-funded interventions, have contributed to any observed changes in the sector?

The Australian Government is the dominant development partner in the sector,²¹ and support provided by other development partners is relatively small in comparison. Nevertheless, other development partners are making an important contribution, such as the Pacific Early Age Reading and Learning Program (PEARL), which is funded by the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and implemented by the World Bank and Kiribati WASH in Schools (KWinS) program, funded by New Zealand and implemented by UNICEF. PEARL focuses on scripted teaching of phonics in the early grades and evidence shows the trial has seen good results in literacy in several schools, stimulating MoE interest in an increased focus on phonics in the curriculum. The KWinS program had promoted awareness and community engagement in WASH but there was no data available to the team on the impact on health or learning outcomes.

In addition, the KEIP-UNICEF relationship has seen both parties leverage the others' initiatives to mutual advantage. For example, UNICEF provided school leadership training materials that were incorporated into the LLL and also saw UNICEF WASH posters distributed to all schools in the country, not just on the four islands of UNICEF activity. Likewise, KEIP supported UNICEF work on community engagement, encouraging support for schools and in student behaviour management. Respondents also noted that the EPiK forum – when functioning at its best and driven by the ministry's (then) Policy, Planning and Coordination Unit – was a fantastic and effective partner coordination mechanism. It served to focus partners' attention and ensure partners – especially new partners – worked through the coordinating arm of ministry in support of the ESSP.

Efficiency

3. How well have financial and non-financial resources been used to achieve KEIP's outcomes?

Summary response to evaluation question

KEIP activities and outputs have been delivered on time and within budget, and distributed equitably, and KEF has worked closely with divisional heads to integrate KEIP planning and budgeting processes with those used to develop DOPs. The managing contractor has ensured a strong focus on budgeting, planning and reporting, and interventions have been routinely assessed to establish whether they are adding value. An assessment of expenditure to date found that most activities have been appropriately resourced, however there are activities that will need to continue in the second half of KEIP that have spent their allocation. At the time of the evaluation, there was a perception within the MoE that budgeting and planning processes were not as transparent as they could be, and this perception needs to be urgently addressed.

While KEIP initiatives have contributed to making the system more efficient, both at the systems level, for example through the DOP system, and at the school level, through the Leading, Learning, Instructional Leadership (LLL) process,

²¹ 78% of the amount committed by development partners to the MoE was provided by the Government of Australia (see Figure below), according to the most recent Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development - Development Assistance Committee data available.

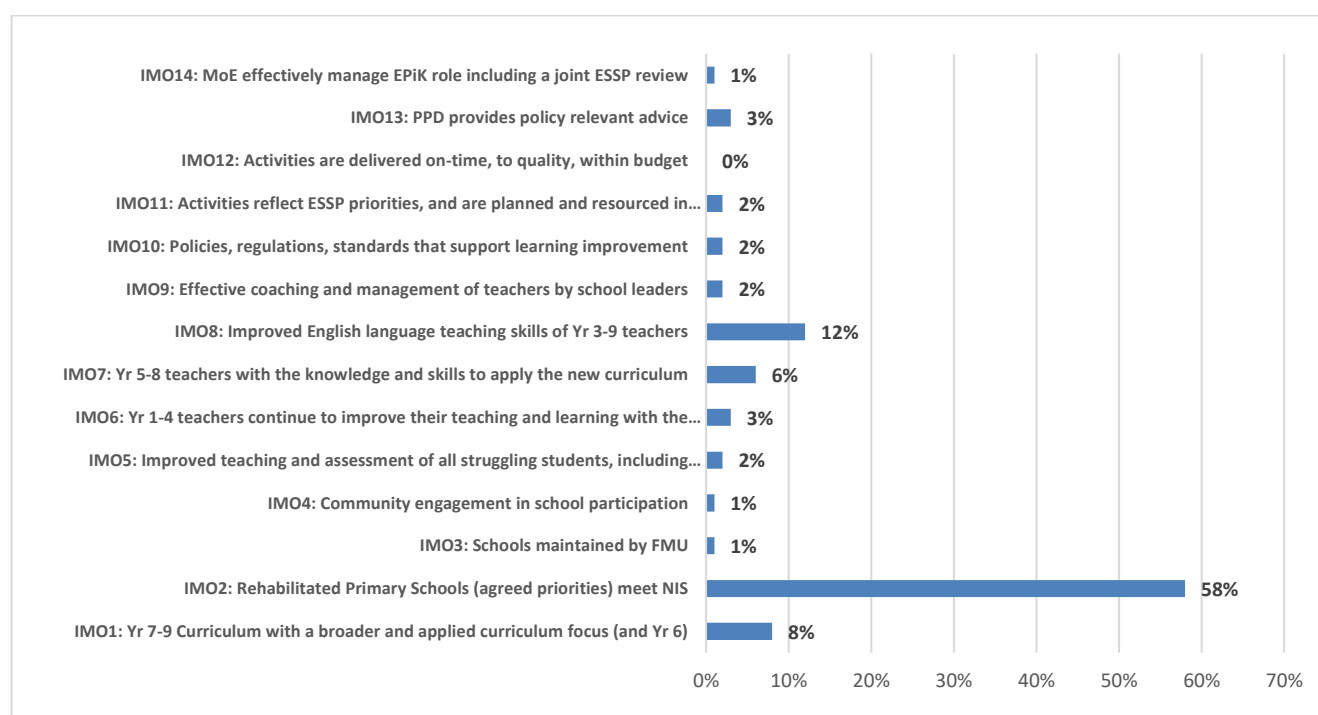
there have been unanticipated events. These have included confusion in all schools visited about the status of KEIP-supported activities, where schools distinguished between responsibilities related to what they see as their core mandate and responsibilities that come with activities facilitated by KEIP. This is despite the ministry informing schools that such activities were part of their core mandate, and that their content and purpose was checked by IECs and assistant lecturers and endorsed by the ministry prior to delivery. It is too early to tell whether the confusion we noted was a result of schools taking time to adjust to a new initiative, or whether it was symptomatic of a deeper implementation issue.

More than half of activity costs in both KEIP Phase II (58 per cent of the budget for program activity costs) and Phase III (also 58 per cent of program activity costs) are directed toward infrastructure. Future design decisions will need to consider whether this is sensible, especially without the Government of Kiribati having a clear policy on maintenance. More value may be created by investing in other aspects that KEIP is supporting that are more likely to affect learning outcomes.

a. Are the interventions being implemented efficiently and are they appropriately resourced?

Of the \$32 million budgeted for KEIP Phase III, about half is allocated to program activities (51 per cent), a quarter to personnel costs (26 per cent), and a quarter to operational and support costs (23 per cent). The breakdown of the budget for Phase III is similar in percentage terms to the allocation of the Phase II budget (50 per cent on activities, 27 per cent on personnel, and the remaining 23 per cent on other costs).

Figure 2: Planned allocation of the KEIP Phase III activity budget (2016 – 2019), by IMO (source: KEIP Phase III Progress Report, July 2018)



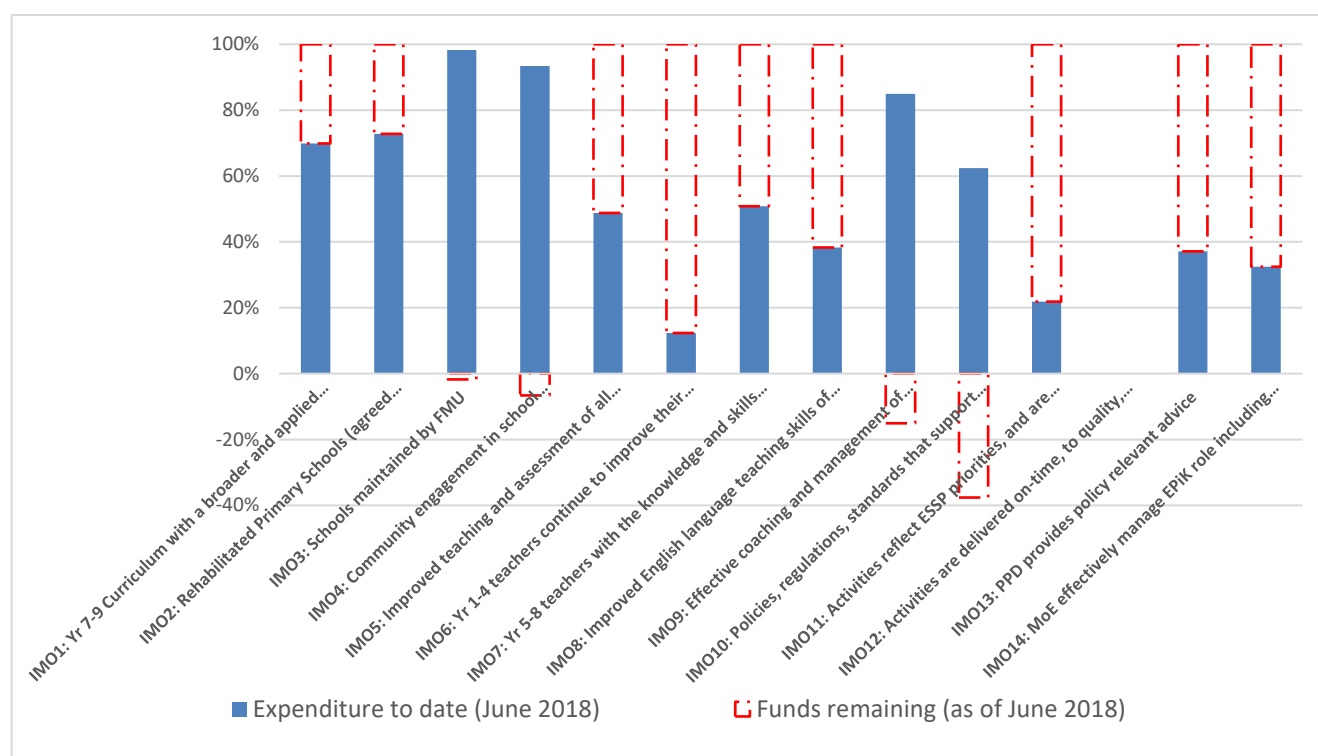
The KEIP budget details intended allocations for the program, including for planned activities. As Figure 2 demonstrates, the largest allocation is for infrastructure, at 58 per cent of the budget. Infrastructure also received the largest allocation in Phase II.²² The next largest allocations are for IMO 8 (improving English language skills) at 12 per cent of the activities budget, and IMO 7 (supporting year 5-8 teachers to implement the new curriculum), which is allocated 6 per cent. In total, these three activities have been allocated 76 per cent of the activity budget, with the other 11 IMOs being allocated the remaining 24 per cent. It is important to note, however, that many of these activities (as outlined in the previous section on effectiveness) have been supported by TA, which are costed separately. For the purposes of transparency, it may be useful for adviser costs to be assigned to each IMO. This would also provide a more accurate reflection of the proportion of the activity costs per IMO.

²² The KEIP Phase II Completion Report notes that 'Program activity spending represented AUD 10,879,951 of total program expenditure, with the support provided to the rehabilitation of school infrastructure comprising AUD 6,849,372 of this total' (April 2016, p.20).

Comparing the KEIP Phase III and Phase II budgets at the activity level, it is worth noting that there has been a slight decrease in the proportion allocated to activities promoting quality in the classroom (for example, the allocation for professional development in Phase III (25 per cent) is smaller than that allocated in Phase II (31 per cent). Our view is that the behaviour change being introduced through the professional development reforms requires a long-term investment and thus one would have expected increased investment in these activities during Phase III rather than a decrease.

With regard to IMO 2, we note that while an appropriate learning environment is critical to the learning process, and also ensures children are motivated to attend and stay in school, the literature²³ suggests that support for building competent teachers, low absenteeism, reading materials in the early grades, schools tracking and supporting performance can have a greater impact on student learning outcomes. Undoubtedly, the decision to invest in infrastructure on South Tarawa was in response to a request from the Government of Kiribati, rather than by KEIP, but with both the Phase II and Phase III KEIP budgets strongly weighted toward infrastructure, future design decisions will need to explore whether this is appropriate and whether more value may be created by investing in other aspects that KEIP is supporting. Moreover, as discussed below under sustainability, investing in new and rehabilitated infrastructure without proportional investments in operations and maintenance – irrespective of their source – will influence the extent to which the infrastructure work done under KEIP (and any successors) can be sustained.

Figure 3: Expenditure on KEIP Phase III Activities, as of 31 June 2018 (source KEIP Phase III Progress Report, July 2018)



An analysis of KEIP expenditure (as of June 2018) found that while expenditure was where it should be (roughly 50 per cent expended mid-way through Phase III), expenditure on activities varied widely (Figure). Expenditure on personnel, adviser support costs, operational costs, and other related costs were all at 50 per cent, however two thirds of the budget for program activity costs (67 per cent) had been spent, with a noticeable variance in expenditure per IMO (Figure). For example, much of the infrastructure component of the program (IMO2) was in line with plans (for example, the construction and rehabilitation of primary schools on South Tarawa), while activities such as IMO10 (policies, regulations and standards that support training improvement) had exceeded the amount initially budgeted by nearly 40 per cent. Under IMO 6 (year 1-4 teachers continue to improve their teaching and learning with the new curriculum) only 10 per cent of the allocated budget had been used. On the whole, this suggests that many activities have been appropriately resourced, however there are activities that will need to continue but without sufficient resources (such as community engagement – an area we discuss further below).

