
Kiribati Education Improvement Program

Evaluation Report

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List of acronyms

CCT	Community Consultation Team
CID	Coffey International Development
CDRC	Curriculum Development and Resource Centre
DEO	District Education Officer
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DOP	Division Operational Plan
EPiK	Education Partners in Kiribati
ESSP	Education Sector Strategic Plan
FMU	Facilities Management Unit
GoK	Government of Kiribati
IE	Inclusive Education
IEC	Island Education Coordinators
KEF	Kiribati Education Facility
KEIP	Kiribati Education Improvement Program
KELP	Kiribati English Language Program
KEMIS	Kiribati Education Management Information System
KTC	Kiribati Teachers College
LIME	Learning, Impact, Monitoring and Evaluation
MC	Managing Contractor
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEF	Monitoring and Evaluation Framework
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MOE	Ministry of Education
NCAF	National Curriculum and Assessment Framework
PSRP	Primary School Rehabilitation Plan
SEMS	Senior Education Management Specialist
SIP	School Improvement Plan
SIU	School Improvement Unit
SLDP	School Leaders Development Program
SLSS	School Leaders Service Standards
SWAp	Sector Wide Approach

TA	Technical Adviser / Technical Assistance
TPD	Teacher Professional Development
TTC	Teacher Training Centre

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1 Executive summary

The Kiribati Education Improvement Program (KEIP) is a framework through which DFAT supports implementation of the Kiribati Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP). It is a ten year program which started in 2011 and is currently about half way through the second of three phases. The value of Phases 1 and 2 is \$43.1 million.

The **goal** of KEIP is that all Kiribati children achieve functional literacy and numeracy after six years of basic education. The focus is on access to and quality of schooling. A second strand is focused on improving governance and management of the education system. Phase 1 was a preparatory phase, oriented to creating an enabling environment for Phase 2 improvements in teaching and learning in the early years (1-4). It is envisaged that Phase 3 will focus on years 5-6 and junior secondary school.

The **purpose of the evaluation** is to take stock of the progress of KEIP in order to check that the implementation approach is the most appropriate and that activities are oriented to achieving the intended outcomes in the most efficient manner. The **key questions** were oriented to describing the results so far, analysing what it means for learning achievement and understanding the implications for the future. The **scope** was from inception in January 2011 until May 2014. The **main methods** were document review, semi structured interviews and observation in three schools in Tabiteuea North and two in South Tarawa. The team comprised of external (independent) and internal (DFAT) evaluators.

Findings

Do all children have access to the new curriculum and materials? Years 1-3 classrooms are equipped with the curriculum materials and resources they need for improving children's learning. All teachers were using them in the classroom and the supply of readers seemed adequate. Teachers were following the language policy in all classes and there is anecdotal evidence that the attendance of children has improved. In most cases observed, access to the curriculum was inhibited by the absence of desks and chairs, which adversely affected teachers' management of the classroom.

Do all teachers have capacity to develop children's Te-Kiribati language, literacy and numeracy skills? The quality of curriculum materials and teacher professional development training is high. Training has been highly equitable, provided directly in all schools in all locations. Though expensive, it is good value for money. Teachers are applying learned practices in planning, teaching and assessment. However, most need a deepened understanding of the new curriculum to develop students thinking and communication skills so they are ready for upper primary and JSS curricula. Many teachers do not fully grasp the conception of literacy that underpins the pedagogical approach in the curriculum guides, nor do they fully understand the relationship between assessment and improved learning. There is variation among school principals in their understanding of the role of the school in monitoring teacher and student progress in curriculum reform. A major issue for the Ministry is the form that the future provision of English language training should take to support the curriculum reforms and language policy.

Are more children learning in rehabilitated classrooms? Rehabilitated classrooms have made little or no difference to enrolment but have had an immediate positive effect in removing substandard infrastructure as a barrier to learning. Progress on the infrastructure component of KEIP has been much slower than expected and is highly political. The Community Consultation Teams associated with preparation for rehabilitation have proven to be effective and such an

approach has been adopted by MoE as a model for consultation on other policy issues.

Do more schools have partnerships with their communities to deliver quality education?

Considering how critical school improvement is to achieve the end of program outcome, this component is under conceptualised, underfunded and under supported. There is considerable unrealised potential to engage the community in school improvement. Research on improving access and participation is small and has not been given the attention or budget it deserves.

Does MoE have greater capacity to plan and monitor the delivery of quality education services?

This component is also too small and scattered to achieve the intended outcome. Support for monitoring and evaluation is crucially important and being supported in a way that is building ownership. But it is not at a stage where it is able to measure outcomes of either ESSP or KEIP. KEMIS, the database, is developing well but there is a very long way to go before it can guarantee the quality of data that will make it invaluable for school-centred reforms. Progress on inclusive education policy has been slow and the issues have become confused.

Relevance: KEIP is a relevant investment both at policy and school level. The envisaged sector approach (SWAp) has progressed modestly. Beyond the impressive creation of the Education Partners in Kiribati (EPIK) forum for donor coordination within MoE there may be little to be gained in pursuing a modality aimed at sector wide reform compared with continued focus on the sub sector of basic education and reform at school level.

Effectiveness and efficiency: Most aspects of KEIP have been effective. Success factors are the strong commitment to equity, the established base of capacity in the classroom, strong MoE ownership of curriculum reform and teacher development, and the role of the Senior Education Management Specialist (SEMS) in supporting system reforms. Factors creating stress have been the speed of reform and intensity of technical assistance. TA has been highly effective and efficient in some cases but has reduced ownership in others. Areas of inefficiency and poor value for money are the infrastructure component and the English language program, KELP.

Impact: Impact was not assessed. Areas of concern are that it will be impossible to evaluate impact on access in the future because of the limited scope of the available data-set and the lack of a baseline.

Sustainability: Sustainability is challenged by several factors; the one-off approach without systems for continuous improvement, insufficient understanding of some of the most important concepts of the curriculum reforms and the limited involvement of school principals, communities and parents. Sustainability requires a very long time frame and a lot of patience. The much needed reforms of MoE are looking promising but are very vulnerable at this stage.

Gender: Both boys and girls are seriously underperforming but boys are performing worst.

Conclusions

Greatest progress has been made in the ESSP strategic goals related to curriculum and teacher competence. Achievement within this short time frame is testament to the strength of ownership of MoE, the exceptional motivation of key individuals from central to school level, and the high quality of technical assistance. Least progress has been made in the strategic goal of providing a conducive teaching and learning environment through infrastructure. The two components of KEIP oriented to improved governance and management of the education system, are too small to achieve the intended outcomes. KEIP contains a number of design tensions that have manifested themselves in implementation. The institutionalisation of EPIK is an impressive achievement, placing MoE at the centre of donor coordination.

2 Introduction

2.1 Description of KEIP

Background

The Kiribati Education Improvement Program ('KEIP' or 'the Program') is the major vehicle through which Australia supports the implementation of the Kiribati Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP). The ESSP (2012-2015) reflects commitment at the international level to the *Education for All* goals and is aligned with the Pacific Education Development Framework. KEIP also supports the basic education priority outcome of the Kiribati-Australia Partnership for Development. This commits both governments to improve the standard of education provided in Kiribati's 118 Primary and Junior Secondary schools (JSS) over the ten years to 2020, with the focus on improving access to a quality education and improving student learning outcomes.

KEIP was designed to be implemented over a ten year period in three distinct phases which would align with the GoK and MoE four-year planning cycles (2008-11, 2012-15, 2016-19). After a late start and to allow the ambitious set of activities to be completed, Phase 1 was extended to two years, concluding in February 2013 rather than the planned December 2011. Phase 2 commenced in March 2013 and is planned to conclude, as scheduled, in December 2015. This means that it will last less than the planned three years. Phase 3 is still planned to start in January 2016 for four years.

Phase I was valued at \$13.2 million and delivered for slightly less. Phase 2 is valued at \$29.9 million.

Intended outcomes

The overarching goal of the KEIP is that, by 2020, *all Kiribati children achieve functional literacy and numeracy after six years of basic education*.

Phase 1 did not have an end of phase outcome but had preparatory activities that were oriented to establishing an enabling environment for the intended outcome of Phase 2: *all children in Years 1-4 participate in primary education and make progress towards functional literacy and numeracy*. The table below shows the phases and the intended outcomes in context.

Table 1: The phases and intended outcomes of KEIP

Phase 1 (completed) Jan 2011- Feb 2013	Phase 2 March 2013 – December 2015	Phase 3 (2016-2019)
No end of phase outcomes specified	End of Phase outcome: all children in Years 1-4 participate in primary education and make progress towards functional literacy and numeracy	Years 5-6 and Junior Secondary School
Outputs (oriented to an enabling environment):	Intermediate outcomes:	
1. physical facilities	1. improved teaching and learning for all children in Years 1-4	
2. legislation and policy	2. improved governance and management of the education system	
3. workforce development		
4. curriculum assessment		

Features of the design

KEIP is designed as a framework within which development partners (to date DFAT, UNESCO and UNICEF) to the education sector can support MoE to implement the ESSP. It focuses

resources on access to and quality of schooling, with Phase 2 focusing on improvements in teaching and learning in the early years (1-4) and Phase 3 on years 5-6 and JSS.

Table 2: KEIP support for ESSP strategies

ESSP STRATEGIES						
1. High quality Curriculum	2. Conducive learning environment	3. Committed and competent teachers	4. Stronger policy and planning systems	5. Legislative and regulatory framework	6. Consolidate partnerships with stakeholders	7 Strong support services
KEIP SUPPORT						
Curriculum and materials	Rehabilitated classrooms	Teacher professional development	Sector planning and monitoring		Community partnerships	Sector planning and monitoring
Improved classroom teaching and learning			Governance and management of the education system			
All children in years 1-4 participate in primary education and make progress toward functional literacy and numeracy						

The logic of KEIP has two strands, structured around five strategies that are directly aligned with the goals of the ESSP, as shown above. These are oriented to improving teaching and learning in the classroom and improving governance and management of the education system according to the logic that:

1. classroom teaching and learning will improve if children have access to better teachers, materials and classrooms. More children will participate in their schools, and will become functionally literate and numerate
2. education services will improve in quality if there are partnerships between schools and communities. This will strengthen the Ministry's ability to plan and monitor the delivery of services

The distinctive focus of KEIP is intended to be on improved learning outcomes which are inclusively distributed. This includes access to learning as well as *improved* learning for *all* children, regardless of gender, geographical location, economic status or disability.

A feature of the design is the inclusion of the Kiribati English Language Program (KELP). This was a follow on from the Language Education Pilot Project (LEPP) and aims to improve the English language skills of i-Kiribati teachers so that they have the competence and confidence to teach their subjects in English in accordance with the Government of Kiribati (GoK) Language in Education Policy.

The modality

The modality for Phase 2 was intended to be program support for activities clearly identified as policy priorities in the ESSP, but using some external management and financing arrangements. The governance arrangement was the GoK-led KEIP Oversight Committee.

Delivery is supported through two mechanisms:

- **Kiribati Education Facility (KEF)** is managed by a contractor (Coffey International Development). Its role is to support and facilitate KEIP by managing the program of technical assistance and providing the operational and administrative support for effective program implementation.

- **Senior Education Management Specialist (SEMS)** contracted under DFAT's Pacific Technical Assistance Mechanism (PACTAM). This position is accountable directly to the Secretary of MoE. The terms of reference include general support to ministry functions as well as moving KEIP progressively towards a Kiribati-led sector wide approach (SWAp).

Financial support is provided in line with the MoE's established expenditure framework and program monitoring would be done through the ESSP monitoring and evaluation framework (MEF), using an agreed set of performance indicators.

Resources are allocated to the program through direct (accountable cash grants) and indirect funding (KEF). Technical assistance is intended to maximise capacity building within the limited absorptive capacity of a small education system and targets key technical areas.

2.2 Evaluation purpose and questions

The purpose of the evaluation is to take stock of the progress of KEIP in order to check that the implementation approach is the most appropriate and that activities are oriented to achieving the intended outcomes in the most efficient manner.

The key evaluation questions were drawn from the terms of reference (Annex 1) and adapted to follow a structure which would describe the results of KEIP, what it means for learning achievement, and what the implications are for the future.

Key evaluation question	Sub Questions
1. <i>What are the results of KEIP so far?</i> (Broadly covers effectiveness and efficiency)	1.1 What is KEIP trying to achieve? 1.2 To what extent are the intended intermediate outcomes being achieved? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do all children have access to the new curriculum and materials? • Do all teachers have capacity to develop children's Te-Kiribati language, literacy and numeracy skills? • Are more children learning in rehabilitated classrooms? • Do more schools have partnerships with their communities to deliver quality education? • Does MoE have greater capacity to plan and monitor the delivery of quality education services? 1.3 What are the main factors affecting achievement of outcomes?
2. <i>What does this mean for learning achievement?</i> (Broadly covers relevance, impact and sustainability)	2.1 Are the inputs and activities appropriately oriented to achievement of the intended outcomes by December 2015? 2.2 Are the strategies for gender equality oriented to outcomes? 2.3 How sustainable are the benefits/changes likely to be?
3. <i>What are the implications for the future?</i> (Covers learning and recommendations)	3.1 Is the program logic still valid for 2014 and 2015? 3.2 Do planned interventions offer the best chance of the outcomes being achieved <i>equitably</i> across the school system (particularly geographically) 3.3 What lessons are relevant for the design of Phase 3?

2.3 Evaluation scope and methods

Scope, focus and form

The scope of the evaluation is all of KEIP from its inception in January 2011 until the time of the evaluation in May/June 2014. This is a short period, so assessment of impact lies outside the

scope.

The focus of the evaluation is formative with an emphasis is on program improvement. KEIP is a program in the early stages of implementation and, with one and a half years of Phase 2 still remaining until scheduled conclusion in December 2015, it is less than half way through. The timing of the evaluation takes account of the design process for Phase 3 which needs to commence in late 2014 in order for arrangements to be in place by January 2016.

The form of the evaluation is interactive. The success of KEIP depends on a productive partnership between the main stakeholders so their participation, to the maximum possible extent, is essential. The role of the evaluators is to facilitate evidence-based decision making by providing systematic evaluation findings through which managers can make decisions about the future direction of the program.

Methodology

Details of methodology are provided in the Evaluation Plan, a summarised version of which is provided as Annex 2.

Mixed quantitative and qualitative methods were used. The main methods were document review, semi-structured interviews and observations. Five schools were visited - three in Tabiteuea North and two in South Tarawa - for observation of infrastructure and teaching/learning as well as interviews with key personnel and community members. Logistics and time prevented a random sample so a purposive sample was drawn. Tabiteuea North was selected as representative of the challenges faced by outer islands and the five schools were selected to include those that have been rehabilitated and those that have not.

The team were careful not to generalise from the school visits except where the findings could be triangulated and where there was general agreement that the issues were common across islands.

2.4 Evaluation team

The team was constituted by DFAT to have a mix of internal and external evaluators and to provide opportunities for staff of MoE and DFAT to accompany the mission in whole or part.

The core team comprised Sue Emmott (Team Leader / external evaluator) and Mary Fearnley-Sander (Technical specialist / internal evaluator). Other members of the team were a MoE representative, Lucy Kum-On (Head of the Kiribati Teacher College) and Samantha Vallance (Office of Development Effectiveness). Accompanying the team to Tabiteuea North were Florence O'Connor (Program Manager DFAT, Kiribati) and Brucetta Mackenzie-Toatu (KEF Relationships Manager).

The report was written by Sue Emmott and Mary Fearnley-Sander, with contributions from Samantha Vallance.

2.5 Limitations

In common with most evaluations, the timeframe was very short for a large and complex program. The visit to Tabiteuea North, whilst very valuable, meant that the time in Tarawa was squeezed. The team were also limited in the amount of time they could spend together owing to separate and distant accommodation arrangements.

Two important areas could not be fully evaluated. The team had a suitable range of skills but lacked a member with an economic and financial skill set. This meant that the question relating to the appropriateness of a SWAp, which required investigation of the readiness of GoK

systems, could not be explored in the desired amount of detail. The shortage of time also meant that the contributions of UNESCO and UNICEF could not be assessed.

In the components relating to improved governance and management of the education system, the contribution of KEIP is small. The purpose of this evaluation is to assess KEIP and the team did not have a mandate to assess progress against the ESSP. This means that, in describing progress attributable, or partially attributable to KEIP, the very substantial attribution of progress to MoE is not, and could not be, fully reflected

The main limitation is the availability of reliable evidence. At this mid-point of KEIP II, only year 1 and 2 teachers have completed their in-service training for implementing the reforms so only initial effects can be looked for. Year 3 teachers have only undergone the first of their three cycles of training. Year 4 teachers have neither new curriculum materials nor training and were therefore outside the scope of the evaluation.

There has been no measurement of the effectiveness of the reforms so far and no system level evaluation of Year 1 and 2 student learning against the new grade-level benchmarks (although schools are collecting these data on a term by term basis). Data on relevant teacher performance against teaching service standards are in the process of collection for entry into the KEMIS school data base. As of May 2014 over a third of all teacher performance appraisals were submitted but not yet disaggregated by year level or entered from hard copy into the system and so are not available for this evaluation.

3 Findings

This section presents the findings of the evaluation, structured according to the intended intermediate outcomes for Phase 2:

1. Do all children have access to the new curriculum and materials?
2. Do all teachers have capacity to develop children's Te-Kiribati language, literacy and numeracy skills?
3. Are more children learning in rehabilitated classrooms?
4. Do more schools have partnerships with their communities to deliver quality education?
5. Does MoE have greater capacity to plan and monitor the delivery of quality education services?

3.1 Access to new curriculum and materials

This section seeks to answer the evaluation question *“do all children have access to the new curriculum and materials?”*

KEIP II has made a major investment in curriculum materials and resources: teacher guides, syllabuses, posters, big books and a large number of supplementary readers and teaching aids for numeracy. To date 32,238 text books and learning materials have been printed and distributed. The new reading for meaning approach to literacy pivots on the big books and with 30 of these in Te-Kiribati, literacy teachers are well resourced.

Factors to consider in answering the evaluation question *“do all children have access to the new curriculum and materials?”* are: (1) teachers' access to the materials; (2) teachers using these resources to teach; (3) children's access the curriculum and materials intended for them; (4) and children's linguistic access to the new curriculum and materials.

In summary the findings are:

Years 1 -3 classrooms in schools are equipped with the curriculum materials and resources they need for improving children's learning. However, it is likely that schools' access to these resources will be short term, unless lockable cupboards are supplied at both the school and classroom level.

Delivery of supplies to schools can be validated by a Register kept by CDRC and by the checklists supplied to DEOs on their school visits, for follow up by CDRC if anomalies are found.

Teachers' access to these resources is, in some cases, hampered by the fact that the resources are stored in the principal's office/staff room. This restriction limits teachers' flexible use of teaching aids in their classroom teaching. None of the classrooms visited had secure places for storage. Sometimes resources were not secure in the head's office. Classrooms were seen where teaching aids and books were heaped on the floor in a corner of the classroom, vulnerable to rapid dilapidation, damage and loss.

All the teachers visited were found using these resources in the classroom.

Children can only access these resources if teachers use them. All teachers were teaching lessons based on the syllabuses for weekly and daily planning. Literacy lessons in Grade 1 and 2 include timetabled sessions on modelled reading of big books, ensuring their use. Some teachers said that they read the teacher guides frequently because of their dependence on them for implementing the new pedagogies.

There were however uneven levels of interest in the use of teaching aids, and less use of aids in numeracy lessons than in literacy. Here, some teachers made barely intelligible drawings of objects on the board to aid students' number concepts; while others had elaborate collections of resources for supporting number concepts and operations. Some classrooms visited were notable for the extent and the imaginativeness of the teachers' development of their own resources and aids.

The supply of readers seemed adequate, though there were not sufficient for every individual, and in larger classes, teachers need more classroom management skills in their use for collaborative sharing by students.

On Tabiteuea North, according to input from the island's principals in the community meeting convened by the Island Council for the evaluation, schools had not received stationary supplies from the Ministry.

