



GOVERNMENT OF TONGA

System Transformation Grant

Program Document

2025-2028

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Acronyms and abbreviations

CAD	Curriculum and Assessment Division
CLRW	Come Let's Read and Write
CPD	Continuing professional development
ECE	Early childhood education
ESA	Education Sector Analysis
GMC	Grant Management Committee
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
HeLP	Hama eLearning Platform
IPB	Implementation Plan and Budget
JSR	Joint Sector Review
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LEG	Local Education Group
MEL	Monitoring, evaluation and learning
MET	Ministry of Education and Training
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MoF	Ministry of Finance
PILNA	Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment
PMCD	Project Management and Coordination Division
PMU	Program Management Unit
POM	Program Operations Manual
PPRD	Policy, Planning and Research Division
PSC	Program Steering Committee
PTA	Parent-teacher association
SEAH	Sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment
SCA	Save the Children Australia
SCG	System Capacity Grant
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
STG	System Transformation Grant
TNU	Tonga National University
TOP	Tongan Pa'anga
TSRSP	Tonga Safe and Resilient Schools Project
TWG	Technical Working Group
USD	United States Dollars
USP-IOE	University of the South Pacific Institute of Education

1. Introduction

The Kingdom of Tonga has been a member of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) since 2020 and is eligible for a System Transformation Grant (STG). The Ministry of Education and Training (MET) and the Local Education Group (LEG) of development partners endorsed a Partnership Compact in November 2023. The agreed priority reform was to *improve literacy in early childhood education (ECE) and primary schools and numeracy in secondary schools, with a focus on male students, boys and girls from poorer households and children with disabilities.*

The STG Program Document describes the components and activities selected by the government and development partners to contribute to the achievement of the priority reform and transform education in Tonga. The program was designed by an expert Technical Working Group (TWG) from the MET and the LEG and complements the System Capacity Grant (SCG) and Multiplier¹ grant activities.

Table 1 Grant summary

Donor	Global Partnerships for Education	
Grant	System Transformation Grant	
Value	US\$2.2m ²	Tongan Pa'anga (TOP) 5.28m
Start	1 st January 2025	
Finish	31 st December 2028	
Years	4	
Implementing agency	Ministry of Education and Training	
Coordinating agency	Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade	
Grant agent	Save the Children Australia	

Table 2 GPE grants

Date	Grant	Value (US\$)	Status
2017-2018	Sector plan development	195,102	Complete
2020-2021	COVID-19	749,982	Complete
2022-2023	Accelerated funding (Volcano Recovery Program)	300,000	Complete
2022-2025	System Capacity Grant Tranche 1	700,000	Ongoing
2023-2023	System Capacity Grant Tranche 2	40,000	Complete
2023-2024	Program Development Grant (Multiplier)	200,000	Complete
2024-2026	System Capacity Grant Tranche 3	260,000	Ongoing
2024-2028	Multiplier	4,750,000	Awaiting effectiveness ³

¹ World Bank as the grant agent.

² Tonga's STG allocation is US\$2.5m and US\$0.3m was utilised as emergency accelerated funding in 2022 for the Volcano Recovery Program in the wake of the eruption and tsunami from the Hunga Tonga Hunga Ha'apai submarine volcano.

³ Approved by GPE on July 2, 2024. Implemented by MET with the World Bank as grant agent through the Tonga Safe and Resilient Schools Project.

2. Program

The program will tackle two persistent bottlenecks to improving learning and access identified in the Partnership Compact: a lack of reading materials and poor education indicators for male students.

2.1 Focus areas

The focus areas for the program were selected to improve primary reading outcomes, targeting gaps in access to reading materials at home and school, and focusing attention on boys who are at risk of dropping out of school.

Table 3 Program objectives, outcomes and components

Objective	Increased proportion of students meeting reading benchmarks in Year 4 and 6.			
Outcomes	1. Increased access to inclusive curriculum materials for teaching reading in Tongan.	2. Improved skills and content knowledge of teachers to teach reading and support all students.	3. Increased frequency of reading and home learning support.	4. Improved attendance at school.
Components	1. Classroom libraries.		2. Home reading program.	3. Boys' education support.

Component 1 Classroom libraries

Value	US\$ 926,724	TOP 2,224,137
Lead	Director, Primary Division Director, Curriculum and Assessment Division	
Timeline	2025-2028	

Supported by the World Bank and Multiplier, the MET is implementing a multiyear program to revise the national curriculum and train teachers in a new comprehensive package of teaching and learning materials (TLMs).⁴ The TWG identified classroom libraries as a gap in the package.

Building from support for reading from New Zealand (primary) and UNICEF (ECE), the MET's Primary Division and Curriculum and Assessment Division (CAD) will develop a comprehensive bank of decodable and graded reading books for primary school students. The key features of the classroom libraries will be:

- Aligned with the new Tongan and English syllabuses, teacher guides and pupil books.
- Wide range of fiction⁵ and non-fiction⁶ genres with comprehension questions.
- Either MET or open-source copyright.
- Made available for download from the Hama eLearning Platform (HeLP) and in a free reading app.⁷
- Available in audio, sign language video, and large print accessible formats.
- Distributed to all government and government-assisted non-government primary classrooms.

The MET has the option to engage Save the Children's Library for All team which has extensive experience supporting governments and local authors and illustrators to adapt or write high quality and engaging children's literature, with recent libraries published in Papua New Guinea, Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste. Tonga's writers will be able to draw on the growing Pacific and global digital libraries of open-source reading books. A proportion of the books will be new texts written by Tongan authors and illustrators and a proportion will be adapted from existing open-source reading books. The classroom libraries will complement the *Mafana* series distribution funded by New Zealand. A book audit will be conducted prior to developing new books.

The activities will include identifying, training, and supporting local authors and illustrators through the writing or adapting, editing, translation, and publishing process, as well as strengthening the manuscript management process at the CAD. To aid reading fluency, every text will be made available in audio format in both Tongan and English. As inclusive education is a high priority, for the first time, the classroom libraries will be made available in sign language video, Braille digital format, and in large print. All graded texts and selected decodable texts will include comprehension questions.

⁴ Including syllabuses, teacher guides, pupil books, and planners.

⁵ Narrative stories in different genres from Tonga, the Pacific and globally, myths and legends, songs, poems, play scripts, graphic novels, diaries etc.

⁶ Information texts on real-world topics, persuasive texts, letters, instructions, recounts, atlases, dictionaries etc.

⁷ Free apps such as [Library for All](#) or [Bloom Reader](#) from SIL International.

To address gender issues, the MET will plan texts which tackle gender stereotypes, particularly for boys' education and children and adults with disability. Common issues identified as barriers to education will be identified and the texts and illustrations will include nationally important themes such as socio-emotional skills, bullying, climate change, disaster risk reduction, and the importance of Tongan culture and history. Children's storybooks will promote mutual understanding, empathy, and celebration of diversity within a safe, positive, and nurturing environment. Stories will expose children to both validating 'mirror' stories that reflect their own identities and circumstances, as well as 'window' stories that introduce them to worlds and lives beyond their own cultures and countries. To the extent possible, the reading package should include books with rural and urban settings, varying family types, gender and disability diversity, and characters from different backgrounds, cultures and identities. The baseline study for the STG includes a survey of children's preferences in reading books.

The new classroom libraries and existing MET reading books will be made available in a free reading app which teachers, caregivers, and students can download and use for reading in school and at home. The books will also be made freely available on the MET's Hama eLearning Platform, including on the RACHEL offline digital content repositories piloted in remote schools under the accelerated program.

The distribution of the libraries will be accompanied by a short national reading in-service program – including follow up coaching - and communication plan for teachers and principals focusing on a small suite of effective reading practices and the best way to encourage the use of the classroom libraries for daily reading aloud and promote home reading (component 2). The delivery will be coordinated and aligned with the new curriculum training which is supported by the Tonga Safe and Resilient Schools Project.⁸

Table 4 Component 1 activities

Activities	When
1.1 Develop classroom libraries	
1.1.1 Map genres and text length against curriculum.	2025 Q1
1.1.2 Write, adapt, translate & illustrate reading books: Y1-2	2025 Q1-2
Y3-4 reading books	2026 Q1-2
Y5-6 reading books	2027 Q1-2
1.1.3 Produce accessible versions of reading books.	2025-2027
1.1.4 Print and distribute classroom libraries.	2026-2028
1.1.5 Upload to HeLP website and app.	2026-2028
1.2 National reading in-service program	
1.2.1 Develop reading in-service modules.	2025 Q4
1.2.2 Print and distribute reading modules.	2026 Q1
1.2.3 Conduct reading in-service modules.	2026-27
1.2.4 Monitor and coach schools.	2027-28
1.2.5 Component 1 implementation Project Coordinator	2025-2028

⁸ <https://projects.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/project-detail/P174434>

Component 2 Home reading program

Value	US\$ 399,120	TOP 957,887
Lead	Director, Primary Division Director, Curriculum and Assessment Division	
Timeline	2026-2028	

To complement the classroom efforts to improve the frequency and quality of reading, the MET will implement a national home reading program to support schools and parent-teacher associations (PTAs) to promote daily home reading with parents of primary aged students. Building on lessons from the previous Ha'u ketau laukonga" (Come Let's Read and Write) community reading program for young children, the component will provide Home Reading Journals of engaging texts and activities for students to take home for reading with their parents and caregivers, training for PTAs, principals and churches on how to engage and train parents in home reading, and a national radio and television campaign to promote home reading every day. As with the classroom libraries, all the materials will be inclusive, promote regular school attendance, and be made freely available for download in the HeLP, and in the free reading app.

Research and experience show that children need role models to show them appropriate ways to behave and engage with the world. Parents and caregivers are the child's first teachers. When caregivers (including older siblings, grandparents and others in the household) read to and with younger children, encourage children to read, and create an environment in the home where reading and studying are valued, these messages are picked up and internalized by the child. Ensuring that parents recognize the important role they play in the future development of their child's love for reading and learning is essential. In every country, children spend much more time out of school than in school, making it very important to build literacy skills in out-of-school contexts.

The PTAs will receive a Home Reading Flipbook and other information, education and communication materials which include activities and messages designed and tested for use with Tongan parents, caregivers and church organisations. Every school will receive sufficient copies of the Home Reading Journals for students to take home.

The key behaviour change messages will be developed and tested for the local context and will include:

- Children of all age, from babies to adolescents, benefit from parental and family engagement.
- All parents, even those with low literacy, can support their children's literacy.
- Reading at home reinforces and complements skills learned at school.
- Families should create an environment in the home where reading is valued and encourage children to read daily.
- Daily reading is critical to build fluency.

