



JOINT SECTOR REVIEW REPORT 2024

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING TONGA

September 2024

ABSTRACT

The Ministry of Education and Training Joint Sector Review (known as Mid-Year Review) Conference 2024 brought together more than sixty participants from various sectors in Tonga's education system. The conference included representatives from government and non-government schools, covering Early Childhood (ECE) to tertiary education, as well as participation from donors. The main goals of the conference were to thoroughly discuss the objectives, priorities, and contributions in the Corporate Plan 24/25-26/27, the budget, and the current state of education in Tonga and to promote collaborative partnerships.





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Acronyms and abbreviations

ANCP	Australian Non-Government Organisations Cooperation Program
AMP	Annual Management Plan
ATI	'Ahopanilolo Technical Institute
APTC	Australia Pacific Training Coalition
CCT	Conditional Cash Transfers
CCTMIS	Conditional Cash Transfers Management Information System
CEO	Chief Education Officer
CDU	Curriculum Development Unit
CP	Corporate Plan
CSD	Corporate Services Division
CUP	Christ University Pacific
EAU	Examinations and Assessment Unit
ECE	Early Childhood Education
EDID	Education Data Intelligence Division
EQAP	Education Quality and Assessment Programme
EMIS	Education management and information system
ESA	Education sector analysis
FY	Financial Year
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GER	Gross Enrolment Ratio
GPI	Gender Parity Index
HeLP	Hama e-Learning Platform
HIES	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
IE	Inclusive Education
JSR	Joint Sector Review
LEG	Local Education Group
LSA	Large-Scale Assessment
MET	Ministry of Education and Training
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MOF	Ministry of Finance
NEMO	National Emergency Management Office
ODA	Overseas development assistance
PacREF	Pacific Regional Education Framework
PILNA	Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment
PQTR	Pupil-qualified teacher ratio
PSC	Public Service Commission
PTR	Pupil-teacher ratio
QAD	Quality Assurance Division
QSSN	Queen Salote School of Nursing and Allied Health
SABER	Systems Approach for Better Education Results
SCR	Student-classroom ratio
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SET	Skills and Employment for Tongans project
TA	Technical Assistant
TCDES	Tonga Council of Directors of Education Systems



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TEPF	Tonga Education Policy Framework
TFSC	Tonga Form Six Certificate
TIHE	Tonga Institute of Higher Education
TIOE	Tonga Institute of Education
TIST	Tonga Institute of Science and Technology
TMPI	Tonga Maritime Polytechnic Institute
TNFSC	Tonga National Form Seven Certificate
TNQAB	Tonga National Qualifications and Accreditation Board
TNU	Tonga National University
TQF	Tonga Qualifications Framework
TSC	Tonga Secondary Certificate
TSD	Tonga Statistics Department
TSDF	Tonga Strategic Development Framework
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and training
USP	University of the South Pacific



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Executive Summary

Joint Sector Review 2024 – Ministry of Education and Training

The Ministry of Education’s Policy, Planning, and Research Division successfully led the **Joint Sector Review (JSR) 2024**, continuing from the Conference held in 2023. This year’s JSR brought together over 60 participants, representing a broad spectrum of Tonga’s education sector, from Early Childhood Education (ECE) to tertiary institutions, including Inclusive Education (IE) and key donor partners. This inclusive forum provided a platform for stakeholders from both government and non-government education sectors to engage in meaningful discussions on the **state of education in Tonga**, enhance collaboration, and shape the strategic direction of the Ministry for the future.

Key Recommendations for 2025:

- 1. Standardized Reporting and Assessment:**
 - Enhance the Assessment Information System (AIS) to effectively handle vast data and produce quality analysis reports by 2027.
 - Develop and implement large-scale assessments for Classes 3, 5, 6, 9, and 11 to improve educational outcomes.
 - Review and refine the curriculum and assessment prescriptions for Classes 1 to 13 to ensure alignment with competency-based assessment frameworks.
 - Collaborate with TSRSP and EAU Tonga for effective item writing in large-scale assessments for Classes 5 and 6.
- 2. Curriculum & Assessment Review:**
 - Establish a robust student learning assessment system similar to STAT and PILNA that focuses on both large-scale assessments and classroom assessment strategies.
 - Conduct PILNA trials in collaboration with EQAP in selected schools to evaluate and improve literacy and numeracy skills.
 - Ensure that all curriculum writers, teachers, examiners, and students communicate effectively by standardizing terminology and expectations within the curriculum.
- 3. Capacity Building and Staff Management:**
 - Prioritize staff capacity building initiatives to better understand and utilize staff strengths and skills effectively.
 - Address staffing challenges by creating clear pathways for promotions and professional development within the education system, encouraging teachers to stay and love their profession.
 - Enhance teacher engagement through targeted support initiatives that focus on improving teaching practices, particularly in mathematics and literacy.
- 4. Collaboration and Support:**
 - Foster improved collaboration with social and civil society organizations, as well as donors, to synchronize efforts and update progress on educational initiatives.
 - Establish partnerships with donors to support literacy and reading improvement programs (Classroom libraries & reading in-service) at the primary level and numeracy enhancements at the secondary level.



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- Encourage cooperative efforts among mathematics associations to address poor results, particularly among boys, and to enhance teaching strategies.
- 5. Promoting Inclusivity and Equity:**
- Focus on enhancing inclusivity and equity within the education sector, ensuring that all students, regardless of background, have access to quality education.
 - Address the needs of schools that are struggling to align with the mainstream education system, with the goal of increasing the current 30% to a higher percentage.
 - Support initiatives aimed at increasing enrollment rates in ECE and TVET to ensure a holistic educational experience for all learners.
 - Support boys' education program and primary school counselling
- 6. Academic Preparation and Transition:**
- Develop strategies to improve student preparedness for Form 7, particularly in light of poor Form 6 results, which may stem from the removal of Form 5 exams.
 - Implement targeted support programs to ensure students are adequately prepared for higher academic challenges.

