

Management Response to Recommendations from the Samoa Inclusive Education Demonstration Program Evaluation

This is a joint management response of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Government of Samoa through the Ministry of Education, Sports & Culture for the Samoa Inclusive Education Demonstration Program (SIEDP).

The evaluation report is acknowledged by the partners, noting the concerns and challenges in the implementation of SIEDP with regards to achieving the outcome of the program of *“developing a model of service provision for girls and boys with disability for inclusive education which can be sustained and supported by the Government of Samoa”*.

The partners agree that while there is heavy criticism in the evaluation report regarding the impact of the program, it should be acknowledged that achieving and identifying success in inclusive education is challenging. While there have been many challenges in the implementation of the program there have also been many successes and achievements, not only in schools but also in communities, through SIEDP. As outlined in the evaluation report; there has been an increase in advocacy of rights of children to education, parents have become more open to their children attending school, more children with disabilities have accessed education (special schools and mainstream schools), service providers have worked more collaboratively together as well as developing Child Protection Policies for their organisations.

In terms of the way forward, the partners agree that there needs to be more prioritisation and consolidation of IE services as well as development of IE Standards to support the child, teachers, parents, schools and communities. The recommendations have been reviewed by DFAT Post and the Education Sector Inclusive Education Taskforce, and it is noted that many recommendations can be addressed in one activity while others can be removed given the Samoan context and some can be integrated into current practices. The partners have also incorporated most of the recommendations into the Inclusive Education Implementation Plan 2017-2020.

Ref.	Recommendation	Response	Actions	Responsibility
Focus and Approach				
R1.	The next two-year phase of IE development in <i>Samoa focus on ‘consolidation’ of the IE service delivery model emphasising system development and capacity building</i> , in preparation for further expansion under the next Samoa Education Sector Plan adhering to the following principles: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focus on quality, equity, cost-effectiveness and sustainability	Agree	DFAT is working closely with the Government of Samoa through the Education Sector and the Ministry of Finance to consolidate initiatives. This will be reflected in the IE implementation plan.	DFAT in collaboration with Government of Samoa

Ref.	Recommendation	Response	Actions	Responsibility
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting MESC to take the lead in IE development and building MESC capacity in the process Pursuing a collaborative approach Ensuring CWD on Savaii have equal access to quality education Ensuring particular barriers faced by girls with disabilities are identified and fully addressed Award of contract to service providers is clearly designated service delivery or system development, with quality adherence, monitoring and reporting frameworks, and basis of payments tailored accordingly 			
R2	That a <i>number of schools be identified for designation as Inclusive Education Demonstration schools</i> , providing sites for trialling of various approaches to inclusive education development (and possibly later acting as inclusive education resource centres) and for developing and demonstrating a comprehensive approach to inclusive education	Partially agree	Agree that this is the way to go. Noting that this has to be carefully thought through to ensure it is feasible. It has been done in Samoa before with some schools treated as special schools but the model did not work.	Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (MESC)
Strengthen the MESC IE Unit				
	Relocation of the MESC IE unit be considered from Curriculum, Assessment and Materials Division to Education Sector Coordination Division – given IE has implications for the whole of MESC and is not a CMAD specific activity and ESCD has mandate to coordinate	Disagree	The ESCD only coordinates activities - it does not have the mandate to implement. The IE unit's location should stay where it is (under CDMD). What is needed is more resources and support	MESC

