



FIJI EFA PROGRESS REPORT FOR 2000 - 2015

Ministry of Education, National Heritage, Culture & Arts

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MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, NATIONAL HERITAGE, CULTURE & ARTS *and* CHAIRMAN OF THE FIJI NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO



Education For All (EFA) is a global initiative led by UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), aiming to meet the learning needs of all children, youth and adults by 2015 and as articulated in the six EFA goals.

UNESCO has been mandated by the United Nations as the leading agency to initiate, coordinate and collate the international efforts to achieve Education for All. Governments, development agencies, civil societies, non-government organizations, institutions are but some of the partners working towards reaching these goals.

Mr. Filipe Bole

The Dakar Framework for Action adopted a World Declaration on Education for All (EFA) in 2000 which established the goal to provide every girl and boy with primary school education by 2015. This augurs well with Pillar 9 of the People's Charter which is to "Make Fiji a Knowledge-based Society". With compulsory education made accessible to all school-aged children, the Ministry of Education is on target to accomplish Universal Primary Education and at the same time ensuring that quality and inclusive education for all are achieved conclusively.

The 'child' being the focal element in all facets of learning, MoE is fortunate to work in collaboration with UNESCO to see to the realization of the six EFA goals outlined below:

- Goal 1: Expand early childhood care and education
- Goal 2: Provide free and compulsory primary education for all
- Goal 3: Promote learning and life skills for young people and adults
- Goal 4: Increase adult literacy
- Goal 5: Achieve gender parity
- Goal 6: Improve the quality of education

These goals are clearly expounded in the content of this report. New initiatives put forth for instance, transport & textbook assistance, decentralizing of administrators to the district and introduction of distance and flexible learning, has carved a way forward in the education fraternity..

In essence, the FIJI Education for All PROGRESS REPORT FOR 2000 – 2015 integrates fulfillment of the MoE's vision for 'Quality Education, Change, Peace & Progress and it is my plea to all stakeholders that we all take stock of the implementations and initiatives designed by the Ministry to see that the EFA goals are achieved as much as possible in the most practical manner.



.....
Hon. Mr. Filipe N. Bole

FOREWORD BY THE PERMANENT SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION, NATIONAL HERITAGE, CULTURE & ARTS and Deputy Chairman of the Fiji National Commission for UNESCO



It gives me great pleasure to release this FIJI Education for All PROGRESS REPORT FOR 2000 – 2015 as it incorporates a summary of the achievements and challenges that we have all experienced in our effort to meet the six EFA goals. The report also presents an important opportunity to assess the progress made in achieving our Educational goals and EFA targets since 2000.

Dr. Brij Lal Sixty six years ago, education was declared a basic human right for every person, as enshrined in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights in 1948. It states that ‘everyone has the right to education’. A right – based approach to Education for All is a holistic one, encompassing access to education, educational quality (based on human rights values and principles) and the environment in which education is provided.

The baseline information portrayed in this report will assist us in determining future progress and for setting benchmarks and standards for improvement purposes. The Government is committed to realizing the full potential of our children and youths. Not only do they have the right to quality education now, they also have the right to be equipped with the relevant and necessary knowledge and skills that will ensure long-term recognition of and respect for human rights, equity, sustainable development, global citizenry, peace and tolerance and inclusiveness. Thus, we will continue to work with all our stakeholders including our donor partners to ensure that access to quality education is achieved. As summed up by Madam Irina Bokova, the Director General for UNESCO says, ***‘When you fund education, you are securing progress towards all the Millennium Development Goals’***. The Fiji government has ensured that the budget for the Ministry of Education is sufficient to improve access to and provide resources to facilitate quality education in Fiji schools.

Finally, I would like to thank our development partners, local and international agencies, private businesses, civil societies, inter-governmental forums, and professional organizations who have played important roles in Fiji’s quest to achieve quality Education for All by 2015.


.....
Brij Lal (Dr.)

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS and ACRONYM

AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development	IT	Information Technology
ACP	Annual Corporate Plan	JICA	Japanese International Corporation Agency
AMU	Asset Management Unit	LANA	Literacy and Numeracy Assessment
APTC	Australia Pacific Technical College	MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
AQEP	Access to Quality Education Programme	MOENHCA	Ministry of Education, National Heritage, Culture and Arts
BEST	Basic Employment Skills Training	NDP	National Development Plan
CAS	Curriculum Advisory Services	NGO	Non-Government Organization
CBA	Classroom Based Assessment	NSAAC	National Substance Abuse Advisory Council
CAT	Common Assessment Tasks	NYTC	National Youth Training Centre
CBT	Competency Base Training	NYSS	National Youth Service Scheme
DEL	Distance Education Learning	NZAID	New Zealand Aid
EAU	Examinations and Assessment Unit	PDU	Professional Development Unit
EU	European Union	PCCPP	People's Charter for Change, Peace and Progress
FCAE	Fiji College of Advanced Education	PRIDE	Pacific Regional Initiative for the Development of Education
FEMIS	Fiji Education Management Information System	PSC	Public Service Commission
FESA	Fiji Education Staffing Appointment database	RDSSSED	Roadmap for Democracy and Sustainable Socio-Economic Development
FESP	Fiji Education Sector Program	PSC	Public Service Commission
FHEC	Fiji Higher Education Commission	RDSSSED	Roadmap for Democracy and Sustainable Socio-Economic Development
FQF	Fiji Qualification Framework	SIMS	Schools Information Management System
FNCF	Fiji National Curriculum Framework	SFCCO	Strategic Framework for Change Coordinating Office
LANA	Fiji Island Literacy and Numeracy Assessment	TEST	Technology and Employment Skills Training
FNU	Fiji National University	TVET	Technical, Vocational Education and Training
FQF	Fiji Qualification Framework	ToT	Training of Trainers
FSLCE	Fiji School Leaving Certificate Examination	TOR	Terms of Reference
FTRB	Fiji Teachers Registration Board	UN	United Nations
GIA	Grant-In-Aid	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
HDP	Human Development Programme	UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
IA	Internal Assessment	UoF	University of Fiji
IHRDP	Integrated Human Resource Development Programme	USP	University of the South Pacific

GLOSARRY

Terms and definitions:

● **Fijian**

Refers to all citizens of Fiji

● **Ministry**

Refers to the Ministry of Education, National Heritage, Culture & Arts

● **ECE**

Refers to children from 0 to 8 years old

● **'Matua' Programme**

The 'Matua' programme is a bridging programme for former secondary school students who dropped out due to various social factors. It provides for opportunities in the completion of formal schooling beginning with Year 10, Year 12 and finally Year 13. Upon successfully completing Year 10, they may be eligible to sit for the Fiji Junior Certificate Examination (FJCE), for the Year 12, the Fiji School Leaving Certificate Examination and the Year 13, the Fiji Seventh Form Certificate Examination. However, since 2011 the FJCE was phased out in order to allow more students to continue their education up to and including Year 13.

● **Government, Committee and Private Schools**

Schools in Fiji are either managed by government, school committee's or private organizations. Government manages its 14 schools whilst school committee and private schools operate others. There are 15 primary and 8 secondary schools managed by private organizations. One of the major roles of government is to provide qualified teachers, their salaries and funding in the form of grants to all schools throughout Fiji however with the exception of private schools.

● **Roadmap**

Refers to the Roadmap for Democracy and Sustainable Socio-Economic Development (RDSSD) 2009 – 2014. It incorporates the current National Strategic Development Plan.

● **Yaqona (Kava)**

A traditional drink termed *piper methysticum* consumed during social and traditional functions only by the adults.

PART 2: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Education for All [EFA] commitment by the UNESCO Member States is a move aimed at improving basic education provisions in the world. It specifically targets groups who are seen to be disadvantaged and marginalized. Access to basic education is still a major problem in most countries due to cultural, social, conflict and economic factors.

Fiji also has its specific problems with regards to basic education in that children continue to face hardships in attending schools daily. It is encouraging to note that some schools have advanced into modern technology. At the same time, others are still attempting to provide basic facilities such as telephone, water and electricity.

The six EFA goals initially came into being after the analysis of the 2000 assessment reports of countries and the prioritization of areas that needed continued commitments. The six goals targeted the following areas;

- Early Childhood Education
- Access to basic primary education
- Learning and life skills for young people
- Adult literacy
- Gender parity and gender equality
- Quality of education

Fiji had prioritized ECE in the development of its Action Plan for EFA. The Taskforce that developed the Action Plan believed that ECE has been neglected by government over the past years. The provision of learning and life skills for young people was the second priority. It was critical throughout the decade up to 2015 and beyond that young people are taught the right knowledge and skills so that they can develop their competencies which will enable them to survive and for employment opportunities later on. Furthermore, equally of high importance was the introduction of teaching vocational skills into the school system. Strengthening partnerships with stakeholders and development partners is always encouraged.

Areas such as gender parity and equality are seen to be non-issues for Fiji. Within the Fiji education system, boys and girls have equal opportunities to all levels and forms of education. National policies regarding scholarship and tertiary education loan schemes do not have gender as a criterion for selection and that both sexes have equal opportunities. The goal on Gender parity and equality therefore was placed on low priority in the Action Plan. Analysis of indicators on access has shown that Fiji is well placed in terms of children's access to basic education. However, the issue of retention and school dropouts needs to be addressed by the Action Plan. The quality of education is also an area where all education systems including Fiji, will continue to be a challenge. Education quality improvement involves many factors which includes teachers, equipment, infrastructure, resources, a conducive learning environment, management committees and community support. In striving towards achieving the targets of the six EFA goals, one issue that stands out is the dire need for all partners and stakeholders in education to work together.

The government cannot achieve the EFA Goals on its own accord as other development partners and stakeholders need to play their part in realizing the targets of the EFA goals by 2015. However, this would be an opportune time to reflect on our achievements and challenges during the past decade. Many development partners have contributed a lot with regards to our achievements. However our challenges continue to dwell over us, one of which is sustainability. It is hoped that the government, development partners and stakeholders would be able to continue providing the resources and the expertise to contribute to an education which is much vibrant and dynamic in the future.

The UN Agencies in the region have been combining efforts in training the EFA coordinators on the methods of assessments of the EFA goals. Data gathering and analysis continue to be a challenge as most data required are not captured by the Ministry. Efforts however have been directed towards the collection of new data and the streamlining of data that are in different silos of the various Ministries in the country. The Ministry of Education with the assistance of AQEP has tried to amalgamate all its data into the new Fiji Education Management Information System [FEMIS] so that there is integration of its existing databases with the new one. The analysis of indicators in this report therefore, has been based on the data available within the Ministry of Education and from other sources for example the Ministry of Health, Bureau of Statistics and the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

Whilst the report acknowledges gaps in the available data, it has provided an extensive analysis of the education system which has deduced some significant findings that would be reflected in our national policies

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 *Development context and emerging trends of education in Fiji*

Formal education was introduced in Fiji about 170 years ago by the missionaries. The schools that were built and the curriculum that was developed were to assist the missionaries in spreading the gospel and promoting a Christian way of life. Some schools however also taught science, history, geography and practical subjects

During the colonial era, the colonial government was reluctant to involve itself in education in its initial stage. Their judgment at that time was that it was more as a private initiative and effort. The government, however did provide funds for non-government schools and established a few schools for specific purposes.

Slowly, the yearning for schooling amongst the communities in Fiji surpassed the government's ability to satisfy it. Consequently, the various Christian missions and more recently, other religious and secular organizations, stepped into the limelight and assisted the government in establishing schools. Within this effort, it relieved the government of its obligations in providing state-owned schools.

In 1970, Fiji had an uneven situation of educational provision. Apart from the small number of government-run schools, local communities and religious organization owned and managed most schools. From the data collected by the Ministry's Annual Report, the trend shows that between 1970 and 1999, primary enrolment increased by approximately 18%, whereas the secondary roll increased by a massive 32.7% for the same period.

In December 1999, a committee was set up by the Fiji Government to undertake a comprehensive review of the Fiji Education system. The Commissioners' roles were to evaluate the Fiji education system and identify achievements, challenges and development priorities in education which would address its needs. The Fiji Commission Education Report, 2000 outlined a set of proposed directions for education in Fiji. The Report proposed agendas for change and reform in order to make the education system in Fiji more dynamic, vibrant, transformative and innovative to meet the challenges of the 21st century. Some of the proposed directions for change in the current education system include:

- Improving the quality of education. This should develop the potential of students and foster self-esteem, so that students can adapt to an ever changing world.
- Whilst community-state partnerships were appreciated, it has brought about inequality in the school system which requires government's intervention;
- More emphasis to be placed on Primary and Early Childhood Education;
- Reforms for secondary education to include the introduction of modular approach. The modular system allows flexibility and should give students the opportunity to explore and take the subjects that of interest to them. At the same time, students are allowed to move to the level of course that best suits their needs;
- Training in school leadership;
- Emphasis in Technical and Vocational Education and non-formal education;
- More attention and emphasis be given to children with special needs and the need to formulate a policy in the area;
- Curriculum to be based on competencies and skills that will benefit all children and the society they live in – broad based curriculum offering a wide range of subjects;

- Promotion of multi-culturalism and the need to learn other languages;
- Monitoring of facilities and teaching standards were necessary, in particular the monitoring of school finances;
- Professional development of teachers is necessary to keep teachers abreast with new developments and innovations.

In 2008, the Government formulated and implemented the Peoples Charter for Change, Peace and Progress, a National document which again highlighted many of the unimplemented recommendations in the Fiji Education Commission Report and suggested for inclusion in the new direction for Fiji's Education System.

The Ministry now has included in its plan the recommendation by the Education Commission Report. One of which was the decentralization carried out to strengthen and empower education officers of the nine education district. This procedure has greatly assisted the teachers and communities in obtaining necessary and relevant information and assistance at much faster rate.

The compulsory education directive by the Minister for Education together with the removal of the Year's 6, 8 and 9 external examinations ensures that all students will be able to reach the targeted Year 12.

The Fiji Government through Cabinet approved the removal of Year's 6, 8 and 10 external examinations by 2010. In doing so, the Ministry also has extended the length of basic education from 10 to 12 years. The Ministry of Education also introduced bus fare assistance for students. It first began in 2009. Students whose parent's joint income is less than FJD\$15,000 get free transport to and from school each day.

Decentralization was implemented in 2010 as part of the Ministry's strategy towards improving its service delivery to the teachers and the members of the communities. Decentralization involves the strengthening of the four Divisional and District Education Offices by elevating the SEO position in the Districts to PEO level at the same time delegating greater responsibilities and decision-making authorities to them.

The School Zoning policy was implemented in 2012 to assist school children to attend any school that is closer to their homes. This greatly assisted parents with financial difficulties in sending their children to school.

In February 2012 the Minister of Education approved the mainstreaming of Vocational Courses in small secondary schools. This means that students would undergo vocational skills training whilst preparing for their external examinations. When they complete Year 12 or Year 13, they would have at the same time gained a trade certification, which should assist them to find employment.

In 2014, the government announced a \$541.5 million budget to the education sector. This is testament to the government's commitment towards making Fiji a knowledge-based society. The funds will cater for the holistic development of the Fijian students from primary to tertiary level. All Fijian students both at the primary and secondary level will no longer be required to pay any tuition-fees for their education throughout the year. These new developments should improve access, retention and at the same time raise the quality of education of students.

1.2 Education development and education sector challenges

A major concern for the successive government after independence has been to ensure the equal access to educational facilities for all children throughout the country. The geography of the country and the distributions of schools have resulted in some constraints in terms of accessibility as well as to the quality of learning in the rural and remote schools.

The wide distribution of the population throughout the country is also a challenge to the Ministry in terms of increasing costs and in administering and monitoring its services especially to the rural and remote schools. Supervisory staff often has to spend much time travelling from one remote school to another.

Decentralization and teachers allowance for rural schools was introduced to ensure students in remote areas and schools located in remote places are not disadvantaged in terms of the services provided to them and the provision of quality education.

The Ministry has been assisting schools through the provision of the annual tuition grant and more than three quarters of this grant is used by 34 per cent of the large schools in urban centers. This prompted the formulation of a new distribution formula in 2009 for the distribution of tuition-fee grants and supplementary grants to ensure fair distribution to all schools. Within the provisions in the old system, grants were given to a school according to its roll. Subsequently, those schools with a higher roll gained maximum benefit from these grants.

The new formula thus takes into account the following disadvantaged indices: school distance from main towns or city; accessibility by boat or road; mark-up price on materials and transportation costs in view of distance and difficulty of access; availability and frequency of public transport and telecommunications, socio-economic status of small- island schools, and the availability of amenities such as water, electricity and medical facilities.

