



# **The Australian Government's Fiji Program Support Facility**

## **Program Design Update: Australia's Support to Fiji's Education Sector**

25 October 2022

Fiji Program Support Facility is managed by Tetra Tech International Development, on behalf of the Australian Government



# Document Control

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## Review & Revisions Log

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## Note for Review

This is a living document and should be maintained up-to-date. Revisions must be approved by the Contractor Representative.

# Table of Contents

Acronyms.....	ii
Figures .....	iv
Introduction.....	1
A. Key Changes from the Original Design.....	1
B. Development Context.....	2
C. Strategic Intent and Rationale .....	4
D. Theory of Change .....	5
E. Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) .....	10
F. Climate Change/Disaster Risk Reduction .....	11
G. Key Policy Priorities .....	12
H. Implementation arrangements.....	13
I. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL).....	14
J. Risk Management and Safeguarding.....	16
K. Annexes.....	18
Annex 1: Executive Summary of Original Design Document .....	19
Annex 2: Indicative Budget.....	24
Annex 3: High-level Implementation Plan .....	25
Annex 4: GEDSI Stocktake and Roadmap.....	28
Annex 5: Governance Structure .....	51
Annex 6: Fiji Education Results Framework.....	52
Annex 7: Fiji Education Program Risk Matrix .....	70
Annex 8: Alternate text for Figure 1: Design Update Theory of Change (accessible).....	71
Annex 9: Alternate text for Figure 2: Pathway Logistics (accessible).....	72

## Acronyms

AGM	Annual General Meeting
AQEP	Access to Quality Education Program
APCP	Australia-Pacific Climate Partnership
APTC	Australia Pacific Training Coalition
CAPS	Community and Parental Support
CC	Climate Change
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CGA	Country Gender Assessment
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRP	COVID-19 Development Response Plan
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DFAT	(Australian Government's) Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
ECE	Early Childhood Education
EdTech	Education Technology
EFA	Education for All
EOPO	End of Program Outcome
EQAP	Education Quality and Assessment Program
FDPF	Fiji Disabled Persons Federation
FEP	Fiji Education Program
FESP	Fiji Education Sector Program
FEMIS	Fiji Education Management Information System
FGCA	Fiji Gender Country Assessment
FNCDP	Fiji National Council for Disabled Persons
FNU	Fiji National University
FWRM	Fiji Women's Rights Movement
GEDSI	Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
HOS	Heads of School
IO	Intermediate outcome
IT	Information Technology

LANA	Literacy and Numeracy Assessment
LGBTQI	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex
MEHA	Ministry of Education, Heritage and Arts
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MTR	Mid-Term Review
NDP	Fiji Government National Development Plan
OPDs	Organisations of People with Disabilities
PacREF	Pacific Regional Education Framework
PCC	Program Coordination Committee
PLCs	Professional Learning Communities
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEO	Senior Education Officer
SIE	Special and Inclusive Education
SMC	School Management Committee(s)
SPC	Pacific Community
SSOs	Student Support Officers
SSS	Student Support Services
TC	Tropical Cyclones
TEL	Technology-enabled learning
The Facility	Fiji Program Support Facility
The Program	Australia's Support to Fiji's Education Sector Program
TTI	Teacher Training Institution(s)
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
USP	The University of the South Pacific
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls
VfM	Value for Money

## Figures

Figure 1: Design Update Theory of Change

Figure 2: Pathway Logics

Figure 3: The GEDSI Framework

Figure 4: MEL Synergies

## Introduction

From June - September 2021, DFAT commissioned a Mid-term Review (MTR) of the Fiji Education Program (FEP). Whilst the MTR established that the original design intent remained sound, it was timely to update and refine elements of the Program to optimise alignment with the current policy context, as well as maximise synergies with more recent Australian and other development programs. Based on the MTR findings and recommendations, the Facility was tasked to undertake a Design Update to refresh the Program for implementation during the period June 2022 to December 2024. This Design Update proposes adjustments to the June 2018 *Australia's Support to Fiji's Education Sector Design Document* (see Annex 1 for an executive summary of the original design).

### A. Key Changes from the Original Design

The most significant change proposed through this Design Update is a shift from the 'whole-of-system' Theory of Change embodied in the original Design to a targeted set of linked system strengthening activities. The broad and extensive education system reform originally envisaged in support of the Ministry of Education, Heritage and Arts (MEHA) *cannot be revived* owing to assumptions upon which the original Design relied, including:

- 1) completion of the proposed MEHA organisational restructure, including decentralisation of technical support roles to district education offices;
- 2) consistent MEHA leadership and accompanying educational priorities; and,
- 3) achievability of an overly ambitious original design in 5 +3 years and on an AUD5 million/year budget.

Over the last two years, the COVID pandemic has helped shape a new operating environment for both students and teachers. Even so, elements of the original design concept are being implemented and will be achieved during the next phase, provided expectations remain realistic and strategic intentions remain focused and clearly delimited. These original elements include:

- 1) mainstreaming Gender Equity, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) throughout the revised curricula and pedagogies, and through special and inclusive education interventions;
- 2) greater systematic use of the Fiji Education Management Information System (FEMIS) data at all levels (central, district, school) for decision-making;
- 3) strengthening standardisation of school – community relationships in support of inclusive and equitable quality teaching and learning; and,
- 4) supporting collaborations between MEHA and Teacher Training Institutes (TTI) to adopt new GEDSI-integrated curriculum into teacher pre-and in-service.

The Program will focus on these achievable system strengthening activities for the remaining period. To accomplish this, the Program will follow three change pathways; (1) improved learning and teaching; (2) evidence-based performance improvement; and (3) inclusive and equitable learning environments.

The Program Design Update sustains the success of activities begun in predecessor programs and progressed during Phase 1, namely curriculum reform, support for students with disabilities, and development of FEMIS.

In Phase 2, the Program will use the remaining 2.5 years to fulfil standing commitments for MEHA-requested initiatives from Phase 1 and progress activities contributing to Australia's strategic priorities. Such activities include gender initiatives, e.g., the Women's Leadership in Education research and follow-on activity; social inclusion and COVID response activities such as Student Support Services (SSS) and mental health counselling; and extension of the primary literacy and numeracy curriculum reform through a GEDSI/Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction integrated revision of secondary school level English and mathematics curricula. This update assumes a budget allocation of approximately AUD 5 million per annum, similar to the original program Design and funding levels during Phase 1.

## B. Development Context

Since the design of the original program in 2018, the Government of Fiji (GoF) has continued its investment in education at all levels through the free education initiative, transport subsidy assistance, free textbooks for primary and secondary education, and, more recently, a sanitary pad voucher system.

However, the development context anticipated in the original Design has changed in three significant ways which have informed this Design Update.

### 1. MEHA Organisation, Leadership and Priorities

The original Design depended on central MEHA reorganisation; decentralisation to the districts; and the development of a new Education Sector Plan. However, the restructure of MEHA, one of the lynchpins of the original program Design, stalled in 2020, with planned changes only half implemented. In addition:

- MEHA staffing was reduced in key units (e.g., Curriculum Advisory Services and IT).
- Decentralisation of responsibility and authority to district education offices did not occur, and the school-based position of mentor teachers did not materialise.
- The Permanent Secretary changed three times, and the Minister changed twice, resulting in varying MEHA priorities and approaches.
- The revised Strategic Plan of 2019 was of limited use for MEHA decision-making and consequently for the Program.

Why was this significant?

- MEHA leadership/priorities shifted in the absence of an anchoring strategy document.
- Sufficient and appropriate counterparts for Program collaboration and sustainability were not available due to inadequate human resourcing at MEHA central, district and school levels.

**Result:** The Design Update reflects a rationalised program scope focusing on key areas that are achievable in the contemporary environment and timeframe. This rationalised scope will be discussed for agreement between MEHA and DFAT at high-level Program Coordination Committee (PCC) governance meetings.

### 2. Tropical Storms and COVID

Children and their families have suffered recurring trauma of environmental, health, and financial shocks since the start of the Program. Already low student learning outcomes worsened as children missed school due to extreme weather events -- Tropical Cyclone (TC) Yasa in late 2020 and Ana in early 2021. In addition, the COVID pandemic disrupted schooling and Program activities for two years. These events changed the development context by:

- redefining FEP's engagement and collaboration with MEHA due to repatriation of FEP international staff and work from home arrangements;
- delaying implementation of the new curriculum due to school closures and the need to focus on meeting immediate educational needs through worksheets and online teaching;
- broadening existing gaps in parental engagement between those students who have had ongoing support from their parents and those who have been neglected during periods of learning at home; and
- increasing disadvantage for remote and maritime students, children from low economic backgrounds, and children with disabilities.

Enforcement of the Suva containment zone and bans on inter-island travel compounded educational and financial inequalities, particularly for remote and maritime children and families reliant on income from tourism. Students with disabilities were among the last to be considered in post-TC recovery efforts and pandemic education, highlighting the need for inclusive policymaking and resilience planning.



Why is this significant?

- It is important to focus on the basics of education – literacy and numeracy – and to re-engage children in learning practices lost while schools were closed.
- Education must be inclusive and equitable, and promote differentiated learning pedagogies for students with disabilities, girls and boys.
- Shifting education to online learning platforms during the pandemic disadvantaged remote and maritime children due to poor internet connectivity.
- MEHA continues to promote e-learning for students; it is unclear if the GoF will be able to provide adequate infrastructure and maintain services for all students, including those with disabilities.

**Result:** The Design Update emphasises fundamental skills like literacy and numeracy, especially in early primary school education, and models GEDSI principles and standards in teaching practice. It will also continue Australia’s strategic support and leadership in areas such as disability-inclusive education and post-trauma student mental health. Use of technology – enabled learning (TEL), supported through classroom-based education technology (EdTech) – will become increasingly important to Fiji. The Program will incorporate innovations into the curriculum rollout activities which model appropriate and sustainable technology solutions for schools and classrooms, and ways to prioritise the EdTech needs of remote and maritime classrooms, girls, and children with disabilities.

### 3. Global Partnership for Education (GPE)

The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) is a multi-stakeholder partnership designed to support the transformation of education in lower-income countries. Fiji has recently received a Sector Capacity Grant (SCG) worth USD 587,879 (approximately AUD 872,695) to finance development of a new education sector plan and strengthen education partner coordination and use of data.

Why is this important?

- 1) The new strategic plan will help focus MEHA priorities.
- 2) Improved partner coordination will help eliminate duplication of efforts (e.g., disaster damage reporting through mobile apps) and promote more efficient and effective partner support.
- 3) GPE grants may affect the types of support requested from Australia (i.e., MEHA may directly source central technical assistance rather than relying on bilateral donors).
- 4) Program support for FEMIS development and greater systematic use of data will be an important contribution to the education sector planning process and result.
- 5) Gender responsiveness is a core priority for GPE and aligns with MEHA and national government commitments on gender mainstreaming.

**Result:** Through the Design Update, the Program will continue MEHA central technical support in areas such as education finance, human resources, FEMIS development, and MEHA capacity building to better use FEMIS data, until no longer required. As requested by DFAT and MEHA, the Program will continue to participate in education sector planning and share lessons learnt from Program implementation and GEDSI mainstreaming to help inform the new MEHA strategic plan.

## C. Strategic Intent and Rationale

The Design Update remains aligned with the Fiji National Development Plan (NDP), the Government of Fiji's clearest vision for the education sector. According to the NDP, Fiji's key education goal is *Quality education for all*, accomplished through two critical actions:

*"The curriculum will continually be reviewed and strengthened to achieve national objectives."  
"A safe and inclusive learning environment will be promoted." (NDP, p. 36)*

Two transformative NDP initiatives that the Program will help MEHA advance in Phase 2 are:

1. The curriculum for primary and secondary schools will be reviewed to support national integration and prepare Fijians for a transformed Fiji, to accommodate creative and active learning and to develop entrepreneurial skills, learning by doing, and effective peer learning. This holistic approach will incorporate enhanced parental engagement to support learning.
2. Women's access to education will be supported, as will their desires for fulfilling employment and career advancement. Women will be empowered, allowing them opportunities for greater participation in leadership and decision-making across all sectors.

The strategic case for Australian engagement in the Fiji education sector continues to be strong. As stated in the original Design, the Program:

- sustains long-term Australian engagement in the sector, building on investments from the early 1990s through to the Fiji Education Sector Program (FESP) 2003 to 2010 and Access to Quality Education Program (AQEP) 2011 to 2017, with particular emphasis on sustaining long-term investments in Special and Inclusive Education (SIE) and FEMIS; and,
- complements Australia's investments in gender equality and disability and social inclusion.

Australia will continue to provide strategic leadership in key education activities over the remaining 2.5 years. Although providing modest financial support to MEHA compared to its overall budget<sup>1</sup>, Australia is still one of the largest and most influential development players in education and is regarded as a partner of preference. Australia will need to strike a balance between maintaining its preferred status and committing to an expanding scope of activities. Thus, the Program will purposefully progress targeted activities which maintain, solidify, and expand its leadership role.

- 1) **Maintain:** Australia is a recognised leader in curriculum development; FEMIS; SIE; education finance; and student counselling. It is important not to lose these comparative advantages, especially as no other donor agency provides equivalent support in Fiji. The Program will help **Australia maintain its position of leadership** in these areas.
- 2) **Solidify: Australia is becoming a leader** in gender equality in education through 1) technical assistance for gender-responsive curriculum and teaching practice; 2) support for MEHA's women in educational leadership research and follow-on networking and training for aspiring women leaders; and 3) its potential to strengthen gender-responsive budgeting and policy review as a lead agent for the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and Fiji's education sector planning. Progressing these activities will solidify Australia as a player in gender-transformative education.
- 3) **Expand:** Community engagement, an activity from the original design, has yet to begin owing to COVID school closures and limited school and community level Program activities to date. This new area will **strategically situate Australia as a broker** for improved relationships between MEHA and the faith-based and community organisations (i.e., school owners) who manage the majority of Fijian schools. Existing tensions between MEHA and school owners may affect success of the curriculum rollout and risk an undermining of the school system. Leadership in this area will contribute to improved social and political stability in the education sector.

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<sup>1</sup> The Program's estimated budget is AUD 5 million, compared to MEHA non-staff 2022/23 budget of approximately AUD 84 million (FJD 128.1 million).

## D. Theory of Change

The updated Theory of Change (Figure 1) has been guided by the following principles:

- alignment with DFAT's Fiji Covid Development Response Plan, with a focus on maintaining the country's stability through education, and focusing on the needs of the most vulnerable, including women, girls, boys, youth and people with disabilities;
- alignment with MEHA's priorities and the Fiji Government's National Development Plan;
- consideration of DFAT-accepted recommendations from the Mid-Term Review;
- focus on areas where there is clear evidence of policy traction within MEHA or where there are already tangible changes to MEHA practice because of prior investment;
- realistic potential for change in MEHA policy or practice by the end of the Program; and
- GEDSI principles of *do no harm*; *nothing about us without us*; *intersectionality* and *substantive equality*.

Over the remaining 2.5 years, the Program will focus its efforts following three interactive pathways of change: (1) *Learning & Teaching*; (2) *Performance Improvement*; and (3) *Learning Environments*. These pathways and their supporting intermediate outcomes are realistic, attainable and measurable. They build upon and consolidate Program achievements to date and provide a coherent foundation for any follow-on program of support. Most significantly, this approach maintains a focus on what matters, i.e., improving inclusive and equitable quality learning for all students in Fiji.

The Design Update Theory of Change includes three pathways of change which address:

1. what is taught and how to improve **learning and teaching**;
2. how measuring learning and teaching can lead to **performance improvement**; and,
3. how **learning environments** (social, emotional, physical, cultural, and gender-inclusive) support student learning outcomes.

Each pathway includes targeted interventions that contribute to the cross-cutting themes of Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI), Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR), and Climate Change (CC)/Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR).

**The first pathway, End-of-program Outcome 1 (EOPO 1), Learning and Teaching, aims to change *what is taught and how it is taught* via:**

- the introduction of improved inclusive and equitable quality learning and teaching materials;
- in-service training, coaching and mentoring for teachers and Heads of Schools (HOS), including GEDSI interventions for more equitable and inclusive teaching practices; and,
- the establishment of in-person and virtual Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) for continuous support and improvement.

Achievement of improved learning and teaching through the first pathway assumes<sup>2</sup> that:

- the new curriculum and teaching practices introduce changes adequate for improved learning and which sufficiently address inclusion, gender equality and equity;
- teachers willingly and successfully adopt the new curriculum and practices;
- MEHA takes full ownership of the new curriculum after the trial phase; and,
- MEHA can manage and fund the national rollout, including providing adequate resources for teacher training and ongoing support, maintaining learning communities and printing/distribution of the new learning materials.

**The second pathway, EOPO 2, Performance Improvement, aims to build the capability of MEHA central, district and school staff to use performance information** to determine whether the new curriculum and pedagogies are leading to improvements in inclusive and equitable learning and teaching. Activities include monitoring and reporting (entering data into FEMIS) and analysing disaggregated results (extracting and analysing data from FEMIS) to assess:

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<sup>2</sup> Risks and mitigation strategies are more fully developed in Section J.

- benefits of the new curriculum, including assessment of the curriculum's differential effectiveness for girls, boys and students with disabilities and any changes in student learning outcomes (by gender, disability and location);
- teacher performance in the classroom and efficacy of the coaching model;
- effectiveness of classroom and community GEDSI activities for teachers and students; and,
- increases in community-led activities that support inclusive and equitable student learning.

Supporting MEHA central, district and school staff to view the collection and analysis of performance information as a core part of their work will maximise the potential for learning, continuous improvement and sustainability. Thus, the second pathway effectively becomes the *feedback loop* designed to generate continuous improvement in teaching and learning practice. Pathway 2 also helps measure and assess school and community support for improvements to student learning environments, the focus of Pathway 3.

Performance improvement anticipated through the second pathway relies on:

- MEHA ownership of FEMIS development and data management/usage;
- the system hardware remaining stable; and,
- an appetite for evidence-based decision-making and the ability to follow through with decisions.

**The third pathway, EOPO 3, aligns the efforts of school administrators, school owners and wider school communities in support of inclusive and equitable learning.** Students learn best in environments where they feel equal, safe and supported -- mentally, socially, financially and physically. Pathway 3 connects efforts supporting student mental health, gender equality, and social, financial and disability inclusion to address intersectional factors that lead to marginalisation. These efforts include:

- support for student mental health counselling, peer mentoring, and clinical referral systems, especially in the aftermath of natural disasters and the pandemic, or in light of widespread social issues such as bullying and gendered violence, both at school and at home;
- technical assistance to MEHA to improve financial support for economically disadvantaged students through free education and special and inclusive education grants, transport allowances and other financial inclusion initiatives;
- identification of students with disabilities and support for their full engagement in classroom learning and access to assistive devices, accommodations and support services; and,
- replication of effective (AQEP) approaches that engage school management committees (SMCs), parents and service providers at annual general meetings (AGMs) and termly community and parental support meetings (CAPS) to promote safe, equitable and inclusive learning environments for girls and boys of diverse (dis)abilities and geographic locations.