Ref.	Recommendation	Response	Actions	Responsibility
			for the Unit to support its work.	
	MESC IE unit staff be provided with opportunities to upgrade their IE qualifications	Agree	This can be part of MESC's professional development or capacity building of staff and in collaboration with service providers, DFAT and other agencies (NUS/USP/APTC) provide relevant opportunities.	MESC
	An IE Administrative Assistant position be established in the IE unit to maximise use of expertise availed by the professional staff	Disagree	There shouldn't be a separate administrative position for IE. The program is currently trying to integrate IE into all aspects of work so that it is not separate	MESC
	Consideration be given to appointing an IE Adviser to the MESC IE unit over the next 24 month period, to support oversight of the various development activities planned, including development of TORs for the various studies proposed.	Agree	Achieved – there is now a permanent IE Adviser position in MESC and funded by the Government of Samoa. The position was filled in October 2016.	MESC
Inclusive Education Standards				
R4	Technical support be provided to MESC, to develop IE Standards/ Guidelines covering all aspects of inclusive education , in all education institutions in the country, including regular, special, mission, private, early childhood, primary, secondary and post school schools and the National University of Samoa; addressing issues such as: inclusive enrolment criteria,	Agree	TA support can be provided under DFAT's Education Technical Assistance Support for Inclusive Education. MESC can also fund for technical support to implement IE recommendations through	DFAT in collaboration with MESC

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	curriculum and assessment adaptation, examination special provisions, use of assistive devices and special resources, infrastructure and facilities, transport, Teacher Aides, use of Individual Education Plans, interaction with disability service providers, gender equality, safety and protection, amongst other. A short term consultant might be appointed to work with MESC/ stakeholders to progressively develop these standards/ guidelines. Completion of these standards may depend on completion of developmental tasks in the discreet areas (referred to under the other recommendations)		the Sector Budget Support funds. There will need to be a realistic implementation / action plan in place to facilitate and coordinate.	
School Disability-Inclusion Indicators				
R5	<i>MESC to establish the essential characteristics of a disability inclusive school</i> (in response to barriers to education for CWD at school/community level), separately specifying process and input indicators, as a point of reference for school improvement planning, capacity building and monitoring change; involving teachers, parents, community members, children and other stakeholders; and using the demonstration schools as sites for this development; developing a school inclusiveness assessment tool; and integrating the final indicators into the Samoa Minimum Service Standards for Schools. Short term technical input may be required to facilitate this task	Agree	This can be part of the development of the IE Standards/ Guidelines and incorporated into the MSS, SEN Survey and the Education Sector's M&E framework. There are indicators for IE in the current MSS for Primary and Secondary. IE Task Force to look further into this.	MESC & Sector IE Task Force
Special Schools and Service Providers				

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R6	GoS/MESC in collaboration with IE specialists and special school operators establish a set of quality standards to guide the operations of all aspects of Special Schools in Samoa, and the delivery of IE services by other providers , together with a procedure for ensuring compliance with the same, and that these standards are used to assess the quality of services provided at the same time, identifying areas requiring strengthening, and proposing strategies and providing means to achieve the same;	Agree	This can be developed as part of the overarching IE Standards/ Guidelines.	MESC & Sector IE Taskforce
	Gos/DFAT explore feasibility of phasing in, over a five year period, an annual Government grant to cover (i) operational costs of special schools and (ii) costs of continuing provision by service providers of IE assessment and referral, early intervention and community based rehabilitation services, in line with service provider quality standards	Agree	DFAT has been supporting the service providers since 2009 with the aim that they will be able to sustain their activities through various initiatives including income generation activities or Government funding. DFAT can support a feasibility study to inform Government. Special schools and providers also receive a grant from GoS.	DFAT in collaboration with Government of Samoa (Ministry of Finance/ MESC)
Child Protection Policy				
R7	MESC to review its draft Child Protection Policy (Safe Schools Policy) ensuring that it includes adequate and appropriate provision for maximising the safety and protection of all children including children with disabilities, and	Agree	MESC has a Safe Schools Policy which incorporates concern/recommendation. Will require a review to	MESC

Ref.	Recommendation	Response	Actions	Responsibility
	development of an accompanying Guideline for implementation, reporting and referral		ensure that it incorporates Child Protection components	
	Develop a teacher in training program on implementation of the Child Protection Policy , trialling the training package and monitoring the application of the same in the IE demonstration schools; a plan for the subsequent roll out of the policy to all schools	Agree	<p>The training program can be incorporated as part of the programs under the Teacher Development Advisory Division (TDAD) at MESC.</p> <p>MESC can also work in collaboration with the service providers using their Child Protection Officers to undertake the training program.</p>	MESC & IE Service Providers
IE Data Collection, Monitoring and Reporting				
R8	MESC <i>to assess the quality of MESC and service provider disability education related data collection and reporting systems</i> , making recommendations for the quality improvement of disability related data collection, storage, reporting and use. A short term consultant might be useful here, working closely with MESC personnel. The Fiji EMIS should be considered in the process.	Agree	<p>A TA can be procured under the TA Facility to support not only MESC but the whole Education Sector and service providers with regards to data collection and reporting systems.</p> <p>The DFAT funded Disability program can also provide support to MESC through the Disability Project Officer based at the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development</p>	MESC & DFAT

