

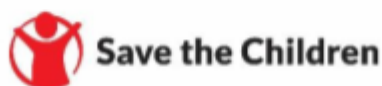


Kingdom of Tonga

JOINT SECTOR REVIEW 2025 REPORT

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING
JOINT SECTOR REVIEW CONFERENCE, 3-4 September 2025

Save the Children Project Management Unit



Abstract

The Ministry of Education and Training Joint Sector Review (Mid-Year Review) Conference 2025 brought together more than seventy participants from various sectors in Tonga's education system. The conference included representatives from government and non-government schools, covering Early Childhood Education (ECE) to tertiary education, as well as participation from donors.

The main goals of the conference were to thoroughly discuss progress on the Corporate Plan 2026-2028, budget execution, current state of education in Tonga, and to promote collaborative partnerships for advancing quality education for all.



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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ANCP	Australian Non-Government Organisations Cooperation Program
AMP	Annual Management Plan
ATI	'Ahopaniolo Technical Institute
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
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
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
SCR	Student-classroom ratio
TCDES	Tonga Council of Directors of Education Systems
TEPF	Tonga Education Policy Framework
TFSC	Tonga Form Six Certificate
TIHE	Tonga Institute of Higher Education
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

Executive Summary

The Ministry of Education and Training successfully hosted the Education joint Sector Review (JSR) 2025, building on the momentum from previous conferences. This year's JSR demonstrated significant progress in curriculum development, policy implementation and infrastructure development while identifying critical areas requiring continued attention and investment.

Key achievements for 2025:

1. Curriculum and Assessment Progress:

- Completed curriculum development for Class 4 English Language and Mathematics (both English and Tongan versions)
- Curriculum drafts for Classes 1-3 in all four core subjects scheduled for completion by October 25, 2025
- Successful implementation of competency-based assessment framework
- Strong Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (PILNA) performance with 87% passing rate in numeracy, exceeding other Pacific countries.

2. Policy Development and Implementation:

- Introduction of comprehensive new education policies for 2025 including Staff Transfer, Student Transfer, Staff Promotion, Phone Use, and Housing policies
- Implementation of updated School Grant Policy and Minimum Service Standards (MSS)
- 10% grant increase to non-government schools addressing equity concerns
- Removal of pass/fail labeling for national exams (Form 5-Form 7).

3. Infrastructure and Resilience:

- Completion of construction at three tsunami-affected schools (USD 3.3M investment)
- Construction underway at eight additional tsunami-affected schools across four remote islands
- Development of standard designs for remote island schools through Tonga Safe and Resilient Schools Project. (TSRSP)

Key Recommendations for 2026:

1. Financial Management and Procurement Reform:

- Achieve 100% procurement compliance (up from historical 25-50%)
- Strengthen budget discipline with mandatory funding confirmation before recruitment
- Address current vacancy funding gap of approximately 1 million pa'anga
- Implement program-based budgeting linking resources to Corporate Plan outcomes.

2. Data Systems and Monitoring Enhancement:

- Complete EMIS implementation across all schools to address data gaps
- Establish comprehensive tracking of repetition rates, completion rates, transition rates, and retention rates
- Develop unified M&E framework aligned with SDG 4 indicators
- Strengthening Assessment Information System (AIS) for quality analysis reports.

3. Human Resource Development:

- Address critical teacher shortages in mathematics and science
- Implement comprehensive teacher retention strategies
- Establish clear professional development pathways
- Address training needs 59% of untrained teachers in some education systems.

4. Sector Coordination and Planning:

- Develop unified Tonga Education Sector Plan aligned with new Tonga Education Sector Framework (TESF) 2025-2035
- Strengthening collaboration between government and non-government systems
- Enhance coordination with donor partners for strategic alignment
- Implement joint monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.
-

1. Introduction

The 2025 Joint Sector Review (JSR) marked a significant milestone for Tonga's education sector, serving as a critical platform for reflection, dialogue and forward planning. Anchored in the transition to the Ministry of Education and Training's Corporate Plan 2026–2028, the review built upon achievements from the previous planning cycle while addressing ongoing challenges identified by the Education Sector Analysis Report (2024).

Hosted by MET Chief Executive Officer Mr. 'Isikeli Oko, the JSR conference convened over 70 participants, including representatives from government ministries, non-government education systems, donor partners and universities. The conference provided a comprehensive, sector-wide forum for assessing progress, promoting strategic coordination and planning for the future of education in Tonga.

The JSR emphasized the Ministry's commitment to accountability, evidence-based decision-making, and alignment with national priorities, with particular focus on gender equality, equitable access, and Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4). Now in its third consecutive year, the JSR continues to serve as a cornerstone for monitoring sector performance, evaluating policy outcomes and charting a shared vision for education.

Dr 'Uhila-moe-langi Fasi, Hon. Minister of Education and Training's address highlighted the dynamic nature of the education sector, emphasizing the need for adaptability and innovation to meet evolving demands. Central to this transformation is the Corporate Plan 2026–2028, a forward-looking, results-oriented framework building on the foundations of the Education Framework. The plan reinforces the importance of accountability, relevance, and alignment with national priorities, ensuring resources and interventions are equitably distributed and outcomes are measurable.



Several key achievements were recognized during the JSR, including the newly launched new national Tonga Education Policy Framework 2025-2035, updated policies such as the School Grants Policy and Minimum Service Standards (MSS), the expansion of Early Childhood Education (ECE) programs, and strengthened student pathways through Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). Improved student learning outcomes, evidenced through PILNA and other assessments, were cited as tangible signs of progress. These successes reflect the collective efforts of the Ministry, Church education systems, development partners and stakeholders working collaboratively to advance the vision of Education for All.

At the same time, the JSR acknowledged ongoing challenges requiring sustained focus, strategic interventions and innovative solutions. The keynote address concluded with appreciation of donor and development partners, recognizing their vital support in driving projects forward and helping realize the Ministry's broader vision for an inclusive, high-quality and sustainable education system in Tonga.

2. Participants

Building on 2024's success, the 2025JSR saw increased representation across all education stakeholder groups.

Stakeholders included:

- **MET Leadership & Divisions:** CEO's Office, Senior Management and all core divisions (Policy & Planning, Corporate Services, Primary & Secondary Education, Quality Assurance, etc.).
- **Educational Institutions:** Principals and directors from non-government schools, and representatives from Tonga National University (TNU), Christ University in the Pacific (CUP), and Tupou Tertiary Institute (TTI).
- **Development Partners:** World Bank, DFAT Australia, MFAT New Zealand, UNICEF, Global Partnership for Education (GPE), Save the Children Australia (SCA) and the South Pacific Community (SPC).

3. Approach

The conference utilized a structured approach building on the 2024 framework:

- Plenary sessions for sector-wide updates
- Divisional breakout sessions for detailed planning
- Stakeholder presentations and feedback
- Interactive discussions on challenges and solutions
- Strategic planning sessions for 2026-2028



The JSR (Appendix 2 Program) had several information sessions where information was discussed via PowerPoint. This was followed by discussion and clarification sessions. Photos of the activities are provided in Appendix 3.

4. Program Overview

4.1 MET Vision and Big Picture

The JSR 2025 opened with an overview of Tonga's broader education landscape, framed within the Corporate Plan 2025. The MET CEO highlighted key guiding documents, including *Lao 'oe Ako* and the TSDF which provide strategic direction for the sector.

