

INDEPENDENT EVALUATION MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

KIRIBATI EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Summary of management response

We (Tarawa Post) agree with the broad thrust of the evaluation's findings, conclusions and recommendations with most being used to either guide activities over the balance of the program's current phase or to inform the design of our future support to Kiribati's education sector.

Individual management response to the recommendations

#	Recommendation	Response and explanation	Action plan	Timeframe
1	Establish policy dialogue processes that will be of mutual benefit to the Ministry of Education and DFAT, ensuring issues, priority needs and policy agendas are discussed	Agree: DFAT and the ministry's executive (along with the program implementing partner) will meet quarterly to discuss strategic matters, and on an 'exception' basis beyond that. Both will be in addition to senior officials' talks, development partner forums; and sectoral coordination meetings.	Underway: The first quarterly tripartite meeting was held in March 2019, with senior officials' talks scheduled for May 2019 and the Education Partners in Kiribati forum scheduled for the second half of the year. Two 'exception' meetings have been held beyond that.	Tripartite meetings will be held in March, June, September and December over the balance of this phase of the investment
2	The design of future education investments needs to be premised on a revised education sector strategic plan to ensure there is strong alignment with such a plan's outcome areas	Agree: DFAT has long sort to integrate education investments with domestic planning cycles.	Underway: DFAT is pursuing an option to find the programming space to allow the sector plan to be developed in advance of the design of any new education investment (subject to delegate approval).	It is anticipated the new education sector strategic plan will be developed during the third and fourth quarters of 2019, with a design to follow soon after.

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3	Agree on indicators and support systems for measuring end of program outcomes that can inform both program, ministry and national reporting and decision-making.	Agree: The KEIP management team was able to 'retrofit' program outcomes and outputs to align with a sector plan that was developed after KEIP was designed. The program team has also worked with ministry officials to ensure national and international reporting is based on robust data.	Underway: The program's monitoring and evaluation adviser, along with ministry counterparts, will continue to review and adapt monitoring and evaluation plans to capture rigorous and reliable outcome level data that is able to inform decision making and serve multiple reporting requirements. The program and the ministry will continue to work with regional partners to improve the Kiribati Education Management Information System.	Work has commenced and will continue for the remainder of the program (and probably into the next). During 2019, the program's monitoring and evaluation team, along with the ministry's research unit will also investigate the program's impact on the education system in Kiribati
4	A long-term plan is required for data management in the sector based on the ministry's information needs. This plan must be strongly articulated and communicated to development partners	Agree: Timely data collection, validation and data management continues to present challenges for the sector.	Underway: In 2018 the program developed a data reporting portal to enable the ministry to have ready access to useful information for decision-making. KEIP will continue to develop this portal during 2019 in parallel with regional efforts to strengthen the Kiribati Education Management Information System (through SPC/UIS). In addition, the new <i>education sector strategic plan</i> (in development) will include a focus on strengthening sectoral information management.	Work has commenced and will continue for the remainder of the program (and probably into the next).

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5	Agree on principles for joint planning and budgeting	Agree: We agree with the recommendation, and are satisfied that existing arrangements for program planning and resource allocation are transparent, widely understood and integrated with divisional and ministerial operational plans.	Underway: KEIP leadership will continue to consult with the ministry's executive about program activities and resource allocation. Joint planning exercises late in 2018 ensured 2019 operational plans for KEIP, divisions and the ministry were aligned and integrated and gained executive sign-off. Executive will be engaged in, and/or briefed on, future planning activities. Planning and resourcing decisions will continue to be consultative and collaborative – including for decisions that will shape future investments in the education sector.	Resourcing will be discussed during monthly management meetings, and tripartite meetings. Joint annual planning exercises will continue throughout.
6	The pace and sequencing of KEIP reforms need to be reviewed in line with existing ministry systems and processes	Agree: It is critical that the pace and sequencing of KEIP reforms matches the capacity of the national system to realise and sustain improved student learning outcomes.	Upcoming: There are strong links between this recommendation and our response to it, and recommendation #10 (the scope of our work). The scope, pace and sequencing of future work in the education sector will be considered in the upcoming concepts and design phases.	Subject to delegate approval, it is envisaged design activity will start in the second half of 2019, and consider questions of scope, pace and sequencing.
7	Use school outreach and school improvement planning committees for greater community engagement on topics of inclusion and learning (reinforcing KEIP outcomes)	Agree in part: The program has done a good job in engaging the community, especially around access and attendance, and school refurbishments.	Underway: During 2019, the program team will work with the ministry to involve the community in efforts to improve the quality of education in Kiribati. Work will proceed in four streams: school planning; learning environments; STAKI results; awareness raising. The community will also be consulted on curriculum and learning topics.	This work will be undertaken over the balance of this phase of the program (and into the next subject to necessary approvals). Activity in this regard has been incorporated into the 2019 work plan.