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	<i>Develop a harmonised consolidated IE data collection strategy</i> , common to service providers and MESC; with reference to common diagnostic criteria; determining data to be collected in the annual school census and reported in the annual education statistical data base, and <i>develop a capacity building strategy in use of the same</i>	Agree	<p>Work has already begun</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support that was provided through CBM 2. MESC IE personnel to revise MESC's Annual Survey by incorporating the Washington Group questions <p>Training can be integrated as part of the Teacher Development Advisory Division Training calendar. The sector has an Information and Communications Strategy which can incorporate relevant IE information</p>	MESC, IE Task force and Education Sector Coordination Division
Secondary schools				
R9	<i>MESC to conduct a study on inclusion experience to date of CWD in secondary schools</i> , including the education progression CWD graduating from Grade 8 in the past five years, into secondary school; making recommendations of changes required to ensure the maximum inclusiveness of secondary colleges and capacity building strategies required to achieve this.	Agree	This can be a long term activity while the sector focuses on consolidation of service delivery as the main priority for now.	MESC & IE Taskforce
Disability Identification, Assessment, Diagnosis and Referral System				

Ref.	Recommendation	Response	Actions	Responsibility
R10	MESC and partners (MOH, NOLA, MWCSD) to conduct a thorough review of the current process of identifying children with disabilities, their assessment, diagnosis, referral, access to services and assistive devices and follow-up, identifying strengths / good practices, together with gaps, inconsistencies, duplications , and/or quality deficits in the process, and making recommendations for enhancement and required capacity building strategies to achieve the same;	Agree	Work has begun in this area and the IE Taskforce and Working Group have revised the Referral system so that there is a common referral form for all providers and ministries. A formal partnership ought to be in place between MESC and relevant Government agencies to address cross cutting issues for CWD. This area of work has been incorporated into the IE Implementation Plan 2017 – 2020.	IE Task Force (includes all the partners)
	Develop and trial a systematic community-based approach to the identification of children with disabilities, involving community leaders (women, youth, church, traditional, other)	Partially agree	This is a long term activity given the complexities of the community/village settings. Collaborative work between MESC and MWCSD is needed to effectively achieve this recommendation.	IE Taskforce, MESC, MWCSD
Early Intervention, Community-based Rehabilitation and Early Childhood Education				
R11	MESC, in collaboration with disabled people's organisation, and other relevant ministries, conduct a review of the range of services currently being provided by different service providers in terms of Early Intervention,	Agree	This work has been done with the current service providers and relevant ministries which outlined areas of focus/ services etc.	IE Taskforce

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	Community-based Rehabilitation and Early Childhood Education , identifying strengths / good practices, together with gaps, inconsistencies, duplications, and/or quality deficits in the process, and making recommendations for enhancement and required capacity building strategies to achieve the same		But there is an opportunity to revise and update. There is also an opportunity to include this in an MOU between service providers and ministries. This has been incorporated into the IE Implementation Plan 2017-2020.	
Inclusive Education Community Awareness and Advocacy				
R12	MESC in collaboration with disabled persons organisation review the effectiveness, coverage, and range of strategies that have been implemented to date to promote: positive attitudes towards disability, understanding of the right of CWD to education; support for the inclusive education of CWD – and make recommendations for a comprehensive community education strategy , taking stock of best practice internationally with regards 'communication for development' promoting positive behavioural change;	Agree	This can be part of the long term work of the program.	IE Taskforce
	Conduct a small survey of the attitudes of children towards disability, making recommendations for, and the subsequent trialling of, a school-based program promoting inclusive attitudes and behaviours amongst students.	Agree	Long term plan for the program	IE Task force
Individualised Teaching and Learning				