Mandate for 2024: The Ministry remains committed to ensuring that Tonga develops a **skilled and competent workforce** to support sustainable national development. The Ministry provides policy guidance across all educational sectors, including Early Childhood, Primary, Secondary, and Post-Secondary education.

Vision: That the people of Tonga will achieve **excellence in education** that reflects the unique identity of the country, with Tonga becoming a **learning society**.

Mission: To provide and sustain **lifelong, relevant, and quality education** that supports the development of Tonga and its people. The Ministry will also focus on the key priorities identified in JSR 2023, with plans to review and update these during the 2024 retreat.





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1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Conference was guided by the approved Corporate Plan 24/25 and Budget from Cabinet to assist with the discussions and contributions to reform and develop a strong foundation for the education sector. The Corporate Plan outlines the Ministry’s strategic priorities and key initiatives for a period of 3 years and is based on the latest data from the Education Sector Analysis in 2022.
- 1.2. Led by the Chief Executive Officer, Mr. ‘Isikeli Oko, of the Ministry of Education and Training with the support of the Project Management and Coordination Division, the Ministry of Education and Training Joint Sector Review Conference was held at the Ministry of Education and Training Conference Room at ‘Api Mataka, Nuku’alofa, Tonga, from the 24th to 27th September 2024.



Pule’anga ‘o Tonga

16 POTUNGĀUE AKO moe AKO NGĀUE

FOKOTU’UTU’U NGĀUE

mo e

PA’ANGA NGĀUE

TA’U FAKAPA’ANGA 2024/25 – 2026/27



2. Participants

- Last year marked the first-ever conference organized by the Ministry of Education and Training (MET), which brought together school heads from all education systems in Tonga, relevant donors, and senior ministry officers. Invitations were extended to all key education stakeholders, with the option for participants to join online via Zoom.
- This year’s stakeholders’ participation increased significantly. The forum was held during school holidays, allowing more participants from outer islands, both primary and secondary schools, to attend. A larger number of classroom teachers were involved, and we saw more representation from the non-government sectors, thanks to invitations being sent out in a timely manner. Donors were actively engaged once again, alongside directors and university representatives, where their involvement was a great addition to the event.
 - Ministry of Education Senior Officers
 - Policy, Planning and Research Division
 - Educational Data Intelligence Division
 - Project Management and Coordination Division
 - Finance and Procurement Division
 - Primary Schools Division
 - Secondary Education Division
 - Quality Assurance Division
 - Assessment & Curriculum Development & Production Division
 - CEO’s Office
 - All Outer Island officers (primary and secondary officers , principals, deputy principals)
 - Non-Government Schools Directors
 - Free Wesleyan School System
 - Anglican School System
 - Catholic School System



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- Lavengamalie School system
- Anastasis College (Church of Tonga school system)
- Free Church of Tonga School System Donors and international development partners
 - World Bank
 - Save the Children
 - DFAT
 - MFAT
 - JICA
 - ADB
- Civil Society Forum
- University of the South Pacific Tonga
- Tonga National University
- Christ University Pacific (CUP)
- Thuso Consultant
- Researchers in the Education Sector

3. Methodology

The Project Management Unit (PMU), Project Management and Coordination Division, Corporate Services Division (CSD), and Policy, Planning and Research Division (PPRD) established a working group to organize the Joint Sector Review which was approved by the Hon. Minister of Education and Training to be called the Ministry of Education and Training Mid-Year Review Conference 2024.

4. Program

4.1 Formal Opening Ceremony

The Ministry of Education and Training, along with the non-government education systems and key partners, has made significant strides in developing the new innovative and to build a stronger Education impact in Tonga. This Joint Sector Review Report for 2024 reflects on the progress achieved thus far, as guided by the Corporate Plan and Annual Management Plan, in pursuit of our National Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Despite the advancements, the remaining challenges in the education sector, particularly in improving reading scores at the primary level and mathematics results in secondary schools.



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Moreover, issues of equity continue to persist, with boys and students from poorer households experiencing weaker outcomes. Addressing these gaps and ensuring the highest standard of education for every school remains a priority.

Greatest appreciation to the Global Partnership for Education and Save the Children Australia for their generous support in facilitating this Joint Sector Review Conference 2024. Their contributions have enabled us to align our work with national priorities, and together, we aim to overcome the barriers identified in the Education Sector Analysis. Our gratitude also goes out to our development partners and the Local Education Group, whose ongoing commitment is vital to the continuous development of Tonga's education system.



Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Education and Training – Hon. Samiu Vaipulu – 'Api Mataka (MET) Opening Speech

As we move forward, we are encouraged by the collaborative efforts within the Ministry and among all education stakeholders. It is through this united vision, guided by our shared values and a commitment to equity and inclusivity, that we can provide quality education for all, leaving no child behind.

4.1.2 Objective, Priorities, and Corporate Plan

The initial session focused on informing the participants of priority activities, national mandates, and priority reforms. The session was led by Mr. 'Isikeli Oko, CEO for the MET.

Vision: That the people of Tonga will achieve excellence in education that is unique to this country, and that Tonga will become a learning society.

Mission: To provide and sustain lifelong relevant and quality education for the development of Tonga and her people.

Key Areas of Focus:

1. National Resilience:

- Building resilience against climate change and disaster risk, including initiatives like the Tonga School Resilience Project (TSRSP).
- Safer school activities to enhance school preparedness and readiness for disasters.
- Implementation of the Tonga Accelerated Resilience Project (TARP).
- Development of the Hama e-Learning Platform to provide students access to learning resources during disasters, activated during COVID-19 and ongoing.
- Distribution of Rachel Boxes to schools in rural areas and outer islands with limited internet access.