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 MET mandate is to ensure Tonga is equipped with a skilled and competent workforce to support sustainable development. This includes providing policy advice on early childhood, primary, secondary, and post-secondary education, and ensuring the effective, efficient, equitable and sustainable implementation of the Education Act and other government policies.

4.2 National and Regional Frameworks

At the national level, the Tonga Strategic Development Framework II (TSDF II) aims to foster a progressive Tonga that supports a higher quality of life for all, emphasizing inclusiveness, sustainability, and human development, with a strong focus on gender equality. TSDF III is expected to replace TSDF II imminently. Education underpins all TSDF II organizational outcomes, particularly by promoting collaboration across sectors, and aligns closely with SDG 4, which seeks to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Regionally, the Pacific Regional Education Framework (PacREF) provides a transformative agenda for sustainable education. It prioritizes:

- Quality and relevance of education and qualifications
- Learning pathways, including TVET and alternative pathways
- Student outcomes and wellbeing
- Teacher professionalism

Partnerships with regional and international organizations, including the Educational Quality and Assessment Programme (EQAP), ensure effective national assessments such as PILNA (Class 4 & 6) and PALS (Form 3 literacy, numeracy, and science). Collaborations with the USP continue to support tertiary education access for Tongan students through fee assistance and subscriptions.

4.3 Government priorities for 2025-2026

1. National Resilience

The Ministry continues to strengthen resilience to climate change and disaster risks. Key initiatives include the ongoing TSSI project, the upcoming BRACE project, and school-based disaster risk reduction programs under the Safe Schools initiative. The Tonga Accelerated Resilience Program (TARP) ensures continuity of education for all students, complemented by the Hama e-Learning platform.

2. Quality Services and Affordability

Major reforms focus on improving data, assessment, and examination systems, including the full implementation of the Education Management Information System (EMIS) and updated human resource systems. National curriculum and assessment reviews are ongoing, alongside the development of professional standards and teacher registration initiatives under PacREF. Local institutions, including TNU, continue to strengthen the provision of high-quality skills education.

3. Improving Education for All

Efforts focus on promoting safe and inclusive learning environments, reducing dropouts, and advancing gender equality. Key strategies include strengthening the Truancy Unit, expanding employable skills training locally and abroad, and providing subsidies for ECE, primary, and secondary education. Initiatives also include inclusive and special education provision, support for student progression from ECE to higher education, reinstating the Form 5 examination, and continued development of the Hama e-Learning platform. Scholarship programs under the Skills and Employment Tonga (SET) project are being phased out, while classroom library and home reading initiatives continue under the GPE's Systems Transformation Grant program.

4. Regional and Community Development

Education initiatives align closely with PacREF priorities, emphasizing quality, learning pathways, student outcomes, wellbeing, and teacher professionalism. National assessments are aligned with regional standards through EQAP, while partnerships with USP support tertiary education access for Tongan students.

5. Blue Pacific Continent 2050

Ongoing initiatives in education contribute to regional development and support the long-term strategic vision for the Pacific under the Blue Pacific Continent 2050 framework.

4.4 Challenges

Despite progress, the sector faces ongoing challenges that require targeted interventions:

- **Limited Resources:** Access to technology and learning materials remains constrained, particularly in outer islands and rural areas. Shortages of textbooks and teaching resources affect the quality of learning.
- **Funding Constraints:** Many sector activities are co-funded by development partners, highlighting the need for sustainable domestic financing.

- **Teacher Recruitment and Retention:** High turnover, especially in mathematics and science, is driven by migration for better-paying jobs or seasonal work abroad.
- **Infrastructure Needs:** School facilities remain inadequate in many locations, requiring reconstruction to ensure safe and resilient classrooms.
- **Gender Disparities:** While girls generally complete high school at higher rates, boys experience higher dropout rates, signalling the need for targeted strategies to support male learners.

5. New MET Policies and Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) Updates

Presenters: Soane Selui & Supiesi Halafihi Baleinatauba – Policy and Planning Division

The session highlighted the critical role of accurate and timely data in shaping effective education policies and ensuring accountability within the MET. Presenters emphasized that data-driven decision-making is central to improving the quality, equity, and efficiency of education services in Tonga.

Education indicators at both the national and global levels, aligned with the SDGs, provide the foundation for sector planning and performance monitoring. By 2030, MET aims to advance progress toward the SDGs, with 10 of the 17 goals directly relevant to education. Key education indicators include:

- Gross and net enrolment rates
- Out-of-school children rates
- Qualified teacher percentages
- Teacher–student ratios
- Provision of basic school services
- Gender parity index
- Completion and transition rates

Reliable data from sources such as the Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (PILNA) and the Government Statistics Department are essential for monitoring progress and guiding strategic decisions across the sector.

5.1 New Education Policies for 2025

To strengthen policy coherence and governance, MET has developed and introduced several new education policies for 2025, grounded within its overarching legal and regulatory framework. The structure ensures that policies are aligned with legislation, regulations, and national priorities, promoting transparency and consistency from system to school level.

Key new and revised policies include:

- **Staff Transfer Policy:** Promotes fair, transparent, and needs-based movement of staff, balancing institutional requirements with employee welfare.

- **Student Transfer Policy:** Establishes clear criteria for student transfers to manage enrolment distribution and prevent overcrowding.
- **Staff Promotion Policy:** Provides a transparent career development pathway based on minimum service years, performance, and professional standards.
- **Phone Use Policy:** Regulates mobile phone use within schools. Teachers may use phones only for official duties during instructional hours, with personal use permitted during breaks. Student phone use guidelines are under development.
- **Housing Policy:** Introduces transparent eligibility criteria for access to government quarters, prioritizing newly appointed staff and those transferred to remote areas, with applications managed through the HR division.

Additional policy work is underway in school zoning, census and enrolment timelines, and data management, reinforcing MET's commitment to equitable access, accountability, and efficient resource allocation.

5.2 Addressing Data Gaps and Strengthening EMIS

While significant progress has been achieved, several data gaps persist that require focused attention. Incomplete or unreported data include:

- Repetition, retention, transition, and completion rates
- Gross intake ratios for new entrants
- Teacher attrition and qualification data
- Professional development participation
- Tertiary and TVET staff qualification and lecturer–student ratios

To address these gaps, MET is enhancing its EMIS to capture comprehensive and accurate education data across all subsectors. Key priorities include:

- Integrating tertiary and TVET data into EMIS
- Establishing formal data-sharing protocols with relevant agencies
- Aligning EMIS with the SDG 4 monitoring framework
- Standardizing census and enrolment deadlines
- Developing operational manuals to guide policy implementation.

5.3 Looking Ahead

Strengthening education data systems and implementing the new policy suite are central to achieving MET's vision of a resilient, inclusive, and high-performing education system.

Through robust data management clear operational frameworks and transparent policy processes, the Ministry is positioned to make evidence-based decisions that advance the national education agenda and contribute meaningfully to achieving the education-related SDGs by 2030.

6. Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment Updates

Presenters: Teresa Pahulu & Amelia Folaumahina

6.1 Curriculum Development and Implementation

The Curriculum Development Unit (CDU) has reported steady progress in rolling out the new national curriculum. As of June 2025, the Class 4 English Language and Mathematics curricula—both English and Tongan versions—have been completed. Drafts for Classes 1–3 across all four core subjects are on track for completion by October 25, 2025.