Achievement of improved learning environments through the third pathway assumes that:

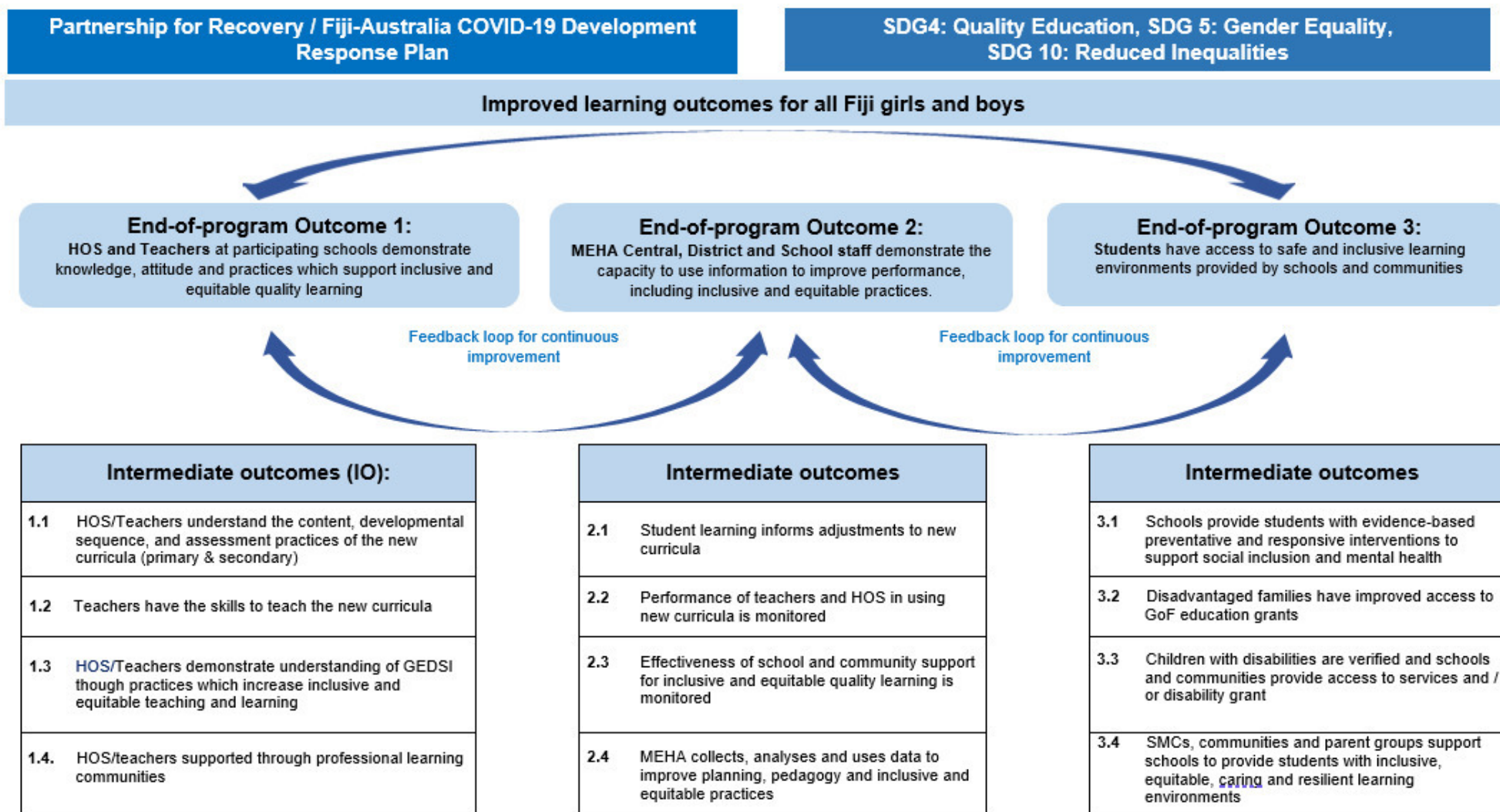
- communities and parents support the new curricula and inclusive learning practices;
- HOS and school managers work in partnership to improve school learning environments; and,
- the Government of Fiji has funds and political will to continue providing sectoral grants and allowances, and to engage in gender-responsive policy.

Taken together, these **three pathways of change** enable the Program to:

1. build upon and consolidate major areas of Australia's investment in education in Fiji over the last decade (i.e., curriculum development, FEMIS, and SIE);
2. adopt a coherent approach which ties the activities and roles of DFAT, MEHA, and the Program into a mutual change process with an agreed and shared set of outcomes;
3. focus on what is achievable over the next 2.5 years;
4. focus on the *people* in the education system (students, teachers, leaders), their knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours; and,
5. provide a sound foundation for any follow-on program of support by Australia.

See Annex 2 for an indicative budget per pathway and Annex 3 for a high-level implementation plan.

## Government of Fiji 5 year and 20-year National Development Plan: Improve quality education at all levels, ensure every Fijian Student has access to education at all levels



Crosscutting Themes – Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI); Climate Change (CC); Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR); Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR)

Figure 1: Design Update Theory of Change



To show how intermediate outcomes (IOs) interconnect and build off each other, the logic chains within and among the pathways are described in more detail below and illustrated in Figure 2.

In **Pathway 1**, teachers' knowledge of the new inclusive and equitable curriculum and their skills to teach it (IO1.1) are strengthened through face to face and virtual professional development activities in the new curriculum (IO1.2) and in GEDSI (IO 1.3). Their knowledge and skills are continuously reinforced through participation in professional learning communities and school clusters (IO 1.4).

Through **Pathway 2**, the achievements of Pathway 1 are measured – student learning outcomes (2.1) and teacher knowledge and skills (2.2). Student learning outcomes also help assess teacher performance and, less directly, community and parent support to learning (2.3), achieved through Pathway 3. Data collected in FEMIS and through joint MEHA-Program monitoring visits and research help measure student outcomes, teacher performance, and community engagement, and inform decisions for improvements (IO 2.4).

In **Pathway 3**, students' improved access to safe, gender equitable and inclusive learning environments is achieved through interventions in three areas:

- **social inclusion**, including student counselling and peer mentoring (IO 3.1);
- **financial inclusion**, through more efficient access and effective use of grants – free education (FEG) and special and inclusive education (SIEG) – and allowances – transportation and hygiene vouchers (IO 3.2); and,
- **disability inclusion**, particularly via verification of students with disabilities and provision of learning support through student learning plans (SLPs) (IO 3.3).

Technical assistance to automate grants and allowances (IO 3.2), reinforces social inclusion activities (IO 3.1) and assistance for students with disabilities (IO 3.3). Communities and parents support schools (HOS and teachers) to create inclusive, safe and equitable learning environments for students through school-based interventions in these three areas (IO 3.4). Community and school responsibilities are delineated in draft leadership and financial management handbooks (currently under review for finalisation) and subsequently measured through the number and types of interventions included in annual school plans (IO 2.3).

Thus, intermediate outcomes within each pathway are self-reinforcing, with the fourth outcome in each pathway supporting achievement of the first three outcomes. Pathway 1 aims to improve learning and teaching and Pathway 3 improves environments where learning and teaching occur. Pathway 2 measures achievement of Pathways 1 and 3 outcomes and establishes a feedback loop for continuous improvement.

In addition to the established End-of-program Outcomes in each pathway, there exist secondary benefits which help improve relationships between MEHA and key education stakeholders:

Pathway 1 – improved and strengthened MEHA and TTI relationships and better alignment between teacher pre- and in-service professional development activities.

Pathway 2 – closer alignment between Program and MEHA MEL activities and better reporting and accountability to DFAT and the Government of Fiji.

Pathway 3 – improved coordination among school heads, faith-based or community school owners, school management committees, parents and other stakeholders in support of students.

These additional benefits support sustainability of Program achievements by (1) strengthening TTIs to both appropriately and continuously meet MEHA needs for trained teachers; (2) building MEHA capacity to continue to address and achieve its own MEL objectives, and (3) unifying schools and communities to identify common goals and jointly mobilise resources to achieve them.

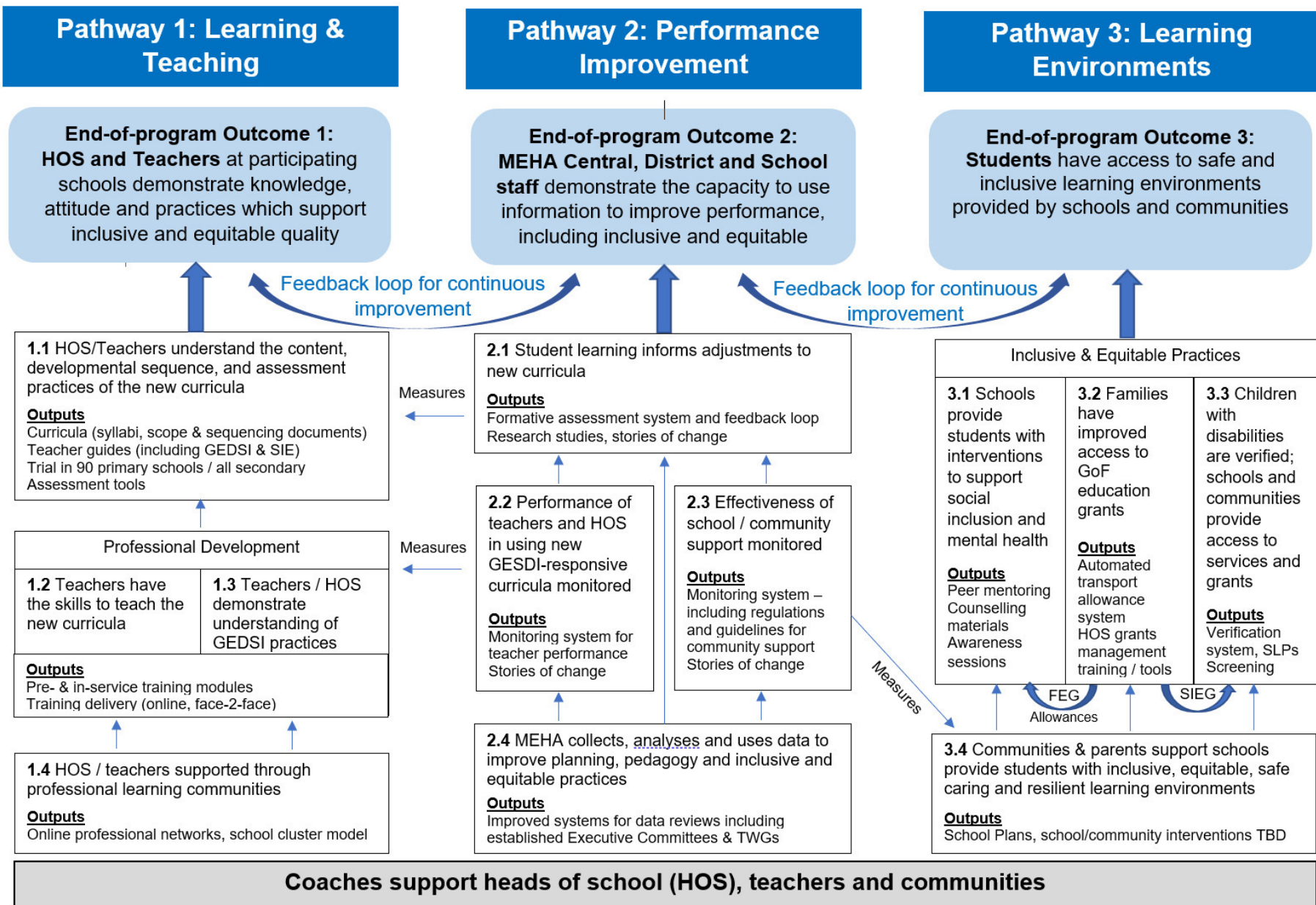


Figure 2: Pathway Logics

## E. Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI)

In Phase 2, GEDSI is embedded throughout the Design Update and adopts the twin-track approach where (1) GEDSI is mainstreamed throughout all activities; and (2) GEDSI-specific activities directly address gender equity, disability and social inclusion both individually and inter-sectionally, reflecting the ways in which different forms of disadvantage may reinforce or amplify each other. Program GEDSI activities are implemented by a team of 7 Program staff and 5 part-time specialists, with support from a Facility Senior Advisor and her team.

The Program undertook a stocktake of GEDSI initiatives in the education sector to inform this Design Update. While highlighting the progress both Fiji and the Program have made supporting students with disabilities, the stocktake also signals a need to strengthen interventions on gender equality and social inclusion. The stocktake was accompanied by a roadmap which has informed the Program's Theory of Change and helped shape its GEDSI interventions to promote inclusive and equitable learning and school environments (see Annex 4 for the GEDSI Stocktake and Roadmap).

Promotion of gender equity, disability and social inclusion requires complementary interventions at multiple levels to create the personal, social and structural conditions that enable individuals to realise their rights and communities and societies to sustain them. The Facility's GEDSI Framework<sup>3</sup> (Figure 3) identifies three levels of change needed to address and support the needs of people of diverse gender, age, (dis)ability, ethnicity, geographic location and sexual orientation.

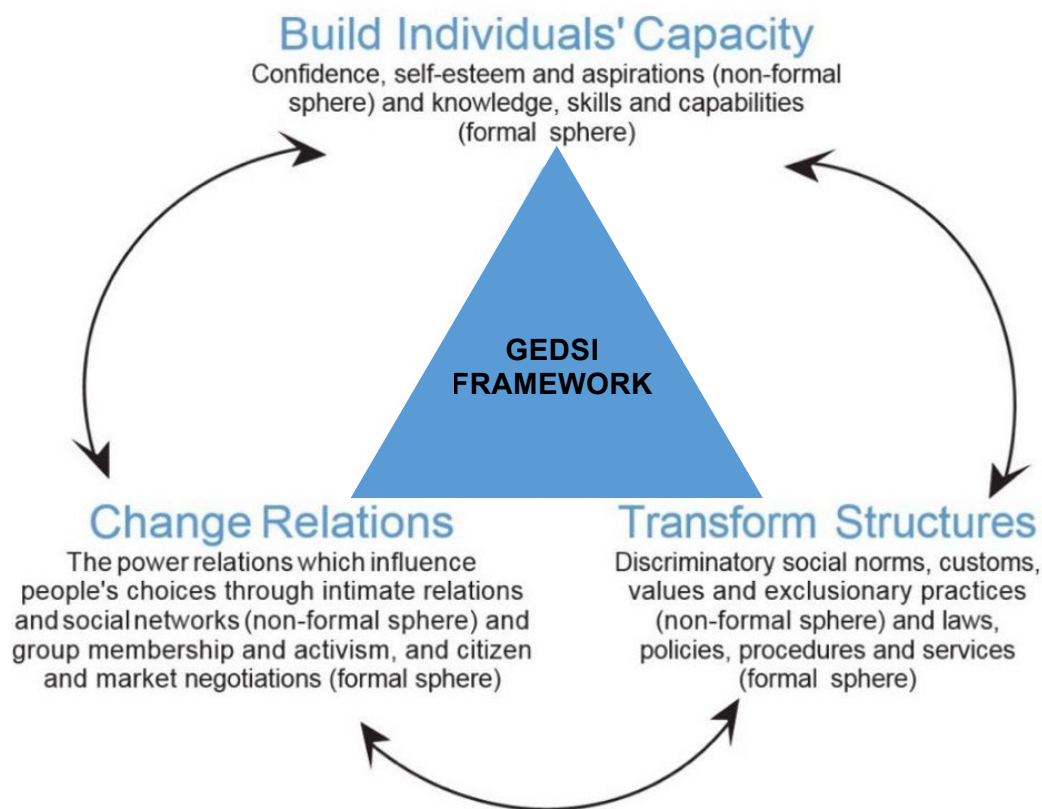


Figure 3: The GEDSI Framework

The Design Update adopts this GEDSI approach with an aim to **build individual capacity** of MEHA leaders, teachers, HOS and community members; **change relations** between these individuals and their school communities; and **transform structures**, including cultures, gender norms, policies and practices, to be more inclusive and equal. Change must occur at all three levels to achieve impact.

<sup>3</sup> The GESI Framework included in the original design has been updated to incorporate disability and become the GEDSI Framework.



At the **individual level**, GEDSI-specific topics are included in the training provided to in-service and pre-service teachers participating in the new curricula rollouts. Heads of Schools, particularly females, will receive GEDSI-transformative leadership training. MEHA staff at central, district, and school level will participate in capacity-building particularly focused on the importance and use of disaggregated data for decision-making.

At the **relations level**, the Program works through school heads, teachers, and school communities at participating schools to address and adapt power relations necessary for more equitable and inclusive student learning environments. Through mentoring, coaching, and pedagogies introduced in the new curriculum, teachers model practices that encourage improved gender relations, and which normalise inclusion of girls, boys and children with disabilities in mainstream classrooms.

At a **structural level**, gender equality, disability and social inclusion continue to be integrated into MEHA systems, planning, finances and resourcing. Structural transformation will be promoted through implementation of the revised SIE Policy and other GEDSI and gender-responsive policies and procedures incorporated into the updated School Management and Leadership Handbooks.

Engagement of the wider school community – HOS, teachers, district education officers, SMCs, parents, etc. – as well as service providers – Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), women’s groups and Organisations of People with Disabilities (OPDs) – helps effect broader change of social norms and transform structures through school policies, practices and resourcing that support gender equitable and inclusive school leadership, cultures, and community-led solutions.

To ensure wide consultation with all stakeholders and communities, the Program will ensure participation and feedback from Organisations of People with Disabilities (OPDs), especially the Fiji National Council for Disabled Persons (FNCDP) and Fiji Disabled Persons Federation (FDPF); women’s organizations; LGBTQI people<sup>4</sup>; and representatives of disadvantaged groups. The Program will work with the Facility GEDSI team to identify key opportunities for ongoing consultations with diverse groups.

## F. Climate Change/Disaster Risk Reduction

Opportunities to incorporate Climate Change (CC), Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), and Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR) measures into activities supporting inclusive and equitable quality learning are few. Nonetheless, the Program will engage with the Australian Pacific Climate Partnership (APCP) to do so, by:

- embedding CC, DRR and EPR principles into the Year 5-8 L&N curriculum (under revision), using them as context or data for examples, and incorporating them into the teacher guides;
- including climate change readers as supporting classroom reading material; and,
- providing training, reference materials and other capacity development to SMCs and community stakeholders to design locally appropriate interventions in pursuit of more resilient<sup>5</sup> schools environments that support improved learning.

In addition, the program will continue ongoing MEHA development and promotion of the FEMIS offline mobile phone app for post-disaster deployment, including rapid assessment/response and recovery coordination. FEMIS may play an important (and currently underutilised) role during emergencies. Support to MEHA will also include provision of disaster recovery systems for MEHA, including backup server hardware.

The Program will remain open to other emerging ideas for incorporating CC/DRR/EPR, if agreed by the PCC, such as converting the revised L&N curriculum into materials for formats suitable for temporary deployment in the aftermath of TC-affected areas.

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<sup>4</sup> Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex

<sup>5</sup> Physically and emotionally able to deal with shocks

## G. Key Policy Priorities

Three key priorities emerge as opportunities for Australia to influence policy in the education sector:

### **Policy dialogue 1: Appropriate education technology solutions**

Increasingly focused on incorporating education technology (EdTech) to facilitate learning and teaching, MEHA recently identified technology enhanced learning as a policy priority for its new education sector plan. Interest in appropriate education technology solutions to support inclusive and equitable quality education has intensified over the past few years. However, as evidenced during the pandemic, benefits of technology enabled learning (TEL) must be balanced with the potential disenfranchisement of economically, socially and geographically disadvantaged schools, teachers, and students. A 2022 UN Transforming Education Summit policy paper<sup>6</sup> advises to keep the needs of the most marginalised at the centre of EdTech decisions.

During Phase 1, the Program had mixed success incorporating technology in the classroom by providing modems, phone apps and smartboards to select schools. A more positive outcome has emerged from using online platforms (e.g., google classroom) for teacher professional development and the establishment of learning communities in support of the curriculum rollout. The Program has important lessons which could help inform MEHA EdTech decisions that may be incorporated into the new education sector plan. Australia can play a critical role in framing policy debate and ensuring that improved learning and teaching – through the new literacy and numeracy curriculum – reaches all children in an inclusive and equitable manner. This may include promotion of appropriate and sustainable technologies like the RACHEL Plus System<sup>7</sup>.

### **Policy dialogue 2: IT/FEMIS and use of data for learning improvement**

FEMIS serves as a backbone for MEHA operations and has grown into one of the largest and most complex IT and information systems in Fiji. Technical assistance from Australia has been pivotal in the development of FEMIS functionality over an extended period. However, due to inadequate staffing of the MEHA IT Unit, resources are often diverted to servicing general IT needs. While this continues, the sustainability of FEMIS as a tool for learning improvement remains in question.

Australia can influence appropriate MEHA resourcing for the IT Unit to ensure investment into FEMIS is not lost. This could be accomplished during regular meetings with the PS, including at PCC meetings; as part of Australia's role as Coordinating Agency for GPE grant funding; and at high-level talks with the Government of Fiji related to bilateral and direct funding for education sector support. Strengthening collection, analysis and use of FEMIS data by MEHA and the Program for monitoring, evaluation and learning (through Pathway 2) will support central, district, and school staff to improve inclusive and equitable quality student learning and teacher performance.