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2. Quality Services and Affordability:

- Reforming data, assessment, and the examination system for better decision-making through the rollout of a new Education Management Information System (EMIS) and updated HR system to pilot schools.
- Review of national curriculum and assessment, starting with Forms 2, 5, and 6.
- Teacher and principal professional development through PACREF, including teacher quality and competency frameworks.
- Strengthening the provision of quality educational outcomes through Tonga National University (TNU).

3. Improving Education for All:

- Focus on safer schools, addressing dropouts, and promoting gender equality.
- Expansion of employable training through Technical and Vocational Training (TVET) and other avenues.
- Providing subsidies for early childhood, primary, and secondary education with a special focus on special education.
- Strengthening the Truancy Unit and developing the Hama e-Learning Platform for widespread access.
- Offering scholarships for low-income students through skills-based employment programs like the SET project.

4. Regional and Community Development:

- Collaboration with PACREF on the Transformative and Sustainable Regional Educational Agenda.
- Engaging with EQAP for national assessments (PILNA) for Class 4 and Class 6.
- Partnering with USP and other institutes to support Tongan students through fees and subscriptions.
- MET's activities and planning are aligned with KPIs derived from the Education Sector Analysis.

Key Performance Areas (KPA):

- Improving access to education (enrollment rates, reducing dropouts, enhancing TVET).
- Enhancing learning outcomes in literacy and numeracy.
- Providing scholarships and training for high-priority skills.
- Strengthening the capacity of the education system (subsidies, qualified teachers).

Challenges:

- Limited resources, especially in outer islands and rural areas (e.g., textbooks, technology access).
- Budgetary constraints, with many activities dependent on donor funding.
- Infrastructure and facilities require improvement.
- Gender disparities, with more girls completing high school than boys.
- High dropout rates.



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New Initiatives:

- SET project scholarships and TVET opportunities.
- Introduction of new resilience and safety projects for schools.
- Revised curriculum from Class 1 to Form 2, with further revision planned for Class 1 to 4 in 2025.
- Extending primary education to Form 2 to address dropouts and improve transition rates.
- Increased grants to non-government educational institutions.
- Resilient classroom infrastructure development.
- Expanding the breakfast program to early childhood and primary schools.
- Reinstating boarding schools for TCA (Tonga College) and implementing Phase 2 of THS (Tonga High School).
- No school fees up to Form 5 for public schools starting in 2025.

4.1.3 Budget Presentation for FY 24/25

The presentation of the budget for the fiscal year 24/25. The session was led by Mrs. Kalolaine Moeaki, Director of Finance (MET).

Budget FY 2024/2025 Overview:

- Total Budget: \$70.65 million
 - Non-operation: 32% (\$22.90 million) covering grants, scholarships, contributions, and peace & reconciliation programs.
 - Operation: 10% (\$7.2 million) for goods & services, capital expenses, travel, and maintenance.
 - Salary: 58% (\$40.60 million) for established and unestablished staff.

Key Achievements:

- Improved budget planning, accounting, execution, and reporting.
- Ongoing financial management, including cash flow, payroll, expenditure reconciliation, and asset register updates.
- Divisional consultation on budgeting to improve service plans.
- Compliance with annual audit recommendations.

Challenges:

- Lack of effective planning links causing delays in service development.
- Manual processes for payroll management, especially contract labor and timesheet submissions.
- Inadequate human resources, particularly in asset control and monitoring.
- Procurement inefficiencies and internal support challenges.

Development Projects:

- Various initiatives supported by partners such as the World Bank, DFAT, Japan, China, UNICEF, Save the Children Australia, and GPE.



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- Ongoing projects include the Tonga Safer Resilient Schools Project, Skills & Employment for Tongans, and the THS Sports Complex.

Risk Management:

- Lack of fixed asset registers in departments.
- Delays in teacher and staff payments.
- Inadequate staffing in the finance division and ineffective MET Management Committee oversight.

Recommendations:

- Address resource shortages in the finance division.
- Strengthen internal controls and update financial processes to align with staff capacity.
- Improve planning and reporting efficiency across divisions.

4.1.4 Progress towards National KPIs

The presentation of this session was led by Mr. Soane Selui, Director of Policy, Planning and Research Division (MET).



Focus Areas: Key SDG Indicator Trends: GER (Gross Enrolment Ratio), NER (Net Enrolment Ratio), OOS (Out-of-School Children), Qualified Teachers, Teacher-Student Ratio, and Qualified Teacher-Student Ratio.

ECE, Primary, Lower Secondary, Upper Secondary (2012-2023)

- GER: The trend indicates a steady increase in the Gross Enrolment Ratio from 2012 to 2024.
- NER: Progress is noted in improving the Net Enrolment Ratio for Early Childhood Education (ECE).
- Data Gaps: Certain crucial data points are either not collected or not reported, which impacts the ability to accurately track and report on SDG indicators.
 - For example, data on repeaters, teacher qualifications, and related metrics may be missing.
- Teacher Qualification Data: There is difficulty in accurately differentiating teacher qualifications across levels, as some teachers serve both lower and upper secondary levels, potentially leading to duplicated numbers and affecting reporting accuracy.

Additional Data Challenges:

- Repetition rates, completion rates, transition rates, and retention rates.
- Gross intake ratio for new entrants into the first grade.
- Teacher attrition rates and recruitment of new teachers.
- Professional development (PD) and training statistics: Percentage of teachers meeting professional standards.