Despite these achievements, several implementation challenges have emerged. Delays in the arrival of translated materials, printing and formatting issues, and late completion of Tongan translations affected school readiness. Staffing instability—stemming from delayed teacher transfers and late appointments of TNU graduates—also disrupted the alignment between trained teachers and assigned class levels. Additionally, some teachers demonstrated limited engagement with reading requirements, while schools independently produced teaching expectations, creating inconsistencies in delivery.

To address these issues, the CDU has expanded its team of curriculum writers to include experienced primary officers and strengthened quality assurance processes. Subject team leaders now have dedicated time for close monitoring, editing, and improvement of curriculum outputs. A specialized Editing and Proofreading Section has been established to support accurate Tongan translation, and subject glossaries are being standardized across all levels. Enhanced monitoring and school visits are providing targeted support for teachers—both trained and untrained—while data collection systems are being developed to guide 2026 planning.

The remainder of 2025 will prioritize:

- Finalizing and quality-assuring C1–C4 curriculum documents.
- Conducting Training of Trainers (ToT) for C1–C4 teachers (October 6–17, 2025).
- Training curriculum writers and developing readers under the GPE funded *Library for All SCA program* for C5 and C6.

In 2026, focus will shift toward nationwide implementation of the C1–C4 curriculum, ongoing teacher training, and the production of readers to strengthen literacy instruction. CDU acknowledges the valuable contributions of:

- USP: for printing Tongan proverbs and grammar books to complement the revised curriculum.
- TNU: for enabling lecturer participation in curriculum revision and school-based support.
- Catholic Education System: for curriculum input, particularly by Olivia Katoa in revising EPARL experiences.

Education system officers and teacher training institutes have been invited to join the October 2025 Training of Trainers to ensure coherence and continuity in curriculum implementation.

6.2 Assessment Systems and Reforms

The Assessment Division reaffirmed that *assessment reveals the true state of an education system*. Its priorities centre on building a competency-based assessment framework, strengthening the assessment data management system, and aligning classroom, national, and large-scale assessments.

Under the leadership of Technical Advisor Dr. Fernando Cartwright, the Fit-for-Purpose Tonga Assessment System has been developed to improve the collection, cleaning, and psychometric analysis of assessment data. The system integrates a digital Assessment Data Management Application, complementing manual processing and PacSIM, with additional capacity-building on barcode printing and Optical Recognition Marking (ORM) for scoring.

In parallel, Technical Advisor Dr. Reg Allen is supporting the establishment of a Student Learning Assessment System, linking classroom assessments with national measures. Key components include:

- High-Stakes Assessments (HSA): prescription consultations for national exams.
- Learning Support Assessments (LSA): data-informed interventions and teacher guidance.
- Tonga Island Learning Support Assessment (TILSA): covering C3, C5, C6, and F3, incorporating PILNA and PALS frameworks.

Item development continues for Classes 5 and 6 across core subjects, while Classroom Assessments (C1–C6) are being strengthened through in-service teacher training.

Findings from the 2021 PILNA Report highlighted that literacy outcomes in Classes 4 and 6 did not meet expected benchmarks, while numeracy performance was comparatively strong, with 87% pass rates—above the Pacific average. Current efforts are focused on addressing these literacy gaps and advancing Form 3 Science PALS trials in selected schools.

Running records have been reintroduced and well received by teachers, reaffirming their value in ongoing classroom assessment. The TFSC and TNFSC examinations continue to play a critical role in tracking national learning progress.

6.3 Key Discussions and Feedback

- **Science performance data:** Participants queried low science pass rates. MET explained that the 30% decline in enrolment and the introduction of an internal assessment component (30%) affected results, though internal assessments have enhanced overall student outcomes.
- **Subject specialization in Form 5:** Suggestions to begin specialization in Biology and Physics from Form 5 were noted for review and future feasibility.

- **English pass rates and tertiary readiness:** Concerns were raised that high English pass rates (e.g., 98%) may not align with students' actual readiness for tertiary-level study. This will be further investigated.
- **AI, academic integrity and curriculum concerns:** Participants recommended the introduction of systems to verify student-authored work in response to AI use. Discussions also highlighted disparities in aid distribution, with CUP receiving under \$1 million compared to higher allocations for TNU and USP. Opposition to including sex education in the curriculum was also voiced.
- **Support for non-exam students and TVET pathways:** It was emphasized that only around 30% of students complete national exams, leaving the majority without formal certification. Recommendations included:
 - Strengthening general mathematics, functional English, and trade skills education.
 - Expanding access to government trade curricula and TVET programs.
 - Introducing policies to retain students until age 18 and defer overseas seasonal work until age 21, ensuring trade qualifications are completed before departure.

7. Budget Overview and Financial Management

7.1 FY 2025/26 Budget Highlights:

- Total projected expenditure: \$74.8 million (increase from \$70.7 million)
- Revenue projection: \$2.1 million (81% of school fees, 19% from examination fees)
- Salary and wages: 58% of budget reflecting sector's labor-intensive nature
- Operating costs: 9% (\$2.7 million) requiring increased investment
- Non-operating expenses: 33% including subsidies and scholarships

7.2 Key Financial Challenges:

- Budget execution at 30% allocation (30 million pa'anga)
- Intra-year fund movements for salary coverage
- Procurement compliance historically low (25-50%)
- Current vacancies are valued at 1 million pa'anga.

7.3 Revenue and Expenditure Overview

7.3.1 Revenue Overview

From FY 2020/21 to FY 2023/24, the Ministry of Education and Training consistently achieved its revenue targets set by Treasury. However, in FY 2024/25, actual collections fell short due to the volatility of fee-based revenue and uneven economic recovery following the post-COVID period. Despite these challenges, the Ministry remains optimistic about achieving its FY 2025/26 revenue targets, supported by ongoing financial reforms and efficiency measures.

For FY 2025/26, total revenue is projected at \$2.1 million, primarily derived from:

- School fees: Approximately \$1.7 million (81%), mainly from Forms 3–5.
- Examination fees: Estimated at \$0.4 million (19%), contributed by Form 5 students.

Minor revenue sources, such as facility hire (e.g., the Sports Complex), offer potential for growth in the future. However, the current revenue structure reflects a high concentration risk, with heavy reliance on student fees, raising concerns regarding affordability and equity for low-income households. Diversifying income streams, particularly through service-based offerings, is a strategic opportunity to enhance financial resilience and sustainability.

7.3.2 Expenditure Overview

The Ministry's expenditure is organized around four strategic program areas:

1. Leadership and Planning
2. Quality Assurance
3. Learning and Teaching
4. Support for Tonga National University (TNU)

Historical expenditure trends show a steady increase, reflecting sector growth and inflationary pressures:

- FY 2020: \$52.5 million
- FY 2021: \$56.7 million
- FY 2022: \$56.2 million

For FY 2025/26, total projected expenditure is \$74.8 million, up from \$70.7 million in FY 2024/25. Key drivers include:

- Facility maintenance for TCA boarding school, TNSC
- Examination implementation costs
- Recruitment of new staff
- Top-up funding for scholarships and subsidy programs

Salaries and wages account for 58% of total expenditure, underscoring the labour-intensive nature of the education sector and the fiscal impact of teacher recruitment. Operating costs, representing 9% of the budget (~\$2.7 million), are distributed between primary and secondary schools, though they remain relatively modest, indicating potential underinvestment in day-to-day learning resources. Non-operating expenses comprise 33% of the budget, covering subsidies for ECE, primary, and secondary education, as well as scholarships and donor-supported initiatives—demonstrating the government's continued commitment to social equity and inclusive access.

