



GOVERNMENT OF KIRIBATI

GoK(12)DPF.09

DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS FORUM

Tarawa, Kiribati

25 – 27 June 2012

AGENDA ITEM: 09 EDUCATION

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to apprise Development Partners of the outcomes of a review of the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) 2008-2011 whose life came to an end on 31 December 2011. The paper also highlights achievements made under the Kiribati Education Improvement Programme (KEIP) and discusses the priorities in the new ESSP for 2012-2015 as possible measures to address education challenges.

Background

1. The 2008-2011 ESSP was the first ever strategic plan to be developed by the Ministry of Education. The development of the plan involved extensive consultation over several years, outcomes of which were presented to a nation-wide National Education Summit conducted in January 2008.
2. The Summit endorsed the plan's six goals and strategic directions as the basis for guiding improvements to the education system for the period 2008-2011. The ESSP's six goals and the 41 strategies to support these goals were developed to address the challenges facing the education sector which were again highlighted in the 2008 National Education Summit. Some of these challenges are discussed in the following paragraphs.
3. External supports to formal education sector in Kiribati comes from donor countries and agencies including Australia, New Zealand, Taiwan, Japan, Cuba and the UN agencies of UNESCO and UNICEF.

Challenges

4. The 2008 Summit highlighted and validated long-expressed public concerns and perceptions about the **outcomes of the Kiribati education system**, more specifically, the declining student performance, particularly in literacy and numeracy; the unbalanced education outcome, that the education system was not educating the whole person – intellectually, culturally, spiritually, socially, and emotionally. There were concerns expressed that there is too much focus on senior level education and

minimal regard for basic education level which is the foundation of education for the child.

5. The 2008-2011 ESSP stipulates that the current education system focuses on preparing professional students for tertiary and higher educational opportunities and non-manual work in the government sector but **neglects the majority of students seeking livelihood skills**. In relation to this, there has also been continuing strong concerns about the lack of opportunities for student school leavers at Form 3, Form 5 and Form 6 and 7 levels.
6. There were also concerns about the **quality of teaching**, the level of commitment, professionalism and competence of teachers who are seen as the backbone of the education system in any country. The declining standards of literacy spoke of the need for more focus on strengthening skills for the teaching of both Kiribati and English in schools.
7. The **curriculum** was seen to be unbalanced, gearing more to the **academic** stream catering only for a small minority of the student population and automatically leaving out the majority of students in Kiribati who cannot continue down this stream. The curriculum was also seen to be **too exam-oriented** and provide limited pathways for student school leavers at Form 3, Form 5, Form 6 and Form 7.
8. The poor condition of **school buildings, facilities and resources** have been the subject of much discussion in the community, in Parliament, at the 2008 Education Summit and at the KDP and Climate Change Summit in 2011. This was included as one of the priority areas in the 2008-2011 ESSP.
9. In the area of **education policy and regulation**, there were no clear policies for some key areas such as in Early Care and Childhood Education (this has since been developed under the current ESSP) and no enforcement of legislation and policies in areas such as compulsory education and teacher registration. The *Education Ordinance* is also archaic and in need of rewriting and a general overhaul to be useful as a legislative base for a modern education system.

Review Outcomes of ESSP 2008-2011

10. Of the 41 strategies that support the six goals of the ESSP, 11 have been completed successfully (including 3 ongoing strategies), 17 partially completed and 13 have not started. In analysing the implementation status of these strategies, key factors present in the “completed” strategies as well as the “partially completed” and “not started” strategies were analysed to draw out the lessons that can be useful for the next ESSP.
11. Extensive work was done in the last planning period in several key education areas resulting in the completion of the following foundational frameworks, standards and policies that are now in place and ready for implementation:
 - a) National Curriculum and Assessment Framework

- b) Teacher Professional Development Framework
 - c) Teaching Service Standards
 - d) National Infrastructure Standards for Primary schools
 - e) Primary School Rehabilitation programme
 - f) Early Childhood Care Education Policy
12. The ESSP 2008-2011 review concludes that the implementation of the ESSP 2008-2011 by the Ministry of Education was commendable given what was achieved with next to nothing by way of resources for the first three years. The Kiribati Education Improvement Program, the major funding mechanism was developed well after the ESSP was finalised in 2008 and did not commence until January 2011, the last year of the plan. While the KEIP program was late in starting, it has embarked in a big way on providing support for the Ministry to move forward in 2011 with the implementation of the current ESSP, in the last year of its implementation.