Teachers were following the language policy in all classes and there is anecdotal evidence that the attendance of children has improved

Teachers think that children's improved attendance is a result of classroom interactions in a language they understand. Certainly most classroom visits showed most children eagerly interacting with the teaching.

A key literacy resource for providing stage-appropriate support to children's reading - the graded readers, differentiated to different levels of reading ability -may not be available for schools.

The production of graded readers – 15 levels of graduation to differentiate texts to different ability levels—has reached print-ready stage. Graded readers for reading in English at Years 3-6 are also planned for the same purpose. However CDRC lacks the resources to print. These resources are crucial for helping struggling readers and motivating children to progress to more and more demanding text. Not proceeding with their printing will certainly impair the effectiveness of efforts to improve early literacy and particularly the inclusive objective of raising the performance of all.

In one important respect the physical environment of most classrooms visited was not conducive to children accessing the curriculum and that is the lack of desks and chairs.

Children in most of the schools visited are having to learn to write sitting bent over on the concrete. While sitting on the floor is common in Kiribati, this posture adds to the difficulty of acquiring early writing skills. Classroom management is more difficult for teachers and inclusive teaching--attending to the needs of individual children-- is harder to implement. In some schools there was evidence of the provision of locally crafted school furniture, which is part of KEIP's school infrastructure program.

3.2 Teacher capacity to teach language, literacy and numeracy

This section seeks to answer the evaluation question “*do all teachers have capacity to develop children’s te-Kiribati language, literacy and numeracy skills?*”

The capacity of teachers to teach language, literacy and numeracy depends on; (1) the quality of the curriculum materials and training, (2) teachers having received training, (3) teachers’ application of that training and the extent of their understanding of the curriculum reforms, (4) teachers’ capacity to monitor the needs of children and differentiate the curriculum based on feedback from assessments, (5) school and system support for the implementation of the curriculum reforms. A distinct issue is (6) the capacity of the teachers to transition children to learning in English from Grade 4. Findings against these aspects follow.

The quality of the curriculum materials and TPD training for Years 1 and 2 teachers was high.

The training materials are well aligned with the curriculum guidelines and resources and consistently support the new curriculum and pedagogy. The training was well coordinated with the roll out of curriculum materials to schools. It was effective and efficient in working outside teachers’ classroom commitments, thus saving teacher relief costs and in allowing them to practice what they had learnt in previous sessions.

Above all the training modality exemplified equity to a high degree Direct delivery in all locations and coaches provided to schools was an expensive but value-for-money choice. Every child was able to benefit to the same degree from the training. In committing to this modality MoE has learnt well the lessons of the ineffectiveness of cascade training, that according to the LEPP ICR report, was in part responsible for disappointing results in teachers’ improvement in English in that program (2010).

Most Year 1 and 2 teachers have received the three cycles of training (TPD). Exceptions are teachers on Banaba and Kanton islands and some teachers who missed out on the opportunity through overlaps between TPD and KELP training.¹ In school visits some instances were recounted of teachers having been moved from higher classes to early grades subsequent to the training, meaning they are not equipped for the needs of the students they now teach.

Teachers are applying practices learnt in training to planning, teaching and assessment.

There was a large range of effectiveness observed in classrooms, but overall there was sufficient consistency to indicate that the training has equipped most teachers to implement the new pedagogy at a basic level. Some schools had teachers well above that basic level and showed that much work in raising and sustaining teachers’ performance could be at the school level through effective principals monitoring and supporting their teachers. This would require

¹ Kanton, the only inhabited island in the Phoenix Islands, also appears to be omitted from STAKI data doesn’t appear to cover what appears from census data to be Kanton.

however much more focus on developing the technical capacity of principals and DEOs than the current design allows for.

To specify, all teachers had planned lessons. Most teachers had the skills to keep the children motivated in different lesson routines. In Year 1, all teachers observed could support children in blending sounds and decoding words. Most could engage children in exchanges that tested comprehension of a text. Most could make use of resources to exemplify simple mathematical concepts. All demonstrated an ability to use questions to test whether students were able to apply the skill being taught. Most teachers used the familiarisation approach to teach English very competently.

However, nearly all teachers observed still need a deepened understanding of the new curriculum to develop students' thinking and communication skills so they are ready for the demanding texts of the upper primary and JSS curriculum. Equipping students to cope at this level is the whole point of the early grades focus. That is where strong strategies for comprehension are developed and unless they have been developed, the investment for improved literacy and numeracy skills at graduation from primary will not bear fruit.

There is some evidence that teachers do not fully grasp the conception of literacy that underpins the NCAF and pedagogical approach to literacy in the curriculum guides. Lack of such understanding will quickly lead to mechanistic and meaningless implementation of practices designed to strengthen specific literacy skills. In planning, some teachers did not integrate the four strands of the literacy curriculum (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) which should be used as mutually reinforcing systems for understanding text. The exploration of the big book was not used as the focus for this integration of these four macro skills and their subsets, which is its purpose in the guides. The teachers' reading of a big book sometimes looked as if it could soon become formulaic. Teachers may need a more confident understanding of the reason for certain practices to use them independently and meaningfully. For example, most classes seemed to be *memorising* the names of the author and illustrator on the title page which is not the purpose of this process of familiarising students with the concept of the book.

Inclusive practice in the classroom is largely a matter of differentiating the curriculum to meet the needs of children at different levels of learning. Both inclusion and differentiation are closely interlinked with assessment. Assessment provides the teacher with information about where the child is in relation to what is being taught. One of the most transformative features of the new pedagogies is the fortnightly assessment day when teachers meet with children one-on-one to test their performance on the learning targeted for the period.

All teachers visited had devised assessment tests fitting the test criteria and had developed student profiles based on the tests but it is not clear that they understood the relationship of assessment to improving learning.

The relationship between learning and assessment is emphasised in the NCAF. But for most teachers who were asked, the point of the profiles is to report to parents on the child's performance. They did not think about its relationship to their own lesson planning. Student profiles in schools visited by the team are not kept beyond the term, so tracking individual students' progression within and between grades is not at present possible. Head teachers receive the results of assessments from teachers, but if used, they are for ranking students not for staff discussions and follow up on learning progress.

In general, 'plenary' teaching styles are not conducive to paying attention to feedback from children's learning or to individual needs. Perhaps because of the practice of having children chorus responses, teachers seemed not accustomed to watching individuals to see if they are

memorising, imitating others or working out answers for themselves. Teachers generally showed good management skills when teaching to the whole class. However they struggled when implementing the one-on-one attention to children during the assessment. Yet the capacity to work with children individually or in small groups while the rest of the class remains engaged is a pre-requisite of inclusive teaching.

It is also an issue for multigrade teaching. In the small, early years classrooms where multigrade was used, observed teachers appeared to default to teaching one lesson-usually that of the lower year, meaning that the other year level was in effect repeating the grade. The management of inclusive teaching and a whole school approach to individualised attention to students in single and in multigrade classes needs to be a focus of any further training in the implementation of the curriculum reforms.

Some school heads interviewed did not show that they understood the role of the school in supporting the implementation of the curriculum reform. This was in contrast to others who actively used systems for monitoring and recoding teacher and student progress.

All head teachers have followed the five day school leadership training organised around a comprehensive School Leadership Handbook supporting the reforms. They were aware of new systems of student and teacher appraisal, benchmarks and standards, but did not articulate their own role in these processes nor were they clear about the point of them.

While all schools visited showed strong engagement with the School Committee, particularly around improving children's attendance, in some small schools this relationship seems to be with individual teachers rather than with the head. The heads also did not seem to be aware of the importance of taking a leadership role in advocating the curriculum reforms with parents, with the result that teachers are under pressure from parents about children bringing home books without "English writing" in them. Unchecked, this lack of understanding and the pressures it leads to might affect teachers' motivation to follow the new language policy.

In view of this finding an inference might be that five days training for head teachers, especially for outer island contexts, was by no means sufficient for understanding the role they and the school have to play as the catchment of all the reforms.

Where there is lack of initiative on the part of the head teacher in the reform implementation, a source of it may be system gaps that break the connection between the school and the Ministry in the monitoring of sectoral reforms. The SIU has developed a comprehensive handbook for principals' leadership/ management of the reforms. The DEOs' school visits serve the purpose of reporting on progress against the KEIP indicators as they relate to the school, including teachers' performance reports and learning information that could be aggregated to benchmark students achievement at the school level. As schools keep attendance records, DEOs would be able to collect and aggregate these and help progress evidence of the effectiveness of the reforms in improving access and participation.

However all this information does not have a clear monitoring and policy destination at system level. It appears from the Handbook that its purpose is for follow up with individual schools.

In summary, the level of penetration of the curriculum reforms at the Year 1 and 2 classroom level is impressive. It indicates the scale, quality and efficiency of the 'behind the scenes' work in curricula and materials development and training producing this result. It probably also indicates that this extent of effort is the minimum necessary for bringing about teaching transformations, a lesson for resourcing the later years. Some aspects of practice, mainly difficulties in class management, still impede the inclusion promise of the new curriculum. On such a base, they would be fixable through more training and particularly through more leadership of teaching and learning by principals. What also needs more training, and will be

more demanding, is securing a wider and deeper understanding of the new literacy paradigm and how it relates to improved performance in later grades.

The success of KEIP not only depends on teachers' capacity to teach literacy in Te-Kiribati but also on the capacity of teachers from Grade 4 onwards to develop students' capacity to be literate and numerate in English.

Developing students' literacy and numeracy in English requires at least three kinds of language skills in such teachers; (1) sufficient proficiency in their own spoken and written English to teach in English, (2) knowledge of how to help children learn when English as the medium of instruction and (3) knowledge of teaching English as a second or foreign language, particularly for students' attainment of literacy in English. The key findings on this program and the skills acquisition are as follows:

- By the start of KEIP II, the English language proficiency improvement program KERP was able to be entirely managed, administered, taught and examined by Kiribati professionals, including certified Senior Examiners. This relieves Kiribati of expensive external language proficiency testing and means the country has sustainable technical resources for running on-going English language training for its workforce.
- The KERP program galvanised the establishment of three Teacher Training Centres on the outer islands to help decentralise teacher professional development.

A total of 591 teachers (around half of Kiribati's teachers) has been assessed and/or trained under the KERP program since January 2012. The proportion of teachers who achieved the desired proficiency level on the KERP test (KERP trained or pre-existing proficiency) represents 45% of the total Kiribati teacher cohort.²

- No strategy (eg. language clubs, networks, purpose-built radio programs) for the *maintenance* of KERP graduates' English language proficiency appears to have been developed. With almost no English in the environment in the outer islands these hard won, expensive, English levels will decline. The advice of the Language Education Pilot Project (LEPP) ICR that English language education support systems would not be able to support the *maintenance* of teachers' English language without a resourced strategy seems not to have been heeded
- Around 380 teachers remain untrained. This group includes Grade 5-6 teachers who will be teaching using English as the medium of instruction and who are responsible for children's achievement in the curriculum in English.
- Training is currently suspended because of the large financial and administrative burden in supporting the engagement and deployment of relief teachers. In fact MOE is facing a sizeable deficit in funding the cost of relief teaching to support KERP.
- The Ministry has concerns about the program and the training implementation on a number of counts:
 - There is disappointment in the KTC, the host institution for KERP that the KERP program has not provided teachers with TESOL skills. There is concern that the transition to English in Grade 5/6 years and in JSS, without teachers knowing the pedagogies for teaching English as a second language, may not succeed as a result.

² KEIP II Quarterly Report, April 2014: 9.

In the view of the leadership of the KTC, the implementation of the English language training under KERP deviated from shared expectations set at the end of the LEPP project (2010) which preceded KERP. A key deviation was the decision to drop the TESOL element of English training of teachers in favour of a single focus on English language proficiency.

- The inefficiency of the modality – a three-month training course for each participant requiring relief teachers for that duration. This inefficiency is particularly marked by its contrast with the delivery of the TPD training of the workforce—no less important—which did not incur these costs. Training during school hours also means that some children were taught by people with no teaching background instead of trained teachers for a whole term and, in some cases, during the critical period of the new curriculum roll-out.
- While the establishment of the TTC on the islands was an achievement, there is a perception at KTC (and evidence at the school in Tabiteuea North which hosts the Tabiteuea North TCC) that the TCCs were exclusively for KERP purposes. The objective of establishing the TTC as ongoing, decentralised locations for teacher professional development seems not to have been realised, including for English language.
- Changes in the intended implementation of KERP reduced the sense of ownership in the KTC of this new English language program that it was hosting. Besides concern over teachers being untrained in the teaching of English, there was disappointment that the TESOL certificate course, newly developed under LEPP, would not receive expected technical development. Shifts in the management of KERP may have diminished MoE's sense of ownership of it: In Phase 2, a KEIP-funded KERP Manager, answerable to the KTC Principal and the KEF-Team Leader was engaged to oversee the program. While liberating KTC from the day-to-day burden of managing and administering KERP, it could be argued that doing so lessened KTC's say in the direction taken by the new program.

Concluding comments on teachers' capacity to teach language, literacy and numeracy

The conclusion to be drawn from the set of issues surrounding KERP is that a major issue for the Ministry is the form that the future provision of English language training should take to support the curriculum reforms and language policy. There is agreement on the part of both Ministry staff and technical advisors associated with the transition to English in Grade 4-5, that **both** improved English language skills **and** TESOL skills are necessary. The issue is: *what kind of training will provide the adequate English language skills, the TESOL skills and the congruence with the model of and language and literacy to facilitate transfer from children's Te-Kiribati literacy skills?* Kiribati is better placed than it was before 2010 to obtain and sustain what it needs. According to the KERP reports Kiribati now has the technical resources to run high standard English language courses and to examine for proficiency. In the hundreds of teachers with certificated proficiency it has the critical mass necessary to maintain high standards of English through appropriate peer professional development arrangements. It will be important to build on these foundations, but to build appropriately requires careful consideration of the model including affordable resourcing for ongoing training and language refreshment.

Compounding anxieties over the stalled language program are concerns that 'English' phase of curriculum materials may not have the same impetus and expertise behind it as the Years 1 and 2 phase. The April 2014 KEIP Quarterly Report reported that learning materials printing and

distribution in Year 3 had been delayed which may affect ongoing curriculum and training roll-outs. There is also loss of some specialist bilingual skills within the curriculum team for this critical phase. A decision has been made to postpone the 50% transition to English language of instruction from Year 4 to Year 5 as the first full year. This decision evidently reflects the view that students are not ready for the move to English any earlier. That need points to how much teacher know-how is needed to help that transition. With transition, the language investment reaches a critical stage and it is imperative that the quality of the inputs to curriculum and training receive the same quality of inputs as the early years. Mechanisms to ensure the quality of ongoing materials and curriculum production should be put in place.

3.3 Infrastructure rehabilitation

This section seeks to answer the evaluation question *“are more children learning in rehabilitated classrooms?”*

Approximately 1500 primary school students are now learning in rehabilitated classrooms.

Under KEIP (Phases I and II), seven primary schools in the outer (Gilbert) islands and South Tarawa have been rehabilitated to comply with Kiribati’s National Infrastructure Standards for Primary Schools.

Progress on the infrastructure component of KEIP has been much slower than expected.

While the Phase I target of completion of six pilot schools in the outer islands was met, Phase II has seen lengthy delays and will not come close to meeting its ambitious targets. The ambition of the MoE’s Primary School Rehabilitation Plan (2012-15) was to refurbish approximately 12 schools per year over the four year period to the end of 2015. In the first 15 months of KEIP Phase II, only one school (in South Tarawa) has been rehabilitated at a much greater cost than planned.

Planning for implementation of the PSRP (2012-15) under KEIP was predicated on a ‘mixed-mode’ approach to school rehabilitation where schools in urban areas and schools already made (or predominately made) in permanent materials would be refurbished in permanent materials, and all others refurbished using a modified traditional design. The intention was to upgrade more classrooms in more locations, faster and at less cost than if an ‘all permanent’ approach was adopted. These plans were consistent with the Kiribati National Infrastructure Standards for Primary Schools, which state that *“factors such as location, available building and maintenance skills, funding, school enrolment and the like will determine the most appropriate construction type.”* (p.4)

However, the ‘mixed mode’ approach was rejected by Cabinet based on their preference for *all* schools to be built and refurbished in permanent materials (discussed further below). Work on the PRSP was placed on hold from December 2012 until July 2013 while the implications for the school rehabilitation component of KEIP were considered.

Ultimately it was agreed that work on seven schools in the Linnix group (on Tabuaeren, Kiritimati and Teraina Islands) and up to ten schools in South Tarawa could proceed over the balance of KEIP Phase II, using a new kit-set ‘permanent’ construction method. It is anticipated that, compared to concrete blocks, the use of prefabricated kit-sets will increase the pace of construction and reduce costs by up to 30 per cent. The decision to rehabilitate schools on an island-by-island basis will reduce costs associated with logistics and contractual costs.

What this revised approach means for school rehabilitation on outer islands needs careful consideration and further discussion. Even if the KEIP partners can be convinced to support the

rehabilitation of *all* schools in permanent materials, the school rehabilitation rollout will take much longer to complete than under the originally proposed approach. There is a very real risk that some communities miss out on their schools being rehabilitated through KEIP.

There is a widespread view that all children should be provided the same level of facilities, regardless of their location. However, attempts to achieve geographical equity in school rehabilitation may not achieve the outcome sought.

Cabinet's preference for all schools to be built and refurbished in permanent materials seems to be based on a desire to give uniform treatment to all schools irrespective of location. This accords with the views of many MPs (of whom 36 of 42 represent the outer islands) who have promised constituents that all schools will be rehabilitated in permanent materials. This position is also consistent with Government strategies to reduce 'urban drift' to South Tarawa. (Another factor may be that rehabilitating the six KEIP Phase I pilot schools using permanent materials set a precedent, creating an expectation for the rest.)

Under the PSRP (2012-15), schools were initially prioritised on the basis of need, but then raised or lowered in response to other filters designed to provide geographical balance and target outer island growth centres. However, the change in approach has effectively set aside this proposed sequencing of schools to be rehabilitated, in large part because the issue of rehabilitating outer island schools originally built from traditional materials is yet to be fully resolved. This has meant that children from a number of such schools that were previously identified as high priority for rehabilitation will miss out on these benefits for the foreseeable future. This does not necessarily achieve the equity outcome sought by GoK.

Classroom rehabilitation has had an immediate positive effect in removing key barriers to learning.

For the rehabilitated schools, the most significant improvements to the learning environment include the provision of adequate classroom space for all students, adequate shelter from rain, secure classrooms (especially important for preserving learning materials), access to water and sanitation facilities for students, and desks and chairs for all students. The evaluation team heard anecdotal evidence that students at the rehabilitated Abaunamou PS now look forward to going to school, and attendance has improved.

In the un-rehabilitated schools visited, lack of the amenities listed above presented very significant barriers to learning. In fact, most students face these barriers as most primary schools in Kiribati do not comply with NIS standards. However, once the key barriers have been removed to bring the learning environment up to an acceptable minimum standard, it is difficult to assess further impacts on learning, especially when infrastructure improvements are part of a package of measures being implemented.

Rehabilitated classrooms have made little or no difference to enrolment.

The table below shows enrolment at the schools before and after rehabilitation.

Table 3: Enrolments in rehabilitated classrooms

School	Island	Enrolment			
		2011	2012	2013	2014
Teraaka PS,	Butaritari Is.	74	44	59	65
Kauake PS,	Aranuka Is	132	*	127	*
Nikierere PS,	Marakei Is.	225	191	211	*
Linda Burns PS,	Kuria Is.	141	144	126	132
Margaret Field PS,	Tamana Is.	103	116	113	132

Tiona PS,	Arorae Is.	198	184	181	225
Abaunamou PS,	South Tarawa	490	625	604	615

Source: Digest of Education Statistics / KEMIS data

*data not available

The first six schools were all completed during the period late 2012 to early 2013. Based on the data available, there is no evidence of significant change in enrolment in four of them, suggesting that improvements to the physical school learning environment have made little difference to access. There is no data to indicate whether or not those children who are attending school are learning more as a result of the improved environment. In Abaunamou Primary School, the significant increase in enrolment occurred in 2012 which, as the rehabilitation was completed in 2014, suggests different reasons for the increase.