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- All children, including children with disabilities, can be supported to read at home with multi-sensory approaches and materials.
- Daily attendance at school helps learning.

Table 5 Home reading program activities

Activities	When
2.1 Home Reading Journals	
2.1.1 Write and illustrate Home Reading Journals.	2026 Q1
2.1.2 Design, write and illustrate Home Reading Flipbook.	2026 Q2
2.1.3 Print and distribute Home Reading package.	2026 Q3-4
2.2 Home reading campaign	
2.2.1 Write PTA training module.	2026 Q2
2.2.2 Develop and test home reading behaviour change campaign.	2026 Q3
2.2.3 Broadcast home reading messages.	2026-28
2.2.4 Train PTAs in home reading program.	2027-28
2.2.5 Monitor and support PTAs.	2027-2028
2.2.6 Component 2 & 3 implementation Education Coordinator	2025-2028

Component 3 Boys' education support

Value	US\$ 235,917	TOP 566,201
Lead	Director, Truancy, Emergency and Safer Schools Division	
Timeline	2025-2028	

Tackling the access and learning inequities for boys is a high priority. The gaps begin in the early grades and become severe in secondary education as boys increasingly fall behind and drop out of school. The MET's programmatic approach will tackle two related areas: psycho-social support and early intervention for learning.

Firstly, the MET will fund one teacher from each primary school to complete the counselling course at the Tonga National University (TNU) or other accredited institution in Tonga. The Certificate IV course will include a focus on school safety, child protection⁹, gender, and inclusion, and will equip the teachers with the skills to support students at risk of dropping out (such as those with high rates of absenteeism), engage with the students' parents, and support remedial education. There will be a strong emphasis on early warning systems, identifying students for early intervention and support before a pattern of absenteeism is established. The skills package will include training on guidance for learning and career pathways to reduce early drop out of male students.

Secondary, the MET will develop a pilot reading booster to be delivered in single-sex peer support groups to target boys who need remedial support. This intensive early intervention will be designed around the interests of boys, be highly motivational, and delivered by specially trained teachers. The booster will be delivered as 'teaching at the right level' to students who have been screened as needing extra skills practice. Teachers will be trained in gender-sensitive pedagogies since teachers' attitudes and acts influence the students greatly in their choices. Students will receive regular, quick assessments to track progress on their reading skills.

These efforts complement the existing government support for the Truancy Unit, and support from UNICEF and Save the Children for safe schools and psycho-social support. The Multiplier grant (incorporated into the TSRSP) will finance a complementary secondary counselling program which will utilize similar approaches. These early interventions will improve school attendance and primary reading outcomes and lay the foundation for more boys to enrol in – and complete- primary and secondary school.

⁹ The Tonga National University and Save the Children have developed a n online course on child protection.

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Table 6 Boys' education program activities

Activities	When
3.1 School counsellors	
3.1.1 Identify suitable candidates for counselling course.	Q1 2025
3.1.2 Write Standard Operating Procedures guidance.	Q1 2025
3.1.3 Scholarships for school counsellors.	Q2 2025
3.1.4 Community of practice and support for school counsellors.	2026-28
3.1.5 Monitoring visits for early warning and intervention.	2027-28
3.2 Reading booster program	
3.2.1 Write and illustrate Reading Booster and teacher training module.	2027 Q1
3.2.2 Print and distribute Reading Booster materials.	2027 Q2
3.2.3 Train teachers and school counsellors.	2027 Q3
3.2.4 Evaluate the pilot program.	2028 Q3

Component 4 Program management and learning

Value	US\$ 638,240	TOP 1,531,775
Lead	Director, Project Management and Coordination Division	
Timeline	2025-2028	

Program management will be coordinated by a dedicated Program Management Unit (PMU) embedded in the Ministry under the Project Management and Coordination Division (PMCD). The PMU will support the respective component leads and provide logistical, fiduciary, procurement, and monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) support to the program. The grant agent supervision and quality assurance costs are included in component 4.

Table 7 Component 4 activities

Activities	When
4.1 Program management and coordination	
4.1.1 Program Management Unit	Annual
4.1.2 Quarterly planning and review workshops.	Annual
4.1.3 External audit.	Annual
4.2 Monitoring, evaluation and learning.	
4.2.1 Monitoring visits.	Termly
4.2.2 Learning events.	Annual
4.2.3 Endline study.	2028
4.2.4 MEL implementation and technical assistance (MEL Coordinator)	2025-2028
4.3 Grant agent supervision costs.	
4.3.1 Grant agent supervision costs.	Quarterly

2.2 Alignment

The focus areas and activities for the STG program are aligned with the government’s planning framework and complement development partner investments.

Partnership Compact

The Partnership Compact was developed based on the latest Education Sector Analysis (2023) and after extensive dialogue between the government, donors, academia, and non-government education systems. It describes the rationale and evidence behind the selection of the priority reform, the theory of change, related development partner projects, and identifies the high priority enabling factors to achieve the priority reform. The STG program selects key unfunded activities from the Partnership Compact that are most likely to have a system-wide transformative impact (Partnership Compact section 4.2.2).

The Partnership Compact can be downloaded [here](#).

The Education Sector Analysis can be downloaded [here](#).

Corporate Plan 2024/25-2026/27

The MET Corporate Plan is the medium-term education sector plan. The STG is fully aligned with the Corporate Plan priorities and the Tonga Strategic Development Framework II 2015-2025 which is the overarching whole-of-government planning document.

Table 8 Alignment with government plans

TSDF II Government Priority Area	Corporate Plan 2023/24- 2025/26	STG program
2. Quality of services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rolling out the new national curriculum. • teacher and principal in-service. 	16.2 Improved quality and relevant curriculum materials. 3.2 Timely production and distribution of quality curriculum materials. 1.5 Improve teacher quality through in-service training.	Component 1 Classroom libraries
4. Improving education for all <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • addressing dropouts and gender equality • strengthening the work of the truancy unit 	16.3 1. Monitor students’ attendance to track absenteeism and drop out. 2. Reduce student absenteeism rate by sex and grade to reduce repetition and dropout rates. 1.9 Identify and support students who are weak academically so ‘no child is left behind.’	Component 2 Home reading program Component 3 Boys’ education support

Joint Sector Review

The MET and LEG conducted its first Joint Sector Review (JSR) in 2023 with over 100 participants from across the education landscape. The STG program design reflected the JSR recommendations, specifically:

Recommendation 2 Implement data-driven systems to monitor and improve students' performance with a focus on early intervention for struggling students.

Recommendation 3 Foster stronger partnerships and collaboration with various stakeholders, including parents.

Recommendation 4 Invest in teacher training and development programs.

Recommendation 7 Allocate resources for the development and maintenance of educational infrastructure, including ... libraries.

Recommendation 8 Promote inclusive education practices that ensure access and support for students with diverse needs, including those with disabilities and poorer households. Develop and implement strategies to reduce barriers to education.

The JSR Report can be downloaded [here](#). At the time of writing, the 2024 JSR has been completed and its recommendation report is pending.

GPE priority areas

The STG aligns with the GPE priority areas of learning, quality teaching and gender equality. The program includes activities to improve parental involvement in reading and attendance, increase access to culturally relevant and accessible reading books, and improve gender equality in access and learning outcomes, particularly for boys and girls at risk of dropping out of primary education.

Development partners

The STG program aligns with current and pipeline development partner projects, building on the major curriculum reform and integrating lessons from recent programs to improve access and quality for the most vulnerable students. The Tonga Safe and Resilient Schools project will be supporting mathematics in secondary education through the continuing curriculum reform, the other high priority curriculum area in the Partnership Compact.

Table 9 Alignment with development partner programs

Development partner program	Relevant activities	STG alignment
Tonga Safe and Resilient Schools Project (TSRP) including the GPE Multiplier 2022-2028 World Bank Australia, World Bank, GPE Multiplier	Curriculum Framework for Class 1-8 (approved) Curriculum Framework for Class 9-13 (in development) Syllabuses Pupil Books Teacher Guides Planner Books	Classroom libraries and home reading to complement the new Tongan and English curriculum materials developed with the support of the TSRSP.

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Development partner program	Relevant activities	STG alignment
	<p>Training for teachers in revised curriculum. New large-scale low-stakes primary learning assessments.</p>	
<p>Tonga Education Support Activity 2019-2023 MET supported by Auckland Uniservices and USP Institute of Education New Zealand</p>	<p>Distributing <i>Mafana</i> series of reading books to schools.¹⁰ Literacy continuing professional development (CPD) for 346 teachers. Leadership CPD for primary principals</p>	<p>Building on the CPD and reading materials, including 24,000 bilingual <i>Mafana</i> books (12 titles) for 120 primary schools to be handed over to MET at the end of August.</p>
<p>Build Teaching Capacity for Inclusive Education 2023-2027 USP School of Education New Zealand Regional program</p>	<p>Improving pre-service and in-service training for teachers, school leaders, and teacher aides in inclusive education.</p>	<p>Inclusive accessible reading materials. Remedial education support.</p>
<p>UNICEF Program 2023-2027 MET supported by UNICEF</p>	<p>ECE curriculum and teacher training. Child protection, psycho-social support, inclusive education, and positive behaviour management for ECE teachers. Inclusive Education Policy and implementation.</p>	<p>Distribution the <i>Waka</i> and <i>Mafana</i> ECE titles developed with USP-IOE and MET in all ECE centres. ECE classroom libraries (11 titles).¹¹ Counselling and support for boys' education. Capacity building for teachers on inclusive education and reading. Parenting guide for caregivers.</p>
<p>Assistance for Pacific Deaf Learners 2024-2027 New Zealand Multi-country program</p>	<p>Improving access to quality learning for Deaf children. Improving early identification of deafness and early intervention services. Increasing access to sign language. Increasing leadership and rights of persons who are deaf.</p>	<p>Sign language translations of classroom libraries and home reading materials. Availability of signed videos of books.</p>

¹⁰ Developed by the University of the South Pacific Institute of Education under the LALI project and printed and distributed under the TESA project. Rights to the *Mafana* series are with the MET. Please see Annex for details of these books.

¹¹ Please see Annex for details of these books.

Multiplier

Tonga’s Multiplier application for US\$5m was approved 2 July 2024 and is incorporated into the TRSRP. The STG has been designed to complement the wider TRSRP and the Multiplier-financed subcomponents.