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8	Highlight evidence of local and or regional success with the use of vernacular in early years, and communicate these to teachers and the community.	Agree with both recommendations: Policies, standards and pedagogical approaches for the teaching and assessment of English language - for teachers, trainers, lecturers and students - continue to challenge the entire education sector (and this extends to our work in workforce skills development).	Ongoing: The program has two streams of ongoing activity here, one related to the adequacy and penetration of the language-of-instruction policy, the second related to teachers' ability to teach in English and teach English as a second language. Whether we have got the balance between the two right needs further investigation, as does the adequacy of resourcing for both. These aspects will be picked up in the design of 'what's next'.	Work in support of the language-of-instruction policy will continue over 2019. So will work in further building teachers' English language competencies.
9	Step up efforts to support (<i>language</i>) policy more comprehensively	The policy, its implementation, and buy-in from the community all need strengthening.		
10	Consolidate gains in curriculum reform and ensure there is evidence of improved learning outcomes (<i>in basic education</i>) before expanding scope to senior secondary school.	Agree in principle: This makes sense, but the precise scope of our future work has yet to be decided. Questions about sequencing and the pace of reform have also yet to be resolved. They will be considered, in consultation with the ministry, in the concept and design of our future support to the Kiribati education sector.	Underway (in part) and upcoming: Findings and recommendations flowing from a 2018 review into the effectiveness of curriculum reform in years one through six will be carried forward over the balance of the program with the ambition of further improving learning outcomes in numeracy and literacy.	Consolidation of curriculum reform in years one through six will occur throughout 2019. Decisions about the scope of future programming will be made (subject to delegate approval) in the third quarter of 2019.

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11	If support expands to senior secondary schools, continue to promote more contextually relevant non-core subjects, practical pathways and links with the Kiribati Institute of Technology.	<p>Agree: We agree that substantial curriculum and pedagogical reform is required to better cater for the needs of senior secondary school students. We also agree that better post-school pathways must be created for school leavers. Both particularly if and when retention rates increase.</p> <p>If our support to Kiribati's education sector strategic plan is to include the senior secondary sub-sector, what that support looks like, and when it gets implemented at scale needs careful consideration. Better, more inclusive teaching of the basics, taking care not to <i>overly</i> vocationalise the curriculum should be foremost in our minds.</p>	<p>Underway (limited scope) and upcoming. The ministry has requested support from the program for senior secondary curriculum reform. Given such work is outside the existing scope of work, KEIP leadership has provided advice on the process of curriculum reform, and guidance on selection of curriculum advisers and the development and or procurement of appropriate teaching and learning materials. The program will assist the ministry to develop a work plan for senior secondary curriculum reform,</p> <p>Decisions about when our future support to the education sector expands to include the senior secondary school and will be considered in the concept and design processes (subject approval) and in close consultation with the ministry.</p>	<p>Advice on, and planning for, senior secondary curriculum reform has commenced.</p> <p>It is anticipated that activity leading to the design of a new investment in the education sector will commence in June 2019 (subject to delegate approval).</p>
12	Improving retention for both boys and girls should be a priority	<p>Agree: Student retention rates – for boys and girls – is of concern across all subsectors. With dropout reported as early as year two, and further losses experienced at key transition points, efforts to improve student retention should be prioritised. Of those students who start year nine, only 15% make it to year thirteen (the last of senior secondary school).</p>	<p>Underway: The program will continue to support the ministry's efforts to increase enrolment, participation and retention rates for I-Kiribati girls and boys. The program will further interrogate the challenges facing girls and boys in this regard, and consider the implications of such research for future activities (which may include curriculum reform, pedagogical changes, and strengthening pathways for early school-leavers).</p>	<p>This work will be undertaken over the balance of this phase of the program (and into the next subject to necessary approvals). Activity in this regard has been incorporated into the 2019 work plan.</p>

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13	Need for clear Government policy regarding maintenance of new buildings	Agree in principle: This is a matter for the Government of Kiribati. We note that provision for school maintenance has been made in the 2019 national budget and that the Ministry of Education's Facilities Management Unit continues to work closely with the Ministry of Infrastructure and Sustainable Energy on matters pertaining to school infrastructure (MISE is the ministry with responsibility for government building stock).	Underway (limited scope): The program's infrastructure team – along with the ministry's Facilities Management Unit and MISE counterparts - has conducted a school infrastructure maintenance survey of 28 schools (including 16 schools refurbished in the first two phases of the program). Based on this survey, the team has developed a costed, prioritised maintenance plan to inform work in this domain. The program will continue to work with school communities to care for refurbished school buildings.	What maintenance work that can be carried forward is included in the program's 2019 work plan (developed in consultation with the ministry of education).
14	Ongoing support should continue to be provided to the curriculum development resource centre to include more proactive and positive messaging around girls that challenges existing stereotypes and promotes societal change.	Agree: As this recommendation implies, KEIP has been doing good work in this regard, and positive messaging in curriculum materials will continue to be an important feature.	Underway: The ministry, with KEIP support, will continue to train curriculum writers, proof readers and quality assurers in gender appropriate content and respectful relationships; and avoiding negative imagery, stereotyping and disrespectful tones. This work will be complemented by gender focussed research (on bullying in schools, and gender-based violence); advocacy aimed at decreasing bullying and gender-based violence, and supporting respectful relationships; and training for school leaders (use of a gender equity checklist).	This work is ongoing and included in the program's 2019 work plan (developed in consultation with the ministry of education).