²³ See DFAT's *What works best for education: A super-synthesis of the evidence* (2017) <https://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Documents/super-synthesis-report.pdf>

KEIP activities and outputs have been delivered on time and within budget, and distributed equitably and geographically (see, for example, KEIP Progress Report, July 2018: 11 for lists of when and where training occurred). However, much of the infrastructure support has focused on South Tarawa (in line with a decision by the Kiribati Government to prioritise these primary schools first, and challenges faced with the building of infrastructure during KEIP Phase II). The program has had a strong focus on improving efficiencies, as alluded to in the section on effectiveness. Examples of efficiency gains made under KEIP include:

- Building curriculum development officers' capacity and taking a new and concerted approach to the development of curriculum resources, the Curriculum Development and Resource Centre (CDRC) has disbanded subject writing groups. In their place, a small group of retired teachers have been recruited to assist and work alongside the current group of curriculum development officers. These teachers will act as a sounding board to the officers as they develop material and will provide insight based on their extensive teaching experience. The additional staff have been added to the MoE staff establishment register, at no cost to KEIP (KEIP Progress Report, July 18: 10).
- A period offer arrangement with qualified suppliers has supported a more streamlined materials supply process for the school rehabilitation program, enabling lower unit costs, timely delivery, better forward planning and value for money outcomes. In addition, the contract with Kiricraft also led to greater efficiencies by having a local supplier, suitably qualified, who prepared the kits off site. This has greatly reduced the build time and decreased the disruption to learning within the targeted schools.
- The role of IECs and ALs has considerably improved the reach of the program to all schools and reduced the cost of professional development. The cascade model for professional development, along with ongoing coaching and mentoring, is cheaper than holding all training on South Tarawa and now ensures training is happening in-situ. Feedback from interviews suggested that training has been implemented as prescribed, without trainees having to make costly and time consuming visits to South Tarawa. Further, ALs have replaced the KTC coaches who were travelling to the islands to support professional development activities at schools. As most ALs are already located on their respective islands, this has greatly improved the efficiency of professional development activities, and ensured that ALs are far more accessible to teachers than the KTC coaches were previously.
- While it is not yet possible to assess the full impact of KEIP support to KTC to implement the redesigned pre- and in-service program (the new program only commenced in 2018), some efficiency gains can already be seen. For example, KTC has delivered training to more students with the same resource/budget profile (applicants have increased, and the new intake has increased from 30 to 100). A workload calculator has been developed and applied to ensure consistent workloads across lecturing staff at KTC, as well as tighter staff supervision. KTC courses have been placed online and the college is using a more structured, transparent application and selection process.

b. Has the progress observed contributed to making the overall basic education sector more efficient?

To create a more efficient sector, the KEIP needs to focus on activities that manage change across the system. The most noticeable of these changes has been the development of DOPs that are aligned to the ESSP and higher-level government education objectives. The DOPs provide detailed activity plans and budgets for each division, outlining how each will contribute to ESSP goals and objectives. They also include information on partner contributions. KEIP activities are aligned to the relevant DOPs, with the aim of ensuring the program contributes directly to MoE goals and objectives. The MoE process, supported by KEIP and a series of education management specialists (like the education strategic planning and policy adviser), ensures that planned activities are costed; budgeting decisions are informed by evidence; and divisional heads have meaningful input into the following year's budget formulations. As noted, a ministry-led mid-term review of the ESSP (which also reviewed progress achieved under each DOP) will inform MoE going forward of progress against the ESSP and identify areas that require further support or review.

Other activities creating efficiencies across the sector have been discussed above, for example, the reforms underway in KTC, the decentralisation of professional development activities to IECs and associate lecturers located on the outer islands, and the efficiencies in the CDRC.

However, some KEIP interventions have created issues in the sector, as the change management process has not always kept pace with the innovations introduced by KEIP. Site visits on the outer islands found that all schools visited teachers distinguished between responsibilities related to what they saw as their core mandate and responsibilities that come with activities facilitated by KEIP. This is despite the ministry informing schools that such activities (for instance purposeful classroom observation to inform better teaching and learning) were part of their core mandate no different

than those used to inform performance appraisals, and that the content and purpose of such activities were checked by IECs and assistant lecturers and endorsed by the ministry prior to delivery. It is too early to tell whether the confusion we noted was a result of schools taking time to adjust to a new initiative, or whether it was symptomatic of a deeper implementation issue.

Another example is the unanticipated boost in the KTC intake (30 to 100), which came as a ministerial directive. As the announcement came late in the MoE budget cycle, there was no time for KTC to secure additional funds in its annual budget allocation, so the technical adviser and director successfully worked through how best to manage this large increase. Thus, while senior management in MoE endorsed the increase in enrolments, it has meant that the MoE has had to find additional funds to supplement funds originally budgeted for student travel and accommodation expenses.

A third example relates to joint monitoring by MoE and KEF. Some units within MoE expressed that they had not had many opportunities to be involved in monitoring, generally because of travel costs associated with getting to the outer islands. While costs need to be managed, MoE officials believe joint monitoring has the potential to provide increased opportunities for learning, skills transfer and MoE ownership over gains being made with KEIP support. This situation clearly remains a vexed issue and will need to be addressed as part of the next round of annual planning for the facility. Those based in Tarawa have arguably more opportunities for monitoring, learning and skills transfer than IECs on the islands. There does not appear to be any evidence of increased ownership or more engagement in activities when officers travel from Tarawa to the islands for monitoring or involvement. Similarly, there does not appear to be any apparent benefit or increased MoE activity/engagement from those who undertook a field trip to Fiji on inclusive education. At present, efficiency gains seem to be best achieved when staff based in Tarawa take up opportunities to take part in or monitor KEIP initiatives on Tarawa, and when activities take place on the outer islands, the associate lecturers and IECs conduct the monitoring.

c. Have the decision-making processes, including decisions about the use of funds, been appropriate and represent value for money?

Channelling funds through Government of Kiribati development account #4 has been limited since mid-2014 because of concerns with national public financial management. A 2015 Education Sector Public Financial Management assessment found 'the residual risks of channelling DFAT funds through Government of Kiribati and MoE downstream systems are not manageable in the short term'. All KEIP funds have since been channelled through KEF systems, except funding tranches for the Line Islands school construction labour costs (disbursed by Ministry of Line and Phoenix Islands). According to interviews held with senior management in the MoE, the administration of KEIP funds by KEF has created some tension. The issue appears not to be about the use of government systems, but rather perceptions of how expenditure decisions are made. While the DOP process has helped to ensure stronger links between KEIP funded activities and the MoE's strategy for the sector, there is a general misunderstanding about what has been allocated and who determines how disbursements will occur against each line item in the budget.

KEIP maintains that the DOP process has ensured adequate transparency, and that each DOP provides sufficient financial information on which components KEIP will support. At the time of the evaluation, however, senior management in the MoE believed that the full financial picture had not been provided and were seeking greater transparency in relation to the KEIP budget and expenditure. If not resolved, this matter could undermine the enormous efforts that have been made to develop a meaningful partnership between the program and the ministry.

While it is outside the scope of this evaluation's terms of reference to conduct a systematic value for money review of KEIP, the evaluation team found that KEIP had instigated several steps to ensure that the activities it implements represent value for money. Many of these activities have already been discussed above (such as the use of the local manufacturer Kiricraft in school construction and rehabilitation, the absorption of the IECs into the MoE's staff establishment register, working within existing MoE structures, and ensuring activities complement each other).

Moreover, KEF is extremely cost conscious in its decision making (for example, in its efforts to encourage the MoE to drive training costs down and eliminate wasteful expenditure) and its financial management systems and procedures are robust and precise to ensure it adheres to the stringent Commonwealth Procurement Rules. Major procurements are managed effectively through various contracting methods. A period offer arrangement with qualified suppliers supports a more streamlined materials supply process for the school rehabilitation program, enabling lower unit costs, timely delivery, better forward planning and value for money outcomes.

Sustainability

4. How sustainable are the benefits of KEIP?

Summary response to the evaluation question:

The evaluation team found that the Kiribati Government has shown a strong commitment to creating a strong policy environment within which KEIP operates. It has demonstrated its commitment further through increasing recurrent budget allocations, absorbing successful KEIP-initiated interventions, particularly in key positions (for example, IECs), and supporting the ambitious reforms in KTC, which has had significant budget implications for the MoE. Although the MoE has steadily increased its recurrent budget allocation, much of this increase has been a result of consumer price inflation, and with high population growth there is a need for additional resources to accommodate more students and to support ongoing education sector reform.

Site visits to schools revealed high levels of community engagement. KEIP Phase II contributed to this engagement through its 'education is everyone's business' initiatives (such as radio advocacy campaigns, community consultations and support for the MoE's Community Consultation Team). This high level of community engagement provides an opportunity for helping to improve learning outcomes (such as tracking school performance and holding schools to account, helping support the implementation of language policy, and collaborating to improve the attitudes and behaviour of learners).

Site visits also found good monitoring of behaviour change of teachers in classrooms (as a result of LLL promoting the use of classroom observations). It is too early, however, to tell the extent to which changes in pedagogy will be sustained. Additionally, while the new curriculum has been adopted, this has not yet been fully supported by necessary changes in the MoE to ensure ongoing curriculum professional development, curriculum renewal and replacement of materials that have disappeared from schools.

a. Does the Ministry – from the institutional to the classroom level – demonstrate commitment and ownership of the key interventions²⁴ supported by KEIP?

The Kiribati Government's commitment is demonstrated through key policy documents, the absorption of KEIP initiated interventions, including a range of key positions (such as IECs) into its own staffing and governance structures, and increased recurrent budget allocation for the sector, which allow it to fund activities initiated through KEIP.

As noted, the priorities of KEIP align with those of the ESSP 2016-2019 (even though Phase III predates the formal ratification of the ESSP), as well as Kiribati's Development Plan development policy agenda²⁵ and the KV20. There are strong synergies between these policy documents and the KEIP strategy,²⁶ for example around the need to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education. All policy approaches promote meaningful investment in all forms of education and training to foster development of human resources in Kiribati.

Within the education sector, the Kiribati Government, with KEIP assistance, has created a robust policy framework that reflects its strong ownership and commitment to the sector. This policy framework includes the 2013 Education Act, the National Curriculum and Assessment Framework, the language policy adopted in 2014, the Inclusive Education Policy, and Teacher Service Standards (these are currently being revised).

²⁴ Key interventions and activities under KEIP Phase III include curriculum reform and assessment; teacher professional development; school leadership; inclusive education; school infrastructure rehabilitation; and strengthening MoE institutional capacity.

²⁵ Of particular relevance in the Kiribati Development Plan (2016-2019) is Goal 1, which aims to 'improve the quality of education and training to provide students with the skills and capability to progress to a productive future'. Activities to achieve this goal include increasing enrolment, improving the skills and competencies of teachers, accelerating the transition into English into primary and junior secondary schools, integrating emerging developments in ICT into the curriculum, and providing healthy and safe buildings and facilities (Kiribati Development Plan, 2016-19: 19-20).

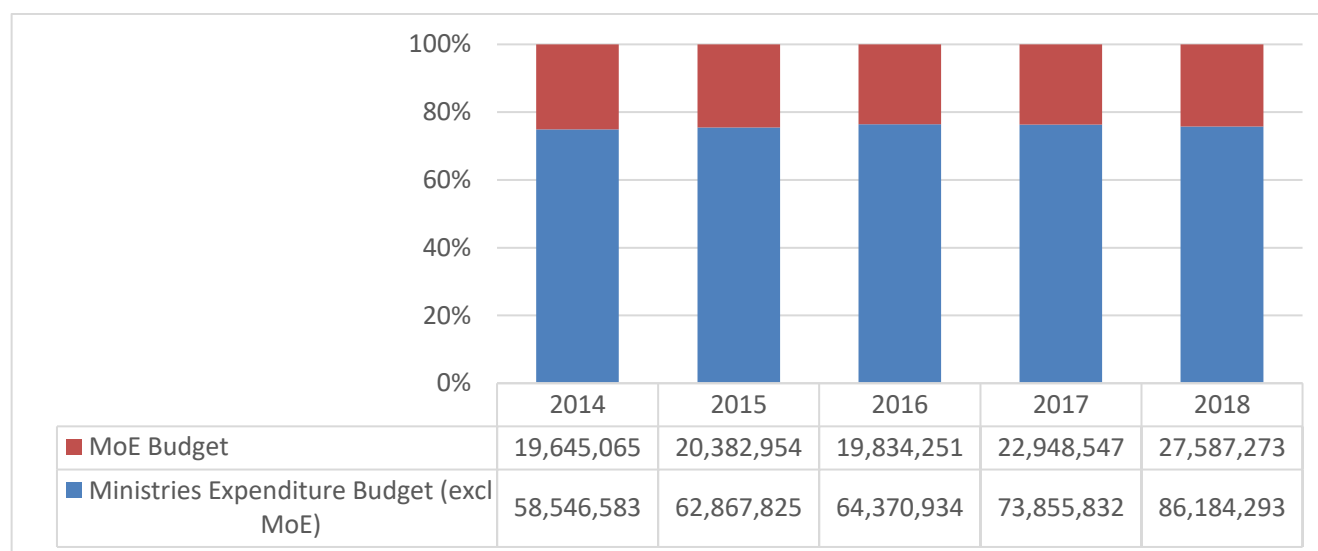
²⁶ KEIP is also consistent with Australia's aid policy, *Australian aid: Promoting prosperity, reducing poverty, enhancing stability* (2014) and reflects the Australian Government's commitment to developing the skills of girls and boys through access to relevant and quality education, and stressing its commitment to cross-cutting issues of gender equality, disability inclusiveness, and environmental resilience.

At the systems level, the MoE has introduced the DOP process (discussed above), which ensures better alignment of budgeting and planning. The process ensures heads of divisions and MoE account sections coordinate and plan activities with budgeting and reporting processes, with support provided by the KEIP M&E adviser, the previous ESPPA and the KEF. Further, the MoE has begun a process, again with KEIP assistance, to review and revise the ESSP, a process that will be completed by the end of 2019.

Another example of a system wide change being introduced by the MoE is the review of teacher service standards and the associated teacher registration process. Once completed, it is expected that the review will introduce a more effective and efficient performance assessment system that is tailored to the specifics of the education sector. It will integrate recent reforms in the sector (including, for example, those being advocated under LLL), and allow for timely, evidence-based responses to data once it has been analysed. Moreover, Kiribati Government has added several new MoE positions to its employment register to support the reform program (such as policy analysts, KTC staff, and IECs).

Although KEIP is designed as a long-term commitment to the education sector in Kiribati and is based on the premise that external financing and technical support will be required for many years,²⁷ Kiribati Government's strong commitment is further demonstrated through increased recurrent budget allocations and its free education policy. The MoE's recurrent budget allocation has increased steadily in recent years, from \$19,645 million in 2014 to \$27,587 million in 2018 (Figure 4).