Table 10 Alignment between Multiplier and STG

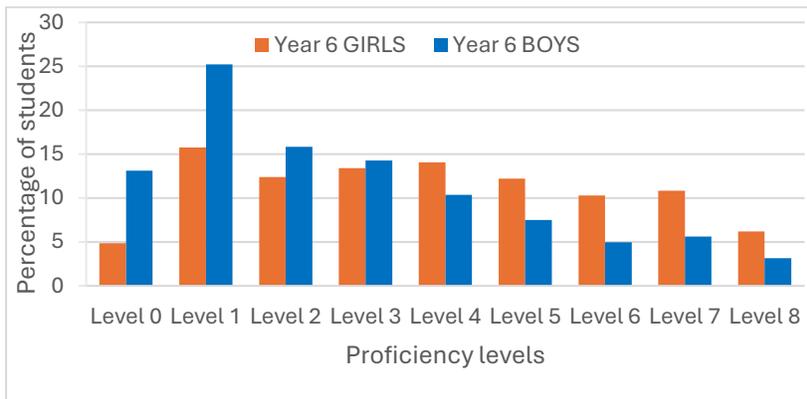
TSRSP component	Complementary STG
<p>2.3 Supporting quality primary and secondary education.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revision of national curriculum (Forms 3-7). Primary framework approved in 2023. • Development of syllabuses, teachers’ guides and students’ books. • Inclusion of cross-cutting gender-responsive and inclusive education approaches. • Professional development of teachers. • Review of pre-service curriculum. • Design and implementation of a counselling program. • Communications campaign to reduce vandalism of schools and corporal punishment. 	<p>Classroom libraries aligned with the new curriculum framework and teaching materials.</p> <p>Reading booster aligned with new curriculum framework and inclusive pedagogies.</p> <p>Training focused on effective use of new classroom libraries and home reading. Uses MET Field Officers and school-based in-service.</p> <p>Counselling program using similar modules but focused on primary schools. Communication campaign focusing on home reading.</p>
<p>2.4 Improving learning and teaching conditions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase of equipment and teaching and learning materials for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Science corners at 20 Form 1 and 2 schools. ○ Science laboratories and ICT equipment at 15 high schools. ○ Laptops and projectors for 32 middle schools. ○ Outdoor playground and literacy zone equipment for 46 primary schools which also deliver ECE. 	<p>Classroom libraries to complement new equipment and materials to improve the teaching and learning environment.</p>

2.3 System transformation

Poor reading outcomes

The Education Sector Analysis identified persistent problems with reading outcomes in primary grades, especially for male students, some female students, and students from poorer households. In 2021, the regional Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (PILNA) found that only 47 and 30 percent of Year 4 and 6 students met the minimum reading proficiency standard (less than proportion who achieved the minimum standard in PILNA 2015 and 2018) and that boys performed far worse than female students (38% of male students met the Year 4 standard compared with 56% of girls).

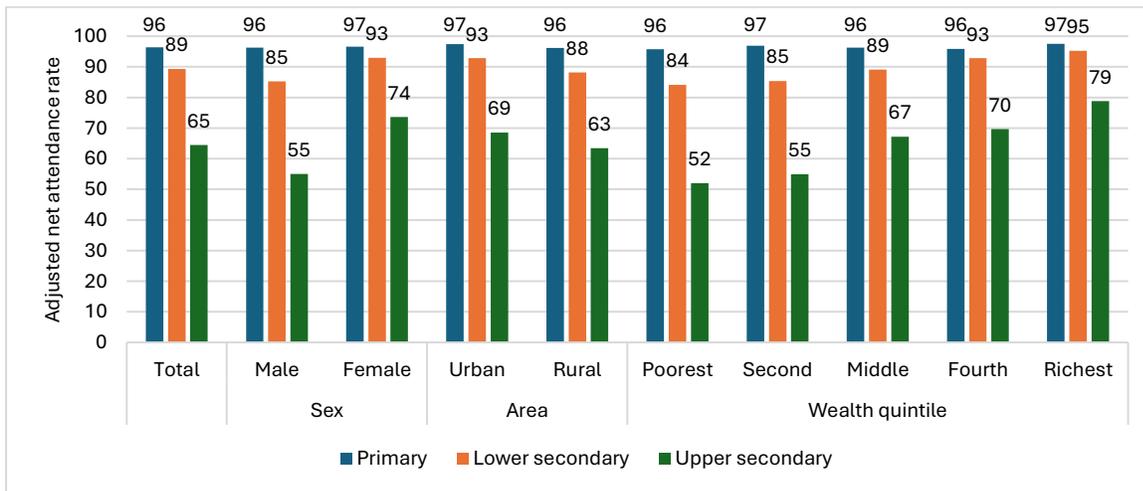
Figure 1 Year 6 reading proficiency by PILNA level, 2021



Male students at risk of dropping out

The 2019 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) and data from the school census show that male students were increasingly likely to drop out as they got older with the result that the gender parity index reached 2.18 by secondary Form 7. The enrolment gap is apparent in primary school and steadily worsens, with poor rural students most impacted.

Figure 2 Adjusted net attendance rate, 2019



These two related issues are having a system-wide impact. If students cannot read fluently, they are unable to access the rest of the curriculum. In turn, they fall further behind and are at a higher risk of dropping out. Furthermore, male students – especially those from poorer families - face increasing socio-economic and cultural pressures to stop attending school. Unable to catch up with learning, and increasingly disaffected, they drop out of school. To transform the education system, the government and its partners need to tackle these inequities to improve efficiency and human capital development.

2.4 Bottlenecks

The Partnership Compact, JSR and ESA examined the root causes behind low reading outcomes and dropping out early. These include cultural and socio-economic barriers preventing boys and young men learning or completing school and economic barriers to children from poorer households enrolling, completing school, and learning at home.

The key bottlenecks to transforming the situation were identified as:

- Gaps in teachers' skills and content knowledge for foundational learning for both genders and support children with functional difficulties.
- Limited provision of quality programs for the professional development, observation, and coaching of teachers.
- Insufficient access to reading books and other curriculum materials.
- Limited access to early intervention and reading recovery programs.
- Culture around reading and home learning, and different social expectations of male and female students.
- Lack of counselling and support programs, especially for male students at risk of dropping out.
- Limited access to quality ECE.

The enabling factors analysis also identified contributory factors which included:

- No increase in the value of operational grants to primary and secondary schools.
- Lack of gender-responsive planning to invest in quality improvements for boys and girls from disadvantaged areas.
- Gaps in data on enrolment and learning due to a lack of updated standards frameworks, frequent monitoring, and regular national learning and school readiness assessments.

2.5 Results and lessons from past programs

The STG program and other projects will tackle these areas, removing the most serious bottlenecks to improving primary reading outcomes. The STG design is based on learning from recent programs.

Tonga Education Support Activity

The Tonga Education Support Activity distributed 18,000 copies of 15 literacy titles and 3,300 teacher guides to all primary schools in the early 2020s proving an effective model for the management of book selection and distribution. The project, which closed in 2023, implemented cycles of continuing professional development (CPD) for primary school teachers and principals which provides MET with modules to adapt, experienced trainers, and lessons in how to improve the effectiveness of the training. A further 24,000 *Mafana* series books were printed and distributed with funding from New Zealand in 2024.

COVID-19

During COVID-19, the MET demonstrated it could establish digital resource libraries and manage large-scale communication campaigns. The HeLP platform is well established and well known and can serve as effective and free repository for the new reading books and other materials. The MET has a professional recording study established under previous emergency grants.

Come Let's Read and Write (CLRW)

Between 2015-2018, the World Bank evaluated the CLRW program which targeted 1st and 2nd grade teachers at 38 schools with training, coaching and materials for more effective reading instruction. These included scripted lesson plans and decodable texts. Decodable and levelled texts would be included in the early grade classroom libraries under component 2, and the reading in-service under component 1 will be delivered at the school level by existing MET CPD staff.

2.5 Evidence

The selected activities have a strong evidence base of effectiveness.

Teachers' classroom practices improve reading outcomes...

A teacher's classroom practice is known to have a profound impact on reading outcomes. For example, an early grade reading assessment in the Tongan language in 2009 found that students had higher reading outcomes if their teachers used the recommended texts and teacher guides. It also found that frequent story retelling was associated with higher reading scores.¹² Data from the Tonga Education Support Activity found that primary school teachers were teaching literacy and numeracy more effectively and teachers and principals were more effectively using formative assessment to promote learning for every child.

...when coupled with high quality teaching and learning materials

The *Cost-effective Approaches to Improve Global Learning* panel recommendations for “smart buys” identified that “structured pedagogy (a package that includes structured lesson plans, learning materials, and ongoing teacher support)” was highly cost-effective and supported by a strong body of evidence from the region and globally.¹³ Structured lesson plans (with a strong emphasis on phonemic awareness, phonics, and later, reading comprehension) coupled with levelled and decodable reading books or student books, have been proven highly effective in multiple countries, including in neighbouring Papua New Guinea¹⁴ and Tonga's earlier “Come Let's Read and Write” program.¹⁵ The TSRSP will be procuring teacher guides, planners and pupil textbooks; the STG will procure the classroom libraries of decodable and graded reading texts.

Families can be supported to help their students attend school and learn

The PILNA 2021 found that “students who performed at or above the expected proficiency level...tended to have significantly higher levels of caregiver support at home.” One of the most impactful interventions ranked in the *Cost-effective Approaches to Improve Global Learning* panel recommendations for “smart buys” was “providing information on the benefits, costs, and quality of education” to caregivers.

¹² *How well are Tongan children learning to read (Vol. 2): Tonga report (English)*. Pacific early reading assessments series Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group.

<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/144771468339284638/Tonga-report>

¹³ 2023 *Cost-Effective Approaches to Improve Global Learning* - What does recent evidence tell us are “Smart Buys” for improving learning in low- and middle-income countries? [K. Akyeampong, T. Andrabi, A. Banerjee, R. Banerji, S. Dynarski, R. Glennerster, S. Grantham-McGregor, K. Muralidharan, B. Piper, S. Ruto, J. Saavedra, S. Schmelkes, H. Yoshikawa]. London, Washington D.C., New York. FCDO, the World Bank, UNICEF, and USAID

¹⁴ Macdonald, K., and B. T. Vu. 2018. *A Randomized Evaluation of a Low-Cost and Highly Scripted Teaching Method to Improve Basic Early Grade Reading Skills in Papua New Guinea*. Policy Research Working Paper 8427, World Bank, Washington, DC.

¹⁵ Macdonald, K., S. Brinkman, W. Jarvie, M. Machuca-Sierra, K. McDonall, S. Messaoud-Galusi, S. Tapueluelu, and B. T. Vu. 2018. *Intervening at Home and Then at School: A Randomized Evaluation of Two Approaches to Improve Early Educational Outcomes in Tonga*. Policy Research Paper 8682, World Bank, Washington, DC.