The Kiribati Education Improvement Programme (KEIP): Achievements

13. Major donors to education in Kiribati, AusAid, UNESCO and UNICEF agreed to harmonise and coordinate their assistance under the Kiribati Education Improvement Program (KEIP). The KEIP is a long-term program aims to address education challenges in the country and as such its focus shows strong linkages with the ministry's priorities in the ESSP 2012-2015. KEIP is divided into three phases; Phase 1: 2011-June 2012; Phase 2: 2012-2015; Phase 3: 2016-2020.
14. The KEIP Phase 1 commenced in January 2011, the final year of the ESSP 2008-2011. Despite its late commencement, KEIP has made great impact on the implementation of important education priorities. Progress under KEIP Phase 1 is summarised below;

School Infrastructure Development:

15. The rehabilitation work on three schools- Teraaka Primary School on Butaritari, Kauake Primary School on Aranuka and Nikierere on Marakei has completed and children started term 1 in 2012 in their new classrooms. The work on three other pilot schools on Kuria, Tamana and Arorae have commenced and to complete before end of 2012.
16. A draft Primary School Rehabilitation Plan (2012-2015) for the roll-out of the rehabilitation program has completed and now awaiting Cabinet approval.

Policy and Legislation:

17. A Working Group has been established to oversee the review of the *Education Ordinance*. Substantial work has been done in the review of the Ordinance that involved consultations within the ministry as well as other stakeholders in Government including the Honourable Attorney General's Chambers as well as with Church School providers, head teachers and principals. After the review in 2011, a

Drafting Instructions have now been developed and will be the subject of further consultations before work on drafting new Education Act commences in mid 2012.

Workforce Development

18. The work in this priority area has involved the establishment of a 'Quality Improvement Focus Area' that aims to restructure the Basic Education division. It also involves a roll-out of Teacher Professional Development Framework and institutional strengthening of the Kiribati Teachers College (KTC) as part of a plan to improve quality of the teaching force.
19. The roll out of the English language program has commenced in Term 1 of 2012 aimed to improve English proficiency of teachers and to use English in teaching other subjects. For the first time 125 teachers are currently doing fulltime English language training at KTC and 15 each at the 3 Outer-Islands Training Centres (OITC). The three OITCs now set up on Abaiang in the Northern district, Tabiteuea North in the Southern and Kiritimati in the Line and Phoenix group have just commenced their intakes in 2012.

Curriculum and Assessment

20. The National Curriculum and Assessment Framework (NCAF) has been approved in 2011. This policy framework set direction on the development of school syllabuses for Primary up to senior secondary school. The new Grade 1-2 syllabuses has been completed and now requires consultation with schools so that it is ready for implementation in 2013. An important component of the work is the in-servicing of the new syllabuses which should be carried out in 2012. Overall, the NCAF roll out is progressing well.

Vision in the new Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) 2012-2015

21. The education challenges identified by the 2008 Summit still prevail and in some areas have grown in severity requiring immediate remedial action. The old ESSP, and its six goals are still very relevant. A seventh operational goal has been added in the new ESSP to stress the need for an effective and efficient delivery of support services to schools.
22. The new ESSP consolidates and strengthens the old plan, and also highlights the need for **urgency**, the need for **major reforms**, and the need for a **different mode and pace of operation for the Ministry**. The new Plan will concentrate on the following key broad areas;
 - (a) Workforce Development;
 - (b) Curriculum and Assessment;
 - (c) School Infrastructure Development;

- (d) Policy and Legislation;
 - (e) Structural Reform Programme.
23. To achieve these key policy areas, the first year of the Plan will focus on the following;
- (a) Restructuring of the Ministry;
 - (b) Review of Education Ordinance
 - (c) National Curriculum and Assessment Framework roll out;
 - (d) Teacher Professional Development Framework
 - (e) Teaching Service Standards;
 - (f) School Improvement Program and School Grant;
 - (g) Infrastructure Development Program;
 - (h) Community Consultations; and
 - (i) Training of untrained teachers at senior secondary level

ISSUES

24. The main issue that requires on-going preparation by Ministry of Education (ME) is the plan under KEIP to shift from a project-based model (PBA) to a sector-wide approach (SWAp). As the SWAp requires more use of local systems for program design and implementation, financial management and monitoring and evaluation. This will require strong leadership and organisation by ME and the need to improve and strengthen our local systems. It also requires on-going capacity building of staff in the ministry.
25. In planning KEIP Phase 2, consideration should be given to the absorptive capacity not only at the ministry level, but also at the school, island and council levels as ME plans for school rehabilitation, the school grant program and up skilling program of teachers, all requires strong commitment and strengthened policy and systems. These initiatives are an integral part of a decentralization reform that ME is moving towards to give more autonomy to the schools.

RECOMMENDATION

26. The meeting is invited to;
- (i) **Note** achievements made in the last ESSP (2008-2011), as well as the progress under the KEIP Phase 1,

- ii) Note the priorities for the next planning period 2012-2015 and request pledge to support pursuance of these priorities in their development assistance programmes .

Government of Kiribati

3-4 April 2012