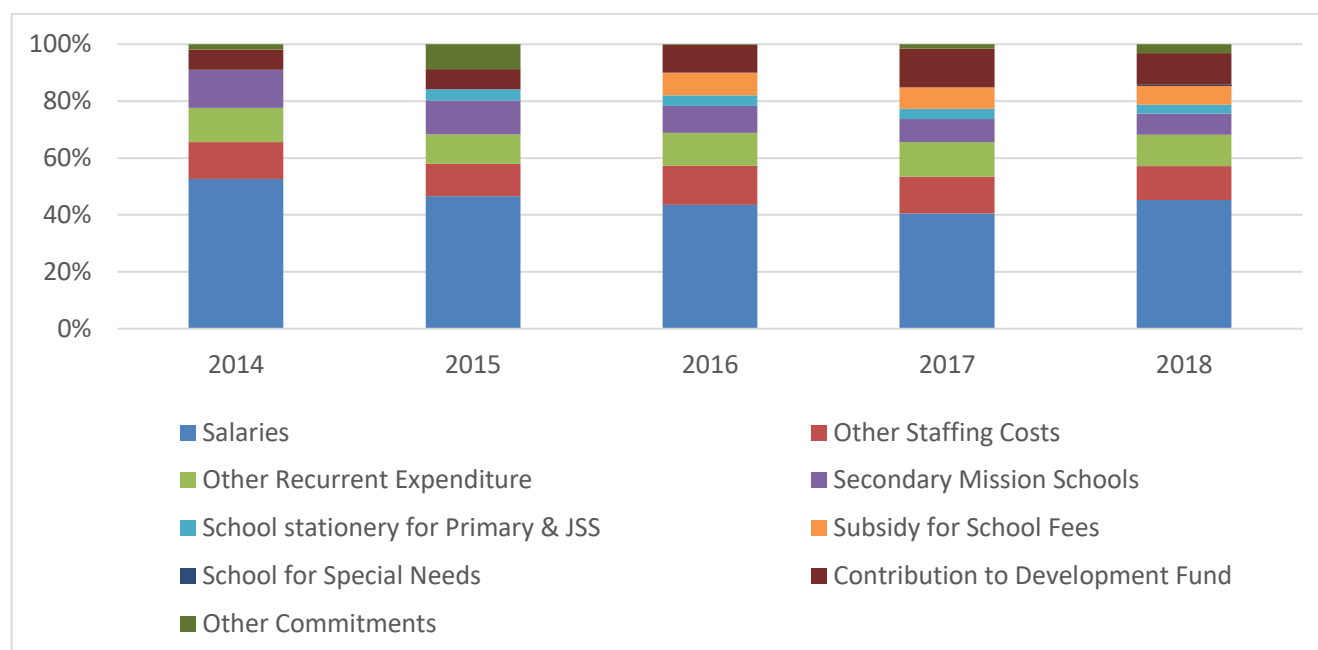
Figure 4: Comparative Statement of Ministries' Expenditure Budget, MoE vs All Other Ministries²⁸ (source: Government of Kiribati, Consolidated Budget Books)



²⁷ The Australian Government's Aid Investment Plan for Kiribati (2015–19) notes that the Australian Government remains steadfast in retaining its status as 'the leading aid donor in Kiribati', and the primary donor in the education sector, based on a long term approach to development assistance' (p.3).

²⁸ Excludes subsidies, grants and other commitments; debt servicing, and contributions to Development Fund. Information taken from Table 4: Comparative Statement of Ministries Expenditure Budget.

Figure 5: MoE Budget, By Category (source: Government of Kiribati, Consolidated Budget Books)



However, much of this increase reflects consumer price inflation, and with high population growth there is a need for an increased budget to finance the implementation of the ongoing education reforms being facilitated by KEIP. Additionally, while salaries, staffing costs and other recurrent expenditures account for the majority of the budget (Figure 5), the proportion of these categories within the MoE budget has declined from 78 per cent in 2014 to 68 per cent in 2018. A further signal of the government’s commitment to the sector can be seen in the fact that the proportion allocated to the Development Fund has gradually increased from 7 per cent of the budget in 2014 to 11 per cent in 2018.

b. To what extent is KEIP contributing to local ownership and understanding of policies and decision-making processes at the community level?

KEIP Phase III has implemented several initiatives to promote community engagement at the school level. This work has built on foundations laid during earlier phases of KEIP. For example, Phase II laid significant groundwork with its ‘education is everyone’s business’ initiatives (such as radio advocacy campaigns, community consultations and support for the MoE Community Consultation Team) and by trialling a broader approach to community engagement that went beyond infrastructure rehabilitation. Much of the support provided to school principals and IECs under Phase III, for example, has included community engagement initiatives as part of training. The LLL includes several modules on improving community engagement in schools. Professional development for IECs and school leaders has also equipped them with the capacity to undertake research on improving community engagement at the school level and increase parent participation in schools. Further, the school rehabilitation program has routinely engaged with community members as part of the consultative process before works begin.

Field visits to schools on South Tarawa and the outer islands confirmed high levels interest among community members, who were often visible during visits to schools. SIP committees also appear to be functioning well, partly because of the foundational work done by KEIP Phase II (where community engagement was one of five strands of activity). SIP committees appear to be focused primarily on minor maintenance of schools and surrounding areas (such as maintaining flower beds), and enforcing attendance during school hours (representatives of the community routinely ‘patrol’ the school to ensure learners and teachers are in classrooms during lesson times). SIP committees also play an important role in fundraising for the schools, and in some cases, this includes the growing of vegetables for sale.

Undoubtedly there are high levels of local ownership of schools (especially on the outer islands) but this local ownership is expressed more in relation to physical buildings. There is little evidence that the community is engaged in supporting learning and/or familiar with key policy changes in the sector. While community members interviewed were aware of the

language policy, few were in a position to support their child in learning English. Community members and parents are critical to the sustainability of the learning experience for children, but, at present, they require far more support than has been provided or may even be possible.

Support to the SIP committees is also required to assist with the maintenance of buildings. The *Repair and Maintenance Survey Report*²⁹ examined 28 schools on nine islands (18 of which were built with Australian aid funds during phases I and II of KEIP). It found, on average, schools needed \$45,000 to be repaired so that ongoing annual maintenance could continue at a cost of \$2,500 per school. While this maintenance budget is out of reach for the SIP committee (in fact it is out of reach for the MoE, as the FMU does not have a budget for the maintenance of schools), there is clearly a need to establish a process to engage and support these committees to help with maintenance. This process should also include exploring a more sustainable local model for maintaining schools on outer islands.

c. To what extent is MoE better equipped to manage the basic education system?

As noted, the program has supported a wide range of reforms to MoE processes. However, a number of these reforms are relatively new and it is too early to know whether they will be owned and sustained by the sector (this includes the significant changes being introduced, for example, in KTC, and the LLL activities). Similarly, while LLL has introduced important shifts in approaches such as monitoring the behaviour change of teachers in classrooms, it is too early to tell whether changes in pedagogy will be sustained longer term.

We have also noted that while considerable physical infrastructure has been provided by KEIP, concerns remain as to how these facilities will be operated and maintained. Additionally, we have noted that ministry planning, budgeting and reporting has improved through KEIP support for the DOPs, which in turn is likely to contribute to better management, as the DOPs are a very useful management tool. Progress against DOPs is being monitored by the MoE through its quarterly reporting cycle, which the MoE is using to inform policy development and track service delivery across all its divisions.

KEIP continues to provide ongoing support to embed reforms introduced under earlier phases of KEIP, and this has enabled the MoE to adopt system-wide reforms. These include, for example, the sequenced revisions to the new curriculum in upper primary and junior secondary schools under KEIP Phase III. These revisions have helped ensure a more sensible approach to curriculum development and therefore ensure a greater likelihood of success. Similarly, the start of the reforms to KTC, which have accelerated under Phase III, began with KEIP working with the MoE under Phase II to revise KTC's management structure. Moreover, the revised and strengthened management structure that has allowed MoE to drive current reforms was initiated under earlier phases of KEIP. The establishment and recruitment of a range of senior management positions in the MoE (such as the MoE director of education, the establishment of the PPD unit, and the strengthening of the School Improvement Unit (SIU)) was key to this process.

We have also noted that MoE is continuing to develop its capacity to manage the ambitious change. This is seen in part by its efforts to strengthen management at the local level, with key developments including strengthened support at the school level for IECs, who then report back to SIU in the central office, strong relationships between IECs and associate lecturers, and support provided by associate lecturers to schools, especially on the outer islands. The fact that the MoE has absorbed IECs into its staffing and governance structures is a clear signal that the MoE sees the importance of IECs in helping to manage schools at the local level. A further example has been MoE driving the review and revision of the ESSP, drawing on KEIP expertise where relevant.

Nevertheless, while a range of different systems and processes have been introduced to equip the MoE to better manage the sector, it is too early to tell whether all of these changes will be sustainable. For example, while a new curriculum has been adopted, critical measures like ongoing curriculum professional development training for teachers, curriculum reviews and renewal, and the replacement of learning materials have yet to be set up. Limited specialist curriculum writing experience and high staff turnover in the Curriculum Development and Resource Centre (CDRC) has resulted in variable curriculum quality and no functioning MoE system to revise and replace materials as per the MoE curriculum policy (that is, every 4-5 years). There is a pressing need to overhaul how MoE develops its curriculum and produces quality products for Kiribati. Similarly, because reforms such as evidence-based policy and planning require a whole of system approach, involving awareness building across many functions and ownership from the top, progress on aspects such as monitoring and evaluation has been slow. It is too early to tell whether reforms have been sufficient.

²⁹ Annex 6, KEIP Phase III Six Monthly Report: January–June 2018.

It is also too early to tell the extent to which behavioural change being introduced by LLL is actually owned at the school level and whether head teachers have bought into (or are simply complying with) new initiatives such as peer learning groups and classroom observations). This also applies to the important work being done at KTC. The KTC reforms have aimed to increase KTC capacity and have focused on refining and reducing course loads at the pre-service program, trialling more online opportunities for in-service training, and revising the English program to allow use of online support and independent learning. These reforms may well provide the MoE with the opportunity to advance the accreditation process and ultimately the development of better quality teachers across the sector.

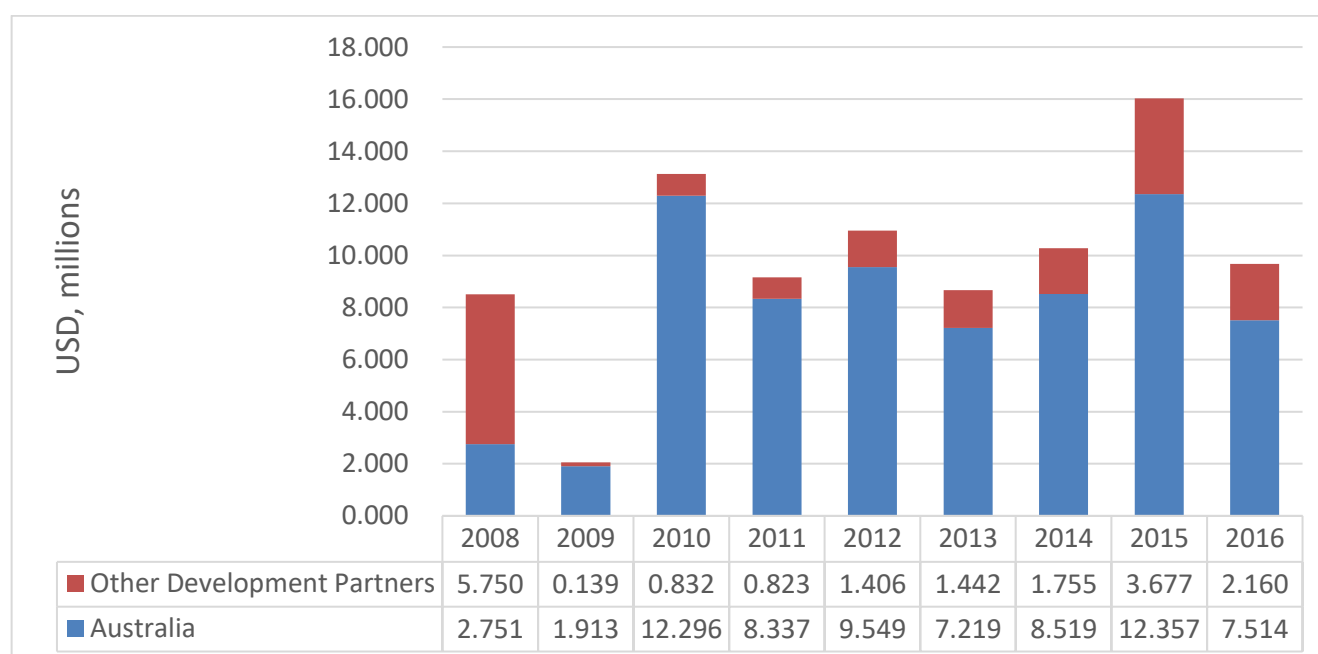
Other reforms (such as technical IT capacity being provided across examinations and KEMIS) have been driven by the TA and while they are owned by the Government of Kiribati, the depth of ownership and capacity does not yet appear to be sufficient to sustain them without long-term support. An additional concern is that rehabilitation of school buildings falls under a different ministry (the Ministry of Sustainable Infrastructure and Energy (MISE)), so changes at the political level will need to occur before MoE can be held accountable for managing or sustaining its schools and infrastructure.

d. Has Australian support (including financial, policy dialogue and so on) contributed to leveraging/securing sustainability?

We have noted a number of key initiatives driven by KEIP that are likely to be sustainable. KEIP has been instrumental in supporting the annual EPIK forum, which provides an important forum for information sharing and networking with a range of key players in the sector. The 2014 Independent Evaluation noted that the institutionalisation of EPIK is an impressive achievement, placing MoE at the centre of donor coordination and addressing barriers to a sector program approach.

Interviews with key role players in the sector also suggest that ongoing dialogue between MoE and KEIP has supported greater ownership and sustained momentum of reforms within MoE. For example, the revised selection process at KTC for pre-service teachers has led to increased numbers of teachers being available to help boost the number of trained teachers at primary schools. Another example has been efforts by MoE and KEIP to integrate community engagement into activities, to ensure broader understanding and support of reforms, and ultimately the sustainability of activities (this was particularly important during KEIP Phase II when KEIP, in conjunction with the MoE, conducted an exhaustive advocacy process with communities to explain the new English language policy). A further example is the role KEIP played in working with the FMU to conduct a survey of school facilities, which has provided a strong evidence-base for MoE planning and policy engagement with the Kiribati Government.