In addition to being a fun way to build connections with children, research on parental engagement and the home environment points to great benefits for children whose parents support their academic development at home. The reading experiences of children at home and at school are different and complementary: while children’s reading experiences at home tend to be conversational, reading experiences at school tend to be instructional. The active participation in the reading process (e.g. when children read themselves, ask or respond questions, etc.), which is often observed while reading at home, has been associated with increased vocabulary gains for those with limited vocabulary. Family involvement is particularly critical in contexts where the quality of formal instruction and available instructional time are low, or where children have some type of disability.

Early intervention is paramount

At the heart of component 2 and 3 is the urgency for more effective early interventions on reading and attendance. Both the reading booster pilot and the school-based counselling support will identify the most vulnerable students and quickly put in place interventions to support the child and improve their educational outcomes.

2.6 Theory of change

The STG program implements key parts of the Partnership Compact theory of change (Figure 3 overleaf).

The **bottlenecks** to increasing the proportion of students meeting the primary reading standards include ineffective teaching practices, a lack of structured pedagogical instructional materials, absence of any reading recovery program, and limited access to decodable and graded texts. These challenges are compounded by insufficient parental support for home learning, especially for the poorest families who lack access to suitable reading materials. Poor attendance also impacts on the acquisition of skills leading to growing disparities between boys and girls, for poor families, and communities in isolated geographical locations. The harm caused by the learning gap is profound as many of these children do not progress to secondary school, with a lifelong impact on communities.

The **theory of change** is if teachers are provided with structured teacher guides, sufficient pupil text books (under the TSRSP) and appropriate reading books (under the STG and also supported by New Zealand and UNICEF), and the teachers and principals can learn and practice effective reading teaching strategies in regular CPD, then the quality of teaching will improve, and children are more likely to acquire foundational reading skills. For students who are falling behind the curriculum standards, teachers need to intervene as early as possible with an intense and supportive reading booster in which the teacher is well trained and well resourced.

Learning to read will be accelerated if children are regularly reading at home in a supportive environment. If parents have appropriate reading materials, culturally sensitive guidance and messages, and community support and encouragement from the PTA, school, and church, they are more likely to read with their child and ensure daily attendance at school. Students who attend school every day are much more likely to achieve the learning outcomes.

The program **activities** are physical and digital classroom libraries and in-service training for primary schools reinforced by a home reading program which provides caregivers with reading materials and support from community groups. To support students who are vulnerable to dropping out, there will be a reading booster pilot delivered by trained teachers and training of school counsellors.

The program **outputs** will be reading books, reading training modules, home reading materials, reading booster materials, trained teachers and school counsellors. The main output indicators and targets are listed in the results framework in section 6.

The program's **assumptions** are related to the roll out of the new national curriculum (and the training which accompanies the training), the appropriateness of the TNU counselling course for educators, and the ability of the MET to craft effective messages and materials for parents.

The main **risks** are related to the human and technical capacity of the MET to manage the development of the classroom libraries and other materials whilst rolling out the new curriculum. Additional mitigations must include reducing the ever-present risk of a major natural disaster, to which Tonga is especially vulnerable. The risk and mitigation measures are described in section 9.

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Figure 3 STG activities in the Partnership Compact theory of change

TSDG SDG	TSDG 2.4.3 SDG 4.2.2	TSDG 2.4.4 & 2.4.7 SDG 4.c.1	TSDG 2.4.5 SDG 4.1.1	SDG 1.a.2	TSDG 2.4.3	TSDG 2.4.4 & 2.4.7 SDG 4.c.1	TSDG 2.4.5 SDG 4.1.1
Corporate Plan KPI	Net enrolment rate (ECE) 90% Gross enrolment rate (ECE) 90%	Student-qualified teacher ratio (ECE) 30 % of qualified teachers (ECE) 65%	Primary learning outcomes (Year 6 reading) 65%	Proportion of expenditure (excluding debt service) 16%	Net enrolment rate (sec) 90% Gross enrolment rate (sec) 95%	Student-qualified teacher ratio (sec) 30 % of qualified teachers 95%	Examination pass rate (Form 6 mathematics) 30%
Priority reform goal	Improve literacy in ECE and primary schools and numeracy in secondary schools, with a focus on male students, boys and girls from poorer households and children with disabilities.						
Long-term outcomes	1. Increase proportion of students meeting reading benchmarks in Year 4 and 6.			Enabling factors	2. Improve pass rate for mathematics in the national examinations.		
Intermediate outcomes	1.1 Increase proportion of children enrolled in ECE.	1.2 Improve skills and content knowledge of teachers to teach reading and support all students.	1.3 Increase access to inclusive curriculum materials for teaching reading in Tongan.	3.1 Domestic financing 3.2 Data and evidence 3.3 Gender-responsive planning and policy.	2.1 Increase proportion of students enrolled in Form 1 and 2.	2.2 Improve skills and content knowledge of secondary school teachers to teach mathematics.	2.3 Increase access to curriculum materials for teaching mathematics.
Activities	1.1.5 Conduct awareness campaign on benefits of ECE. 1.1.4 Support (and collect data from) non-formal ECE programs. 1.1.3 Transfer ECE grants and assistance programs. 1.1.2 Expand access to special and inclusive education. 1.1.1 Open more ECE classes and build playground and WASH facilities.	1.2.5 Strengthen principal and teacher standards, lesson observations, coaching and inspection for reading and inclusive education. 1.2.4 Create and implement a reading and IE professional development program for ECE and primary teachers. 1.2.3 Exchange reading and IE best practices in Tonga and regionally. 1.2.2 Establish and support a reading and IE professional development team, which includes INU and USP. 1.2.1 Offer scholarships to increase supply of qualified ECE teachers.	1.3.5 Develop and distribute reading recovery and home reading materials. 1.3.4 Produce and distribute inclusive education support materials (e.g., identification). 1.3.3 Produce and distribute Tongan reading books, textbooks, classroom libraries and lesson plans in accessible, digital and physical formats. 1.3.2 Increase time for reading in Tongan/English. 1.3.1 Review and update Tongan and English syllabuses and aligned materials.	3.3.2 Strengthen planning and monitoring. 3.3.1 Develop and update gender, inclusion and learning policies. 3.2.3 Strengthen school-based and national assessment. 3.2.2 Increase capacity of FMIS Unit and EAU. 3.2.1 Operationalise new Open FMIS system. 3.1.3 Increase retirement age for teachers from 60 to 65. 3.1.2 Prioritize funding for reading and maths programs. 3.1.1 Update grants formula.	2.1.7 Distribute scholarships and grants to improve enrolment. 2.1.6 Increase availability of extracurricular activities. 2.1.5 Increase the number of qualified male teachers. 2.1.4 Strengthen PTAs and collaborate with churches and communities to support parents to be more involved in children's attendance and learning. 2.1.3 Produce and distribute knowledge sharing materials for parents and communities. 2.1.2 Increase the number of trained school counsellors. 2.1.1 Increase the number of middle schools.	2.2.6 Review teacher training programs for mathematics teachers. 2.2.5 Develop in-service program to equip teachers to support male students. 2.2.4 Implement a maths professional development program and network for secondary school principals and teachers, including lesson observations. 2.2.3 Analyse gaps in maths teaching and student learning. 2.2.2 Increase scholarships for new mathematics teachers. 2.2.1 Create more specialist mathematics teaching positions.	2.3.5 Provide more access to online mathematics resources. 2.3.4 Write and distribute mathematics textbooks that are inclusive and culturally relevant for all Tongan students. 2.3.3 Empower school leaders to lead mathematical learning effectively. 2.3.2 Increase the time allocation for mathematics. 2.3.1 Review and update mathematics curriculum and aligned resources.
Bottlenecks	Children from poorer households are not ready for school.	Gaps in teachers' skills and content knowledge on reading and inclusive education. Only 54.5% ECE teachers qualified.	Lack of reading books and curriculum materials. No reading recovery program.	Insufficient domestic financing of reading and mathematics. Grants not linked to equity or inflation. Data not used by schools or MEI to improve learning and equity.	High dropout rates for boys, boys and girls from poor households, and children with disabilities. Limited support and recovery programs.	Gaps in teachers' skills and knowledge. Lack of CPD programs for mathematics.	Insufficient textbooks, teacher guides, and digital materials for mathematics.
Root causes	Poor households less likely to send their children to formal ECE. Lack of reading materials in poorer households.	Insufficient domestic financing for CPD in literacy and inclusion. No national literacy or inclusive education program. Few ECE teachers being qualified.	Insufficient domestic financing for curriculum materials. Primary grant has not increased in line with inflation. No national reading program.	Heavy reliance on donor funding. Limited domestic budget for education. Outdated FMIS system. No primary learning assessment apart from PILNA.	Socio-economic and cultural pressures for boys and young men to leave school. Lack of access to Middle School and Secondary places.	Lack of specialist mathematics teachers. Complex mathematical concepts. Lack of knowledge of gaps in mathematical learning. Salary gap between public and non-government schools.	Lack of investment in mathematics. Middle School and Secondary grant has not increased with inflation.

3. Beneficiaries

3.1 Targeting

The program is national in scope and will reach all **130** primary schools (106 government and 24 non-government). The reading booster will initially target primary-aged boys with poor reading scores at 30 primary schools with low reading assessment scores.¹⁶ All materials will be made available online for free for the use in all schools.

Table 11 Component targeting

Component	Targeting
1. Classroom libraries	All primary schools
2. Home reading program	All primary schools
3. Boys' education program	
3.1 School counsellors	All primary schools
3.2 Reading booster pilot	30 primary schools

3.2 Inclusion of non-government schools

The non-government schools meet the GPE criteria for government-assisted education. Tonga has a long history of non-government education provision, beginning with the early missionary churches. Under Part VII of the Education Act, the registered non-government Managing Authorities (known as “education systems”) have full authority to manage their schools using their own governance mechanisms.

The registration process for Managing Authorities is managed by the MET with the final decision from the Minister and includes signing a Memorandum of Agreement. The MET, with due notice to the Managing Authority, may visit, inspect, or appraise any school or teacher and non-government schools are expected to provide regular data. Non-government schools receive a subsidy from the government which is paid on a per-head basis to enable non-government schools to operate their schools and pay their teachers.

3.3 Beneficiaries

The classroom libraries, reading in-service, home reading journals, and school counsellors will benefit an estimated **18,164** primary students (48% female).¹⁷ The reading booster pilot will reach an estimated **1,000** primary students (25% female).

An estimated **889** primary teachers (78% female) will receive a classroom library and at least five days of school-based in-service training.¹⁸ Up to **60** primary teachers will receive additional training

¹⁶ The schools will be selected on the Secondary Entrance Exam literacy results or (if reported before the subcomponent is implemented) the geographical areas with the lowest reading assessment scores in the new Year 6 large-scale assessment.

¹⁷ Student population estimate is 2022 enrolment as reported in the ESA + 10%.