8. Donor Partner Investments and Achievements

Donor partners provided detailed updates on ongoing and planned investments in Tonga's education sector, covering infrastructure, system strengthening, early childhood development (ECE), inclusive education, skills development, child protection, and climate resilience.

8.1 Development Partners Investment

8.1.1 World Bank – Tonga Safe and Resilient Schools Project (TSRSP)

Presented by Will Fonua.

TSRSP is a USD 50.52 million initiative, financed by the International Development Association (USD 30M), the Crisis Response Window and the PNG/Pacific Island Umbrella Facility (USD 5.77M), and the GP (USD 4.75M). Governance is led by a MET steering committee, with implementation oversight by MET and the Ministry of Finance, and operational coordination through the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Project Management Unit.

Key Components:

- **Infrastructure:** Three tsunami-affected schools have been completed (USD 3.3M investment), with MET standard designs developed for remote island schools. Construction is ongoing at eight additional schools, allocating USD 1.8M for government schools and USD 1M for non-government schools.
- **System Strengthening:** EMIS implementation in government schools now captures student and teacher attendance and issues report cards. Curriculum revisions for Classes 5 and 6 have been completed, including pupil books, teacher guides, and training programs

8.1.2 UNICEF (2023–2027 Partnership)

Presented by Talanaivini Mafi.

UNICEF supports ECE, equitable learning, skills development, system strengthening, WASH, child protection and education resilience.

Achievements include:

- Completion of pre-service training modules aligned with the Pacific ECE Teacher Competency Framework.
- Hosting the first ECE Teachers Symposium (November 2024) for 150 teachers.
- Implementation of in-service teacher training programs, including the ECE reading program and IE in ECE modules (Phase 1).
- Development and dissemination of storybooks for ECE learners.

Planned 2025/26 activities:

- Embed national ECE quality standards into existing systems.
- Train teachers in remote learning facilitation.
- Implement inclusive education practices and procure assistive devices.
- Strengthen school and community disaster risk reduction (DRR) planning.
- Enhance multi-sectoral early childhood development through parent engagement and regional collaboration.
- Expand child protection initiatives, including mental health awareness, teacher and counsellor training, peer support groups, and online protection materials (BOYS platform and Laaha, starting 2026).

8.1.3 Australia (DFAT)

Presented by Mele'ana Moala'eua, DFAT investments include:

- Australia Awards Scholarships: AUD 35M annually.
- TSRSP Infrastructure: AUD 9.3M.
- Tonga Australia Support Platform (TASP): AUD 2M under the National TVET Policy Framework, partnering with MET, TIST, MAAMALOA Technical Institute, MANGO, Laaha, MTI, and the Tonga Chamber of Commerce.
- Pacific Australia Skills (PacAus Skills): AUD 229.5M supporting skills development aligned with local labour market needs.
- Regional Support: USP (USD 93M since 2019) and SPC EQAP (USD 47.13M).

8.1.4 New Zealand (MFAT)

Presented by Lesieli Nai, programs include:

- Tupu Inclusive Education: Builds teacher capacity for inclusive practices.
- Heilala Keu Ongona: Strengthens deaf education, sign language, and early intervention.
- Pacific Qualification Recognition Initiative: Enhances regional mobility and employability.
- PYEEEP: Youth leadership program with 46% participation and 92% retention.
- Tonga Education Partnership: Roadmap for 2026-aligned MET investments.
- Manaaki Scholarships: Targets seven priority sectors, allocating 20 scholarships (10 NZ, 10 Pacific).
- STS and STTS Initiatives: Governance, climate, leadership, and vocational programs (1 week to 12 months).
- ODFL Initiatives: Ensure education continuity during disasters, with skills access for women, youth, and persons with disabilities.

8.1.5 South Pacific Community (SPC)

Presented by Lupe Fe'iloaki.

SPC supports 27 Pacific countries as the principal scientific and technical organization. The Polynesia regional office (est. April 2023) aids education quality through EQAP, harmonizing EMIS systems and regional standards. The 2025 work plan includes 36 activities (19 completed, 17 remaining), with MET's CEO chairing the 10th Pacific Board for Educational Quality meeting.

8.1.6 GPE and Save the Children Australia

Presented by Lilieta Takau, initiatives focus on strengthening education system capacity, child protection and safeguarding, literacy and climate resilience:

- **GPE Grants:**

- System Capacity Grant (USD 7M) for technical advice and local group support.
- System Transformation Grant (USD 2.2M) to raise Year 4 and 6 reading benchmarks.
- BRACE Project (USD 8.7M, co-funded with GCF): Improves school safety and sustainability through retrofitting, solar power, internet connectivity, climate education (Form 6–7 elective), and teacher training.
- Past initiatives include TARP I & II, the Australian Humanitarian Project.

- **DFAT- Save the Children Australia:**

- ANCP – *Future Ready Children in Tonga* (AUD 413,302, DFAT) strengthens systems to protect children from violence.
- ANCP Phase 2 approved for four years (AUD 2M), including financial agreements and stakeholder engagement.
 - Additional programs focus on reducing student seclusion, improving literacy, and enhancing school safety.

8.2 Cross-Cutting Themes

Collectively, donor-funded projects demonstrate:

- Multi-year financial commitments
- Capacity-building for teachers, schools and systems
- Inclusive education and child protection initiatives
- Climate resilience and safe school infrastructure
- Alignment with national priorities via coordination through MET, MOF and regional partners.

8.3 Key Questions and Feedback

- **Recognition of Tongan Qualifications in Australia:** Undergraduate programs are widely recognized across Australian universities; postgraduate recognition processes began last year through TCT.

- **Scholarship Return Obligations:** Concerns raised about lack of return requirements and monitoring of scholarship recipients. Issues acknowledged; no formal response recorded.
- **University Research and CUP Support:** Donors were asked to support university research initiatives, emphasizing CUP's role as a leading research institution in the Pacific. Concern noted without formal response.

9. Non-government Education Systems (Managing Authorities)

Sector Overview:

Nine major non-government education systems serve approximately 6,500+ students, representing significant diversity in educational approaches and contributing substantially to Tonga's education landscape.

9.1 Free Wesleyan Church (FWC) – Dr 'Ungatea Kata

- Staff and Students: 580 staff serving 4,964 students
- Key Priorities:
 - Urgent need for a Tonga Education Sector Plan aligned with the Tonga Education Strategic Framework 2025–2035
 - Strengthening coordination between government and non-government systems for strategic planning and monitoring
 - Improving collaboration, policy standardization, and reducing the number of children and youth left behind.