Figure 5: Official Development Assistance to Kiribati: Education Sector, in USD (Source: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development - Development Assistance Committee Creditor Reporting System)



The EPIK Forum has provided an opportunity for the MoE to leverage support for its initiatives, especially funding support for activities, but as Figure 5 illustrates, the support provided by other development partners remains small. In 2016 – the

most recent year for which data is available – Australia provided 78 per cent of the total amount committed to the sector by development partners.³⁰

While outside the remit of KEIP, policy dialogue between the governments of Australia and Kiribati could be strengthened further. Australia and Kiribati hold annual consultations but they focus primarily on Australia's Aid Investment Plan for Kiribati. The consultations do not deal specifically with the details of the Kiribati Government's strategy for the education sector, and typically involve high level Australian officials who are not intimately involved in the direct management of KEIP. It would be more meaningful if there was dialogue that focused solely on the education sector (as was the case during KEIP Phase II), and such dialogue happened more frequently. This would ensure regular contact between DFAT and the MoE and make it easier for DFAT oversee its investments in the sector and promote harmony between the objectives of KEIP and the strategic objectives of the MoE.

e. What lessons can be learned from the different phases of KEIP that should help shape the design of future interventions?

We have identified a number of lessons that KEIP has already learned and is addressing that should help shape the design of future interventions. To briefly recap:

- Align closely with priority areas in ESSP.
 - The DOP process will be central to ensuring appropriate planning, resourcing and reporting.
- Allow the MoE to demonstrate and take leadership of agreed priorities.
 - A partnership approach to planning, decision-making and implementation in line with capacity constraints promotes MoE buy-in and uptake of reforms.
 - Where there is strong alignment of KEIP support to MoE priorities and evidence to support the success of KEIP interventions, through a process of negotiation, MoE has committed to system changes, including taking on the funding of KEIP interventions over time.
 - Ensure that gains are consolidated and evidence of outcomes is available, especially regarding the new curriculum and new approaches to teaching and learning, before embarking on new initiatives.
 - There is enormous value in focusing on quality teaching and learning in the classroom, but there is also a need for practical pathways to be established for those students for which further academic coursework is not appropriate.
- Close and collaborative relationships between TA and MoE counterparts has supported systems reform.
- Adopting an iterative and adaptive model has enabled interventions and approaches to be trialled, learned from and adapted to suit the context and maximise results.
 - Piloting different approaches to in-service training and professional development using flexible, modular courses.
 - Efforts to promote equity through online enrolments and modules in KTC, which increases opportunities for those on outer islands.
- Infrastructure must continuously evolve based on lessons learned.
 - Importance of DRR principles, such as raising floors vulnerable to flooding and to create cooler buildings (see below).
 - Increased use of the local construction industry for the rehabilitation of school infrastructure is helping to build capacity.
 - Ongoing development of climate adaptive designs for new facilities is critical.
- The KEIP communication strategy is an important means for sharing success stories, public diplomacy and helping to promote partnership between the governments of Kiribati and Australia.

³⁰ Other development partners working in the Education Sector include New Zealand, UNICEF, Japan, Korea and Germany. However, other than UNICEF, most development partners are working outside of primary and secondary education and are instead focusing on tertiary education).

Cross-Cutting Issues

5. Are cross-cutting issues such as gender, disability including and the environment being adequately addressed?

Summary response to evaluation question

KEIP has made a concerted effort to incorporate cross-cutting issues into the design and implementation of activities, guided by a gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI) strategy. Approaches to supporting children with disabilities met success in some individual cases but broader traction with regard to inclusive education across all schools and MoE appears nascent. Gender stereotyping, climate change and DRR have been considered in the revised National Curriculum and Assessment Framework and ongoing curriculum roll out. Recent reporting shows high levels of gender-based violence and disturbing attitudes toward girls and women. This justifies an ongoing focus by KEIP on incorporating positive discipline, respectful relationships and visionary messaging about girls into the curriculum and as part of teacher professional development. DRR principles and climate change have strongly influenced the school rehabilitation program, promoting ongoing adaptations to design and collaboration with MISE.

a. How well has KEIP addressed cross-cutting issues?

Since 2011, KEIP has had a GEDSI strategy to provide clear guidance, as well as targets, outputs and opportunities for integrating gender equality, disability and social inclusion through all KEF-supported activities. The strategy also promotes appropriate analysis of data and comprehensive planning to ensure issues of inclusion are addressed. The strategy has been updated several times, with the last update in March 2016. KEIP has supported MoE to embed inclusion principles in ESSP 2012-15 and ESSP 2016-19, in the principles underpinning the Kiribati Education Act 2013 and in the Inclusive Education Policy.

Despite the Inclusive Education Policy being passed by the National Parliament in early 2015, MoE has to date committed a limited amount of funds to its implementation. KEIP is supporting several initiatives under the policy, and there have been several individual successes with regard to mainstreaming, but broader progress appeared nascent in the schools visited, and there was limited buy-in from MoE officers. KEF's efforts have largely focused on disability inclusion with less visible emphasis on gender equality. While the policy intended to address inclusion in a broad sense, its translation has become synonymous with disability among stakeholders interviewed. KEF is now looking to lift the profile of gender equality across the different KEIP interventions.

A recent internal report highlighted progress against KEIP's GEDSI strategy. Achievements included:

- Curriculum materials, including teacher guides and learning materials, better represent gender equality both in imagery, language and focus.
- The inclusion of skills and knowledge from the respectful relationship program is being included into the year 8 and 9 curriculum subjects of Moral Education, Social Science and Health.
- Women workers from Kiribati Institute of Technology have been involved in the construction of schools and fabrication of materials.
- Improvements have been made to school infrastructure to address gender requirements, for example toilets have been positioned in secure, not secluded, locations.
- Gender equality messaging has been incorporated into leadership training for IECs and ALs.
- The establishment of the MoE National Executive Leadership Standards Framework competency, which includes reference to positive organisational culture, including attention to counselling and support services. The framework also promotes inclusion through school councils for girls and boys, women in decision-making positions and safety programs for girls.
- The establishment of the MoE National Teacher Service Standards Framework, which supports school leaders and teachers with a focus on gender equality issues and gender sensitive leadership in schools.
- Community consultations have been conducted on the impact of gender-based violence on children and their schooling.
- Annual Inclusive Education Showcase Conferences have been held, during which IECs reported on the implementation of their action plans that responded to the prevention of gender-based violence in the community.
- KTC policies have been revised to ensure groups such as new mothers and residents of outer islands were not excluded.

- School leaders have been supported to develop a school-based discipline policy to support a positive learning environment for girls and boys.
- Support has been provided for awareness-raising days at MoE, such as Black shirt Thursday (for gender-based violence), White Ribbon Day and International Women's Day.

While many of these achievements were observed by the team, changing social norms requires a long-term vision that is sensitive to the local context, especially local power dynamics. An ongoing commitment is required by all stakeholders rather than one off interventions that are isolated from the broader system. KEIP has sought to build momentum through a multi-pronged approach, promoting and advocating for inclusion at the policy level, among MoE officers, with external stakeholders and at the school and community level. While there is a long way to go, there has been a shift in MoE attitudes, thinking and action on disability inclusion over the life of KEIP. This has been demonstrated in approaches to policy formulation, curriculum revisions, more inclusive pedagogy, infrastructure, 'recognising' KSCCSN, and paying the salary of the head teacher there. It has also been apparent in MoE's introduction of 'allowable adjustments' for students with disability in its system of formal high-stakes examinations. These achievements should continue to be monitored on a regular basis. They should be embedded as part of KEIP's Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, involving the setting of realistic targets and indicators. MoE should also continue to be supported over time with role modelling and work to adopt good practice systems and processes in relation to gender equality and disability inclusion.

KEIP's Monitoring and Evaluation Framework also refers to the inclusion of children with a disability at the EOPO level (in relation to learning outcomes) and at the intermediate outcome level, that is IMO 5. However, there is limited accurate data on the number of children with disabilities, and no linking of student data to assessments such as STAKi, meaning indicators that report on this IMO exclude children with a disability (noting KEMIS is unable to provide student level data on disability).

In terms of the environment, KEIP has been proactive in ensuring that environmental issues are central to all its core activities. Climate change and disaster risks have been considered during design and implementation and have been regularly monitored through the KEF annual work and risk management plans. Moreover, mitigation strategies have been incorporated into the new curriculum and teacher guides to create awareness and understanding at the basic education level about the environment and climate change; human action causing climate change and mitigation strategies to reduce the impact of climate change. Appropriate messages on climate change adaptation have also been incorporated into the new curriculum to provide students with relevant knowledge on responding and adapting to climate change and disaster impacts, such as high tides and heavy rain fall events.

The school rehabilitation and upgrading process has been influenced by DRR principles, with floors raised in areas vulnerable to flooding, use of building materials and structures that withstand rust and strong winds as recommended in the National Infrastructure Standards for schools. Coastal erosion has also been considered and an innovative double storey classroom designed. This design uses a raised floor to eliminate the use of sand and gravel, which contribute to coastal erosion. Sea walls have been built with funding support from the MISE at schools that may be affected by coastal erosion. The Risk Management Plan in the KEIP 2018 Annual Plan describes weather and other potential disaster risks, such as flooding and heavy rains, with strategies to ensure site assessments are undertaken before construction and appropriate modifications considered in the design, structure and location of the school.

b. What are the ongoing challenges regarding gender equality, disability and social inclusion?

Through interviews and reviewed documents, the team identified a number of ongoing challenges with regard to gender equality, disability and social inclusion, including:

- A recent report on girls' menstruation management³¹ highlights a lack of understanding in the community around menstruation. Despite the issue being included in the curriculum, teachers felt they did not have the resources or training to deal with the issue in the classroom. Lack of community information on menstruation has been compounded by traditional beliefs and social taboos that see many girls teased at school by men and boys in relation to menstruation. The recent Menstrual Hygiene Management survey identified some disturbing attitudes and behaviours, including the bullying and sexual harassment of girls. Poor WASH facilities have contributed to absenteeism and reduced participation of girls during menstruation. Girls with disabilities face additional barriers when managing their menstruation.

³¹ MoE (2018) *Breaking Down Barriers: Coming of Age, Becoming the Change*, case study on the knowledge, attitudes and practices of Menstrual Hygiene Management in Kiribati Schools 2018. The study was supported and led by the MoE, Australian Volunteers International and UNICEF.

- Similar to other Pacific Island Countries, the prevalence of gender-based violence remains very high in Kiribati. High levels of sexual abuse of girls have been reported³² including of girls with a disability. Teachers reported to the evaluation team that while they trying to promote and use positive discipline in the school, violence toward children in the home was common. One school in South Tarawa reported parents coming to school and using violence in the classroom to resolve disputes among children. It will be important for KEIP to maintain an ongoing dialogue around gender-based violence and its impact on schooling through professional development for teachers and leaders. In particular, teachers must be provided with support so that they are confident in teaching aspects of the curriculum that relate to respectful relationships and sexual health and are equipped with strategies related to positive discipline. Messaging around respectful relationships should continue to be mainstreamed in all KEIP-supported interventions. The use of the LLL program to promote messaging on positive discipline among school leaders is an excellent contribution, as are revisions in the curriculum that support respectful relationships. Both should continue to be revisited, emphasised and progress monitored.
- Recent KEIP research highlights some of the push and pull factors causing boys to drop out of school. The report stated that an overly academic curriculum in JSS and SSS and insufficient opportunities for sport were deterrents for boys to continue beyond year 6. On the face of it, the number of boys dropping out is greater than girls, but it is important to recognise that school non-completion is a significant issue across genders. For example, only 18 per cent of students who started year 9 in 2014 made it to year 13 in 2017.³³ The implications for girls not completing education are significant. Social norms suggest that on dropping out, boys will maintain their social status and have opportunities to find physical work. Girls, on the other hand, are on a trajectory for becoming young mothers with low status and limited opportunities for economic empowerment. The unemployment rates for young women aged 15-24 is 73 per cent. There is also evidence suggesting that Kiribati's poor health indicators are exacerbated by low educational attainment.³⁴ For this reason, as KEIP continues to work in JSS, improving retention for both boys and girls should be a priority focus.
- With limited career pathways for students who don't graduate from senior secondary and free education only available to those who pass (beyond year 9), an increasing reliance on high stakes examinations has developed. The team was told frequently about students, teachers and families sleeping on site at JSSs and SSSs in the leadup to these end of year examinations to maximise study time. International evidence shows potential for high-stakes examinations to have an increased negative impact on students from disadvantaged groups by disproportionately limiting their opportunities to proceed to the next level of the education system or to avail themselves of certain kinds of educational opportunities.³⁵ Stakeholders interviewed also commented that students most likely to fail were those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. After year 9, students who fail must attend mission schools and are charged fees. Because of these kinds of equity issues, the uses and outcomes of examinations must be carefully monitored at the system, group, and individual levels, and efforts made to reduce or mitigate any unintended negative consequences.

c. What are the factors that can explain any observed changes in the sector in terms of gender, disability inclusion and environment issues?

Having a legislative and policy environment that recognises the value of gender equality, disability and environmental mainstreaming as part of MoE's reform agenda is a key factor to changes in gender, disability inclusion and environment issues. The Shared Implementation Plan to Eliminate Sexual and Gender Based Violence in Kiribati (2013) proposed a framework for addressing harassment, discrimination and violence-supportive practices and promoting school cultures of respect, equality and non-violence. The implementation plan recognised KEIP as having 'significant opportunities for systematisation of good practice prevention activity (that is, addressing underlying norms and attitudes, not promoting protective behaviours) through the current education reforms....'. These policy platforms, international targets and conventions, along with DFAT's policy framework on these issues have given KEIP a mandate to push for changes in the sector related to gender, disability inclusion and environmental issues.

While societal progress remains nascent in terms of shifting many of the norms around these issues, some KEIP interventions have the potential to build capacity and influence behaviour in the longer term. Recognising that KEIP

³² Secretariat of the Pacific Community and the Kiribati Ministry of Internal and Social Affairs, (2010) *Kiribati Family Health and Support Study: A study on violence against women and children* and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), 2013, *A Deeper Silence: The Unheard Experiences of Women with Disabilities – Sexual and Reproductive Health and Violence against Women in Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Tonga*,

³³ MoE Presentation to EPIK on *School retention and learning*, May 2018.