There are some unintended outcomes of improvements to school infrastructure.

The evaluation team's school visit to the recently rehabilitated Abaunamou PS in South Tarawa revealed that the rehabilitated multipurpose sports court had exacerbated tensions between the school and members of the surrounding community. As community members had contributed labour an earlier upgrade of the courts, they expected to continue using the newly renovated court outside school hours. Unfortunately, such use has damaged school fencing and gardens planted by the children for the purpose of learning and there have been episodes of very aggressive behaviour towards school staff seeking to prevent entry to avoid vandalism. In this case, where it had been hoped that the upgrade of such facilities might provide a stimulus to the community engagement process, it has instead exacerbated tensions.

It is not clear at this stage whether the arrangements for maintenance will prove adequate.

GoK is responsible for school maintenance as part of its normal service delivery. This means that maintenance falls outside the scope of KEIP. While some donor funding is available to FMU, such as the grants provided for maintenance of the schools rehabilitated under KEIP as well as Taiwanese funds for school maintenance grants in the outer islands, the institutional arrangements are complicated. In addition to MoE, MIA and the Ministry of Public Works are involved in maintenance of schools, Kiribati Housing Corporation is involved in teacher accommodation, the Ministry of Environment, Land and Agricultural Development is involved in issues of materials, and the Ministry of Finance is responsible for fund flows. Some of the delays experienced so far may have been a result of inadequate exploration of institutional issues in the design of KEIP.

The evaluation team found evidence of the practical difficulty maintaining buildings made from permanent materials, especially in the outer islands where permanent materials are not readily available nor the skills to work with them. We also witnessed some excellent maintenance of buildings from traditional materials undertaken by school communities. Even in Tarawa, in a school not yet rehabilitated, school committee members had successfully lobbied MoE to allow them to build platforms around the water tank. Not only did both school staff and the school committee believe this would result in better quality work, but the plan allowed for the savings to purchase a much needed photocopier for teachers to copy learning materials. This kind of example shows that although maintenance of schools is widely seen as a government responsibility, some communities are ready to go to extraordinary lengths to improve the physical learning environment.

However, as it is common not to do maintenance until a school is almost collapsing, as observed by the team in un-rehabilitated permanent structures, it is likely that maintenance will be an ongoing concern. There is therefore a relatively high risk that newly rehabilitated schools will soon fall into disrepair.

3.4 Partnerships with communities

This section seeks to answer the evaluation question “do more schools have effective partnerships with their communities to deliver quality education?”

In comparison with outcomes on teaching, learning and infrastructure, this component has suffered from weak definition and low prioritisation combined with relatively little funding.

This component links to Goal 6 of the ESSP which aims to strengthen school/community relationships and raise public awareness of education policies and initiatives. It comprises two strands:

1. Implementing a community engagement, communication, and advocacy program
2. Conducting research and implement initiatives on improving access and participation in basic education

During Phase 1, the interest arising out of the work of the Community Consultation Teams (CCTs), which were established in KEF/FMU to convey information to communities about infrastructure rehabilitation, raised awareness in MoE that the process could be used to advocate for other key priorities under ESSP.

In the Phase 2 design, this component comprised of two activities; implementation of a community engagement, communication and advocacy program and research on access and participation. By mid-2014 these were clustered in four categories; school leaders/school-based management, community consultations, advocacy of ESSP reforms impacting on early learning and participation and access research. Only 4 per cent of the activity budget (2% of the total phase 2 budget) has been allocated (see table 5 in section 4.3)

Whilst each activity has value as a necessary contribution to the intended outcome, they are nowhere near sufficient in total. The result has been that small amounts of funds, as well as technical assistance, have been dispersed over a wide range of different purposes. It is difficult to understand how the allocation decisions have been made and to assess what the value add of KEIP has been over and above the normal work of MoE.

In some activities it is difficult to disentangle whether there is ownership and leadership by MoE or whether KEF is supply-leading.

In addition to small amounts of funding³, there have also been TA inputs. The international School Based Management Adviser has provided capacity building support to this component through the School Improvement Unit (SIU) but his input has also ranged across the other components on teaching and learning. Two KEF staff – the Relationships Manager and the Gender and Social Inclusion Coordinator – have also provided inputs. The latter have elements of capacity addition (an extra pair of hands to get the job done) and capacity substitution (taking on a line management role for a function which does not exist).

Capacity addition was justified in support of the CCTs in the early days of the community consultation process because it was new. However, as MoE develop ownership (see below), there is a risk of ambiguity in the role of the KEF Relationship Manager – about whether it is an implementation role or a technical assistance role - and that the transition from direct implementation to capacity development is not fully made.

³ \$118,593 in 2013 and a budgeted \$125,168 for 2014

With capacity substitution, the risk is of draining MoE staff time for an activity that lies outside their priority areas. The KEF-funded Gender and Social Inclusion Coordinator is, as part of the role, responsible for developing the MoE Inclusive Education Policy. This has never had an institutional home in the ministry and, consequently, little ownership. As with the Relationship Manager position, the G/SI Coordinator is an ambiguous role, being a staff position of KEF but acting in a line role in the SIU.

More generally, a further difficulty in understanding the KEIP inputs in this component is that the reforms in MoE have led to change in structures, units and teams. This means that original counterpart relationships are not necessarily as appropriate as they were at the time of design and early implementation.

An unintended positive outcome of the CCTs was the decision of MoE to create an institutional home for wider community consultation purposes

The CCTs, established for the infrastructure component, were originally incorporated within the Basic Education Division, which later became the School Improvement Unit. Their main function continues to be pre-construction and post-construction briefing visits but their effectiveness is being improved. Refresher training, held in early 2014 to clarify the purpose and processes of community consultations, was supported by a manual developed by KEF and this has subsequently been adopted by MoE for wider community engagement purposes.

The KEF Relationship Manager has been deeply involved in assisting MoE to incorporate CCTs. The previous post holder had very strong connections in MoE and so was instrumental in gaining ownership of the new concept. At this stage, with the likely appointment of a Public Relations Officer and the revitalisation of the Communication Working Group, it is not clear what MoE can now do with its own human resources and where, or what type, of support it needs from KEF.

There is a great deal of unrealised potential to engage the community in school improvement

Discussions with representatives of the School Committee in each school visited by the evaluation team demonstrated that all had been involved in some sort of support to the school and some had made very positive and creative contributions. This appeared to be related to the capacity and motivation of the principal as well as the initiative of the members. There were some interesting anecdotes about how committees raise funds for the school as well as to provide themselves with a sitting allowance to compensate for their time and effort. These were triangulated with school principals and teachers and found to be convincing. But it was also clear that some communities were highly dependent on principals and teachers to specify exactly how they could help.

As part of the reform process, the former School Committees are being replaced or supplemented by School Improvement Committees. These are supposed to be linked to School Improvement Plans and to have a different orientation. It was clear that some committees were involved in increasing access or, more commonly, attendance of children who were enrolled but frequently absent. All could give a range of reasons why children either do not attend school at all or why they stop attending.

School committee members have an unclear understanding of why the language policy had been introduced and what benefits it was supposed to bring.

When asked about the language policy, none of those interviewed understood its purpose. However, they had varying views about whether it was a good thing, with some commenting that the children liked going to school more.

There is now a second level of community consultations which goes beyond infrastructure rehabilitation to engage in broader, more inclusive processes focused on advocacy for reforms. This includes representatives of other ministries (Health, Island and Social Affairs) and churches. Since the Deputy Secretary was appointed as Chair of the Communications Working Group it has been possible to finalise the Communications Strategy and recruit a Public Relations Officer.

Two videos were produced on the language policy and quality in education and distributed to school principals. It is interesting to note that MoE insisted that the international technical adviser appear on the video. Although she preferred not to, on the grounds that the policy should be seen to be coming from MoE, people believed that no one would believe in its importance if delivered by I Kiribati.

Support for school improvement and school leadership is under conceptualised and under supported.

Support for school leadership is reported under this component. This appears to be because the School based Management Adviser sits in SIU and the other activities in this component, especially development of School Improvement Plans and on the job training and coaching for SEOs and DEOs, are centred in SIU. Support for school leadership is an important activity but there is little logic in centring it in SIU as a community partnership issue. Activities such as development of the *MoE Leadership and Management Handbook for Principals and Island Education Coordinators*, and the short training program for all school principals, for example, relate to training and therefore sit more logically within KTC.

The reason for the lack of fit between activities and purpose in this component was partly a design weakness due to under conceptualisation of the importance of school-based reform. But, if there was logic in the design, the many changes in structure in MoE may have been a reason why such logic is no longer apparent.

The School Improvement Unit (SIU), as a result of restructuring, is now a very important unit but is under supported compared with units responsible for curriculum and TPD.

SIU is responsible for all aspects of school improvement but it has few staff; 6 for primary and 3 for junior secondary. In its previous incarnation as the Basic Education Unit, most staff time was spent on very time-consuming human resource issues as well as answering parliamentary questions and responding to letters from politicians. With continuous movement of staff, exacerbated by the vast amount of training and the need for replacement teachers for KELP participants, the amount of human resource issues needing to be addressed has increased.

DEOs are supposed to visit schools twice a year but, because of the weight of work and the disproportionate amount of time consumed by travel, the reality is that they tend only to travel for the more politically expedient reasons, such as to investigate a complaint from an MP. However, to overcome this problem SIU has demonstrated its ability to find creative solutions. An example was bringing five principals from the islands for on the job training by substituting for the DEOs to enable them to travel. This was cost neutral for SIU as DEO replacement costs are covered in the recurrent budget. The knock on effect was that it also provided acting opportunities for teachers who replaced the principals who had gone to SIU. The effect of this is to develop close MoE-school linkages which can be developed for the purpose of policy and planning. At the same time, the negative effect is disruption to learning in the classroom with so many changes, and the lack of consistency of teachers is a complaint of parents.

Progress on School Improvement Plans has been slower than anticipated, with one of the main reasons being the extremely challenging logistics of travel.

Only 13 SIPs (9%) had been completed by April 2014 owing to the limited opportunity of the SIU team to provide support for principals. For whatever purpose, there are extreme logistical difficulties in moving teachers, principals and ministry staff around the islands. It is not uncommon for people to be unable to get to the islands according to the work schedule or to be stuck for weeks without transport to get away.

Although the funds received by SIU were small, staff stated that they received the allocation they had asked for in 2014. It was not clear whether they asked for what they knew was available or for what they knew they could absorb; whether they had limited ambition or whether they are not yet sufficiently aware of the range of possible options for school improvement. The one change they are keen to introduce is the position of Island Education Coordinator. This has been an idea since 2011 linked to decentralisation, but it has faced considerable delays in implementation. There are political issues, relating to potential role conflict with the Island Councils, but the current barrier appears to be the lack of budget to provide them with motorbikes and laptops as essential tools of the trade.

Prior to this, between phases 1 and 2, SIU had put in a detailed plan and budget but, as far as they understood, the funds had been allocated by DFAT to UNICEF and UNESCO. This had disappointed SIU because UNICEF and UNESCO were seen to be still working to their own agenda rather than responding to what SIU felt it needed.

Research on improving access and participation is small and isolated. It has not been given the attention or the budget to realise the intended outcome on access

The intention in the design of KEIP was to undertake research on access in order to develop strategic interventions to achieve the ESSP 2020 goal of “*All Kiribati children to have access to relevant and quality education*”. These strategies were to be ready for Phase 3, particularly as that phase includes JSS, where access issues are severe.

In 2013, during Phase 1, a small piece of research was commissioned by KEF to three retired teachers to investigate the reasons for student absenteeism on three islands. It was followed up in early 2014 with three trial interventions aimed at exploring practical and affordable solutions. Of the three, only the trial on parent education showed promise. The two others, one into professional development and one into community collaboration were flawed in their conceptualisation and execution.

The budget for this component was only \$50,000, an amount which could never have delivered the kind of high quality research on access that would enable meaningful strategies to be developed. Ownership was also an issue as, in the absence of an institutional home for research or for the inclusive education policy, the research was led by KEF. The result has been a small and isolated exercise which has not progressed policy at the sectoral level.

One problem of having a pot of money for research, in the absence of a research policy, is that claims can be made from any unit. CDRC have, for some time, wanted to research the impact of the new curriculum on access. This has been controversial because it would be impossible to show any cause and effect relationship and also because some stakeholders consider that it is not CDRC's role to do research. SIU, for example, argue that the DEOs report on benchmarks both qualitatively and quantitatively so CDRC would be duplicating data collection and would not have any responsibility for follow up on the findings.

Access research has become confused with the development of the Inclusive Education policy.

Although the definition of inclusive education encompasses the whole range of factors that exclude children from education, there has been a dominant focus on disability. This has created confusion about what inclusion means, how it relates to access, what an appropriate policy on disability might be for a country in which there is not yet a definition of disability. Given the range of policy issues needing to be addressed by MoE and the lack of an institutional home either for a wide definition of inclusion (because it concerns everything preventing access) or a narrower definition relating to disability inclusion, this aspect of work has become stuck. If there is any ownership of it, which is questionable, it would appear lie with DFAT and, by virtue of having a full time coordinator position, KEF.

Concluding comment on partnerships with communities

In conclusion, some very good and important work has gone on in relation to promoting partnerships between schools and communities. However, considering how critical school improvement is to achieve the end of program outcome, this component is grossly under conceptualised, underfunded and under supported relative to curriculum, teacher professional development and infrastructure.

3.2 Ministry capacity

The intended intermediate outcome for this component is that MoE has greater capacity to plan and monitor the delivery of quality education services. It spans four ESSP goals (4,5,6,7) with three of them (4,5,9) clustered under one activity.

Like the component on school-community partnerships, this component is too small and scattered to achieve the intended outcome.

In 2013 the budget was \$172,500 (see Table 5 in section 4.3 for comparison with other components) and the planned budget for 2014 is \$132,000.

The design of this component is very confusing. The rationale concerns resource allocation, decentralisation, school leaders professional development related to school improvement plans, KEMIS, inclusive education strategy, the special needs school and oversight of early childhood education. The activities are then divided into two streams; functions essential to improving access and early years teaching and learning and allocation policy and budget efficiencies.

Support provided comprised operational support and TA:

- Operational support: budget support of for travel, consultation workshops and training associated with policy development, KEMIS strengthening and procurement of services for the disability mapping and training of Special School teachers.
- Technical assistance:
 - a School-based Management Adviser who would work on school leadership and school improvement plans
 - a Database Management Adviser who would improve the usability of KEMIS data
 - An M&E Adviser who would advise on monitoring and evaluation of the ESSP
 - A Gender and Social Inclusion Mentor who would provide support for the MoE Participation and Access Team, the Gender and Inclusive Education Coordinator and the IEWG to deliver key activities including the policy development, mapping exercise and formulation of implementation strategies

Each of these activities is important. However, they comprise a 'bag' of issues which are not directly related to each other and which do not cohere to deliver an easily understood outcome. The lack of fit can be seen in some of the reporting. For example, the SBM Adviser is housed under this activity yet contributes substantially to the SLPD program which is reported under the component of strengthening teacher capacity.

Support for monitoring and evaluation is crucially important and being supported in a way that is building ownership, but it is not at a stage where it is able to measure outcomes of either ESSP or KEIP.

Technical assistance from the short term M&E Adviser has helped to advance development of an M&E Framework for the ministry to assess progress against the ESSP. The SEMS has also been instrumental in the process by introducing a Ministry Operating Plan (MOP) and Divisional Operating Plans (DOPs). The SEMS and M&E adviser have worked closely together, and in a participatory way with MoE, to develop a system of planning, monitoring and reporting which is integrated throughout.

Considerable progress has been made but the process is complicated and slow because of the amount of change going on in MoE. In an ideal world, M&E would be integrated alongside changes in the mechanisms for planning and the framework would be developed by the planners themselves at the appropriate level. In reality, such sequencing has not been possible as the various elements are happening at the same time. When the ESSP MEF was developed with support from UNESCO as part of their contribution to KEIP, it was overly detailed because the ESSP itself was overly detailed. Both are more detailed than a strategy but less detailed than an implementation plan and therefore do not serve either purpose well. When the MOP and DOPs came into being, at a later stage, the indicators of the MEF were no longer the most appropriate and are not owned by anyone. Considering that the process of planning and performance measurement is new this is to be expected.

The mechanism for assessing the impact of teacher professional development, LIME, has become stuck and is far behind in providing information for planning and monitoring.

Support is provided in this component for LIME (Learning Impact, Monitoring and Evaluation). This aims to assess the impact of teachers' professional development on students learning outcomes, including the impact of different strategies for integrated packages of curriculum implementation and professional support for different contexts. As a concept, it was clear in the design and was housed in KTC.

The original research question concerned the impact of teacher training on student performance. It has subsequently been modified to include the other contributing factors explicit in the KEIP framework, such as curriculum and school leadership. Early in 2013 it was decided that the University of the South Pacific (USP) would conduct the research as part of their institutional relationship with member governments. By June 2014 there has been confusion about how to proceed and no progress. In addition to the delays, there has been some concern that USP may not be the right organisation to undertake this kind of research.

KEMIS is developing well but there is a very long way to go before it can guarantee the quality of data that will make it invaluable for school-centred reforms

The Data Management Adviser has been working with the Statistics Office and the Technical Services and Information Management Working Group (TSIMWG) to implement the KEMIS Enhancement Strategy. This includes a robust platform to house the database securely, ensure data integrity, availability and reliability. This has also been done in collaboration with the M&E Adviser and SEMS so that MoE senior managers develop the collective capacity to track progress throughout their cycle of operational planning, performance measurement, reporting

and evaluation. As with M&E, progress is steady but slow with the additional challenge of a low technology environment and awareness of the potential benefits.

KEMIS appears to be a good system with stakeholders expressing confidence in it whilst also understanding its limitations. The main concern is about the quality of the data it contains. Not all data is entered into KEMIS and is not yet coordinated or centralised. Much is held by the people who gather it or use it, such as DEOs, in scattered locations across the islands on a combination of laptops and data sticks. The very difficult logistics also mean that, by the time data is incorporated in KEMIS, it may be long out of date.

Steady progress is being made in the development of KEMIS and the process is suitably oriented to raising awareness of its importance and generating ownership. But the burden is high and the unit only has three staff, which is not enough for such a large and significant task. The fact that the staff adheres to the policies and processes for quality control and auditing of data is therefore highly commendable.

Progress on policy development for inclusive education has been slow and the issues have become confused.

During Phase 1, the orientation of activities related to inclusion was on disability. In the absence of information, a scoping study of students with disabilities was planned but not undertaken. An Inclusive Education Working Group (IEWG) was established with members from MoE, MIA, CEDAK (church school providers), Health (MHMS) and the School for Children with Special Needs. Part of its mandate was to lead the process of developing an inclusive education (IE) policy. In Phase 2, a mapping study was planned but later dropped.

In the absence of any other planned activities, development of the IE Policy has become the main activity. During the process the issues and definitions have become confused. It is not clear whether the policy is about access for all children or access for children with disability. It starts with reference to *all children regardless of ability, gender, interests, geographical location, religious or socio-economic background* but provides no discussion or analysis of the very different categories or the issues that underpin those children's exclusion. Most of the strategies are unrealistic for Kiribati within a reasonable timeframe and are more appropriately encapsulated as *access* rather than *inclusion*.

In the absence first of an institutional home and then, later, the establishment of a Directorate of Policy, Planning and Development but with the position of Director unfilled, the process has been KEF-led throughout. During the evaluation, the team did not experience any ownership of the concept in MoE. The draft policy, which is not costed and is not implementable in its current form, has been nominally approved but is not being moved the next step - submission to Cabinet for approval. A positive aspect is that MoE has learned, from its experience with the Education Bill, that submission of a policy without adequate preparation and consultation results in resistance and inter-departmental rivalry.

The quality of the draft IE policy and lack of funding for research on access has set back progress on an issue that was considered a central focus of KEIP in the design.