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- Qualifications and ratios of teachers/lecturers in tertiary and TVET sectors.
- Percentage of students on scholarships.
- Proportion of teachers, lecturers, students, and youth with ICT skills.
- Enrolment by field of studies in Higher Education and TVET.
- Tracer studies indicating the percentage of graduates by qualification and field of study.

Recommendations for 2025:

- Once EMIS has been populated we will experience less of the missing data, Tracking would be much easier from both attendance to performance of both students and teachers.

These indicators align with the Pacific Regional Education Framework (PacREF) and SDG 4, which tracks progress through 12 global indicators and 47 thematic indicators.

Discuss last year’s Joint Sector Review’s Recommendations

Recommendations	Comments
1. Development of a Comprehensive Corporate Plan in 2024: Establish a robust and forward-looking Corporate Plan that aligns with national development goals and serves as a guiding document for the Ministry’s strategic initiatives.	The MET 2024/25 – 2026/27 Corporate was submitted and approved by the Parliament
2. Collaboration with Stakeholders: Foster stronger partnerships and collaboration with various stakeholders, including parents, local communities, NGOs, and the private sector to improve education outcomes. Engage stakeholders in decision-making processes and resource allocations.	Various stakeholders are now involved in the decision making processes and resources allocations through the Local Education Group and several Technical Working Groups.
3. Invest in Education Infrastructure: Allocate resources for the development and maintenance of	Serval projects from World Bank, Global Partnership for Education (GPE), GCF and MFAT are addressing
4. Teacher Priorities: Invest in teacher training and development programs, ensuring that educators have the necessary skills and resources to deliver high-quality education. Develop incentives to attract and retain qualified teachers in underserved areas.	Primary Division- update training of the new Syllabus TESD - training of principal of schools to have safety plan in time of emergency and organizing emergency drills
5. Enhance Education Quality: Implement curriculum reforms that emphasize relevance, creativity, and critical thinking. Strengthen assessment and evaluation practices to ensure they align with desired learning outcomes. Promote a culture of continuous improvement in educational institutions.	Primary Division - field officers are often visiting out all schools to ensure curriculum relevance and needs for the schools – revised of Curriculum Class 1 – Form 2 (in progress) Secondary – Multiplier Fund – revise Curriculum Form 3-7
6. Monitoring and Evaluation: Develop a robust monitoring and evaluation framework and plan to assess the effectiveness of education policies and programs. Regularly review and adjust strategies based on performance data and feedback from stakeholders.	Develop adapted STAT tests Primary Division - field officers are often visiting out all schools to ensure M&E.



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<p>7. Inclusive Education (IE): 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.</p>	<p>This is a priority area for the Ministry:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An IE school is planned to be established next year in Vava'u. • MFAT and GPE will contribute to improving the IE by developing a standard sign language for Tonga, equipment and resources to assist the disabilities in their studies.
<p>8. Professional Development and Research: Encourage educational research and innovation to inform evidence-based policy decisions. Provide opportunities for educators and administrators to engage in professional development and stay updated on best practices.</p>	<p>HR – Increased training opportunities Secondary – Increased PD and closely working with TNU on Research Areas. Primary Division – Revise Primary School Policies</p>
<p>9. Focus on student-centered approaches to education, emphasizing holistic development, and critical solving problem-solving skills. Implement data-driven systems to monitor and improve students' performances with a focus on early intervention for struggling students.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) GPE's System Transformation Grant to improve the literacy and address the issues with boys' dropout. 2) The World Bank is currently funding a project to improve the Ministry's EMIS.

4.1.5 Examination and Assessment Unit

The journey of the examination and Assessment Unit from the shift from Standardized Reporting to Raw Marks, and then to Outcome-based and finally Competency-based Assessment, represents a significant journey in modernizing educational evaluation. This progression emphasizes moving from traditional test scores to more comprehensive approaches that focus on students' understanding and mastery of competencies.

The Curriculum and Assessment Review under the Tonga Support for Resilience and Social Protection (TSRSP), the education sector aims to align teaching and assessments with modern educational outcomes.

High-Stakes Examinations: These exams still play a role but are balanced with more varied methods of assessment to provide a fuller picture of student learning.



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High Stakes Examinations:

Level	TNFSC		TFSC	
	Subject	% Beginner	Subject	% Beginner
2020	Mathematics With Calculus	58	Mathematics	78
	Mathematics With Statistics	53	Agricultural Science	57
2021	Mathematics With Statistics	67	Mathematics	83
	Economics	52	Geography	68
2022	Mathematics with Calculus	75	Chemistry	61
	Geography	56	Mathematics	95
	Mathematics with Statistics	51	Chemistry	72
			Music	60
			Agricultural Science	59
			Computing and ICT	51
			Development Studies	50
2023	Mathematics with Calculus	57	Mathematics	80
			Chemistry	73
			Geography	52

Large-Scale Assessments (LSA): Tools that measure student performance across different grade levels, such as national or regional exams, are being developed, including item writing for Class 5 and 6.

Classroom Assessments: These are crucial for teachers to monitor day-to-day student progress, using methods that effectively gauge learning outcomes within the context of classroom instruction.

Recommendations for 2025:

1. Assessment Information System
2. Large-scale Assessments (Class 5, 6, 9, 11)
3. Classroom Assessments (Class 1 – 13)
4. Reviewed curriculum (Class 1 – 13)
5. Reviewed assessment prescriptions (Class 12, 13)

5. Donor’s Sessions

5.1 Tonga Safer and Resilient Schools Project (TSRSP) (World Bank)

The Tonga Safer and Resilient Schools Project, funded by the World Bank, focuses on enhancing the safety and resilience of education facilities and improving data-driven education management, curricula, and assessments. Key updates include:

- Disbursement: 20% of the US\$21.93 million allocated for improving educational facilities has been disbursed.
- Key Projects: Construction of Tonga College Dormitories, Kanokupolu, and Te’ekiu school facilities is underway, with expected completion by October 2024.
- Phase 1 & 2 Designs: Design work for schools in Tongatapu, ‘Eua, Ha’apai, Vava’u, and the Niua is ongoing, with the completion targeted for 2025.