³⁴ <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/KIR> Accessed August 2016

³⁵ Greaney and Kellaghan, 1995; Madaus and Clarke, 2001.

works in schools and among entrenched opinions, customs and practices and can only influence broader society so much, it has had some success. For example, during the latter stages of Phase II and early in Phase III, KEIP conducted several community consultations to raise awareness of gender-based violence in schools and at home. This was implemented mainly by IECs and officers from Tarawa. In some communities, these consultations have resulted in formation of committees to address the issue. Not unexpectedly, however, much still needs to be done to shift attitudes across the country. Attitudes will need time to shift but can be supported by an approach to gender equality, gender-based violence, and disability inclusion that focuses on enabling change in the community and custom.

The school rehabilitation program has continued to provide access to students and people with a physical disability, for example with the construction of covered walkways. Moreover, school rehabilitation processes have provided opportunities for skills formation and livelihood support, especially for women. This was a planned and parallel component of the infrastructure program. It included opportunities for women in business and mandated skill formation arrangements. The program also allowed men and women to gain work experience as KIT students, illustrating the extent of harmonisation of Australian aid investments in Kiribati).

Through the use of the GEDSI tool and training of the Curriculum Development and Resource Centre (CDRC) officers, primary school curriculum materials have been reviewed with a gender lens. The majority of materials sighted by the team included gender equitable imagery and gender inclusive language, with the exception of a few resources, such as big books and readers that had been developed locally. There are plans for further training, enhancement of the tool and peer review before additional materials are printed. This will ensure materials better represent gender equality and inclusion. Given the power of education to shift social norms over the long term, as much as feasible, efforts should be made to revise the curriculum to include more proactive and positive messaging around girls that challenges existing stereotypes and promotes transformative societal change. This messaging should emphasise stories with girls as narrators, lead characters and heroes.

With KEIP support, an accredited Certificate III Teacher Assistant course has been developed with KTC, and this will be offered as a one-year award in 2018. Students are in the process of completing their practical placement at KCSSN. KEIP is working with MoE to encourage the recruitment of these assistant teachers into model schools once they graduate. These will be the first teachers to have specific training to work with children living with a disability, including the ability to develop IEPs. If deployed for this purpose (they could be asked to work in any school), these teachers will greatly enhance the staffing capacity to teach children with special needs at the Model Inclusion Schools.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The evaluation found that progress toward end of program outcomes is mixed. Results on learning outcomes have not yet demonstrated any consistent upward trends and MoE management reforms are at various stages of implementation and institutionalisation. Nevertheless, the evaluation found that KEIP has made good progress toward achieving its expected outputs, and the performance of the program has been both effective and efficient. The majority of planned KEIP activities have been delivered on schedule. Several have been harmonised with other Australian-funded interventions in the sector, such as the role of the ESPPA, investments in KSCCSN, support to the SPC and UIS to facilitate improvements in data management, and the awarding of Australian Awards Scholarships to teachers and ministry personnel. KEIP has also made a concerted effort to incorporate cross-cutting issues into the design and implementation of activities, guided by a GEDSI strategy.

Several system-wide innovations supported by KEIP have helped strengthen the sector, such as the introduction of the DOP process, which has helped the MoE improve its budgeting, resource allocation, planning and reporting procedures. A number of successful KEIP initiatives, such as IECs, have been adopted by the MoE and are now incorporated into its budget planning. Other activities, such as infrastructure, have evolved over time to suit the context. The new curriculum (years 1-6) has also been adapted to suit local conditions. It has been adopted by teachers and the roll out remains on track.

Recently introduced innovations (such as the sweeping reforms at KTC and the LLL) introduced by KEIP appear to be effective, however it is too early to tell what the lasting impact of these activities will be and will require ongoing monitoring. Both the KTC reforms and the LLL initiative display characteristics of effective and efficient development programming. KTC has aligned pre- and in-service training with the new curriculum, teachers are being upgraded, there is a strong focus on quality, and an equitable enrolment process has been introduced. The LLL initiatives, meanwhile, have introduced a robust professional development focus on new pedagogies and leadership, and have enabled the ALs to play a critical role in supporting professional development in situ.

The Kiribati Government continues to help secure the sustainability of the gains achieved by KEIP by creating a strong policy environment within which KEIP operates, increasing recurrent budget allocations, facilitating the absorption of successful KEIP initiated interventions (in particularly key positions, such as the IECs) and also supporting, for example, the ambitious reforms at the KTC.

The evaluation identified several areas that will require attention in the remaining period of KEIP Phase III and/or require additional thought in the design of the next phase. Of particular concern is the challenge KEIP faces in measuring the achievement of high-level outcomes. Linked to this point is the finding (by MoE's own admission) that MoE data is still inadequate to support evidence-based decision making and resource planning in the sector. Senior management within the MoE also expressed concern over a perceived lack of transparency in planning and budgeting of KEIP activities. They noted that in previous years, senior management were fully consulted and integral to the financial approval process. This issue needs urgent attention to ensure it does not undermine the strong partnership between the MoE and KEIP. Other areas of concern include the perception among many of the direct beneficiaries of KEIP that the pace of change is too fast in some areas to enable consolidation and transfer of skills and knowledge within the MoE, and that the level of consultation with stakeholders is not always appropriate.

The evaluation also identified several opportunities to strengthen the sustainability of activities initiated by KEIP. These could be further explored and incorporated into the design of the next phase of KEIP. Ongoing discussions between the program and MoE could, for example, identify other areas where KEIP could strengthen existing MoE systems. Another opportunity would be to harness the strong community engagement (especially outer island SIP Committees) to help improve learning outcomes (such as tracking school performance and holding schools to account, helping support the implementation of the language policy, and working with schools to enhance the behaviour of learners). Strong community engagement also provides an opportunity to explore a more sustainable local model for improving school infrastructure on outer islands to ensure a greater likelihood of effective maintenance. Finally, the appointment of a new permanent secretary in the MoE and feedback from this evaluation provides an opportunity for MoE and KEIP to work

together to build on last year's DOP process and strengthen joint planning and implementation for 2019 (including establishing a partnership agreement that identifies a common approach to work and promotes greater transparency).

Recommendations

With the above findings and conclusions in mind, the evaluation team has compiled the following recommendations. We believe these issues need to be addressed in the remaining period of KEIP Phase III and/or considered during the design of the next phase of KEIP to achieve the EOPOs and longer term, transformational change in the education sector in Kiribati.

Findings	Recommendation	Responsibility			
		MoE	DFAT	KEIP	Design Team
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Few opportunities for policy dialogue between Kiribati Government/MoE and DFAT EPIK is insufficient for dialogue 	1. Establish a policy dialogue process that will be of mutual benefit to the MoE and DFAT, ensuring issues, priority needs and policy agendas are discussed.	√	√		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retrofitting KEIP to ESSP has had its challenges 	2. Future design of KEIP needs to be premised on the revised ESSP to ensure there is strong alignment of future program (including M&E) with ESSP outcome areas. ³⁶	√	√		√
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measuring achievement of high-level outcomes has been problematic Support for data collection and management is not supporting MoE priority needs 	3. Agree on indicators and support systems for measuring EOPO 1 and 2 that can inform both KEIP and MoE reporting and decision-making. For example, for EOPO 1: MoE and KEIP should work together to track and report progress against the performance indicators specified in the KV20 for Education. ³⁷ For EOPO 2: Develop a rubric that defines how, and to what extent, KEIP support to the MoE can be attributable to any improvement in planning, allocation of resources, and management of the sector. 4. A long-term plan is required for data management in the sector based on MoE information needs. This plan must be strongly articulated and communicated to development partners.	√		√	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Misunderstanding regarding KEIP resources A lack of understanding regarding the KEIP budget and planning process 	5. Agree on principles for joint planning and budgeting to ensure greater buy-in from MoE in the KEIP Annual Planning process and opportunities for routine follow-up between senior management in MoE and KEIP (such as quarterly progress meetings between MoE, DFAT and the KEF team).	√	√	√	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pace of reforms problematic at school level 	6. Pace and sequencing of KEIP reforms needs to be reviewed in line with existing MoE systems	√		√	√

³⁶ To achieve this recommendation it may be necessary to extend/amend KEIP Phase III by a year to allow this and/or use the mid-term review of ESSP as an interim guide.

³⁷ See the targets specified on page 25 of KV20. The relevant performance indicators: improvement in per cent of school aged children that receive formal education; per cent of school dropouts; per cent improvement in English language literacy; improvement in the competency of teachers; reduction in pupil teacher ratio; survival/retention rate in primary education; amount of truancy; and improvement in parents support towards school activities. Where applicable the information should be disaggregated by gender and disability.

Findings	Recommendation	Responsibility			
		MoE	DFAT	KEIP	Design Team
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overload of reporting requirements/introducing new approaches 	<p>and processes, particularly at the IEC and school level, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise and implement new JSS courses over two years, with a focus on core subjects for Year 8 in 2019 and non-core in 2020 to enable consultation, peer review and sufficient time for professional development, particularly in new subject areas. Review the workloads of IECs. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High level of community engagement in maintenance and functioning of schools 	7. Use school outreach and existing SIP committees for greater engagement with the community on topics of inclusion and learning (reinforcing KEIP outcomes)	√		√	√
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Language policy at risk and unlikely to achieve expected outcomes (particularly in English) in foreseeable future 	8. Work with MoE to highlight evidence of local/regional success with use of their first language in early years and communicate this to MoE, teachers and community. 9. Step up efforts to support policy more comprehensively (that is, expose community to English language, emphasise the link between English and pathways to reducing shaming, incentivise local solutions) including the provision of, or increased access to, simple audio/visual equipment to assist teaching of English.	√		√	√
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Curriculum Review (Years 1 to 6) has provided a series of practical recommendations based on solid research Curriculum and Assessment Framework still very academic in SSS, few qualified teachers and resources especially for science, limited pathways Throughput rate is very low in SSS (only 15 per cent of JSS students make it through to Year 12/13) School non-completion is a significant issue across both genders. 	10. Consolidate gains in the curriculum reform and ensure there is evidence of improved learning outcomes before expanding scope to SSS. Consult with MoE to consider opportunity cost of investing in SSS versus taking time to consolidate gains, transfer knowledge and embed effective and efficient system changes. 11. If support expands to SSS, continue to promote more contextually relevant non-core subjects, practical pathways in the curriculum including English as a pathway and SSS links with KIT. 12. As KEIP continues to work in JSS (and if support expands to SSS) improving retention for both boys and girls should be a priority focus.	√		√	√
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very little provision for maintenance of new buildings Buildings being maintained on outer islands only if/when resources are provided 	13. Need for clear Kiribati Government policy regarding maintenance of new builds (including clarification regarding the role of the SIP Committee). The policy should provide a viable strategy (linked to a realistic resource plan) that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocates a sustainable local model for rehabilitating and upgrading schools on outer islands; and 	√		√	√

Findings	Recommendation	Responsibility			
		MoE	DFAT	KEIP	Design Team
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies how the community can play a key role in the maintenance of existing and rehabilitated buildings (including making provisions for applicable resources – such as tools, and materials that can be locally sourced). 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender equity issues continue to challenge the system 	<p>14. Given the power of education to shift social norms over the long term, as much as feasible, ongoing support should continue to be provided to build capacity within CDRC and to review curriculum resources at all levels to include more proactive and positive messaging around girls that challenges existing stereotypes and promotes transformative societal change. This messaging should</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> emphasise stories with girls as narrators, lead characters and heroes, and emphasise respectful relationships. 	√		√	√

Annex 1: Terms of Reference

Kiribati Education Improvement Program (KEIP) Independent Evaluation 2018

Terms of Reference

1. Background

Improved Basic Education is one of the priorities of the Kiribati-Australia Partnership for Development and the Aid Investment Plan Kiribati: 2015-16 to 2018-19. The Government of Kiribati and the Government of Australia are committed to improve the quality of education provided in Kiribati's 118 Primary and Junior Secondary schools (JSS) through the Kiribati Education Improvement Program (2011 – 2019).

The Kiribati Education Improvement Program (KEIP) is a framework/program through which Australia supports the Ministry of Education (MoE) to implement the Government of Kiribati's (GoK) Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP). The ESSP reflects MoE commitment to Sustainable Development Goal 4 and Kiribati Development Plan. KEIP support focuses on improving the basic education subsector of the ESSP with a focus on access to a quality education and improved learning outcomes.

KEIP is a nine-year program (2011-2019) that aligns with GoK planning cycles and works at various levels (MoE, school leaders, teachers, community) to support systemic change. KEIP has been delivered over three phases:

- i. Phase I (Jan 2011-Feb 2013, \$13 million) focused on building the enabling environment/policies for subsequent phases;
- ii. Phase II (Mar 2013-Mar 2016, \$22m including \$2.2m NZ contribution) focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning in Years 1-4.
- iii. Phase III (Apr 2016-Dec 2019, \$32 million) focuses on consolidating previous reforms and extending reforms to upper primary school (years 5-6) and into junior secondary schools (years 7-9).

The goal of KEIP Phase III is for young I-Kiribati to finish basic education with the knowledge and skills to contribute to a productive and resilient Kiribati community by pursuing two end of program outcomes:

- i. improved learning outcomes in basic education for I-Kiribati girls and boys, including children with disabilities and
- ii. MoE effectively plans, resources and manages sector priorities.

Key interventions and activities under KEIP Phase III include curriculum reform and assessment; teacher professional development; school leadership; inclusive education; school infrastructure rehabilitation; and strengthening MoE institutional capacity.

Australia's financial support to KEIP is channelled/provided through the Kiribati Education Facility (KEF) since Phase II – Phase III. The KEF is based within MoE and managed by the MC, Coffey International for Development. Through the KEF, the MC mobilises and manages locally engaged staff and international Technical Advisers (TAs) to support MoE with the implementation of the planned activities under each component of KEIP.

Australia also supports the Education Strategic Planning (and Policy) Adviser (ESPPA) role within MoE (formerly the Senior Education Management Specialist deployed in June 2010 – December 2014) under the Pacific Technical Assistance Mechanism. The ESPPA works directly with the MoE Executives to implement and manage the ESSP 2016-2019. The key focus includes strengthening capacity in policy planning and development across all subsectors of the education system in Kiribati,

sector performance management and donor coordination. The ESPPA work complements and supports the KEF work in the basic education subsector of the ESSP.

Australia also provided funding to UNESCO and UNICEF for specific activities as part of the curriculum and teacher professional development under KEIP Phase I and through regional funding in KEIP Phase II to UNESCO/UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) and Pacific Community (SPC) to support improving data collection, quality and availability in the Kiribati Education Management Information System (KEMIS) within MoE.