¹⁸ Teacher population estimate is 2022 workforce as reported in the ESA + 10%.

in the reading booster pilot. **130** primary teachers will complete the counselling course (50% female). An estimated **500** PTA members (50% female) will receive training on the home reading package.

3.4 Gender equality

In line with the Partnership Compact, the STG program has a focus on the education outcomes for boys and girls from poorer households. There is robust evidence that boys are underperforming girls in retention and learning achievement. There is data from household surveys that girls from poorer households are also at risk of dropping out in the higher grades, primarily due to social pressures to get married and the economic impact of school fees.

The program addresses gender equality in each component:

Table 12 Gender equality actions

Component	Brief description of how the component addresses gender equality
1. Classroom libraries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive representations of males and females in text and illustrations which combat societal stereotypes of male and female roles, ambitions and actions. • Equal balance of male and female main and supporting characters, emotional depth and narrative arcs. • Good balance of fiction and non-fiction titles including themes that will appeal to boys (established at baseline). • Narrative plots will cover topics on socio-emotional learning, mental health, and wellbeing, including topics such as bullying. • Equal balance of any antagonistic or negative characters. • Consciously including plots which reinforce the value of education, especially for boys and young men, and the potential harms of dropping out, missing school, or early marriage and pregnancy. • Interwoven messages about the importance of reading, preparing for climate change, and healthy minds and bodies. • In-service training will emphasise the importance of boys and girls reading every day, praising reading, and inclusive teaching and learning strategies for reading. • Training will include strategies for ensuring boys and girls get equal access to the classroom libraries, and messaging for caregivers and students on home reading. • Having audio versions of Tongan and English stories read by a balance of male and female narrators to improve comprehension of weaker readers. • The SCG will be developing new gender-responsive Teacher and Principal Standards during the STG period.
2. Home reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Home Reading Journal will include texts and illustrations with an equal balance of male and female characters, narrative arcs, and antagonists, which do not reinforce stereotypes and show males and females in non-stereotypical roles and situations.

Component	Brief description of how the component addresses gender equality
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The PTA Flipbook will include strong messaging on the importance of daily reading and attendance for both boys and girls and offer strategies tailored for both sexes. • PTA training will include an equal balance of men and women.
3. Boys' education program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school counsellor training will reinforce safe school and safeguarding strategies for boys and girls, including messaging on relationships, bullying, violence, attendance, and early marriage. • The community of practice for counsellors will reinforce messaging and local solutions to attendance, learning, and bullying issues. • The reading booster groups will be same sex to tailor for the needs of each group of students. The texts will be designed to be engaging for boys as they are more likely to require the booster. The booster will include specific messaging on engaging boys (and their parents) successfully in the early reading intervention. • The SCG will be financing a new Gender Policy and equitable School Grants Policy during the program period.
4. Program management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All data will be sex disaggregated. • All PMU staff and consultants will receive gender training and have mandatory gender equality responsibilities in their terms of reference.

3.5 Disability inclusion

A regional inclusive education program funded by New Zealand and managed by the University of the South Pacific Institute of Education (USP-IOE) is supporting CPD for teachers during the STG program period. The New Zealand aid program is also supporting a multi-country assistance program for Deaf learners, including support for sign languages and education services for Deaf learners.

To complement these regional initiatives, the STG program will significantly increase the availability of accessible reading materials in primary schools, including sign language translations and audio versions. During the STG period, the complementary SCG will be funding updated gender- and disability-responsive Minimum Service Standards and an equitable School Grants Policy.

Table 13 Inclusive education activities

Component	Brief description of how the component addresses gender equality
1. Classroom libraries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production of audio, Braille format, and large print versions of all reading texts for students with visual impairments. • Production of signed video versions of all reading texts for students who are Deaf or hard of hearing. • Texts will contain narrative and visual representations of children and adults living with disabilities. • At least 15 percent of texts will have an adult or child living with disabilities as the main protagonist or hero with non-stereotypical roles and where their disability is not their defining characteristic. • All texts will be made available for free online and in an accessible app for parents, teachers, and students.

Component	Brief description of how the component addresses gender equality
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The reading in-service module will include strategies for quickly screening for reading difficulties and simple adaptations to the curriculum, classroom and teaching approach based on the Save the Children Student Needs Action Pack and aligned with the inclusive education training from the USP-IOE.
2. Home reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As per classroom libraries. • Positive messages about the right to school for children living with disabilities and the availability of inclusive and special education will be included in the PTA training, Flipbook and behaviour change campaign. • Strategies for supporting reading at home with children with disabilities.
3. Boys' education program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School counsellors will receive training in supporting the needs of children living with disabilities, including how to tackle stigma and discrimination and harmful stereotypes, and refer students for additional services. • The reading booster program will directly address learning gaps and include simple guidance on screening for reading difficulties and adapting the package for different needs.
4. Program management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data will be disaggregated by disability. • All PMU staff and consultants will receive disability inclusion training and have mandatory gender inclusion responsibilities in their terms of reference.

4. Capacity strengthening

The STG program has been designed to enhance national capacity and aid effectiveness across the four components.

4.1 Technical assistance and PMU

The MET is a small organisation. The embedded PMU staff hired by the STG will provide technical assistance throughout the program. Recruited by MET and staffed with national specialists, the PMU is a key government operational unit within the MET structure and has been responsible for the successful coordination of multiple GPE programs. The PMU will be supporting the STG and SCG programs during the Partnership Compact.

The PMU provides financial management, procurement, and coordination support for the program, ensuring quarterly review and reporting systems are working effectively, and providing advice to the MET to ensure that GPE and grant agent policies are being adhered to.

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Table 14 PMU structure

Role	Supports	Duration
Head of PMU	Director, Project Management and Coordination Division	4 years
Project Coordinator	Implementing divisions for Component 1	4 years
Education Coordinator	Implementing divisions for Component 2 & 3	4 years
MEL Coordinator	Policy, Planning and Research Division Component 4	4 years
Corporate Services Coordinator	Finance Division Corporate Services Division	4 years

The STG makes use of regional expertise through short-term external technical assistance for capacity strengthening in key activities. Save the Children’s Library for All may be selected by MET to provide technical assistance to the CAD in the development of the classroom libraries and Home Reading Journals. Library for All has regional experience working with ministries of education to develop high quality children’s libraries and has a strong reputation for developing the capacity of local managers, writers, editors, and illustrators.

Save the Children Pacific literacy experts will provide support for MET to develop the reading in-service and home reading modules. Both inputs will be coordinated with the TSRSP technical team and reflected in the Capacity Development Plan shared with the SCG. Capacity strengthening strategies include professional development, development of standard operating procedures, mentoring, and sharing of exemplar materials. Save the Children is already providing technical assistance to MET and TNU on safe schools and school-based counselling funded by the Australian Non-Government Organisations Cooperation Program.

Table 15 Technical assistance

Role	Duration
Library for All Classroom Library Development (including home reading journal)	3 years (if required)
Pacific Reading Specialist	Up to 40 days

4.2 Sustainability

The activities have been selected for sustainability and replicability.

Component	Description of sustainability	Rating
1. Classroom libraries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment in local writers, editors, translators, illustrators and graphic designers to increase the sustainability of local book publishing. • Adapting open-source texts from the Pacific and globally, including those originally funded by donors. • MET or open-source copyright to allow lower cost reprinting. • Making books available for free to parents, teachers, students and non-government education systems on a free reading app and the HeLP online platform, including uploading to a global digital library for redundancy in the event of a local disaster. • Adapting and updating existing reading modules developed under a previous project. • Using low cost, school-based, one-day in-service delivered by existing trainers trained under a previous project rather than expensive, unsustainable residential workshops (i.e. bringing the trainers to the school rather than the teachers to the training). • Providing a strong secure waterproof container for the books to reduce the risk of loss during vacations and natural disasters. • Physical books have a lifespan of at least 5 years, and schools will be able to reprint, copy and download all texts. • Due to the size of the book procurement, it is likely these will be printed overseas which is more cost effective. 	High
2. Home reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapting existing community reading resources from other Pacific countries (e.g. the home reading flipbook from Papua New Guinea). • Adapting open-source texts from the Pacific and globally for the Home Reading Journals. • Using local writers, editors, translators and illustrators. • Making materials available for free for all stakeholders on HeLP and a free app. • Home Reading Journal produced in an easily reproduced format for future reprinting. • Delivering PTA training at the school (facilitated by the principal) as a low-cost modality. • Journals have a lifespan of 2-3 years as they will be sent home with students and have a higher risk of loss and wear and tear. 	Medium
3. Boys' education program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updating the existing CLWR package for the new curriculum reading booster. • Establishing the education counselling course at the TNU or similar higher education institution. 	Medium

Component	Description of sustainability	Rating
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building a community of practice for school counsellors using social media. 	

4.3 Aid effectiveness

Use of country systems

The STG will continue to build the use of country systems begun under the previous GPE programs.

Table 16 Use of government systems

System	Approach	Change from previous projects
Planning	Program activities are included in MET's annual planning cycle and reflected in the Corporate Plan and Annual Management Plan.	No change
Budget	Program budget, donor and annual expenditure are identified in the national budget.	No change
Parliament	The achievements and outputs of the program are included in the MET Annual Report.	No change
Treasury	Disbursement is to a government donor trust account (GPE Trust Account/DFA) at the National Reserve Bank of Tonga under the authority of the Ministry of Finance.	No change
Procurement	Procurement is managed by MET using government systems supported by the Procurement Division at the Ministry of Finance. MET has the option to use Save the Children for complex, time-critical or overseas procurements on request.	No change
Accounting	Program income and expenditure is recorded in the government's accounting system (SUN).	No change
Audit	The annual audit is conducted by an independent audit firm selected by MET and approved by Save the Children.	No change
Reporting	The program activities are reported quarterly and annually as per the government's processes, donor and grant agent policies.	No change

Role of the LEG

Tonga has a Local Education Group consisting of the government, development partners, non-government education systems, and academic institutions. This mechanism will provide aid coordination, consultation, and accountability functions. The MET will briefly report on the progress of the grant biannually during LEG meetings and during the Chief Executive Officer's regular meetings with the Directors of Education Systems. The LEG will receive copies of the grant's six-monthly progress and completion reports.

Coordination with key projects

The STG program is designed to complement existing programs, particularly the TSRSP, safe schools project, and the regional inclusive education program funded by New Zealand. The PMU will lead coordination activities and ensure there is regular communication to avoid duplication. The SCG activities on policy strengthening and revitalising the Standard Tests of Achievement in Tonga are strongly related to the STG, including the use of shared texts, Program Operations Manual, Capacity Development Plan, and gender-inclusive policies.