### **Policy dialogue 3: FEMIS data in emergencies**

Significant work has gone into development of a FEMIS mobile phone app that can capture data offline and automatically update central systems once a connection has been established. This is an ideal system for GoF data capture, consolidation and sharing throughout all stages of post-disaster assessment and recovery. However, alternative systems have been introduced (UNICEF, Save the Children) which may make it difficult to share accurate and timely data, and result in data collection that does not feed into MEHA's own systems or support whole of government response coordination.

Australia can continue to promote a coordinated approach at GPE and partner coordination meetings and encourage stakeholders to adopt a streamlined system which feeds into MEHA's FEMIS disaster recovery app, and to collaborate in its development, training and implementation.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://transformingeducationsummit.sdg4education2030.org/system/files/2022-07/Digital%20AT4%20discussion%20paper%20July%202022.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> RACHEL (remote area community hotspot for education) is a portable, plug and play server that can store copies of open education websites and establish a classroom intranet (offline connectivity hub).

## H. Implementation arrangements

The Design Update acknowledges that *how* assistance is delivered is equally as important as *what* is delivered. Key principles expressed in the Fiji-Australia Vuvale Partnership will guide Program implementation in Phase 2 toward harmonised and mutually reinforcing approaches. Principles include:

- Engage with each other with trust, respect and understanding.
- Share responsibility for delivering programs and policies.
- Listen and speak carefully.
- Work in a considered and sustainable manner.

The Design Update adopts a range of delivery modalities, based on lessons from Phase 1. Notably, Phase 2 shifts the Program towards a localised model of support and capacity development, and away from a reliance on international staff, including advisers. Where advisers are required for niche skills (e.g., curriculum and FEMIS), they will support local specialists and teams and have a capacity development objective. In these instances, short-term and remote working options will be pursued to deliver better Value-for-Money (VfM). This shift draws on Fijians' existing knowledge and relationships for efficient, cost effective and sustainable inputs. Moreover, it actions the Vuvale principles to trust, respect, listen, and to share responsibility for effecting lasting change.

The Program will also shift towards localised modalities such as institutional partnerships with TTIs and research institutions and will build its convening or facilitating role with partners and stakeholders as appropriate. The Program will continue to deliver training where required and in Phase 2 the coaching model for the curriculum roll-out and SIE will be strengthened and consolidated.

The Program will strengthen education sector linkages in Fiji, for example with:

- UNICEF's review of the Early Childhood Education (ECE) sector;
- Save the Children Fiji's activities to improve school safety and resilience;
- New Zealand's initiative to strengthen teaching capacity in inclusive education;
- PacRef's<sup>8</sup> agenda for building capacity of education institutions;
- EQAP's leadership in assessment and support for teacher training;<sup>9</sup> and,
- The GPE initiative and resultant education sector planning.

The Program will continue collaboration with TTIs (Corpus Christi, Fulton College) and university partners (Fiji National University (FNU), University of Fiji, and University of the South Pacific (USP)) for teacher pre- and in-service training related to the new curricula, consultation on inclusive education and joint research.

The Program partners with select CSOs for specific interventions, e.g., Frank Hilton Organization on referral pathways for students with disabilities, Project Heaven for eye and ear screening, and OPDs for awareness raising on disability inclusion. Additional CSOs will be engaged as appropriate.

The original Design governance structure included a Program Coordination Committee (PCC), a Sustainability Steering Committee, and a series of Technical Working Groups (TWGs). The updated governance structure revitalizes the PCC as the key governance forum, supported by various Executive Committees and associated TWGs (see Annex 5 for updated structure). Duties of the Sustainability Steering Committee have been added to the PCC's mandate.

To promote sustainability, the Program adopts and strengthens existing structures and systems (e.g., SMCs, FEMIS, parent associations, mothers' groups, school clusters). The Program also temporarily seconds teachers as coaches to train HOS and champion teachers, who will return to the classroom with the enhanced skills and knowledge necessary to sustain the new curricula nationally. Where gaps exist, the Program will seek to establish models that can be sustained, adapted or replicated by MEHA (e.g., executive committees, school clusters, and the champion teacher coaching model).

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<sup>8</sup> PacREF is the Pacific Regional Education Framework, a regional policy guide for 15 Pacific Island Countries.

<sup>9</sup> A new Educational Quality and Assessment Program (EQAP) business plan (2023-2026) is under development.

## I. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL)

In Phase 2 the Program will address three intertwined applications of MEL:

1. accountability to DFAT and GoF/MEHA through reporting milestones and the PCC;
2. providing evidence to inform Program decision-making and cross-Facility learning; and,
3. enhancement of MEHA capacity to develop and use evidence to inform decision-making and develop interventions at central, school and community levels.

**Accountability** – DFAT and Fiji Program Support Facility (Facility) MEL guidelines establish reporting milestones required for accountability to DFAT. The Facility submits MEL products (annual and six-monthly reports, report cards and various trackers) to demonstrate efficient and effective use of Australian investment. Accountability to GoF/MEHA primarily occurs at Program Coordination Committee (PCC) meetings that convene MEHA, Ministry of Economy, DFAT, Facility and Program representatives to set high-level direction and assess achievement.

**Program management and cross-Facility learning** – MEL findings inform Program management by signalling adjustments needed to achieve outcomes. Learning events across regular Program team interaction (fortnightly and monthly team meetings and semi-annual reflect and refocus talanoas) as well as cross-Facility talanoas, create opportunities to share challenges, achievements, lessons learnt, and transferable and replicable interventions. MEHA executive committee meetings provide a forum for MEHA/Program management and decision-making, as well as learning through reviews of performance data and by commissioning, disseminating, and discussing research studies.

**MEHA Capacity-development** – The Program uses MEL processes to build MEHA capacity for quality monitoring, evaluation and learning. This is accomplished through helping MEHA to (1) standardise monitoring tools and practices; (2) establish a culture of evaluation and learning from information gathered through monitoring and FEMIS; and (3) cultivate the practice of using these data to inform decisions. MEL activities include monitoring and evaluation visits; inputting data into FEMIS; intersectional analysis of data (qualitative and quantitative) by technical working groups (TWG); reporting of findings to MEHA executive committees; and informed decision-making.

The Design Update capitalises on overlaps and interconnectedness among these three applications to bring about efficiencies and a sense of joint purpose. Synergies between Program and MEHA MEL and among governance forums, create stronger MEHA MEL systems and processes, which, in turn, drive continuous improvement and create opportunities to share the performance story (see Figure 4).

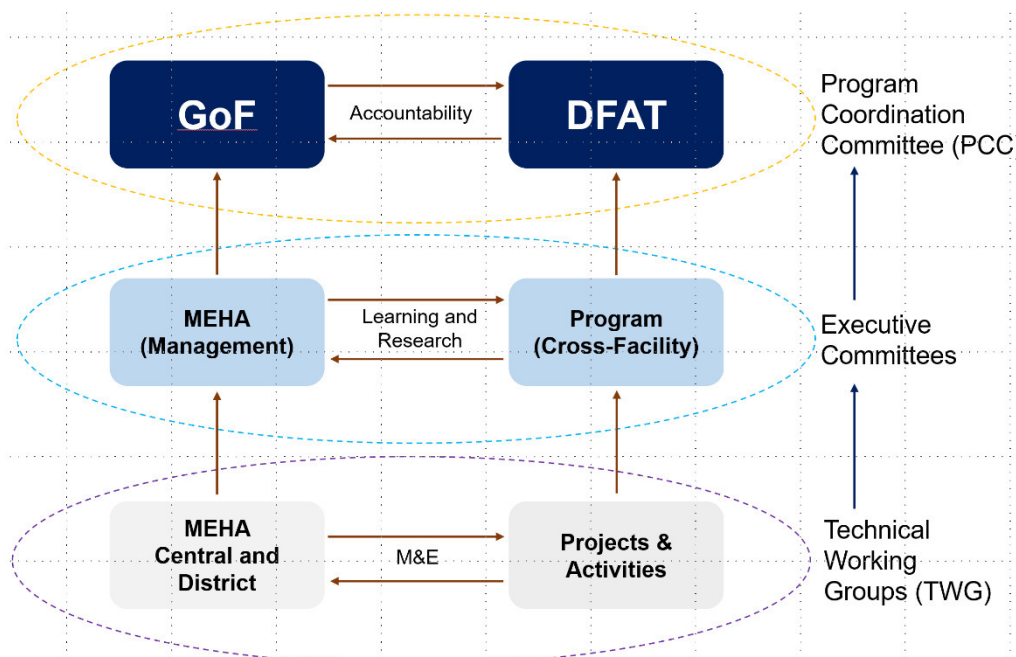


Figure 4: MEL Synergies

Greater synergies across Program and MEHA MEL will be achieved through Pathway 2 activities and reinforced through three areas of systems improvement:

- better use of FEMIS data;
- enhanced Program-MEHA collaboration; and,
- regular and timely reviews of progress.

**Better use of FEMIS data** – Australian investment has driven development of Fiji’s education management information system (FEMIS), wherein an enormous and growing repository of disaggregated data has accumulated. However, feedback from MEHA and Program staff suggest these data are under-utilised. Over Phase 1, Program-funded Excel training and on-the-job capacity-building developed MEHA staff skills to better access FEMIS data; yet it is currently unclear if FEMIS data are analysed regularly and used systematically to inform equitable and inclusive decision-making at the central level, or accessed at any other level (district, school and community).

In Phase 2, the Program will continue partnering with MEHA to ensure that disaggregated data and meaningful analyses, are increasingly accessed and shared across all levels and between the Program and MEHA. Intersectional framing will be used wherever possible. FEMIS data will help both MEHA and the Program to track learning and teaching improvements, monitor investments and inform programmatic adjustments, as needed.

**Collaborative MEL activities:** FEMIS (quantitative) and qualitative data will be collected through collaborative monitoring visits and joint research studies, with findings analysed at technical working group meetings. MEHA and Program staff will coordinate MEL activities to strengthen MEHA systems, build human capacity, and avoid duplication of efforts, resulting in greater value for money (VfM) for both MEHA and the Program. MEHA central staff will collaborate with Program staff; district officers may be included, as allowed in their evolving terms of reference.

The Program will continue partnering with MEHA on discrete research studies in areas relevant to inclusive and equitable learning (as agreed between MEHA and DFAT). Collaborative research was completed between MEHA, Program, USP, EQAP and other stakeholders during Phase 1. Continuing this approach will build MEHA research skills and ensure MEHA ownership of the products and recommendations.

**Regular and timely review of progress:** In Phase 2, greater attention will be given to *how* data are used by MEHA and the Program to inform decision-making. Well analysed data and resultant insights can be transformational if used to:

- identify causes of underperformance in learning and/or teaching;
- highlight learning outcome gaps for different student groups (e.g., students with disabilities or from disadvantaged households, gender-biased outcomes, urban bias, etc.);
- identify reasons students leave school early; and,
- evaluate the effectiveness of MEHA, school and community initiatives.

Regular and timely data collection and use of performance information by MEHA central, district officers, HOS, and teachers can drive continuous improvement and create opportunities to share lessons learnt and tell the performance story.

In Phase 2, Program MEL will be led by a full-time MEL Specialist, a Coordinator and an Assistant, with support from the Facility MEL Senior Specialist. The Program also supplies a senior level FEMIS developer and an Advisor to the MEHA Learning and Development Unit. Additional Program staff support MEL activities, namely the Literacy Coordinator, the Numeracy Coordinator, the Program coaches, the Secondary Mathematics Specialist, and one part-time SIE Advisor.

In alignment with the Facility GEDSI Framework, all performance data are disaggregated (by sex, (dis)ability, geographic location, etc.) wherever possible and supplemented with additional GEDSI-specific data collected for activities primarily focused on achieving GEDSI outcomes.

The Program Results Framework, Annex 6, guides Program MEL activities and is based on the Fiji Facility MEL Plan and Guide (summarised in the annex and available upon request).



## J. Risk Management and Safeguarding

### Risk Management

The program is assessed to have an inherent risk rating of High which then reduces to Medium after application of controls and treatments. There are two risks that need to be escalated: natural disasters as they happen and the potential inability for the Ministry of Education to rollout the revised literacy and numeracy curricula due to lack of resources.

Program risks are discussed at weekly meetings between Post and FEP, or immediately on the phone, depending on the risk. If deemed high, the risks are escalated to the Counsellor who would then escalate to the delegate (Head of Mission).

The DFAT will maintain a risk register which will be reviewed and updated quarterly by Post.

This risk register will be uploaded into the AidWorks system once the Design Update has been approved by the Delegate.

The Program Manager, Tina Seniloli, is responsible for managing risks for DFAT and will be the primary point of contact for the Contractor.

Team Leader Necia Billingham is responsible for managing risk on behalf of the Contractor.

Key programmatic risks to Program implementation, according to the Design Update, and their corresponding mitigation strategies include the following:

**Risk 1:** Teachers do not adopt the new curriculum, reverting to known practices and pedagogies

*Mitigation:*

- Coaches visit schools for face-to-face support, including modelling of new practices; coaches also reach out to teachers using tech platforms.
- Communities of practice are established for teachers to provide peer support and motivation.
- HOS are trained in the new curriculum and pedagogies.
- MEHA/CAS officers and District Officers are trained to coach HOS and teachers.

**Risk 2:** MEHA fails to take full ownership of the curriculum national rollout, including providing adequate resources for printing of the new learning materials.

*Mitigation:*

- A MEHA Executive Committee, led by PS, has been formed to provide oversight of the rollout.
- MEHA has approved secondment of 8 teachers in strategic locations across the country to be trained as coaches in Terms 2 & 3. They will provide support for the national rollout next year when they return to their classrooms/schools.
- Allocation to print the materials was included in the national budget (just approved).
- Up to 5% of Program funds (currently unallocated) can be draw on to supplement, if needed.

**Risk 3:** Communities do not support the new curriculum and inclusive learning practices.

*Mitigation:*

- The Program will review AQEP best practices, especially those that have continued since the close of that program.
- Community engagement activities will start small, in only a subset of the 90 schools.
- Per their mandated responsibilities, HOS will coordinate with SMCs to oversee the community activities; the Program will provide support to HOS.

**Risk 4:** FEMIS development slows for lack of human resources and/or the system crashes.

*Mitigation:*

- Unallocated Program funds can be draw on to hire additional MEHA programmers, if needed.
- International (remote) FEMIS specialist may be retained though end of Program.
- The Program is providing a back-up server to expand and duplicate capabilities in case of a system failure (lesson learnt from 2021).

**Risk 5:** New curriculum and pedagogies are insufficient to support inclusion and equity.

*Mitigation:*

- Teachers Guide and PD modules will be developed to specifically focus on strategies for differentiating new curriculum for use with students with disabilities.
- Program Coaches will be trained in SIE principles and coach HOS and teachers.
- An Inclusive Education L&N Coach will visit schools needing additional targeted support.
- Additional Teacher Guides and PD modules will be developed to enrich GEDSI aspects of the new curriculum.

The Program Risk Matrix in Annex 7 provides details on these and additional, higher-level Program risks and safeguarding concerns, noting that the Program operates within the broader FPSF operational risk environment.

**Safeguards**

Supporting schools carries a range of inherent risks, and safeguards covering Child Protection and Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Harassment (PSEAH) continue to inform Program planning and implementation. The Program adheres to all safeguarding measures according to the Facility’s Child Protection Plan and PSEAH Plan, which ensures compliance with DFAT’s Child Protection and PSEAH standards, including ensuring all downstream partners also comply with all standards. All program activities are subject to their own risk assessments, and additional mitigations include: registration with the Fiji Teachers Registration Authority (inclusive of police checks) to visit schools; wearing of photo ID cards at all times when in schools; understanding of the Government of Fiji child protection requirements; ensuring that personnel are accompanied by other adults when in the presence of children; ensuring any photography meets DFAT requirements including informed child/parent/guardian consent as required; and avoiding or reducing overnight stays in small communities wherever possible. For working with children positions such as the coaches, the Program ensures that they have completed a two-day training on safeguarding before entering the school, and the risk mitigations in the schools and community will be regularly monitored by the Facility.

**Fraud**

A Fraud control plan is in place for the Activity which complies DFAT’s obligations derived from the PGPA Act (2013). Investment managers are aware of their obligations under DFAT’s Fraud Control Framework and under the Public Service Act 1999 (Cth) (including the APS Values, the Employment Principles and the APS Code of Conduct) and have arrangements in place to prevent, detect and prevent misuse of ODA resources supporting the Activity. The Contractor is aware of their obligations under DFAT’s Fraud Control Framework. Fraud risk is significant from a resourcing perspective but also in the potential loss of trust, termination of contracts (staff or service providers) and the need for resources being diverted for potential audit follow-up and investigation. Fraud risks are mitigated through internal training and awareness, strong procurement and recruitment processes, rigorous governance processes, strong contracting processes, and all staff signing Conflict of Interest and Code of Conduct forms. Compliance with these requirements is regularly reviewed by Post.

The Contractor has established fraud control processes and specific definitions on corrupt practice are included in contracts, with clear termination and disbarment processes for contractors and individuals that engage in such activities. FEP, as one of six FPSF programs, operates within the Facility’s fraud control environment for all operations as set out in the FPSF Fraud Control Plan and associated key policies and procedures primarily the Finance and Procurement Manuals. All Facility operations are based on a zero tolerance policy for fraud and active reporting to DFAT and Tetra Tech management.

## **K. Annexes**

1. Executive Summary of Original Design Document
2. Indicative Budget
3. High-level Implementation Plan
4. GEDSI Stocktake and Roadmap
5. Governance Structure
6. Fiji Education Program Results Framework
7. Fiji Education Program Risk Matrix



## Annex 1: Executive Summary of Original Design Document

### About the new program

Australia has a long-standing commitment to Fiji's education sector, with support spanning the last three decades. Following the completion of the core Access to Quality Education Program (AQEP) in June 2017,<sup>10</sup> Australia continues its support to Fiji's education sector through rebuilding of schools damaged by TC Winston, implementation of transitional activities<sup>11</sup> and the design of a new education program, responsive to the Ministry of Education, Heritage and Arts' (MEHA) priorities and areas of need. The initial phase of the program covers 2017/18 – 2021/22, with a possible extension for a further three years. It will operate with an investment of up to AUD25 million in the initial phase, delivered through Australia's Fiji Program Support Facility (Facility).

As Australia's investment in Fiji's education sector represents only around one per cent of the MEHA annual budget, the program will contribute to MEHA's strategic priorities through targeted support including demand driven technical assistance, grants to support analytics, and partnerships. The program design was developed in close consultation with MEHA and, during implementation, will be aligned and responsive to the Government's 5 & 20 Year National Development Plan and their MEHA Education Strategic Plan currently under development. The program will remain flexible to emerging needs as MEHA institutes the required civil service reforms and establishes an effective organisational structure and culture. Technical assistance will be provided in areas such as:

- Contributing to new curriculum development with specific emphasis on literacy and numeracy;
- improving teacher quality through upgraded qualifications and pre-service/in-service training;
- increasing functionality of the Fiji Education Management Information System (FEMIS) to enhance
- data usage/analysis and evidence-based decision-making, setting an example for the Pacific region; and,
- providing reliable internet connectivity options to schools with no or intermittent internet access.

The underpinning program framework will be a systems-based approach that comprises systems strengthening, capacity development and partnerships for teaching and learning.

AQEP's successes were improved literacy and numeracy outcomes, improved student participation and the demonstration of successful disability inclusion in pilot schools. The new program will support MEHA to replicate these achievements at scale. What came through with great uniformity in the stakeholder consultations was that these achievements were attributable to the modality of school-based training, excellent teaching guides and inclusive school climates. However, a critical factor for success was the quality of school leadership.

The current restructure of MEHA is focused on devolving accessible and quality services to the district level and to the schools and institutionalising school-based educational leadership, management and technical expertise. For example, school heads' new position descriptions require them to be instructional leaders. The position of mentor teachers will be created in each school to lead staff improvement; and the nine District Education Offices will become a source of technical support to schools.

Added to these enabling factors are those of the civil service reforms for 'improved service to the Fijian public' with activities such as merit-based recruitment, performance management and career advancement to create attractive jobs and improve the professionalism of the workforce. The effectiveness of the new program is interlinked with the success of these reforms to support MEHA to be a responsive Ministry; therefore, supporting the new organisational structure and personnel will be a core focus of the program.