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Challenges:

- Design Changes: Impacting construction timelines, particularly for the Tonga College dormitories.
- Community Expectations: Balancing needs and investment levels.
- Contractor Capacity: Financial capacity and tendering processes need improvement.
- Funding: US\$10 million is budgeted, with additional funding being sourced from GPE, IDA, and PPIUF.

EMIS Implementation:

- Budget: US\$4.85 million allocated.
- Progress: The Education Management Information System (EMIS) has been rolled out to most government schools, with full utilization expected by November 2024.
- Performance Indicators: Tracking admissions, dropout rates, absenteeism, at-risk students, and staff attendance.

Project Management:

- Staffing: 12 current staff, with recruitment underway for positions such as project engineers and procurement officers.
- Project Rating: Rated moderately satisfactory as of April 2024, with contingency plans in place for emergencies.
- Completion Target: September 2027, with an original budget of US\$15 million and additional financing of US\$14.53 million.

5.2 DFAT (Government of Australia)

Focus Items/Priorities:

- Consultations: Ongoing discussions between TVET, MET, and stakeholders on areas requiring assistance.
- Support Initiatives:
 - Technical and resource support
 - Professional development
 - Support for TNQAB
 - Accredited course offerings

In Progress/Achievements:

- Activity Implementation: Key activities commenced in June, including forming a working group to integrate TVET initiatives.
- Global Contribution: Australia's support extends to Global Partnership for Education and system transformation efforts.
- Scholarships: 36 scholarships were offered to support education and training.



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Challenges:

- Labour Shortages: Labour migration has caused shortages, impacting project implementation and local workforce availability.

5.3 MFAT (Government of New Zealand)

Focus Items/Priorities:

- TESA (Tonga Education Support Activity): Focus on professional development for GPS and short-term training.

In Progress/Achievements:

- TESA: Completed in June 2023, with consultations for a new phase underway. Plans are in place to redesign New Zealand's Aid Program for Tonga.
- TVET in High Schools: Ongoing, with a focus on certificates in Technological Educational Skills.
- Regional Support for Inclusive Education: Expanding the program to the outer islands and providing Pacific assistance to deaf learners. The first deaf disability program was conducted by deaf students.

5.4 Save the Children Australia (SCA)

5.4.1 GPE projects

Key Achievements and Focus Areas:

1. **Joint Sector Review (JSR) and Enabling Factors Analysis (EFA):**
 - Completed the Ministry of Education Joint Sector Review 2023.
 - Selected and contextualized policy outcomes, endorsed and reviewed by an Independent Technical Advisor.
2. **Strengthening HeLP (<https://help.edu.gov.to>) for Resilience:**
 - Expanded **HeLP learning** to be more resilient and accessible offline.
 - **National School Safety & Resilience Coordination Committee** is operational, enhancing preparedness against disasters at school and community levels.
3. **Gender-Responsive Planning & Policy Development:**
 - Developed and disseminated a **Gender Policy** and strengthened **annual planning** and reporting processes.
 - Updated **Minimum Service Standards** and **National Teacher & Principal Standards**.
4. **Child Protection in Education:**
 - Strengthened child protection mechanisms, increasing knowledge and resources for addressing priorities in Tonga's schools.
 - Conducted a **Child Protection Study** in the education sector and developed a briefing paper based on the findings.



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Future Focus Areas:

- **School Grant Policy** developed and implemented.
- **Improve Literacy for Primary Schools**
- Develop Classroom Libraries, Home School Reading programs and Boys Education Support
- Updated MET websites and initiated the pilot of an adapted STAT/LSA test.
- Completed the required application package for the GPE STG (System Transformation Grant).

5.4.2 SCA projects

Child Protection and Safeguarding in the Tongan Education System

Study Overview: A study, funded by Save the Children Australia, was conducted to assess the risks faced by children in Tongan schools and identify gaps in child protection mechanisms.

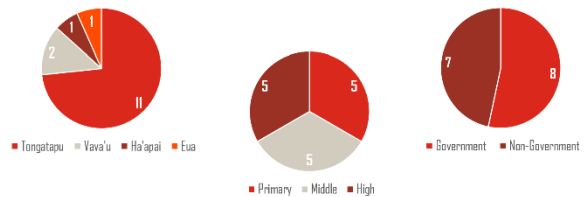
Key Findings:

1. **Policies and Processes:**

- **89% of teachers** and **93% of parents** indicated there are procedures to protect children.
- Only **39% of teachers** reported their school has explicit child protection policies, with many relying on informal understandings.
- **47% of teachers** stated no formal reporting policies exist, and protection channels vary between schools.

Over 250 respondents were spoken to, including 8 key stakeholders, 11 school leaders, 107 children, 64 teachers, and 64 parents drawn from 15 schools.

Schools in the study were distributed across location, school level, and school type:



2. **Training and Qualifications:**

- **61% of teachers** reported having no formal training in child protection.
- Existing training is often informal, through presentations and discussions at PTA meetings.

Recommendations:

- Develop a **Child Protection Road Map** integrated into the Ministry's overall planning.
- Establish a **formal Child Protection Policy** with clear procedures for reporting and monitoring.
- Create structured **channels for teachers** to seek support for child protection.
- Design and implement a **formal training program** to equip teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge on child protection.



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6. Non-Government Education Systems Presentations

6.1 Roman Catholic Church School System.

Focus Items/ Priorities Achievements
Emphasis is on the child’s talent – Teach and train the child to value and work his/ her talent. This teaching will only be effective when it’s carried out with ‘LOVE’.