5. Monitoring, evaluation and learning

The MEL Coordinator will support the Policy, Planning and Research Division (PPRD) to deliver the monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) activities for the grant. All data will be sex- and disability-disaggregated. The MEL activities will be described in a MEL Plan which will be reviewed and updated annually and include indicator descriptions and data collection and reporting tools.

5.1 Monitoring

Monitoring activities will include quarterly review workshops, school monitoring visits, and a beneficiary database to track progress on program outputs. As a result of the findings in the baseline study, the program will support regular tracking of primary student attendance data.

Table 17 Monitoring activities

Activity	Type	Frequency
Program Steering Committee (PSC)	Review	Quarterly
Quarterly plan & review workshops with divisions	Review	Quarterly
School monitoring visits	Visit	Termly
Tracking student attendance data	Monitoring	Termly
Portfolio review	Review	Biannual

5.2 Evaluation

Two evaluation activities are financed by the program and one activity is financed by the SCG Tranche 1 (JSR 2025). The STG baseline study was financed by the Program Development Grant. The SCG Tranche 3 will be financing the Year 3 national learning assessment which may provide data for the STG objective-level indicator. During the STG period, there will be a mid-term review of the Partnership Compact and another regional learning assessment.

Table 18 Evaluation activities

Activity	Type	Frequency
Evaluation of the reading booster pilot.	Study	Once
STG endline study.	Study	Once (2028)
Joint Sector Review	Review	Annually
Mid-term review of the Partnership Compact	Review	Once (2026)

Activity	Type	Frequency
Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment	Regional learning assessment	Triennial Cycle 5 2025 Cycle 6 2029
Standardized Tests of Achievement for Tonga ¹⁹	National learning assessment	Biennial once restarted

5.3 Learning

Learning and iteration are important activities within the Partnership Compact and STG program. There are formal mechanisms for sharing learning within the Tongan education sector, including the regular meetings of the Tonga Council of Directors of Education Systems, the LEG, annual JSR, and symposia and knowledge sharing events funded by the STG.

Table 19 Learning activities

Activity	Type	Frequency
Local Education Group	Forum	Biannual
Annual knowledge sharing events	Symposium	Annual (x3)
School counsellor community of practice	Forum	Termly
STG Annual Progress Report	Report	Annual
STG Completion Report	Report	Once (2029)

¹⁹ Currently, the TSRSP is supporting the Year 5 and 6 large-scale assessments. The SCG will be financing the development and implementation of the Year 3 learning assessment.

6. Results framework

The program results framework is derived from the Partnership Compact and includes the relevant Corporate Plan key performance indicators (KPIs) and international indicators from the GPE and Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

Table 20 Results framework

Objective/outcome	Indicator	KPI	Disaggregation	Baseline (2024)	Target (2028)	Data source
Objective Increased proportion of students meeting reading benchmarks in Year 4 and 6.	a. Percentage of students in Year 4 and 6 achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in literacy.	KPI 13.2 SDG 4.1.1	Grade Sex	2021 Reading Year 4 PILNA Male: 38% Female: 56% Overall: 47% Year 6 PILNA Male: 21% Female: 91% Overall: 87%	Cycle 5 2025 Cycle 6 2029 Improved	PILNA or STAT Year 3 and 6.
	b. Number of beneficiary children.	GPE 4 ²⁰	<i>Cumulative</i> Grade Sex	0	Primary: 18,164	EMIS
Outcome 1 Increased access to inclusive curriculum materials for teaching reading in Tongan.	1.a Number of reading books developed and distributed.	GPE 1 ²¹	<i>Cumulative</i> Grade Language	Developed: 0 Distributed: 0	Developed: 330 Distributed: 48,895	Distribution report
	1.b Percentage of ECE and primary classes with a classroom library. ²²	-	Grade	80% Y1: 64% Y2: 73% Y3: 100%	Primary:95% (124 schools)	Distribution report

²⁰ GPE global indicator: Cumulative number of children who directly participated in project activities, received project-supported incentives or services, or benefited from project interventions so far.

²¹ GPE global indicator: Textbooks purchased and distributed.

²² Classroom library consisting of reading materials only, not specifically constructed library.

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Objective/outcome	Indicator	KPI	Disaggregation	Baseline (2024)	Target (2028)	Data source
				Y4: 85% Y5: 73% Y6: 100%		
	1.c Reading book-student ratio.	-	Grade	2.91 (median 30 books per class) Y1: 0.89 (10) Y2: 2.50 (30) Y3: 1.90 (25) Y4: 3.85 (40) Y5: 6.76 (56) Y6: 2.76 (20)	5.00	Study
	1.d Percentage of reading books available online.	-	-	0%	100%	Activity report
	1.e Percentage of reading books available in accessible formats.	-	-	0%	100%	Activity report
Outcome 2 Improved skills and content knowledge of teachers to teach reading and support all students.	2.a Percentage of teachers demonstrating improved literacy teaching skills.	-	Grade	Teaching: 78% Behaviour: 90% Classroom: 79% Documents: 63% All domains: 78% ²³	Increased	Study
	2.b Percentage of teachers trained in teaching literacy.	GPE 2 ²⁴	Cumulative Grade Sex	Primary: 0 (0%)	Primary: 90% (800)	Training report
	2.c Percentage of students who report they read at school on the previous school day.	-	Grade Sex	T: 76% M: 72% F: 80% Y1: 92%	85%	Study

²³ Average share of teachers who were observed following the classroom practices completely, by domain (Baseline Report 2024).

²⁴ GPE global indicator: Teachers trained

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Objective/outcome	Indicator	KPI	Disaggregation	Baseline (2024)	Target (2028)	Data source
				Y2: 78% Y3: 68% Y4: 78% Y5: 72% Y6: 70%		
Outcome 3 Increased frequency of reading and home learning support.	3.a Percentage of students who report they read at home on the previous day.	-	Grade Sex	T: 59% M: 53% F: 66% Y1: 77% Y2: 70% Y3: 48% Y4: 61% Y5: 51% Y6: 49%	70%	Study
	3.b Percentage of students whose caregivers frequently support their children. ²⁵	-	Grade Sex	2021 PILNA Year 4: 49% Year 6: 54%	Increased	PILNA or STAT Year 3 and 6.
	3.c Number of PTA members trained in home reading program.	-	Sex	0	500	Training report
	3.d Number of reading materials distributed.	-	Grade	0	Flipbooks: 130 Home Reading Journals: 18,164	Distribution report
Outcome 4 Improved attendance at school.	4.a Percentage of students absent for one or more days in the previous week.	-	Sex	M: 35% F: 39%	Reduced	Study
	4.b Number of counsellors trained.	-	<i>Cumulative</i> Sex	0	130	Training report
	4.c Number of teachers trained in reading booster.	-	<i>Cumulative</i> Sex	0	60	Training report

²⁵ Average proportion of students who answered with either ‘Always’ or ‘Most of the time’ across the PILNA caregiver support domain questions.

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Objective/outcome	Indicator	KPI	Disaggregation	Baseline (2024)	Target (2028)	Data source
	4.d Number of students participating in reading booster program.	-	<i>Cumulative</i> Sex Grade	0	Male: 750 Female: 250 Total: 1000	Training report

7. Budget

Table 21 Budget by sub-component and year, US\$

Component	Year 1 2025	Year 2 2026	Year 3 2027	Year 4 2028	Total
1. Classroom libraries	246,269	301,317	297,751	81,386	926,724
1.1 Develop classroom libraries	209,603	205,908	210,708	-	626,219
1.2 National reading in-service program	36,667	95,409	87,043	81,386	300,505
2. Home reading program	29,167	227,515	69,994	72,444	399,120
2.1 Home Reading Journals	-	191,703	-	-	191,703
2.2 Home reading campaign	29,167	35,813	69,994	72,444	207,417
3. Boys' education support	-	61,042	105,013	69,863	235,917
3.1 School counsellors	-	61,042	43,346	44,863	149,250
3.2 Reading booster program	-	-	61,667	25,000	86,667
4. Program management and learning	175,615	142,203	145,833	174,589	638,240
4.1 Program management and coordination	109,667	73,399	75,968	78,627	337,660
4.2 Monitoring, evaluation and learning	27,448	30,304	31,365	57,463	146,580
4.3 Grant agent supervision costs	38,500	38,500	38,500	38,500	154,000
Total	451,051	732,077	618,591	398,282	2,200,000
Grant agent fee	38,500	38,500	38,500	38,500	154,000

Table 22 Expected disbursements by component and year, US\$

Component	Year 1 2025	Year 2 2026	Year 3 2027	Year 4 2028	Total
1. Classroom libraries	246,269	301,317	297,751	81,386	926,724
2. Home reading program	29,167	227,515	69,994	72,444	399,120
3. Boys' education support	-	61,042	105,013	69,863	235,917
4. Program management and learning	175,615	142,203	145,833	174,589	638,240
Total	451,051	732,077	618,591	398,282	2,200,000
Grant agent fee (7%)	38,500	38,500	38,500	38,500	154,000

Table 23 Expected disbursements by component and year, TOP

Component	Year 1 2025	Year 2 2026	Year 3 2027	Year 4 2028	Total
1. Classroom libraries	591,047	723,160	714,603	195,327	2,224,137
2. Home reading program	70,000	546,036	167,986	173,865	957,887
3. Boys' education support	-	146,500	252,030	167,671	566,201
4. Program management and learning	421,475	341,288	349,999	419,015	1,531,776
Total	1,082,522	1,756,984	1,484,618	955,878	5,280,001
Grant agent fee (7%)	92,400	92,400	92,400	92,400	369,600

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Table 24 Program implementation costs, US\$

	Year 1 2025	Year 2 2026	Year 3 2027	Year 4 2028	Total
General agency fees (in addition to allocation)	38,500	38,500	38,500	38,500	154,000
Grant agent direct costs (part of allocation), including for supervision, country office, etc.)	38,500	38,500	38,500	38,500	154,000
Other cost related to implementation support (program implementation, PSU etc.)	106,750	70,380	72,843	75,393	325,366

Results based financing

Due to the size of the STG, the country will not utilise results-based financing for this grant.

8. Implementation arrangements

8.1 Responsible actors and processes

The **executing agency** of the Financing Agreement is the Ministry of Finance (MoF). The Financing Agreement will describe the financial management, procurement, and safeguarding systems and processes to be used for the grant.