Regardless of this assistance, the disparities between the rural/remote and the urban continue to be a major challenge. The infrastructures and facilities of some rural/remote schools are not conducive to the teaching-learning environment as this greatly impacted the quality of education and students access. The economic viability of those living in rural communities limit their capacity to adequately fund and maintain school facilities and resources. This makes it too difficult for committee-run schools many of which are in rural districts, to raise sufficient funds to supplement government grants in order to maintain an acceptable standard of school environment that supports quality teaching-learning process. School maintenance is always an issue with the committee-run schools and in many cases the cost levied to the community members is somewhat seen as an added burden to the many of them.

Another challenge faced by the Ministry is the observed disparity in the educational achievement among the different ethnic groups in society. Over the years, concerns have been raised on the differences in the levels of academic performance amongst ethnic groups.

The assessment structure that exists ensures that a child will have to go through the external examinations offered at Year 12 and Year 13 before they can enroll at tertiary institutions.

The Fiji National Curriculum Framework developed in 2008 acknowledged the importance of assessment and suggested a change in focus from assessment *of* learning to assessment *for* learning. This saw the introduction of the class base assessment, literacy and numeracy assessment and the mainstreaming of vocational education in 2010 and 2012 respectively. This should enable students to realise and at the same time maximize their potentials.

The multi-ethnic nature of society in Fiji also poses a challenge for the nation's development efforts and requires special efforts to help increase mutual understanding and respect by all ethnic groups in the country.

1.3 *Policies, Strategies and interventions adopted by Government for education development*

The Ministry of Education in Fiji is responsible for the delivery of education to pre-schools, primary, secondary schools, and vocational centres. These include among others, the provision of policy guidelines to guide education providers in the delivery of education in the Republic of the Fiji Islands. The Ministry of Education has put in place a 3 - year Education Sector Strategic Plan and an Annual Corporate Plan as a guide for all sections and divisions in implementing its set objectives. The Ministry as a portfolio is guided by the following legislations:

- Education Act (1978) - Cap.262
- Examination Act - Cap.262A
- FNU Decree (No. 39) 2009
- Substance Abuse Advisory Council Act - Cap.140A
- University of the South Pacific Act - Cap.266
- Fiji Museum Act - Cap.263
- National Trust of Fiji Act 1970 - Cap. 265
- National Trust of Fiji Amendment Act (No.40 of 1998)
- *Protection of Objects of Archaeological and Paleontological Interest Act* - Cap. 264
- Natural and Cultural Heritage Convention 1972
- Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention 2003
- FTRB Promulgation 2008
- Higher Education Promulgation 2008
- Libraries-Deposit of Books Act (Cap. 109)
- Higher Education Promulgation 2008
- Fiji Teachers Registration Promulgation 2009
- Fiji National University Decree 2009
- University of Fiji Decree 2011

Consultations on the review of the Education Act 1978 (Cap 262) has been successfully completed in 2009 to incorporate changes and direction in education. In 2010, the Ministry developed the School Zoning Policy to ease parents in sending their students to their school home zones. Zoning was implemented in 2011 in order to address access, quality, optimal utilization of resources, and inequity in the distribution of educational benefits in schools.

Since 2000, Government's Strategic Development Plans highlighted the need to provide *Quality Education for ALL* students in Fiji. The Peoples Charter for Change, Peace and Progress 2008, identified that education is strongly associated with improved living standards and people who are deprived of education are often disadvantaged throughout their lives. It also identifies that there were issues and gaps that needed to be addressed in order to build social cohesion and a peaceful society.

Fiji needs a society that is well educated, optimistic, forward looking and enterprising so that it can take advantage of emerging opportunities and meet future challenges.

The role of education is not only to prepare young people for change but to help determine the changes that will occur. There is a world-wide recognition and acknowledgement that the nature and provision of education is fundamental to human development, social cohesion, economic

development, sustainable competitiveness, environmental sustainability and the strengthening of peaceful co-existence. The role of the Ministry of Education is to ensure that education system addresses each of these fundamentals so that individuals will experience life meaningfully and live with dignity.

In Fiji today, there is virtually universal access to primary and lower secondary school education, and there is a long-term commitment to provide twelve years of education for all those who seek it.

Indeed, progress has been achieved, as measured quantitatively by high the levels of school enrolment, improved equity of access, and the large number of academically qualified people.

Our vision in the new direction is *“Quality Education for Change, Peace and Progress”*. In this direction, Fiji must work towards building a knowledge-based society and increasing access to higher education. Various initiatives and reforms were encouraged by Government in order to build a *“Better Fiji for All”*.

The strategies for the Ministry of Education as stated in the Roadmap for Democracy, Socio-Economic Development 2009-2014 pave the way for the implementation of the following reforms and initiatives:

- The Establishment of the Fiji Higher Education Commission;
- Establishment of the Fiji Qualification Framework;
- Establishment of the Teachers Registration Board (currently known as the Fiji Teachers Registration Authority)
- Establishment of the two Universities: University of Fiji and the Fiji National University;
- The expansion of basic compulsory education to 12 years of schooling;
- The removal of Years 6, 8 and 10 external examinations and the introduction of school-based assessment;
- The provision of the transport assistance;
- The provision of free text books and the localizing of the content;
- Zoning policy for school intake and enrolment;
- The setting up of infant schools for Years 1 to 3 students;
- The increase in ECE salary grant and the implementation of the new ECE curriculum called the *“Mataniciva”*;
- Upgrading of primary schools into secondary schools in the rural areas;
- Upgrading existing junior secondary schools into fully-fledged secondary schools which will also offer Year 13 education.
- Transferring the Year 7 and 8 from secondary schools back to the primary schools.
- Mainstreaming of the vocational courses through the introduction of the Basic Employment Skills Training (BEST) program in all secondary schools;
- Provision of life-skills training, Leadership training and the setting up of the National Employment Center to assist in the provision of employment for youth;
- Reviewing the curriculum and to be based on the Fiji National Curriculum Framework;
- The Merging of the Teacher training, Agriculture, Nursing & the National Training Productivity Centre institutions to be part of the Fiji National University;
- Decentralization to provide effective & efficient service
- The provision of rural incentives for civil servants for example, the rural allowances.
- The development of the new Fiji Education Management Information System (FEMIS) so that it is user-friendly and is easily accessible by all schools.
- The provision of capacity building for the Ministry’s staff;

- Introduction of the External Schools Review Inspection visits to monitor standards in schools;
- The introduction of e-learning and distance learning;
- Improvement of the quality of the teacher through training incentives, capacity building and teacher registration;
- Improving and encouraging partnership with NGOS and Civil Society Organisations;
- The implementation of inclusive education for children with special needs
- Establishment of schools in the Educationally Disadvantage Areas.
- Provision of Year 13 education to most secondary schools.

1.4 Relevance of EFA to the education situation and development status

The Government of Fiji is signatory to international commitment towards 'Education For All' and therefore places a lot of emphasis in ensuring effective and accelerated implementation of policies and targets to promote access to quality education and achievement of EFA goals.

Of the 20,999 students entering Year 1 in 1999, only 71.12%% reached Year 8 of the same cohort. By the time they reached Year 12, only 58.23% of the same cohort remained in the system.

The major contributing factors toward the high attrition rate include financial difficulties, family pressures and obligations, lack of parental guidance and commitment to children's education, school admission policies, the exam-oriented structure within the education system and peer pressure.

The quality of school infrastructure, facilities, and teaching resources also varies between schools. Standards of school vary from those that are generally housed in well-constructed and well maintained buildings with a good range of facilities and a reasonable supply of teaching and learning resources to those in the poorer communities with limited resources and poor management. These types of schools are found more so in rural and peri-urban areas where communities are usually from the low socio-economic background and are unable to contribute financially to improving the school infrastructures.

In recent years the European Union has made significant contribution towards the upgrading of rural schools. Other donor agencies such as JICA, FESP and lately AQEP also provided funding to improve the infrastructures and the learning and teaching conditions. These improvements have contributed in the increase in the school participation, thus reducing student's drop-out.

With lots of emphasis on education in the last decade, Fiji has attained a near Universal Primary Education, high adult and youth literacy rates and minimal differential noted in enrolment ratios between girls and boys. Though there are challenges, Government has put in place initiatives and programmes to address these challenges so that our goals and targets are realised before 2015.

The compulsory education was introduced to ensure that all school-aged children on August 13th 1993 have access to basic education. This is also in line with the Government's commitment towards the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Government now has extended basic education to 12 years and has also increased funding for school tuition fees and grants to make education accessible to all. In the Education Sector budget for 2014, all Primary and Secondary students will now receive free education.

Other assistance in terms of bus fares and boat vouchers, school textbooks, improvement in physical infrastructure, assistance to early childhood education, the introduction of distance education and the removal of lower level examinations are mechanisms put in place to ensure that every school-aged child have access to twelve years basic education.

2.0 TRACKING REGIONAL PROGRESS

2.1 Early Childhood Education

Fiji, in the development of its action plan for EFA, placed Early Childhood Education (ECE) as one of its priority areas. In its yearly plan, the Ministry in showing its commitment and recognizing the importance of child development at an early age has included ECE as an output in itself.

In October 2009, the ECE policy was developed and approved by the Ministry of Education to provide a clear direction for stakeholders providing ECE services in Fiji. This policy again affirms the Ministry's intention in continuing to encourage private organizations to develop and manage pre-schools.

Some strategies put up by government through the Ministry to achieve this goal are:

- Teacher-training at the Fiji National University, University of the South Pacific Australia-Pacific Technical College and the Methodist Lay Missionary Centre for ECE teachers;
- Provision of salary grants for teachers in ECE;
- Assisting the local communities in setting up their own ECE Centres;
- Community awareness programmes to assist parents to understand the importance and the role of ECE in the development of a child;
- Coordination of donor assistance in designing the curriculum framework for ECE;
- Providing building grants assistance to ECE Centres;
- Provision of grants to assist in purchasing ECE education resources;
- Establishment of Infant schools
- Facilitating the approval process in the establishment and recognition status the new ECE Centres
- Formulation of the Early Childhood Education and Care Policy.

The budget and financing plan includes:

- Continuation of Lautoka Teachers College training
- Continuous in-service training for teachers
- Payment of salary grant to ECE teachers
- Curriculum framework for ECE

To achieve the above, the funding is being met by the Government and donor partners like AusAID, UNICEF, PRIDE and Save the Children Fiji and New Zealand.

ECE in Fiji provides developmentally and culturally appropriate quality care and education to the 3 to 8 year olds and programmes are conducted in the national languages of Fijian, Hindi and Rotuman wherever necessary.

The curriculum addresses the smooth and timely transition from the kindergartens to the middle and upper primary schools. Programmes offered are based from the ECE Curriculum "Na Mataniciva" developed in November 2009. The development of the Mataniciva is directly linked to the NCF through the adopted thematic approach.

ECE centres are managed by school management committees who are also responsible for the selection and recruitment of their teaching staff. The Ministry of Education in Fiji provides

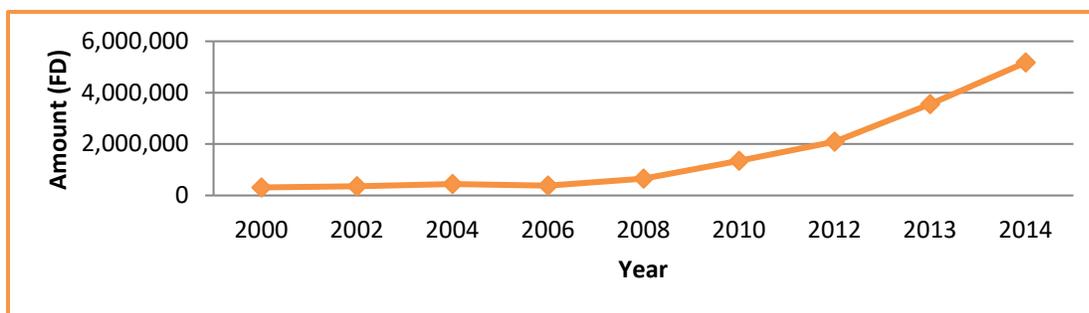
support in the establishment and registration of the schools, the payment of grants to its teachers and support for equipment, furniture and learning materials. There are more than 700 centers where each is supervised mostly by a single teacher.

In 2012, ECE teacher's appointments and remunerations were formalized with the Cabinet approval. The overall budgetary provision for ECE also increased and the ECE policy was reviewed and enacted to cover the administrative and service delivery.

Table 2.1.1: Summary of ECE structures in Fiji

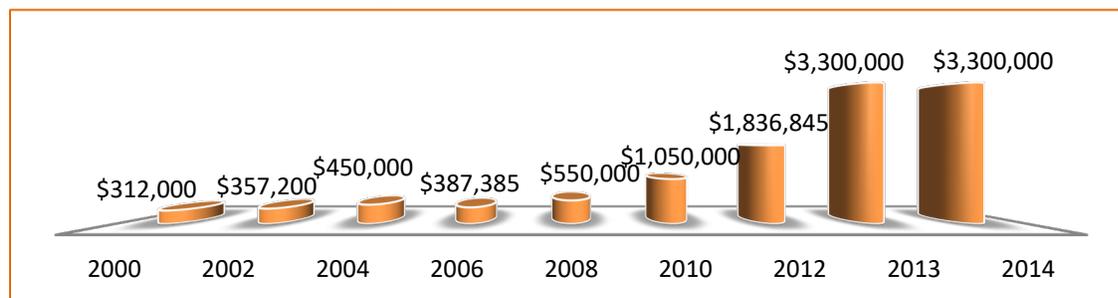
	Kindergarten	Childcare/Day Care Centre
Age of Children served	4 and 5 years	2-6 years
Service Focus	A half-day programme offered for children under qualified ECE teachers.	A full day programme offered under qualified ECE teachers, health workers and child care givers.
Opening Hours	8 am – 12 pm	7 am – 5 pm
Monthly Fees	Range from \$0 - \$140 a term	From \$200 - \$700 a term
Required qualification level for teachers/ staff	Degree/Diploma/Advanced Certificate/Certificate in ECE/Basic Training	
ECE Teachers Salary by Qualification level	Qualification Category	
	Degree, Advanced Certificate in ECE	\$5,330.00 per annum
	Diploma, Certificate in ECE/Child Care	\$3,280 per annum
	Basic Training, Non-certificate holder	\$2,460 per annum

Figure 2.1.1: ECE Funding for 2000 - 2014



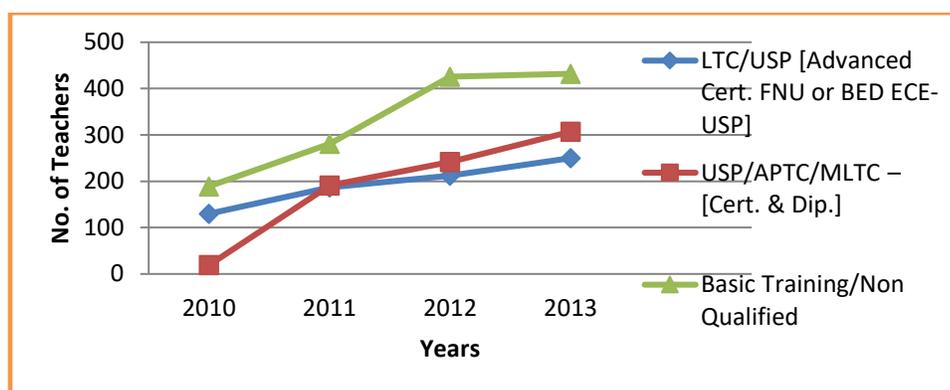
[Source: Ministry of Education Finance Record]

Figure 2.1.2: Salary Grants for ECE teachers



[Source: Ministry of Education Finance Record]

Figure 2.1.3: Summary of ECE teacher's qualification



[Source: FEMIS, Ministry of Education Annual Report]

Figures 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 show a vast increase in the budgetary allocation for ECE. Figure 2.1.3 also shows an increase in the improved level of qualified ECE teachers. This is indicative of the Government's commitment towards Early Childhood Education and including it as a priority in its plan.

Table 2.1.2: ECE Enrolment – 2002 - 2012

Years	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012	2013
Roll	2230	4822	4308	5267	7167	9577	There was no recorded enrolment data for 2013.

[Source: FEMIS, Ministry of Education Annual Report]

Table 2.1.2 above shows an increase in the Early Childhood enrolment¹ from 2002 to 2012. It must be noted that the recorded enrolment figures for 2006 decreased significantly and one of the reason was due to the political instability Fiji went through during this year. The increase in enrolment for the ECE over the years is a result of the Government and stakeholders support towards ECE. However, more efforts are still required to get the other percentage of the ECE aged children who are not at school.