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<sup>10</sup> AQEP contractor, Palladium, continues to manage TC Winston school and health centre reconstruction infrastructure work to December 2019.

<sup>11</sup> In the period from July 2017 to the mobilisation of the new program mid-2018, transitional activities are being undertaken, mainly analytics and trainings in activities continuing from AQEP.

With a finite funding envelope, the program will need to work closely with MEHA to ensure a holistic approach that delivers good outcomes across the 933 schools (ECE/primary, secondary and special) and 13,000 MEHA staff (teachers, head teachers, divisional/district and central office staff).

Given Fiji's vulnerability to severe weather events like flooding and cyclones (evidenced by the impact of Tropical Cyclone Winston in 2016 and Cyclones Gita, Josie and Keni in 2018), it will also be important to work with MEHA to improve their emergency response and preparedness capability, including disaster hazard mapping at the school level.

### **The methodology of the design**

The literature base of the design has been informed by the Fiji National Development Plan 2017-30, MEHA's Strategic Development Plan 2015-18, Australia's investment planning for Fiji and for the region; and DFAT guidance on education and cross cutting issues. A review of reports of other relevant activities in progress in Fiji, former program evaluations, country diagnostics and recent literature on learning and assessment improvement was also conducted.

Consultation activities were inaugurated by an in-country consultation mission in late November 2017 which culminated in an Aide Memoire (15 December 2017). At that time a Design Reference Group was also formed to engage key stakeholders' support for the systemic work the program has in view. In late January 2018, when the design outline was formed, two feedback workshops were held in Suva, one with the leadership of the MEHA; and one with the wider stakeholder group earlier consulted. The purpose was to seek responses to the proposed strategies and encourage ownership of the program.

### **The conceptual approach to the design**

The importance of building on MEHA's current shift to decentralisation was reinforced by the instructive contrasts between the last two major education designs that Australia has supported in Fiji: the Fiji Education Sector Program—FESP, (2003-2010); and AQEP (2011-2017). FESP was a systems-based program; AQEP was the opposite: a school-based one. This contrast was not accidental: the FESP Independent Completion Report judged that “many of the systems benefits introduced by FESP were not transmitted to the classroom level”.<sup>12</sup> The limitation of the AQEP approach, on the other hand, was that its intensive focus on 85 schools is not scalable or sustainable by the government according to the AQEP End of Program Report<sup>13</sup>. However, through piloting the school based management approach in these 85 schools, AQEP has demonstrated what schools can achieve with effective support provided by school heads, teachers, school management committees, parents and communities, and MEHA.

The challenge of the new program design is working out how to systematise that effective support. The design's strategy to meet this challenge is to recognise the three levels of system in education service delivery: systems at the centre; district and school level systems; and school-community systems. While each level has its distinctive function, some processes are common to all: policy, planning, resourcing, quality management and monitoring. They provide the means of knitting the three systems together in flows from top to bottom; and vice versa. Recognising this helps to see how to affect that transmission to the classroom of system benefits. The new district capacities for supporting schools; and capacities in schools for operationalising that support, enable improvement to occur at scale. They also enable the program's assistance to be catalytic, rather than intensive.

### **Program outcomes and strategies**

The long-term development outcome proposed for the program is: *Improved learning outcomes for all Fiji girls and boys* from the earliest years of schooling (Early Childhood Education - ECE) through to primary and secondary to effectively enter tertiary or technical vocational studies or directly into the working world.

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<sup>12</sup> DFAT, 2010. Fiji Education Support Program Independent Completion Report, p.6.

<sup>13</sup> Peterson G, Crawford-Bryde, J and R Gwilliam, August 2017 (draft to be finalised). AQEP End of Program Evaluation, p.3.

Specific emphasis will be placed on building the foundation of literacy and numeracy instruction through student-centred learning and modern approaches to classroom management. It reflects Australia's interest in contributing to the skills development of Fijian youth as reflected in its updated Skills for Jobs and Growth Sector Strategy—Pacific Education and Skills Development Agenda 2018-24 (PESDA) and the intent of Australia's Stepping Up Pacific Engagement policy.

The end of Phase 1 outcome is: *Central and decentralised systems and partnerships deliver the support to schools that enables all girls and boys to learn.*

This outcome is appropriate to the systems focus of the program and, together with the program logic that leads to it, reflects the three levels of systems necessary for learning improvement of all. The program's emphases on disability, gender and social inclusion<sup>14</sup> are encapsulated in "all girls and boys". These emphases are implemented in the program by approaching learning improvement as requiring the development of inclusive, safe and supportive learning environments as well as effective instruction and assessment.

The key strategies of the program for achieving its outcomes are related to strengthening capacity within, and linkages across, the three systems necessary for learning improvement of all Fijian children – central MEHA level, district and school level and, community level.

#### *Pillar 1*

The first pillar, focused on the central Ministry, has two main strategies. One is for strengthening the functionality of FEMIS to enhance data usage and analysis to inform policy, planning, resourcing, management and evaluation. Its rationale is to develop a results-focused approach on the part of all sections that have a role in supporting improved learning in schools. Central to the strategy is strengthening MEHA's strategic planning processes – especially important in the establishment of the Ministry restructure, but equally for providing an authorising environment for the new program; and embedding joint strategies for achieving improvement in literacy and numeracy for all.<sup>15</sup> The second strategy at the centre is concerned with improving the systems directly affecting teaching, indicated in the situational analysis data as a major need. These are the curriculum and learning assessment systems and MEHA's planning for both pre-service and in-service provision. There will be scope under the new program for technical assistance to be provided to the Curriculum Development Unit, or its replacement in the new structure, to support a review and modernisation of the curriculum.

#### *Pillar 2*

The strategies for Pillar 2—district and school level systems—concern ways of supporting the instructional leadership at the school level so it can impact on the school's teaching and learning. They aim to do this in the immediate term by supporting the development of the subject understanding and pedagogical leadership of the three crucial school system actors: school heads, mentor teachers and district Senior Education Officers (SEOs). The strategy also includes developing the school systems for analysing learning data, monitoring school performance, reporting and planning for improvement. The role of the district SEOs in leading this development is critical to the success of the program. The design also prepares for deepening and sustaining the development of teachers, school and district leaders by strengthening the service provision capacity of local institutions. These are Fiji's School Heads Association to support peers in career development; and teacher training institutions for the provision of a quality in-service diploma specialising in literacy and numeracy<sup>16</sup>. The award course will enable teachers with low levels of qualification and experience to upgrade; and will provide ECE/primary teachers with the right level of exposure to the demanding technical work of teaching literacy and numeracy well.

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<sup>14</sup> And consider looking at national identity as an outcome of social inclusion.

<sup>15</sup> Support to curriculum development could also cover technological, physical and financial literacy

<sup>16</sup> This will need to incorporate student-centred learning and modern approaches to student behaviour and classroom management.

### Pillar 3

Pillar 3 is a combination of strategies. One is for supporting policy development at the centre, to improve school environments so children with a disability are not excluded, absenteeism and drop out are reduced and girls and boys can reach their potential through conducive learning conditions. The complementary strategy at the school level is partnerships with CSOs and school owner organisations for the conversion of those policies into live school cultures. The policy development will be based on practical measures for the implementation of MEHA's *Special and Inclusive Education Policy Implementation Plan 2017*, developed with AQEP support; and the relevant sections of the Fiji National Gender Policy.<sup>17</sup> In this latter case, and in line with the emphasis in the Fiji National Development Plan (FNDP) on reducing violence against women, supportive school culture development will focus on fostering gender-based respect and respect for all aspects of difference in schools for its future influence on relationships between young women and young men, a need to which the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre has drawn thematic attention in its reports.

Pillar 3 has an additional agenda, which is to promote a constructive partnership between this unique school owner institution (there is almost universal non-government ownership of schools and MEHA). The program can help unlock potential in ownership organisations for community involvement in children's learning through these strategies of engagement; which may become the basis on which more cooperative school owner management relations which might be negotiated with MEHA.

### Delivery approaches

The program has identified delivery approaches which are fit for the evolving institutional contexts in which it is working. As well as specialised technical assistance and the use of grants mechanisms for supporting analytics, it favours partnerships. The range of partnerships options are detailed below. One kind is institutional partnerships, for their appropriate peer-to-peer interactions in working with senior MEHA staff; and their capacity to draw flexibly on the range of technical support as needs emerge. An example would be an Australian State Department of Education and/or a curriculum and assessment authority. The program will also seek an Australian university partnership to support Fiji teacher training institutes' bid for support to develop a high quality in-service diploma in literacy and numeracy teaching.<sup>18</sup>

Innovatively, the program suggests a twinning arrangement between an Australian Principals' Institute and the Fiji School Heads and Principals Associations. An arrangement of this sort will not only make available relevant practitioner expertise for leadership development, but could develop enduring Fiji-Australia people-to-people and buddy relationships through the kind of resources and exchanges at its disposal.

The program will maximise existing Australian investments in Fiji. It suggests working with the Australia Pacific Training Coalition (APTC) for competency-based delivery of teacher training by lecturing staff. It will encourage engagement with the regional Education Quality and Assessment Program (EQAP) for strengthening and expanding Fiji's re-engagement with regional learning assessment and benchmarking; and it will also leverage the "South-South" policy forums on learning improvement that will accompany these activities. These island-to-island engagements are favoured by stakeholders. Coffey, the contractor that administers the Facility, manages four of DFAT's education programs in the Pacific and can support MEHA by convening forums to explore shared development experiences and good practices in the sector.

The United Nation's International Children's Fund (UNICEF) is another region-convening partner that the program will work with, particularly in literacy curriculum development. The program's work in early grades curriculum support will be improved by working with UNICEF on the kindergarten curriculum, to ensure coherence between pre-school and kindergarten/early grades readiness for learning.

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<sup>17</sup> The program will support all areas of the *Special and Inclusive Education Policy Implementation Plan* except infrastructure. It will also support the use of the Gender and Social Inclusion lens in sections 5.11; 5.14-5.-18 (policy, financing and research) of the National Gender Policy.

<sup>18</sup> This could also cover technological literacy.

### **Critical risks and their management**

Two critical risks are foreseen. Given that MEHA is the largest of Fiji's Ministries with over 13,000 staff, it may take longer than envisioned to embed the civil service reforms. In this event, the expected outcomes of a strengthened Ministry, improved teacher quality and school culture may take longer to take hold, which means systemic improved learning outcomes may not be visible by the end of the initial phase of support. Management of this risk will be through monitoring progress in systemic

development and behaviour change from the start, so that there can be timely program strategy adjustment. This will be led by the program Sustainability Committee comprised of senior MEHA staff and representatives from DFAT, with six monthly reviews proposed. In addition, the design suggests a mid-term independent review towards the end of the program's second year. This review will have the specific brief of appraising the likelihood of program outcomes being achieved; of appropriately strategising the remaining years of the program; and informing the next phase of support.

A second critical risk is related to the low levels of teacher qualifications. While most primary teachers have a qualification, the majority only have a certificate (32%) or diploma level qualification (38%). If improved teacher quality is delayed due to reforms taking longer to bed down, existing capacity at the school system level — including the district SEOs— may not be adequate for supporting transformed classroom teaching at scale. This situation is likely to be discernible early in the program, at the time of baseline assessments (2018). Management strategies will be to expand program support to training of the three actor groups (school heads, mentor teachers and SEOs) and mobilising the capacity of the large number of former AQEP trainers. The numbers for training are not large (731 primary schools) and a monitored graduated program of supplementary training should mitigate this risk.

## Annex 2: Indicative Budget

### Budget Summary (July 2022 to June 2023)

#### Pathway 1: Learning & Teaching

Areas of Investment	BUDGET AUD FY 2022/2023
Curriculum and Teaching Resources	200,000
Professional Development - Teaching	120,000
Professional Development - GEDSI	175,000
Professional Learning Communities	50,000
<b>TOTAL Learning and Teaching</b>	<b>1,309,909</b>
<b>% of TOTAL</b>	<b>26%</b>
<b>Budget AUD FY 2023/24</b>	<b>1,200,000</b>
<b>% of TOTAL</b>	<b>24%</b>
<b>Budget AUD FY 2024</b>	<b>450,000</b>
<b>% of TOTAL</b>	<b>18%</b>

#### Pathway 2: Performance Improvement

Areas of Investment	BUDGET AUD FY 2022/2023
Student Learning Outcomes	120,000
Teacher Performance	80,000
School/Community Support	80,000
FEMIS Development/Use	271,700
<b>TOTAL Performance Improvement</b>	<b>851,525</b>
<b>% of TOTAL</b>	<b>17%</b>
<b>Budget AUD FY 2023/24</b>	<b>800,000</b>
<b>% of TOTAL</b>	<b>16%</b>
<b>Budget AUD FY 2024</b>	<b>600,000</b>
<b>% of TOTAL</b>	<b>24%</b>

#### Pathway 3: Learning Environments

Areas of Investment	BUDGET AUD FY 2022/2023	% of TOTAL	Budget AUD FY 2023/24	% of TOTAL	Budget AUD FY 2024	% of TOTAL
Mental Health and Social Inclusion	167,366					
Financial Equity and Inclusion	304,620					
Special & Inclusive Education	220,000					
Community Engagement	250,000					

Areas of Investment	BUDGET AUD FY 2022/2023	% of TOTAL	Budget AUD FY 2023/24	% of TOTAL	Budget AUD FY 2024	% of TOTAL
<b>TOTAL Learning Environments</b>	<b>1,229,086</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>1,400,000</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>700,000</b>	<b>28%</b>
<b>Other Program Personnel (Coaches)</b>	<b>666,268</b>	13%	680,000	14%	200,000	8%
<b>TOTAL Project Costs</b>	<b>4,056,788</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>4,080,000</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>1,950,000</b>	<b>78%</b>
<b>Program Management</b>	553,219	11%	570	11%	300	12%
<b>Unprogrammed/Discretionary</b>	<b>250,000</b>	<b>5%</b>	250,000	<b>5%</b>	175,000	<b>7%</b>
<b>TOTAL Australia's Support to Fiji's Education (FEP)</b>	<b>5,000,000</b>		<b>5,000,000</b>		<b>2,500,000</b>	

In addition to funds attributed to the three pathways of change, an unallocated discretionary fund of up to 5% of the total Program budget will be set aside for emerging MEHA priorities. Use of these funds will be negotiated between DFAT and MEHA and endorsed through the Program Coordination Committee (PCC), made up of DFAT, MEHA, Facility and Ministry of Economy representatives (see Section H).

### Annex 3: High-level Implementation Plan

**EPO1 – HOS and Teachers at participating schools demonstrate knowledge, attitude and practices which support inclusive and equitable quality learning**

Fiji Education Program (FEP)	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2
<b>IO 1.1 – HOS/Teachers have access to and understand the content, developmental sequence, and assessment practices of the new curricula (primary &amp; secondary)</b>										
Output 1.1.1 - Primary L&N curriculum revised and PD package designed										
Output 1.1.2 - Secondary mathematics curriculum revised and PD modules designed										
Output 1.1.3 - Secondary English curriculum revised and PD modules designed										
<b>IO 1.2 – Teachers have the skills to teach the new curricula.</b>										
Output 1.2.1 – Targeted PD for primary L&N										
Output 1.2.2 – Targeted PD for Secondary Maths										
Output 1.2.3 – Targeted PD for Secondary English										
<b>IO 1.3 – HOS/Teachers demonstrate understanding of GEDSI through practices which increase inclusive and equitable teaching and learning</b>										
Output 1.3.1 - Targeted PD for resilience, inclusion and equity										
Output 1.3.2 - Coaching and mentoring to empower female HOS/teachers										
<b>IO 1.4 – HOS/teachers supported through professional learning communities</b>										



Output 1.4.1 - Learning communities established										
Output 1.4.2 - Special schools as resource centres										

**EOPO 2 – MEHA Central, District and School staff demonstrate the capacity to use information to improve performance, including inclusive and equitable practices.**

<b>Fiji Education Program (FEP)</b>	<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q2</b>	<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q4</b>	<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q2</b>	<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q4</b>	<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q2</b>
<b>IO 2.1 – Student learning informs adjustments to new curricula</b>										
Output 2.1.1 – Assessments and tracker data collected										
Output 2.1.2 – Research on student learning outcomes informs MEHA										
<b>IO 2.2 – Performance of teachers and HOS in using new curricula is monitored</b>										
Output 2.2.1 – Monitoring conducted to assess teacher use of new curriculum										
Output 2.2.2 – Research conducted to test effectiveness of coaching model										
<b>IO 2.3 – Effectiveness of school and community support for inclusive and equitable quality learning is monitored</b>										
Output 2.3.1 - School management and leadership manuals establish community responsibilities										
Output 2.3.2 – School plans reviewed for evidence of interventions promoting inclusive, equitable and resilient student learning										
<b>IO 2.4 – MEHA collects, analyses and uses data to improve planning, pedagogy and inclusive and equitable practices</b>										
Output 2.4.1 - FEMIS functionality developed and meaningful information available										
Output 2.4.2 - MEHA staff trained to access and analyse data and present recommendations										
Output 2.4.3 - District and school-based staff trained to access, analyse and disseminate data										
Output 2.4.4 - Research studies inform decision-making										

**EOPO3 – Students have access to a safe and inclusive learning environment provided by schools and communities**

<b>Fiji Education Program (FEP)</b>	<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q2</b>	<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q4</b>	<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q2</b>	<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q4</b>	<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q2</b>
<b>IO 3.1 – Schools provide students with evidence-based preventative and responsive interventions to support inclusion and mental health</b>										
Output 3.1.1 – Support for awareness days and school peer mentoring										
Output 3.1.2 – Completion of counsellor training and referral pathways documentation										



<b>Fiji Education Program (FEP)</b>	<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q2</b>	<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q4</b>	<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q2</b>	<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q4</b>	<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q2</b>
<b>IO 3.2 – SMCs, communities and parent groups support schools to provide students with inclusive, equitable, caring and resilient learning environments</b>										
Output 3.2.1 - SMC capacity developed to address retention, inclusion, safe and resilient schools										
Output 3.2.2 Communities ensure reading materials and other classroom learning resources are provided										
Output 3.2.3 - Parent groups trained in inclusive education and home-based L&N techniques										
<b>IO 3.3 – Disadvantaged families have improved access to GoF education grants</b>										
Output 3.3.1 – MEHA policies, practices and systems reviewed through inclusion/equity lens										
Output 3.3.2 – Relevant policies and systems developed or updated to promote GEDSI										
<b>IO 3.4 – Children with disabilities are verified and schools and communities provide access to services and / or disability grant</b>										
Output 3.4.1 - Selected SIE Policy recommendations operationalised										
Output 3.4.2 - Screening for hearing and vision impairment										

## Annex 4: GEDSI Stocktake and Roadmap

Prepared by Helen Tavola, submitted to the Fiji Education Program, April 2022

### 5.1.1 Purpose

This stocktake presents an overview of where the Fiji education system sits in regard to gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI). Further, it looks at current interventions by the Fiji Education Program (FEP) and possible future interventions.

### 5.1.2 Methodology

The review draws on recent literature, in particular the draft Fiji country gender assessment, recent research undertaken by the Ministry of Education, Arts and Heritage (MEHA) and FEP, outcomes of reviews of FEP and its predecessor, the Access to Quality Education Program (AQEP); and other relevant information. In addition, the stocktake has benefited from discussions with FEP staff and a policy 'deep-dive' with staff from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and External Trade (DFAT) and FEP staff.

For the purposes of better analysis, the three pillars of GEDSI are covered separately, but overlaps and intersections are noted.

### Contextualising the Stocktake

In Fiji, in both the *iTaukei* and Indo-Fijian cultures, gender norms sustain a patriarchal hierarchy of men's power and privilege over women. A man's position is to be the leader, in his household and his community; women are subordinate, and their roles are to reproduce and care for the family. Gender norms are deeply entrenched in the private and public spheres of social and cultural groups.

People with disabilities in Fiji suffer significant stigma and discrimination, despite recent improvements. Children with disabilities can be regarded as objects of punishments for past wrongs but are also regarded with pity and sympathy. They are generally not seen as having significant rights and access to education has typically been uneven. Women with disabilities face discrimination based on the inter-section of gender and disability.