The IE policy has never been a high priority for MoE. It is one among several new policies in development and at the time of the evaluation, the policy on satellite schools was the highest political priority. MoE is too small and there is too much reform going on to manage more than one new policy at a time.

Considering that the distinctive focus of KEIP was intended to be *inclusively distributed improved learning outcomes* the failure to ensure that the necessary elements to achieve this were incorporated in the formulation and funding of activities is a major design weakness. The

weak conceptualisation in the design, combined with insufficient oversight of quality, has contributed to DFAT's policy on Disability Inclusive Development and its inclusion in the scope of works for KEF intruding on what should have been a far more holistic approach to inclusion. Disability is an important issue but it is one among many. During policy development there has been almost no consideration of *how* it would be addressed.

One effect of DFAT/KEF moving forward a policy such as this is that it has raised an expectation that KEF will finance the activities it is proposing. Given the level of funding for the component and the cancellation of the disability scoping study, that is highly unlikely.

Activities intended to progress work on allocation and budget efficiencies have not been brought to a conclusion in relation to furthering a SWAp

This area of activity is managed directly by DFAT rather than being supported through KEF. Pieces of work carried out include an institutional capacity assessment of MoE and a broader assessment of national systems. The purpose of the assessments was to support the desired move towards a sector wide approach (SWAp). They have moved slowly partly because in the face of high workload and transaction costs, they have not been prioritised. This has not had significant implications as there appears to be a general acceptance that GoK systems are not yet sufficiently robust to accommodate budget support.

Within MoE, a source of concern to most stakeholders is the slow processing of accounts. This has been evident to KEF in the slow acquittal against accountable cash grants. In part this is because there are not enough people in the accounts section to process in a timely way.

4 Analysis of the findings

4.1 Relevance

KEIP is a relevant investment. It supports the GoK policy to improve basic education in order to provide economic stability for the country and is aligned with the MoE ESSP. It is one of the priority outcome areas of the Kiribati-Australia Partnership for Development. KEIP also aligns with DFAT's *Pacific Education and Skills Development Agenda (PESDA)* which seeks to increase access to education and increase learning outcomes.

At the level of the school, KEIP is highly relevant in meeting the needs of teachers and students for a high quality curriculum that supports the kind of learning needed for the 21st century. It is relevant for parents and communities but could be more relevant if greater attention was paid to partnerships. The relevance of KERP is debatable. There is no doubt that teachers need English language skills in order to teach in English but the need is greatest at JSS and SSS and KERP was not targeted at those teachers. The contestable point, even at the design stage, has been about whether teachers needed to be skilled in English language or in the skills to teach English. This has never been resolved.

Relevance of a SWAp

At the level of the ministry, the design envisaged a trajectory towards a Sector Wide Approach (SWAp). The design of Phase 2 refers to attention paid in Phase 1 towards the key SWAp elements of policy formulation and coherence with strategic planning and implementation and a sector performance framework monitoring against jointly agreed targets. Phase 2 was intended to follow this with the development of a basic expenditure framework for resource allocation. Given that SWApS develop over a much longer time frame in most countries, this was exceptionally ambitious. Not surprisingly therefore, the envisaged Public Expenditure Review

(PER), a Public Expenditure Tracking Survey (PETS), Working in Partner Systems Assessment (Education), and teacher demand and supply study have not yet happened.

The Terms of Reference of the Senior Education Management Specialist (SEMS) include supporting the implementation of the SWAp. Certainly great progress has been made in transitioning away from the 'projectised' KEIP Oversight Committee into the MoE-led Education Partners in Kiribati (EPIK) but this is a long way from a SWAp.

There is no commonly agreed definition of a SWAp however literature review⁴ suggests that the key features are as shown in the table below. Comparing the status in Kiribati shows that it largely remains at concept or pre-SWAp stage.

Table 3: Features of a SWAp and status in Kiribati

Key feature	Present / progress towards
Engagement of most or all significant stakeholders or funding sources to support shared sector wide policy and strategy	No - important donors eg Japan, Taiwan have their own strategies
Comprehensive and coherent policy and expenditure framework	No – there is a policy framework in the ESSP but no expenditure framework
Partner government ownership and leadership	Not yet - just starting with the institutionalisation of EPIK
Shared processes, planning and management procedures for managing sector strategy and work program	No – in development but will take time
Use of, or progress towards, government financial management systems and procedures	No, but small funds channelled as accountable grants

The key relevance question for GoK and DFAT is about what outcomes the modality of a SWAp is going to deliver. A research study of the results of education SWAps in Solomon Islands and Tonga⁵ provides some relevant learning. Success depends critically on leadership stability and political commitment at senior level in the MoE. Getting cohesion to make sure the various policies developed are actually implemented is highly dependent on people to drive it. In common with many other countries there is little evidence to demonstrate the impact of a SWAp, and the required amount of research to know whether it results in improved delivery at school level is not being done. The research is clear that low sectoral capacity is not a barrier to a SWAp but that, to address it, there needs to be an understanding at the outset that a lengthy period of time will be required. A challenge for all is addressing the many intractable service delivery problems at the same time as building capacity at the ministry level in order to develop a SWAp, without compromising the delivery of services to schools and children.

Having UNICEF and UNESCO under the KEIP framework has not reduced the workload of the ministry. The intention of DFAT, in funding UNESCO and UNICEF to contribute under the framework of KEIP was to improve aid effectiveness. However, as both agencies have their own priorities, which they need to agree with MoE outside the framework of KEIP, the workload for the ministry is not reduced in any way. Effectively this means that MoE deals with DFAT/KEF, UNICEF and UNESCO in exactly the same way as it would with three project partners and in the same way that it deals with development partners, such as Taiwan and Japan, who operate outside KEIP.

There appears to be little to gain, in terms of relevance, by pursuing a SWAp in Kiribati. A strong point of KEIP is that it is seriously oriented to improving teaching and learning and

⁴ Education Sector Wide Approaches: background, guide and lessons. UNESCO, 2007

⁵ Researching SWAps in Pacific Education, RUPE, University of Auckland

there is emerging evidence that it is getting results. A weak point in terms of design, but possibly a strength in terms of maintaining focus, is that little attention has been paid to system reforms. In the light of the international evidence on SWApS and in the experience of expert educators interviewed during this evaluation, the current focus on school level may, at this stage, be more effective than concentrating resources on the much more difficult to achieve system change.

4.2 Effectiveness

As the findings section has shown, a great deal has been achieved through KEIP.

The major achievement is in curriculum reform and training of the whole workforce. Early indications are that children and teachers like the new curriculum and are engaged in learning.

More modest progress has been made in community engagement and MoE capacity building as these aspects received less support than curriculum and teaching. Very slow progress has been made in improving the physical learning environment through rehabilitated infrastructure.

Factors influencing success

A number of factors contribute to the success of KEIP:

- ***There has been strong commitment to equity and to the intended outcome that all children would benefit.*** The modality of training was the same whether it was in Tarawa or the remotest parts of Kiribati so all teachers got face to face training and coaching in their schools. KTC were strongly committed to delivery and the quality of curriculum and supporting materials has been motivating for teachers and engaging for children. TA support in the development of curriculum and training materials has been relevant and high quality.
- ***In the classroom there is an established bedrock capacity in classroom management skills and reasonably competent practice, which is sometimes consciously informed by the old curriculum.*** Teachers have the basic skills to teach reading and to ask questions that extend the child's understanding at word level. This is not necessarily or only attributable to KEIP as teacher practice builds on years of support but it helps teachers to assimilate new training and develop deeper levels of competency.
- ***Where there is strong MoE ownership, change can happen quickly.*** This ownership has been evident not only in planned activities but also in innovations. It is facilitated where the timing and amount of TA support can be controlled by the ministry, and where it is of high enough quality to demonstrate the value added. In the best case scenarios, transfer of skills has taken place and there is no further need for TA.
- ***In MoE, the role of the SEMS has been very important.*** The position, and the individual within it, has enabled steady progress to be made in the kind of reforms that will impact on school level. There has been a restructuring of departments aimed at separating technical professional functions such as school improvement planning from the very time-consuming and distracting human resource management. The establishment of a Directorate of Policy, Planning and Development will, when the post is filled, provide an institutional home for initiatives such as inclusive education which have not so far been owned by any particular department or position. In the absence of key staff, which has been a chronic problem, the SEMS has acted in the positions at the request of the Secretary and been able to ensure that things stay on track.

Factors creating stress

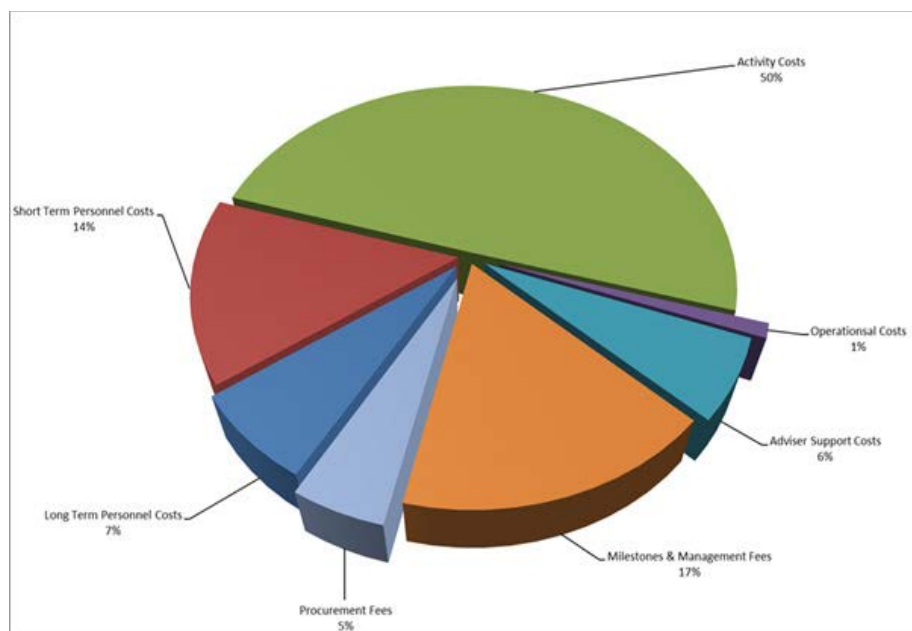
At the same time as so much has been achieved, the speed of reform has been so fast that it has seriously stressed the system. Individuals have been overworked for a long period of time. This creates a risk that there is no energy for the remaining implementation and that the quality cannot be sustained.

Various factors have contributed to the intensity. There has been too much TA and it has been too concentrated for MoE to absorb. But MoE has also contributed to its own stress by wanting to roll out all components at the same time, even in the face of advice to slow down and sequence things in a more considered way.

4.3 Efficiency

The pie chart below shows the allocation of funds in Phase 2. Half of the total is allocated to activities; around one quarter (27%) is the cost of technical advisers; and the other quarter (23%) is the cost of KEF.

Table 4; Pie chart showing Phase 2 budget allocations



Evaluating the efficiency of TA is difficult, especially when it is in combination with some of the activity costs. Although there is general agreement that most of the TA has been high quality, there is no doubt that it has been far too concentrated, especially in Phase 1 and at the start of Phase 2. This created serious stress, especially to CDRC and KTC, with the result that they currently have no desire to accommodate more.

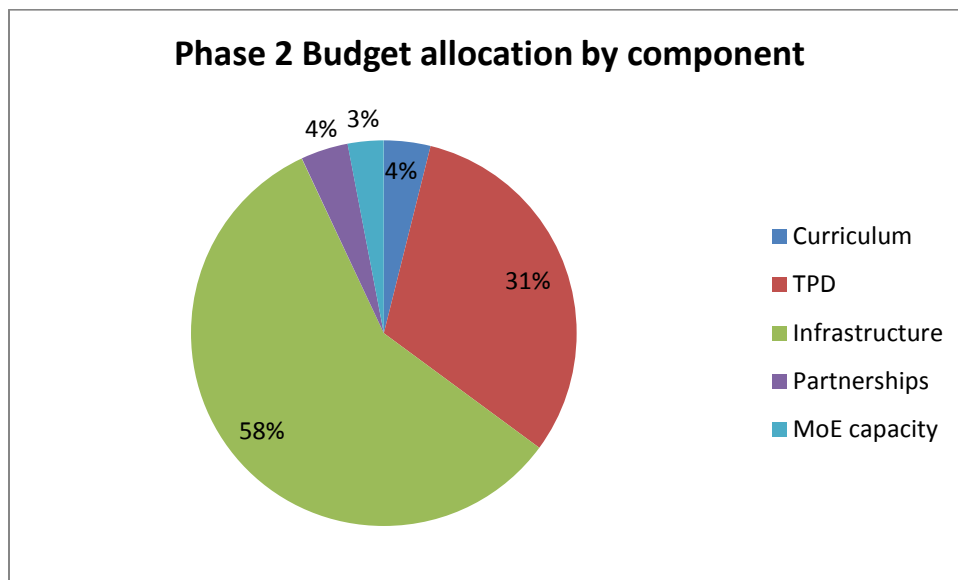
The effect of some TA has undoubtedly been to reduce ownership. KELP is the most obvious example. The failure to build on the newly developed TESOL tradition could have been resolved at design stage, especially as there were serious concerns within DFAT about its relevance and effectiveness. Unfortunately, by the time of the evaluation, resentment against KELP and its implementing partner had escalated to the point that the crisis of cessation due to shortage of funds for replacement teachers could be described as a blessing in disguise.

But TA can be highly effective and efficient. Although not part of KEIP, and funded directly by DFAT, the role of the SEMS has been critical in moving forward the reforms that provide the enabling environment for progress in KEIP. The role has included a strong emphasis on capacity development across MoE as well as capacity substitution at times when key Director positions have been unfilled. This has met the immediate needs of the Secretary by enabling reforms to move forward rather than become stuck.

There are areas of fuzziness in some of the positions in KEF. Both the Relationships Manager and the Gender and Inclusive Education Coordinator are staff of KEF yet they are functioning, to varying degrees, as TA. This is risky if not recognised and managed appropriately. There is also an issue about the number of KEF staff working within a unit. Whilst capacity addition is the agreed strategy, there is some imbalance. In the FMU, for example, there are only three MoE staff responsible for maintenance of all schools in Kiribati but four KEF staff working on the KEIP infrastructure component.

Turning to the detail of the activities component of the budget (50% of the total in 2013, and around 56% planned for 2014), the Pie diagram below shows how it is allocated by component.

Table 5; Budget allocation for KEIP activities



More than half of the activities budget (58%) is allocated to the infrastructure component.

Whilst an adequate physical learning environment is one of the factors motivating children to attend and stay in school, it is not as important in children's learning achievement as teacher quality, an accessible and well-sequenced curriculum and schools tracking and supporting participation and learning. In view of the slow progress made and the small number of children benefiting, the investment in infrastructure appears out of proportion to the benefit and does not yet offer value for money. It is however, politically expedient.

In contrast, the 31% allocation for teacher professional development appears to have been both effective and efficient. Aiming to reach all teachers in their schools, regardless of logistics and cost, is an expensive model but it is equitable and as there is some evidence that it is effective, it offers good value for money.

KELP has been an expensive and highly inefficient program to run. KELP assessment and training courses have resulted in 70% of trainees either assessed or completing the course having achieved Level 3. This equates to 38% of all teachers at a cost of around \$5 million compared with around \$2.5 million to reach all Year 1-3 teachers with TPD. The KELP modality of withdrawing teachers from the classroom required an unsustainable cost for relief teachers for all three terms of KELP of AUD 640,000. There were also issues of sequencing as KELP training overlapped with TPD training, resulting in some teachers missing out on the essential capacity development they needed to implement the curriculum.

Only 11% of the budget has been allocated to the three components of curriculum, partnerships and MoE capacity building:

- Investment in curriculum (4%) appears small but has been supported by a range of technical advisers which are costed separately. It builds on a long history of support as well as considerable investment of staff time from CDRC. Considering that it directly meets the needs of children and teachers, it offers excellent value for money. It may well have been underfunded if the CDRC cannot proceed with the printing and distribution of the levelled readers which are vital support to the reading program.
- Partnerships between school and community comprise 4% and are mainly related to the community consultation teams established for infrastructure renovation. Although they have resulted in an unexpected level of interest from communities which has been noticed by MoE, this appears to be positively motivating the School Improvement Unit to use its own resources.
- Only 3% of resources have been allocated to MoE capacity development. The most important contribution has been for KEMIS, which is crucial in demonstrating impact in the long term. Supported by two technical advisers, this input has been used effectively and efficiently however, other allocations have been unfocused and may not represent good value for money.

4.4 Impact

The main means of assessing whether curriculum reform and teacher training have achieved the objective of increasing children's learning achievement is STAKI. No data is available to assess this by 2015 and, as the STAKI results have been on an upward trend since 2009, they are not enough, on their own, to demonstrate impact. In fact, 2015 is an artificial milestone and with one year shaved off Phase 2 owing to the overrun of Phase 1, the timeframe is too short to evaluate the impact of the reforms on results.

Impact may currently be compromised by the fact that some of the most important concepts are not sufficiently well understood. This is particularly true of the importance of monitoring and evaluation in order to understand progress and results across the ESSP. Monitoring of results is critical at the school level as this is the unit that will determine whether improved teaching and learning continues to develop or withers from lack of attention. There are some instruments such as KEMIS and STAKI but they are not yet collecting the data on learning performance available in schools nor are they oriented to planning or built into a cycle of policy development and implementation. STAKI alone will also not be enough to understand which elements are making a difference and it needs to be supported by qualitative longitudinal research.

Impact on access will be impossible to evaluate because the only study conducted on access is neither a baseline nor of sufficient quality to inform policy or practice. The underlying assumption of KEIP is that it will increase access and two of the three end of program outcomes relate to access. However, the inputs and activities are mainly focused on learning. Therefore, it is not entirely clear whether KEIP is a program oriented to access or to quality. Access to learning is paramount but ***the emphasis on access to learning has obscured the different issue of access to schooling itself***, which has a distinctive set of issues and solutions.

The impact of KEMP is questionable. At design, there were different visions of what an English language training program should be and KEMP was not what KTC preferred. Teachers want skills in *teaching* English. The program has also not been targeted towards those teachers of the academic curriculum at G5/6 and JSS who need strong English skills the most.

Outside KEIP, but critically important in supporting the reforms that create an enabling environment, is progress made with the support of the SEMs. One of the two objectives of the

SEMS is to improve aid effectiveness and donor coordination. In the design of KEIP it was envisaged that a sector wide approach (SWAp) would be in place by the end of Phase 1. Whilst this was unrealistic, the SEMS has been able to guide MoE to establish its own Education Partners in Kiribati (EPiK) forum.

EPiK is a major achievement, replacing the KEIP Oversight Committee, which was a parallel structure appropriate only to DFAT, UNESCO and UNICEF, with a ministry structure catering to all donors in education. This has been possible because the SEMS is contracted through a different mechanism from KEIP (PACTAM) and is accountable directly to the Secretary rather than to KEF or DFAT.

4.5 Sustainability

It is early days in KEIP to assess whether the changes and benefits will be sustainable. However, the following observations suggest areas where sustainability is at risk and can be strengthened.

One-off inputs can realise fast change but not sustainable outcomes. Introducing change supported by a single orientation or training has been normal practice in MoE. In the major components of KEIP creating and sustaining change requires systems for continuous improvement and maintenance of the professional skills developed. Without systems the risk is that they will be lost.

Some of the most important concepts of the curriculum reforms are not yet sufficiently well understood to be sustainable without being deepened and consolidated. An unintended consequence of over-commitment on the side of training and curriculum staff is that they find it difficult to make time for their own personal development. This matters in those areas necessary for sustaining the literacy and language approach, such as early grades literacy and bridging to English methodologies. For those teachers who underwent KERP, there is a high risk of loss of English language skills owing to the very limited opportunity to use them.