The MET is the **implementing agency**. The Director, Project Management and Coordination Division will oversee the project implementation progress, collate reports from implementing divisions and units, and report regularly to the Chief Executive Officer and senior management team. The officers responsible for coordinating the components and activities will be:

Table 25 Responsibilities

Component	Responsible	Supporting
1. Classroom libraries	Director, Primary	Director, CAD
1.1 Develop classroom libraries.	Director, Primary	Director, CAD
1.2 National reading in-service program.	Director, Primary	Director, Quality Assurance Division
2. Home reading program.	Director, Primary	
2.1 Home Reading Journals.	Director, CAD	Director, CAD
2.2 Home reading campaign	Director, Primary	Director, Quality Assurance Division
3. Boys' education program.	Director, Truancy, Emergency and Safer Schools Division	Director, Primary Director, Secondary
3.1 School counsellors.	Director, Truancy, Emergency and Safer Schools Division	Director, Secondary TNU or USP-IOE
3.2 Reading booster program.	Director, Primary	Director, Secondary
4. Program management and learning	Director, PMCD	Director, Finance Division
4.1 Program management and coordination.	Director, PMCD	Director, Finance Division
4.2 Monitoring, evaluation and learning.	Director, PPRD	Director, PMCD

As with previous grants, the MET will establish a **Program Management Unit** to coordinate and support implementing divisions. Please refer to section 4 for more details on the PMU.

The **GPE coordinating agency** is currently the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The core responsibilities of the coordinating agency include promoting inter-agency harmonisation and complementarity; supporting MET efforts to establish an effective and inclusive LEG; coordinating developing partners in the development and review of the GPE grant outputs; and providing a conduit for information about GPE grants.

The **grant agent** is Save the Children. SCA will provide fiduciary and technical oversight of the program as per the Financing Agreement, GPE policy ([Terms of Reference for SCG Grant Agents](#)) and GPE [Accountability Matrix](#). The grant agent functions include timely disbursement of funds upon receipt of a disbursement letter, acquittal and activity report; granting of No Objection to expenditure as per the limits stipulated in the Financing Agreement; provision of quality assurance and technical review of activity outputs; spot-checks and audit; safeguarding support, and the review of progress and completion reporting. At the request of the MET, SCA may recruit and jointly manage technical advisers hired through the grant and may provide direct payment for goods and services in exceptional circumstances.

8.2 Governance and accountability

Program Steering Committee

The MET will continue with the GPE Program Steering Committee (PSC) established under previous GPE grants. The PSC will meet quarterly to monitor program activities and expenditure and review annual plans and key deliverables. The PSC members will include:

- Chairperson: Chief Executive Officer, MET
- Deputy Chairperson: Director, Project Management and Coordination Division
- Secretary: Head of PMU
- Members:
 - Director, Policy, Planning and Research Division
 - Director, Curriculum and Assessment Division
 - Director, Primary Division
 - Director, Secondary Division
 - Director, Truancy, Emergency and Safer Schools Division
 - DFAT representative as Coordinating Agency
 - Ministry of Finance Aid Division representative
 - Other MET Directors as required.
- Program Coordinator – Tonga, SCA
- Project representatives as required (for example, TSRSP)

Grant Management Committee

SCA will establish an internal grant management committee (GMC) which will meet monthly to monitor grant disbursements and ensure that agreed policy and processes are being followed correctly. A key role of the GMC is early detection of any issues which may arise during implementation and put in place additional support and mitigation strategies. The GMC will review financial and activity reports and support the drafting of reports to GPE and LEG.

Local Education Group

The Local Education Group (LEG) includes the MET, Directors of Education Systems, higher education representatives, and development partners. This mechanism will provide aid coordination, consultation, and transparency functions. The MET will briefly report on the progress of the grant during LEG meetings and during the Chief Executive Officer’s regular meetings with the Directors of Education Systems. The LEG will review draft copies of the grant’s six-monthly progress and completion reports. All program outputs (teaching and learning materials, study reports etc.) will be shared with the LEG.

8.3 Fiduciary arrangements and financial management

The program will use the Government of Tonga financial management and audit system, policies, procedures, and templates as described in Public Finance Management Act (2002) and relevant [Ministry of Finance](#) instructions. The Financing Agreement will list the grant agent authorization checkpoints for large expenditures. The MET may request the use of SCA systems on a case-by-case basis and must present a strong rationale for not using government systems.

The existing GPE Trust Account/DFA will be used for the new SCG tranche. The MET will set up an agreed chart of accounts for the activities in the government’s SUN financial management system and ensure GPE funds and activities are reflected in the Annual Management Plan, National Budget, and Corporate Plan.

The currency for disbursement and reporting is United States Dollars (USD). The MET may use Tongan Pa'anga (TOP) for local payments, with exchange rate gains and losses captured in financial reporting. The grant will be transferred through the GPE Trust Fund Agent (World Bank) to SCA in USD. SCA will disburse funds into the Trust Account/DFA at the National Reserve Bank of Tonga at the prevailing USD/TOP exchange rate at agreed replenishment frequencies as defined in the Implementation Plan and Budget (IPB) and upon receipt of a Disbursement Letter with adequate supporting documentation of activities and expenditure. SCA will retain sufficient funds to make agreed direct payments as per the IPB.

Table 26 Flow of funds

Step	Currency
1. SCA sends cash transfer request to GPE Trust Fund agent (World Bank).	USD
2. Trust Fund agent transfers funds to SCA.	USD
3. In response to a Disbursement Letter, IPB, Quarterly Financial Report (acquittal) and accompanying evidence from MET, SCA disburses funds to the Trust Fund or DFA at the National Reserve Bank of Tonga.	Converted to TOP at transfer
4. Advice from National Reserve Bank of Tonga to MoF that they have credited TOP amount to the DFA and record the exchange rate in SUN.	TOP
5. MoF acknowledges receipt of the funds and transfers funds to MET.	TOP
6. Activity managers expend the funds as per the IPB. PMU Corporate Services Coordinator maintains records of expenditure and acquittal reporting.	TOP

The financial management arrangements, flow charts, and templates will be described in an updated Program Operations Manual (POM) shared with the SCG. The POM will be reviewed – and updated if necessary – on an annual basis.

8.4 Procurement

Procurement will use government policy processes, templates and rules as prescribed by the Ministry of Finance. SCA will have to grant a No Objection for high value procurements above an agreed level listed in the Financing Agreement. Procurement will use standard open Requests for Tender or (in the case of exceptional circumstances) Limited Tender. As per the Financing Agreement, a representative of SCA will be on tender panels for contracts above a specified limit. The PMU will manage a tender and contract ledger.

In exceptional circumstances the MET may request the use of SCA procurement systems (for example, due to time constraints, for international consultants, or for large international procurements).

8.5 Audit

The program operations will be covered by the annual internal audit of MET divisions as per the rolling audit cycle. An annual program audit will be conducted by an independent external auditor hired by SCA. Audit reports and any resulting actions will be shared with the LEG and GPE.

8.6 Implementation Plan and Budget

The program will have an annual Implementation Plan and Budget based on the approved Program Document and Budget. The IPB approval process will be mandated in the POM. The IPB is updated quarterly and includes the original activities and budget, approved changes (including any Program Revision Notifications), expenditure-to-date, and cash flow projections. Progress against the IPB will be regularly reviewed through the PSC, quarterly review workshops, and SCA's internal GMC.

The key parts of the IPB are:

- Implementation plan by activity and month.
- Budget and projected disbursements by month.
- Approved variations to the budget including any Program Revision Notifications.
- Disbursements by quarterly tranche including the prevailing exchange rate at the time of transfer.
- Monthly, quarterly, and annual actual v budget expenditures based on the Quarterly Financial Reports.
- Risk and mitigation matrix.
- Procurement plan (plan v actual).

Maintaining the IPB is the responsibility of the PMU. Implementing divisions must be consulted on IPB development each quarter to ensure integration with the government planning, budget and reporting cycle and coordination with other development partner activities.

8.7 Program Operations Manual

The existing GPE Program Operations Manual (POM) will be updated by the PMU to include STG components, implementation plan and budget, and any variations in the fiduciary arrangements. The POM will include the MEL Plan, Capacity Development Plan, IPB templates, financial and procurement processes and templates, Emergency Preparedness Plan, communications plan, and safeguarding and child protection reporting protocols. Terms of Reference for technical assistance will be added as required. The POM will require a No Objection from SCA prior to implementation and will be reviewed and updated on at least an annual basis.

8.8 Preparatory steps and program effectiveness

The Program Development Grant will finance preparatory steps to ensure timely program effectiveness. These include:

1. STG baseline study.
2. Negotiating and signing the Financing Agreement.
3. Updating the Program Operations Manual.
4. Preparing the MEL Plan.
5. Preparing the Capacity Development Plan.
6. Recruiting and equipping the PMU.
7. Orientating the officers responsible for the components.

9. Risk identification and mitigation measures

The MET and SCA have identified the major risks to the program as:

- Implementation capacity
- External risks (natural hazards)
- Safeguards and safety, including sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH)
- Fiduciary

The risks due to stakeholders, legal, governance, and external economic and political changes are rated as low. The risk identification matrix and mitigation measures will be updated quarterly or as needed by the PMU. There are no outstanding legal or fiduciary issues from previous GPE grants.

Table 27 Risks and mitigation matrix

Risk	Risk rating	Mitigation strategies	Rating after mitigation
SEAH and safety			
Major disaster in one or more target provinces resulting in suspension or restriction of activities and/or reprioritisation of resources/staff.	High	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Emergency Preparedness Plan in the POM. 2. All program staff inducted in Plan. 3. Pre-position equipment and medical supplies in PMU office. 4. Familiarisation with MET disaster response plans. 	Moderate
Vehicle accident involving program staff, education staff or beneficiaries during program activity leading to injuries or loss of life.	High	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Emergency Preparedness Plan in place in the POM. 2. Travel risk assessments for sea travel. 3. First aid equipment, water, life jackets and GPS beacons for sea travel. 4. All program staff inducted in Plan. 	Moderate
Child safeguarding, protection or gender-based violence incident involving program or partner staff leading to harm to beneficiaries, conflict or reputational damage	High	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Child protection, gender equality and safeguarding questions during selection, onboarding, and training for all program staff and consultants. 2. Mandatory safeguarding training for all those in contact with children including school-based counsellors, teachers, and study enumerators. Interviews with children will be conducted in a safe space (e.g. in public view but not overheard) or with a second adult present. 3. Standard Operating Procedures for school-based counsellors including referrals pathways if SEAH is reported. 4. Safeguarding and anti-violence messaging in Flipbook and communication campaigns. 	Moderate