Traditional *i-Taukei* society was inherently communal and inclusive, yet modern, multi-cultural urbanized Fiji has groups who are left behind and left out, resulting in degrees of social exclusion.

To set the context for GEDSI, it is important to consider that Fiji is party to numerous human rights conventions and agreements at the international, regional and national levels. These commit the Government of Fiji to ensuring the rights of girls and women, boys and girls to education among other rights. These include:

- Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) ratified 1995
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) ratified 2017

- Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) ratified 1993
- Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) (2015)
- Beijing Platform for Action (1995)
- Regional: Pacific Leaders' Gender Equality Declaration (2012)
- National – 2013 Constitution; national development plan; legal and policy frameworks

The Government of Fiji is obliged to meet the articles in the three Conventions listed above, whereas compliance with the other agreements is voluntary. An example is Article 24 of the CRPD that has very clear directives on education, with an inclusive education (IE) focus, which is at Annex 1.

Under the 2017 National Development Plan for Fiji, MEHA has responsibilities relating to reducing unemployment; making education more accessible to all Fijians; contributing towards building a knowledge-based society; and promoting gender equality and inclusivity.

### **Gender Equality**

The MEHA Strategic Plan 2019-2023 plan states that gender inequality and discrimination will be addressed cooperatively, providing women with greater choice and freedom for their participation in the family and society. Women's access to education will be supported, as will their desires for fulfilling employment and career advancement. The plan is, however, lacking in specific strategies for achieving these goals.

The draft chapter on education in the Fiji Country Gender Assessment (CGA) (2021) provides a comprehensive overview of the gender equality dimension of the Fiji education system. It found that while Fiji has achieved 100% enrolment and gender parity at the primary school level, adolescent girls in Fiji outpace boys at the secondary level. Over 90% of girls aged 14-18 are enrolled in secondary school, compared with only 79% of boys of the same ages. The gender parity ratio is 1.10, indicating that there are more girls than boys enrolled in secondary school. Not all children in Fiji benefit from early childhood education (ECE), with slightly more boys than girls attending, for no obvious reason.

The national literacy rate<sup>19</sup> for females is the same as for males at 99% overall but the standardised tests results from the Literacy and Numeracy tests (LANA) from 2016-2019 showed that girls consistently outperform boys in both literacy and numeracy.

In Fiji, nearly all adolescent girls (97%) complete secondary school, compared with about three-quarters of adolescent boys (74%). In Years 12 and 13 certificate examinations, girls consistently outperform boys. There is a strong gender bias in secondary technical subjects such as agriculture and home economics. In 2019-2020, considerably more girls completed Years 12 and 13 compared to boys. Thus, the gender gap in secondary schools was more marked with more girls attending school. The enrolment rates of both boys and girls declined in 2020-2021 compared to the previous two years, most likely due to the impact of tropical cyclones and the Covid pandemic.

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<sup>19</sup> National literacy rates are notoriously unreliable – each country sets their own standard and in the case of Fiji a proxy of four years of primary education is used.

Numerous studies in the past two to three decades have identified that in Fiji, as elsewhere, boys are underperforming, have high absenteeism / truancy and leave school earlier than girls.<sup>20</sup> A gender issue that emerges from the above data is the challenge of how to keep boys in school longer and how to improve their learning outcomes. This is a regional and global challenge with no easy answers.

Research by MEHA with FEP support showed high levels of physical violence, bullying and verbal abuse among students in Fijian schools including sexual violence and cyber bullying.<sup>21</sup> The key findings of the study with respect to the types and prevalence of bullying are that a third of the students (32%) reported that they were bullied at least once or twice a month in the previous year. Of the students that were bullied, 28 % had experienced four or more types of bullying. Verbal bullying was the most common form of bullying (experienced by 61% of the students), followed by physical violence (40%) and relational bullying<sup>22</sup> (38%). One quarter (26%) of students had experienced gender-based bullying and 12% of students had experienced cyber-bullying. Overall, female students were slightly more likely to have been bullied than the male students. Children with disabilities were the most bullied group.

Research by the Fiji Women's Rights Movement (FWRM) also highlighted the safety risks for young girls who experience physical and/or sexual harassment when they travel daily on public and school buses to and from school.<sup>23</sup>

Bullying, physical and sexual violence against girls and boys in school is an extension of the gender-based violence and other violence that children witness in their homes and communities and replicate in the school environment.

Given that Fiji has an extremely high rate of gender-based violence, schools are an ideal environment to challenge harmful social and cultural standards that accept violence towards others.<sup>24</sup> Schools have a role to play in preventing gender-based violence.

### **The Role of Education in Preventing VAWG**

- Schools are an ideal environment to challenge harmful social and cultural standards that accept violence towards others.
- Schools and other educational institutions are part of the day-to-day lives of young people, enabling prevention programmes to be delivered in a context where non-violent and gender-equitable relationships can be normalised.
- Curriculum to prevent violence and promote gender equality; training education staff to give them the tools to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls; and, establishing safe spaces for students, is key.

Source: Ministry of Women, Social Welfare and Poverty Alleviation, 2020. National Action Plan – Key Messages and Media Guide

### **Women on school management committees (SMC)**

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<sup>20</sup> For example, *Learning Together: Directions for Education in the Fiji Islands*, 2000.

<sup>21</sup> MEHA, *Research Study into Bullying in Fijian Primary Schools*, undated.

<sup>22</sup> Relational or social bullying usually involves hurting someone's relationships or reputation.

<sup>23</sup> FWRM, 2019. FWRM GIRLS Programme Participants Submission on the National Budget Process 2019-2020.

<sup>24</sup> Research by Fiji Women's Crisis Centre, *Somebody's Life, Everybody's Business*, 2013, found that 61% of ever-partnered women had suffered physical violence; 34% were subjected to sexual violence; and 64% of ever-partnered women have suffered some kind of abuse.

In line with the cultural norms of all communities in Fiji about decision-making, most SMCs are not only dominated by men but, in many instances, men are the only members. In communities where AQEP supported schools, women were encouraged to stand for a position on their SMC and were supported with training on school finances and maintenance. As a result, women's representation in executive roles on SMCs increased from 6% to 18%, their overall membership increased from 10% to 34% and women's perspectives have been included in decision-making.<sup>25</sup> It is not clear whether these practices have been sustained post-AQEP.

### ***Teacher training institutions (TTI) and GEDSI***

A 2017 AQEP found that all TTI in Fiji had some courses in either or both special and inclusive education. These courses were found to be of varying quality and coverage and none included a practical component. The current FEP Special and Inclusive Education team currently engage with TTI in regard to Special and Inclusive Education (SIE) but to a limited extent.<sup>26</sup>

A 2020 FEP study found that TTI are generally keen to engage with broader GEDSI issues but they indicated that they would need help to do that. This has not yet been put into effect. This would require a shift in focus: from MEHA level to engagement on the ground. This approach was recommended by the Mid-term Review of the FEP.

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<sup>25</sup> AQEP and MOE (undated) *Best Practice in Supporting Gender Equality*, pp. 5-8.

<sup>26</sup> *Strengthening Inclusive Education in Fiji, lessons learned from AQEP*. Policy brief, June 2017.

### ***Women in leadership in schools***

A 2021 study conducted by FEP and MEHA<sup>27</sup> found that while women make up 69% of the teacher workforce, they make up only 27% of school leadership as head-teachers or principals. The study found that 85% of women are interested in leadership but few apply. Upon questioning whether women aspire to leadership roles and what barriers they face, the study found that women do aspire to leadership roles, but barriers are primarily the lack of qualifications and lack of leadership experience.

Cultural norms and the expectation that women undertake the main child-caring and domestic responsibilities inhibit women from applying for senior roles. The study found that there was a general tolerance of women getting to middle leadership levels but to not the top levels.

The study looked at what interventions might help women achieve leadership roles. This included: increasing leadership exposure such as opportunities for women in acting roles and in leading projects in schools; seeking programs for women in education leadership including Australian Awards, Leadership Fiji; encouraging the use of technology to increase qualifications through online self-paced flexible learning; increasing awareness on gender equality in schools; and reviewing recruitment filters to broaden leadership experience definition to include soft skills. The current recruitment filters focus on qualifications and years of leadership experience in schools, which are quite narrow. Contemporary recruitment practice can include questions such as: 'Describe a situation where you had to deal with conflict; discipline issues etc.' in order to assess soft skills.

### ***Children with Disabilities: Special and Inclusive Education (SIE)***

Fiji has a long history of 'special schools', dating back to the mid-1960s, which segregate children with disabilities from their peers. There are currently 17 special schools, many of which cater for children of mixed disabilities, apart from two specialist schools for blind and deaf children. Current educational discourse favours the integration of children with disabilities into their local schools, so that they may learn alongside children of their locality and age-group, with extra help if required. Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPD) in Fiji and elsewhere are strongly opposed to segregated schooling and favour inclusive education. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities also strongly advocates for inclusive education where all children attend the same schools regardless of their abilities but assistance and accommodation are provided as needed.

There have been considerable improvements in recent years in the number of children attending special and inclusive schools. In mid-2021 there was a total of 2,168 students with disabilities were recorded in Fiji Electronic Management Information System (FEMIS), including 774 girls (36%) and 1,394 boys (64%). Of these, 755 students (35%) had been verified as students with disabilities<sup>28</sup>, including 256 girls (34%) and 499 boys (66%). 1413 unverified students with disabilities are attending school (518 girls, 89 boys). There were 415 schools that were attended by students with disabilities (17 special schools, 398 inclusive schools). 62 schools received the SIE Grant in 2020 (17 special schools, 45 inclusive schools).<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> MEHA (with FEP) Women in Leadership Survey Results (draft), 2021, provided by author.

<sup>28</sup> The disability verification process requires teachers to identify students with possible disabilities, then complete a Student Learning Profile (SLP) for students and record the information in FEMIS. When MEHA verifies the disability status of these students, the schools are entitled to a SIE Grant.

<sup>29</sup> Draft Fiji Country Gender Assessment chapter on education and FEP.

MEHA has a SIE Policy, developed with the support of AQEP/FEP advisers. This has been undergoing revision with support of FEP and at the time of writing, was awaiting consultation before final endorsement. Such a policy is important as it provides clear guidance on the position of MEHA and strategies that will be taken to achieve inclusive education.

MEHA has a Senior Education Officer (SEO) for SIE. This reflects no increase in established positions since the first Special Education Officer was appointed some decades ago. Three SIE ‘coaches’ have also recently been employed by the FEP to work in different parts of Fiji. The initial role of the coaches is to verify children who have been identified by teachers as having disabilities. This has been taking place remotely and will commence face-to-face in April 2022. As the need for verification reduces, the coaches will conduct capacity building for teachers to better support children with disabilities in their classrooms teaching the national curriculum, especially literacy and numeracy.

A review of curriculum delivery and teaching practices for students with disabilities in mainstream and special schools in Fiji in 2021<sup>30</sup> found that special school teachers were using the outdated 1995 special education curriculum, going to the internet to look for curriculum content while others are referring to Individual Educational Plans as the curriculum. The FEP SIE team is currently planning to develop a guide for teachers in SIE for teaching the national curriculum to children with disabilities. This can be used in conjunction with the handbook developed by AQEP<sup>31</sup> that provides strategies for teaching disabled children in the classroom. This handbook is in the process of being updated by FEP.

Despite positive progress and improvements, much of which has been supported by AQEP and FEP, there are still numerous challenges and barriers, including:

- Challenges of identifying and verifying children with disabilities.
- Attitudinal barriers by teachers, peers and parents.
- Teacher skills and confidence and lack of access to relevant training.
- Large class sizes, especially in urban areas.
- Inappropriate curriculum.
- Lack of necessary resources or funding for teacher aides.
- Physical environment may not be conducive.
- Fewer girls with disabilities attend school – not fully understood why.
- Lack of coordination with other key Ministries such as Health and Social Welfare – important for referrals and for sharing data.
- Teacher aides are not widely available in mainstream schools, and where they are available, they are commonly misused, for example being told to ‘babysit’ all children with disabilities in a separate room.

There has been some pushback to IE. Reportedly, when support is not provided for IE at the school level and schools feel unable to cope, some children with disabilities are sent to special schools. FEP coaches and advisors are trying to prevent this although allegedly some teachers, MEHA staff and parents favour

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<sup>30</sup> FEP / MEHA, *Review of curriculum delivery and teaching practices for students with disabilities in mainstream and special schools in Fiji*, 2021.

<sup>31</sup> AQEP, *Disability-inclusive Education Handbook for Teachers*, undated.

special schools.<sup>32</sup> A review of the use of curriculum for students with disabilities found that: 'It is common for struggling readers to be referred to and enrolled in special schools as many mainstream teachers feel that special school teachers are reading specialists. However, this strategy further disadvantages students because by the time they re-enrol in the mainstream school, they have missed much of the curriculum.'<sup>33</sup>

Children with disabilities have multiple disadvantages. As mentioned earlier, research on bullying in Fijian primary schools conducted by MEHA and FEP found that children with disabilities are the most bullied group.<sup>34</sup> Both boys and girls with disabilities were found to be the targets of bullies.

Research on out-of-school children found children with disabilities were a significant group among out-of-school children<sup>35</sup> with girls with disabilities more likely to be out of school than boys. This tallies with the fact that more boys with disabilities than girls attend SIE. This shows the intersecting factors of gender and disability as parents are typically very protective of girls with disabilities. Research in other Pacific Island Countries<sup>36</sup> has shown that parents sometimes do not send their disabled daughters to school for fear of bullying, abuse, stigma and discrimination. Social exclusion may also be an intersecting factor where families are low-income and live in remote areas.

### **5.1.3 The critical role of Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPD)**

OPD in Fiji<sup>37</sup> and the wider Pacific region have typically been mainly involved with advocacy for the rights of people with disabilities. They also engage with support to improve the lives of people with disabilities and could be used as a valuable resource for the education sector. As people with disabilities themselves, members of OPD are fully aware of the challenges faced in the education system. OPD could be more involved with referrals of children who may require support with their education. Given the limitations of MEHA in SIE, OPD are a relatively untapped resource in the community. Consultations with OPD is also in line with the Fiji Program Support Facility GEDSI Action Plan and Strategy.<sup>38</sup>

Apart from SIE, disability has been mainstreamed throughout FEP, for example the work on the FEMIS that collects data on children who have been verified as having disabilities. This is information that is widely accessible. Disability has been mainstreamed through a primary curriculum review. School building standards are including disability access, which is complex to enforce.

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<sup>32</sup> Comments from FEP SIE team.

<sup>33</sup> FEP, *Review of curriculum delivery and teaching practices for students with disabilities in mainstream and special schools in Fiji Summary report*, 2021, p. 6.

<sup>34</sup> MEHA, *Research Study on Bullying in Fijian Primary Schools*, (undated).

<sup>35</sup> MEHA, *Situational Analysis of 'Out-of-School' Children in Fijian Primary Schools*, draft 2021.

<sup>36</sup> Such as Tavola, H, *Tuvalu Study on People with Disability*, 2018 and Tavola, H, *Barriers to Education in Solomon Islands*, 2011.

<sup>37</sup> Fiji Disabled Persons Federation has 32 affiliate bodies throughout Fiji.

<sup>38</sup> Fiji Program Support Facility GEDSI Action Plan and Strategy, p. 14.



## Social Inclusion

The term social inclusion is broad and generally refers to disadvantaged or excluded groups in society. For the purposes of this situational analysis, this includes groups such as:

- Out of school children / youth
- Disaffected students (such as those needing counselling).
- Rural / remote<sup>39</sup> children (children themselves not necessarily disadvantaged but schools may be)

Anecdotal evidence suggests that school children with non-heterosexual orientations are often bullied and tormented, which leads to exclusion. However, while this study acknowledges this issue, it was not able to draw upon sound evidence to support this claim.

### 5.1.4 Out-of-school children / youth

A situational analysis of out-of-school primary school students<sup>40</sup> by MEHA found that records show 3,024 children who dropped out of primary school in 2020 – that is students registered on FEMIS<sup>41</sup> as having been enrolled in 2019 (or earlier years) but who are no longer enrolled in 2020.

This represents 2% of all the Year 1-8 students enrolled in 2019. Of these ‘visible’ out-of-school children, 60% are boys and 40% are girls.

Children from Year 8, urban schools, and schools in Suva district were more likely to be out of school than from lower class years, other school locations and other districts. This does not include children who had never enrolled in primary schools, which may include some children with disabilities. It is highly likely that girls with disabilities are among those children never enrolled in school, as their numbers are considerably lower than boys with disabilities in schools. This demonstrates the intersecting disadvantages of gender, disability, and exclusion.

School drop-out is usually preceded by early warning signs, including irregular attendance. The FEMIS report on students who are significantly absent from school shows that in Term 3, 2019, there were 5,399 students with absences of 20 days or more in the term which is 3.6% of the total Year 1-8 enrolment. Of these students, 60.1% were boys and 39.9% girls.

A disproportionately high number of at-risk students were in Year 8 (25% of all Years 1-8 students) and from urban schools (69% of all Years 1-8 students).

Many children leave the education system with no qualifications or prospects. They may fall into a large group of those who are not in education, employment or training (NEET). Research on out-of-school children by MEHA In Fiji in 2017 found that in the Suva/surrounding districts found that 73% of the school dropouts were male students while 27% were females. This reinforces the previously identified challenge of retaining boys in school.

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<sup>39</sup> Rural and remote includes schools in outer islands that have challenges in terms of transport, connectivity, and resources.

<sup>40</sup> MEHA, Situational Analysis of out-of-school Children in Fiji Primary Schools, draft 2021.

<sup>41</sup> FEMIS is Fiji Education Management Information System.

### **5.1.5 Second-chance education**

Although ‘second chance education’ or technical and vocational education and training (TVET) is commonly seen as gender-neutral, it is highly gendered. There is an increasing demand for second-chance education as many young people leave school with low qualifications and limited prospects. In 2002, MEHA instituted the Matua Programme as a bridging programme to enable people who dropped out of secondary school to complete their education and obtain a School Leaving Certificate. Women have accounted for, on average, 63% of Matua students from 2011-2016. Between 2016 and 2021, total enrolment in the Matua Programme has increased 80%, from 310 to 559 students. In 2015, the MEHA evaluation of the Education for All (EFA) programme called for expanding the Matua Programme to other “strategically located and relevant secondary schools”. However, the programme at Nabua Secondary School is the only one in Fiji, and this effectively limits the opportunity for this type of second-chance education to girls and women living out of the Suva region.<sup>42</sup>

MEHA provides assistance for five Youth Training Centres that provide vocational training. Marist Champagnat provides training for youth with disabilities. There are numerous other training institutions supported by religious and other organisations such as Montfort Technical Institute and Tutu Training Centre. These centres and institutions strongly favour males. The Makoi Women’s Vocational Centre is an example of a centre that caters for females, and it teaches skills such as cookery, sewing and hydroponics, mainly an extension of domestic roles.

### **5.1.6 Fall-out from the Covid-19 Pandemic**

Preliminary evidence suggests that the fallout from the Covid-19 pandemic may have exacerbated already existing disadvantages. For example, there were significant drops in the 2020 results of the Year 12 and Year 13 National Examinations. Following the lengthy school closures in 2021, there is a risk of high attrition and dropout rates. Early evidence in Fiji may suggest falling rolls. An analysis of this situation looking at the effect on girls and boys and children with disabilities will be an important basis for future actions.

### **5.1.7 School counselling**

School counselling exists on a small scale but there is a great need for it. The high rates of bullying in schools and family poverty exacerbated by the economic hardships caused by the Covid-19 pandemic all contribute to the need for counselling.

However, there is a reported lack of understanding in Fiji schools: students are sent for counselling as a form of discipline rather than its intended purpose of talking about issues and concerns in student lives.

FEP has been closely involved with increasing school counselling capacity. Between January 2019 and August 2021, the Student Support Services (SSS) pilot delivered counselling and other SSS across 25 under-resourced schools with recognised student mental health and behavioral challenges. FEP has

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<sup>42</sup> Information on the Matua Programme provided by FEP and the draft Fiji Country Gender Assessment chapter on education.

assisted with school counsellor training in different ways, by funding two local health CSOs to deliver services through six qualified Student Support Officers (SSOs); supporting a range of other activities related to SSS across Fiji including training 35 teacher-counsellors (M = 18, F = 17) through the Australia Pacific Training Coalition (APTC); developed counselling standards and tools (such as referral guidelines) and provided SSOs with counselling kits. The 35 teacher-counsellors (Male = 18, Female = 17) are in schools across Central, Western and Northern Divisions.