Overall, KEIP has been progressing well with reporting at the bi-annual Education Partners in Kiribati (EPiK) sector forum and the Kiribati Aid Program Performance Report. So far, the new curriculum materials for Years 1-6 have been provided to all 94 primary schools, with teacher professional development programs being carried out before materials are taught in the classrooms. Nineteen primary schools have been rehabilitated so far under KEIP.

The scope and nature of KEIP support has been ambitious considering the comprehensive reform agenda, absorptive capacity within MoE and allocated timeframe. This has been demonstrated by the requested extensions to KEIP Phase I (14 months) and Phase II (3 months). Emerging challenges include the limited capacity for school maintenance within Government of Kiribati systems; and the central role of Kiribati Teachers College to effectively support professional development in-service teachers in line with national requirements (e.g. National Language Policy, Inclusive Education Policy, National Curriculum and Assessment Framework). As KEIP Phase III progresses to Junior Secondary schools, increasing attention is being focused on ensuring appropriate learning pathways for students and clarifying the role of faith-based schools. A trial of tablet use in Year 4 classrooms is being delivered under KEIP to support student learning and as a tool to help teachers maintain their English language proficiency.

2. Purpose of the evaluation

The purpose of the proposed evaluation is to assess overall program performance toward achieving planned program outcomes. The findings of the evaluation will inform the design of further Australian aid investment in the education sector and improvements to program delivery through the remainder of KEIP Phase III. Evaluation findings will be presented at the bi-annual EPiK forum and published on the DFAT website.

3. Scope

Robust evaluation plays a vital role in ensuring that we deliver a high quality aid program and should provide evidence and lessons to underpin our aid spending. An independent evaluation of KEIP was conducted in August 2014, to review progress of the program from January 2011 to the second year of KEIP Phase II. That report is available on the DFAT website.

Building on the 2014 review, this independent evaluation will include KEIP Phase II (March 2013 – March 2016) and Phase III (April 2016 – 2018) and the Education Strategic Policy Planning Adviser. Through the following questions, the evaluation will assess progress toward intermediate outcomes; assess whether the current and planned interventions offer the best chance of these outcomes being achieved; and propose changes to ensure the equitable and sustainable attainment of such objectives.

The evaluation should address the following questions:

1. To what extent are the KEIP end of program outcomes (refer Phase II and III Investment Design, Program Logic, and M&E framework) on-track to being achieved?

- 1.1 What factors have contributed to successes and what are the lessons learned?
- 1.2 Have outcomes been achieved *equitably* across the school system, particularly geographically?
2. To what extent have Australian-funded interventions supported the achievement of KEIP outcomes?
 - 2.1 Are these the right interventions to achieve the program outcomes? Are they efficient and effective and appropriately resourced?
 - 2.2 What have been the missed opportunities and unintended benefits, if any?
 - 2.3 What changes to the delivery approach need to be considered to ensure outcomes can be achieved under KEIP Phase III and to support a future investment?
3. To what extent are KEIP and MoE securing the sustainability of progress made?
 - 3.1 Does the Ministry –from the institutional to the classroom level – demonstrate ownership of the capacity development and curriculum reform process?
 - 3.2 Is the MoE better equipped to manage the basic education system?
4. Are cross-cutting issues such as gender, disability inclusion and environment issues being adequately addressed? What are the ongoing challenges regarding gender equality and disability inclusion? What priority activities/actions could improve performance?

The evaluation will include one in-country visit for consultations (observations, interviews, focus groups) with national stakeholders, including MoE and Development Partners/members of EPiK working in the education sector. There will also be at least one field visit to an outer island.

4. Team composition

The team is proposed to comprise the following people:

- Team Leader
- Education Specialist
- DFAT representative with Pacific education program management experience (Vanuatu Senior Program Manager)
- Government of Kiribati representative - observer

DFAT considers that activities of this nature provide an opportunity for program staff to gain exposure to thematic and monitoring and evaluation experts and would like Post/program manager to participate as an observer in the evaluation to the extent possible. The staff member's participation will improve the quality of the evaluation report and recommendations by providing contextual knowledge DFAT's operations and structure. Vanuatu program staff participation supports cross-program learning.

Participation from the Government of Kiribati enables knowledge and lessons from the evaluation to be retained within the Government, and may enhance future engagement between DFAT and the Government on this program.

DFAT may procure two consultants to fill the Team Leader and Specialist roles at the ARF C3-C4 level. This role may be filled by a single person who possesses the quality and requirements of the positions as set out below.

The Team Leader role may include:

- extensive monitoring and evaluation experience using qualitative and quantitative methods;
- demonstrated experience in a team leadership role and effectively utilising the expertise of team members;
- experience and knowledge of the primary and secondary education sectors;
- ability to provide timely delivery of high-quality written reports.

The Education Specialist role may include:

- experience in the primary and secondary education sub-sectors, preferably with a focus on early grades and early grade learning, basic education reform and numeracy and literacy;

- understanding of teacher professional development especially in preparing teachers to improve literacy, and to implement a bilingual education approaches (using a two-languages implementation model) and assisting teachers in ‘bridging’ from one language of instruction to another); and
- ability to provide timely delivery of high-quality written inputs and reports.

Both responsibilities will require:

- thorough understanding of the Australian aid program and experience in aid program development, planning, monitoring and evaluation;
- demonstrated analytical skills and ability to gather and synthesise views from a range of stakeholders and resources, including drawing on international best practice;
- excellent interpersonal and communication skills, including a proven ability to liaise and communicate effectively with key national stakeholders.

5. Roles and responsibilities of the evaluation team

The Team Leader and the Specialist and in close collaboration with the other team members, will:

- plan, guide and develop the overall approach and methodology for the performance assessment including the development of the Independent Evaluation Plan for the Independent Progress review;
- manage and direct evaluation activities, representing the team and leading consultations (and this includes deciding the most appropriate level of participation of DFAT personnel in certain meetings)
- manage, compile and edit inputs from other team members, to ensure the quality of reporting outputs;
- synthesise evaluation material into a draft and a final Independent Evaluation Report;
- mentor the team with a view to improving their monitoring & evaluation skills;
- participate in any further DFAT quality assurances process;
- demonstrate strong monitoring and evaluation expertise in the education sector.

Other team members will:

- work under the overall direction of the Team Leader;
- provide advice on context, access to networks, and an understanding of GoK and DFAT processes; and
- participate in the Independent Evaluation as directed by the Team Leader;

DFAT will provide assistance with:

- program briefing on Australian aid investments in the education sector in Kiribati;
- sourcing and provision of relevant documents;
- logistics such as organising and confirming meeting schedules and domestic travel arrangements; and
- hosting the aide-memoire presentation (see below)

6. Outputs

The following outputs are proposed to be provided:

- 1) **Draft Independent Evaluation Plan** to be submitted by Team Leader to Tarawa Post by *[To be confirmed in line with Section 9]* (for discussion and comments).
- 2) **Final Independent Evaluation Plan** to be submitted by Team Leader to Tarawa Post no later than *[To be confirmed in line with Section 9]*.

- 3) **Aide Memoire** to be presented by the Team Leader to representatives of DFAT Post, the Government of Kiribati, Coffey International and any other interested party at the completion of the in-country mission (Aide Memoire Meeting tentatively proposed on [*To be confirmed in line with Section 9*]). The Aide Memoire must be based on the template provided and will a) summarise initial findings; (b) validate facts and assumptions; and (c) discuss the feasibility of initial recommendations. The key audiences for this document will be the Australian High Commission, the Government of Kiribati and the other active stakeholders.
- 4) **Draft Independent Evaluation Report** to be submitted by the Team Leader to the Post for comments by [*To be confirmed in line with Section 9*]. The report should be no more than 30 pages (plus annexes). Lessons and recommendations should be clearly documented in the report.

DFAT will present a quality assured draft to the MoE Secretary by [*To be confirmed in line with Section 9*]. Feedback, through the MoE will be provided to the Team Leader by [*To be confirmed in line with Section 9*]. DFAT/MoE will not alter the findings or recommendations but reserve the right to ensure in-country stakeholder views are accurately represented.

- 5) **Final Independent Evaluation Report** to be submitted by the Team Leader to the Post by [*To be confirmed in line with Section 9*].

All reports are required to meet the standards set out in the DFAT Monitoring and Evaluation Standards, particularly Standard 5 – Independent Evaluation Plans and Standard 6 – Independent Evaluation Reports. All reports are required to be based on templates provided, including the template for the Independent Evaluation Plan and Independent Evaluation Report, unless otherwise agreed in writing by DFAT.

It is intended to tie payment regimes to the outputs identified above. Reimbursables will be paid as agreed.

7. Key Stakeholders

Government of Kiribati

1	Mr David Collins	Minister of Education
2	Ms Kaaro Neeti	Secretary to the Ministry of Education
3	Ms Felicity Kaiuea	Deputy Secretary, MoE
4	Ms Ruuta Tekeraoi Terieta	Director for Education, MoE
5	Ms Reetina Katokita	Director for Policy Planning and Development, MoE
6	Heads of Divisions	Ministry of Education
7	Island Education Coordinators	Ministry of Education
8	Head Teachers and Principal	Ministry of Education
9	Teachers	Ministry of Education

Additional Local Stakeholders

10	Members of the Education Partners in Kiribati	
11	Kiribati Institute of Technology	Ministry of Employment and Human Resources
12	CEDAK	Catholic Mission office, Teoraereke
13	Kiribati School and Centre for Children with Special Needs (KSCCSN)	Bikenibeu
14	University of the South Pacific	Extension Campus, Teoraereke

Government of Australia

15	Mr Bruce Cowled	Australian High Commissioner to Kiribati
16	Mr Thomas Roth	Deputy High Commissioner to Kiribati
17	Ms Alexandra Langley	Second Secretary (Development Cooperation)
18	Ms Florence O'Connor	Program Manager, Kiribati Education Improvement Program
19	Tony McGee	Education Specialist (Pacific), Canberra

Coffey International Development

20	Mr Paul Tippet	Senior Development Specialist
21	Ms Helen Stannard	Team Leader, KEIP
22	KEF Technical Advisers	Coffey International Development

Development Partners

23	UNICEF	Kiribati and Fiji
24	SPC	Fiji
25	UNESCO/UIS	Samoa

8. Key documents to review

1. Investment Design Document for Kiribati Education Improvement Program Phase I, II and III
2. Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) 2012 – 2015 and ESSP 2016 – 2019
3. KEIP Phase II Completion Report
4. KEIP Phase II and III Annual Plans
5. KEIP Phase II and III Progress Reports
6. Education Strategic Planning Adviser Terms of Reference, workplans and associated reports
7. KEIP 2014 Independent Evaluation Report and Management Response

9. Timing and Duration

The Independent Evaluation is proposed to be undertaken as follows. All aspects are subject to discussion and agreement with DFAT. A teleconference will be scheduled to discuss timing and various aspects of the outputs at the commencement of services. Dates are indicative and negotiable with preferred tenderer.

Task	Indicative dates		Location	Indicative inputs			
	Option A	Option B		Team Leader	Specialist	DFAT	Other/GoK
Initial briefing, review documents and prepare Independent Evaluation Plan (include refinement of evaluation questions)	Early May	May	Office/Remote	3 days	3 days	3 days	3 days
Preparation of draft evaluation plan			Office/Remote	3 days	3 days	1 day	1 day
Submit Draft Independent Evaluation Plan to Tarawa Post	18 May	1 June					
Discuss Draft Independent Evaluation Plan and confirm the evaluation questions with Tarawa Post	Late May	Mid-June	Office/Remote	0.5 days	0.5 days	0.5 days	0.5 days
Preparation Final 2018 Independent Evaluation Plan to Tarawa Post			Office/Remote	1 day	1 day	0.5 days	0.5 days
Submit Final 2018 Independent Evaluation Plan to Tarawa Post	8 June	29 June	Office/Remote				
In-country mission: Proposed key activities as follows: i. initial team meeting and briefings Tarawa ii. consultations including an outer island visit, early conclusion drawing, preparation of Aide Memoire iii. presentation of Aide Memoire A detailed schedule will be developed separately to these ToRs.	18-30 June	23 July – 6 August	Kiribati	13 days	13 days	13 days	13 days
Preparation 2018 Independent Evaluation Report including data processing and analysis			Office/Remote	5 days	3 days	1 days	1 days
Submit 2018 Independent Evaluation Report (see 7. Outputs)	20 July	27 August	Office/Remote				
Comments on the draft report from Post	Minimum of 5 working days before final draft due		Office/Remote				
Preparation 2018 Independent Evaluation Report (see 7. Outputs)			Office/Remote	2 days	1 days		
Submit Final 2018 Independent Evaluation Report (see 7. Outputs)	22 August	28 September	Office/Remote				
In-country presentation of evaluation findings	TBD	TBD	Kiribati	5 days			

Task		Indicative dates		Location	Indicative inputs			
		Option A	Option B		Team Leader	Specialist	DFAT	Other/ GoK
Travel Days					4 days	3 days		
	Total (maximum inputs)				36.5 days	27.5 days	19 days	19 days