9.2 Siasi Tonga Tau'ataina – Paula Fonua

- Schools and Coverage: 3 schools (Tongatapu, Vava'u, Ha'apai); 700+ students; 120 staff
- Strategic Plan: Five-year plan (2024–2028) aligned with national education plan and policy framework
- Infrastructure:
 - Tongatapu: 16 classrooms, 4 science labs
 - Vava'u: 12 classrooms, 2 science labs
 - Ha'apai: relocation to safer inland site, construction planned next year
- Curriculum:
 - 82–90% of students in non-academic streams
 - Technical and vocational pathways (TVET) introduced in maritime and carpentry
 - C1–C8 literacy programs, visual arts initiatives, and EMIS implementation at Tailulu Tongatapu.
- Student Welfare:
 - Truancy interventions through home visits and surveys

- Counselling programs and inclusive education support for students with disabilities
- Participation in MFAT-supported Tupu program for teacher training

9.3 Roman Catholic – Polikalepo Tuaileva

- Schools: 8 preschools, 3 primary schools, multiple secondary institutions
- TVET Programs:
 - Cookery, hospitality, tourism, fashion design, hairdressing, secretarial studies, automotive, construction, carpentry
- Accreditation: TNQAB certified
- Challenges: Limited access to TVET certificates and eligibility age adjustments.

9.4 Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) – Siaosi Masila

- Schools: 4 schools serving ~1,000 students; 50 staff; ECE–Form 7
- Education Philosophy: Holistic development of mental, physical, spiritual, and social growth
- Programs:
 - Structured academic schedule (9:00–15:30) with gardening, scripture instruction, and church services
 - Emphasis on play for social development
- Milestone: 130th anniversary of SDA education in Tonga, 10 Dec 2025

9.5 Ocean of Light (OOL) – Sabba Paymen

- Student Body: Culturally diverse (20% Chinese, 5% non-Pacific, remainder Tongan/Pacific)
- Curriculum: Cambridge IGCSE, AS levels; focus on English, mathematics, science
- Administration: Co-directors with high school and primary panels; collaborative governance
- Programs: Harmony Patrol, senior student-led service, music, and Global Perspectives
- Infrastructure: New science block with labs; lab technician planned for 2026
- Challenges: Language barriers, ongoing teacher training, balancing cultural identities

9.6 Acts Community College (ACTS) – Katherine Tupou

- Students and Staff: ~400 students, ECE–Form 7; 15 years of operation
- Focus: Literacy development, inclusive education (9.5% of students), differentiated learning
- Programs: Conflict resolution, child protection, partnership with Tupu pilot, USP, and VSA
- Challenges: Limited professional support, funding for teacher aides, flooding, transportation

- Philosophy: “*Ko e Ako Fungani – ‘Oku Kanoloto ai ‘a e ‘Otua mo Tonga ko hoku tofi’a*” – holistic education and community collaboration.

9.7 Anglican Church – Losana Latu

- School Overview: Established 1905; co-educational; 158 students (60% girls, 40% boys); 48 teachers
- Curriculum & Philosophy: Inclusive, Christ-centered education; focus on academic, vocational, and spiritual growth
- Professional Development: Workshops on teaching, learning, leadership, classroom management
- Challenges: Untrained staff, leadership development, supporting previously underperforming students.

9.8 Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (LDS) – Ronny Muli

- Focus: Spiritual development, academic excellence, English proficiency
- Programs: Pass-to-Play policy for sports eligibility, multiple qualifications for graduates, daily PLCs, bi-weekly in-service training
- Philosophy: Holistic education aligned with church values, leadership development

9.9 Anastasis College – Momea Tolu

- Overview: Established 10 May 2024; 105 students (projected 160); 13 teachers
- Philosophy: Holistic development—spiritual, cultural, practical; strong community engagement
- Curriculum & Programs: DEAR reading program, CITVS technical/trade programs, sports, youth groups, anti-bullying, media literacy
- Infrastructure: 16 classrooms, multipurpose hall, staff quarters, computer room, classroom libraries
- Challenges: Low initial academic performance, incomplete facilities, internet and transport limitations
- Opportunities: Strong church-school partnerships, sports culture, expansion plans for facilities and community programs

9.10 Key Challenges Across Non-Government Systems:

- Teacher training and professional development needs
- Infrastructure completion requirements
- Financial sustainability concerns
- Integration with national education policies
- Special needs support capacity

10. University institutions Updates

10.1 Tonga National University (TNU)

Presented by Dr. Tangikina Moimoi Steen

Plans and Objectives

TNU aims to preserve, extend, and disseminate knowledge of Tonga through teaching, research, scholarship, consultancy, and other means. TNU actively engages in research projects and consultancies with both international organizations and universities. The university offers around 60 academic programs, with ongoing program development to meet Tongan Qualifications Framework (TQF) levels 7–10, including continuous program accreditation with the Tonga National Qualifications and Accreditation Board (TNQAB) for degrees, master's, and regional awards.

TNU is committed to fostering the study of the Tongan language and culture. By 2026, the university plans to deliver, for the first time, a Bachelor of Arts in Tongan Language and Culture, currently under TNQAB accreditation. The university also seeks to facilitate Tonga's economic and social development through educational pathways promoting innovation and sustainable resource use, establishing cross-border pathways with multiple universities locally, regionally, and internationally. TNU follows a strategic development plan approved for 2024–2029, with an implementation plan in draft, soon to be finalized.

Staff and Student Profile

TNU employs 131 staff members, with 5% holding doctorates, 23% master's degrees, 11% postgraduate qualifications, 21% bachelor's degrees, 13% trade certifications or diplomas, and 7% school-leavers. The staff gender distribution is 53% male (69) and 47% female (62).

The university expects 1,173 students in 2025, including 777 females and 396 males, enrolled across certificate (481), diploma (491), and degree programs (201). The academic structure includes 12 schools, covering Education, Media and Journalism, Tongan Language and Culture, Accountancy, Tourism and Hospitality, Nursing and Midwifery, Health and Science, Tu'uloa (Open Access), Agriculture, Information and Communication Technology, Science and Technology, Maritime, and Polytechnic programs. Student enrollment per faculty includes 386 in Education, Arts, and Humanities, 350 in Science, 227 in Nursing, and 210 in Business. Each faculty is led by a dean.

Budget

TNU's approved budget for the year was 6.3 million, while actual spending reached 8.1 million due to various expenses, including recruitment of top executive positions (100,000), graduation (200,000), cost-of-living adjustment (100,000), and increased utility expenses (100,000). The contribution to the Retirement Fund Board (RFB) was 1.3 million.

The proposed budget for the following year is 8.5 million, with a projected deficit of 1.8 million. Funding priorities include the development of quality programs, research

and innovation centers, academic and administrative capacity building, and student support services. Proposed funding sources include government supplementary budgets, donor partners, and tuition fees.

Achievements

TNU has made significant achievements in research and teaching. Staff members are engaged in cross-disciplinary teaching, and the university has established research frameworks, guidelines, and indicators. Public engagement includes Po Tatala Public Lectures (9), publications, and conference presentations locally and internationally. TNQAB registration is complete, and quality management submissions, including PCET and QMS, were submitted five months ago. TNU has strengthened international collaborations with multiple Memoranda of Understanding, including partnerships with institutions in China, South Korea, Tonga, New Zealand, and Australia. The strategic plan for 2024–2029 is finalized.