2.2 Universalization of primary education

In Fiji, there is no problem regarding the education of girls since both girls and boys have equal access to education. The same applies to the education of the ethnic minority groups. The ethnic minority groups in Fiji have assisted the Ministry of Education in establishing their own

¹ It must be noted that the figures above is based on the ECE data our ECE Office had collected from those schools who had submitted their yearly school returns. A lot of ECE Centers to date have yet to submit their school details including their school roll. The difficulties faced by our ECE Unit in collecting ECE information include:

- Managements of ECE Centres and ECE teachers do not make the commitment to provide their school information because they felt they are not obliged to as they are not financially supported by the Ministry of Education. ECE teachers are not civil servants and are remunerated by the management committee.
- Lack of officers to manage more than 700 ECE Centres throughout Fiji. At the moment, there are only two ECE Officers who manage these ECE Centres.

school which they managed. The Government through the Ministry of Education in turn assisted these schools in the provision of tuition and per capita grants for the efficient and effective management of schools.

The Government through the Ministry will continue to accentuate the need for quality, accessibility and retention in all its education programmes for all children including children with special needs and in difficult circumstances. This is always reflected in the Ministry’s yearly plans and policies.

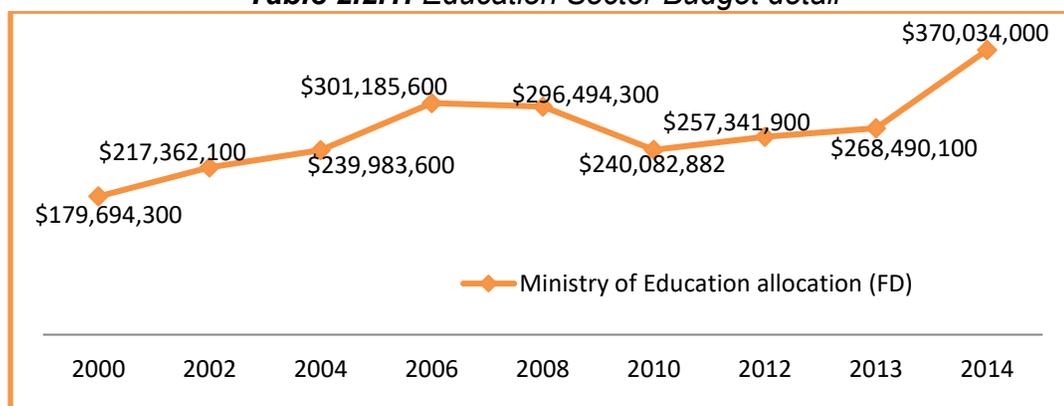
The Peoples Charter for Change, Peace and Progress introduces Pillar 9 which focuses on making Fiji a knowledge-based society. It outlines key measures and actions that needed prioritising. Some of these measures include ensuring access to quality education for all and improving financing education.

Pillar 9 is further strengthened in our Roadmap for Democracy and Sustainable Socio-Economic Development (RDSSSED) 2010-2014. One of its targets is an increase of the NER for Secondary Schools from 77% to 90% of the Year 1 cohorts by 2010. The target also includes an increased proportion of pupils in Year 1 reaching year 5 to be 95% and above. The roadmap also highlighted MDG Goal 2 which states that education and training need to address the goals of universal primary education (UPE). The Roadmap further stresses the need to address the issue of students dropping out from schools.

In the 2014 National budget announcement, the Prime Minister mentioned that the government will provide free education for all primary and secondary schools students. This is in line with chapter 2, clause 31 of the 2013 Fiji’s constitution which states that: 31 – (a) “every person has the right to early childhood, primary and secondary education and further education and (2) The state must take reasonable measures within its available resources to achieve the progressive realisation of the right – (b) to free early childhood, primary, secondary and further education and (b) to education for persons who were unable to complete their primary and secondary education”.

The 2014 Ministry’s budget receives a vast amount of \$370,034,000 which is an increase of more than \$100m from the Ministry’s 2013 budget allocation.

Table 2.2.1: Education Sector Budget detail



[Source: Ministry of Education Finance Record]

Table 2.2.1: Net Intake Rate into Year 1 by gender from 2000 to 2013

Table 2.2.1 shows a steady increase in the enrolment of the 6 years old into Year 1 from 2000 to 2012 but slightly declined for 2013. It's also noted that the female intake is more than the male. There is not much difference between the intake rate for the two genders except for 2013 and this is a reflection of the Ministry's effort in strengthening equitable access to education for all school children in Fiji.

Year	Net Intake Ratio		
	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
2000	95.51	93.86	94.71
2002	85.35	87.51	86.40
2004	87.12	88.07	87.58
2006	82.79	83.65	83.21
2008	95.37	96.77	96.04
2010	95.22	95.54	95.38
2012	95.63	99.29	97.40
2013	90.95	96.68	93.71

[S]

Source: SIMS, Ministry of Education, Fiji / Bureau of Statistics]

Figure 2.2.2: Primary Gross Enrolment Rate (Years 1 - 6) by gender from 2000 to 2013

The gross enrolment rate for primary schools students from Years 1 – 6 are above 100%. This shows a high degree of participation in the primary schools around the country. The figure also indicates students below the age of 6 and above 11 who are still in Year 1 to 6. Between 2000 and 2006, was a period of political instability for Fiji, and this may have contributed largely in the decline in GER for the Years 1 - 6 students.

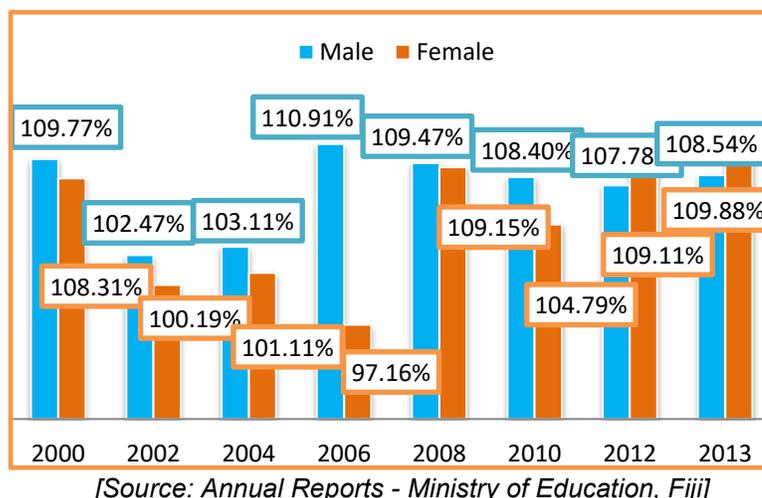


Figure 2.2.3: Primary net enrolment rate by gender from 2000 – 2013

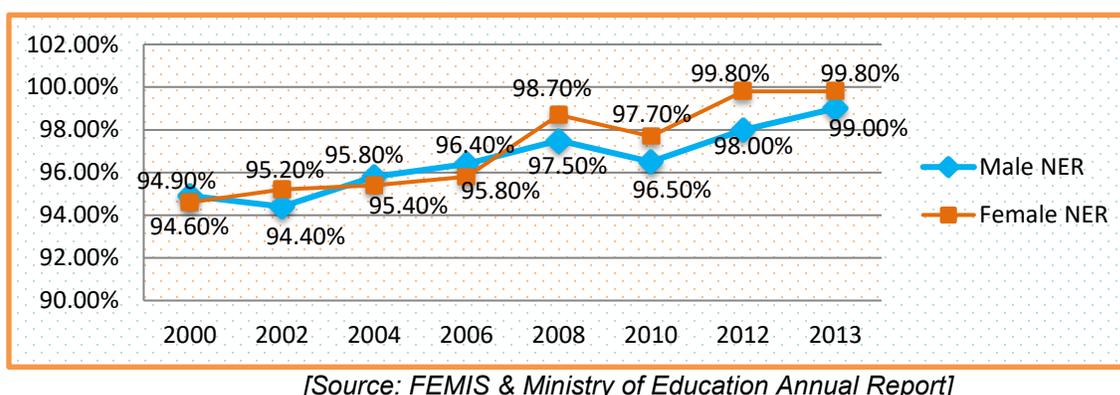
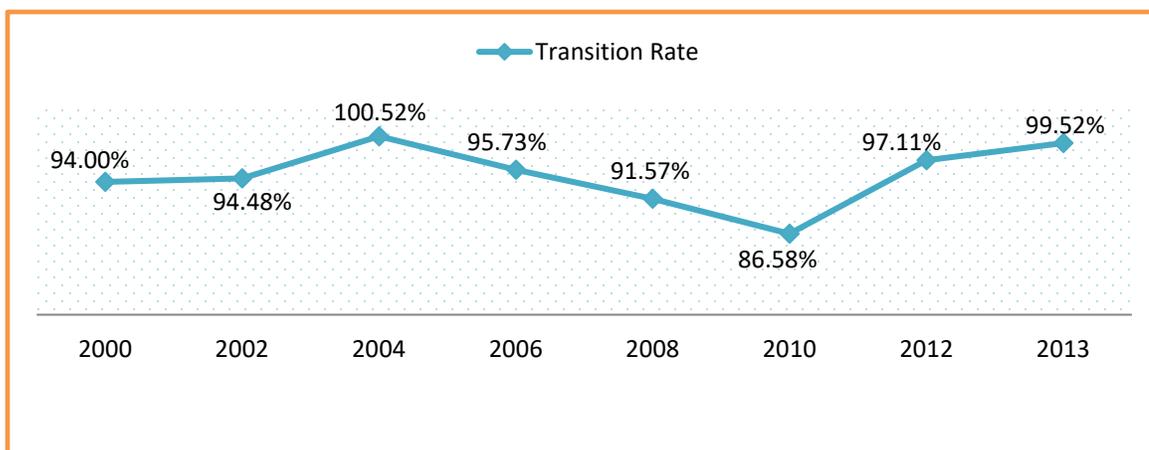


Figure 2.2.3 shows an increased enrolment rate of children over the years. The enrolment rate is now almost 100% and indicates a near universal primary education in Fiji. The increased NER is a result of the Government's commitment towards education as well as its efforts in the realisation of its international commitments such as the EFA and MDGs.

Figure 2.2.4: Transition rate from 2000 - 2013



[Source: SIMS, Ministry of Education Annual Report]

The transition rate has been increasing from 2000 to 2004 and likewise from 2010 to 2013. The decline in 2006 was due to the political instability that Fiji experienced at that time. Many may have not fully recovered from the experiences of the event of 2006 until Government through the Ministry of Education in 2010, started implementing initiatives targeting improved students access, retention and the provision of quality education.

General policies and programmes

In line with the Education for All, the Compulsory Education was initiated to ensure that all school age children have access to basic education.

There are various approaches that have been highlighted in the Government plans like the 2000 Education Commission Report, 2007 - 2011 Strategic Development Plan (SDP), the Roadmap 2009 - 2014, the Peoples Charter, the Constitution, the Education Act and the Corporate Plans of the Ministry that strongly recommended changes to the current education system which will ensure the provision of holistic education to the students.

The indicators above clearly show the effectiveness of these policies and the initiatives put in place to ensure improvement in the retention, access and the provisions of quality education to our students.

2.3 Learning and life skills for young people and adults

In Fiji, Youth is defined as those people between the ages of 15-35 years old. This comprises of 36.85% % of the total population of 836,239 according to the 2007 Fiji Population Census. 51.3% of the total youth population are males with the remaining 48.7% being females. 45% of total youth population resides in our rural areas with the Western Division being the most densely youth populated region when accounting for youth population in each division in Fiji.

Special emphasis are placed on the development of youth in Fiji, particularly in their learning needs in order to allow them to develop their full capacities to be able to work and participate actively in society.

Strategies to achieve the goal

Youth unemployment rate in Fiji has been declining from 20.5% in 2009 to 19.9% in 2012 (World Bank Report). This is has been brought about by the increased number of programs and activities that target improved Youth well-being. Key performance indicators from the Roadmap (RDSSSED 2009-2014) targeted young people in benefiting from placement services and work experience programs to increase from 100 to 120 annually and for teenage pregnancy to be reduced from 16% to 8% by 2011. This resulted in the setting up of the National Employment Centre in 2009 which develops and assists the unemployed in Fiji, majority of whom are youth, to find basic employment which can adequately provide for their daily needs.

As the fifth component (policy direction) of the Ministry of Youth and Sports flagship program, saw the implementation of the life skills program which essentially lays the foundation for youth development programmes, particularly the yearlong specific skills training program. The Ministry's intent through this program is to facilitate the development of necessary life skills for young people to minimize their vulnerability to all forms of abuse, exploitation and peer pressure.

A key performance indicator from the Fiji National Development Plan target is that the proportion of students to successfully complete TVET courses to be not less than 90% in order to be able to meet current and future demands. This resulted in the setting up of Vocational Centers and the mainstreaming of the vocational courses to ensure students have the necessary skills and knowledge that will assist them in finding employment.

Another key performance indicator is the reviewing of the curriculum to develop the life skills in our youth. This is in line with the Peoples Charter focus in enhancing skills and vocational training as well as the promotion of leadership and entrepreneurship training and facilitating job placement in partnership with the private sectors.

The Government has established the Fiji Qualifications Framework (FQF) in recognition of the strategic importance to national planning and development of a supply of people with skills, knowledge and attitudes that match current shortages in the economy and the future needs of Fiji. In line with this, national qualifications have been developed by industry for identified areas of need in the economy. To date, a total of 25 national qualifications have been developed and are accredited on the FQF. Equipping young people with skills through these national qualifications will expand their opportunities within Fiji and in the region.

In acknowledging that Youth unemployment is a priority issue that needs a targeted intervention approach, the Fiji government through the National Employment Centre established in 2010 has made provisions to ensure that youths acquire the necessary skills and knowledge needed in the transition stage from secondary schools into the work force. Three National Youth Training Centres were set up as a result, in the two main islands and the third one in Kadavu. For the targets highlighted in the Sustainable Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (SEED), the following strategies were highlighted;

- Increase number of youths trained for livelihood activities and lifelong skills and values to be responsible citizens;
- Promotion of children and youth issues and their increased participation in decision-making processes, at all levels;
- Support the establishment of small & microenterprise projects in rural and urban centres;
- To restructure all youths development programmes towards a more client oriented and market driven approach;
- To encourage National Volunteer Services in all Government Ministries & Statutory bodies.

The 3 years Strategic Youth Development Plan from 2013 – 2015 aims to:

- promote life skills and experience through training, work attachment, family education and inter personnel skills.
- empower young people with skills based on its four pillars to cope with daily challenges that can hinder socio-economic youth development. These include:
 - ☞ Protective Factors;
 - ☞ Technical assistance for website development
 - ☞ Risk Factors;
 - ☞ Harm Minimization; and
 - ☞ Resilience.
- Develop and implement training programs that target young people; and
- Enhance partnership with community and stakeholders

Policies and Programs

Preparing youths for sustainable livelihoods are addressed by the Ministry of Youth and Sports through its annual work programmes and plans. Some of the policies implemented to ensure that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills program include:

- Partnership with UNICEF – 2005;
- Life Skills Training integrated into the 3 Year Strategy for Youth Development plans;
- Endorsement of National Youth Service Scheme in the year 2008 which also reflects life skills as a key component.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports conducted training and empowerment programmes aimed at preparing and building youth confidence, knowledge and skills towards community based projects and activities to enhance youth potential for success in their work and in their personal life. The Seed of Success and Empowerment Training Programme basically target building self-confidence and motivation amongst the participants to succeed.

Table 2.3.1: Youth Training Programmes for 2010 to 2013

Youth development training programmes	2010	2011	2012	2013	Total
Seeds of success training programme	22	29	25	16	76
Empowerment training programme	32	15	7	7	54
Total number of training programmes conducted	54	44	32	23	130

[Source: Ministry of Youth and Sports Annual Reports]

Figure 2.3.1: Total Number of Outreach Programmes Conducted in 2010 to 2013

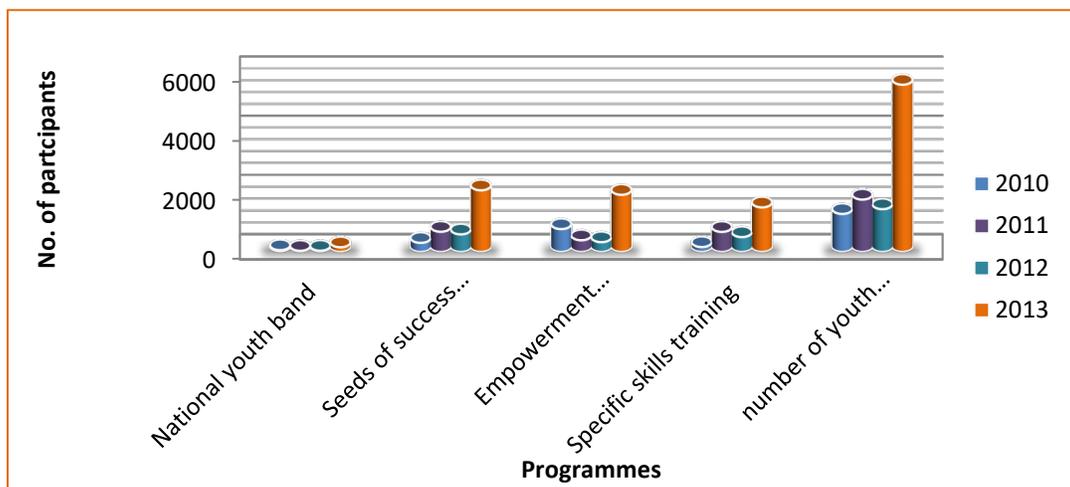
Youth Development Programmes target young people through capacity-building between the ages of 15-35 yrs. old and are generally focused in rural areas. Programmes adopt behavioural change approaches that aim at empowering youths to be self-sufficient, and to be better citizen.