Annex 2: Documents Reviewed

1	KEIP Phase I Design Document and Annexes
2	KEIP Phase II Design Document and Annexes
3	KEIP Phase III Design Document and Annexes
4	KEIP Phase II Annual Plan 2015
5	KEIP Phase III Annual Plan 2016
6	KEIP Phase III Annual Plan 2017
7	KEIP Phase III Annual Plan 2018
8	KEIP Aid Quality Checks 2015
9	KEIP Aid Quality Checks 2016
10	KEIP Aid Quality Checks 2017
11	KEIP Aid Quality Checks 2018
12	KEIP Phase II Evaluation Report
13	KEIP Phase II Evaluation Report - Management Response
14	KEIP Phase III Progress Reports July - Dec 2016
15	KEIP Phase III Progress Reports Jan -June 2016
16	KEIP Phase III Progress Reports Jan -June 2017
17	KEIP Phase III Progress Reports July - Dec 2017
18	KEIP Phase II Completion Report (April 2016)
19	Senior Education Management Completion Report 2014
20	Education Strategic Planning Adviser (ESPPA) Terms of Reference 2017
21	Education Strategic Planning Adviser (ESPPA) 6 Monthly Progress Report (Oct 2017)
22	Education Strategic Planning Adviser (ESPPA) 6 Monthly Progress Report (2016/2017)
23	Education Strategic Planning Adviser (ESPPA) Completion Report (2017)
24	Kiribati Ministry of Education, Sector Strategic Plan 2012-2015 (March 2012)
25	Kiribati Ministry of Education, Education Sector Strategic Plan 2016-2019 (October 2016)
26	Kiribati Ministry of Education, STAKI Report 2015
27	Kiribati Ministry of Education, STAKI Report 2016
28	Kiribati Ministry of Education, STAKI Report 2017
29	Kiribati EGMA Report 2017
30	Kiribati PILNA Report 2015
31	The Status of Early Childhood Health and Development in Kiribati
32	Kiribati Early Human Capability Index 2017 (PEARL)
33	EPIK MoE Presentation on school retention rates and learning May 2018
34	MoE & UNICEF <i>Breaking Down Barriers: Coming of Age</i> , Becoming the Change, case study on the knowledge, attitudes and practices of Menstrual Hygiene Management in Kiribati Schools 2018
35	KEIP Phase III Review of the Implementation of the Year 1 -6 Curriculum: Implications for Improving Literacy and Numeracy, May 2018
36	Overview: Case Study on why boys are dropping out of school in Kiribati
37	Guest et al, 2016. How many Focus Groups Are Enough? Building an Evidence Base for Nonprobability Sample Sizes. Guest Greg, Emily Namey, and Kevin McKenna. <i>Field Methods</i> 1 – 20. 2016.

	https://www.researchgate.net/publication/301719869_How_Many_Focus_Groups_Are_Enough_Building_an_Evidence_Base_for_Nonprobability_Sample_Sizes
38	Government of Kiribati, Ministry of Education, <i>Digest of Education Statistics</i> , 2016 (Draft)
39	Government of Kiribati, <i>Kiribati Development Plan (2016-2019)</i>
40	Government of Kiribati, <i>Consolidated Budget Books (2014 – 2018)</i>
41	Government of Kiribati, <i>Kiribati 20-Year Vision: 2016 - 2036</i>
42	DFAT (2014) <i>Australian aid: Promoting prosperity, reducing poverty, enhancing stability</i>
43	DFAT (2015) <i>Australian Government's aid investment plan for Kiribati: 2015 – 19</i>
44	KEIP (2016) English Language Proficiency, and TESOL development of KTC Staff, in-service and pre-service teachers: Review and Recommendations
45	KEIP (2018) Repair and Maintenance Survey Report
46	KEIP (2018) Review of the Implementation of the Year 1 to 6 Curriculum: Implications for improving literacy
47	KEIP (2018) A cross-cutting issue: Update on Progress Toward Gender Equality (Internal)
48	World Bank Development Data Group and UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2004). <i>A Framework for Assessing the Quality of Education Statistics</i> .
49	Secretariat of the Pacific Community and the Kiribati Ministry of Internal and Social Affairs, (2010) <i>Kiribati Family Health and Support Study: A study on violence against women and children</i>
50	Questions for Children – See http://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/washington-group-question-sets/child-disability/
51	United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), (2013) <i>A Deeper Silence: The Unheard Experiences of Women with Disabilities – Sexual and Reproductive Health and Violence against Women in Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Tonga</i>
52	A. Bishop, S. Finucane, M. Finucane (2002) <i>Ending Violence Against Women and Girls: Pacific Regional Scan</i>
53	Ministry of Internal and Social Affairs (2010) <i>National Approach to Eliminating Sexual and Gender Based Violence In Kiribati: Policy and Strategic Action Plan 2011-2021</i>
54	Secretariat of the Pacific Community (2010). <i>Kiribati Family Health and Support Study: A study on violence against women and children</i> , Noumea, New Caledonia.

Annex 3: List of Evaluation Participants

	Constituency	Designation
	Government of Kiribati	
1.	Mr David Collins	Minister of Education
2.	Ms Bwakura Metutera Timeon	Secretary to the Ministry of Education
3.	Ms Felicity Kaiuea	Deputy Secretary, MoE
4.	Ms Ruuta Tekeraoi Terieta	Director for Education, MoE
5.	Ms Reetina Katokita	Director for Policy Planning and Development, MoE
6.	Kinta Eram	TSIMU
7.	Eretia Monite	School Improvement Unit, SEO Senior Secondary
8.	Tebwaatoki Taawetia	School Improvement Unit, SEO Junior Secondary
9.	Rakera Tiree	School Improvement Unit, SEO Primary
10.	Teburantakia Kaei	Gender and Inclusive Education Coordinator
11.	Karabi	Director of Curriculum
12.	Mariateretia Nauree	SAO, Examinations and Assessment Unit
13.	Marian Tabani	Acting Senior Resource Officer, CDRC
14.	Ms Tirebwa	Sector Economist, Ministry of Finance
15.	Tarebwaia Tiinga	Island Education Coordinator, Abaiang
16.	Mr Kuarawete	Assistant Lecturer, Abaiang
17.	Head Teachers and Principal	Ministry of Education
18.	Teachers	Ministry of Education
	Additional Local Stakeholders	
19.	Leretita Bataeru	Council for Mission Schools
20.	Tinana Kaue	Principal, Kiribati School and Centre for Children with Special Needs (KSCCSN)
21.	Julie Lamb	AVI, Finance and Operations Adviser, KSCCSN
22.	Etita Rubi	Finance and Operations Manager
23.	Dr. Takuia Uakeia	Acting Director, University of the South Pacific
24.	Peter Langbien	KIT Principal
25.	Bannau Tiata	KIT Deputy Director, Quality
26.	Helen Cherry	KIT Academic Services Adviser
27.	Parents/Community Members	
28.	School Improvement Committees	
	Government of Australia	
29.	Mr Thomas Roth	Deputy High Commissioner to Kiribati
30.	Ms Alexandra Langley	Second Secretary (Development Cooperation)
31.	Ms Florence O'Connor	Program Manager, Kiribati Education Improvement Program
	Coffey International Development	
32.	Paul Tippet	Managing Contractor Representative
33.	Helen Stannard	Team Leader, KEIP
34.	Erin Blake	Monitoring and Evaluation Adviser
35.	Angela Cincotta-Segi	KTC Teacher English Language Specialist
36.	Glenn Davies	Senior Development Specialist Gender, Disability and Social Inclusion
37.	Andrew Erbs	Database Management Specialist
38.	Phillip Geeves	Assessment Adviser
39.	Nick Harding	Infrastructure Management Advisor
40.	Lucy Kum-On	Senior Manager Professional Learning
41.	Glenn Newling	JSS Curriculum Adviser
42.	Susanne Owen	School Based Leadership and Management Adviser
43.	Ben Schultz	KEIP Finance Advisor
44.	Neil Trivett	KTC Teacher Training Specialist

Development Partners

- | | | |
|-----|----------------|-----------------------------|
| 45. | Scott Pontifex | SPC/EQAP Fiji |
| 46. | Mathew Morris | Director NEPO (PACTAM) |
| 47. | Nigel Ewels | NZ Deputy High Commissioner |

Annex 4: KEIP Progress Per Component/IMO

KEIP progress reporting has taken different forms since commencement, especially as KEIP has attempted to align the IMOs more closely to the ESSP, and subsequently the DOPs. This has, for example, seen recent KEIP reports group the IMOs under relevant goals in the ESSP.³⁸ We have therefore followed a similar approach in discussing progress.

School Curriculum and Assessment

- IMO1: Year 7-9 curriculum with a broader and applied curriculum focus
- IMO4: Community engagement in school participation and educational performance
- IMO6: Year 1-4 teachers continue to improve their teaching and learning with the new curriculum
- IMO7: Year 5-8 teachers with the knowledge and skills to apply the new curriculum

Curriculum

KEIP reporting has shown that the new curriculum continues to be developed and rolled out on schedule, with a new year introduced every year. The recent KEIP-supported *Review of the Implementation of the Year 1 to 6 Curriculum: Implications for Improving Literacy* and observations from the team confirm that teachers have adopted the primary curriculum and, where still available, are using all resources supplied during KEIP Phase II.³⁹ There are ongoing challenges, however, relating to timeliness, quality, and replacement of materials and the continuous training of teachers in skills to deliver the new curriculum. Concerns raised during interviews with key informants, MoE officials and at the school level included:

- There is still a lack of awareness (and relevant evidence shared) among MoE officials, teachers and the community around the value of using the first language in the early years. Teachers are also struggling with the transition to English. Both of these are likely to threaten the ongoing implementation of the policy.
- The JSS curriculum has been revised to provide a more applied, relevant focus for I-Kiribati students (as per the Phase III design). However, many year 7 teachers introducing the curriculum this year, specifically those with completely new subjects to teach, did not feel confident about their capacity to teach the new content.
- Limited specialist curriculum writing experience in the CDRC and high staff turnover has resulted in variable curriculum quality and no functioning MoE system to revise and replace materials as per the MoE curriculum policy (that is, every 4-5 years).

The team observed a strong commitment by MoE to acting on the recommendations of the recent curriculum review and noted that MoE was in the process of developing an action plan with KEF support. However, interviewed MoE officers said they were unsure how much funding and support would be provided by KEF to address the recommendations, as they believed KEIP funding was now focused on JSS. The new curriculum adviser had also informed them that his focus was now on the roll out of the JSS curriculum. Nevertheless, in follow-up discussions, the KEF team and DFAT noted that critical gaps identified in the review would be considered as part of the 2019 KEIP Annual Planning process, and that support would be provided to MoE to review its curriculum 'replacement policy', with a view to ensuring funding for regular replacement of materials was included in the MoE budget in the future. As part of this process, a focused effort will be made on providing information to all staff, with less reliance on MoE internal communication channels to distribute information and inputs.

Assessment

With KEIP support, the national assessment, STAKi, has been carried out routinely every year in October since 2015. This has provided MoE with an indication of progress in te-Kiribati, English and numeracy, although as discussed below, trends have been difficult to observe from the results. Since 2017, the ministry has fully funded the implementation of the assessment, demonstrating strong ownership of the process. KEIP support is still required to

³⁸ See Annex 5, KEIP Phase III Progress Report July–December 2017 for more details.

³⁹ At the end of KEIP Phase II, research found that all primary schools had received years 1 - 4 new curriculum materials and readers. The case study research showed that the teachers were using the new curriculum to plan and deliver lessons, and the SED research showed that 90% of teachers had easy access to new curriculum materials, and less than 5% of teachers may have restricted access to new curriculum materials. Our visits to schools, roughly three years later, found that in the bigger schools particularly curriculum materials were often incomplete. However, as we were not doing a census it is not possible to quantify the extent to which materials are missing from schools.

analyse the results. KEF advised that staff turnover had hampered the transfer of skills in this area. There was also interest from MoE officials to see greater integration of student-level assessment data with information recorded in KEMIS.

With KEIP support, work has started on aligning the year 8 STAKi with the new outcomes-based curriculum under development. Results from these national assessments are being distributed at the school level in a simple traffic light report card format. While efforts have been made to communicate these results to parents, very few community members interviewed by the team were familiar with the results of the STAKi, referring more often to the end of term report cards. The assessment technical adviser had also reported a reluctance on the part of schools to share STAKi information in any detail with the community.

Nevertheless, KEIP has made strong progress in promoting community engagement on issues related to the school rehabilitation component of both Phase II and Phase III. Community consultation has been a key part of the school rehabilitation process. Further, the MoE Community Consultation Team has been well received and provided a foundation for ongoing engagement on issues such as school improvement, attendance, inclusion and how to increase community support.

Infrastructure

- IM02: Rehabilitated primary schools (agreed priorities) on South Tarawa meet the national infrastructure standards
- IM03: Schools maintained by the FMU

KEIP Phase III has made strong progress in upgrading the targeted schools across South Tarawa (as per the Kiribati Government's Primary School Rehabilitation Plan). Under Phase II, KEIP supported the rehabilitation of seven schools on the Line Islands (Teraina, Tabuaeran Island, Kiritimati Island) and five schools on Tarawa. The rehabilitation works, despite being extensive, are on schedule to be completed before the end of Phase III, and all are compliant with National Infrastructure Standards (including standards on safety, and water and sanitation facilities). Site visits in South Tarawa demonstrated that works have gone relatively smoothly with minimum interference to the affected schools. Construction has been done in close consultation with Ministry of Sustainable Infrastructure and Energy (MISE), which has provided new seawalls where necessary. MISE has also approved and signed-off on all school and classroom infrastructure work as required by the government.

Upgrading work typically involves the demolition of existing classrooms, the construction of new facilities, including 'KitSet' classroom blocks, new toilet blocks, electric lights and power sockets, and WASH facilities (such as potable water tanks and hand wash stands). To further facilitate inclusive education, covered walkways and wheel chair accessible ramps and toilet/shower facilities are also being provided. Furniture is also provided for the classrooms, and new offices and staffrooms being built.

The construction works are being carried out by a local, South Tarawa based, construction contractor, Squareline Construction, which is both 'pre-qualified' to tender for KEF contracts and experienced, having undertaken other KEF KitSet work contracts. All procurement takes place in line with Commonwealth Procurement Rules. All building works are put out to tender to pre-qualified contractors. At present (and as an outcome of the public tender process) Squareline is undertaking construction work in Taaken Bairiki PS and at KTC (Learning Hub). Only one company, KiriCraft, is equipped to do the pre-fabrication work for the KitSets and it is unlikely that another provider would set up a similar facility due to the short-term nature of the KEIP infrastructure program. Additionally, 20 smaller contracting companies bid for works such as fencing, covered walkways and furniture.

Being a KEF 'pre-qualified' contractor means that the company is actively encouraged to achieve a gender balanced workforce on site. This site runs a labour force of about 20 people with usually five of them female tradespeople. The appointed contractor supplies all labour required to undertake the works, while the materials, which are sourced from New Zealand, again as a result of an open tender process, are the responsibility of the KEF.

Interviews with the FMU suggest that it has worked well with KEF TAs on the upgrading works. The FMU, for example, chairs weekly site meetings during the construction phase at the targeted schools, and has been integral to the recent *Repair and Maintenance Survey Report*⁴⁰ conducted by KEIP. The purpose of the survey was 'to enable the MoE through its FMU to better understand the condition of its schools'. This survey assessed the maintenance and repairs

⁴⁰ Annex 6, KEIP Phase III Six Monthly Report: January – June 2018.

needed in 28 schools on nine islands of Kiribati, 18 of which were built with Australian aid funds. These schools had been upgraded and repaired during KEIP Phases I and II. As already noted, however, the rehabilitation of the buildings fall under a different ministry (MISE), and as such, changes at the political level will need to occur before the MoE can be held accountable for the repair and maintenance needs identified in the survey.