Ref.	Recommendation	Response	Actions	Responsibility
R13	MESC to conduct a study to review current practice vis-à-vis curriculum adaptation, assessment, examinations and the use of Individual Education Plans , by teachers of CWD, making recommendations for quality enhancement in these areas.	Agree	Long Term plan for the program - MESC to conduct a study under sector budget support in future.	IE Task Force
	MESC to ensure that appropriate guidelines and a teacher professional development be developed in these areas	Agree	MESC to incorporate in its systems and processes for teacher development.	MESC & IE Task Force
Comprehensive, Whole-of-School Approach to School Development of Inclusion				
R14	MESC to develop and trial a whole-of-school approach to the development of disability inclusive primary schools , whereby school administrators. Assessing the disability inclusiveness of the schools, using the newly developed Inclusion Indicators (refer R 5 above), involving school, parents, community members and facilitators, and a school disability inclusion improvement and capacity building plan; progressively implement the plan (with external support in specific areas) and monitor change over time	Agree	Long term plan for the program. This can come after the development and set up of IE Champion Schools.	IE Task force
	Conduct a school / community mapping exercise to identify the range and number of CWD in the school catchment, and develop individual plans for their access to disability support services and education	Agree	MESC to consult MWCS D to start this work. This exercise can also be incorporated with other studies/ reviews that have been recommended to ensure that it is not burdensome on the sector.	MESC/MWCS D

Ref.	Recommendation	Response	Actions	Responsibility
	Conduct a school-community mobilisation to promote IE, potentially using the Index of Inclusion model;	Not sure what this is but sounds like something for the long term	This recommendation also fits in with the Information/ Advocacy Strategy work.	IE Taskforce
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify suitable teachers for advanced training as IE resource teachers Trial, on a whole of school basis, school-based inclusive education capacity building covering critical topics (potentially using the 'On-line-training International' program, discussed in 3.2 above possibly establish a School/Community Disability Committee for monitoring the progress of individual children, and school adherence to inclusion standards Developing disability inclusion specifications for school infrastructure, water and sanitation Trial program of disability awareness and elimination of stigma / discrimination amongst students; amongst other. All or parts of this might be implemented as an Action Research Project, possibly supported by a University-contracted team, in association with the NUS, over a two-year period (whether funded under the Australian Development Research Award Scheme, the Education 	Partially Agree	<p>MESC to seek TA support for this under sector program.</p> <p>A number of teachers have gone through training at APTC. A new cohort is undertaking a course during the first 6 months of 2017.</p> <p>The recommendation includes several components which needs to be mapped out. Also some may not be feasible under the Inclusive Education program under MESC but fits under the Disability program with the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development.</p>	Government of Samoa (MESC, MWCSD)
IE Capacity Building				
R15	A short-term IE consultant be engaged to work with MESC / other stakeholders, to examine	Agree	Long Term plan for the program. It needs to be included as part of the	Government of Samoa

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	<i>the full-range of inclusive education training needs of MESC and other stakeholders</i> in different roles (teacher aides, regular school teachers, special school teachers, IE trainers, IE coordinators, NUS staff, amongst other), and develop a multi-dimensional cost-effective capacity building strategy meeting the needs of different groups and exploring innovative approaches to training delivery (use of technology, mobile phones, on-line learning).		Education Sector and other sectors (Disability/Community) work plans.	
	Provide a small number of scholarships for Inclusive Education Certificate, Diploma or Degree (one year, on-line) offered by various Australian Universities or USP through the Samoa campus	Agree	MESC to consider under current upgrade program for teachers at USP and NUS. Inclusive Education is already part of the priority needs for the Australia Awards program, under the targeted Education trial.	IE Task Force, MFAT
	Ascertain interest of NUS lecturers to develop enhanced knowledge/practice in inclusive education, and explore opportunities for graduate study	Agree	MESC through IE Taskforce to liaise with NUS.	NUS
	Consider offering the on-line training, in various aspects of special education offered by OLT International as discussed in 3.2 above, potentially as a school-based strategy for groups of teachers	Agree	Long Term Plan for the program	