Apart from the specific skills training which included the Seeds of Success training, Empowerment Training Programme and training in Small Engine Repairs, over the past 3 years, the Ministry managed to conduct 130 outreach training programme.



[Source: Ministry of Youth and Sports Annual Reports]

Figure 2.3.2: Total Number of Youth in Youth Development Programmes for 2010-2013



[Source: Ministry of Youth and Sports Annual Reports]

A total of 5639 youths participated in the Youth Development Programmes from 2010-2013. The figure above shows the total number of youths that participated in youth development training programmes for the past three years.

National Employment Centre (NEC)

The Centre, established under the National Employment Centre Decree of 2009, has registered about 25829 or 91.8% of unemployed persons by the 30th September 2012. Of this, 63% were females and 45.7% were males. The table below shows the cumulative figures from 2010-2013 for the NEC programmes.

Table 2.3.2: NEC Activities since its inception

Activities	Years			
	2010	2011	2012	2013
No. registered	9,549	13,283	3,696	6,225
No. of workplace attachment	72	1,012	762	1,256
No. of permanent employment	145	444	990	652

[Source: Ministry of Labour report]

Table 2.3.3: NEC Activities until February, 2014

Activities	Accumulative Total	Yearly Total				
	Total 2010 - 2013	2010	2011	2012	2013	Feb 2014
Registration	33,592	9,549	13,283	3,696	6,225	880
Counseling	17,917	3,825	9,976	2,832	1,284	0
Aptitude Assessment	17,396	3,338	9,976	2,830	1,252	0
Life Skills Training	10,129	2,351	5,431	1,333	1,014	0
Employment Skills Training	2,696	152	2,360	184	-	0
Volunteer Service	531	14	242	112	91	72
Work Attachments	3,239	72	1,012	762	1,256	137
Permanent Employment	2,436	145	444	990	652	205
Foreign Employment	45	-	1	44	-	0
Small Business Employment	8	-	1	7	-	0
MoU From Employers	381	-	139	87	133	22

[Source: Ministry of Labour report]

Life Skills Training

The Ministry of Youth and the Ministry of Labour continues to engage in consultations with NGOs, business sectors and tertiary institutions to initiate capacity-building programmes for formal employment or for self-employment.

Between 2005 and 2007, Skills for Life Training were conducted in Suva and nearby areas, in Labasa and in the rural and maritime islands.

Table 2.3.4: Number of trainings conducted and Youth Participation (by gender) in Life Skills Programme from 2005 to 2009

		2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Central/Eastern	No. of training conducted	9	12	6		20
	Male	314	243	112		253
	Female	167	162	72		247
	Total	481	405	154		500
Northern	No. of training conducted	21	2	3		8
	Male	149	36	78		128
	Female	95	48	46		115
	Total	244	84	124		243
Western	No. of training conducted		4	2		15
	Male		85	110		299
	Female		46	28		192
	Total		131	138		491

[Source: Youth & Sports Annual Report: 2005, 2006, 2007, 2009]

Table 2.3.5: Total Number of Participants per Programme for 2010 to 2012

Types of programmes	Northern	Western	Central/Eastern	Total
Registration	3260	9763	12806	25829
Professional counselling	1930	4984	8950	15864
Aptitude test	1781	4864	8730	15375
Life skills training	1449	3841	3400	8690
Employment skills training	824	773	1099	2696
Work attachments	119	436	1045	1600
Permanent employment in formal sector	111	540	739	1390

[Source: National Employment Centre Information Paper 17th December 2012]

2.4 Adult literacy

Literacy is a key determinant for long-term human development and a significant factor to the social and economic improvement of individuals and a nation.

Adult and continuing education must be greatly expanded, diversified, and integrated into the mainstream of national education and poverty reduction strategies. The vital role literacy plays in lifelong learning, sustainable livelihoods, good health, active citizenship and the improved quality of life for individuals, communities and societies are widely recognized. Literacy and continuing

education are essential for women's empowerment and gender equality. Closer linkages among formal, non-formal and informal approaches to learning must be fostered to respond to the diverse needs and circumstances of adults.

Fiji's Roadmap (RDSSSED) 2009-2014 highlighted under the Education and Training sector envisaged the need to have a literate nation through increased enrolment from ECE to Vocational programmes. It also specifies under its target the need to reduce disparities between the different ethnic groups. .

The related strategies to reduce disparities include:

- Introducing and expanding the concept of 'Matua' programme to other strategically located and relevant secondary schools.
- The matching TVET strategies include:
 - Establishing the national standards for qualifications.
 - Students accessing vocational pathways.
 - Strengthening links with industry, higher education institutes, communities, businesses and provincial councils.
 - Review of TVET curriculum and assessment system to incorporate relevant changes in specific areas of community needs and development of students.
 - Mainstreaming of Vocational Education through the inclusion of the Basic Employment and Skills Training (BEST)

There are also strategies that include expansions of compulsory education programme to all secondary schools that will create alternative pathways for learning and employment opportunities for students and early school leavers.

General policies and programmes

Literacy has been on high in Fiji because education is free and compulsory for the 6 to 16 age groups. Classes have been conducted in the mother-tongue language at early years of education but when students' progress through higher education, the medium of instruction in schools, tertiary education and at workplaces is English. With the expansion of the compulsory education to 12 years of basic education, literacy should increase in the next decade.

From the National Development Plan, a performance target that would definitely improve adult literacy is the expansion of the 'Matua' programme. The 'Matua' programme is a bridging programme for former secondary school students who dropped out due to various social factors. The 'Matua' program ensures that this disadvantaged group is given the opportunity to complete the formal schooling program up to Year 12 and Year 13.

The programme comes under the outcome on increased participation in education for adults. Outcome 6 of the Plan emphasizes enhanced equity for those in rural areas, women, persons with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups all targeted at improving literacy.

This is aligned to Fiji's 2013 Constitution which emphasizes the need to provide education for those that are unable to complete their secondary education.

The Ministry's Education Act also mentioned the need for improving literacy and numeracy at all levels by of Education as specified herein:

Schools shall be classified into the following categories:—

Intermediate schools, being schools in which full time instruction is given to the pupils in the seventh and eighth or the sixth, seventh and eighth years of formal education;

Cap. 262 Ed. 1978 Education Subsidiary Legislation

(d) middle schools, being schools in which full time instruction, mainly of a practical nature, extending over a period of two, three or four years, is given to pupils who have completed the sixth year of formal education;

(e) secondary schools, being schools in which full time instruction is given in general, technical, commercial and/or agricultural subjects, extending over a period of from two to six years, to pupils who have completed the full primary school course; and in which instruction may also be given to part time pupils;

(f) technical institutes, being schools in which full or part time instruction is given in general, technical or commercial subjects up to trade, sub-professional or professional level;

(g) craft centres, being schools in which full or part time instruction is given in handcraft and home craft subjects;

(h) vocational schools, being schools in which full or part time instruction is given in general and vocational subjects; (i) teachers' colleges, being institutions for the training of teachers.

The Ministry of Education is primarily responsible for ensuring that parity in the literacy rate is reached. This could be achieved through the realization of such targets as girls to boys ratio reaching 1:1. Even the 'Matua' programme which allows mostly females who were forced to leave school due to pregnancy and other social and economic problems would have the opportunity to re-enrol. Boys who have dropped out at the higher levels of secondary education are given a second chance through the academic stream or even through other educational pathways such as TVET.

For all these parity related targets, the Ministry plays a major role through its awareness programmes and other strategies that could improve access. The Ministry of Youth and Sports is also responsible for education programmes for school leavers and this is mainly through schools that they are co-managing and community programmes that are more inclined towards non-formal modes of education.

Parity initiatives are conducted through the awareness and monitoring programmes of the Ministry and this is sourced from Programme 2 Primary Education, Programme 3 Secondary Education, Programme 5 Tertiary and Technical Education and Programme 6 Research, Development and Training.

Progress on Literacy

Adult Literacy

Since 2012, there has been minimal progress in the determination of the adult literacy levels in the country. The status of EFA Goal 4 for Fiji remains and is reproduced in this report.

The table 2.4.1 shows that Fiji has a high literacy rate, i.e. over 90% of the populations over the age of 15 years are literate.

Table 2.4.1: Adult Literacy Rates² in Fiji 2000 – 2004

² Due to limited data available, the literacy rates for the rest of the years are not reflected in this report. The literacy rates included in this report are extracted from our past reports to UNESCO.

Adult literacy rate (%)– Male	94
Adult literacy rate (%)– Female	91
Total Adult literacy rate	93

Source: UN Common Database (UNESCO) - 2006

Youth Literacy Rate for Fiji

The definition for literacy rate is the percentage of people aged 15-24 who can, with understanding; both read and write.

Table 2.4.2: Youth Literacy Rate in Fiji between 1980 and 2004

Year	1980	1985	1990	2004
Youth literacy rate (%)	95.0	96.8	97.8	99.0

Source: UN Common Database (UNESCO) - 2006

The table above shows that the adult literacy rate is lower than the youth literacy rate in Fiji. With adults, the literacy rate for women is lower than that for men. There might be a need for literacy programmes for both women and men in the communities to raise their literacy levels. There are also roles that the media, schools, national libraries and NGOs play directly and indirectly in the improvement of literacy in Fiji.

The adult literacy rate in Fiji was 93% in the year up to 2004. There seems to be a slight difference between male and female literacy rate, with the former being slightly higher (males: 94, females: 89).

Fiji is well served through the various forms of media. This is indicative of the level of literacy present in the population. It also serves to broaden literacy as availability and exposure will develop literacy levels. The print media has a wide range of publications. There are dailies and periodicals targeting specific readership audiences. These range from the young to the old to sports people as well as those interested in lifestyles, fashion gender issues, community living, agriculture, tourism, youth, politics, local & world news to name a few. The two dailies namely the Fiji Times and the Fiji Sun have a very large readership and wide coverage. However, the cumulative circulation statistics may not reflect on the exact level of literacy as often the same people are buying more than one newspapers daily. At least the four main islands have the papers available. This is where about 90% of the population live.

The papers in the other languages i.e the 'Nai Lalaka'i & 'Shuti Dut' also have quite a large readership although they are weekly publications. There are a number of other publications that make their circulation on a number of other issues. There are two Fiji broadcasting companies. Their reach is extensive. Both companies broadcast in the three main languages, English, Fijian and Hindustani. Both radio stations broadcast on three stations each. Broadcasts are on a full 24 hour basis. The two television stations in Fiji Television Limited and Fiji Broadcasting Commission Limited both of which are very well established. They both have free to air 24 hour channels. The television coverage throughout Fiji is extensive with only a very small section of Fiji yet to have access. There is also a paid TV service that has Fiji wide and international reach. Mai TV is presently is also a television station but with limited coverage however will without doubt add to the literacy rate in Fiji.

2.5 Context of Gender parity and equality

To measure progress towards achieving Goal 5, it is necessary to look at both gender parity and gender equality. Gender equality includes ensuring equity in access to education, learning processes, learning outcomes, and job opportunities.

International agreement has already been reached to eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education. This requires that gender issues be mainstreamed throughout the education system but, supported by adequate resources and strong political commitment. By creating a safe and gender-sensitive learning environment, it should remove a major hurdle to girls' participation in education. Increasingly women's literacy is another crucial factor in promoting girls' education. A comprehensive effort therefore needs to be made at all levels and in all areas to eliminate gender discrimination and to promote mutual respect between males and females regardless of age. To make this possible, changes in attitudes, values and behavior are required.

Strategies to achieve the goal

The strategic priorities of Government are consistent with the MDG 3 to promote gender equality and empower women. The immediate strategies to the above targets are as follows:

- The review of the curriculum to incorporate relevant changes that enhances the development of students and addresses the needs of the communities;
- Mainstreaming gender perspectives in all sectorial development programmes;
- Empower women, particularly rural women; and
- For women leaders, the provision of more training for women educators who aspire to leadership positions.

The Roadmap highlighted that gender and development contributes to stability. Gender parity is almost achieved and is on track to achieving the EFA goal of eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education.

The Government's Roadmap 2009-2014 is committed to eliminating gender disparity at all levels of education, labour force, and business sector to ensure gender equality and empowerment of women' in our nation.

Policies and programmes to address literacy and gender disparity are specified in various policy documents of the Ministry of Education. The Ministry's Education Sector Strategic Development Plan (ESSDP) 2012 – 2014 Outcome 4 targets the increase in leadership positions in schools of women.

The outcome also targeted females as the disadvantaged group that need to be assisted for further development. Similarly males could also be considered to be a disadvantaged group at upper secondary because they tend to drop out of school at lower levels of secondary education more so than females.

Legislation and legal framework

Since the part of the Education Act that addresses compulsory education also applies here as it does in Goal 2, the other part that might be worth highlighting is the one that covers teachers. Part VIII of the Education Act is titled 'Teachers' confirms that the Permanent Secretary is able to decide on the composition of male to female teachers as indicated indicative of the Act below:

Issue and cancellation of Certificates or licenses and appeals against cancellation
22 – (1) Subject to any regulations made under the provisions of this Act, the Permanent Secretary may issue to any person a certificate or license authorising such person to teach in any school or classification or type of school or may recognize a teaching certificate awarded elsewhere

Approval of appointment of teachers

23. The appointment of teachers (other than public officers in any school shall lie with the manager of such school, but every appointment shall be subject to the prior approval of the Permanent Secretary.

The Public Service Commission (PSC) Circular Number 44, (issued on 24th August, 2010), after endorsement by Cabinet has now made mandatory that Sex Disaggregated Data be incorporated into all government policy documents; and therefore become an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in each ministry. Apart from the Ministry of Education which is the main driver of gender parity for schools, there are other coordinating and implementing agencies, government and non-governmental that contribute directly to gender parity through their support programmes such as the provisions of scholarships.

There is no direct allocation from the budget that is geared towards the achievement of gender parity but in all budgeted programmes, gender is always considered during the planning and implementation stages.

Table 2.5.1: Gender Parity Index for enrolment from 2000 – 2013

	2000	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012	2013
GPI for Primary Net Intake Rate (NIR)	0.92	0.90	0.90	0.97	1.00	0.99	1.01	0.97
GPI for Primary Gross Enrolment Rate (GER)	1.00	1.00	0.99	0.97	1.00	1.00	1.01	1.01
GPI for Primary Net Enrolment Rate (NER)	1.00	0.99	1.00	0.98	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.01
GPI for Secondary Gross Enrolment Rate (GER)	1.14	1.16	1.13	1.13	1.17	1.15	1.14	1.11
GPI for Secondary Net Enrolment Rate (NER)	1.08	1.08	1.09	1.13	1.15	1.16	1.13	1.12

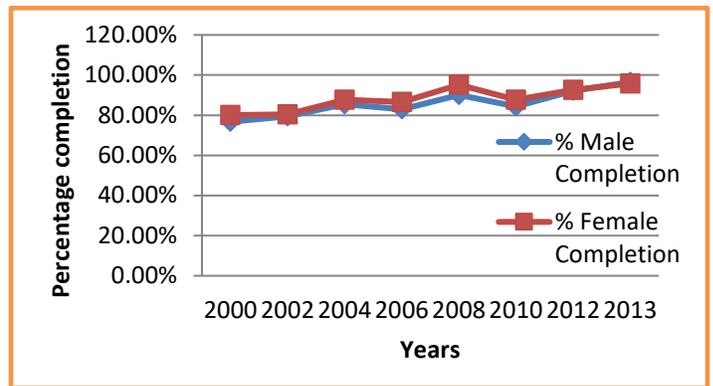
[Source: Ministry of Education Annual Report]

Gender parity almost even out at the primary level but is in favour of girls at the secondary level.