Challenges

Challenges include ongoing development and delivery of quality programs in the Tongan context, research collaboration with local academics, staff capacity building (as many staff come from the Ministry of Education and Training with no prior university teaching experience), and student support service development. International partnerships and commercialization efforts are ongoing, particularly for unique programs such as the Bachelor of Tongan. Delays in the implementation of cabinet-approved projects, such as nursing programs, also pose challenges.

Lessons Learned

The Vice-Chancellor emphasized that TNU is “our university” and highlighted the importance of program uniqueness and encouraging students to pursue further studies at other universities. The focus remains on producing excellent students while utilizing resources efficiently. Collaborative efforts, faith in Tonga’s own culture, and positive partnerships are essential to achieve holistic development and ownership of Tongan language and culture.

10.2 Christ University in Pacific (CUP)

Presented by Dr Vili Vailea Saulala

CUP’s guiding principle is reflected in Ephesians 2:10. The institution comprises three primary schools, three secondary schools, and one university, operating under the “*Otua mo Tonga*” Framework. Established in 2004, it celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2024. CUP emphasizes digital learning due to resource constraints, implementing an electronic library and Management Information System (MIS) to digitize lectures, classes, and resources.

CUP has six faculties: Apologetics and Theology, Business and Law, Science, Computer Science, Education, and Technology. The structure is designed to facilitate

student access to lecturers and support. CUP hosts conferences on research, including AI and cybersecurity, and invites public participation for awareness. The motto is “In Christ We Live.” CUP offers education from foundational levels to master’s degrees. Over 100 students attend, with 80% gaining employment, despite rising national unemployment rates.

10.3 Tupou Tertiary Institute (TTI)

Presented by Rev. Samiuela Fonua

TTI presented a roadmap for establishing the FWCT University in 2026, awaiting TNQAB accreditation. This initiative marks the 200th anniversary of the Methodist mission in Tonga (1826) and seeks to merge FWCT higher institutions, including Siaatoutai Theological College, Tupou Tertiary Institute, and Hango Agricultural College. The university model emphasizes knowledge, wisdom, fonua, and lotu, with degree, diploma, and certificate qualifications.

The academic structure includes a School of Theology, School of Divinity, School of Agriculture, School of Trade, and School of Business. University support pillars encompass management, academic and research services, admission and qualification services, teaching support, and productivity/resource support. Governance follows the FWCT Constitution. The roadmap outlines required actions, timelines, and current statuses. TTI provided 2025 enrolment figures and projections for 2030, alongside research outputs.

11. Day 2: MET Internal Administration

Day 2 of the MET JSR workshop focused on financial management, procurement compliance, monitoring and evaluation frameworks, and divisional planning discussions. Key sessions included presentations from the Ministry of Finance, comprehensive M&E training, and budget analysis for government-funded education.



12. Ministry of Finance Presentations

Presenters: Sivoki Lavemaau, Melesungu Halaholo, Sisilia Finau

12.1 MOF Mandate and Budget Overview:

The session commenced with a presentation from MOF outlining its mandate under the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) and Treasury Instructions, emphasizing its responsibility to oversee government funds and ensure strict compliance with financial regulations.

The Ministry detailed the government budget cycle, which comprises four key stages: formulation, including the development of budget strategy and guidelines; approval through the Appropriation Act; execution guided by procurement regulations and Treasury circulars; and audit and evaluation via audit reports and annual reports submitted to Parliament. In terms of total government funding, education has received an increased allocation and remains a government priority, ranked third after Finance and Health, with initiatives such as *Tokoni Makehe* to support university student loans through Tonga Development Bank.

MET's overall budget execution is on track, with about 30% of funds (approximately 30 million pa'anga) properly allocated. Challenges were noted due to intra-year fund movements, primarily to cover staff salaries as recruitment and promotions exceeded initial projections. Current vacancies are valued at approximately 1 million pa'anga, highlighting the need for prior funding confirmation before recruitment. Historical issues include unutilized funds in 2019/20 (3 million pa'anga) and extra funding requests in 2024/25 to cover salary shortfalls, often sourced from contingency allocations. Strengthened adherence to budget guidelines, avoiding unnecessary transfers, and confirming funding before recruitment were emphasized. Program-based budgeting linking resources to outcomes in the Corporate Plan (CP) and Annual Management Plan (AMP) was stressed, highlighting the need for

discipline, compliance with capital expenditure criteria, and clear evidence of how finance links to intended outcomes over a three-year horizon.

12.2 Procurement

The session then focused on procurement, particularly the Annual Procurement Plan (APP) for FY 2026–2026. Key points included allocation of items by procurement method and by month, with a target due date of July 31 for planning submission. Procurement compliance in prior years ranged from 25% to 50%, with hopes that post-session adherence could reach 100%. Challenges identified included incorrect vote allocations, insufficient funding, delayed responses to procurement queries, contract management issues, and unclear cancellation processes when items are already in the market. Participants were advised that procurement plans should align with divisional portfolios, consider timing accurately, and follow the approved APPs. Smaller or less critical items may be reduced or adjusted. Non-compliance with procurement rules will no longer be tolerated, and as of June 31, any deviations will be returned to the Ministry for correction. Overall, the session stressed that efficient and compliant procurement is essential to ensure that financial resources are used effectively and in alignment with ministry objectives.

12.3 Treasury

Treasury matters were presented by Sisilia Finau, focusing on payment management for salaries, projects, and other allocations, all under the authority of the CEO of each ministry. Key issues highlighted included initiative projects that retain unspent balances after completion, inaccuracies and incomplete entries in the SUN financial system, late submission of payment requests, and missing or incorrect documentation, such as invoices, contracts, procurement approvals, and outdated forms. Treasury emphasized that accurate vote entries are critical for maintaining the integrity of financial records, including proper amounts, supplier details, and supporting calculations.

The presentation reinforced the importance of collaboration between clerks, administrative teams, and management to ensure all financial processes are completed before CEO approval and submission to Treasury. This ensures timely, accurate, and compliant financial management, contributing to effective planning and execution of MET programs.

Key Learnings:

- **Budget Management:** Education remains government's third priority after Finance and Health, with MET executing approximately 30% of allocated funds (30 million pa'anga) appropriately
- **Procurement Compliance:** Historical compliance rates of 25-50% must improve to 100% post-workshop, with Annual Procurement Plan (APP) for FY 2026 due July 31
- **Treasury Operations:** Critical importance of accurate vote entries, proper documentation, and timely submission of payment requests to maintain financial integrity.

Action Items Identified:

- Strengthen adherence to budget guidelines before recruitment
- Ensure funding confirmation prior to staff appointments
- Implement program-based budgeting linking resources to Corporate Plan outcomes
- Achieve 100% procurement compliance with APP submissions.

13.Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation

Presented by Soane Selui

Introduction to Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

The session began with an overview of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), emphasizing its role as a systematic process of collecting, analyzing, and using data to track the implementation of activities and assessing their effectiveness in achieving planned objectives. M&E is critical for ensuring accountability within the Ministry of Education, guiding evidence-based decision-making, and improving the allocation of resources. It also enables the Ministry to measure progress, identify challenges, and promote continuous learning, thereby strengthening the delivery of policies, plans, and programs across all levels of the education system.