The bilingual language policy is a very positive development for Kiribati but the lack of understanding about it creates a risk that it will not survive as classroom practice In the face of inadequate socialisation with parents and politicians the value of language policy is still questioned. During school visits the evaluators asked most stakeholders – the principal, teachers and committee members for their opinion about the language policy. Some were very positive about the difference it was making. Others, perhaps most, either did not understand why it was introduced or firmly believed that English should be taught from the start and that learning in te-Kiribati would disadvantage their children. These lingering concerns, especially among teachers responsible for implementing the language policy, create a high risk of subversion in the classroom which will reduce learning achievement.

Sustainability needs strong support from school principals, communities and parents. School principals are central to reform at the school level and their role is increasingly demanding. Of the six school principals interviewed, four were very clear about their role. They had benefited from training and could talk convincingly about what was new to them, what they thought would improve their school and how they could work with school committees more effectively. One had not had training owing to a recent appointment. This highlights the problem with the one-off training model because frequent movement of staff means that staff miss it and are under-developed as managers. Their job is also made harder because they are not provided with the basic equipment to manage information. One principal, for example, had constructed graphs showing attendance at his school, which he was using to address issues of attendance. He had learned how to do this during training but had neither laptop nor printer and so was using private facilities.

High quality resources are likely to deteriorate. The capacity of teachers to improve children's literacy has been consistently developed at a basic level and it is a great achievement that they are adequately resourced with materials. Those schools that do have the extensive curriculum materials have no system of storage. Inevitably they will quickly deteriorate and be lost unless quick action is taken to secure these frail products within classrooms and schools. In the longer term there needs to be budget allocated annually for replenishment.

Communities and parents are also very important for sustainability. They have a lot of potential to increase access and support learning but they need much more support than has been, or probably can be, provided.

Ownership is critical. KELP in particular, has proved unsustainable and should have been predicted earlier. It has been problematic since design with divisions over whether TESOL or KELP was a preferable model. As a result it was not owned by KTC and resentment was exacerbated by KELP taking over teacher training centres. At the time of the evaluation KELP had stopped abruptly because MoE did not have the budget to pay for replacement teachers. Around 400 teachers remained untrained including some of the teachers who need it most. Also at risk of being unsustainable is the decreasing ownership of the NCAF as time passes. It was developed in 2011 and by 2014, is still only at year 4. It may be difficult to keep up the momentum for the same quality development of supporting materials for Years 5 and 6 while simultaneously bedding down the recently introduced curriculum.

Sustainability requires a very long time frame and a lot of patience. Along with the assumption that one-off processes would be enough to introduce and sustain change was the under estimation by MoE of how long it takes to embed learning and how much effort is needed to improve quality. One informed commentator suggested that the highest risk, at this point, is over confidence about how embedded the processes are.

The much needed reforms of MoE are very vulnerable. Although the design was underpinned by analysis, the decisions taken represented stakeholder priorities at the time. Some of the critical limitations of system reform, including whether, or which, reforms could be addressed under KEIP, therefore now appear not to have been addressed. Some reforms such as evidence-based policy and planning require a whole of system approach, so progress on aspects such as monitoring and evaluation has been slow because of the need to build awareness across many functions and ownership from the top. Other reforms are driven by TA and whilst they are owned by MoE, the depth of ownership and capacity is not enough to sustain them without long term support.

The change with the greatest potential to improve aid effectiveness is the move away from the parallel structure of the KEIP oversight committee in favour of the EPIK. This effectively renders KEIP's role in coordination of donors redundant and places a better coordination mechanism firmly within the appropriate institutional home of MoE. It constitutes an unintended, positive exit strategy. Whilst it is too early to assess whether it can be sustainable and likely to require ongoing support from the SEMS, it is a very significant step in the right direction.

4.6 Gender equality

In terms of access to education, the Net Enrolment Ratio (NER) is stagnant or declining. There is gender parity in primary grades but at JSS and SSS there is significantly higher girls' enrolment than boys. More robust analysis on the contributing factors for lower participation by boys is required.

The school committees interviewed were all asked about those children who did not attend

school. Without any prompting on gender, they all talked about the problem of boys preferring to collect coconuts for money rather than wanting to go to school. In reference to problems with vandalism, which seems to affect all schools, there were frequent mentions of 'naughty boys' or of boys 'roaming'. Teachers too, in response to questions about the type of students achieving or not achieving, mentioned boys as under achievers.

The 2013 STAKI data shows differences in learning outcomes by gender. Boys significantly underperformed across all three tests and across both year groups. In Year 4 tests, 42% of boys critically underperform compared with 27% of girls. In Year 6 English performance, more than 60% of boys critically underperformed compared with around 40% of girls. It mentions, without supporting evidence, that the nature of the curriculum and/or delivery of the curriculum is biased towards girls.

The content, relevance and delivery of the curriculum is one of a number of factors that contribute to boys' underperformance, just as there are for the underperformance of children with disabilities or in remote areas. These concerns about having an inclusive curriculum and inclusive curriculum delivery prompted the whole process of reforming the curriculum and teaching practice in the first place. As implementation of this reform has only just started, the STAKI results reflect the outcomes from the content and teaching delivery of the old curriculum. The impact of the new curriculum and teaching methodologies will not begin to be evident until the 2013 Year 1-2 cohorts are tested as Year 4 in 2015/6. The new curriculum and TPD has taken the underperformance of boys into account and is focussing on teachers' recognising the need to use methodologies that engage all children and recognise that boys and girls may learn differently.

More broadly, it is important to contextualise the underperformance of boys. Overall, all children, boys and girls, are underperforming badly in Kiribati. While girls seem to be improving at a faster pace, both boys and girls need to be achieving far better outcomes. The outperforming of boys by girls may just reflect the fact that opportunities for girls have improved over the past decade.

Considering the significance of gender disparity between boys and girls, it is surprising and disappointing that the draft inclusive education policy makes no reference to it.

4.7 Monitoring and evaluation

There is a tension between getting buy in for a process and being able to demonstrate results.

Monitoring and evaluation, in terms of knowing whether the various reforms are having the intended impact, is critically important. The process of developing a framework that will enable impact and process to be measured is underway and is being managed in a participatory way, aimed at getting buy in from MoE and, ultimately, ownership. This is necessarily a slow and protracted process. The result is that, 14 months into Phase 2 implementation, the kind of information required to evaluate is not yet available and is unlikely to be for quite some time.

The starting point for developing the KEIP Performance Measurement Framework (PMF) was the ESSP monitoring and evaluation framework (MEF). As the latter was somewhat complicated, the KEIP framework was designed to be simpler, drawing on selected indicators rather than the whole range and supplementing them with indicators from KEMIS. The result is an appropriate and manageable framework for KEIP whilst demonstrating to MoE that their own system is capable of meeting the information needs of other stakeholders.

Although the KEIP PMF is positively aligned with the ESSP MEF, the latter is in continual development because it is linked to policy and planning reforms in MoE. This means that the KEIP PMF falls behind. At present, for example, the DOPs do not line up with KEIP and vice

versa. This is unavoidable with both systems in continual development.

The limitation of both the KEIP PMF and the MoE MEF is that they are reliant on data from KEMIS. Although KEMIS is a good system, there are concerns about the quality of the data it contains. Not all data is entered into KEMIS and much is held by the people who gather it or use it in scattered locations on laptops or data sticks. Most of this is not coordinated or centralised and owing to the very difficult logistics, is sometimes long out of date. The burden is high for a unit with only three staff, especially as the system becomes more sophisticated.

Developing the M&E framework and system has been particularly challenging because of the whole-of-system implications. Ministry staff are not familiar with M&E and it is not normal practice to share information across units so the pace of introduction of new ideas has had to accommodate different levels of absorption capacity. Progress has been compromised because the position of Director of Policy, Planning and Development remained vacant for an extended period.

At this stage, the ministry does not report on the ESSP or on the strategies within it. This is another reason why KEIP needs to have its own framework. For MoE, the ESSP, and its associated MEF, are viewed more as passive documents rather than active tools. This stems from the lack of familiarity with M&E and under recognition of its value. However, with a new ESSP due to be developed over the next year, the learning in KEIP is likely to result in better integration.

KEIP is supposed to be evaluated for the success of its strategies for enhancing access, including for the most disadvantaged groups. Increased enrolment and completion are therefore relevant indicators of whether all children are achieving functional literacy and numeracy. This would require a baseline that would show not only overall Kiribati attainment levels in literacy and numeracy but also their distribution across different regions and groupings. At present there is no such baseline.

As yet there is no timely mechanism for knowing whether high stakes policy is resulting in improved learning. Without such a mechanism it will not be possible to say whether the policies of curriculum reform and language are working or if they are not, to take remedial action. It is relevant in this context that the April 2014 KEIP Report states that the Years 5 and 6 syllabus development will be postponed until confirmation of Years 1-4 curriculum implementation is effective. However, there is no evidence being gathered that would confirm such effectiveness and the idea is not part of any systematic approach to review for such a purpose.

Indicators are not well aligned on learning and access. Not attending, during implementation, to the progress of learning as the key indicator of the success of the reform may be influenced by the fact that the KEIP PAF only has an indicator on *learning* at the outcome level (the STAKI results). Access, by contrast has many output indicators against it despite the fact that there are no major access strategies outside improved teaching and learning. These indicators include net and gross enrolment and net intake rates, which are not connected with learning improvement. Data collection on outputs related to learning improvement will, sooner rather than later, yield valuable information about the quality of the implementation in time to correct areas of disparity and ineffectiveness.

There are some ambiguities in where monitoring and evaluation is or should be housed. A partial attempt has been put in place by the CDRC which has led to some debate perhaps dispute about where such monitoring should be located. The funding of the LIME study which was meant to provide longitudinal information on the students undergoing the reform has missed a baseline date and there are questions about its ownership and buy in from by the MoE

where it to take place as designed now. Collection of the numbers performing against benchmarks would be in line with existing measures for performance monitoring and would strengthen to areas of MOE for whom this should be ongoing, core business.

4.8 Analysis and learning

Analysis underpinning the design

At this stage of implementation, and with the benefit of hindsight, it is evident that some aspects of analysis underpinning the design of KEIP were not adequately addressed. The table below indicates issues which might have benefitted from deeper analysis and potentially identified areas of risk that could have been mitigated.

Analysis	Question it answers	What it might have avoided
Institutional	How will implementation work? Will reforms be accepted?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding the dependence on individuals, and the fact that key positions stay unfilled for a long time might have avoided the stress of so many things happening at the same time. Understanding some of the insurmountable logistical challenges related to remoteness might have moderated expectations about the infrastructure program. Understanding the legal process might have reduced negative reactions to the Education Bill. Identifying the absence of an institutional home for an Inclusive Education Policy might have avoided a KEF-led process which is not owned by MoE
Political economy	Who gets what and why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding the issues of equity and why everyone has to have the same structure might have avoided the stalemate over the infrastructure component. Analysing the role of Island Education Coordinators in relation to Island Councils may have identified aspects of resistance
Socio-political	Will people accept it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding political and social impact of fundamental change in the language policy might have meant more would be done to socialise the concept and rationale with communities and among politicians. Understanding exactly what teachers want for English language teaching might have overcome resistance to KERP Understanding the interdependence of good teaching and good school leadership might have led to a timely focus on consolidating teaching and learning reforms at the school level

Design tensions

KEIP contains a number of design tensions that have manifested themselves during implementation. There is a question about what exactly KEIP is. It was designed as a form of sector support yet, in having a specific focus on early years teaching and learning, is more appropriately classified as sub sector support. Some elements led by KEF, have the appearance of a traditional project. Tensions in the design are:

- Priorities.** Although the early years focus is justified, KEIP does not support important priorities of MoE in JSS and senior secondary schools, nor in pre-service teacher training. At the same time, KEIP promotes its own priorities such as disability inclusion which are not shared by MoE.

- **SWAp.** KEIP was designed with explicit aim of progressing a SWAp. However, the means by which this is being achieved, through the key role of the SEMS, is outside the KEIP framework. UNESCO and UNICEF inputs, whilst under the framework of KEIP, require the same amount of work of MoE as would separate projects.
- **Modality.** The institutionalisation of the EPIK, under MoE leadership, is very positive but it leaves KEIP without its fundamental purpose of providing a framework under which donors would cohere. The unintended consequence is that it leaves KEIP looking like a single DFAT project, albeit an important and large one.
- **Program logic.** The design tension created by the separation into two strands of teaching/learning and governance/management has manifested itself in uneven definition of activities, uneven allocation of resources and uneven performance across the components.
- **Access.** Additional analysis of the issues affecting access is required. The issues of getting children into school and keeping them in school are complex but the arrangements for addressing access are inadequate and resulting in research which is not actionable on scale. Combined with a not yet functional system for M&E, there is currently no way of assessing outcomes.

It will therefore be important to address these issues during the design of Phase 3.

Lessons learned in implementation

Many lessons have been learned during implementation. The following points, discussed in previous sections, can be summarised as:

Working on demand for education is just as important as the supply side. The effect of community consultations for the infrastructure component, as well as unexpected negative reactions to the language policy, has created awareness in the ministry that it has underestimated both the role and the interest of parents and communities in education reforms.

The bilingual language policy is a very positive development for Kiribati but it is not well understood. More work is needed to overcome the lingering concerns, especially among teachers responsible for implementing the language policy, to ensure that it survives as classroom practice.

School principals are central to reform at the school level. The role of school principal is increasingly demanding. Not only do they need more support to consolidate and sustain reforms but they also need basic equipment, such as laptop and printer, to manage the information that will enable them to increase access and learning.

One-off training is not enough to entrench reform. There is greater awareness in SIU and KTC that reforms need continual reinforcement and follow up. But there are two major barriers; the longstanding organisational culture of one-off training, which is difficult to change and the formidable logistical challenges of providing continuous reinforcement.

Some aspects of evaluation cannot wait. Although it is important to build ownership by reinforcing institutional roles and relationships, it is also important to define which things cannot wait and sequence them early. Some things are important enough for KEF to implement directly and get buy-in later. A parallel process of lesson learning in KEF would have produced some qualitative analysis to meet accountability requirements.

5 Conclusions

1. KEIP aligns with, and is central to, the realisation of the strategic goals of the ESSP.

In the short period of time from 2011 to 2014, it has achieved a great deal. There are some major achievements of which MoE and development partners can be very proud.

2. Greatest progress has been made in the ESSP strategic goals related to curriculum (1) and teacher competence (3).

Development of a high quality curriculum and training of the whole workforce is an impressive achievement. The focus on early years has been effective and there are early indications that children and teachers like the new curriculum and are actively engaged in learning. Using te-Kiribati as the language of instruction is enabling all children to learn in a language they understand. These components have been well resourced and are proving, at least at this early stage, to be an effective way of supporting reforms that have high potential to impact on learning achievement at the most critical stage of a child's education.

3. Achievement is testament to the strength of ownership of MoE, the exceptional motivation of key individuals from central to school level and the high quality of technical assistance.

The pace of change demonstrates that MoE has considerable potential to implement fundamental reform. At the same time, the stress on the education system of a micro state has been high. Delivering so much change across so many islands with such huge logistical challenges has been exhausting for a handful of key individuals. This creates a risk that reforms may not be sustainable over time.

4. Least progress has been made in the strategic goal of providing a conducive teaching and learning environment (2).

The infrastructure component of KEIP has been bogged down by political and logistical challenges and is far behind schedule. As few children are so far benefitting from rehabilitated schools, this component, which consumes almost one third of the total budget for 2014, is neither an effective nor efficient means of improving learning achievement.

5. The two components of KEIP, oriented to improved governance and management of the education system, are too small to achieve the intended outcomes. Although they were intended to support system reforms that directly increase learning achievement, activities are spread too thinly across too many ESSP strategic goals. Activities intended to promote sector planning and monitoring are a curious mix of appropriately strategic and inappropriately operational, spanning four major goals (4,5,7).

6. The design, at least in the program logic, has artificially separated school improvement from teaching and learning.

This has manifested itself in two ways; specifically in under emphasising and under resourcing the concept of school partnerships (Goal 6) and generally in uneven definition of activities, uneven allocation of resources and uneven performance across the components.

7. The institutionalisation of EPIK is an important shift in the right direction, placing MoE at the centre of donor coordination.

The move away from the parallel mechanism of the KEIP Oversight Committee to the EPIK as a framework for donor harmonisation within the ministry has been possible because of the institutional separation between the SEMS and the DFAT/KEF implementation mechanisms. Making the SEMS accountable directly to the Secretary of MoE, but working constructively with DFAT/KEF, has been very important.

8. This leaves a question about what exactly KEIP is.

MoE leadership on donor coordination is very positive but it leaves KEIP without its fundamental purpose of providing a framework under which donors would cohere around sector support. With no identified advantages in pursuing a SWAp as a policy priority, KEIP is currently looking

like single donor sub sector support for early years teaching and learning. Where there is strong MoE ownership, it looks like a program. Where elements are led by KEF it has the appearance of a traditional project.

9. There is considerable variation in ownership across KEIP.

Phase 2 has succeeded in shifting ownership and control to MoE in several important areas. With the exception of KERP, there is very strong ownership of the curriculum and teacher professional development. There is also strong ownership of school improvement but this has been less fully supported by KEIP than it might have been. In contrast, there is weak ownership of activities supporting monitoring and evaluation of learning achievement. The concept of inclusive education appears to have little ownership. It has been introduced in a way that confuses inclusion, participation and access as well as alarming MoE because it has cost implications far beyond what the ministry can afford.

10. Insufficient attention has been paid to access.

What has been achieved so far is necessary to improve quality but it is not enough. Even more challenging than quality is access. The kind of reform that will increase access is more difficult because the issues of getting children into school, and keeping them in school, are complex and can only be achieved in the long term. But the arrangements for addressing access are insufficient. Other than the small scale research, and the incomplete policy on inclusive education, there is nothing strategic in place to address access. Combined with a not yet functional system for M&E, there is currently no way of assessing outcomes related to access.

11. It will be a significant challenge to ensure that improvements in the quality of education are sustainable.

Substantial reforms have already been achieved but they are in their infancy and there is still a long way to go. Although MoE has made great progress on rolling out curriculum reform and teacher professional development there is limited understanding of the kind of systems that need to be in place to sustain achievements compared with those that can achieve one-off change. The risk is that both MoE and DFAT may be over confident about how embedded the benefits and changes are and about the amount of time and effort needed to sustain them.

12. It will not be possible to evaluate impact unless more analytical work is undertaken.

A significant weakness of KEIP is the inability to form a judgement about whether it is a good investment because the analytical work is not being done. Awareness about the importance of monitoring and evaluation is growing, through a rigorous, participatory, system wide process but it will take time for the still unfamiliar concept to be comprehended as something which is useful to the ministry.

6 Recommendations

6.1 Recommendations for the remainder of Phase 2

1. Consolidate those things that are working well.

- i. Enhance KEIP PMF by including indicators of curriculum and pedagogical effectiveness in order to ensure that the existing system of school reporting is relevant to system monitoring
- ii. Install lockable cupboards to preserve curriculum resources and supply desks and chairs for all Grade 1 and 2 classrooms.
- iii. Re-equip the teaching resource centres on the outer islands as centres for teacher

professional development, including maintenance of English proficiency. Consider whether it would be value for money to restore internet connectivity at these centres so that teachers can maintain their language levels by access to online English language resources

2. Review aspects that need change.

- i. Re-visit MoE priorities – informal as well as formal – as part of the regular policy dialogue meetings between DFAT and MoE to ensure that KEIP is responding appropriately, within the framework of early grades teaching and learning
- ii. Assess the implications of managing the training of remaining cohorts in English with existing resources made available by KERP. Use the strength of the out-of school model used for TPD in order to address the weakness of requiring teacher replacement.
- iii. Substantively review the inclusive education policy to ensure that definitions are clear and it is appropriately costed
- iv. Clarify the KEF roles of Relationship Manager and Gender & Social Inclusion Coordinator to ensure that they only support activities for which there is an institutional home in MoE and that their role as TA is properly articulated
- v. Consolidate support for school improvement so that it can be described as a coherent package
- vi. Drop small activities which are not adding value

3. Strengthen the analytical base.

- i. Within the budget and timeframe, design a framework of robust research and analysis to underpin implementation and add qualitative measures of impact to accompany STAKI 2015 results

6.2 Recommendations for the design of Phase 3

KEIP, as a framework for donor support, is no longer relevant now that MoE has taken on the coordination function directly through the mechanism of EPIK. This has profound implications for the design of Phase 3 and for choices about whether to continue with broad support across so many of the ESSP strategies or whether to focus more deeply on those that make a difference to children's learning achievement. *The recommendation of the review team is to continue to focus on the sub sector and ensure that activities are significant in scale and balanced in investment.*

Recommendations which flow directly from findings and conclusions:

- i. Consolidate continuing professional development of Year 1-3 teachers as well as undertaking Grade 5-6 and JSS adaptation to the new curriculum
- ii. Focus more attention on school principals and DEOs as leaders of reform at the school level
- iii. Support SIU by strengthening linkages with other divisions/units involved in improving teaching and learning
- iv. Pace and sequence reforms appropriately in the light of the stress created during Phases 1 and 2
- v. Although infrastructure is a political imperative, it is advisable to moderate the proportion of budget that it consumes
- vi. Continue to support the SEMS position outside the framework of KEIP because of the proven advantages in supporting the long and difficult path of system reform with accountability directly to the ministry rather than for outcomes specified by the program

Issues arising from the findings and conclusions, which need full discussion during the design phase

There are other important findings of the evaluation which the team believe are likely to increase achievement of results in Phase 3. However, these are issues which need to be fully worked through in the design process with the involvement of all stakeholders. We therefore do not wish to elevate to these issues to the level of recommendations.