Figure 2.5.1: Ratio of Male/Female enrolment in primary school



Figure 2.5.2: Male/ Female completion rate



[Source: Ministry of Education Annual report]

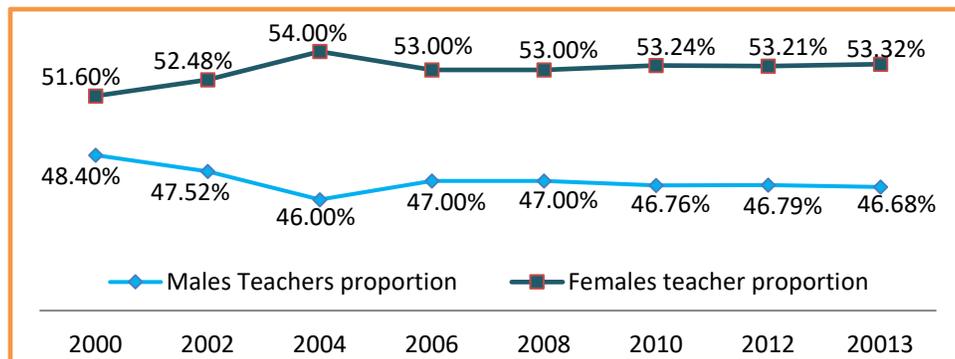
Figure 2.5.1 above shows the male enrolment is higher than their female counterparts. Figure 2.5.2 shows an even number of completion for both sexes with female having a slighter edge over the male.

Literacy Gender Parity Index

The literacy gender parity index for youths is 1, however with adults; the literacy parity index is 0.96. This shows that with youths, there are sufficient learning opportunities for both females and males. This may not be the same with adults as reflected in figure 2.5.3.

Proportion of teachers in Primary and Secondary Schools by gender for 2000-2012

Figure 2.5.3: Teacher proportion for Primary and Secondary Schools in Fiji



[Source: Ministry of Education Annual report]

Table 2.5.2: Teacher classification by level of education and gender as a percentage of totals for 2004 to 2012

	2000		2002		2004		2006		2008		2010		2012		2013	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Primary	43.45	56.55	43.43	56.57	43.4	56.6	44.2	55.8	44.6	55.4	45.4	56.6	45.3	54.7	45.26	54.74
Secondary	51.41	48.59	50.36	49.64	50.3	49.7	48.6	51.4	49.8	50.1	48.6	51.4	46.7	53.3	48.73	51.27

[Source: Ministry of Education, Annual Report]

The tables and the figures above indicate that there are more female teachers in both primary and secondary schools. It is also noted that there is a heavy concentration of female teachers in the primary schools. The results above may be the result of a high attrition rate of male teachers from the teaching field than the female teachers.

Table 2.5.3: Number of education officers in management positions by gender (2014)

Posts	Female	Male
Deputy Secretary	2	1
Director	4	5
Divisional Education Officer	0	4
Principal Education Officer	5	12
Senior Education Officer	26	36
Education Officer	9	29
Principal Accountant	1	0
Senior Accountant	0	1
Principal Admin Officer	1	2
Senior Admin Officer	4	1
Accounts Officer	2	0
Admin Officer	9	3
Executive Officer	16	3
Total	79	97

[Source: Ministry of Education, Fiji]

The figures above show that out of the total 176 officers in the administration/professional category, 44.8% are females. There is a need to recruit more qualified female officers into the administration level of education to participate in the planning and decision making on policy matters.

Table 2.5.4: Proportion of male and female participating in school management for 2009 to 2014

	2009		2013		2014	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Head Teacher	79.8	20.2	73	27	73	27
Principal	84.6	15.4	71.4	28.6	75.3	24.7

[Source: Ministry of Education, Fiji]

The proportion of females who takes up leadership positions in schools at both secondary and primary is still low even though the trend shows a large increase for 2013.

2.6 Quality of education

National Action Plan - Education Reform Programme

Quality in education results in an inter-play between key factors such as learners who are healthy, well-nourished and ready to participate and learn. It also considers environment that is safe, protective and provide adequate resources and facilities. It looks at the instructional processes through which trained teachers use child-centered teaching approaches in well managed classrooms. The content in the curriculum material for acquisition of basic areas of literacy, numeracy and life skills is relevant and skillful assessment to facilitate learning and reduce disparities. (UNICEF, June 2000).

In terms of improving the quality of education offered by schools in Fiji, there are two important issues to be considered:

1. Improving the efficiency of the education system; i.e. trying to ensure the returns to education in relation to the inputs that are utilized. In other words, the resources that are available to education are efficiently utilized in the efforts to increase the learning outcomes of students.
2. Increasing the effectiveness of the system; i.e. trying to ensure the outcomes, the products of the education system are such that they would make the maximum contribution to the personal, economic and social development of the individual and the country as a whole. The ultimate aim here is to ensure that the education the students have received will better equip them for life.

Fiji has achieved positive progress towards ensuring universal expansion and access to primary education, however through its current reform policies, improvement in the quality of education for all school - aged children is envisage.

The quality of education in Fiji can be assessed by the quality of input and processes indicators. Input resources such as the budgetary requirements, schools infrastructure, and quality of teachers contribute to the quality of education (outputs) we produce.

For the education system to achieve quality education for all, a number of policies and programmes have been initiated by the Ministry. These include:

- School Standard Monitoring and Inspectorate Policy (SSMIP).
District education officers are now empowered to inspect schools particularly to examine the performance of teachers and advice accordingly for improvement in the delivery of teaching and learning. It provides clear guidelines on why, when, how and by whom the FPSSISP shall be conducted to provide assurance to stakeholders and to promote improvement and successful innovation that enhances learners' experiences and leads to better outcomes for them. It is also to professionally assist schools and teachers develop educational strategies and learning environment conducive to quality performance and improved educational outcomes hence the realization of the Ministry's vision and mission. It also offers an evaluation system which is fair and consistent, both in the manner in which inspection is carried out and in the style of reporting which it generates so that it:

- identifies, acknowledges and affirms good educational practices in schools;
 - promotes continuing improvement in the quality of education offered by schools;
 - promotes self-evaluation and continuous development by schools and staff; and
 - provides an assurance of quality in the educational system as a whole, based on the collection of objective, dependable and high quality data.

- The establishment of the Fiji Higher Education Commission (FHEC) in 2010 to regulate higher education institutions and the programmes that they offer is a response to the need to ensure the delivery of quality higher education and training by tertiary education providers including universities. In doing so, Government will provide assurances that programmes and qualifications meet national standards which will facilitate the recognition of Fiji's qualifications in the region and internationally. In addition, the Commission will ensure that funds allocated for higher education is used in the best interests of students, training providers and the nation.

- Fiji Teachers Registration Board (FTRB) Promulgation.
The FTRB registers all teachers engaged in the teaching of children in schools and other education institutions. The Board also ensures that teachers observe the rules of their profession and discipline those who fail to do so by de-registering them from the system. The registering of teachers ensures quality service from the teachers and protects children from unqualified and untrained teachers. There is compulsory registration of all teachers.

- Schools Zoning
Urban schools are zoned so that access to education is improved and to ensure equality in the distribution of educational benefits and optimum utilization of teachers and resources.

- Decentralization
Administrations from headquarters were decentralized in 2009 for efficiency in services, effective administration and implementation of government policies. Decentralization of administrative functions strengthens the nine District Education Offices to implement and monitor education programs and projects in their own districts.

- Government Policies
Fiji's Roadmap to Democracy 2009 -2014 clearly outlined the strategy to be carried out in order to make Fiji a knowledge-based society. These include:
 - improving the curriculum content that will address holistic education;
 - improving the numbers and quality of competent and motivated teachers as well reducing the pupil teacher ratio;
 - increase use of standard improvement measures in schools and enhancement of the rural education programme through the improvement of infrastructures, review of school performance and piloting the distance learning programme;
 - ensure retention of quality good teachers;
 - effective and efficient allocation of subsidies to tertiary institutions;
 - Strengthening TVET programme and
 - better training in financial management, record keeping and monitoring & evaluation.

- Transport Assistance.

Government through the Ministry of Education have been providing transport assistance to school students whose joint parents income fall below \$15,000 annually. In 2014, the Government injected about \$20 million to assist children from low economic background to have access to education. Transport subsidy has been provided to buses, mini vans and boat owners to transport students to school on a daily basis.

- Introduction of Distance and Flexible Learning

Distance and flexible learning had been introduced to nine primary and eight secondary schools located in rural and very remote areas. Teachers who are disadvantaged because of lack of access to proper curriculum materials such as textbooks and other resources are targeted here. Teaching using trained and experienced teachers have been seen as one of the medium to assist teachers teaching in isolated areas.

- 2014 Government Budget

For the first time in the history of the nation, the budgetary provision of \$370,034 given to the Ministry ensures that all Fijian students have free education. All primary and secondary students will no longer be required to pay any school fees as well as buying text books as was in the past.

- Numeracy

The Fiji Numeracy and Roll-Out provided an opportunity for a stock-take of research-based evidence about good practice in numeracy and literacy for learning of mathematics. While there is a need to improve performance for some disadvantaged groups, Fiji students have performed well in Australian Mathematics Competition as well as in the Fiji Mathematics Association & their school based mathematics competition.

The roll-out was carried out as recommended by the Minister for Education and senior management. The decision came about after all were convinced on the alarming revelation from the numeracy team trial report, on the poor status of primary mathematics in schools. During the Trial the officers from the Curriculum Development Unit (CDU) were also using a new numeracy material that has been developed for the Fiji teachers.

The tables below show the dramatic change in pupils' ability to do mathematics in their classes during the trial:

Figure 2.6.1: Year 1 results

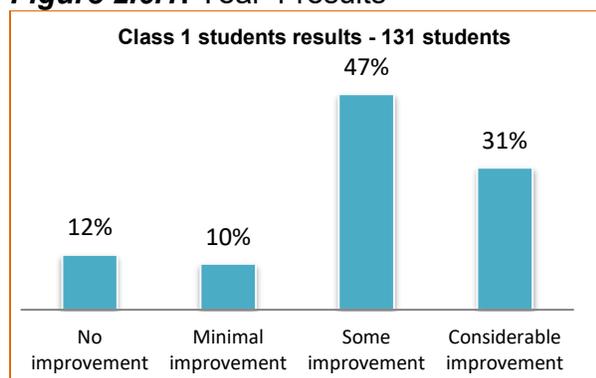
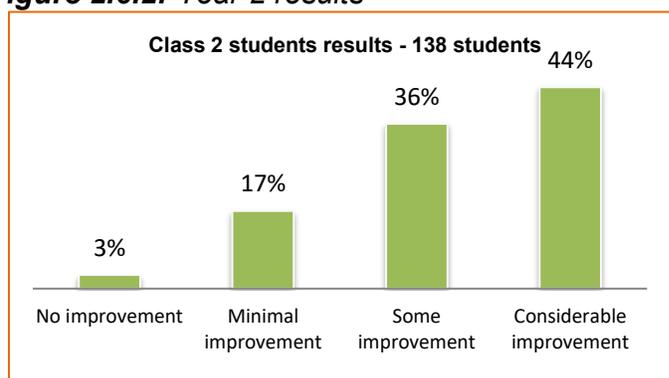


Figure 2.6.2: Year 2 results



[Source: Ministry of Education Numeracy Progress Report – 2010]

Figure 2.6.3: Class 3 results

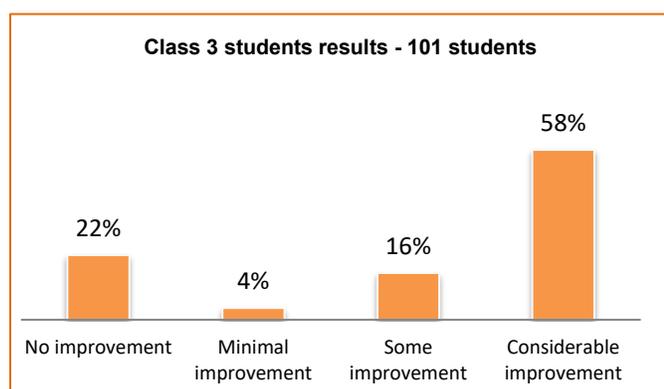
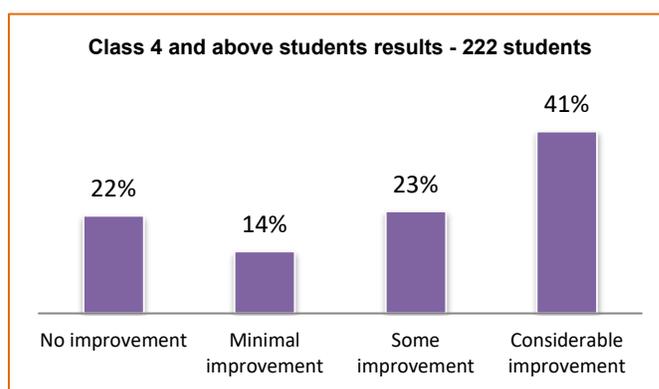


Figure 2.6.4: Class 4 results



Source: [Ministry of Education Numeracy Progress Report – 2010]

Table 2.6.1: Fiji schools National literacy and numeracy attainment in 2011.

Assessment	Overall National attainment
LANA [Year 4] Literacy % of schools above national average	34.9
LANA [Year 4] Numeracy % of schools above national average	40.9
LANA [Year 6] Literacy % of schools above national average	33.0
LANA [Year 6] Numeracy % of schools above national average	40.7
LANA [Year 8] Literacy % of schools above national average	33.6
LANA [Year 8] Numeracy % of schools above national average	38.6

[Source: Ministry of Education Annual Report – 2011]

Figure 2.6.2: LANA 2011 literacy – number of schools above and less than equal to the national average

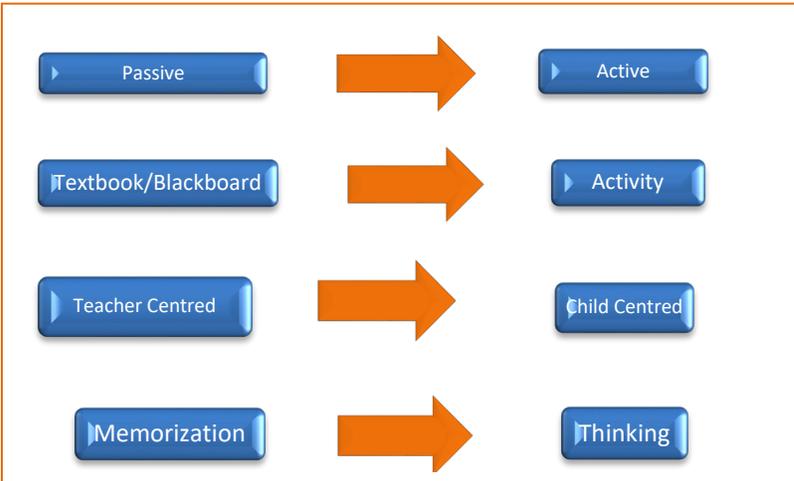
District	Class 4					Class 6					Class 8				
	No. of Schs > National Avg	% of Schs > National Avg	No. of Schs <= National Avg	% of Schs <= National Avg	No. of Schs	No. of Schs > National Avg	% of Schs > National Avg	No. of Schs <= National Avg	% of Schs <= National Avg	No. of Schs	No. of Schs > National Avg	% of Schs > National Avg	No. of Schs <= National Avg	% of Schs <= National Avg	No. of Schs
Ba-Tavua	24	40.0	36	60.0	60	17	28.3	43	71.7	60	22	38.6	35	61.4	57
Cakaudrove	12	18.5	53	81.5	65	16	25.0	48	75.0	64	13	21.3	48	78.7	61
Eastern	34	30.9	76	69.1	110	24	21.8	86	78.2	110	36	33.3	72	66.7	108
Lautoka-Yasawa	46	56.8	35	43.2	81	38	46.9	43	53.1	81	35	47.3	39	52.7	74
Macuata-Bua	34	35.8	61	64.2	95	35	36.8	60	63.2	95	25	30.9	56	69.1	81
Nadroga-Navosa	14	23.7	45	76.3	59	17	28.8	42	71.2	59	18	31.0	40	69.0	58
Nausori	32	27.8	83	72.2	115	34	29.6	81	70.4	115	32	29.4	77	70.6	109
Ra	8	20.0	32	80.0	40	8	20.0	32	80.0	40	7	17.5	33	82.5	40
Suva	42	52.5	38	47.5	80	43	53.8	37	46.3	80	35	46.1	41	53.9	76

[Source: Ministry of Education Annual Report – 2011]

The Fiji-wide trial results concerning numeracy generated a lot of true insights into the reality of most of our mathematics class as today. The training of all teachers, in the areas of literacy and numeracy was needed. The fact that the education system in Fiji was moving away from the external examinations and including more classroom based assessment approach, adds more justification in expediting the roll-out process.