The M&E Cycle:

The session outlined the complete planning and M&E cycle, demonstrating how each stage is interconnected. The cycle begins with the **Corporate Plan (CP)**, followed by the **Annual Management Plan (AMP)**, implementation of divisional activities, systematic monitoring and evaluation using data and indicators, preparation of annual reports for accountability, budget planning to guide resource allocation, and finally, the review and adjustment of policies. This cyclical approach ensures that planning, execution, and evaluation are consistently aligned, with data feeding into improved decision-making and policy refinement.

Corporate Plan (CP):

The **Corporate Plan** serves as the medium-term (three-year) strategic direction for the Ministry, establishing its vision, mission, goals, and priorities. It aligns with national priorities and frameworks, such as the Tonga Education Policy Framework (TEPF). Each division within the Ministry is tasked with delivering five targeted outputs that are both realistic and achievable. For each output, divisions are expected to define the activities required to achieve the targets, the measurement criteria, and timelines for implementation throughout the three-year planning period. The CP therefore provides a clear roadmap for performance expectations and resource alignment across the Ministry.

Annual Management Plan (AMP)

The **Annual Management Plan** operationalizes the Corporate Plan on a yearly basis. It provides a detailed account of how each activity is executed to achieve both divisional and overall ministry outputs. The AMP specifies what needs to be done, identifies the personnel responsible for each activity, and sets clear timelines and budget allocations. This level of detail ensures that daily operations are aligned with strategic objectives, facilitating effective monitoring, accurate reporting, and timely adjustments to implementation strategies.

Monitoring and Evaluation Framework:

M&E focuses on verifying whether the planned activities are being carried out as intended and whether the desired results are being achieved. The Ministry employs an M&E plan and framework to systematically track performance indicators. Timely monitoring, data collection, and analysis are essential for improving education policy and planning, ensuring that evidence-based decisions can be made at both operational and strategic levels. M&E allows the Ministry to identify challenges, capture lessons learned, and ensure that resources are used effectively to maximize educational outcomes.

Annual Reporting and Accountability:

Annual reports serve as a key accountability tool to Parliament, donor partners, and the general public. These reports rely on M&E data to provide evidence of what has been achieved, the challenges encountered and addressed, and lessons learned for future planning. Reports must comply with the updated format provided by the Prime Minister, including a comprehensive foreword covering staff performance, financial management, capacity development, achievements, challenges, statements of responsibility, and documentation of procurement and resource utilization. This standardized reporting ensures transparency, consistency, and accountability across all levels of the Ministry.

14. MET Financial Management and Budget

Presented by Sione Samate & Kalo Moeaki, MET Finance Division

This session was a continuation of Day 1 Finance Session.

During the session, the Finance Division presented key budget analysis highlights with a focus on government-funded students. It was reported that the total operating fund per student is \$130 for primary students (16,292 students) and \$420 for secondary students (3,567 students), giving a total of 19,859 students and an overall per-student funding of \$338, with the total teaching fund per head amounting to \$1,582. The financial discussion emphasized that government schools are the Ministry's main responsibility, and to ensure quality education, there is a need for adequate operating funds, improved resources, and increased funding where possible. In cases where additional funding is not feasible, recommendations included reducing the number of schools and distributing operating expenses to secondary schools in the form of targeted subsidies to maintain educational standards.

The session also noted that the internal finance manual, which provides guidelines for budgeting and financial management, has been approved by the Honorable Minister and was distributed to all divisions in hard copy during this session. Divisions were reminded that it is their responsibility to prioritize which activities should be funded under the Ministry's budget, ensuring that resources are allocated efficiently and in alignment with strategic objectives.

15. Divisional team time and Wrap Up

Following the Finance Division session, the directors and their divisions held team discussions on the targets, work progress, challenges and planning in their divisions

The final wrap up concluded with reflections from MET CEO, emphasizing the need to prioritize fundable activities while ensuring alignment with strategic plans. Participants were reminded to strengthen accountability mechanisms, maintain compliance with reporting and procurement requirements, and continue linking resource allocation to measurable outcomes. The session closed with a prayer, marking the formal end of the workshop and reinforcing a collective commitment to improving education planning, financial management and program delivery across all divisions.

16. Conclusion

The 2025 Joint Sector Review demonstrates significant progress in Tonga's education sector while highlighting critical areas requiring sustained attention and investment. The transition from the 2024 framework to the new Corporate Plan 2026-2028 represents an evolution in strategic thinking, emphasizing accountability, evidence-based decision-making, and collaborative partnerships.

Key Strengths Identified:

- Strong donor partner engagement with coordinated investments exceeding USD 100M
- Diverse and committed non-government education sector serving thousands of students
- Advancing curriculum and assessment reforms aligned with international best practices
- Growing university sector with innovative programs and research capacity.

Critical Success Factors:

- Improved financial management and procurement compliance
- Comprehensive data systems enabling evidence-based planning

- Enhanced teacher recruitment, training, and retention strategies
- Unified sector coordination between government and non-government systems

The conference reinforced the collective commitment to providing quality education for all Tongan students while respecting the country's unique cultural identity. Success will depend on sustained collaboration between all stakeholders, adequate resource allocation, and continuous adaptation to emerging challenges and opportunities.

As Tonga moves toward 2030 and the achievement of SDG 4 targets, the foundation established through this JSR process provides a solid platform for transformative change in education. The emphasis on equity, quality and sustainability positions Tonga's education sector for continued growth and international recognition while serving the developmental needs of its people.

Day 2 provided essential knowledge and tools for improving financial management, procurement, strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation against KPIs and accountability within MET operations. The workshop reinforced the critical importance of compliance, evidence-based decision-making, and systematic monitoring for effective education service delivery.

Note: For the first time, the JSR Workshop will be offered for education stakeholders from Vava'u, Ha'apai and 'Eua outer islands. Details will be provided in a separate report.

13. Recommendations

13.1 Immediate Priorities (2025-2026):

1. Financial Management and Accountability:

- Establish mandatory funding confirmation before recruitment
- Develop program-based budgeting linked to Corporate Plan outcomes

2. Data Systems and Evidence-Based Planning:

- Complete EMIS rollout to capture missing data
- Integrate tertiary and TVET statistics into unified system
- Formalize data-sharing protocols with relevant agencies
- Develop comprehensive M&E dashboard for real-time monitoring.

3. Human Resource Strategy:

- Address critical teacher shortages in mathematics and science
- Develop comprehensive retention package for quality teachers
- Establish clear professional development pathways

- Create incentive structures for rural and outer island assignments.

13.2 Medium-term Goals (2026-2028):

1. Sector Coordination and Unity:

- High priority to have Cabinet endorsement of TEPF 2025-2035
- Establish formal coordination mechanisms between government and non-government systems
- Develop Budget and Plans to continue the Joint Sector Review/Mid Term Review Annually
- Create shared professional development opportunities.

2. Quality and Equity Enhancement:

- Address gender disparities with targeted boys' education initiatives
- Expand inclusive education provision with adequate support systems
- Strengthen early childhood education access and quality
- Enhance TVET pathways aligned with national economic priorities,

3. Infrastructure and Technology:

- Expand Hama e-Learning platform capabilities
- Ensure equitable technology access across all islands.