6.2 Free Wesleyan Church School System

Focus Items/ Priorities Achievements	Comments/ Discussions Recommendations
CHILD TO BE reared in the Christian faith; the teachings of Jesus Christ. Toloa’s International Class reaches Year 12. first time sitting the New South Wales exams in October/ November Request opportunity: * to participate in Gov. Professional Development Programs. * for more scholarships	Plan to establish an University in 2026 Free Education in Gov. Schools will greatly affect our roll/ registration for 2025

6.3 Anglican School System

Focus Items/ Priorities Achievements	Challenges Comments/ Discussions Recommendations
VISION: Jesus to be the Centre of it all MISSION: In Jesus we move together through work and pray to enhance academic success and to be saved to His Kingdom <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers’ Salary Multi-Million Project – St. John, Staff Development and Students’ achievement 	Students: recruitment Teachers: 80% do not have teaching certificate Lesson: To Be Flexible- cater for the students’ need.

6.4 Free Church of Tonga School System (Tailulu)

Focus Items/ Achievements/ Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2024 - 2029 begins the new 5-year plan of the school <p>Challenges – resources/ Finances</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Corporal punishment - Distractions of class time (extra curriculum) - Disruptions from academic classroom work. Eg. Sports/ band (students win gold for their talent.



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6.5 Church of Tonga (Anastasis College)

Focus Items/ Priorities Achievements	Challenges Comments/ Discussions Recommendations
Establish Feb 9, 2024 Motto: Ko Sisu pe ko e Maama Ko e La'a hoku Laumalie Enrolment 105 (43 boys, 62 girls) Staff: (10 full time & 2 part time)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers – upskilling and Professional Development are needed Communication/ Network with other systems/ MET MET not allowing teachers to resign from Government and continue at Anastasis College.

6.6 Lavengamalie Church School System

Focus Items/ Achievements/ Challenges
Motto: Mo'ui 'ia Kalaisi Acts 17:18 In Him we live and have our being. After 40 years only 30% is able to join the main stream of academic students. Focus more now on teaching technical subjects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan to establish Sports academy & Music Academy to assist in catering for the 70%

6.7 Tertiary Systems

6.7.1 Tonga National University (TNU)

Focus Items/ Priorities Achievements	Challenges	Comments/ Discussions Recommendations
<u>Tonga National University (TNU)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff teaching cross-disciplinary Potatala Lecture Conference Presentation – local and International Monitor Evaluation and Learning Course 	-Lack of senior staff with teaching and research experiences at University Level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consolidate existing practices in Teaching and Learning Promote TNU Program (academic, technical and vocational training) and continuing education that is responsive and appropriate for the needs of the people of Tonga. Build Teaching and Research Capacity of Staff More funding for TNU's operation and the construction of the new Campus



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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accredit courses by TNQAB 
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6.7.2 University of the South Pacific (USP)

Focus Items/ Priorities Achievements	Challenges
<p><u>USP Tonga Campus</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Drive to address requirement of member countries in terms of Field of Studies ▪ Responsible for Institute of Education and Pacific TAFE (Preliminary and Foundation) – both self-funded ▪ Offered STEM program to encourage involvement of female student. ▪ Research and Innovation – encouraged at USP and funded by IOE ▪ WORKING COOPERATIVELY WITH TNU to cater for graduated scholars from Secondary Schools ▪ Minister of Education and Training represents Tonga to the counsel of Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Decrease in enrolment. ▪ Trying to address study opportunities ▪ Lack of devices at home for students to access to since most courses are offered online. ▪ Unable to offer some of the science courses locally due to lack of resources. ▪ More courses needed to be offered – limited resources ▪ Graduation Day 11th October, 2024



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6.7.3 Christ University Pacific (CUP)

Focus Items/ Priorities	Achievements	Challenges	Comments/ Discussions Recommendations
<p><u>Christ University in the Pacific (CUP)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 5 Faculty/School (Education, IT, Theology, Business Management and Law, Criminal Justice) 	<p>Limited resources (funding, infrastructure, equipment to name a few)</p>	<p>Limited resources (funding, infrastructure, equipment to name a few)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To fully accredit courses by TNQAB ▪ International recognition of CUP Qualification

7. Linkages of Corporate Plan (CP), Annual Management Plan (AMP) and Budget.

The Ministry of Education's planning and operational framework is built on the **Tonga Strategic Development Framework II (TSDF II)**, which outlines the country's development priorities over a 10-year period. The Ministry plays a key role in supporting the TSDF II through detailed strategic plans, ensuring alignment with national objectives.

Key Components:

- **Corporate Plan (3 years):** Provides the strategic direction for the Ministry, setting national KPIs and overarching objectives.
- **Annual Management Plan (AMP):** An operational document that details the Ministry's annual priorities, initiatives, and day-to-day activities.
- **Budget (annually):** Allocates necessary financial resources to support the implementation of the CP and AMP.
- **Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) Plan:** Currently in development, to ensure continuous assessment and reporting on progress.

TSDF Organisational Outcomes:

- **Collaboration** with social and civil society organizations to promote group development.
- **Social and cultural practices** that are more appropriate to Tonga's needs.
- **Improved education and training** focusing on lifelong learning.
- **Enhanced research and development** based on foresight and national priorities.



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Linkage Process:

- **Alignment:** Ensuring the CP, AMP, and Budget are coordinated and reflective of national strategies.
- **Budgeting:** Allocating funds based on strategic priorities.
- **Monitoring and Reporting:** Continuous assessment and adjustment of plans.
- **Feedback and Communications:** Encouraging interaction and updates to improve effectiveness.