More and better results are likely through the following:

- i. **Focus on the nexus of curriculum, teacher professional development and increased attention to school improvement (including school-community partnerships).** A single stream of balanced activities where the connectivity can be understood easily and simply by all stakeholders is preferable to streams separating teaching and learning from education management.
- ii. **Focusing on fewer areas of system reform.** System reform is the business of MoE and donors add relatively little value compared with targeted technical support. M&E is the obvious example of crucial support at system level because results cannot be shown on any investment without a robust framework. It is a big enough challenge to develop a MEF for the ESSP which dedicates sufficient resources to monitoring, evaluation, and high quality impact oriented research. Supporting small and discrete activities across complex governance and management reform areas is a distraction.
- iii. **Distinguish clearly between the role of KEF staff members and the appropriate role of local technical advisers.** This is particularly important in Phase 3 to ensure that KEF supports activities that are genuinely owned by MoE and that technical assistance needs are properly defined and recruited for rather than being supported by default.
- iv. **Eliminate any confusion between a sector and sub sector approach.** A clear and convincing rationale for a partial or sub sector approach would appear to offer the same, or more, advantage as aiming for the very long term development of a SWAp.
- v. **Including pre-service training.** As well as in-service training to prepare *all* teachers effectively.

Issues which require analysis during the design

- i. **Review of the JSS curriculum** to adjust the level of difficulty to appropriate grade level and re-structure in line with outcomes based curriculum structure of primary curriculum with a focus on literacy numeracy communication and problem solving skills. The move to JSS needs to be underpinned by a strong analysis of what impact can be anticipated by focusing on certain aspects of curriculum and pedagogy rather than trying to service whole curriculum reform.
- ii. **Access and quality.** It is very important in the light of global learning about how increasing access tends to be associated with a cost to quality, to have a deep analysis of the issues affecting access. This should clarify the extent to which increasing access is a realistic intended outcome within the timeframe of KEIP Phase 3 compared with intensive focus on increasing quality.
- iii. **Access to JSS.** Large scale multifactor analysis of access to and retention in JSS as the basis for determining the key strategies for participation in JSS for this phase, additional to those of curriculum and pedagogical reform. This study should take place before design activities and should include a strong demand-side focus.
- iv. **Institutional capacity.** Review of CDAD SIU and KTC for supporting continuation of curriculum, teacher and school reform into JSS level

Issues specific to English language teaching

- i. **English language.** A specialist review of options should be undertaken for the most appropriate and effective training model for equipping teachers (Grade 4 –JSS) with the knowledge and skills to deliver the curriculum in English. This should include consideration of the balance between teachers' own level of proficiency and skills in TESOL, a review of the existing KTC TESOL certificate course and the KELP curriculum and the importance of consistency of approaches for the learning of English and the learning of literacy in Te-Kiribati, in order to enhance students' transfer of literacy skills in te-Kiribati to English. It should also review the extent to which the

capacities required for delivering the curriculum in English require internationally equivalent English language testing regimes.

- ii. **Sustainability.** A sustainable model for supporting ongoing teacher professional competence after training is necessary including maintenance of English proficiency and particularly for the outer islands. This model should include developing stronger ties between DEOs and school principals as responsible for students' performance at the school. Consideration should be given to expansion of telecommunication technology for data delivery and for regular 'virtual' visits. While the remoteness of the islands for physical contact is daunting. Kiribati has the advantage of a small number of schools which makes strong one-on-one relationships possible between schools and DEO/other forms of support. Existing island TCCs should be also considered for use as resource centres for peer based activity, networking and contact with Tarawa. Review of the IEC concept should accompany the model with the objective of ensuring that any such development enhance rather than complicate relationships between MoE and schools and between schools and Island Councils.

7 Annex 1: Terms of Reference

Kiribati Education Improvement Program (KEIP)

- Independent Evaluation 2014

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's Performance Management and Evaluation Policy requires that monitored initiatives (those valued at more than \$3.0 million or otherwise significant to country strategies) undertake at least one evaluation during their life at the time, and for the purpose, considered most appropriate by the program manager.

1. PURPOSE

The Kiribati Education Improvement Program ('KEIP' or 'the Program') is the major vehicle through which Australia supports the implementation of the (Kiribati) Ministry of Education's Education Sector Strategic Plan. It is envisaged that KEIP be implemented over ten years, and in three phases, from 2010. After an initial establishment phase, KEIP is one year into a second. With two years remaining in this second phase, and with preparation for a third due to commence late in 2014, it is timely to take stock of the program.

The purpose of this Independent Evaluation is to 'take stock' of the Program: to check: that the implementation approach adopted is the most appropriate, and that the activities being implemented are achieving the ends being sought in the most efficient manner. The Independent Evaluation will provide advice to the Government of Kiribati (particularly the Secretary to the Ministry of Education), the Government of Australia (particularly the Counsellor - Development Cooperation, Tarawa Post) and the Program Oversight Committee on the performance of the Program to date, recommend changes to strengthen its performance over the remainder of current phase and provide guidance on the design of a subsequent four-year phase from 2016.

2. BACKGROUND

Improved Basic Education is one of four Priority Outcome Areas of the Kiribati-Australia Partnership for Development. Under this Priority Outcome Area, the Government of Kiribati and the Government of Australia have committed to improve the standard of education provided in Kiribati's 118 Primary and Junior Secondary schools over the ten years to 2020, with the focus on improving children's access to a quality education and improving student learning outcomes. The objectives, targets and activities set out in the Improved Basic Education Priority Outcome Area Implementation Schedule have largely been derived from the Education Sector Strategic Plan and informed by the Kiribati Development Plan and (Australia's) Pacific Education and Skills Development Agenda.

2.1 The Kiribati Education Improvement Program

In this context, Australia's support to basic education assists the Government of Kiribati implement its Education Sector Strategic Plan and is delivered through the Kiribati Education Improvement Program, complemented by the placement of a Senior Education Management

Specialist in the Ministry of Education. Through KEIP, Australia and its development partners UNICEF and UNESCO provide assistance to address the most pressing issues articulated in the sector plan. The Program aims to ensure that over time other donors will choose to participate as the program becomes part of a sector-wide-approach.

The Kiribati Education Improvement Program was designed to be implemented in three distinct phases to align with the GoK and MoE four-year planning cycle (2008-2011, 2012-2015, 2016-2019) and progressively move towards a Kiribati-led sector program. The original timeframe for the implementation of the KEIP was:

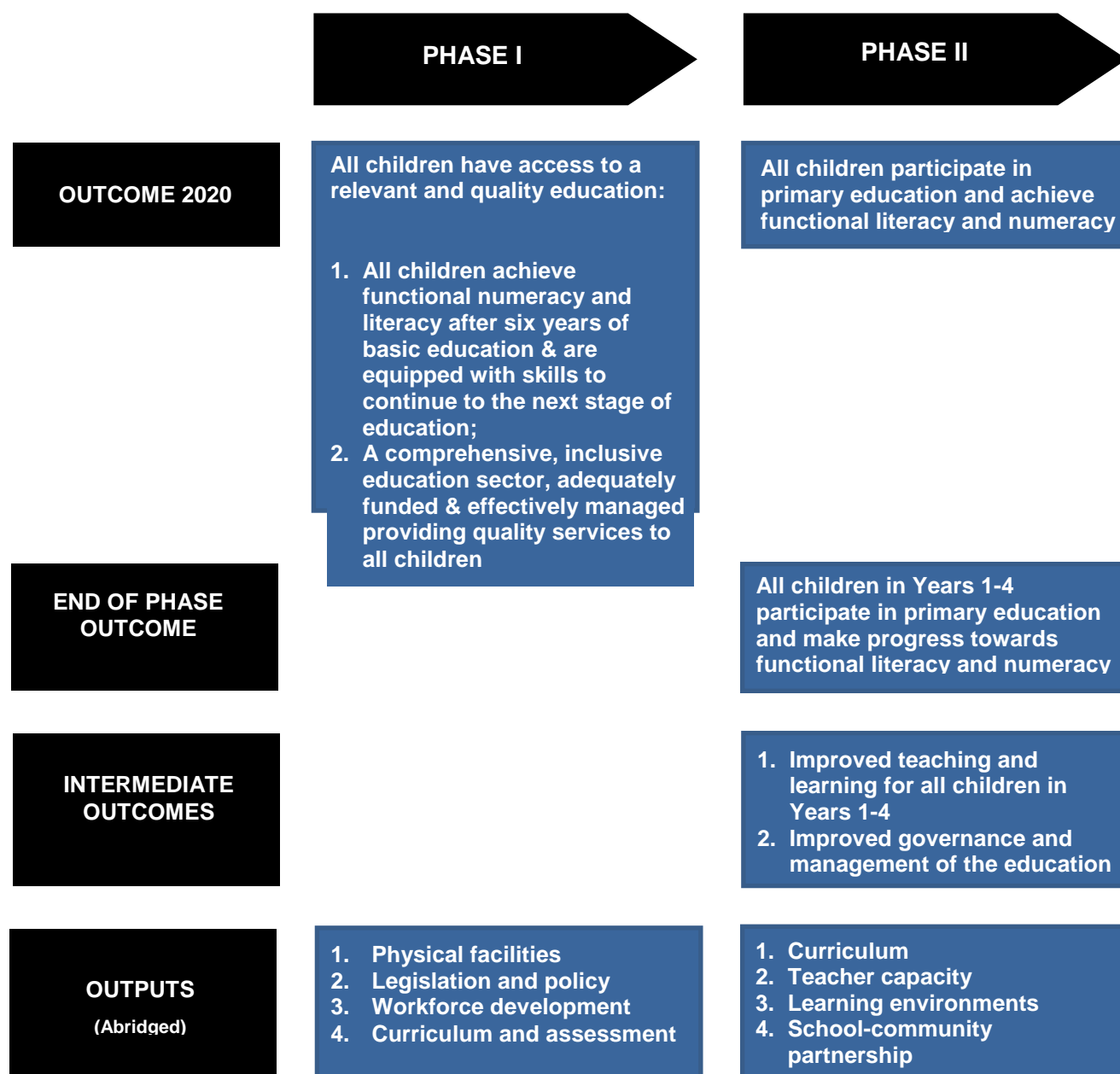
- Phase I June 2010 - December 2011
- Phase II January 2012 - December 2015
- Phase III January 2016 - December 2019

The Kiribati Education Improvement Program is delivered by a managing contractor (Coffey International Development) through the Kiribati Education Facility (formerly the KEIP Program Office). The managing contractor was not mobilised until January 2011. A Senior Education Management Specialist was deployed in June 2010 to prepare for the Program's implementation.

Because of the ambitious nature of Phase I, and to allow the bulk of the activities to be completed, Phase I was extended by 14 months, pushing back the timeframe for alignment with GoK planning cycles. Phase II started in March 2013 and is scheduled for completion, on time, in December 2015. Phase I (17 January 2011 to 28 February 2013) was valued at \$13.2 million (although delivered for slightly less) and Phase II (1 March 2013 to 31 December 2015) is valued at \$29.9 million. Phase II has a more explicit and deliberate focus on the early grades (Years 1-4).

Figure 1 describes the Program's outcomes and outputs in the first two phases, noting their refinement. In Phase II there is a much sharper focus on early grade learning (particularly on numeracy and literacy).

Figure 1 - KEIP outcomes & outputs across KEIP Phase I and KEIP Phase II



2.2 Kiribati English Language Program (KELP)

The Kiribati Ministry of Education requires that teachers achieve a certain standard in English language proficiency to make them effective classroom practitioners. The Kiribati English Language Program (KELP) - a component of KEIP - sets out to improve the English language skills of I-Kiribati teachers with the goal of teachers having the competence and confidence to teach their subjects in English in accordance with the Government of Kiribati (GoK) Language in Education Policy.

[Note: KELP was preceded by the Language Education Pilot Project which set out to (a) increase the English language proficiency of education personnel; (b) improve the language and pedagogical competencies and confidence of English language subject specialists, and (c) improve the language and pedagogical competencies and confidence of teachers using English as the medium of instruction for other curriculum subjects. Of interest to the KEIP Independent Evaluation is that in LEPP collected baseline data of English proficiency levels for 1225 (80%) education personnel from across Kiribati using the International Second Language Proficiency Rating (ISLPR)].

KELP commenced in 2012 and training was delivered to approximately 120 teachers per term. Teachers are taken out of the classroom for a term, and are backfilled with their classes taught by temporary teachers and retired teachers.

From 2013 (and for Phase II) KELP training was scaled-back (80 trainees per term) with the priority target groups being re-focussed to accommodate the teacher professional development program that supports the implementation of the new Curriculum and Assessment Framework (which targeted teacher of Years 1-2 teachers in 2013, Years 3-4 in 2014). In Phase II, KELP was also re-oriented to contribute more directly to the achievement of the Ministry's overall targets for improved literacy outcomes for primary school children.

Thus in 2013, the priority target groups were teachers of Years 4-6 in preparation for 'bridging' of students into English from Year 3 (when there is an increasing use of English as a medium of instruction in all subjects). Early grade primary school teachers were not a priority target group (mainly because te-Kiribati is the medium of instruction in the early grades) which allowed them to be fully available for teacher professional development on the new Curriculum and Assessment Framework.

By December 2013, approximately 545 primary and junior secondary teachers (or 56 per cent of 972) have been trained under the KELP since its inception. The number of teachers who have either achieved the desired standard (or were already "at standard") is 369. Of the remaining 429 teachers who still require training, JSS and Primary teachers in Grades 1–2 and 5–6 will be prioritised in 2014, as Grade 3–4 primary teachers will participate in the teacher professional development program in support of the new Curriculum and Assessment Framework.

In 2014, some \$723,000 will be directed at implementing KELP, representing approximately 55 per cent of all KEIP funds directed at strengthening the capacity of teachers (and almost twice as much as being directed at implementing the early years' literacy and numeracy teacher professional development program). In 2014, KELP training will be delivered to three cohorts of 80 trainees, each undertaking full-time KELP courses at the Kiribati Teachers' College and at the three Teacher Training Centres on Abaiang, Kiritimati and Tabituea North.

3. OBJECTIVE

The overarching objective of the Independent Progress review is to (a) assess the performance KEIP (including KELP) to date, checking that that the implementation approach adopted is the

most appropriate, and that the activities being implemented are achieving the ends being sought in the most efficient manner; and (b) recommend changes to strengthen the its performance over the next 24 months.

4. SCOPE

Independent evaluations, assessments, reviews and appraisals of aid program plans and activities provide information for DFAT's assessment of aid program effectiveness, provide lessons to DFAT and implementation partners on aid program management, inform management of existing activities and stand to inform the design of subsequent phases of existing activities (or of new activities).

Based the framework set out in Annex B, the Independent Evaluation should assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability and gender equality as they apply to the implementation of the KEIP. In so doing, the Independent Evaluation should address the following questions:

- to what extent is KEIP the 'right thing to do' and contributing to higher level objectives of the aid program outlined in relevant country and thematic strategies?
 - do the goals and objectives remain relevant and should they be retained for a third phase
- to what extent is KEIP on track to achieving its objectives - is it making the difference we expected - and is it doing so equitably across the islands and atolls of Kiribati?
 - is the ambition of adopting a sector-wide approach still realistic and desirable?
 - what progress has been made to towards a SWAp over the first two phases of the Program?
 - what further steps need to be taken?
- is KEIP being managed in such a way to get the most out of its resources?
- has KEIP had (other) positive and/or negative impacts on its intended beneficiaries
- to what extent is it likely the benefits of KEIP will continue now and after funding has ceased?
- how is KEIP advancing gender equality and disability inclusion, promoting women's empowerment, and pursuing inclusion of people with disabilities?
- what lessons have been learned and instances of good practice identified that could inform any subsequent phase of KEIP (and other similar programs in the Pacific).

In evaluating the performance of the KELP, the Independent Evaluation review will consider (and advise) on the following:

- does KELP align with, and contribute to, the objectives and outcomes of KEIP and what if any changes could be made to KELP to improve its contribution to KEIP?
- does KELP represent the best way to: (a) have teachers meet minimum English language proficiency standards, at the same as (b) ensuring teachers are equipped to help implement the Language in Education Policy (particularly in supporting 'bridging' of students into English from year 3 using a two-languages implementation model)?

In essence we are asking the team to; (a) assess progress towards intermediate outcomes; (b) assess whether the current and planned interventions offer the best chance of these outcomes

being achieved *equitably* across the school system (particularly geographically); and to propose changes to ensure the equitable attainment of such objectives.

5. METHODOLOGY

The assessment methodology will include a document review, field visits (observations), stakeholder consultations (interviews and focus group discussions), and data analyses (predominately but not limited to student performance information and baseline data collected on teacher's English language proficiency). A list of reference documents is provided at Annex C.

The Team Leader of Independent Evaluation is responsible for the development of a draft Evaluation Plan to be submitted to DFAT for approval prior to the in-country mission. The Evaluation Plan will be based on a collaborative approach and will include: (a) a brief statement of purpose; (b) a summary of the overall evaluations design; (c) a list of the key evaluation questions and sub-questions; (d) a description of the approach to sampling; (e) an overview of appropriate data collection methods and approaches to triangulation; (f) an explanation of how data will be analysed; (g) an overview of any ethical issues that may emerge and how they will be dealt with; (h) some guidance on scheduling and allocation of tasks. The Independent Evaluation Plan should be consistent with the intent of Standard 5 of the (AusAID) Monitoring and Evaluation Standards provided separately.

The Independent Evaluation will be undertaken according to the plan, within the timeframe included in Table 1.

6. TEAM COMPOSITION

6.1 The Independent Progress review will be undertaken by a team of two Consultants. The team will comprise the following people:

- STA (through ERF) - Team Leader (ARFC3/4) and preferably Monitoring and Evaluation specialist;
- Member - Education Specialist (through DFAT/ERF) with particular expertise in early year teaching and learning and an emphasis on numeracy and literacy.
- Member - Office of Development Effectiveness or Pacific Program Enabling Unit
- Member - Government of Kiribati representative

DFAT considers activities of this nature as providing an opportunity for program staff to gain exposure to thematic and monitoring and evaluation experts and would like a program manager to participate in the evaluation to the extent possible.

6.2 Skills required within the team include:

- extensive monitoring and evaluation experience using qualitative and quantitative methods;
- experience in the basic education sub-sector, preferably with a focus on early grades and early grade learning;
- 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);

- knowledge of development priorities and issues in Kiribati in particular and the Pacific in general;
- thorough understanding of the Australian aid program and experience in aid program development, planning, monitoring and evaluation;
- excellent interpersonal and communication skills, including a proven ability to liaise and communicate effectively with key national stakeholders; and
- ability to provide timely delivery of high-quality written reports.