During the roll-out workshops, a change in the teaching pedagogy from classroom teachers was heavily emphasized. The approach of changing the mathematics and literacy teaching pedagogy was something most participants agree as it will result in transformation in the classroom. The model shown below summarizes the entire shift that was going to be required:

Diagram 2.6.1: The new teaching approach



The diagram encourages that there be less reliance upon the text book/chalk & board teaching but more emphasis on activity based learning. Moreover students during mathematics teaching and learning process ought not be treated as passive listeners but be accorded the status of active participants in mathematics classes.

Teachers ought to reduce the emphasis on memorization but to lay more emphasis on students' critical thinking skills or abilities. Most important of all is that teachers need to be reminded on the importance of always using a child – centered approach rather than a teacher – centered so that the areas of need of the child is dealt with successfully.

Diagram 2.6.2: Literacy and numeracy map in Fiji from 2009 to 2010

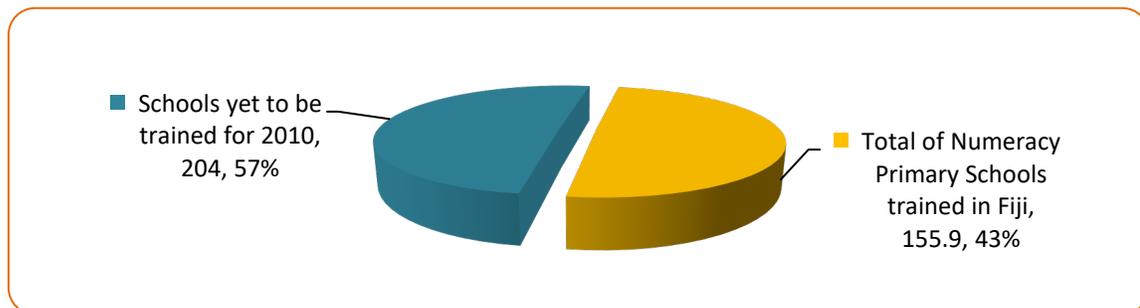


● - Literacy major workshops ● - Numeracy major workshops

The training of the trainers for Literacy and Numeracy was conducted in centers around Fiji as shown in the map above. This series of trainings were moved to rural centers around Fiji after the initial training of the trainers began in Suva in November 2009 through funding from UNESCO Office for the Pacific States in Apia.

As is evident from the coverage map, the Eastern Division especially the Lau group the most difficult to cover because of the scattered nature of the islands. However training for Lau and Rotuma teachers in the holidays were conducted as this would allow more time for them to return home by boat or air.

Figure 2.6.5: Total schools that have trained in numeracy for 2009 to 2010



[Source: Ministry of Education Annual Report]

Government expenditure on education

Education has been recognized as a form of investment in human capital that yields economic benefits and contributes to the future wealth through increasing the productive capacity of its people. For this reason, Fiji has placed more emphasis in Education and the Sector which has also received the highest budget of Government since independence. Since 2000, the Ministry of Education has been receiving the greatest portion of the Government budget annually, most of which is spent on operational expenditure where 80% goes to the salaries of its personnel, bulk of which are teachers.

The increase in the Ministry's budget will facilitate and enhance the learning and teaching processes that ensure quality outcome.

Table 2.6.3: Ministry's Education budget from 2000 - 2013

Years	Ministry's allocation(FD)
2000	179,694,300
2002	217,362,100
2004	239,983,600
2006	301,185,600
2008	296,494,300
2010	240,082,882
2012	257,341,900
2013	\$268,490,100

[Source: Ministry of Education Annual Reports]

Programmes allocations by year

Table 2.6.4: Education budget analysis by programme for 2012 - 2013

Head 21	Programme	Amount (\$)		% of Ministry of Education budget	
		2012	2013	2012	2013
Programme 1	Administration and Policy	\$23,367,000	\$ 24,157,900	9.08	9.00
Programme 2	Primary Education	\$113,366,000	\$119,104,500	44.05	44.36
Programme 3	Secondary Education	\$109,841,600	\$112,891,500	42.68	42.04
Programme 4	Curriculum Development	\$3,324,700	\$ 3,679,600	1.29	1.37
Programme 5	Tertiary Technical Education	\$2,132,200	\$ 3,361,400	1.22	1.25
Programme 6	Research, Development and Training	\$991,000	\$ 982,100	0.38	0.36
Programme 7	Asset Monitoring Unit	\$417,300	\$ 279,200	0.16	0.10
Programme 8	Examinations	\$1,709,800	\$ 1,996,500	0.66	0.75

Programme 9	Culture & Heritage	\$2,192,500	\$ 2,037,400	0.85	0.77
Total		\$257,342,100	\$268,490,100	100%	100%

[Source: Ministry of Education 2012 and 2013 Annual Report]

Overall, Primary education takes up a substantial portion of the education budget. This is because the largest number of students and schools are in the primary level of education. Out of the 929 schools, 729 schools are primary.

Improve infrastructure

The Ministry of Education allocated about \$4,570,869 in 2013 towards the improvement of physical infrastructure in schools. This is for all levels from pre-schools to secondary schools. Improved facilities will mean improved learning environment which is crucial for quality education. Improved infrastructure also includes living conditions for students in hostels and teachers in their living quarters. Assistance is available to rural schools that provide living quarters for teachers.

Donor assistance from the European Union (EU) had greatly assisted the Ministry of Education in providing better facilities to schools. The EU provided FJD56 million to the Ministry for infrastructural development which includes the provision of resources and teacher training. Other donor agencies such as JICA, AQEP and NGOs also provided funding for infrastructure development.

Teachers Qualifications

Teachers are arguably the most important input to the educational process and without teachers whose quantitative and qualitative adequacy can be demonstrated, neither children's education nor any other educational initiatives introduced will blossom. It is important that qualities of teachers are addressed when discussing quality of education.

Table 2.6.5: Percentage of teachers certified to teach according to National Standards for each school type for 2010 - 2013.

Qualification	2010				2012				2013			
	Primary (%)	Secondary (%)	Special Schools (%)	Total number of teachers	Primary (%)	Secondary (%)	Special Schools (%)	Total number of teachers	Primary (%)	Secondary (%)	Special Schools (%)	Total number of teachers
Master's Degree or Higher	0.2	0.8	1	48	0.7	1.3	0.1	97	0.7	1.3	0.1	97
Bachelor's Degree and Postgraduate Diploma	8.8	55.1	8	2963	10.2	53.3	15.3	2987	10.2	53.1	11.3	2987
Diploma or Advance Diploma	9.3	39.6	3.5	2132	28.9	43	11.7	3466	39.3	43.2	12.3	3466

Certificate or Advance Certificate	80.3	1	42.8	4100	60.2	2.4	58.5	3221	60.1	2.4	60.4	3221
Form 7 or lower	1.4	3.5	44.7	306	-	-	14.4	16			15.1	16

[Source: Ministry of Education Annual Report]

As a measure of quality in the education system, the qualification of teachers is an important measure of quality of education systems. The above table above shows that in 2010, most teachers in Fiji are well certificated and qualified to teach in schools according to national standards.

Both males and females are well certificated according to national standards to teach in primary and secondary schools. An increasing number of teachers are going for second degrees and the Ministry is encouraging these teachers to continuously upgrade their qualifications as it will impact on the quality of their teaching. The Ministry has a fixed budget of \$700,000 yearly for in-service training both locally and overseas.

An area of concern at the moment is the Technical/Vocational section where it is difficult to find enough graduates in these areas of study to teach. The Ministry in its training plan is prioritizing teachers in the area of TVET for scholarships. The problem of the lack of TVET graduates is due to the high attrition rate of TVET teachers with most of them moving to the private sector where employment opportunities are more attractive.

Table: 2.6.6: Percentage of teachers with degree qualifications for 2000 -2013

	Primary (%)								Secondary (%)							
	2000	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012	2013	2000	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012	2013
Males	0.73	1.04	1.28	0.44	2.15	4.06	5.7	7.25	26.0	26.0	25.1	23.8	25.1	26.1	26.6	27.0
Females	0.53	0.96	1.32	0.50	2.31	5.10	5.8	8.46	27.7	27.9	28	27.4	27.5	29.8	29.3	31.8
Total	1.26	2	2.6	0.94	4.46	9.16	11	15.71	53.7	53.9	53.1	51.2	52.6	55.9	55.8	58.8

[Source: Ministry of Education 2012 Annual report]

Primary teachers only need a teacher certificate from Teacher Training institutions to teach in primary schools. There is an increase in the number of primary teachers who are going back to university to upgrade their qualification to a degree qualification. For secondary teachers they have to have a degree qualification to teach at Year 11 to Year 13. Some teachers have diploma qualifications from the Fiji National University (FNU) and there is a need to upgrade their qualifications for consideration for post holder positions.

There are a greater number of female secondary teachers with degrees than males while at the primary level, there are more males with degrees than females. The target is for all teachers to have a first degree especially in secondary schools. The primary teaching programme at the FNU Teachers College has been upgraded to diploma level and this should contribute to quality of education at the primary level. The courses in the other two private primary teacher training institutions in Fiji are similarly being upgraded to diploma level with the HEC assisting in benchmarking the quality.

Teacher/Pupil Ratio

Table 2.6.7: Teacher Pupil Ratio for 2000 - 2013

	Primary								Secondary							
Years	2000	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012	2013	2000	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012	2013
Teacher pupil ratio	1:28	1:27	1:28	1:28	1:26	1:27	1:26	1:25	1:18	1:16	1:16	1:17	1:16	1:16	1:15	1:15

[Source: Ministry of Education SIMS]

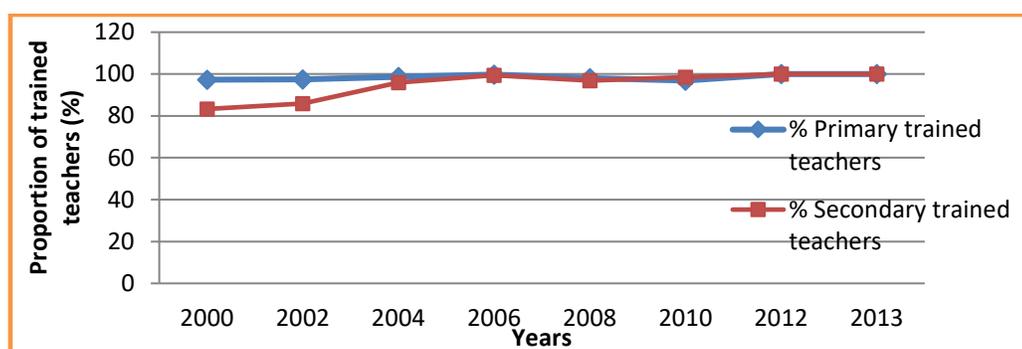
Table 2.6.4 shows that the teacher/pupil ratio in both primary and secondary schools is good as compared to universal standards. However there are vast differences in the teacher/pupil ratio between the rural and urban schools. In the rural schools, the teacher/pupil ratio is low due to low enrolment while in the urban schools the teacher/pupil ratio is somewhere around 1:40 for both Primary and Secondary Schools. This situation is true for both primary and secondary schools.

If examination result is a measure of educational outcome, then teacher/pupil ratio may not be a contributing factor to performance in schools in Fiji since most urban schools with higher ratios perform better than rural schools in examination results.

Teachers

Teachers play a vital role in education and in Fiji, the Ministry of Education makes up the greatest number of employees in the civil service. In teacher recruitment processes, equal numbers are given to male and female when allocating scholarships for teacher training in both the primary and secondary training institutions.

Figure 2.6.6: Percentage of Trained and Certified Teachers in Fiji: 2000 – 2013



[Source: Ministry of Education, Annual Reports]

The above figure shows that Fiji has a well-trained and well-qualified teaching force in both secondary and primary levels. Primary school teachers are trained from the teacher training institutions graduating with a diploma in primary teaching.

Secondary school teachers are trained from the teacher training institutions and universities. The slightly lower numbers is due to the lack of degree qualifications amongst some of the secondary teachers especially in the TVET area. Teachers for TVET are usually graduates of the former Fiji Institute of Technology and other institutions without a teacher training certificate.

2.7 Summing up

In 2008, the Peoples Charter for Change, Peace and Progress resurfaced many of the unimplemented recommendations in the 2000 Fiji Education Commission Report and suggested for inclusion in the new direction for Fiji's Education System.

Paramount was the role of education in building social cohesion and national identity in all communities. The country needs a Better Fiji for All and equal opportunities to be provided to all. The Peoples Charter identified that education is strongly associated with improved living standards and people who are deprived of education are often disadvantaged throughout their lives.

Our vision in the new direction is "Education for Change, Peace and Progress". In this direction, Fiji must work towards building a knowledge based society and there is a need for increasing access to higher education. Various initiatives and reforms were encouraged by Government in order to leap forward in building a Better Fiji for All. These reforms and initiatives amongst others include:

- The Establishment of the Fiji Higher Education Commission;
- Establishment of the Fiji Teachers Registration Board;
- Establishment of the two universities namely the University of Fiji and the Fiji National University;
- The expansion of basic compulsory education to 12 years of schooling; and
- The removal of the Years 6, 8 and 10 external examinations;

3.0 REVIEW OF EFA STRATEGIES IN THE REGION

3.1 Assessment of EFA

Goal 1: Early Childhood Education

A 50 % access to Early Childhood Education gives room for improvement. From the limited data collected, it is presumed that the other half the ECE children are located in disadvantaged areas in rural and very remote areas. The Ministry of Education is taking up responsibilities in the training of ECE teachers and the development of the ECE curriculum. The ECE policy developed in 2009 provided a clear direction for stakeholders in providing ECE services and to access key administrative and policy information to ensure that all services offer quality programmes.

Goal 2: Universal Primary Education

The primary enrolment ratio is now close to 100%. Fiji is on target to achieve universal primary education by 2015; however there are issues that need to be addressed in order to reach the

unreached and those who are out of schools. Government through the Ministry of Education has implemented a number of initiatives and reforms to get ALL the primary school aged children to school, particularly those that are disadvantaged economically and financially.

Goal 3: Life Skills Training

Unemployment rate in Fiji remained unchanged at 7% in 2012 from 7% in 2010. Unemployment rate in Fiji averaged 7.67% from 1986 until 2011, reaching an all-time high of 12% in 1988.

More effort is required to prepare all young people and adults to have equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programme to prepare them for the employment market. The establishment of the National Employment Centre has assisted in reducing youth unemployment rate from 20.5% in 1994 – 98 to a 19.9% in 2009 – 2013. Assisted Life skills training will be better coordinated in the future through the establishment of the National Employment Centre.

Goal 4: Literacy

Fiji is on target to achieve this goal. Fiji has a high literacy rate where over 90% of the population over the age of 15 years is literate. High achievement levels of literacy rate are due mainly to Fiji's high achievers in terms of access to education for both males and females. The data collection method needs improvement to be able to ascertain the progress and achievement level of the goal.

Goal 5: Gender Equality

Gender equality is almost achieved in terms of access to quality education in Fiji, especially for girls. There is gender equality in enrolment and completion rates for primary schools. In secondary schools males do not stay longer in schools, perhaps due to early attraction to employment opportunities. Gender balance does not translate to the workforce. Government's Strategic Plan recognizes that support is needed to strengthen government capacity to implement policies on gender and development.

Goal 6: Quality of Education

Quality of Education is quite difficult to measure. The quality of education in Fiji can be assessed by the quality of input and processes indicators. Input resources such as the budgetary requirements, schools infrastructure, and quality of teachers contribute to the quality of education outcomes. By 2015, more efforts are still required to improve quality of education in Fiji particularly addressing rural and urban disparities.

Government's attention in the medium term is to improve the quality of living standards in the rural areas and various incentives are being put in place to address improvement in the quality of resources in various schools.

3.2 Enabling/constraints

ECE initiatives, legislations and strategies

The Ministry of Education provides support in the establishment and registration of the schools, the payment of grants to its teachers and support for equipment, furniture and learning materials

It is taking up the responsibilities of the training and remunerations of ECE teachers. Previously it was the owners of the ECE Centres that pays the salary of the teachers. On many occasions those that teach in the rural and remote centres were not properly paid.

In 2012, ECE teacher's appointment and remuneration were formalized through Cabinet approval. The overall budgetary provision for ECE was also increased and the ECE policy was reviewed and enacted to cover the administrative and service delivery. This is in line with the Ministry's commitment towards the EFA Goal 1.

The formulation of the new ECE Curriculum will now provide the direction that would ensure that the learning and teaching processes are followed. The new Curriculum Framework also recommends that ECE Centres be attached to nearby primary schools for the smooth and timely transition from the kindergartens to the middle and upper primary schools.