7.1 Division Contributions & Discussions to Linkages of CP, AMP, and Budget.

7.1.1 Quality Assurance

Secondary School Inspection:

- **In Progress:** Inspections of 12 secondary schools (4 Government and 8 Non-Government) were conducted using the Minimum Service Standards (MSS) to assess school performance.
- **Achievements:**
 - Non-Government schools displayed **exemplary teaching and management capacity**.
 - Government and Non-Government schools showed strong **student achievements**, with both teaching methods and learning environments meeting the "Achieve" level.
- **Challenges:** Continuous improvement needed, especially in **staff collaboration** to ensure unified progress across schools.

Tonga National Professional Standards Framework for Teachers (TNPSFT):

- **In Progress:** The **TNPSFT** is being used to assess and improve teaching quality.
- **Achievements:**
 - Teachers are assessed through **Level Descriptors** and competency levels, with **teacher appraisal records** being kept for successive appraisals.
- **Challenges:** There is a need to ensure the **purpose of the framework**—focused on improvement and accountability—is fully understood and implemented across all schools.
- **Recommendations:** Continue working on the **Theory of Change**, supporting teachers in analysis, goal setting, and development planning through a clear and structured framework.

Professional Development:

- **In Progress:** Ongoing training and development sessions to improve teaching and management skills across both Government and Non-Government schools.
- **Recommendations:** Strengthen collaboration within staff to ensure **professional development goals** are aligned with the overarching strategic plans (CP and AMP), contributing to consistent improvement in teaching standards across all schools.



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7.1.2 Policy, Planning and Research Division (PPRD)

Focus Items/Priorities:

- Transition from the **old band structure** (up to June 30, 2016) to the **new band structure** (starting July 1, 2016, to present, 2024).

Achievements:

- The implementation of the **new band structure** is ongoing.

Challenges:

- **Overpayments** due to staff leaving without resuming duty.
- **Unauthorized absences** and **late submission of leave** requests.

Comments/Discussions:

- **Staff Capacity Building:** Understand staff capacities and promote good management practices.
- **Promotions to Senior Leadership (SL) posts:** Establish clear pathways to enhance **motivation**.
- **Staff Relationships:** Foster a **healthy working environment** to improve staff interactions.

Recommendations:

- Implement a system for **capacity building, timely reporting,** and enhanced **staff management** to address overpayment and absenteeism issues.

7.1.3 Learning and Teaching Secondary Division

Focus Items/Priorities:

- **Empower Teachers and Students** to be a blessing to others.
- Focus on:
 - **Mathematics** improvement
 - **Upskilling of Teachers**
 - **Enhancing teaching and planning strategies**

In Progress/Achievements:

- All **Mathematics associations** are collaborating to address poor math results, particularly among boys.
- The **Ministry of Education and Training (MET)** is providing professional development training.
- Emphasis on **lesson coverage** and **test setting** (internally).
- Resources and training are being facilitated to improve teaching skills.



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- Data collection efforts are underway through **EMIS** to help schools track student performance until graduation.

Challenges:

- Need to **trial exam procedures** before students take the exams.
- Schools must improve their systems to trace individual student performance.
- There is a need to work cooperatively with other education systems to **reduce disruptions** to school programs.

Inspirational Note:

- "You will always win when you move with love and genuine intentions."

7.1.4 Learning and Teaching Primary Division

Focus Items/Priorities:

- **8 Subdivisions within the Primary Division:**
 - Primary & Middle Schools
 - Early Childhood Education (ECE)
 - Inclusive Education
 - Soroban
 - Broadcasting
 - Sport and Culture
 - Resource Centre

Achievements:

- This year, **30 teachers** left the field due to migration, resignation, or passing, but staffing changes have been implemented in schools to mitigate disruptions until the end of the academic year.
- There is an expectation to fill the **30 teaching vacancies** for the new staffing year.
- Plans for ECE include establishing **10 new schools** by 2025, requiring **10 teachers** to start these classes.
- In Inclusive Education, **3 special classes** are set to be established in 2025, needing **3 professional teachers**.
- **4 F1 classes** are planned for 2025, requiring **2 teachers per class**.
- The total staffing requirement for 2025 is **51 teachers**.

Challenges:

- Difficulty in replacing the **30 teachers** who left, which may affect the quality of education.
- Ensuring sufficient staffing levels to support the expansion of ECE and Inclusive Education classes.



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7.1.5 Corporate Service Division

1. **Focus Items/Priorities:**

- School Registration: \$50 fee for a 2-year registration period.
- Drafting a Manual for Divisions.
- Addressing the need for cleaners in the main office.
- Completing the PMS Cycle for 2023/24.

2. **Achievements/Challenges:**

- The **teacher registration renewal fee** has been established at **\$75 for 3 years**.
- Several divisions are finalizing their drafts, with a few remaining before the first draft of the manual can be distributed.
- The decision regarding the **Director post** in schools is pending parliament approval, causing a delay in implementation.
- Planning for **World Teachers' Day** on October 5th is underway, with the program details yet to be finalized.

7.1.6 EAU Division

Standardized Reporting/Raw Marks:

- Transition from outcome-based to competency-based assessment.
- Ongoing updates on the Assessment Information System (AIS) by 2027 to handle vast data and produce quality analysis reports.
- Implementation of large-scale assessments for Classes 5, 6, 9, and 11.
- Development of classroom assessment strategies for Classes 1 to 13.
- Review of the curriculum for Classes 1 to 13, alongside assessment prescriptions for Classes 12 and 13.
- Collaboration with TSRSP and EAU Tonga for establishing large-scale assessments beginning with item writing for Classes 5 and 6.
- Participation in PILNA exams for literacy and numeracy with 15 Pacific countries, highlighting the need for an effective AIS to incorporate classroom assessments.