A draft completion report of the SSS program<sup>43</sup> indicated that in general, it was valued by school heads, teachers and the students themselves even though being sent to a counsellor was often seen as a form of discipline. Most school staff perceived the SSS to have led to overall improvements in behaviour and student wellbeing in their schools. Student responses indicated that they are motivated to seek help although many find it difficult and embarrassing to communicate their emotions as culturally children to not share private feelings with strangers. Although not all students were fully aware of SSS activities in their schools, they generally agreed that the school counsellor would be a trustworthy and supportive person to talk to if they needed help. The end of project report also found that counselling was not well understood or differentiated from advisors. Many teachers and school heads saw themselves as counsellors, although they were not trained as such.

A major issue that has emerged is that teachers who are trained as counsellors do have any reprieve from their teaching roles to undertake counselling, so they are not performing their counsellor roles. This is an issue for MEHA to address.

To sustain counsellor training in the future, the University of the South Pacific (USP) could potentially support counsellor training through its courses at a lower cost than APTC.

### **5.1.8 Remote and Isolated Rural Schools**

Some 208 primary and secondary schools out of a total of 904 schools are classified as remote or very remote. These schools have multiple disadvantages. During the school closures of 2020 and 2021, very few remote communities would have had suitable technology to support e-learning. Even when schools are open, remote schools are typically unable to support e-learning in school. During the lockdown of 2021, outer islands were cut off from Suva as there was a limit on travel, so they were unable to obtain hard copies of MEHA worksheets.

A Review of the Fiji Education Program's support for its Technology Enabled Learning in Fiji schools 2021 showed, among other things:

- Varying levels of use of equipment.
- Poor maintenance.
- Limited knowledge of how to use equipment.
- An appetite from teachers for developing capacity to use technology to support slow learners.
- Some improvements in teaching practice.
- There is strong evidence of social inclusion through TEL, with all investments benefitting remote and historically under-resourced schools.

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<sup>43</sup> *Pilot of student support services – completion review*, January 2022 (draft).

- There was no evidence of gender differences in the take-up of e-learning or teaching.

MEHA has a proposed e-learning program for remote schools, but the details were not known at the time of writing.

### **5.1.9 School feeding programs**

School feeding programs are an example of social inclusion as they target the most disadvantaged children. FEP has engaged in school feeding programs in response to cyclones and in 2020 and 2021 in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Many families in the west of Viti Levu have struggled financially due to the downturn in tourism and lunches were provided to schoolchildren when schools were open. This program was due to finish in March 2022.

FEP is currently looking at a more sustainable approach, such as working with mothers' clubs and/or SMCs, which could provide an opportunity for women's leadership.

### **Challenges and issues to a GEDSI approach**

A GEDSI approach brings together three different but overlapping areas of social policy. In the case of FEP, SIE has clearly been working as a program on its own and some fear that this aspect of its work will be lost when subsumed under GEDSI.

While gender mainstreaming has been underway, for example in reviews of the curriculum, initiatives that specifically address gender equality have been lacking in both AQEP and the FEP to date.<sup>44</sup> This may be due to the prevailing political discourse in Fiji to treat everyone as equal – 'We are all Fijian' – and the disinclination to be seen to favor specific groups. However, for Fiji to meet its human rights obligations, it needs to address equity rather in order to bring about equality by considering some measures that allow boys and girls, men and women, to achieve the same outcomes.

Initiatives are taking place under the broad heading of social inclusion but they are rarely referred to as such. Programs such as, for example the school feeding program, are definitely social inclusion. Much of the SIE work also overlaps with social inclusion. Support to counselling and technology support to remote school also fall with the social inclusion orbit but are rarely referred to as such.

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<sup>44</sup> AQEP End of Program Evaluation Report 2018 and FEP Mid-Term Review 2021.

## Possible entry points for FEP

Initiative	GEDSI linkages	Link to FEP strategy
Support appointment of Gender Adviser in MEHA	To progress GE initiatives and gender mainstreaming in MEHA, especially developing a gender policy for MEHA; advancing recommendations from the women in leadership study such as reframing the competency framework for appointments	Development of evidence-based policies  Improving centralised policymaking and management of education by MEHA
Implement recommendations from the women in leadership study	Encouraging equity in education sector	Acting upon evidence-based studies to bring about equity
Work with TTIs	A 2020 initial review with TTIs indicated strong interest in including a GEDSI approach. This should be through embedding GEDSI in the curriculum rather than through one-off training	Improving the performance of schools and teachers, including through engagement with Fiji's five TTI's <sup>45</sup>
Continue to support coaches and to provide support for MEHA's SIE officer, e.g., developing resources for teaching national curriculum to Children with disabilities	Disability – SIE Overlap with social inclusion and gender	The second iteration of FEP's goals included: Sufficient resources for SIE
One of SIE staff to continue working supporting literacy and numeracy. Could assist boys with early literacy issues	SIE/gender/social inclusion	Second iteration of FEP: An inclusive Literacy and Numeracy Curriculum
Support expansion of Matua Program	Gender, social inclusion and possibly disability	Identifying opportunity for DFAT post- FEP. Building stronger links with communities
Support research into impact of Covid-19 related school closures, focus on retention and early grade literacy and numeracy levels	Gender, social inclusion and possibly disability	Development of evidence-based policies as basis for further interventions
Scale up support for training Student Support Services (counsellors) using USP for training and developing course materials with USP, if required	Gender, social inclusion and possibly disability	Building stronger links with communities
Advocate to MEHA for trained teacher-counsellors to have time allocated for counselling duties	Social inclusion, with possible overlaps to gender and disability	Using evidence from review to improve the situation for school counsellors

<sup>45</sup> This is from the FEP goals that were initially identified. These were changed in the intervening years but the Midterm review recommended reverting to the original plan.

## GEDSI Roadmap

The **GEDSI roadmap** is generally aligned to the draft plan for the second phase of the FEP. There is also provision for mainstreaming across other activity areas of the FEP and the Ministry of Education, Heritage, and Arts (MEHA), which is an essential part of the twin-track approach taken – specific activities addressing GEDSI as well as an overall approach. This roadmap is a follow-up to the 2022 GEDSI Stock-take and Policy Review report.

There are four objectives within the program, and within with each objective is a project. Each project has components. There is, however, some overlap between the objectives. All of the activities will align with the priorities of MEHA.

<b>Objective 1</b>	<b>Advance quality and inclusive teaching and learning in literacy and numeracy</b>
<b>Project 1</b>	<b>Gender-responsive and inclusive English literacy and Maths curricula and pedagogies</b>
<b>Components</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Primary literacy/numeracy revision &amp; rollout</b></li> <li><b>2. Secondary Maths revision</b></li> <li><b>3. Secondary English revision</b></li> <li><b>4. Targeted professional development</b></li> </ol>

### *GEDSI curriculum review*

The primary curriculum for Years 1-4 has already been reviewed with a GEDSI lens and the Years 5-8 GEDSI curriculum review is underway. Secondary curricula remain to be reviewed.

Key entry points in the secondary curriculum that need review are English and Mathematics. The curriculum can include female role models who can be emulated as key figures in nation-building. In the longer-term, subjects such as Social Science and History could potentially be reviewed.

Identifying and addressing the hidden curriculum is also important. The hidden curriculum in this case refers to implicit norms and behaviours that are taught in school that allow for the creation of stereotypes, biases and prejudices relating to gender. What is omitted can be as important as what is included. An example is Year 11 History revision sheets for 2021 that are on the MEHA website where none make any reference to the women of Fiji.

### *GEDSI manual for the education sector*

The current GEDSI manual<sup>46</sup> was internal to the Fiji Program Support Facility but was used mainly for MEHA and Teacher Training Institutions (TTI). It needs to be reviewed and updated so that it can be fit for purpose for education. It can then be used as a guide for professional development (PD) and leadership training, especially for women in educational leadership. Teachers need guidance on how to teach in an inclusive way: how to avoid stereotypes and how to include all people in their teaching processes. The manual should be used as a tool in professional development (PD) on GEDSI. The manual also needs to include transformational and adaptive leadership and to include practical case studies and examples.

### *Targeting boys in literacy and numeracy*

Indications are that boys are underperforming in literacy and numeracy from an early age, and they are leaving school earlier with lower qualifications. Remedial literacy and numeracy should target boys who are falling behind, but not to the detriment of girls. Early intervention in primary years can

<sup>46</sup> Fiji Program Support Facility, *Draft GEDSI Support Plan for Teacher Training Institutions and MEHA Western Division*, 2020

be for all children but can particularly assist boys' learning so that overall results can be more equitable.

**Proposed activities:**

- Undertake GEDSI review of secondary curricula especially primary English and secondary Mathematics
- Revise and update GEDSI manual for education sector a focus on leadership training, especially for women in leadership.

<b>Objective 2</b>	<b>Promote inclusive education conditions through policy &amp; practice</b>
<b>Project 3</b>	<b>Inclusive learning environments (gender, social and disability)</b>
<b>Components</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Inclusive policy and systems</b></li> <li><b>2. Gender in Education (leadership, TTI, etc.)</b></li> <li><b>3. Student Support Services</b></li> <li><b>4. Support for SIE Policy implementation</b></li> </ol>

*Support for Special and Inclusive Education (SIE) Policy Implementation*

While this covers much of the current work of the FEP SIE team, including support for the three coaches deployed to different parts of Fiji, it covers intersecting and overlapping areas of GEDSI. The coaches will support teachers in verifying students with disabilities and they will also work with improving literacy and numeracy, as in Objective 1. FEP will continue to support teachers to teach the national curriculum to teach children with disabilities using the handbook developed by AQEP.<sup>47</sup>

The current MEHA SIE policy is under revision, with further consultation to take place. Once it is completed and endorsed, an implementation plan will be developed. FEP will continue its support for all the stages of the policy and the implementation plan development.

The critical role of Organisations of Persons with Disability (OPD) should not be overlooked and their views should be actively and regularly sought in order to inform the work of the SIE team. The Facility Disability Adviser should be able to facilitate such meetings.<sup>48</sup>

*Gender, disability, and inclusion*

Enrolments of students with disabilities show that many more disabled boys attend school than disabled girls.<sup>49</sup> In addition, research on out-of-school primary children found children with disabilities among out-of-school children.<sup>50</sup> This study made many recommendations, and the more targeted ones could be implemented under the FEP. These include training and supporting teachers to identify and respond to children at risk of dropping out of school by using various strategies and developing an action plan to improve engagement and attendance.

This is a potential area for professional development. It could also be part of training with school management committees as they are an important link to communities, especially in rural areas.

<sup>47</sup> The DFAT-funded Access to Quality Education Program (AQEP) developed the *Disability-inclusive Education Handbook for teachers* (undated).

<sup>48</sup> At the time of writing this roadmap, the Fiji Program Support Facility was developing a draft engagement strategy with OPDs. This strategy should provide a basis for engagement between OPDs and FEP.

<sup>49</sup> Research in other Pacific Island Countries indicates that this gender disparity is largely due to parents' over-protectiveness towards their disabled daughters,

<sup>50</sup> MEHA, *Situational Analysis of Out-of-School Primary Children in Fiji*, 2021 (draft)



### *GEDSI in Teacher Training Institutions (TTI)*

The 2020 study by the Fiji Facility (referred to earlier) found that the three TTI in the west of Fiji were keen to engage with GEDSI issues but needed assistance to integrate this into their curriculum. Some TTI have developed action plans, but FEP had not progressed this to date. This issue should be revived and actioned so that trainee teachers have awareness of GEDSI issues. GEDSI should be embedded in the curriculum so that it is a more sustainable approach than one-off training sessions.

### *Student Support Services (SSS)*

FEP has been closely involved with increasing school counselling capacity. Between January 2019 and August 2021, the Student Support Services (SSS) pilot delivered counselling and other SSS across 25 under-resourced schools with recognised student mental health and behavioural challenges. A draft completion report of the SSS program<sup>51</sup> indicated that in general, it was valued by school heads, teachers, and the students themselves even though being sent to a counsellor was often seen as a form of discipline. Most school staff perceived the SSS to have led to overall improvements in behaviour and student wellbeing in their schools.

An important issue is that trained teacher-counsellors are not allocated any time for counselling, and it is an 'add-on' to their teaching loads. MEHA needs to develop a policy that provides a balance for counsellors so that they can do justice to both roles.<sup>52</sup>

There remains a large unfulfilled need for school counsellors and FEP and or Australia Awards may consider supporting the training of more counsellors. The University of the South Pacific (USP) offers courses that may be appropriate to this purpose.<sup>53</sup>

Teacher trainees are in theory trained in basic counselling skills.<sup>54</sup> The completion report of the SSS program, referred to above, found that many teachers considered themselves to be counsellors. This highlighted a lack of understanding of the difference between counselling and providing advice. Clearly this aspect of teacher training needs strengthening.

### *Women in leadership*

The 2021/2022 research on women in leadership in Fijian schools found that while women comprise 69% of all teachers, they hold only 27% of head-of-school positions. Although the research found that the majority of women teachers did aspire to leadership roles, they identified many barriers preventing them from fulfilling their aspirations. Barriers included the lack of required qualifications; lack of required years of experience; and family responsibilities and commitments.

While gender equality in regard to leadership is the goal, gender equity is the means to get there: the means of correcting the situation that has left women behind. The study recommended, among other things, training to build basic leadership knowledge with the goal of empowerment; developing leadership skills through exposure; supporting qualifications upgrades; and mainstreaming GEDSI into the curriculum of teacher training institutions so that future generations of teachers are more aware of issues around gender equality. The institutional or structural issue of recruitment filters that prevent women from achieving senior positions also need to be addressed. Recruitment filters for positions of responsibility should be adapted to include soft skills such as collaboration, empathy and negotiation.

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<sup>51</sup> *Pilot of student support services – completion review*, January 2022 (draft)

<sup>52</sup> At the time of writing this roadmap, students needing counselling were referred to Empower Pacific, supported by UNICEF

<sup>53</sup> Current information is that UNICEF is supporting student referrals to Empower Pacific, a practice started under the first phase of FEP.

<sup>54</sup> University of the South Pacific, University of Bristol and University of Nottingham, *Quality teachers and teacher education in Fiji*, 2016, p9



### *Implement recommendations of 'Research Study on Bullying in Fijian Primary Schools'*

School-based violence is widespread in Fiji's schools, notwithstanding the MEHA Student Code of Conduct and statements of zero tolerance of violence. The MEHA research on bullying in Fijian primary schools found that a third of the students (32%) reported that they were bullied at least once or twice a month in the previous year. The study found significant impacts of bullying on the students being targeted including general negative well-being; difficulty focusing; and sleeplessness. The study also found that being bullied affects attitudes to school and attendance. It also identified that children with disabilities are the most bullied group. The study found a link between bullying and absenteeism: as the frequency of bullying increases, the probability of students not attending school also increases.

Bullying, physical and sexual violence against girls and boys in school is an extension of the gender-based violence and other violence that children witness in their homes and communities, which is replicated in the school environment.

The bullying study made several recommendations that are yet to be implemented and there is scope to do so under the FEP project of inclusive learning environments.

#### **The Role of Education in Preventing VAWG**

- Schools are an ideal environment to challenge harmful social and cultural standards that accept violence towards others.
- Schools and other educational institutions are part of the day-to-day lives of young people, enabling prevention programmes to be delivered in a context where non-violent and gender-equitable relationships can be normalised.
- Curriculum to prevent violence and promote gender equality; training education staff to give them the tools to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls; and, establishing safe spaces for students, is key.

*Source: Ministry of Women, Social Welfare and Poverty Alleviation, 2020. National Action Plan – Key Messages and Media Guide*

#### **Proposed activities:**

- Continue to support Senior Education Officer (SEO) SIE in revising the SIE policy; undertaking necessary consultations; and developing an implementation plan.
- Continue support to teachers using the national curriculum with children with disabilities.<sup>55</sup>
- Continue to support coaches to undertake verification and support literacy and numeracy work.
- Develop a schedule for regular consultations with OPD.
- Review the draft support plan for integrating GEDSI into the TTI curricula.
- Start implementing the recommendations of the Out-of-school children study. This can start with training and supporting teachers to identify and respond to children at risk of dropping out of school.
- Advocate to MEHA to develop a policy to allow time for teacher counsellors to fulfil their counselling roles with a reduced teaching load. Explore options to support training of school counsellors including incorporating basic counselling skills into teacher training.
- Implement recommendations from women in leadership research, in particular:
  - Developing a pilot mentoring program within MEHA, with training for mentors and mentees. (Mentors can be males as the research identified that women need support from men).
  - Leadership recruitment review of filters – broaden leadership experience definition to include soft skills.
  - Training by MEHA for women and leadership.
  - Mainstreaming gender equality into the curriculum of teacher training institutions so that future generations of teachers are more aware of gender equality (overlap with Project 1 activity).

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<sup>55</sup> AQEP developed a handbook for teaching children with disabilities from Years 1-4. The current guide being developed is broader in scope. The 2021 *Review of curriculum delivery and teaching practices for students with disabilities in mainstream and special schools in Fiji* found that the handbook was not widely used.

- Progressively implement recommendations from bullying study.
  - Review MEHA policies to ensure that they are robust in addressing violence and bullying.
  - Train and support teachers, especially Child Protection Officers, to prevent and respond to school violence and bullying.
  - Promote the meaningful participation of children in efforts to prevent and respond to school violence and bullying, with priority to children who are especially vulnerable as a result of race, ethnicity, disability, gender or sexual orientation. (Possibly in collaboration with a civil society organisation or UNICEF).

<b>Objective 3</b>	<b>Engage communities to foster resilient and caring school communities</b>
<b>Project 3</b>	<b>Resilient and caring school communities</b>
<b>Components</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. SMC capacity-building for climate change, disaster reduction, gender equality and disability inclusion</b></li> <li><b>2. Family/intergenerational literacy initiative</b></li> </ol>

It should be noted that improved engagement with community stakeholders (including SMC) and schools is a cross-cutting issue across all parts of the FEP.

#### *Follow-up from Access to Quality Education Program (AQEP) work*

The predecessor program to FEP, AQEP, worked closely with a selected number of school management committees (SMC). In communities where AQEP supported schools, women were encouraged to stand for a position on their SMC and were supported with training on school finances and maintenance. As a result, women’s representation in executive roles on SMCs increased from 6% to 18%; their overall membership increased from 10% to 34% and women’s perspectives were included in decision-making. As it is not clear whether these practices have been sustained post-AQEP, it would be useful to undertake a focussed piece of research to assess the sustainability of these interventions. If they have been sustained, similar practices could be built on and undertaken in more schools.

Another form of community engagement would be to work with mothers’ clubs in targeted schools. Many schools in Fiji, especially rural schools, have mothers’ clubs that typically engage in providing school lunches, fund-raising etc. Mothers’ clubs are important stakeholders in the education process in rural Fiji but are often overlooked. There is potential to expand their horizons to include training in areas such as basic GEDSI training; improving literacy; and supporting their children’s learning activities in the classroom. The purpose of the engagement would be to increase community involvement and participation in schools which may eventually result in improving learning outcomes. It also has an implicit gender equality purpose, as it will empower the women concerned through increasing their knowledge.

#### *Out-of-school children / youth*

There is a large but unmeasured number of out-of-school children and youth in Fiji who are not in education, training, or employment. Opportunities are few for those who leave school without qualifications. There have been initiatives in providing second-chance education such as technical and vocational education that caters largely to males. The Matua Program is a relatively small initiative that started in 2002.

The then Ministry of Education instituted the Matua Programme as a bridging programme to enable people who dropped out of secondary school to complete their education and obtain a School Leaving Certificate. Women have accounted for, on average, 63% of Matua students from 2011-2016. Between 2016 and 2021, total enrolment in the Matua Programme increased 80%, from 310 to 559 students.