REFERENCES

- Ministry of Education and Training Corporate Plan 2026-2028
- Joint Sector Review – Outer Islands Report October 2025
- Press Release - [Mid-Year Sector Review 2025 \(Joint Sector Review\) Highlights Tonga's Education Priorities and Progress](#)
- Joint Sector Review Conference Presentations, September 2025
[Presentations Day 1 - Google Drive](#)

Annex 1 – Attendance (Tongatapu)

Annex 2 – Program

Annex 3 – Photos – More Photos : [Facebook](#)

Appendix 1. List of attendees

Ministry of Education and Training

JSR 2025

Date: 3 September 2025

Venue: MET Conference Room

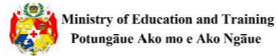
Name	Organization	Signature	Gender
1. Seiosekina Fifita	MET		F
2. J. Ron Lui	LDS		M
3. Losaline Langaoi	LDS		F
4. Ofa Vaemike	FWC		F
5. SIAOSI MASILA	SDA.		M
6. Lesieli Malupo	Project Division		F
7. Tuameliu Moku	Project Division-MET		M
8. Pelenaise Telefoni	Scholarship		F
9. Vilunckunfoliaki	TAPQAB		M
10. Okehi Akauola	MET		F
11. Keto Ketoz Maja	MET		F
12. Harasi Tosi	SOT		M
Manaea T. Tuifua	SOT		F
14. Ungakea Kaka	FWCT		F
15. Viliami MAUMAU	FWCT		M
16. Mekane Lisiate	LCES		F
17. Sele ALTI Lavalalaga	FWCT		F
18. Pearl Foma	FCT		M
19. Mehemais Kakau Sialeki	TCES		M

	Name	Organization	Signature	Gender
20	Sonia Moala-Mafi	Anglican Diocese		M
21	SAMUELA FONUA	INTERIM VE FWCET UNI		M
22	DAVID. MAPAPALANGI	TCES		M.
23	Salome Wilohi	ACTS COMMUNITY SCHOOL		F
24	Kathryn Tupou	ACTS Community School		F
25	Kalblaine Koluse	Ocean of Light		F
26	SABA PARMAN	Ocean of Light		M.
27	Lesieli Lokotui Nai	NZHC/MFAT		F
28	Lupe. T. Feilotekei	SPC - PRO		F
29	Epele Samutu	MET - Finance		M
30	Joanne Selua	MET - Policy		M
31	Juliet Paasi	MET - Finance		F
32	Supiesi Hakafiki. B	MET-PPRENUS		F
33	Lucy Moala-Mafi	TNU		F
34	Manu Akouola	TNU		M
35	Losa Moeleane	TNU		F
36	Neleam Moalaiaua	DFAT		F

	Name	Organization	Signature	Gender
37	Losana V Lata	SAHS (Angkan)		F
38	Adi Tolanavun Mapi	UNICEF		F
39	Lesieli Uhi	CSD		F
40	Ameloa Tolu	ECE		F
41	Maile Ongosia	ECE	M. Ojose	F
42	Anyula Tei	ECAIED		F
43	Toa Hemaletu	FINANCE		F
44	Kala Baka Tōhokalo	CSD		F
45	Foerata Vaomotoa	✓		F
46	Sela 'Ahekalu	CDU		F
47	Hifo Tūmakafe	CDU		F
48	Malia Tongia	FIN		F
49	Camy TAPU	FIN		F
50	Kanifeleni Fifita	FIN		F
51	Ahioaketai	FIN		F
52	Losaline Sili	TESP		F
53	Tavai Vikiiani	CEO's office		F
54	Prosmow BING	TASP		F

	Name	Organization	Signature	Gender
	Dr Gladys Fonua	Christ's University	<i>Gladys Fonua</i>	Female
56	Loa Bitouman	MET	<i>[Signature]</i>	✓
57	Silia Tamfa	✓	<i>[Signature]</i>	✓
58	Afuhia 'Aholoni	MET	<i>[Signature]</i>	F
59	Sabote Finayauß	FWC Education	<i>[Signature]</i>	F
60	FIONA. T. FINVA	MET	<i>[Signature]</i>	F.
61	Selu Kama	TUMT	<i>[Signature]</i>	F
62	Positina KANA	PMU	<i>[Signature]</i>	F.
63	Takafina Vaea	Ltd Secondary	<i>[Signature]</i>	F
64	Nelema Matalaun	DPAT		F
65	DR TANGIKINA STEEN	TNU		F
66	Petana Vi	MET		F
67	LILIEIA TAKALI	PMU		F
68	Angelina Kuitau	PMU	<i>[Signature]</i>	F
69	Suliana Kanongata	PMU		F
70	Maaimoa Mafitele	PMU		F
71	LOSALISE POOI	MEDIA		F.

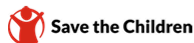
Appendix 2 Workshop Programme



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING
Mid-Year Review Conference 2025
DATE: 3 September 2025
VENUE: MET Head Office, 'API MATAKA

MC – Mr Soane Selui - Director, Policy & Planning Division, MET
Chairperson – Mr. 'Isikeli Oko – CEO

Day 1: Wednesday, 3 rd September 2025		
9.00 - 9.10 am	Opening Session Opening Prayer	Director of the SDA Church System Pastor Siasia Masila
9.10 - 9.20 am	Welcome Remarks	CEO of Education & Training – Mr. 'Isikeli Oko
9.20 - 9.40 am	Keynote Address: Government Education Priorities & Targets for FY2025/26	Minister of Education and Training – Hon. Dr 'Uhilamoelang Fasi
	Vote of Thanks	Director, MET (Truancy) – Mr. Kalafitoni Latu
10.00 – 10.30 am	<i>Group Photo & Morning Tea</i>	
10.30 -10.50 am	Introduction – Bigger Picture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objectives Priorities and Contributions in the New Corporate Plan 2025/26 	CEO, MET – Mr. 'Isikeli Oko
10.50 – 11.10 am	Budget FY 2025/26	Director, MET (Finance) – Kalolaine Moeaki
11.10 – 11.30 am	Newest Updates on New policies for MET & Website	Director, MET (EMIS) – Soane Selui
11.30am – 11.50 am	New Curriculum and Examination Updates	Director, MET (CAD) - 'Amelia Folaumahina
12.00 – 1.30 pm	LUNCH	
2.00 – 2.40 pm	Donor Partners Presentations (7mins <i>presentations from Plans & Projects FY2025 related to Education</i>)	World Bank (TSRSP) – Mr. Will Fonua UNICEF- Ms Talanaivini Mafi DFAT – Ms Mele'ana Moala'eua MFAT – Ms. Lesieli Nai SPC – Ms Lupe Fe'iloaki GPE/SCA – Ms Lilieta Takau
2.40pm – 4.00pm	Non Government Education Systems 5mins-7mins <i>Education Systems to Present on your Contributions to build a greater Education for all in Tonga</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free Wesleyan Church – Dr. Rev 'Ungatea Kata Free Church of Tonga – Mr. Paula Fonua Seventh Day Adventist – Mr. Siasia Masila Ocean of Light – Mr. Saba Payman Latter Day Saints - ACTS – Ms. Kathryn Smith-Tupou Anastasis - Ms Momea Tu'ifua Roman Catholic Mr. Soane Vahe Anglican Ms. Losana Latu
4.00 - pm	University Presentations	Tonga National University (TNU) University of the South Pacific (USP) - Apologies Christ University of the Pacific (CUP) Tupou Tertiary Institute (TTI)



Appendix 3 Workshop Photos