School Leadership

- IMO 9: Effective coaching and management of teachers by school leaders

The introduction of 18 IECs to the outer islands in 2015/16 has dramatically increased MoE's ability to reach out to and monitor schools. Originally funded by KEIP, these positions have now been formalised within the MoE system. The IECs have become largely administrative positions, supporting the work of other development partners such as UNICEF's WASH program. Given the IECs expanded work load, it became necessary to recruit associate lecturers (10 in total) for both Tarawa and the outer islands to support head teachers and teachers with in-service coaching and leadership mentoring. Where there are no associate lecturers, IECs do both. This usually only occurs in locations with a few schools, so the load is manageable. IECs and associate lecturers are trained and supported to carry out their capacity development roles.

The LLL program, developed by KEF with MoE input, received excellent feedback from participants and continues to evolve based on identified needs.⁴¹ The majority of teachers interviewed confirmed that head teachers had introduced new processes after training, with teacher observations (including the provision of feedback) and regular peer learning groups being the most common changes. Through the IECs and associate lecturers, KEIP has conducted significant monitoring of head teachers following trainings. Initially this process was impeded by cultural issues. Some head teachers were reluctant to offer negative observation comments, although this has improved over time. Among teachers (and some principals), there is some confusion about the improved processes supported and advocated for through LLL and how these appraisals fit in with the MoE requirements such as formal teacher appraisals. As a new program, the activities introduced as part of LLL are not yet reflected in the formal school calendar. One principal suggested that integrating LLL commitments or blocking out periods for these requirements would assist with better organisational management at the school level and support principals, particularly those with a full teaching load, to manage their commitments. While IECs were very supportive of the LLL, they also commented that the additional workload from the monitoring has added to their already significant workload.

For LLL Phase I, head teachers were mostly trained in South Tarawa. For Phase II and future phases, KEIP has introduced a cascade model that brings training to the local environment and includes follow-up activities and mentoring from IECs and associate lecturers. In Phase II, some teachers on outer islands indicated that there were some issues with IECs not being able to elaborate some course details. In general, however, participants were pleased with the quality of training.

Inclusive Education

- IMO5: Improved teaching and assessment of all struggling students including children with a disability

KEIP inclusive education initiatives have been consistent with DFAT's twin track approach⁴² and have involved a range of approaches targeting teachers, schools, parents and external factors such as community attitudes, policies, regulations and resources. KEIP has supported the distribution of the Kiribati Disability Inclusive Teaching Guide, the implementation of Individual Education Plans, the establishment of Model Inclusion Schools in South Tarawa, in-service teacher workshops and the development and delivery of a Certificate III Teacher Assistant course at KTC. Much of this work has been built on the substantial regulatory and policy work that occurred during KEIP Phase II, such as the formulation of the Inclusive Education Policy, the passing of the 2013 Education Act in parliament, and subsequent promulgation of education regulations.

The team visited only one Model Inclusion School, so it was difficult to gauge the effectiveness of interventions, especially as many interventions were relatively new. Teachers interviewed had little recall of the type of inclusion training received and added that they had insufficient strategies to deal with the increasing number of students with

⁴¹ Although substantially different to the training providing during KEIP Phase II, LLL does nevertheless build on the success KEIP Phase II achieved in its 'School Leadership and Management' initiative whereby all registered school principals were trained in the period 2013 – 2016. A key feature of the training was the adoption of school improvement plans by schools during KEIP Phase II.

⁴² See <https://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Pages/development-for-all-2015-2020.aspx> (accessed September 2018)

special needs that were enrolling in the Model Inclusion School. They also felt there had been little awareness provided to the broader school community on inclusion principles and supporting children with special needs.

Interviews with teachers at other schools revealed few had awareness of how to be inclusive of students with a disability, with the exception of sitting them at the front of the classroom. While accepting of the need to be inclusive, teachers felt unprepared to teach diverse learners or children with special needs and some community members said they should go to KSCCSN. In most cases, schools reported having only one or two students with a (physical) disability, although several mentioned hearing problems and slow learners when prompted. With the exception of the Model Inclusion School, no teachers interviewed had received any training on how to identify or teach children with a disability and only two head teachers (including one from KSCCSN) had a copy of Kiribati Disability Inclusive Teaching Guide. Only one teacher at the Model Inclusion School had seen the guide briefly in the head teacher's office, while the other teachers had not heard of it. This is despite several copies of the guide being sent to all schools in Kiribati in Feb 2018 and teachers in Model Inclusion Schools attending training around this guide.

Field visits found that for some teachers, their only exposure to 'inclusive education' had been reference to it in new curriculum materials, or through the new teacher observation tool. Contradicting these findings, teacher observation data showed teachers were performing well in their approach to inclusive education, suggesting there was considerable misunderstanding about the term 'inclusive education'.

While KEIP has worked with KSCCSN at several levels, KSCCSN often felt more burdened by the engagement than supported. KSCCSN has experienced increasing enrolments every year but is under significant financial stress as it is not recognised as a government primary school and operates as a small not for profit organisation.⁴³ The school has been approached by KEIP on several occasions to support KEIP initiatives but representatives interviewed said that they felt consultation on matters related to inclusive education were often conducted late in the process. They also complained that requests for support were stretching their limited human and financial resources. Despite the strong commitment from the school to support children with a disability, only a few KSCCSN teachers are qualified and they have limited specialist training in working with children with special needs. Teachers at KSCCSN receive salaries 15-20 per cent less than government teachers and there was a worry that the increased demand from KEIP for teachers experienced in working with children with special needs could drain their already limited pool of teaching staff.

There were conflicting reports on the success of mainstreaming students with a disability. KSCCSN was concerned that there was pressure to mainstream more students but, based on student feedback, believed teachers at King George V School were not yet adequately prepared to receive students with special needs. KSCCSN said it believed students and their aides were not receiving enough support from classroom teachers. For example, vision impaired students were not receiving class content in advance so that it could be translated into braille and aides for deaf students needed time to be able to translate difficult scientific concepts. Similarly, there were issues around the willingness of teachers to use suitable accommodations for examining students with a disability to ensure they were not disadvantaged. While KEIP support has been provided to develop Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and some accommodations made for examinations, KSCCSN advocated for a more formal approach to transitioning that considered and monitored the support required at all levels, to ensure the mainstreaming experience was not detrimental to student welfare.

Kiribati Teachers College

- IMO8: Improved English language teaching skills of Year 3-9

KEIP support combined with strong, reform-minded KTC leadership resulted in a significant transformation of both pre-and in-service training for primary and JSS teachers in KTC. It is still too early to assess the effectiveness of these reforms in developing teacher competence, given the redesigned pre-service program only commenced in January 2018. The development of new courses has been closely aligned with the South Pacific Qualifications Framework, although MoE has chosen to delay going through accreditation at this point. An online enrolment process has seen a huge increase in applications, with equity measures ensuring students from outer islands and males are targeted. While this increase has provided a much-needed boost to the number of future qualified teachers, the announcement came late in the MoE budget cycle. This meant there was no time for KTC to secure additional funds in its annual budget allocation, so the technical adviser and director successfully worked through how to best manage this large increase. Thus, while senior management in the MoE endorsed the increase in enrolments, it has meant that the MoE

⁴³ The Australian Government provides a \$300,000 grant to KSCCSN and MoE has recently started contributing \$100,000 towards the salaries of teachers.

has had to find additional funds to supplement what was originally budgeted for student travel and accommodation expenses.

There has also been a strong emphasis on improving quality, particularly through responding to participant feedback on courses and ongoing professional development of KTC lecturers. While courses are being modularised, and recognising this is a new model, it is worth noting that several teachers undertaking in-service training were still unaware that certain course offerings⁴⁴ would provide them with credit points that could be used to upgrade their qualifications.

ESL/TESOL courses have been redesigned in light of the 2016 ESL/TESOL review.⁴⁵ Using the KTC assistant lecturer positions, the plan is being executed as designed. It was first rolled out in Tarawa, then the four big islands, followed by the 15 smaller islands, with the emphasis on ways to address the challenges teachers were facing in teaching the English curriculum. The course begins with a 10-day face-to-face workshop (usually in Tarawa) followed by an independent learning component, culminating in a workshop. Participant feedback has been very positive,⁴⁶ although one principal commented that materials had very small print. The ESL materials observed by the team also had few articles related to Kiribati or the Pacific more broadly. While we understand teachers were provided with USB sticks that included the online materials referenced, several teachers interviewed on Buitaritari expressed frustration that they couldn't access the internet links in the workbook (due to unreliable and expensive internet).

With KEIP support, a new, more contextually appropriate proficiency tool was developed in 2018 and is being gradually introduced pre- and post- course roll out. While this will give a better indication of course quality, it will be difficult to compare the effectiveness of the new style of courses compared to previous approaches. There was a strong interest from MoE officials in understanding whether ESL/TESOL training for teachers was improving their proficiency. Results from the new training were still pending at the time of the evaluation.

There has been significant progress toward the recommendations in the 2016 ESL/TESOL review. Promotion of the use of English in schools and outside the classroom, however, remains an ongoing challenge. The Learning Hub, currently under construction at KTC, will provide a much-needed space to promote the use of English and has the potential to be replicated at a smaller scale across the sector. In the outer islands, this might be an area where KEIP could incentivise some local solutions that promote greater use English as per ESL/TESOL review, cognisant of the contextual realities, including affordability and limited internet connectivity on many islands (see recommendation 8).

Ministry of Education

- IMO10: Policies, regulations and standards that support improved learning improvement
- IMO11: Activities reflect ESSP priorities, and are planned and resourced in advance
- IMO12: Activities are delivered on-time, to quality, within budget
- IMO13: PPD provides policy relevant evidence
- IMO14: MoE effectively manages EPIK role including an annual joint ESSP review

Previously supported by the ESPPA, KEIP has more recently promoted the use of the MoE's DOP process to plan and budget for activities. The DOPs align division-level activities to the ESSP and higher-level government objectives for education. Other development partners have also been encouraged to include their activity plans and budgets, including KEIP support. The KEIP financial information included has been limited to the funded activities in the IMOs as per the KEIP Annual Plan. While this process is progressing well and has strong MoE ownership, there is more work to be done to embed the process, for example, by including measures to monitor performance, track expenditure and forecast the cost of emerging policies and initiatives.

EPIK meetings have been taking place every six months, with high level representation from the MoE and development partners working in the education sector. The meetings have been financed by the KEIP and managed by MoE. During the last meeting, MoE provided an update on ESSP progress, including achievements to date, future plans and the status of the ESSP mid-term evaluation being implemented with KEIP support. Partner representatives, including KEIP, provided an overview of their activities, plans and achievements. While the meetings have run well and

⁴⁴ Not all in-service training attracts credit points (ESL doesn't, TESOL does), and credit can only be claimed once assessment tasks have been satisfactorily achieved.

⁴⁵ KEIP (2016) English Language Proficiency, and TESOL development of KTC Staff, in-service and pre-service teachers: Review and Recommendations

⁴⁶ Participant feedback surveys, evaluation team school consultations.

provide a forum for sharing information between development partners, senior MoE officials felt they, 'didn't necessarily get much out of the event' and were interested in how the meetings could be made more strategic and purposeful. With so much content (and PowerPoints) to get through, there were few opportunities for MoE-led discussions on priorities that might stimulate dialogue and debate with development partners. Other stakeholders from the sector also commented on the multitude of PowerPoint presentations and limited opportunities for discussion. It is therefore apparent that there is a need for the MoE to make sure it takes control of the agenda to suit its needs. These meetings should be strategic (and they have been in the past, for example, under KEIP Phase II), and provide a forum for information sharing and the basis for policy dialogue (see recommendation 1).

The KEMIS struggles to provide timely and accurate data to support MoE decision-making. In a crowded development partner space (all largely funded by DFAT), KEIP support has focused predominately on securing the stability of the server through improved hardware rather than data management. Nevertheless, KEIP has provided support to the MoE executive team to retrieve basic information from its operational units, through a portal, in the absence of an effective data management system. This has assisted the MoE to report on enrolments, examinations and staffing.

Coordination with the work of other development partners is discussed under Key Evaluation Question 2, and it is an area that could be improved significantly if there were better clarity on roles and responsibilities. There have been attempts to demarcate who does what in this space but KEIP has little information or detail on what others are contracted or expected to provide. It is also an example of DFAT regional programming not quite meshing with bilateral programming. Despite the efforts of development partners to coordinate support, MoE and other key informants believe progress around KEMIS and information management could be enhanced through:

- a) greater consultation among all parties, including providing more details to MoE about the cost and resourcing implications of decisions around certain reforms and system upgrades;
- b) more clarity around roles and responsibilities of the various development partners, including their limitations; and
- c) a longer-term plan that promotes increased alignment among development partners and MoE priority needs, which need to be more strongly articulated and communicated to development partners.

MoE and key informants would like to see increased integration of databases that to date have been developed without a common vision across the divisions. MoE has requested increased skills transfer to MoE staff across the divisions, particularly in relation to accessing and analysing data from the databases. Connected to reporting requirements under the SDGs, MoE would like to be able to report at the student level and wants to see examinations data integrated with KEMIS.

Given the limitations of MoE data, it has been necessary for KEF to undertake specific research on KEIP priority areas to assess effectiveness of KEIP activities. Interviews with senior management in the MoE found that they do not believe they are fully consulted on the research agenda for KEIP and were not always included as part of research teams for recent studies. A major KEIP investment in research relates to the Kiribati Tablet Trial (KTT). Despite cabinet approval for the trial, several senior officers within MoE and other stakeholders expressed concern about the value of such a pilot⁴⁷ and believe some KEIP technical assistance has been diverted to the trial, in their view, potentially at the cost of more pressing MoE priorities.

KEIP support for the MoE-led mid-term evaluation of the ESSP 2016-2019 has been very well received. Findings will inform decision making for the second half of ESSP implementation and the development of the new ESSP (scheduled to start in 2019). The MoE-led process will enhance the MoE executive and management's understanding of an evaluation process and results-based management.

⁴⁷ Assessing the cost effectiveness of using tablets versus more traditional resources will be essential to determining the viability of such an approach for Kiribati and other Pacific islands in the future.