In 2015, the MEHA evaluation of the Education for All (EFA) programme called for expanding the Matua Programme to other “strategically located and relevant secondary schools”. However, the programme at Nabua Secondary School is the only one in Fiji, and this effectively limits the opportunity for this type of second-chance education to girls and women living out of the Suva region. Expansion of the Matua Program would be a strategic intervention at increasing opportunities for a hard-to-reach group. This could be part of the 2024 workplan.

### Proposed activities

- Undertake research to find out if AQEP initiatives with SMC have been sustained. Consultations with communities involved should seek to find out reasons for continuing or not continuing gender equality practices. Future work with SMCs should evolve from lessons learned and could include, for example, revising the SMC handbook and training in women’s leadership, linking to resilience and disaster preparedness.
- Develop a program for engaging with mothers’ clubs in targeted schools to provide training in GEDSI and other relevant areas that could improve their children’s’ learning outcomes.
- Explore expansion of the Matua Program with a view to expanding educational opportunities for out-of-school youth, especially girls and women, to other part of Fiji. (2024)

<b>Objective 4</b>	<b>Systems in place for MEHA to adopt evidence-based approach to policy and decision-making for literacy and numeracy</b>
<b>Project 4</b>	<b>Evidence-based policy &amp; decision-making</b>
<b>Components</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. MEHA capacity-building in MEL (FEMIS development, data analysis &amp; usage)</b></li> <li><b>2. Collaborative research to inform policy &amp; practice</b></li> </ol>

### Research

MEHA, with FEP support, has produced some excellent research. Future research should be action-oriented with a concise set of realistic recommendations. When recommendations are too broad and vague, research results tend to be shelved.

The impact of COVID pandemic on the education sector, especially the prolonged school closures in 2020 and 2021 should be explored in order to see whether any remedial action could be taken. For example, FEMIS data shows that there were 14,852 students in Year 11 in 2020 but only 13,644 in Year 12 in 2021, which is a natural progression. A drop of 1,208 students from year to the next, or 8.1%, is quite significant.

The research study on bullying in Fijian primary schools produced sound results. (See Objective 2). When the bullying into primary schools’ study has been implemented, a study into bullying in Fijian secondary schools, especially boarding schools, should be considered to assess the extent of the problem there. Anecdotal evidence suggests that bullying is widespread at the secondary level, especially in boarding schools, and is detrimental to the education and well-being of students.

### Proposed activities

- Undertake research into the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 and 2021 on the education sector from an inclusion lens.
- Undertake research into the extent and impact of bullying in Fijian secondary schools, especially boarding schools.

### Whole-of-program recommendation

The 2021 Mid-Term Review of the FEP was emphatic that the second phase needed to achieve better results in gender equality than in the first phase. This was largely because the first phase of

FEP focussed on finance and human resource reforms at the Ministry level and these areas of work did not have a gender focus.

In order to manage the implementation of the GEDSI interventions in this roadmap, FEP should recruit a Gender Equality in Education Adviser who can ensure that the activities in this roadmap are implemented. The Adviser will support MEHA to translate its gender equality policy commitments into reality ensuring that gender equality principles are mainstreamed and promoted throughout the Ministry and throughout FEP.

*The Adviser would:*

- Consult on the potential benefits of and need for of a gender policy for MEHA. If a gender policy is deemed advantageous, the Adviser should coordinate consultations for its development.
- Coordinate and manage implementation of activities in the policy and in this roadmap.
- Ensure that all MEHA initiatives are consistent with gender equality norms and practices.
- Provide gender training as required.

## Roadmap for Gender, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) mainstreaming into the Fiji Education Program (FEP): Activity matrix

### Objective 1: Advance quality & inclusive teaching & learning in literacy and numeracy

#### Project 1: Gender-responsive & inclusive English literacy & Maths curricula & pedagogies

Activity	Output	Outcome	Risks & challenges
Undertake GEDSI review of secondary curricula especially English and Mathematics	Revised curricula in selected subjects	Gender-sensitive curricula that reflects the reality of Fijian life	Could be done internally if GEDSI specialist has time.
Revise and update GEDSI manual for education sector a focus on leadership training, especially for women in leadership	Revised GEDSI manual	Increased awareness and changed practices among FEP and MEHA employees	Resistance and lip-service to GEDSI approach

### Objective 2: Promote inclusive education conditions through policy & practice

#### Project 2: Inclusive learning environments (gender, social & disability)

Activity	Output	Outcome	Risks & challenges
Continue to support Senior Education Officer (SEO) SIE in revising the SIE policy; undertaking necessary consultations; and developing an implementation plan	Completed SIE policy and implementation plan with clear guidance on way forward	Improved education for children with disabilities in Fiji schools.	Sufficient time and human resource capacity to undertake all actions effectively.
Continue support to teachers using the national curriculum with children with disabilities.	Records of contacts with schools. (Phone calls, emails, school visits)	Children with disabilities able to learn better with adapted curriculum.	Ability and willingness of teachers to follow guide.
Continue to support coaches to undertake verification and support literacy and numeracy work.	Records of verifications. Records of literacy and numeracy interventions.	Increased verifications of children with disabilities. Progress in literacy and numeracy work.	Dependent on ability and continuity of coaches.
Develop a schedule for regular consultations with OPD	Correspondence with OPD. Schedule of dates.	Records of meetings / consultations.	Willingness of OPD to participate and contribute.
Review the draft support plan for integrating GEDSI into the TTI curricula.	Revised support plan. Record of consultations with TTI.	GEDSI embedded into TTI curricula and processes.	Willingness of TTI to participate. Time and human resources to undertake required work.

Activity	Output	Outcome	Risks & challenges
Start implementing the recommendations of the Out-of-school children study. This can start with training and supporting teachers to identify and respond to children at risk of dropping out of school.	PD module on supporting teachers to identify and respond to children at risk of dropping out of school. (Potentially on MEHA Moodle platform).	Fewer children leaving school early.	This may be put in the 'too hard basket' as it is a poorly defined area yet is doable.
Advocate to MEHA to develop a policy to allow time for teacher counsellors to fulfil their counselling roles with a reduced teaching load. Explore options to support training of school counsellors including incorporating basic counselling skills into teacher training.	MEHA policy on school counsellors	Counsellors in schools have increased effectiveness, possibly leading to lower dropout rate.	This should be a straight forward activity with no perceived risks.
<p>Implement recommendations from women in leadership research, in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing a pilot mentoring program within MEHA, with training for mentors and mentees. (Mentors can be males as the research identified that women need support from men).</li> <li>• Leadership recruitment review of filters – broaden leadership experience definition to include soft skills</li> <li>• Training by MEHA for women and leadership.</li> </ul> <p>Mainstreaming gender equality into the curriculum of teacher training institutions so that future generations of teachers are more aware of gender equality (overlap with activity on TTIs)</p>	Reports and evidence showing that activities have been completed.	Increasing numbers of women are willing and empowered to apply for leadership roles.	Political will to pursue these activities.

Activity	Output	Outcome	Risks & challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Progressively implement recommendations from bullying study.</li> <li>Review MEHA policies to ensure that they are robust in addressing violence and bullying.</li> <li>Train and support teachers to prevent and respond to school violence and bullying.</li> </ul> <p>Promote the meaningful participation of children in efforts to prevent and respond to school violence and bullying, with priority to children who are especially vulnerable as a result of race, ethnicity, disability, gender or sexual orientation. (Could be engagement with civil society organisation) (CSO)</p>	<p>Policy review document. Training module for PD on preventing and responding to school bullying. Evidence of engagement with NGO.</p>	n/a	n/a

### Objective 3: Engage communities to foster resilient and caring school communities

#### Project 3: Resilient and caring school communities

Activity	Output	Outcome	Risks & challenges
<p>Undertake research to find out if AQEP initiatives with SMC have been sustained. Consultations with communities involved should seek to find out reasons for continuing or not continuing gender equality practices. Future work with SMCs should evolve from lessons learned.</p>	<p>Research report.</p>	<p>Women's roles in SMCs enhanced.</p>	n/a
<p>Explore expansion of the Matua Program with a view to expanding educational opportunities for out-of-school youth, especially girls and women, to other part of Fiji.</p>	<p>Feasibility report on consultations for expanding Matua program.</p>	<p>Improved opportunities for out-of-school youth.</p>	<p>Depends on willingness of host schools.</p>

Activity	Output	Outcome	Risks & challenges
Engage with mothers' clubs in targeted schools to provide training in GEDSI and other relevant areas that could improve their children's learning outcomes.	Records of engagement with mothers' clubs.	Improved knowledge has flow-on benefits for children.	Agreement of all stakeholders.

#### Objective 4: Support MEHA monitoring, evaluation & learning (MEL) for decision-making

##### Project 4: Evidence-based policy & decision-making

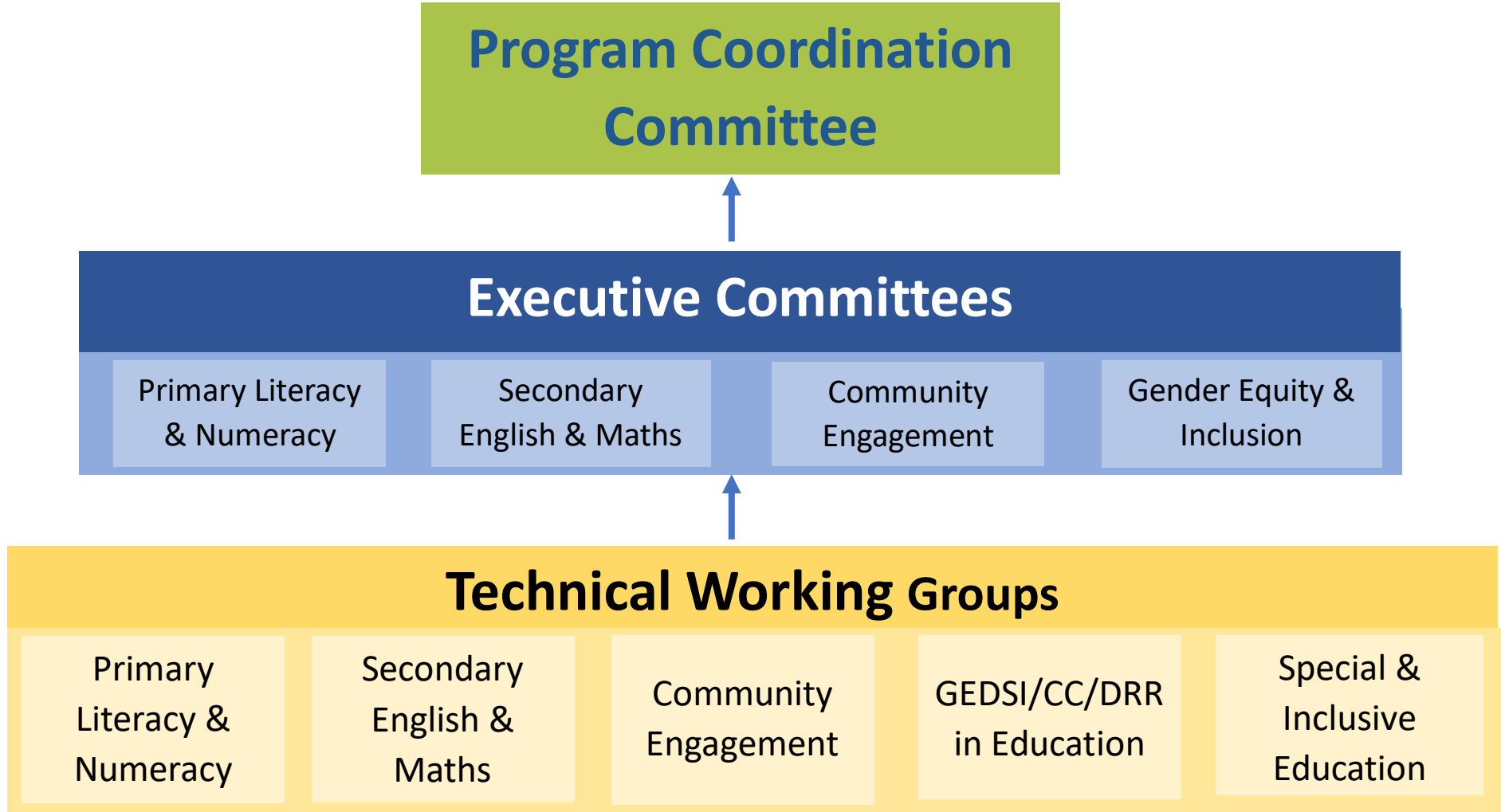
Activity	Output	Outcome	Risks & challenges
Undertake research into the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 and 2021 on the education sector from an inclusion lens.	Research report.	Lessons may be learned on the resilience of the education system.	Ability to locate former students who have left due to COVID-19 as well as other stakeholders.
Undertake research into the extent and impact of bullying in Fijian secondary schools, especially boarding schools.	Research report.	Schools will be safer and better learning environments.	Willingness of participants to reveal bullying.

#### Whole-of-program recommendation

Activity	Output	Outcome	Risks & challenges
Establishment of Gender Adviser in Education position.	Signed employment contract. Records of training activities and other interventions.	Gender progressively integrated into MEHA programs.	Availability and suitability of candidates applying for position.



Annex 5: Governance Structure



## Annex 6: Fiji Education Results Framework

The Program MEL aligns with the principles, standards and processes outlined in the Fiji Facility MEL Plan and Guide. (The Plan and Guide, available upon request, is summarised below.)

Program monitoring will be guided by:

- the Program monitoring workplan, comprising regular school and community monitoring visits and support for MEHA monitoring and information systems;
- indicators in the Program Results Framework, including relevant mandatory indicators from the Fiji Facility Performance Assessment Framework, DFAT's Tier 2 indicator list and the Fiji CRP.

Program evaluation will be guided by:

- evaluative questions (listed below) which test key assumptions in the Program Theory of Change;
- questions raised at Program learning events, e.g., at reflect and refocus talanoas and the Facility most significant change even;
- reflections at monthly Program team meetings and fortnightly team/project meetings.

Program learning will be structured around:

- monthly and fortnightly team/project meetings which allow discussions on what is going well and what can be improved;
- MEHA executive committee meetings which serve as learning events as well as a forum for sharing findings and making evidence-based decisions;
- Semi-annual reflect and refocus talanoas which allow collective discussion and decision-making at project, Program and Facility levels;
- collection and discussion of significant change stories at the annual most significant change event.

Key Evaluation Questions: The following are key evaluation questions that guide assessment of critical aspects of Program performance. The questions are subject to review at Facility learning events (listed above).

- Is the Program helping MEHA reach its goal - *improved learning outcomes for all Fiji boys and girls*?
- To what extent is the Program providing evidence to inform Program and cross-Facility learning and decision-making?
- To what extent is the Program enhancing MEHA capacity to develop and use evidence to inform decision-making and develop interventions at central, school and community levels?
- Has FEP strengthened the partnership between DFAT and the Government of Fiji?

## IMPACT AND CONTEXT

Impact statement: Improved learning outcomes for Fiji girls and boys

Indicator No.	Indicator <i>What we're going to measure</i>	Primary audience	Level <i>The level of the result in the program logic</i>	Mandatory indicator <i>Is this a mandatory DFAT or Facility indicator?</i>	Data source/ collection method <i>The tool and methodology we're going to use</i>	Frequency <i>How often we're going to do it</i>	Collection by <i>Who's going to collect and analyse it</i>	Disaggregation
1	Number of additional girls and boys enrolled in school per annum	DFAT	Contextual indicator	Yes – CRP and Tier 2 indicator	FEMIS enrolment data	Annual	MEHA (IT unit) FEP MEL	Sex, disability, district, location, school type, year level
2	Year on year retention rate in participating schools	Program, MEHA, DFAT	Contextual indicator	No	FEMIS enrolment data	Annual	MEHA (IT unit) FEP MEL	Sex, disability, district, location, school type, year level
3	% Change in standardised test score in L&N	Program MEHA, DFAT	End of Program	No	RPT and NPT in FEMIS	Annual	MEHA (CAS) FEP L&N FEP MEL	Sex, disability, district, location, school type, year level
4	Gap in learning outcomes between different student groups	Program MEHA, DFAT	Contextual indicator  Cross-outcome EOPO indicator	No	LANA examinations results  RPT and NPT results - FEMIS	Annual	MEHA (Exams Unit) FEP L&N FEP MEL	Sex, disability, location, school type, year level, language, participating schools vs. comparison schools.

EOPO 1 – **HOS and Teachers** at participating schools demonstrate knowledge, attitude and practices which support inclusive and equitable quality learning (**PATHWAY 1**)

IO 1.1 – HOS/Teachers understand the content, developmental sequence and assessment practices of the new curricula (primary and secondary)

Indicator No.	Indicator <i>What we're going to measure</i>	Primary audience	Level <i>The level of the result in the program logic</i>	Mandatory indicator <i>Is this a mandatory DFAT or Facility indicator?</i>	Data source/ collection method <i>The tool and methodology we're going to use</i>	Frequency <i>How often we're going to do it</i>	Collection by <i>Who's going to collect and analyse it</i>	Disaggregation
5	Extent to which L&N curriculum has been scoped, sequenced and rolled out (covering primary and secondary)	Program, MEHA	Intermediate outcome	No	Assessment of progress at reflect and refocus talanoas using curriculum tracker tool  Coaches Fortnightly Report  Mentoring Support Tool  MEHA classroom observation	6 monthly	MEHA (CAS) FEP L&N FEP MEL	N/A
6	# and % of schools to which updated curricula have been distributed by MEHA	Program, MEHA	Intermediate outcome	No	HNESD data	Annual	MEHA HNESD, CAS, FEP L&N, FEP MEL	School type Location

IO 1.2 – Teachers have the skills to teach the new curricula

Indicator No.	Indicator <i>What we're going to measure</i>	Primary audience	Level <i>The level of the result in the program logic</i>	Mandatory indicator <i>Is this a mandatory DFAT or Facility indicator?</i>	Data source/ collection method <i>The tool and methodology we're going to use</i>	Frequency <i>How often we're going to do it</i>	Collection by <i>Who's going to collect and analyse it</i>	Disaggregation
7	Extent to which lower primary teachers at the participating schools are providing quality literacy and numeracy instruction	Program, MEHA	Intermediate outcome	No	Mentoring Support Tool  Survey of teachers	6 monthly	MEHA (CAS) FEP L&N FEP MEL	Sex, year level taught, school type, district, location
8	% Of teachers making use of Daily Teaching Guides in L&N with required regularity	Program, MEHA	Intermediate outcome	No	Survey of school heads Survey of teachers  MST  MEHA classroom observation	Annual	MEHA (CAS) FEP L&N FEP MEL	Sex, year level taught, school type, district, location, age
9	% of teachers using L&N assessment feedback to improve student performance,	Program, MEHA	Intermediate outcome	No	Survey of school heads and teachers <i>(on teaching strategies and interventions to accommodate differentiated learning for</i>	6 monthly	MEHA (CAS) FEP L&N FEP MEL	Sex, year level taught, school type, district, location, age

<b>Indicator No.</b>	<b>Indicator <i>What we're going to measure</i></b>	<b>Primary audience</b>	<b>Level <i>The level of the result in the program logic</i></b>	<b>Mandatory indicator <i>Is this a mandatory DFAT or Facility indicator?</i></b>	<b>Data source/ collection method <i>The tool and methodology we're going to use</i></b>	<b>Frequency <i>How often we're going to do it</i></b>	<b>Collection by <i>Who's going to collect and analyse it</i></b>	<b>Disaggregation</b>
					students with disabilities).  MST  MEHA classroom observation			

IO 1.3 – HOS/Teachers demonstrate understanding of GEDSI through practices which increase inclusive and equitable teaching and learning

<b>Indicator No.</b>	<b>Indicator <i>What we're going to measure</i></b>	<b>Primary audience</b>	<b>Level <i>The level of the result in the program logic</i></b>	<b>Mandatory indicator <i>Is this a mandatory DFAT or Facility indicator?</i></b>	<b>Data source/ collection method <i>The tool and methodology we're going to use</i></b>	<b>Frequency <i>How often we're going to do it</i></b>	<b>Collection by <i>Who's going to collect and analyse it</i></b>	<b>Disaggregation</b>
10	Number of MEHA policies and systems reviewed by program and updated by MEHA using inclusion/equity lens	Program, MEHA	Output/ Intermediate Outcome	No	FEP team confirmation during 'reflect and refocus'  GEDSI and Education Senior Specialist Reporting	Annual	MEHA-Policy Unit FEP-MEL	N/A

<b>Indicator No.</b>	<b>Indicator <i>What we're going to measure</i></b>	<b>Primary audience</b>	<b>Level <i>The level of the result in the program logic</i></b>	<b>Mandatory indicator <i>Is this a mandatory DFAT or Facility indicator?</i></b>	<b>Data source/ collection method <i>The tool and methodology we're going to use</i></b>	<b>Frequency <i>How often we're going to do it</i></b>	<b>Collection by <i>Who's going to collect and analyse it</i></b>	<b>Disaggregation</b>
11	Number of MEHA staff completing inclusion, equity and resilience package	Program, MEHA	Output	No	Attendance Register  Survey of teachers/HoS	6 monthly	MEHA (e-learning) FEP MEL	Sex, Location, Roles, Age

IO 1.4 – HOS/ teachers supported through professional learning communities

<b>Indicator No.</b>	<b>Indicator <i>What we're going to measure</i></b>	<b>Primary audience</b>	<b>Level <i>The level of the result in the program logic</i></b>	<b>Mandatory indicator <i>Is this a mandatory DFAT or Facility indicator?</i></b>	<b>Data source/ collection method <i>The tool and methodology we're going to use</i></b>	<b>Frequency <i>How often we're going to do it</i></b>	<b>Collection by <i>Who's going to collect and analyse it</i></b>	<b>Disaggregation</b>
12	% Increase of school leadership positions held by women	Program, MEHA	Intermediate outcome	No	FESA-MEHA data	Annual	MEHA	District, School type, location



<b>Indicator No.</b>	<b>Indicator <i>What we're going to measure</i></b>	<b>Primary audience</b>	<b>Level <i>The level of the result in the program logic</i></b>	<b>Mandatory indicator <i>Is this a mandatory DFAT or Facility indicator?</i></b>	<b>Data source/ collection method <i>The tool and methodology we're going to use</i></b>	<b>Frequency <i>How often we're going to do it</i></b>	<b>Collection by <i>Who's going to collect and analyse it</i></b>	<b>Disaggregation</b>
13	Number and percentage of women trained in educational leadership	Program, MEHA	Output	No	FESA-MEHA  Facility Training Register	6-monthly	MEHA- LDU FEP MEL	District, Year level taught, School type, location

EOPO 2 – **MEHA Central, District and School staff** demonstrate the capacity to use information to improve performance, including inclusive and equitable practices.