2. **Curriculum & Assessment Review:**

- Enhancing capacity to measure education quality through student learning results.
- Establishing a student learning assessment system, focusing on large-scale assessments and effective classroom assessment strategies.
- Collaboration with EQAP for running PILNA trials in three schools for Tonga in 2025, aiming to set up a system similar to STAT and PILNA.

Achievements:

- Successfully updated assessment information and implemented ongoing development of the AIS.
- Initiated large-scale assessments for Class 5 and 6, with the assistance of TSRSP.
- Planned PILNA testing for Classes 4 and 6, with trials scheduled for the upcoming month in three schools.



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Comments/Discussions:

- The discussions and presentations during the event emphasized that educational outcomes hinge on several key areas:
 - Academic achievements across various levels.
 - Increased enrollment rates in Early Childhood Education (ECE).
 - Improvement of literacy and numeracy skills among students.
 - Graduation rates versus dropout rates.
 - Focus on inclusivity and equity in education.
 - Higher enrollment in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), highlighting young girls.
 - Early engagement with students facing educational difficulties.
 - Development of competencies and overall education attainment.
 - Promotion of lifelong learning initiatives.

8. Recommendations

Based on the presentations and discussions during the Join Sector Review Conference for the Ministry of Education and Training, here are some key recommendations that address challenges across the education sector and can facilitate significant progress:

Recommendations for JSR 2025

- 1. Standardized Reporting and Assessment:**
 - Enhance the Assessment Information System (AIS) to effectively handle vast data and produce quality analysis reports by 2027.
 - Develop and implement large-scale assessments for Classes 3, 5, 6, 9, and 11 to improve educational outcomes.
 - Review and refine the curriculum and assessment prescriptions for Classes 1 to 13 to ensure alignment with competency-based assessment frameworks.
 - Collaborate with TSRSP and EAU Tonga for effective item writing in large-scale assessments for Classes 5 and 6.
- 2. Curriculum & Assessment Review:**
 - Establish a robust student learning assessment system similar to STAT and PILNA that focuses on both large-scale assessments and classroom assessment strategies.
 - Conduct PILNA trials in collaboration with EQAP in selected schools to evaluate and improve literacy and numeracy skills.
 - Ensure that all curriculum writers, teachers, examiners, and students communicate effectively by standardizing terminology and expectations within the curriculum.
- 3. Capacity Building and Staff Management:**
 - Prioritize staff capacity building initiatives to better understand and utilize staff strengths and skills effectively.
 - Address staffing challenges by creating clear pathways for promotions and professional development within the education system, encouraging teachers to stay and love their profession.



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- Enhance teacher engagement through targeted support initiatives that focus on improving teaching practices, particularly in mathematics and literacy.
- 4. Collaboration and Support:**
 - Foster improved collaboration with social and civil society organizations, as well as donors, to synchronize efforts and update progress on educational initiatives.
 - Establish partnerships with donors to support literacy and reading improvement programs (Classroom libraries & reading in-service) at the primary level and numeracy enhancements at the secondary level.
 - Encourage cooperative efforts among mathematics associations to address poor results, particularly among boys, and to enhance teaching strategies.
- 5. Promoting Inclusivity and Equity:**
 - Focus on enhancing inclusivity and equity within the education sector, ensuring that all students, regardless of background, have access to quality education.
 - Address the needs of schools that are struggling to align with the mainstream education system, with the goal of increasing the current 30% to a higher percentage.
 - Support initiatives aimed at increasing enrollment rates in ECE and TVET to ensure a holistic educational experience for all learners.
 - Support boys' education program and primary school counselling
- 6. Academic Preparation and Transition:**
 - Develop strategies to improve student preparedness for Form 7, particularly in light of poor Form 6 results, which may stem from the removal of Form 5 exams.
 - Implement targeted support programs to ensure students are adequately prepared for higher academic challenges.

9. Conclusion

The 2024 Joint Sector Review has illuminated significant strides made within Tonga's education sector while also highlighting critical areas requiring concerted effort and collaboration. The ongoing transition from standardized to competency-based assessments signifies a pivotal shift towards a more holistic and effective educational framework. However, the need for enhanced standardized reporting and robust assessment systems remains paramount, as we seek to cultivate an educational environment that prioritizes student learning outcomes.

As we reflect on the achievements to date, particularly in the realms of large-scale assessments and curriculum reviews, it is clear that our collective efforts have begun to bear fruit. Yet, challenges persist, notably in areas of teacher retention, training, and resource allocation. The statistics revealing that only 30% of schools can effectively align with the mainstream education system underscore the urgent need for targeted capacity-building initiatives. The development of quality assurance mechanisms within schools is also essential for maintaining high standards and ensuring the authenticity of assessments.

The commitment to collaboration with donors, educational stakeholders, and community organizations will be instrumental in synchronizing efforts aimed at improving literacy, numeracy, and overall educational quality. By fostering a culture of continuous professional development and support for teachers, we can create an environment where educators feel valued and motivated to inspire the next generation.



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Furthermore, enhancing inclusivity and equity in education is a fundamental priority. Addressing the specific needs of underperforming schools and ensuring all students, regardless of their background, have access to quality education is vital for the long-term sustainability of the system.

In summary, while the path forward is laden with challenges, the findings of this review reinforce our shared commitment to building a transformative, resilient, and inclusive educational landscape in Tonga. By embracing collaboration, prioritizing effective teaching practices, and implementing robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, we can ensure that every child receives the education they deserve, paving the way for a brighter future for all. Together, let us reaffirm our dedication to the principles of equity, quality, and continuous improvement as we work towards realizing our vision for a thriving educational system in Tonga.

10. References:

Presentations

[JSR 2024 - Google Drive](#)