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Risk	Risk rating	Mitigation strategies	Rating after mitigation
		5. Safeguarding plan and checklist for all studies, workshops and activities. 6. Complaints Response Mechanism operational. 7. Program monitoring data and reporting disaggregated by sex and disability. 9. All program staff and consultants sign and orientated in the mandatory SCA Safeguarding Procedure and Bullying, Harassment, Discrimination and Exploitation Policy and MET's new Gender Equity Policy.	
Operational			
<p>Difficulty recruiting key personnel or high turnover of personnel in MET, PMU or SCA.</p> <p>Lack of skills or knowledge for program activities among MET staff or PMU.</p> <p>Overreliance on PMU to implement activities.</p>	High	1. Robust recruitment process including technical assessments of applicant's skills and knowledge. 2. Competitive remuneration packages. 3. Performance-based contracts for PMU and consultants. 4. Professional development opportunities and targeted training prior to effectiveness (funded by the Program Development Grant) and during component implementation (funded by the STG or SCG). 5. Annual capacity needs assessment and Capacity Development Plan. 6. Clear terms of reference including mandatory skills transfer from embedded PSU and technical advisers. 7. Clear leadership structure where senior MoET leaders are responsible for each component. 8. Regular review meetings (PSC, quarterly review, GMC) to identify and mitigate emerging capacity gaps or overreliance on PMU. 9. Close coordination with other capacity strengthening activities such as TSRSP to avoid poaching staff or overcommitting divisions.	Moderate
Challenges coordinating the program TA with existing or planned TA from other development partners/projects.	Moderate	1. Use the LEG as a coordination mechanism and ask for partner input on the Job Descriptions of planned technical assistance.	Low

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Risk	Risk rating	Mitigation strategies	Rating after mitigation
		2. Regular review meetings and joint PSC with the World Bank's TSRSP, UNICEF, MFAT, DFAT and other projects to ensure technical assistance and program activities are harmonized. 3. If necessary, joint working arrangements and allocated deliverables/tasks to ensure no duplication of roles. 4. Sharing the IPB and Capacity Development Plan with the LEG on an annual basis.	
Competing priorities within MET including across multiple donor projects.	Moderate	1. Establish a PMU to reduce administrative and coordination burden. 2. Include related projects in PSC. 3. Include STG in the Corporate Plan, Annual Management Plan, and budget for implementing divisions. 4. Implement Capacity Development Plan for skills transfer. 5. Intelligently utilise short term consultants and specialist organisation such as Library for All to provide additional capacity for priority activities.	Low
Implementing partners			
Risks associated with implementing partners such as the higher education institution organisation delivering the primary school counselling program.	Low	1. Grant agent oversight of procurement process. 2. Prequalification assessments to identify likely providers. 3. Development of realistic terms of reference with clear deliverables. 4. Assessment of partner capacity prior to performance-based contracting. 5. Close monitoring of implementing partner performance. 6. Rapid resolution of contractual issues or poor performance.	Low
Fiduciary			
Fraud or theft of program materials	High	1. Transparently using government financial management and procurement processes. 2. Regular audits, post-distribution school visits and spot checks. 3. Monthly budget v actual expenditure reports. 4. Rigorous background checks on program staff.	Moderate

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Risk	Risk rating	Mitigation strategies	Rating after mitigation
		5. Electronic transfer of funds where applicable. 6. Use of existing systems (e.g. for grants to schools). 7. Minimizing large events outside of the capital. 8. Communicating distribution of classroom libraries, training events, and scholarships to public via mass media. 9. Fraud reporting system mentioned in all materials.	

10. Workplan

Table 28 Workplan

Component	Activity	2025				2026				2027				2028			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4												
1. Classroom libraries																	
1.1 Develop classroom libraries																	
1.1.1	Map genres and text length against curriculum.																
1.1.2	Write, adapt, translate & illustrate Y1-2 Classroom Libraries.																
	Write, adapt, translate & illustrate Y3-4 Classroom Libraries.																
	Write, adapt, translate & illustrate Y5-6 Classroom Libraries.																
1.1.3	Produce accessible versions of reading books.																
1.1.4	Print and distribute classroom libraries.																
1.1.5	Upload to HeLP website and app.																
1.2 National reading in-service program																	
1.2.1	Develop reading in-service modules.																
1.2.2	Print and distribute reading modules.																
1.2.3	Conduct reading in-service modules.																
1.2.4	Monitor and coach schools.																
2. Home reading program																	
2.1 Home Reading Journals																	
2.1.1	Write and illustrate Home Reading Journals.																
2.1.2	Design, write and illustrate Home Reading Flipbook.																
2.1.3	Print and distribute home reading package.																
2.2 Home reading campaign																	
2.2.1	Write PTA training module.																
2.2.2	Develop and test home reading behaviour change campaign.																
2.2.3	Broadcast home reading messages.																
2.2.4	Train PTAs in home reading program.																

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		2025				2026				2027				2028			
2.2.5	Monitor and support school PTAs.																
3. Boys' education support																	
3.1 School counsellors																	
3.1.1	Identify suitable candidates for counselling course.																
3.1.2	Write Standard Operating Procedures guidance.																
3.1.3	Scholarships for school counsellors.																
3.1.4	Community of practice and support for school counsellors.																
3.1.5	Monitoring visits for early warning and intervention.																
3.2 Reading booster program																	
3.2.1	Write, illustrate Reading Booster and teacher training module.																
3.2.2	Print and distribute Reading Booster materials.																
3.2.3	Train teachers and school counsellors.																
3.2.4	Evaluate program.																
4. Program management and learning																	
4.1 Program management and coordination																	
4.1.1	Program Management Unit																
	ICT equipment																
	PMU operations																
	PMU vehicle																
4.1.2	Quarterly planning and review workshops.																
4.1.3	External audit																
4.2 Monitoring, evaluation and learning																	
4.2.1	Monitoring visits.																
4.2.2	Learning events.																
4.2.3	Endline study.																
4.3 Grant agent supervision costs																	
4.3.1	Grant agent supervision costs																

11. Consultations

The MET established a Technical Working Group for the program design which included representatives from MET divisions, non-government education systems, and development partners. The Local Education Group provided extensive written feedback on the first draft of the document and the resulting changes were recorded in a changelog. Three subnational consultation workshops were held to review the draft components and activities with principals, teachers, members of the non-government education systems and education officers. A baseline study was conducted in August-September which included questions on the program design elements, and which collected baseline data for the results framework indicators.

Table 29 Consultations

Meeting	Date	Participants	Male	Female	Total
National workshop 1	2024-06-21	TWG	6	5	11
National workshop 2	2024-07-11	TWG	4	5	9
Baseline workshop 1	2024-07-11	TWG	4	5	9
Subnational workshop 1	2024-07-12	Stakeholders	8	13	21
Subnational workshop 2	2024-07-17	Stakeholders	8	12	20
Subnational workshop 3	2024-07-19	Stakeholders	4	14	18
Baseline study	August-Sept	Teachers	12	54	66
		Students	287	283	570
		Caregivers	12	37	49
Baseline workshop 2	2024-08-07	TWG	4	6	10
National workshop 3	2024-08-07	TWG	4	6	10
Local Education Group	Review v1 draft	LEG	-	-	-
Save the Children Australia	Internal review	SCA	-	-	-
GPE	QAR v4 draft	GPE	-	-	-
Local Education Group	Review v4 draft	LEG	-	-	-
National workshop 4		TWG			
MET SMT	Approve	SMT			
Local Education Group	Endorse	LEG			

Table 30 STG Technical Working Group

Name	Job title	Organisation	Sex
Ms. Kalolaine Moeaki	Director of Project Management and Coordination Division (Chairperson)	MET	F
Ms. 'Amelia Folaumahina	Director of Curriculum and Assessment Division	MET	F
Mr. Kalafitoni Latu	Director of Truancy, Emergency and Safer Schools Division	MET	M
Mr. Soane Selui	Director of Policy, Planning and Research Division	MET	M
Mr. Eddy Fakahua	Chief Education Officer, Primary Division	MET	M

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Name	Job title	Organisation	Sex
Ms. 'Oketi Lotulelei 'Akau'ola	Deputy Director of the Quality Assurance Division	MET	F
Ms. Liu Nuku	Deputy Director of the Examination and Assessment Unit	MET	F
Mr. Poli Tuaileva	Representative of the Catholic Church Education System	Non-Gov	M
Ms. Losela Fakasi'i'eiki	Representative of the Free Wesleyan Church Education System	Non-Gov	F
Ms. Natalia Latu	Representative of the World Bank	Donor	F
Mr. Herbert Takeifanga	Director of the Primary Division	MET	M

Annex

The STG classroom libraries expand upon book development and distribution financed by New Zealand and UNICEF.

ECE titles

Title	Author(s)
1. 'Oku ou sai'ia 'ia au / I like me.	ECE Team, 2023.
2. Ko e hā e ongo koau? / Which sense am I	'Eseta Pasikala
3. 'Oku ou sai'ia hoku 'apiako/ I like my school	Lesieli 'Asikia & Manu Fonua
4. Fakataha fakafāмили / Family Reunion	'Anitita Niu
5. Kuo maau? / Is it ready yet?	Mikaele Fakasi'i'eiki & Vulase Hafoka.
6. Ko e 'aho 'eva 'a Tevita / Tevita's Day Out	ECE Team, 2023.
7. Ko e Potungāue Tamata Afi / Firefighters	Mele S. Aleamotu'a & Toakase Tatafu
8. Ko e 'eva vaka 'a Mele mo Toakase / Mele and Toakase's boat trip	Mele S. Aleamotu'a & Toakase Tatafu
9. Kapau 'e 'iai ha'o hiku / If you had a tail.	ECE team, 2023
10. Ko 'eku fuofua tau'olunga fakatonga / My first Tongan dance.	Maile Ongosia
11. Ko fē 'a e vakapuna? / Where is the airplane?	'Olivia Fatongia & 'Ana Heti Veikune

Mafana series

Title	Author	Published
Taimi 8 pongipongi	Pohiva Vai'omo'unga	2009
'Oku kolo'ia pe 'a Tonga ke ako'i	Latai Sekeni Tu'imana	
Fua'i'akau	Fakatahataha'i 'e he va'a ako Tokamu'a, Potungaue ako mo ako ngaue	2014
Toki tumu 'ia paka	Fakatahataha'i 'e he va'a ako Tokamu'a, Potungaue ako mo ako ngaue	
'E vave ni mai pe ha'ane fe'unga 'ia koe	Potungaue ako mo e ako ngaue	2017
Ko mamani mo hono ngaahi naunau	Fakatahataha'i 'e he va'a ako Tokamu'a, Potungaue ako mo ako ngaue	2014

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Title	Author	Published
Ko e mamani mo e ngaahi me'a mo'ui	Fakatahataha'i 'e he va'a ako Tokamu'a, Potungaue ako mo ako ngaue	2014
Ko e Uike Fakafiefia Eni Kiate Au	Pohiva Vaimo'unga	
Fēfononga'aki	Fakatahataha'i 'e he va'a ako Tokamu'a, Potungaue ako mo ako ngaue	