7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT TEAM

7.1 The team leader 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 in certain meetings of DFAT personnel)
- manage, compile and edit inputs from other team members, to ensure the quality of reporting outputs;
- produce and present an aide memoire;
- synthesise evaluation material into a draft and a final Independent Evaluation Report; and
- mentor the team with a view to improving their monitoring & evaluation skills.
- participate in any further DFAT quality assurances process

7.2 Other team members will:

- work under the overall direction of the Team Leader;
- provide specialist advice, 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 logistical support by way of organising and confirming meeting schedules
- assist with domestic travel arrangements
- host the aide-memoire presentation

8. OUTPUTS

The following are to be provided:

8.1 Draft 2014 Independent Evaluation Plan to be submitted by Team Leader to Tarawa Post by Monday 5 May 2014 (for discussion on Wednesday 7 May 2014). The Final 2014

Independent Evaluation Plan version is due by Friday 9 May 2014. The Independent Evaluation Plan should meet the standards set out in the (AusAID) Monitoring and Evaluation Standards provided separately (particularly Standard 5 - Independent Evaluation Plans).

8.2 In-country 2014 Independent Evaluation Aide Memoire - to be presented by the Team Leader to representatives from the KEIP Oversight Committee, Tarawa Post, the Government of Kiribati, Coffey International, UNESCO and UNICEF representative and any other interested party at the completion of the in-country mission (the Aide Memoire Meeting is proposed for Friday 6 June 2014). The Aide Memoire must be based on the template provided.

An Aide Memoire will be prepared by the evaluation team at the end of an in-country visit to: (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 DFAT evaluation manager and initiative manager, the partner government and the other active stakeholders.

8.3 Initial Draft 2014 Independent Evaluation Report - to be submitted by the Team Leader to the Education Resource Facility for quality assurance by Monday 23 June 2014. This report must be based on the Independent Evaluation Report template provided and meet the standards set out in the (AusAID) Monitoring and Evaluation Standards (particularly Standard 6 - Independent Evaluation Reports).

The Education Resource Facility will present a quality assured draft to the Chair, KEIP Oversight Committee and the Development Program Specialist - Education & Workforce Skills Development, Tarawa Post by Friday 4 July 2014. Feedback, through the Chair, KEIP Oversight Committee, will be provided to the Team Leader by Friday 18 July 2014. DFAT/ KEIP OC will not alter the findings or recommendations but reserve the right to ensure in-country stakeholder views are accurately represented.

8.4 Final Draft 2014 Independent Progress Review Report - to be submitted by the Team Leader to the Education Resource Facility by Friday 25 July 2014 (or at another time agreed upon with the Education Resource Facility). The report will be no more than 20 pages (plus annexes). Lessons and recommendations should be clearly documented in the report.

The Education Resource Facility will undertake a final quality check and have it copy edited. The Education Resource Facility will present the Final 2014 Independent Progress Review Report to DFAT / Chair KEIP OC by Friday 1 August 2014 (and provide the Team Leader a copy at the same time).

9. TIMING & DURATION

The Independent Evaluation will commence on or around 24 March 2014 (preliminary document reviews) and be completed no later than 20 June 2014. All aspects are subject to discussion and agreement with DFAT. A teleconference will be scheduled to discuss timing and various aspects of the outputs (anticipated 2 April 2014).

Task	Indicative dates	Location	Upper limit of input			
			Team Leader	Specialist	GoK	Other
Review documents and prepare Independent Evaluation Plan	28 April 2014 to 2 May 2014	Office	6.5 days	1.0 days	4.0 days	4.0 days
Submit Draft 2014 Independent Evaluation Plan to Tarawa Post	5 May 2014	Office				
Discuss Draft 2014 Independent Evaluation Plan with Tarawa Post making revisions to the draft as agreed	7 May 2014	Office	0.5 days			
Submit Final 2014 Independent Evaluation Plan to Tarawa Post	9 May 2014	Office				
<u>In-country mission:</u> Proposed key dates and activities as follows (a detailed schedule will be developed separately to these ToRs): (a) 25 May 2014 - arrive Kiribati (b) 26 May 2014 - initial team meeting and briefing (b) 26 May 2014 to 5 June 2014 - consultations including an outer island visit, early conclusion drawing, preparation of Aide Memoire (d) 6 June 2014 - presentation of Aide Memoire (e) 6-7 June - report writing (e) 8 June 2014 - depart Kiribati	25 May 2014 to 7 June 2014	Kiribati	14.0 days	13.0 days	13.0 days	13.0 days
Prepare Initial Draft 2014 Independent Evaluation Report (see 9. Outputs, below) including data processing and analysis		Office	5.0 days	3.0 days	1.0 days	1.0 days
Submit Initial Draft 2014 Independent Evaluation Report to Education Resource Facility(ERF)	(by) 23 June 2014	Office				
Prepare Final Draft 2014 Independent Evaluation Report (see 9. Outputs, below)		Office	2.0 days	1.0 days		
Submit Final Draft 2014 Independent Evaluation Report to ERF (see 9. Outputs, below)	(by) 25 July 2014	Office				
Travel Days			3.0 days	3.0 days		
Total			31 days	21 days	18 days	18 days

Document History

Version	Date	Details
v0.0	23 January 2014	Initial version for consultation and review
v0.1	30 January 2014	Version for submission to ERF and based on comments from (a) Sam Vallance; (b) Mary Fearnley-Sander; (c) Audrey Aarons.
v0.2	18 February 2014	Revisions based on comments from: (a) Anne Glover; (b) Beryl Kennedy; (c) Adeola Capel - This version to be used as basis for discussion with Team Leader with a view of finalising them for use.
v0.3	12 March 2014	Further (minor) revisions based on comments from Regan Field and ERF - This version to be used as basis for discussion with Team Leader with a view of finalising them for use.

ANNEX A

Education Sector Context

At the policy level, the GoK has a strong commitment to education as a key plank in its development strategy. This is emphasised in the latest Kiribati Development Plan (2012 – 2015) which prioritises human resource development as a main foundation of the strategy. The government is also strongly committed in its Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) to the EFA and MDG goals, including MDG 2 (“by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling”). While Kiribati recognises that the full attainment of this target by 2015 is somewhat ambitious, its target for 2020 provides that 100% of children “will achieve functional literacy and numeracy after six years of basic education and are equipped with the skills to continue to the next stage of education”.

Responsibility for the education sector is somewhat dispersed within government. The Ministry of Education (MoE) has responsibility for 9 years of compulsory basic education (6 years primary and 3 years junior secondary). It is also largely responsible for the post compulsory sector, including senior secondary schooling, teacher and nursing education, higher, technical and further education. However, pre-school, vocational training and non-formal education are under the direction of other ministries.

Main responsibilities of the Ministry of Education are: (i) management of resource planning and policy development related to education and training, (ii) provision of program support to education and training institutions, (iii) regulation and recognition of education and training providers (Years 1-13), (iv) accreditation of instructional programs, and (v) accounting for the resources allocated by government to the education system.

The Ministry operates this small formal system in a highly centralised manner, although part of its commitment in the current sector plan, the Education Sector Strategic Plan (2012 – 2015) is to move towards a more decentralised management, with more authority at the level of the school. In support of this, the Ministry has prepared an Education Act which lays the groundwork for organizational restructuring. This will provide for greater clarity on roles and responsibilities, and position the Ministry for a more decentralised operational approach to system management. A key feature of this move is the establishment of a new post of Island Education Coordinator (IEC) on each Island. This will be a full time post to take on the function presently carried out by the Senior Grade 1 Head Teacher, who normally has a teaching load in addition to coordination duties.

This strengthening of Island and school capacity is necessitated by the raft of system reforms that the Ministry is currently implementing. The central focus of the new reforms is improvement of teaching and learning, and reforms include a new National Curriculum and Assessment Framework (NCAF), a Teacher Professional Development Framework (TPDF), new Teaching Service Standards (TSS) and updating of the National Infrastructure Standards for schools. New standards for Head Teachers and Principals have also been developed, and the commitment to strengthening school based governance and management is supported by a drive to support the development of School Improvement Plans (SIPs) which operationalize a whole school development approach. A key component of this is a commitment to building stronger school-community relations, by extending the work of the Community Consultation Teams (CCTs) to assist the mobilization of community support for SIPs.

This new and relatively robust and integrated policy framework positions the Ministry well for addressing the system transformation that is outlined in the ESSP. The major challenge at this stage lies in implementation, as the system confronts the normal system inertia, capacity and

resource constraints, and huge demands of change management on a broad range of fronts. Given the resource limitations, a key plank of the reform program is building better links with the community, at the national level to get buy-in from the broad range of stakeholders who influence and are affected by the education system. At the island, school and community level the aim is to build a sense of shared responsibility for education delivery, and for supporting the learning of their children.

Core Education System Data

The education system of Kiribati is small, with a total enrolment of students in all levels of formal education in the region of 27,000 and with a teaching service of around 1,200. In 2012 there were some 14,950 students enrolled in 94 government primary schools, and 5,911 students enrolled in 23 government Junior Secondary Schools (JSS). The Senior Secondary School (SSS) sub-sector, which is largely church provided with the exception of two government SSS, enrolls some 5,200 students. The total church school enrolment in 2012 was 3,211, of which 899 students were enrolled in JSS grades (Forms I – III). Non-government provision of formal basic and secondary education represents some 12% of total enrolment, although it is concentrated in the senior secondary, where non-government provision is over 60% of enrolment in that sub-sector.

The table below summarises the main system indicators for 2011:

Table 1: Main Education System Indicators 2011

School Level	Enrolment			NER	SR	GER	Teachers			STR
	Total	Girls	Boys	Total	Total	Total	Total	Male	Female	
Primary	15,458	7,723	7,735	82%	91.20%	90%	628	118	510	25:1
Junior Secondary	6,964	3,785	3,179	64%	86%	86%	331	145	186	21:1
Senior Secondary	4,550	2,540	1,904	41%	66.50%	45%	240	122	118	18:1
	NER	Net Enrolment Rate			GER	Gross Enrolment Rate				
	SR	Survival Rate			STR	Student:teacher ratio			19.1	

The most important issue with regard to these data is that the NER has stagnated at around this level for several years, and is on a slightly declining trend, while the survival rate at 91.2% is trending positively. The stagnant or declining NER at around 82% represents a serious concern for the Ministry and its development partners. This implies the need for strategies that will improve access for children currently excluded by removing the obstacles most likely to deter attendance, including household costs of education and poor quality teaching and learning.

Factors responsible for exclusion and poor attendance, identified in the KEIP 2 Design Document, “include weak support from parents for children’s education, poor or inadequate transport, family financial difficulties, poor learning environments (including not enough texts and material and unqualified and unmotivated teachers) and un-safe schools (with students afraid of their teachers). Other barriers identified by the MoE Inclusive Education Working Group during KEIP Phase 1 are disability, learning difficulties, and serious and recurring illness. Additional, but unexamined barriers are violence against children and adolescents, and unstable homes including those involving domestic violence.”

An initial study of parent’s perceptions of the reasons children stay out of school that was completed in 2013, identified broadly similar factors, although they placed a higher priority on lack of confidence in the value of education (Kiribati Education Facility (KEF) (2013) “Briefing Notes for AusAID: Action Research on Absenteeism” unpublished briefing note prepared by KEF for MoE). These findings are summarised in the table overleaf.

This study has limitations in terms of categorization (economic factors underlie many of the school and household factors), and is more anecdotal than analytical. However, it provides a starting point for a further analysis which will offer more insight into the ways in which these factors interact in a dynamic that shapes the patterns of exclusion, and will identify geographic and household income differentials. What emerges clearly is that household poverty and lack of confidence in the value of education constitute an important factor. Clearly these two factors interact, with judgements about the value of schooling influenced by household poverty.

The Gender Parity Index (GPI) for 2012 enrolment data indicates parity for the primary grades (1.00), but significantly higher girls' enrolment in JSS (1.19) and SSS (1.33), reflecting the greater formal and informal employment prospects for boys. The primary school teacher workforce is predominantly female (81%), while at JSS level it is closer to 60%, and almost 50% in SSS. Teacher geographic distribution is relatively even, except for three small islands (Kanton, Banaba and Tamara) having student teacher ratio (STR) lower than 15:1. Two Islands have STR above 28:1, namely Teeraina (38) and Arorae (33). Reliable data on inclusion of children with disabilities is not available as there is not yet a national system for classification of disability, nor the institutional capacity to identify such children, but a study is currently under way to take this forward.

Table 2: Factors influencing non-attendance

Type of Factor	Factors
School related factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools demanding contributions from parents who cannot afford them cause parents to withhold children from school, or schools may even exclude non paying children. • Children find learning boring and unstimulating • Dislike of teachers and fear of punishment • Shortage of textbooks and lesson preparation by teachers • Lack of sports and recreation facilities and equipment means children leave for recreation and fail to return • Lack of toilet facilities, children leave and do not return • Preferential treatment of children by teachers • Early school closing on pay-days (twice per month) • Schools closed for major island or village functions
Home related factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families do not believe education has value • Internal movement of parents on the island –e.g. for copra harvesting • Poor attenders fall behind and lose interest • Poor health of children, and illness

Type of Factor	Factors
Geographical factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distance to schools, especially for girls Lack of affordable transport
Economic factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents lack the resources to support their children, cannot afford learning materials, uniforms and transport.

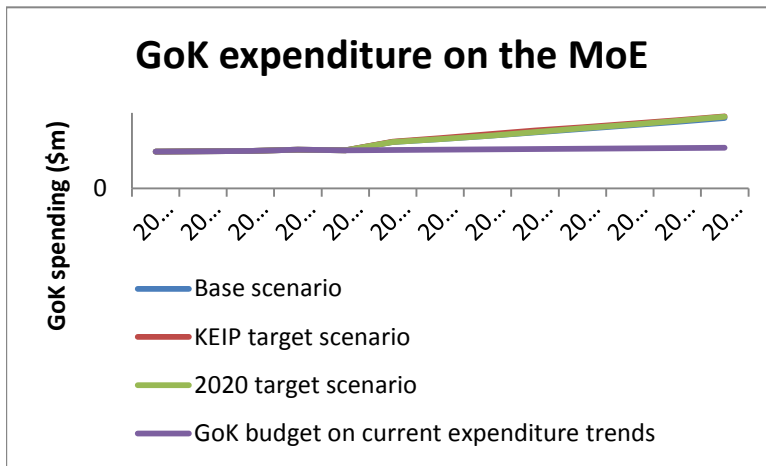
In terms of learning outcomes, the currently available data also provides grounds for concern. Government of Kiribati assessments reveal that Kiribati primary school children are not performing well in literacy and numeracy, although there is a slight upward trend indicated in some of the data. The Ministry's own Standardised Tests of Achievement for Kiribati (STAKI) indicates overall low performance in these tests, with fewer than a third of students' performance assessed "satisfactory" in English, two thirds in Kiribati and, at year six level, fewer than one fifth in numeracy. These data are supported by other learning assessment initiatives that the Ministry is currently trialling, and confirm the priority focus on improving learning outcomes that is a basis of the ESSP.

Table 3: STAKI Performance in Year 4 and 6 2007 - 11

Subject	Year 4			Year 6		
	2007	2009	2011	2007	2009	2011
English	29%	39%	29%	13.50%	33%	22.50%
Kiribati	61%	62%	62%	60%	56%	60.50%
Numeracy	35%	37.50%	37.50%	16%	17%	18%

In terms of sector financing, education emerges as a high priority for Kiribati government expenditure, which committed some 21% of the national budget, within international guidelines, to the sector. This figure has fluctuated between 26% (2009) and 18.2% (2010), but indicates a government commitment of resources to the sector. A worrying trend is the high proportion of resources that is committed to salaries, which is 70% of total expenditure (including tertiary), and is closer to 90% of recurrent expenditure if tertiary and development expenditure are excluded. A recent study of the Cost of Service Delivery in the education sector projects that there will be a substantial funding gap if targets in the ESSP and KEIP are to be achieved, and that ongoing external support for education will be required for the foreseeable future. The table below indicates the extent of that gap.

Figure 1: Actual and Projected Expenditure 2008 to 2020



ANNEX B

Questions to guide the Independent Evaluation

The Independent Evaluation will assess Program performance against the criteria listed below, and based on that assessment, rate performance using the Assessment Criteria Ratings Table overleaf. The questions below may be used to inform such an assessment, noting however that not all may be relevant in this instance and that others may be used.

1. Relevance - is it contributing to higher level objectives of the aid program (& is it the right thing to do)?

- Are the objectives relevant to, and align with, Australian Government and partner government policy priorities?
- Are the objectives relevant to the context and the development needs of beneficiaries?
- Is the Program valued by the partner government?
- Given the context, is this the best way to meet such ends?
- Is the approach or modality the most appropriate?
- Does the Program stand to contribute to the attainment of high level objectives of the aid program
- If not, what changes could be made to ensure continued relevance?

2. Effectiveness - is it on track to achieve its objectives?

- What indications show the intended outcomes will be met and positive change achieved (equitably)?
- To what extent are intermediary outcomes being achieved and contributing to the expected outcomes?
- Are the outcomes and theory of change plausible and realistic given the context?
- Is policy dialogue used being to successfully influence partners and support intended outcomes?
- What are the key factors enabling or inhibiting progress towards outputs / objectives?
- Are there any unintended consequences associated with the Program that need to be investigated further?
- Are risks being managed well to mitigate negative consequences?
- Is there a robust monitoring and evaluation system in place?
- Can performance information be readily accessed and is it being used to inform decision making?

3. Efficiency - is it being managed in such a way to get the most out of its resources?

- Is the Program producing the outputs expected at this stage?
- Does the Program represent value for money and what could drive improvements in that regard (if any)?
- Is the budget being spent as expected and projected or is it under/overspent?
- Are the inputs adequate to achieve the intended outcomes?
- Are the implementation arrangements well-harmonised with other development partners?
- Do implementation arrangements align with and support partner government systems to the appropriate extent?
- Are adviser inputs appropriate, giving consideration to the amount of inputs, timing of their deployment and the extent their contributions stand to contribute to program outputs?

4. Sustainability - is it likely the benefits will continue after funding has ceased?

- Is it clear what sustainable benefits and changes the Program is expected to generate?
- Do program management and governance arrangements provide the Government of Kiribati with sufficient national ownership of KEIP directions and priorities? Are they appropriate and aligned with GoK systems and/or could they be streamlined?
- Do partners report and demonstrate a level of ownership, leadership, capacity and resources to maintain the activity outcomes after Australian Government funding has ceased?
- What is the likelihood that sustainable benefits will be achieved?
- Are local systems being used appropriately?
- Is there an observable trend away from using external consultants toward partner self-management.
- Are there any areas of the activity that are clearly not sustainable? What lessons can be learned from this?

5. Gender Equality - is it advancing gender equality and promoting women's empowerment?

- Does the program integrate appropriate strategies to address gender equality concerns and achieve appropriate outputs and outcomes?
- Does the program particularly address inequalities and is there evidence of progress towards these outcomes?
- How does the Program advance gender equality (and disability inclusion) and promote women's empowerment (and the inclusion of people with disabilities)?
- Do partners view gender equality as a priority / does the Kiribati Education Facility encourage partners to make gender equality (and disability inclusion) a priority?
- Does the monitoring and evaluation system collect sex disaggregated data and include specific questions or gender specific indicators addressing gender inequalities?

Assessment Criteria Ratings Table

Criteria	Rating (1-6)	Explanation
Relevance		
Effectiveness		
Efficiency		
Sustainability		
Gender Equality		

Rating scale

Satisfactory		Less than satisfactory	
6	Very high quality	3	Less than adequate quality
5	Good quality	2	Poor quality
4	Adequate quality	1	Very poor quality

Explanation of assessment criteria

1. Relevance: is the activity contributing to higher level objectives of the aid program?
2. Effectiveness: is the activity on track to achieve its objectives?
3. Efficiency: is the activity being managed to get the most out of its inputs and resources?
4. Impact: has the activity produced positive or negative changes?
5. Sustainability: is it likely the benefits of the activity will continue after funding has ceased?
6. Gender equality: is the activity advancing gender equality and promoting women?