The ECE policy was developed and approved by the Ministry of Education to provide a clear direction for stakeholders in providing ECE services in Fiji to access key administrative and policy information to ensure that all services offer quality programmes.

The Ministry's Corporate Plan has Outcome 2 focusing on ECE alone. This is in alignment to the Fiji's Constitution that states: 31 – (a) "every person has the right to early childhood, primary and secondary education and further education and (2) The state must take reasonable measures within its available resources to achieve the progressive realisation of the right – (a) to free early childhood, primary, secondary and further education and (b) to education for persons who were unable to complete their primary and secondary education".

Challenges

More efforts are still required to get the other 50% of the ECE-aged children who are not at school. These are presumably the disadvantaged who are residing in rural and very remote areas.

The management of ECE centres is always an issue in terms of providing the relevant and necessary data and information needed to be able to monitor the progress of Goal 1. Most management of the ECE Centres and ECE teachers do not make the commitment to provide these simply because they felt they are not obligated since the Ministry provides only limited or no funding at all from the Ministry.

ECE teachers are non-civil servants, even they receive salary grants from the Ministry and this continues to be a problem in terms of recruiting quality teachers.

Lack of staff at the education district level is also a challenge in terms of the monitoring of ECE at the districts. More emphasis is placed on primary and secondary schools. At the moment, there is only one Senior Education Officer that looks after more than 700 ECE centers around the country. The other Education Officer provides professional assistance.

Most of the ECE centres continue to be managed by school management and most of them are in the economically disadvantage areas.

The current budgetary provision is still inadequate to fully expand ECE in the country.

Universal Primary education

Initiatives and strategies

In Fiji today, there is almost universal access to primary education. The Ministry is also committed to provide twelve years of basic education for all our students.

In alignment with the Peoples Charter for Change, Peace and Progress, the Roadmap for Socio Economic Development and the new constitution, various initiatives and reforms were encouraged by Government

It has over the years been prioritizing education in its development plans and as a result the Education Sector received the highest budget amount. In the 2014 budget, the Government continues to show its commitment with the provision of free education for all Fijian students at primary and secondary schools. The budget also includes the provision of free text books. The budgetary provision of more than \$370,000 should ensure the provision of quality education and at the same time ensuring that students have access to school as well as the provision in ensuring they are retained in the school system.

Previously student's attendance has been affected due to the school fees and other levies imposed by the schools. Poor infrastructures and lack of teaching resources also impacted student's attendance and quality of teaching. Teachers would prefer to teach in urban rather than rural schools due to the poor state of most classrooms, teaching resources, water, electricity and teachers quarters.

Challenges

Rural schools continue to be affected in terms of the number of students due to urban drift, family obligations and lack of financial support. The 2014 budget will of course ease the load on the committee run school in terms of schools fees, however more improvement are needed in improvement made to the conditions of the schools as whole. Support from parents is also an issue that continues to affect the quality and retaining students in schools.

Learning and life skills for young people and adults

Initiatives and strategies

The Ministry of Youth and Sports have been organizing variety of trade discipline training to our young people through its Youth Centres, special emphasis has been directed to adding value to the existing youth programs in terms of infrastructural development, self-reliant and enterprising. Reaching out to our young people in remote and rural areas is among new service applications strategies of the Ministry.

The Ministry of Education in initiating the Matua programme is giving equal opportunities for those adults who had not completed their secondary schools education initially to do so. The mainstreaming of the Basic and Employment Skills Training should ensure that when a child leaves secondary schools, he or she is equipped with some basic skills to assist in finding a suitable employment.

The Youth and Sports Ministry in its strive towards excellence service delivery to the young people of Fiji, will continue to ensure equity in training priorities allowing for reviewing of

programs from time to time, careful distribution of training resources among youth training centres and collaboration in training policy and implementation among a wide range of stakeholders.

Challenges

Unemployment is probably the biggest challenge for young people. The number of unemployed youths in Fiji registered with the NEC is about 11,860 with ages ranging from 15 to 25.

Unemployment may be caused by lack of appropriate qualifications, the widening gap between the supply and demand in the labour market, and rural to urban drift.

In addition, there is lack of coordination of programme implementation by relevant stakeholders at the national level. Stakeholders will need to map and identify their various initiatives and work towards identifying overlaps and loopholes that need to be demarcated and addressed within the current frameworks.

Youths who are not in the education system, unemployed and without training need to be identified so that the relevant capacity building can be initiated to develop their knowledge and skills for employment. The Monitoring and Evaluation aspects of all programmes implemented need to be strengthened to ensure efficiency and effectiveness of the programmes and to gauge the impact the programme is making in changing the lives of young people.

Finance remains the pivotal factor towards new youth development initiatives.

Adult literacy

Initiatives and strategies

Adult and continuing education needs to be expanded and integrated into the mainstream of national education and poverty reduction strategies. The vital role literacy plays in lifelong learning, sustainable livelihoods, good health, active citizenship and the improved quality of life for individuals, communities and societies must be more widely recognized. Closer linkages among formal, non-formal and informal approaches to learning must be fostered to respond to the diverse needs and circumstances of adults.

The Roadmap highlighted the need to have a literate nation under the Education Sector. It also specifies under its target the need to reduce disparities. In the Ministry of Education Corporate Plan, Outcome 6 focuses on education and training – technology and employment skills training. This will involve developing the curriculum framework with the integration of education for sustainable development in TVET. The plan will also involve strengthening the effectiveness of the Technology and Employment Skills Training (TEST) programmes through the mainstreaming of vocational courses in secondary schools. This should create alternative pathways for learning and employment opportunities for students and early school leavers.

Teachers' qualifications need to be improved through organized trainings, professional development sessions and upgrading at tertiary institutions.

There is a need to strengthen and expand the concept of 'Matua' programme to other strategically located and relevant secondary schools.

Emphasis in strengthening links with industry, higher education institutes, communities, businesses and provincial councils for students who graduates from the programme.

Review of TVET curriculum and assessment system to incorporate relevant changes in specific areas of community needs and development of students.

With the extension of compulsory education to 12 years in Fiji and with a number of new initiatives targeting access and quality it is hoped that literacy levels in Fiji will surely improve in the coming years.

Challenges

The lower literacy in adults and particularly females is a challenge for Government. Infrastructural facilities and institutions to facilitate adult education and community learning is an issue because of other competing priorities.

Adult education is another challenge that needs to be addressed in Fiji. There is very limited institutions that exist in the country offering adult education. Ten years ago, a lot of work had been done by the NGOs and government representatives through the initiative of the Ministry of Youth and Sports to set up a Non-formal Education Department. It lacked the political will and all the work fell through.

At this point in time, the Ministry of Youth and Sports has formulated a draft Fiji Non-Formal Education Policy which will address the needs above.

Gender parity and equality

Initiatives and strategies

Goal 5 is progressing well and with the current Government initiatives, there is a need to further monitor and strengthen the various policies in place to ensure the equal participation of females. Primarily, there is a need to reiterate gender equality and non-discrimination in policies to control the traditional stigmatization of girls and create aggressive awareness conducted to change the mentality of stakeholders especially at grassroots level.

Assurance should be affirmed in all policies of the career pathway for females by the enhancement of equality in all aspects of employment opportunities and fair treatment.

Challenges

Support is required to conduct more awareness on gender with stakeholder/parents to alter traditional perception and stigma placed on the education of females which have negatively impacted on the progress of their education.

More awareness also is to be conducted on the Umbrella Policies like the Peoples Charter for Change, Peace and Progress and the Roadmap for Democracy and Socio-Economic Development. This is to also include the gender related international ratifications that Fiji has ratified apart from EFAs and MDGs.

Quality Education

Initiatives and strategies

Quality education is the Ministry of Education primary focus. It is aimed at ensuring quality learning experiences are provided to enhance educational outcomes and affirm the holistic

development of students. In the endeavor towards the realization of this, the Ministry incorporated the word 'Quality' to its vision in 2011 to read 'Quality Education for Change, Peace and Progress'.

This is further enhanced by its policies and initiatives and experiences towards improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the education system through quality inputs in the learning and teaching process. Leadership and management training for future leaders and current leaders will ensure a continuous supply of quality leaders in schools. The Ministry's policies encourage partnerships with all stakeholders to work together to produce a conducive learning environment.

Challenges

Whilst the Ministry tries to ensure that teachers in Fiji are certified, actual delivery inside the classroom is often a concern. This has resulted in poor academic performances of some schools in external examinations.

Despite the Ministry efforts to up-skill the TVET teachers, the lack of TVET graduates to teach TVET subjects in schools has been an ongoing problem. This is due to the high attrition rate of TVET teachers with most of them moving to the private sectors where employment opportunities are more attractive.

Fiji is a multiracial country with different ethnic groups. Social disparities continue to exist amongst the different communities. Of particular concern is the difference between the economic livelihood of the rural and urban communities. Such disparity is also manifested in the quality of school facilities and resources which impact on school performance.

The increase in squatter settlements in urban areas and the migration of families from the rural to the urban areas are also problems affecting quality education provision. This has a major impact on education services and trying to meet the needs of this population in places where they reside.

Social disparity is a major issue which the Ministry has been trying to address in terms of providing educational equity to all children irrespective of their social background. Factors that need to be considered in addressing quality would include:

- Facilities and resources;
- Availability of teaching and learning resources;
- Teachers qualifications;
- Leadership qualities;
- Level of commitment of community members and parents; and
- School management

The quality of education across social groups in Fiji depends on each community's commitment to education and their view towards education. The commitment of most indigenous Fijian communities to education still lags behind than that of the other ethnic groups.

3.3 Lessons learned and best practices

While the emphasis in the colonial days was on education, today's education is seen as a basic right for all children in Fiji. This is all possible due to the formulation of the many policies and legislations which give rise to the numerous government initiatives that makes schooling more attractive to the school children.

Despite the economic and political instability over the years, Fiji has invested heavily in education. Our education system has made impressive achievements and compares very favourably against other developing nations. There is widespread access, practically universal primary education, high literacy rates and virtually gender parity. Education is now compulsory for the first twelve years of basic education, although continuous monitoring and enforcement are needed.

The education system in Fiji is built around the partnership between the State and the community. As a result of this arrangement, there is great diversity of schools. This allows parents/srudents to choose schools with which they are comfortable with. Another positive aspect is that education involves a high degree of community participation.

Previously, the education approach in Fiji has been one where the notion of academic excellence has been prominent. This resulted in an over reliance on the external examinations results which in turn affects the retention of school children in the school system. From the recommendations received, the Fiji intermediate (for Year 6), Eighth Year (Year 8) and the Fiji Junior (Year 10) external examinations were abolished. In their places are the LANA for primary schools (Year 4, 6 and 8 respectively) and the Class-based assessment for secondary schools. This ensures the continuous monitoring of the learning and teaching process for the affected students. More emphasis is also placed on the technical and vocational education.

Over the years, there have been requests for an education reform. These pleas have reiterated the need for a responsive curriculum which, through continual review, is better able to meet the economic and development needs, socio-cultural expectations and moral and intellectual development needs of the changing education environment of Fiji.

The introduction of the Fiji National Curriculum Framework in 2014 will ensure that the young are provided with the opportunity to achieve outcomes that will enable them to participate in our unique environment with many of its cultural traditions and practices.

The new curriculum maintains its commitment to internal and regional conventions and educational initiatives ratified by the Government of Fiji. This includes the UNESCO's Delor' 4 pillars of Education, related to MDG and EFA goals and the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD, 2005 – 2014), the Pacific Education and Development Framework (2009-2015), the Pacific Education for Sustainable Development Framework (2006) and its Action Plan (2008) among others.

The essence of a good school is the provision of quality learning and teaching conditions. It is through the quality of teaching that schools can make the difference to the life chances of their students. Therefore, the teacher effectiveness is the key to improved educational outcomes. Fiji, in recognising and acknowledging the role of teachers and important part that they played in the provision of quality education, continues to support and provides in-service training and professional

development programmes such as the Future Leaders and Current leaders workshop. The phasing out of the Grant-in-Aid teachers has brought about greater equity amongst them. This has motivated and encouraged teachers to perform better. Over the years, the budgetary allocations for the Ministry for Education have increased significantly and it has contributed immensely in the improvement of the learning and teaching processes.

4.0 EMERGING TRENDS

4.1 *Emerging regional development challenges*

The education sector will continue to focus on existing issues and a number of emerging ones in years to come. Current issues include student retention in schools, dropout rates, student's performance, education quality and public and private costs of education.

The emerging issues include student behaviour, drug abuse in schools, and assessment of student learning, nation building and curriculum relevance. These emerging issues pose a lot of challenges on the Education Sector in Fiji and bring greater competition for scarce resources.

The use of substances such as drugs, yaqona, cigarettes and other illegal substances in schools is becoming a major threat to the education system in Fiji. A survey done in schools on drug and substance abuse show that the ages of students using such substances is getting lower. The threat of HIV/AIDS and prostitution amongst students is now becoming real putting more of our students at a greater risks.

The quality, relevance and attractiveness of schooling to students continue to be a challenge. There is a big competition between the developments and attractiveness of the outside world and the school programmes. The rising unemployment rate compounds the problem, thus creating a sense of hopelessness amongst students and posing the question of the relevance of schooling. If the education sector is not careful, then the attractiveness of the outside environment will far surpass that of the schools creating greater chances for dropouts from the system.

The financial status of families in Fiji is another barrier to basic education. Most families find themselves under severe financial constraints and could not afford school levies, lunches and bus fares for their children. The problem is further aggravated by the lack of understanding by parents about the importance of education when weighed against other commitments such as social and religious commitments.

In communities where the parents have total commitment towards their children and schools, the schools can be seen differently from other schools where there is lack of community and parents support.

The majority of schools' committees lack support from the parents and communities thus results to the poor state of schools in terms of resources and infrastructure. This leads to poor performance and poor quality of education.

The geographical isolation of schools is still a problem in terms of accessibility. With lots of primary schools located in the small outlying islands and remote areas of the main islands accessible only by boats and poor roads, administration problems are challenging. Students in those areas are facing problems of traveling to school daily and most stay in hostels which are not usually in good condition. Teachers are also reluctant to be posted to these schools because of the poor living conditions and lack of proper infrastructure and utilities. Many times these schools are without teachers due to transportation problems.

English is the official language of instruction in schools in Fiji. There are two other major languages which are the indigenous Fijian 'iTaukei' language and the Hindi language which under the new language policy have become compulsory in all schools. Language maybe a barrier to education as English is the second language to most students in schools.

At the primary level, most teachers find it convenient to teach in the students' mother tongue for greater understanding at the beginning stages of primary schools. The transition to the English language can come at a later stage in the primary school level. English is still a major challenge to most students at the secondary level but is a compulsory subject in all examinations within the school system in Fiji.

The lowering of retirement age of all Civil Servants in 2009 had resulted in many of the senior and experienced teachers leaving the service. This has impacted on the Ministry in terms of loss in leadership skills, knowledge and experience.

Fiji by virtue of its geographical position is faced with the twin problems of illicit drug trafficking and illegal use. These are further aggravated by the rapid transitional and social changes arising from urbanization. These developments create an atmosphere which exposes the entire communities to greater risk in drug usage.

After 1995, unrecorded alcohol consumption in Fiji was estimated to be 1.0 litre of pure alcohol per capita for the population older than 15 years (*Drug and Alcohol Use in Fiji: A Review by (Elenoa Seru Puamau)*).

The uncertain political and economic climate that Fiji had undergone has had significant economic consequences for nation and the living standards of its people. It has affected basic education in not only Fiji but the Pacific region as a whole. When families face economic hardships brought about by conflicts and political uncertainty, children's education is affected as parents cannot afford to pay educational costs. The process of education is usually affected and schools at times have to close as experienced in the past.

4.2 Comparison of new policy directions in socio-economic development (taken by government in light of recent development and emerging challenges)

A key policy objective agreed to by Cabinet in the formulation of the Substances Abuse Advisory Council Act of 1998 and the establishment of the Council in 1999 was "the promotion of a healthy lifestyle and safer drinking practices and the development and promotion of actions and advice which will reduce alcohol-related and substance abuse problem for the nation".

The Drugs and Substance Abuse is now a real and emerging issue in our schools and a concerted effort is needed by all to address the root cause. The devastating effects of drugs and other substances will have a huge adverse impact on the economy, social and cultural life of our people and likewise on the physical and mental well-being of the children as they can affect their academic performance in schools.

The Ministry of Education in its effort to protect the children from using drugs in the schools system, have included in its Strategic Plan for 2012-2014 Outcome 3 which states “The welfare of students are promoted and protected through school improvement programmes that build character and bring about social cohesion in an environment that is safe and secure”.