**(PATHWAY 2)**

IO 2.1 – Student learning informs adjustments to new curricula

<b>Indicator No.</b>	<b>Indicator <i>What we're going to measure</i></b>	<b>Primary audience</b>	<b>Level <i>The level of the result in the program logic</i></b>	<b>Mandatory indicator <i>Is this a mandatory DFAT or Facility indicator?</i></b>	<b>Data source/ collection method <i>The tool and methodology we're going to use</i></b>	<b>Frequency <i>How often we're going to do it</i></b>	<b>Collection by <i>Who's going to collect and analyse it</i></b>	<b>Disaggregation</b>
14	Extent to which students learning results adjusts the new curricula	Program, MEHA	Output/ Intermediate Outcome	No	Survey of school heads Survey of teachers	Annual	MEHA (CAS) FEP L&N FEP MEL	Sex, year level taught, school type, district, location, age
15	% Of students at or above the minimum literacy proficiency level in Year 5 and Year 7 LANA	Program, MEHA	Contextual indicator	No	LANA Year 5 and Year 7 examinations results	Annual	MEHA (Exams Unit) FEP L&N FEP MEL	Sex, disability, district, location, school type, year level
16	% Of students at or above the minimum numeracy proficiency level in Year 5 and Year 7 LANA	Program, MEHA	Contextual indicator	No	LANA Year 5 and Year 7 examinations results	Annual	MEHA (Exams Unit) FEP L&N FEP MEL	Sex, disability, district, location, school type, year level

IO 2.2 – Performance of teachers and HOS in using new curricula is monitored

<b>Indicator No.</b>	<b>Indicator <i>What we're going to measure</i></b>	<b>Primary audience</b>	<b>Level <i>The level of the result in the program logic</i></b>	<b>Mandatory indicator <i>Is this a mandatory DFAT or Facility indicator?</i></b>	<b>Data source/ collection method <i>The tool and methodology we're going to use</i></b>	<b>Frequency <i>How often we're going to do it</i></b>	<b>Collection by <i>Who's going to collect and analyse it</i></b>	<b>Disaggregation</b>
17	% Of teachers making use of Daily Teaching Guides in L&N with required regularity	Program, MEHA	Intermediate outcome	No	Survey of school heads Survey of teachers  MST  MEHA classroom observation	Annual	MEHA (CAS) FEP L&N FEP MEL	Sex, year level taught, school type, district, location, age
18	% Of HoS submitted MST to MEHA on a quarterly basis	Program, MEHA	Output	No	MST	6- monthly	MEHA (CAS) FEP L&N FEP MEL	Sex, year level taught, school type, district, location, age

IO 2.3 – Effectiveness of school and community support for inclusive and equitable quality learning is monitored

<b>Indicator No.</b>	<b>Indicator <i>What we're going to measure</i></b>	<b>Primary audience</b>	<b>Level <i>The level of the result in the program logic</i></b>	<b>Mandatory indicator <i>Is this a mandatory DFAT or Facility indicator?</i></b>	<b>Data source/ collection method <i>The tool and methodology we're going to use</i></b>	<b>Frequency <i>How often we're going to do it</i></b>	<b>Collection by <i>Who's going to collect and analyse it</i></b>	<b>Disaggregation</b>
19	Number of participating schools with revised masterplans that address L&N outcomes, GEDSI, safety and resilience	Program, MEHA	Output	No	Survey of HoS  Focus group discussions	6 monthly	MEHA FEP MEL	School type, location
20	Extent to which school management handbook has been updated	Program, MEHA	Output	No	Assessment against checklist and standards for SMC roles in Handbook	6 monthly	FEP MEL	N/A
21	Number of participating schools with established libraries	MEHA, Program	Intermediate outcome	No	FEP Procurement record	6 monthly	Partnership Manager  MEHA-District Office  FEP MEL	School type, location
22	Average time spent by parents/guardians supporting literacy and numeracy homework	Program	Intermediate outcome	No	Survey of parents  Focus group discussions	Annual	MEHA FEP MEL	Sex, location

IO 2.4 – MEHA collects, analyses and uses data to improve planning, pedagogy and inclusive and equitable practices

<b>Indicator No.</b>	<b>Indicator <i>What we're going to measure</i></b>	<b>Primary audience</b>	<b>Level <i>The level of the result in the program logic</i></b>	<b>Mandatory indicator <i>Is this a mandatory DFAT or Facility indicator?</i></b>	<b>Data source/ collection method <i>The tool and methodology we're going to use</i></b>	<b>Frequency <i>How often we're going to do it</i></b>	<b>Collection by <i>Who's going to collect and analyse it</i></b>	<b>Disaggregation</b>
23	User perceptions of FEMIS data accessibility and utility	Program, MEHA	End of Program	No	Survey of FEMIS users (teachers, HoS, MEHA staff)	Annual	MEHA- IT FEP MEL	Sex, Role, Age, Location, Levels of intervention
24	Compliance rate for entry of RPT and NPT data at school and student levels	MEHA	Contextual indicator	No	RPT and NPT-FEMIS	6 monthly	FEP MEL FEP L&N	School type, Location, Levels of intervention
25	Performance level against FEMIS rubric	MEHA	Intermediate outcome	No	Assessment of FEMIS functionality and utility using the rubric (at reflect and refocus talanoas)	6 monthly	MEHA (IT)  Partnership Manager	N/A
26	Number of people trained to analyse data (at basic and intermediate levels)	Program, MEHA	Intermediate outcome	No	Attendance record IT Manager	6 monthly	MEHA (IT) FEP MEL	Sex, District, Location, Level of intervention

EOPO 3 – **Students** have access to safe and inclusive learning environments provided by schools and communities.

**(PATHWAY 3)**

EOPO 3.1: Schools provide students with evidence-based preventative and responsive interventions to support inclusion and mental health.

<b>Indicator No.</b>	<b>Indicator <i>What we're going to measure</i></b>	<b>Primary audience</b>	<b>Level <i>The level of the result in the program logic</i></b>	<b>Mandatory indicator <i>Is this a mandatory DFAT or Facility indicator?</i></b>	<b>Data source/ collection method <i>The tool and methodology we're going to use</i></b>	<b>Frequency <i>How often we're going to do it</i></b>	<b>Collection by <i>Who's going to collect and analyse it</i></b>	<b>Disaggregation</b>
27	Extent to which SSS pilot action research recommendations are accepted and implemented	Program, MEHA, DFAT	Intermediate outcome	No	Consultation with SAAC and relevant MEHA units.	6 monthly	SSS-TA	N/A
28	Number of students accessing counselling from accredited counsellors	Program, DFAT	Output	No	Counsellor records SAAC SSS-TA	6 monthly	MEHA- SAAC SSS-TA	Sex, year level, location

IO 3.2– Disadvantaged families have improved access to GoF education grants

Indicator No.	Indicator <i>What we're going to measure</i>	Primary audience	Level <i>The level of the result in the program logic</i>	Mandatory indicator <i>Is this a mandatory DFAT or Facility indicator?</i>	Data source/ collection method <i>The tool and methodology we're going to use</i>	Frequency <i>How often we're going to do it</i>	Collection by <i>Who's going to collect and analyse it</i>	Disaggregation
29	Number of students with disabilities (boys and girls) in FEMIS (broken down by verified or not verified)  <b>Responds to DFAT CRP indicator: 'Number of additional verified students with disabilities in FEMIS – Fiji Education Management Information System'</b>	Program, MEHA	Intermediate outcome	Yes - CRP indicator	FEMIS	6 monthly	SIE	Sex, disability, district, location, school type, year level
30	# and % of schools that have received special and inclusive education grant (SIEG)	Program, MEHA	Intermediate outcome	No	FEMIS	Annual	SIE	School type, location
31	Number of students screened and identified with vision and hearing impairment	Program, Facility	Output	No	SIE screening data	6 monthly	SIE team and SAAC TA	Sex, location, school type, Year level, Disability status



32	Proportion of students with disabilities with an active Student Learning Profile (SLP)	Program, MEHA	Output	No	FEMIS (SLP)	6 monthly	SIE	Sex, Location, verified, unverified, disability status
33	Extent to which SMCs, communities and parent group are working together to support L&N outcomes and inclusive, equitable, caring and resilient learning environments	Program	Intermediate outcome	No	Randomised school-level case studies	Annual	Partnership Manager  MEL - Education	School type, location

Mandatory Cross Facility and additional DFAT indicators

Indicator No.	Indicator <i>What we're going to measure</i>	Primary audience	Mandatory indicator <i>Is this a mandatory DFAT or Facility indicator?</i>	Data source/ collection method <i>The tool and methodology we're going to use</i>	Frequency <i>How often we're going to do it</i>	Collection by <i>Who's going to collect and analyse it</i>	Disaggregation
34	Stakeholder (DFAT, GoF, CSOs) opinion of value added by Facility	DFAT	Cross-Facility indicator	MEHA perception survey	Annual	FEP	N/A
35	Number of formal governance/coordination committee meetings (by sector program and attended by Facility, DFAT and counterpart)	DFAT	Cross-Facility indicator	Program and Facility records including meeting minutes	Biannual	FEP	N/A
36	Stakeholder (DFAT/GoF) satisfaction with Facility coordination and governance mechanisms (by program)	DFAT	Cross-Facility indicator	Perception surveys with partners (including DFAT)	Annual  Biannual	FEP	N/A

Indicator No.	Indicator <i>What we're going to measure</i>	Primary audience	Mandatory indicator <i>Is this a mandatory DFAT or Facility indicator?</i>	Data source/ collection method <i>The tool and methodology we're going to use</i>	Frequency <i>How often we're going to do it</i>	Collection by <i>Who's going to collect and analyse it</i>	Disaggregation
				Annual Reflections workshop/survey			
37	Evidence of strengthened and effective coordination during disaster responses (including across CSOs and Government)	DFAT	CRP indicator	Facility reflect and refocus records of discussion  Facility reporting	Annual	FEP	N/A
38	Number of examples of Facility-supported cross-ministry, cross-sector learning or collaboration by the Facility, DFAT, CSO and/or ministry partners	DFAT	Cross-Facility indicator	Facility reflect and refocus talanoas	Biannual	FEP	N/A
39	Number of examples of meaningful changes to program logic as a result of Facility reflection	DFAT	Cross-Facility indicator	Facility reflect and refocus talanoas  Analysis of program theories of change	Biannual	FEP	N/A

<b>Indicator No.</b>	<b>Indicator <i>What we're going to measure</i></b>	<b>Primary audience</b>	<b>Mandatory indicator <i>Is this a mandatory DFAT or Facility indicator?</i></b>	<b>Data source/ collection method <i>The tool and methodology we're going to use</i></b>	<b>Frequency <i>How often we're going to do it</i></b>	<b>Collection by <i>Who's going to collect and analyse it</i></b>	<b>Disaggregation</b>
40	Number of reflect and refocus talanoas per program during year (including program and activity levels for each program)	DFAT	Cross-Facility indicator	Facility records  Minutes of reflect and refocus talanoas	Biannual	FEP	N/A
41	Number of examples of well-managed transitions out of ineffective activities	DFAT	Cross-Facility indicator	Facility reflect and refocus talanoas	Biannual	FEP	N/A
42	Proportion and amount of sector program spend on activities with cross-cutting themes as either a primary or secondary objective	DFAT	Cross-Facility indicator	Facility budget, broken down by cross-cutting theme (gender equality, social inclusion, disability inclusion, DRR, climate change) as either a primary or secondary objective.	Annual, prior to annual report	FMU	N/A
43	Number of examples of specific and meaningful change in partner policy or practice related to GEDSI	DFAT	Cross-Facility indicator	Perception surveys and key informant interviews, Facility stories of change and	Ad hoc, as stories are identified through Facility monitoring,	FEP	N/A

Indicator No.	Indicator <i>What we're going to measure</i>	Primary audience	Mandatory indicator <i>Is this a mandatory DFAT or Facility indicator?</i>	Data source/ collection method <i>The tool and methodology we're going to use</i>	Frequency <i>How often we're going to do it</i>	Collection by <i>Who's going to collect and analyse it</i>	Disaggregation
				most significant change methodology, validation at Facility Reflect and refocus talanoa Facility GEDSI tracker	evaluation and reflection		
44	Proportion of GEDSI tracker commitments that are judged to be 'on track'	DFAT	Cross-Facility indicator	Facility GEDSI tracker	Biannual	FEP	N/A
45	Number and proportion of formal governance meetings (with DFAT and counterparts) that have GEDSI as an agenda item and/or GEDSI representation (GoF/Facility/DFAT)	DFAT	Cross-Facility indicator	Agendas/minutes of meetings with DFAT and GoF	Biannual	FEP	N/A
46	Examples of assistance to strengthen governance systems and significant policy change achieved	DFAT	Tier 2 indicator	Reflect and refocus talanoas	Biannual	FEP	N/A
47	Number of woman and girl survivors of violence	DFAT	CRP and Tier 2 indicator	Counsellor records and CSO reporting	Annual	FEP	Sex

<b>Indicator No.</b>	<b>Indicator <i>What we're going to measure</i></b>	<b>Primary audience</b>	<b>Mandatory indicator <i>Is this a mandatory DFAT or Facility indicator?</i></b>	<b>Data source/ collection method <i>The tool and methodology we're going to use</i></b>	<b>Frequency <i>How often we're going to do it</i></b>	<b>Collection by <i>Who's going to collect and analyse it</i></b>	<b>Disaggregation</b>
	receiving services such as counselling						

## Annex 7: Fiji Education Program Risk Matrix

See separate attachment

## **Annex 8: Alternate text for Figure 1: Design Update Theory of Change (accessible)**

**Government of Fiji-5 year and 20-year national Development Plan: improve quality education at all levels, ensure every Fijian Student has access to education at all levels**

- **Partnership for Recovery / Fiji-Australia COVID-19 Development Response Plan**
- **SDG 4: Quality Education, SDG 5: Gender Equality, SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities**

### ***Improved learning outcomes for all Fiji girls and boys***

**End-of-program Outcome 1: HOS and Teachers at participating schools demonstrate knowledge, attitude and practices which support inclusive and equitable quality.**

Intermediate outcomes (IO):

- 1.1. HOS/Teachers understand the content, developmental sequence, and assessment practices of the new curricula.
- 1.2. Teachers have the skills to teach the new curricula.
- 1.3. Teachers / HOS demonstrate understanding of GEDSI practices.
- 1.4. HOS/Teachers

**End-of-program Outcome 2: MEHA Central, District and School staff demonstrate the capacity to use information to improve performance including inclusive and equitable.**

Intermediate outcomes:

- 2.1 Student learning informs adjustments to the new curricula.
- 2.2 Performance of teachers and HOS in using new GEDSI-responsive curricula monitored.
- 2.3 Effectiveness of school/ community support monitored.
- 2.4 MEHA collects, analyses and uses data to improve planning, pedagogy and inclusive and equitable practices.

**End-of-program Outcome 3: Students have access to safe and inclusive learning environments provided by schools and communities.**

Intermediate outcomes:

- 3.1 Schools provide students with interventions to support social inclusion and mental health.
- 3.2 Families have improved access to GoF education grants.
- 3.3 Children with disabilities are verified; schools and communities provide access to services and grants.
- 3.4 Communities & parents support schools provide students with inclusive, equitable, safe caring and resilient learning environments.

**Crosscutting Themes – Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI); Climate Change (CC); Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR); Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR)**

## Annex 9: Alternate text for Figure 2: Pathway Logistics (accessible)

### Pathway 1: Learning & Teaching

1 End-of-program Outcome 1: HOS and Teachers at participating schools demonstrate knowledge, attitude and practices which support inclusive and equitable quality.

1.1 HOS/Teachers understand the content, developmental sequence, and assessment practices of the new curricula.

#### *Outputs:*

- Curricula (syllabi, scope & sequencing documents)
- Teacher guides (including GEDSI & SIE)
- Trial in 90 primary schools/ all secondary
- Assessment tools

### Professional Development

1.2 Teachers have the skills to teach the new curricula.

1.3 Teachers / HOS demonstrate understanding of GEDSI practices.

#### *Outputs:*

- Pre- & in-service training modules
- Training delivery (online, face-2-face)

1.4 HOS / teachers supported through professional learning communities.

#### *Outputs:*

- Online professional networks, school cluster model.

### Pathway 2: Performance Improvement

2 End-of-program Outcome 2: MEHA Central, District and School staff demonstrate the capacity to use information to improve performance including inclusive and equitable.

2.1 Student learning informs adjustments to the new curricula.

#### *Outputs:*

- Formative assessment system and feedback loop
- Research studies, stories of change

2.2 Performance of teachers and HOS in using new GEDSI-responsive curricula monitored.

#### *Outputs:*

- Monitoring system for teacher performance
- Stories of change

2.3 Effectiveness of school/ community support monitored.

#### *Outputs:*

- Monitoring system – including regulations and guidelines for community support
- Stories of change



2.4 MEHA collects, analyses and uses data to improve planning, pedagogy and inclusive and equitable practices.

*Outputs:*

Improved systems for data reviews, including established Executive Committees & TWGs

### **Pathway 3: Learning Environments**

3 End-of-program Outcome 3: Students have access to safe and inclusive learning environments provided by schools and communities.

#### Inclusive & Equitable Practices

3.1 Schools provide students with interventions to support social inclusion and mental health.

*Outputs:*

- Peer mentoring
- Counselling materials
- Awareness sessions

3.2 Families have improved access to GoF education grants.

*Outputs:*

- Automated transport allowance system.
- HOS grants management training/ tools

3.3 Children with disabilities are verified; schools and communities provide access to services and grants.

*Outputs:*

- Verification system, SLPs
- Screening

3.4 Communities & parents support schools provide students with inclusive, equitable, safe caring and resilient learning environments.

*Outputs:*

- School Plans, school/ community interventions TBD

***Underpinned by: Coaches support heads of school (HOS), teachers and communities***