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	Develop IE Handbook for Teachers (consider adaptation of Fiji IE Handbook for Teachers) & provide in-service for teachers on the same	Agree	MESC IE unit to develop this handbook in partnership with the IE Taskforce.	IE Task Force & MESC
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate issue-focused in-Australia IE study tour, involving different categories of IE practitioners, to relevant IE locations including: Special Education unit of an Australian Education Departments; visits to special schools and to different types of regular schools that support CWD in different ways Explore scope for Samoan IE teachers (regular and/or special schools) spending a week or so attached to special schools or regular schools with CWD, in Australia 	Agree	DFAT will explore with MESC and the IE Taskforce to apply for attachments and study tours through the Australia Awards Fellowship	DFAT / MESC
	Facilitate short-term placement of Australian IE teachers to Samoan demonstration or special schools for short periods of time. This might be done on a volunteer basis, with program covering travel and expenses. Twinning arrangements might be set up between specific schools	Agree	This is in process – MESC has developed a plan with AVID for volunteers to support the implementation of IE.	
	Provide a small number of scholarships for training in specialisations including: speech therapy, occupational therapy, physiotherapy; audiology, amongst other	Agree	<p>DFAT is already targeting these priority areas under our Health & Education scholarship trial.</p> <p>DFAT would welcome more advocacy and promotion</p>	DFAT

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			from Health & Education of these areas.	
Inclusive at National University of Samoa				
R16	MESC to <i>facilitate a review of the inclusion education provision currently offered by the National University of Samoa</i> , making recommendations to strengthen the same, in line with implementation of the Inclusive Education Policy	Partially agree	NUS to work together with MESC and the IE Task force to review the IE unit offered at NUS. MESC cannot review NUS programs.	NUS & MESC – IE Task Force
	NUS be facilitated to assessment its disability-inclusive status in relation to the newly developed inclusive education standards (refer R 4 above) and developing an NUS Inclusive Education Development Strategy .	Partially agree	As IE is a sector wide initiative, the IE development strategy should be sector wide and incorporate aspects from all the relevant stakeholders	IE Taskforce
Review, Strengthening and Institutionalisation of Teacher Aide Initiative				
R17	MESC to conduct a comprehensive review of the Teacher Aide Initiative , as implemented to date under SIEDP, examining: position description, role, relationship with classroom teacher, other teachers and school principal, training, supervision, performance, supervision, remuneration, retention / turnover, terms and conditions of employment, criteria for assigning TAs to CWD, duration of association with individual CWD and CWD education outcomes, scale of demand, cost, institutionalisation within MESC, amongst other. Engage an independent IE specialist to lead the review, working closely with local stakeholders (involving MESC, service providers, NUS)	Agree	This has been incorporated into the IE Implementation Plan	MESC & IE Taskforce

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	Based on findings of TA study, develop a Teacher's Aide Policy Framework , including: Position Description, Training Pathways, Terms & Conditions of Employment, Remuneration Framework, Recruitment Procedure, prior qualification requirements, supervision structure, amongst other.	Partially Agree	Service providers to assist with this – in the long term MESC to consider formal arrangements for teacher aides. TA to support this for the long term and incorporate these into the National Teachers Development Framework and Teacher Standards	IE Task Force/MESC/IE service providers
Inclusive Education Technical Advisory Group				
R18	DFAT establish a pool of inclusive education consultants who made be drawn upon at short notice to provide short-term technical, quality assurance or monitoring inputs, in support of DFAT, MESC, disability people's organisations or other, as required.	Partially Agree	DFAT has a TA facility to support the implementation of the Education Sector Plan and the Education Sector Support Program. IE has been identified as one of the priority areas for the provision of TA support. There are also several other avenues for IE to tap for technical support including AVID, NZ	IE Taskforce