The National Substance Abuse Advisory Council (NSAAC) has since been conducting awareness and workshops on the harmful effects of drugs through drug awareness programs, peer education training, training of trainers for teachers, presentations, school broadcasts, distribution of brochures, radio and television advertisement.

The high number of drug abuse cases by young people and the easy access of these substances in the local market have prompted the authorities to draft a Volatile Substance Abuse Decree to regulate and control some of the volatile substance which are in the market.

Concerns raised by health professionals on the increasing incidents of child abuse cases that were reported and had been screened by the Ministry of Health has led to Cabinet’s endorsement of the 2010 Child Welfare Decree., It was enacted to ensure mandatory reporting of abuse cases involving children and strengthens referral processes to medical professionals to appropriate authorities.

The Decree empowers health professionals to mete out care and treatment orders for the child and avoid any discrimination to the child. The implementation of the decree is in alignment to the Convention of the Right of the Child agreement to which Fiji is a signatory.

The need to have a responsive curriculum that will be able to meet the demands of economic growth and the development needs of the nation resulted in reforming the existing curriculum and the formulation and implementation of the Fiji National Curriculum Framework in 2013. The new curriculum framework gives more opportunity to young people to achieve the outcomes that should enable them to participate and contribute positively to the development of the society. The NCF sets out to meet the learning needs of all children and students from Early Childhood to Year 13.

The mainstreaming of job-related subjects should facilitate sustainable economic and social development by providing students with the knowledge, skills and practical experience needed in a wide range of employment opportunities.

The formulation of the Fiji Qualifications Framework (FQF) by the Fiji Higher Education Commission which is part of the Ministry of Education reiterates the commitment of the government in ensuring quality.

The framework will ensure there is a standard in the courses offered at all local tertiary institutions. This should assist in

- ⇒ meeting the industry need with alignment to the training institutions.
- ⇒ ensuring the transferability of credits across various institutions.
- ⇒ ensuring recognition of local qualifications by overseas institutions.
- ⇒ allow the award of certificates set against national standards.
- ⇒ providing for the offering of different levels of programmes at different institutions but which can lead to a national qualification

The cost of living combined together with the increasing poverty makes education very costly to parents. Even though the Government subsidizes cost for tuition and remissions for the disadvantaged, many parents still have problems in sending their children to school. This has resulted in the government initiatives to assist students with transport assistance. The bus fare assistance, tuition fee grant, zoning policy, free textbooks, removal of the external examinations for Years 6, Year 8 and Year 10 are some of the initiatives targeting students to prevent them from dropping out of the school.

The 2014 budget will come as a relief for all parents and students alike as government had made the commitment in its budget for all primary and secondary students to receive free education. Parents will no more be required to pay for any fees at any primary or secondary school. Free textbooks are also provided to students in schools.

The Government also assisted tertiary students through the provision of full scholarship for the top 600 students and the provision of the students' loans scheme for the others.

During 2007, a substantial amount of planning and reforms were carried out to enhance the delivery of service to all stakeholders at all levels of education in the country. One of the restructures carried out was the decentralization. Functions of the Primary Section at the Ministry's Headquarters were devolved to the education districts so that education services are accessible to all our numerous client, far and wide, who in the past, sacrificed a lot of time and money to come the Ministry's Headquarters for assistance

The lowering of the retirement age to 55 years by the Government in 2009 to some extent has created a vacuum in terms of skills and experience in the teaching profession. The Professional Development Unit of the Ministry with the financial assistance of AQEP (AusAID) have been working tirelessly in putting together the current Leadership and Management modules to be used in the training of the Future and Current Leaders. Workshops have been conducted throughout all education districts to try and address the problem on hand.

The political upheavals of 1987, 2000 and 2006 have remained an issue for many children in Fiji. The adverse social impact on families and children is obvious. The situations placed parents and guardians who were affected under considerable stress and anxiety. The effects will have lasting effects on the children's performance, confidence and esteem. The Government in realizing the gravity of the impact of the political instability towards its economy and its people decided to launch a national initiative to Build a Better Fiji for All through the Peoples Charter for

Change peace and Progress. It has nine pillars which is directed towards rebuilding Fiji into a non-racial, culturally vibrant and united, well governed and truly democratic nation.

The Roadmap for Sustainable Development for Democracy further strengthens the principles and the objectives of the Charter.

4.3 Implications for future education development in the region

The Ministry will continue to build on its performances and achievement of the 2012 – 2014 Education Sector Strategic Development Plan (ESSDP). Improving the quality of education, ensuring that students have access and retaining the students in the school system will continue to be a priority for the Ministry in years to come.

The issues that currently exist, demands for serious reconsideration of the ways and means by which the present system of education is undertaking to educate and develop the potential of every child to the maximum. A relevant and essential view as expressed by the 2000 Education Commission Report, that education in Fiji will require “strategies to further qualitative improvements in the nation’s human resources”. Such strategies must be aimed at molding the child to become an active and productive participant in society and to take charge of his or her life in a constantly changing and culturally diverse environment.

This, points to the need for clear educational outcomes and directions for the children of Fiji. The development of the Fiji National Curriculum Framework has incorporated outcomes that will provide will the direction and at the same time provide the guidance to the learning and teaching process to ensure the:

- Facilitation of the holistic development of every child;
- Promotion of fundamental shared values amongst students;
 - Children are motivated and prepared to be lifelong learners;
- Children are assisted to live a full and productive life;
- Preparation of children for the world of work where changes are expected.

The challenges of the 21st century demands for students to have a democratic mind, be self-initiative, are hardworking and are able to use their education to be worthwhile members of society. These students should also have enquiry skills in order to assist them to investigate concepts, construct meaning, test ideas and provide logical reasoning. The ideal learner should be a holistic person who is not only able to fulfill his or her life goals, but is able to contribute effectively to Fiji’s multi-racial and multi-cultural society.

4.4 A new regional vision of education for post- 2015

Education will always remain the most important prerequisite for any nation including Fiji to attain changes, peace and progress. The Ministry's guiding principle places the child at the center of everything we do where its customers will continue to be the priority focus in the services provided.

Based on the National Goal of making Fiji a knowledge base society, the Ministry will continue to uphold its obligations and commitment towards the national vision and mission in trying to address access and equity issues to support social justice and at the same time promote unity and harmony.

The Government through its future national development plans has prioritized the following:

- ensure access to quality education for all
- establishment of a statutory body for Community and Non formal learning
- establish a modular system of education
- establish a coherent national tertiary education
- increase access to tertiary and higher education
- ensure improved overall quality of teaching and learning through better-trained teachers
- implement a progressive and responsive curriculum
- strengthen early childhood education, especially in rural areas and outer islands
- improve financing of education
- enhance skills and vocational training as well as promoting leadership and entrepreneurship training and facilitate job placement in partnership with private sector
- introduce a system for the distribution of all education grants that specifically recognizes and is based on the disadvantage of schools.

The Ministry's focus for the future will therefore be directed towards the Government plans as stated above to further develop the quality of education currently provided to the children of the nation.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Recapitulation of major findings

Goal 1

Data and information management on ECE is still a challenge due to various factors. These factors include:

- ECE centres in Fiji being managed by school management committees who are also responsible for the selection and recruitment of their teaching staff
- There are only two officers managing the operations of all the ECE centres in the country.
- ECE teachers are non-civil servants and this continues to be a problem in terms of recruiting quality teachers.
- Most of the ECE centres continues to be managed by school management and most of them are in the economically disadvantage areas.
- The current budgetary provision is still inadequate to fully expand ECE in the country.

In 2012, ECE teacher's appointment and remuneration were formalized with the Cabinet approval and this should remove the burden on the teacher and the management and at the same time be responsible for the submission of relevant informations that will highlight the real progress of this goal.

Goal 2

Fiji is on target to achieve universal primary education by 2015. The primary education indicators hover around 98% – 100% which is indicative of the Ministry's effort in trying to make education accessible to all. The 2014 budget will surely have a positive impact on students access as all primary and secondary school students will no longer be required to pay any schools fees nor buy any text books. This is in addition to the many initiatives put in place by the government through the Ministry to ensure the students are not disadvantaged. There are however issues that existed on quality and likewise on access and retention. This will continue to be a priority for the Ministry in the years to come.

Goal 3

The rise in the cost of living and the increase in poverty is a challenge into achieving this goal. Government in trying to address the related issues to Goal 3 has included in its National Plans and legislation strategies to reduce unemployment through reforms and capacity building. The unemployment rate stood at 8.6% in 2007 with youth labour force participation rates dropping from 57% to 53% between 1996 and 2007. With all the programmes and initiatives established by the Government one of which is the establishment of the National Employment Centre, should help reduce unemployment and at the same time improve the previous status of our Goal 3 achievements.

Goal 4

Fiji is on target to achieve this goal. Fiji has a high literacy rate where over 90% of the populations over the age of 15 years are literate. High achievement levels of literacy rate are due mainly to Fiji's high achievers in terms of access to education for both males and females.

Goal 5

Gender equality is almost achieved in terms of access to quality education in Fiji, especially for the girls. There is gender equality in enrolment and completion rates for primary schools. Gender balance does not translate to the workforce. Government's Strategic Plan recognizes that support is needed to strengthen government's capacity to implement policies on gender and development.

Goal 6

Quality of education is quite difficult to measure. The quality of education in Fiji can be assessed by the quality of input and processes indicators. Input resources such as the budgetary requirements, schools infrastructure, and quality of teachers contribute to the quality of education.

The Fiji Higher Education Commission and the Fiji Teachers Registration Board are significant initiatives to ensure the quality of education in tertiary institutions and schools. The Fiji Qualifications Framework will assist in the creation and regulation of a learning environment for Fiji based on national standards and continuous improvement

Government's attention in the medium term is to improve the quality of living standards in the rural areas and various incentives are being put in place to address improvement in the quality of input resources in various schools.

The 2014 budget should address the quality of education provided in schools. This should be a continued determination to achieve this all the time.

5.2 Key recommendations for the government's future national education targets

GOAL 1

- Strengthening the number of ECE Staff (for both at the Head Quarter and at the Education Districts)
- All ECE teacher's salary to be paid by the government
- Improving the monitoring of the ECE centres
- Improvement of data collection method
- Review and improve the current ECE Policy
- Relevant and legal provision that will commit the owners of the ECE centres

GOAL 2

- Implementation of the thematic approach for Years 1 and 2.
- Continuous monitoring of the NCF implementation at primary level
- Strengthen LANS a diagnostic tool to improve the literacy and numeracy rate
- To review the zoning policy
- Review the disbursement of grant to allow equitable distribution between rural and remote schools against urban schools
- Strengthen inclusive education
- Review the teacher-student-ratio in urban schools

GOAL 3

- Strengthening the non-formal education
- Review of the salary of Vocational teachers to be more attractive for those with industry background and experience
- Including bridging programs for out of school children to be able to rejoin the school system and acquire appropriate life skills
- Registration of all vocational school with FHEC

GOAL 4

- Improve and strengthening data collection mode
- Offer education programmes to improve the literacy and numeracy level for adults in the community with difficulty in the two areas

GOAL 5

- Formulation of the Gender Mainstreaming Policy

GOAL 6

- Strengthen External Schools Review Inspectorate (ESRI)
- Review pupil teacher ratio for urban schools
- Review current policies to enhance quality processes
- Review teacher intake policy
- Strengthening partnership with other teacher training institutions
- Broaden assessment strategies

5.3 New perspectives of international cooperation for education development in the region.

Fiji is part of the global community and by virtue of this link, it has international responsibilities. The Government has made commitments to international bodies such as the United Nations, UNESCO, International Labour Organization, the European Union, the Commonwealth, Melanesian Spearhead Group and so on. At the regional level, Fiji holds close ties with their counterparts through bilateral and multilateral agreements. Fiji is also part of the EU/NZAID Pacific Initiatives for the Delivery of Basic Education.

Fiji also had committed itself to UNESCO's Education For All and the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

Fiji's education plan now features prominently in the Peoples Charter for Change, Peace and Progress which lays the platform for the direction to be taken by the Ministry for the future.

The Ministry will continue to support the Government's commitment towards its international partners and local stakeholders through the development of policies and strategies to enhance these partnership and commitments for the realization of a better Fiji for all.

APPENDIX

Table 1: School Summary in Fiji for 2014

District	Primary				Secondary				Secondary & Vocational					Total Sec & Sec/Voc	Special Schools					Vocational					Total
	Govt	Non Govt	Private	Total	Govt	Non Govt	Private	Total	Govt	Non Govt	Private	Total	Govt		Non Govt	Private	Total	Govt	Non Govt	Private	Total				
Ba/Tavua		62		62		7		7		7		7	14		2		2				0	78			
Cakaudrove		66		66		9		9	1	3		4	13		1		1			1	1	81			
Eastern		115		115	1	7		8	1	4		5	13		1		1		1		1	130			
Lautoka/Yasawa	1	82	3	86	1	13	2	16		7		7	23		3		3				0	112			
Macuata/Bua		96	1	97		15		15	1	9		10	25		1		1				0	123			
Nadroga/Navosa		59		59		9		9		5		5	14		1		1			1	1	75			
Nausori		115	2	117	2	19	2	23	2	4		6	29		1		1				0	147			
Ra		40	1	41		4		4		3		3	7		1		1				0	49			
Suva	1	77	8	86	3	24	3	30		8	1	9	39		6		6		2	1	3	134			
Total	2	712	15	729	7	107	7	121	5	50	1	56	177		17		17		3	3	6	929			

Table 2: Overall ECE budgetary provision

Year	Grant for Pre-School Teachers(FD)	Pre School Grant (FD)	Infant Schools	Training	Equipment for Early Childhood Education (FD)	Building Grant for Early Childhood Education (FD)	Total (FD)
2000	312,000		-		-	-	312,200
2002	357,200		-		-	-	357,200
2004	450,000		-		-	-	450,000
2006	387,385		-		-	-	387,385
2008	550,000		-		100,000	-	650,000
2010	1,050,000	50,000			100,000	150,000	1,350,000
2012	1,836,845		-		100,000.00	150,000.00	2,086,845
2013	3,300,000		-		100,000	150,000	3,550,000
2014	3,300,000		1,200,000	25,000	500,000	150,000	5,175,000

Table 3: Primary net enrolment rate by gender from 2000 – 2014

	Male NER	Female NER
2000	94.90%	94.60%
2002	94.40%	95.20%
2004	95.80%	95.40%
2006	96.40%	95.80%
2008	97.50%	98.70%
2010	96.50%	97.70%
2012	98.00%	99.80%
2013	99.00%	99.80%

Table 4: Total Number of Youth Participants in Youth Development 2010-2012

Youth development training programmes	2010	2011	2012	2013
National youth band programme	54	30	33	150
Seeds of success training programme	299	674	586	2072
Empowerment training programme	764	387	323	1921
Specific skills training	158	669	494	1496
Total number of youth participated in training programmes	1275	1760	1436	5639

Table 5: Education Sector Budget detail

Years	Ministry's allocation (F\$)	% of National budget
2000	179,694,300	22.82
2002	217,362,100	20.04
2004	239,983,600	21.47
2006	301,185,600	19.45
2008	296,494,300	19.41
2010	240,082,882	17.59
2012	257,341,900	15.64
2013	268,490,100	14.44
2014	370,034,000	15.79

Table 6: Summary of ECE teachers with their qualification

	2010	2011	2012	2013
LTC/USP (Advanced Cert. from FNU or BED ECE from USP)	130	187	212	250
USP/APTC/MLTC – (Cert. & Dip.)	19	191	242	307
Basic Training/Non-Qualified	189	281	426	432
Total	338	659	880	989

Table 7: Teacher proportion by gender

	2000	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012	20013
Males Teachers proportion	48.4	47.52	46	47	47	46.76	46.79	46.68
Females teacher proportion	51.6	52.48	54	53	53	53.24	53.21	53.32
Total no. of teachers	9802	10307	9898	10450	9559	9175	9787	9787

Table 8: Primary and Secondary students Male/Female Ratio

	Male/Female Enrolment
2000	1.07
2002	1.06
2004	1.08
2006	1.07
2008	1.07
2010	1.07
2012	1.06
2013	1.07

Table 9: Completion Rate for Primary and Secondary

	% Male Completion	% Female Completion
2000	76.75%	80.05%
2002	79.45%	80.42%
2004	85.52%	87.62%
2006	82.86%	86.65%
2008	90.04%	95.22%
2010	84.38%	87.65%
2012	92.10%	92.62%
2013	96.53%	95.79%

Table 10: Total Number of Outreach Programmes Conducted in 2010 to 2013

Youth development training programmes	2010	2011	2012	2013
Seeds of success training programme	22	29	25	16
Empowerment training programme	32	15	7	7

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