

Agenda Item 4: Infrastructure: Concept Paper for Primary school infrastructure development

Purpose: Providing all the Gilbert Group Primary schools (74 with 229 classrooms) with viable permanent classrooms (pre-fabricated building materials) that meet the national infrastructure standard (NIS).

Background

In 2011 and 2012, the Australian Government provided infrastructure development through the first phase of the Kiribati Education Improvement Program (KEIP) towards some schools (6) in six islands (Butaritari, Marakei, Kuria, Aranuka, Tamana and Arorae) in the Gilbert Group as part of the pilot phase. At end of phase I, six schools were completed. Few Island (Makin & Banaba) Councils allocated a portion of their support grant from Government to rehabilitate their primary school classrooms.

In phase II of KEIP (2013-2015), 7 schools in the Line Islands (Kiritimati, Fanning and Washington) and some schools (5 or 6) on South Tarawa will receive the same infrastructure development support worth of \$7.2 m.

The remaining primary schools on 16 (Makin, Butaritari, Marakei, Abaiang, Maiana, North Tarawa, Kuria, Aranuka, Abemama, Nonouti, TabNorth, TabSouth, Beru, Onotoa, Nikunau) outer islands need to be rehabilitated with permanent materials to provide students with a conducive environment for learning, keeping in line with the overall educational reform of the Ministry.

The substantial amount of funding needed (\$16.4m) for the project is indeed a significant investment for the GOK in terms of the production of quality human resources. There is a high expectation of improvement in the quality of education which the school will offer when the construction is completed. The project will benefit several generations for as long as those classrooms remain viable. Despite the high cost of the project, it is worth a fortune to Kiribati as it has benefits that are continually applicable to several generations and that can impact the achievement of quality education by each school. In this regard the school will be able to produce good and useful citizens who can contribute significantly to the social and economic development of Kiribati.

Pre-fabricated (Kitset) Buildings have several advantages over Concrete Blockwork Buildings. There is lower cost, so more schools can be upgraded. Better production and hence quality control. Faster construction time with less local labour and less skill required for erection. Shorter timeframe for donors. These classrooms will last as long as any building with a Colorbond Steel Roof. Each classroom is estimated to require \$37,000 that is inclusive of its water and sanitation facilities.

LIKELY BENEFITS:

For Students

- Children are studying and learning in an environment conducive to learning. (Goal no. 2 in the Education Sector Strategic Plan - ESSP)

Providing healthy and safe school buildings and facilities, essential materials, resources and equipment for schools and improving the quality of teaching. Practically in terms of the following;

Space

To create a working and studying space for students that is safe and spacious for all students especially those with special needs. To provide a comfortable and spacious classroom for performing any physical educational activities, like dancing and jumping poems.

Relationship building

The new classrooms will give students a time to know each other to become friends for life and with whom they will share childhood memories. In improved schools students not only develop closer relationships with peers and teachers but also with the school community.

Proper sitting manner

Students will be sitting in furnished (desks) classrooms which is more hygienic than sitting on a dust floor or on an uncomfortable gravel floor as in the current traditional classrooms. It will help rural students when they migrate to urban schools, especially to get used to the sitting position and knowing the proper and comfortable way of sitting in a classroom that is often practiced in urban schools.

For the Teachers

Teachers can perform their group work approach more effectively as they are learning in a standard safe size classroom.

The teachers can produce as many learning activities with their students which they can display in the classrooms safely in a NIS compliant classroom

For the Community

Engaging their attention

The community will be sending their children to new schools as they are confident that the classrooms are safe to learn in, as they are built permanently.

Also they will feel responsible and an ownership for looking after the new classrooms to maintain it because of their children's education and mostly it is built in their community. A positive and continuous contribution towards the school can encourage community possessiveness.