The Independent Evaluation Report should be based on the [ERF] Evaluation Report template provided.

ANNEX C

Key Documents

Additional documents may be identified. Copies will be provided electronically separately. Discussion with the Team Leader will identify the documents to be provided in the first instance in order to inform the initial desk work (and development of the Independent Evaluation Plan).

Government of Australia documents:

1. *An Effective Aid Program for Australia: Making a real difference – Delivering real results*
2. *Promoting Opportunities for All* education strategy
3. *Pacific Education and Skills Development Agenda*

Government of Kiribati documents

1. Kiribati Development Plan 2012-2016
2. Education Sector Strategic Plan 2008-2011
3. Education Sector Strategic Plan 2012-2015
4. Education Sector Strategic Plan 2012-2015 Monitoring and Evaluation Framework
5. National Curriculum and Assessment Framework
6. National Infrastructure Standards for Primary Schools

Government of Kiribati and Government of Australia strategic documents

7. The Kiribati-Australia Partnership for Development
8. The Kiribati-Australia Partnership for Development: Improved Basic Education Priority Outcome Area - Implementation Schedule

Kiribati Education Improvement Program documents (including contractor material)

9. Program Design Document: KEIP Phase I
10. KEIP Phase I Scope of Services - Coffey International
11. Grant Agreement - UNESCO
12. Contribution Agreement - UNICEF
13. Terms of Reference – Senior Education Management Specialist
14. KEIP Annual Plan 2011
15. KEIP Quarterly Progress Report – January-March 2011
16. KEIP Quarterly Progress Report – April-June 2011
17. KEIP Quarterly Progress Report – July-September 2011
18. KEIP Quarterly Progress Report - October-December 2011

19. Senior Education Management Specialist Work Plan 2011
20. Senior Education Management Specialist Quarterly Progress Report – January-March 2011
21. Senior Education Management Specialist Quarterly Progress Report – April-June 2011
22. Senior Education Management Specialist Quarterly Progress Report – July-September 2011
23. Senior Education Management Specialist Quarterly Progress Report - October-December 2011
24. Senior Education Management Specialist Annual Report 2011
25. KEIP Extension Proposal - January-June 2012
26. KEIP Extension Proposal - July-February 2013
27. KEIP Quarterly Progress Report – January-March 2012
28. KEIP Quarterly Progress Report – April-June 2012
29. KEIP Quarterly Progress Report – July-September 2012
30. KEIP Quarterly Progress Report - October-December 2012
31. KELP Progress Report 2012
32. Senior Education Management Specialist Work Plan 2012
33. Senior Education Management Specialist Quarterly Progress Report – January-March 2012
34. Senior Education Management Specialist Quarterly Progress Report – April-June 2012
35. Senior Education Management Specialist Quarterly Progress Report – July-September 2012
36. Senior Education Management Specialist Quarterly Progress Report - October-December 2012
37. Senior Education Management Specialist Annual Report 2012
38. Program Design Document: KEIP Phase II
39. KEIP Phase II Scope of Services - Coffey International
40. KEIP Annual Plan 2013
41. KEIP Quarterly Progress Report – January-March 2013
42. KEIP Quarterly Progress Report – April-June 2013
43. KEIP Quarterly Progress Report – July-September 2013
44. KEIP Quarterly Progress Report - October-December 2013
45. Senior Education Management Specialist Work Plan 2013
46. Senior Education Management Specialist Quarterly Progress Report – January-March 2013
47. Senior Education Management Specialist Quarterly Progress Report – April-June 2013
48. Senior Education Management Specialist Quarterly Progress Report – July-September

2013

- 49. Senior Education Management Specialist Quarterly Progress Report - October-December 2013
- 50. Senior Education Management Specialist Annual Report 2013
- 51. LEPP Independent Completion Report 2010
- 52. KELP Progress Report 2012

Previous relevant assessment reports

- 53. Assessment of National Systems
- 54. Institutional Capacity Assessment - Ministry of Education

Independent Evaluation templates

- 55. Template: Aide Memoire [ERF version - ERF to supply]
- 56. Template: Evaluation Report [ERF version - ERF to supply]
- 57. [AusAID]Monitoring and Evaluation Standards (especially Standards 5 and Standard 6)

Other documents:

- 58. Millennium Development Goals
- 59. Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, Accra Agenda for Action, and Busan Partnership Agreement
- 60. Cairns Compact on Strengthening Development Coordination

ANNEX D

Initial list of key personnel to be consulted

Government of Kiribati

1. Ms Meare Tekanene Minister of Education
2. Ms Tererei Abete-Reema Secretary to the Ministry of Education
3. Mr Tawaria Konwenga Deputy Secretary
4. Heads of Divisions Ministry of Education
5. Ms Lucy Kum-On Principal KTC
6. Principals - South Tarawa Ministry of Education
7. Principals - North Tabiteua Ministry of Education
8. Teachers - South Tarawa Ministry of Education
9. Teachers - North Tabiteua Ministry of Education
10. Island Education Coordinators Ministry of Education
11. Ms Beryl Kennedy PACTAM Adviser placed in Ministry of Education

Government of Australia

12. Mr George Fraser Australian High Commissioner to Kiribati
13. Mr Michael Hunt DFAT - Counsellor, Development Cooperation
14. Mr Mark Sayers DFAT - Development Program Specialist
15. Ms Audrey Aarons Pacific Education Adviser (contracted by DFAT)
16. Ms Mary Fearnly-Sander DFAT - Education Adviser

Coffey International Development

17. Ms Anne Glover Coffey International Development - Senior Development Specialist
18. Mr Nelson Ireland Coffey International Development - Current Team Leader
19. Ms Libby Hegarty Coffey International Development - Former Team Leader
20. KEF Long-term Advisers Coffey International Development
21. KELP personnel Indonesia-Australia Language Foundation

Development Partners

1. Ms Nuzhat Shahzadi UNICEF (Kiribati)
2. Mr Simon Molendijk UNICEF (Fiji)
3. Mr Toshiyuki Matsumoto UNESCO (Samoa)

8 Annex 2: Extracts from the Evaluation Plan

Key evaluation questions

In the first working draft of this evaluation plan, a three step process was undertaken for clarifying the key questions:

1. Questions in the main part of the TOR were compared with those provided in the annex
2. As there were a large number of general questions in the annex, the most appropriate were prioritised
3. These were then developed into a structure which could support a logical line of investigation for the evaluators and demonstrates a clear progression for stakeholders.

Based on feedback from DFAT, the table below clusters the questions from the TOR against the DAC/DFAT criteria.

Table 3: TOR Questions, clustered by evaluation criteria

Criteria	TOR questions - clustered against the criteria which are to be used for scoring
Relevance	<p>To what extent is KEIP the 'right thing to do' and contributing to higher level objectives of the aid program outlined in country and thematic strategies?</p> <p>Do the goals and objectives remain relevant and should they be retained for a third phase?</p> <p>Does KERP align with, and contribute to, the objectives and outcomes of KEIP?</p>
Effectiveness	<p>To what extent is KEIP on track to achieving its objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is it making the difference we expected? • is it doing so equitably across the islands and atolls of Kiribati? • Is it pursuing inclusion of children with disabilities? <p>Is the ambition of adopting a sector-wide approach still realistic and desirable? What progress has been made towards a SWAp over the first two phases of the program?</p> <p>Does KERP represent the best way to have teachers meet minimum English language proficiency standards, at the same time as ensuring teachers are equipped to help implement the Language in Education Policy (particularly in supporting 'bridging' of students into English from year 3 using a two-languages model)?</p> <p>Has KEIP had any unintended consequences, positive or negative, on its intended beneficiaries?</p>

Efficiency	Is KEIP being managed in such a way to get the most out of its resources?
Sustainability	To what extent is it likely the benefits of KEIP will continue now and after funding has ceased?
Gender Equality	How is KEIP advancing gender equality?

Questions relating specifically to learning and recommendations for the future are:

- what lessons have been learned and instances of good practice identified that could inform any subsequent phase of KEIP (and other similar programs in the Pacific)?
- What further steps need to be taken towards a SWAp?
- What changes (if any) could be made to KELP to improve its contribution to KEIP?

All of these questions will be answered by the evaluation team, at least as far as is feasible within the time, available evidence, and skills of the team.

Addressing the criteria is important for the purpose of rating, which is required by DFAT, as well as for the separate purpose of aggregation amongst all evaluations. However, the criteria are not always clear to all stakeholders and do not lend themselves to telling a logical story about the achievements of the program.

Therefore, the proposed line of questioning and reporting follows the very simple structure: 'what?', 'so what?' and 'now what?'. This enables the evaluation to:

1. **Describe** what is currently being achieved
2. **Analyse** what this means in the current context
3. **Assess** the implications for the remainder of Phase 2 and into Phase 3

The following pages show the key evaluation questions and sub-questions as they will guide the evaluation (Table 5) and the associated data collection methods (Table 6).

Table 5: Key evaluation questions and sub questions

Key evaluation question	Sub Questions
4. What are the results of KEIP so far? <i>Broadly covers effectiveness and efficiency</i>	1.1 What is KEIP trying to achieve? 1.2 To what extent are the intended intermediate outcomes* being achieved? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do all children have access to the new curriculum and materials? Do all teachers have capacity to develop children's Te-Kiribati language, literacy and numeracy skills? Are more children learning in rehabilitated classrooms? Do more schools have partnerships with their communities to deliver quality education? Does MoE have greater capacity to plan and monitor the delivery of quality education services? 1.3 What are the main factors affecting achievement of outcomes? 1.4 Are the arrangements for governance and management supporting achievement of outcomes?
5. What does this mean for learning achievement? <i>Broadly covers relevance, impact and sustainability</i>	2.1 Are the inputs and activities appropriately oriented to achievement of the intended outcomes by Dec 2015? 2.2 Are the strategies for gender equality oriented to outcomes? 2.3 How sustainable are the benefits/changes likely to be?
6. What are the implications for the future? <i>Covers learning and recommendations</i>	3.1 Is the program logic still valid for 2014 and 2015? 3.2 Do planned interventions offer the best chance of the outcomes** being achieved <i>equitably</i> across the school system (particularly geographically) 3.3 What lessons are relevant for the design of Phase 3?

* Intermediate outcomes for Phase 2	** End of phase outcome
1. Improved teaching and learning for all children in Years 1-4 2. Improved governance and management of the education system	All children in Years 1-4 participate in primary education and make progress towards functional literacy and numeracy after six years

Table 6: Evaluation Questions and Data Collection Methods

Key question	Sub Questions	Data collection methods
1. What are the results of KEIP so far?	<p>1.2 To what extent are the intended outcomes being achieved?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do all children have access to the new curriculum and materials Do all teachers have capacity to develop children's Te-Kiribati language, literacy and numeracy skills? Are more children learning in rehabilitated classrooms? Do more schools have partnerships with their communities to deliver quality education? Does MoE have greater capacity to plan and monitor the delivery of quality education services? <p>1.3 What are the main factors affecting achievement of outcomes?</p> <p>1.4 Are the arrangements for governance and management supporting achievement of outcomes?</p>	<p>Documentary analysis: program design document; annual plans, KEIP quarterly progress reports, KELP progress reports, SEMS quarterly reports, LEPP baseline information, GoK baseline and monitoring information, specific studies. UNICEF Annual Progress Reports; UNESCO biannual reports to the KEIP Oversight Committee; Oversight Committee minutes</p> <p>Observation: presence of curriculum, teaching in Te-Kiribati and English language, condition of classrooms, school improvement plans</p> <p>Key informant interviews (in person, by email or skype):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MoE: Secretary, Director of Education, Sr Education Management Specialist, Heads of Departments, head teachers, teachers, teacher professional development DFAT: Counsellor, Development Program Specialist, Program Manager UNICEF: Chief Education Officer (Suva), Education Specialist (Suva), Education Officer (Suva), Joint Office Chief (Kiribati) UNESCO: Education Specialist (Samoa) Coffey: Senior Development Specialist, (interim) Team Leader, former Team Leaders, advisers <p>Focus group discussions: school committees (if feasible):</p>
2. What does this mean for achievement?	<p>2.1 Are the inputs and activities appropriately oriented to achievement of the intended outcomes by Dec 2015?</p> <p>2.2 Are the strategies for gender equality oriented to outcomes?</p> <p>2.3 How sustainable are the benefits likely to be?</p>	<p>Documentary analysis: as above plus: GoK policies, DFAT policies;</p> <p>Key informant/group interviews: MoE officials, implementation team, UNICEF, UNESCO</p> <p>Evaluator experience</p>
3. What are the implications for the future?	<p>3.1 Is the program logic still valid for 2014 and 2015?</p> <p>3.2 Do planned interventions offer the best chance of the outcomes being achieved <i>equitably</i> across the school system (particularly geographically)</p> <p>3.3 What lessons are relevant for the design of Phase 3?</p>	<p>Key informant/group interviews: as above</p> <p>Presentation of findings at conclusion of fieldwork to consolidate recommendations and ensure they are appropriate and feasible to implement.</p>

Evaluation of Kiribati Education Improvement Program

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

Program Summary

Program Name	Kiribati Education Improvement Program		
AidWorks details	Initiative ING620 / Activities 10A818 & 13A009		
Commencement date	17 January 2010	Completion date	31 December 2015
Total Australian \$	Estimated total initiative value: \$41,594,651.40		
Total other \$	-		
Delivery organisation(s)	Coffey International Development		
Implementing partner(s)	Ministry of Education		
Country/Region	Kiribati		
Primary sector	Education Basic Education		
Outcomes	2020 All children participate in primary education and achieve functional literacy and numeracy after six years. 2016 All children in Years 1-4 participate in primary education and make progress towards functional literacy and numeracy after six years.		

Evaluation Summary

Evaluation Objective: The purpose of the evaluation was to take stock of the Kiribati Education Improvement Program (KEIP or 'the program') - to check that the implementation approach adopted was the most appropriate and that the activities being implemented are achieving the ends being sought and in the most efficient manner.

The evaluation was to provide advice to the Government of Kiribati, the Government of Australia and the *Education Partners in Kiribati* forum on the performance of the program to date, recommend changes to strengthen its performance over the remainder of current phase and provide guidance on the design of a subsequent four-year phase from 2016.

Evaluation Completion Date: 10 September 2014 (acceptance of final report)

Evaluation Team: Sue Emmott (Team Leader), Mary Fearnley-Sander, Samantha Vallance, Lucy Kum-On.

Summary of evaluation findings

The KEIP Independent Evaluation found a great deal had been achieved in a very short period of time, testament to the strength of Ministry of Education's ownership of the reforms, the motivation of key individuals and the high quality of technical assistance. It concluded that KEIP is a highly relevant investment. It found greatest progress had been made in relation to curriculum and teacher development, and least progress made in relation to improving teaching and learning environments. The evaluation also concluded that the implementation of a new development partner coordination mechanism - *Education Partners in Kiribati* (EPiK) was impressive.

The KEIP Independent Evaluation Report also suggested areas where improvement, consolidation and further analysis may be required over the balance of the current phase of KEIP or in the course of the next. It noted challenges in addressing school-based reform and called for tighter links between activities aimed at school improvement and enhanced teaching and learning, highlighting the central role of principals and school communities in both. The report stressed the importance of robust and timely monitoring and evaluation to inform evidence-based policy development, planning and programming and to underpin a continuous improvement approach to service delivery.

The report made ten recommendations, clustered under three headings, to strengthen performance of the remainder of KEIP Phase II. These include: reconfigured strategies aimed at supporting teachers' acquisition of skills required to teach English, and to teach in English, consistent with the bi-lingual language policy inherent in the National Curriculum and Assessment Framework; and better targeted and more rigorous approaches to research into aspects of access and participation to complement national testing of student achievement. It also made seventeen recommendations pertaining to the design of KEIP Phase II, the key one being to maintain a focus on student learning in primary and junior secondary schools. The extent to which these will be carried forward is outlined below.

DFAT's response to the evaluation report

Notwithstanding the evaluation's limitations we are of the view that the report provides a balanced assessment of KEIP's strengths and weaknesses. We are 'comfortable' with its findings, conclusions and recommendations, and while we may not agree with everything in it, see it as providing a useful basis for reflection and further discussion. The report identifies a number of opportunities to recalibrate the program with the aim of achieving better results. That UNESCO, in preparing *the Kiribati Education for All Report*, drew many similar conclusions provides an additional layer of confidence in the KEIP Independent Evaluation Report.

DFAT's response to the conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations

In addition to the recommendations to strengthen performance of the remainder of KEIP Phase II, and those pertaining to the design of KEIP Phase III, the evaluation report set out five lessons learned in implementation, and, 'along the way', provided some useful insights that will inform subsequent adjustments. Not all of the recommendations will be carried forward or, subject to further analysis and discussion, be carried forward immediately. Adjustments sought will be made inside KEIP budget allocations.

Actions following from the narrative, lessons learned, conclusions drawn & recommendations made

In consultation with the Ministry of Education and Coffey International Development, we formed the view that one of the recommendations relating to the third phase can be brought forward into the second. Work on some has already commenced.

Over the remainder of KEIP Phase II, DFAT will

- maintain regular and frequent discussions with the Ministry of Education and other Education Partners in Kiribati (including Coffey International Development) to ensure KEIP is adequately and appropriately contributing to ends being sought by the Education Sector Strategic Plan (in particular those aimed at improving access to, and the quality of, basic education in Kiribati);
- continue to advocate for consolidated and streamlined approaches to monitoring and evaluation to support of evidence-based policy, planning and decision-making, underpinning a continuous improvement approach to service delivery (in schools and at a sectoral-level);
- work with the Ministry of Education and Coffey International Development to generate new approaches for equipping teachers of Year 4 and beyond to develop children's capacity to be literate and numerate in English;
- continue to provide high-level strategic support to the Ministry of Education, outside of KEIP, through the Senior Education Management Specialist (to December 2014) and beyond that through the recruitment and mobilisation of a Strategic Planning and Development Adviser (from February 2015);
- advocate for more, and more robust, research to be conducted into access, participation, learning outcomes, and the effectiveness of curriculum reform and teacher professional development initiatives (noting the Ministry of Education's desire to move this work forward);
- work with delivery partners to reconsider how school improvement is conceptualised and review the extent and nature of support to it;
- commission analytical work to inform the design of Phase III or components within it (for instance school learning improvement grants) including an updated Assessment of National Systems and a sector-based assessment of Public Financial Management systems;

DFAT will also work with delivery partners to ensure: (a) teachers better understand the conception of literacy that underpins the new curriculum and the relationship between assessment and effective teaching; (b) principals are equipped to monitor teacher performance and student progress, and able to support improvements in both; and (c) principals accept their role as advocates of critical elements of reform (particularly language policy). DFAT will also closely monitor renewed efforts to enhance school learning environments (including the provision of school furniture and storage) and the passage of the Inclusive Education Policy.

In designing KEIP Phase III DFAT will

- consult and collaborate with delivery partners in the commissioning, conduct, review and approval of the KEIP Phase III Design Document, with particular emphasis on ensuring KEIP Phase III strongly aligns with the revised Education Sector Strategic Plan. The design of KEIP Phase III and the development of the Education Sector Strategic Plan should be tightly-coupled, with each informing and being informed by the other;
- retain the goal of all children participating in a primary education and achieving functional literacy and numeracy; consolidate gains made in Phase II; and continue to focus on supporting Kiribati's basic education sub-sector, with emphasis on: (a) more children enrolling in and attending school; and (b) having those children engage and participate in meaningful classroom activities and learn foundational literacy and numeracy skills (in te-Kiribati and English);
- seek a realistic, cohesive, balanced, context-specific and affordable package of activities focusing on school improvement and strategic, high-value elements of system reform (including monitoring and evaluation and that underpin the eventual transition to a sector-wide approach);

DFAT will consider the recommendations of the Independent Evaluation Report and the results of relevant analytical work in commissioning the design of KEIP Phase III.