



Kingdom of Tonga  
Ministry of Education and Training

# COVID-19 Accelerated Resilience Program

Program name/s	COVID-19 Tonga Accelerated Resilience Program
Donor	Global Partnership for Education
Implementing agency	Ministry of Education and Training
Grant agent	Save the Children
Coordinating agency	Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

FINAL DRAFT

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## Acronyms and Abbreviations

CDU	Curriculum Development Unit
DFAT	Australia Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
EC	Education Cluster
IE	Inclusive Education
ECE	Early Childhood Education
EOC	Emergency Operations Centre
EPPRF	COVID-19 Education Planning, Preparedness and Response Framework
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
GOT	Government of Tonga
LEG	Local Education Group
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning
MFAT	New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
MET	Ministry of Education and Training
NEMC	National Emergency Management Committee
PILNA	Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment
PIM	Program Implementation Manual
PSU	Program Support Unit
PSS	Psycho-Social support
RAP	Response Action Plan
RFT	Requests For Tender
SCA	Save the Children Australia
SIO	School Improvement Officer
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SMT	Senior Management Team
TNCDES	Tonga National Council of Directors of Education Systems
TWG	Technical Working Group
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

## 1.0 Introduction

While Tonga is at present COVID-19 free, the nation is facing the emergency impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Following its rapid response to the emergency of damage caused by Cyclone Harold (5% of ECE centres, 20% of Primary schools, 30% of secondary schools were damaged and 2,000 students affected<sup>1</sup>), the Government of Tonga (GOT) is now preparing for the potential damage caused by the pandemic. Should COVID-19 spread to Tonga, it will lead to the closure of 181 schools in five regions to protect vulnerable populations which directly affects 21,344 students (48 percent female) and 1600 teachers (60 percent female).

The Government of Tonga has invested TOP3.8m (USD1.7) in its National COVID-19 Action Plan specifically for the education sector. This program document is an application for the Global Partnership for Education's (GPE) COVID-19 Accelerated Funding which will complement the GOT investment. Save the Children Australia was selected as Grant Agent by the Ministry of Education and Training (MET). A letter of endorsement by the Tonga Council of Directors of Education Systems (Local Education Group) at its meeting of 18 September 2020 is attached herein.

The **COVID-19 Tonga Accelerated Resilience Program** will support the development and delivery of multimodal lessons for early childhood education (ECE), Inclusive Education and primary schools for home-schooling and the development of guidance for parents and caregivers to be used in the event of further school closures due to disasters or COVID-19 outbreaks. Further, it will support the development of the capacity of teachers to be able to support students learning in a variety of media. This will enable Tonga's education systems to develop more capable and flexible teachers who will have enhanced skills, enabling them to leapfrog, by using a range of technologies, towards modern pedagogies. The Program will allow Tonga to harness the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic to emerge with education systems which are much better prepared for emergencies.

The program is designed to be *flexible* to allow MET to respond rapidly to the changing situation in Tonga (for example, if the national response coordination plans are updated). Timely technical support will be *embedded* in MET to reduce the strain on personnel and systems from the dual emergencies. Additionally, the program is designed to be *highly coordinated* through the Ministry's Education Cluster (EC) and Local Education Group (LEG) with the national and international response, building upon other activities and aid to avoid duplication of effort. Finally, the program is designed to be *sustainable*, building on investments in disaster risk reduction and resilience *and* strengthening the education sector in the medium to long term. Resources and training provided by the COVID program will be of ongoing benefit to Tonga's educational systems. The training of teachers and sharing of technical support will reduce costs and ensure more resources reach those in need for current and future emergencies.

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<sup>1</sup> MET, TC Harold Damage Assessment Report and Response Plan, April 2020

## 2.0 Tonga's Context

This section describes some of the key contextual issues in which this project will be implemented.

### 2.1 Demographics

#### Participation Rate in Schools

Tonga's overall school enrolment rate for 4-15 years of age, as of the 2016 Census, was high at 95%, with most enrolling in primary and secondary schools. Females enrolment was higher than males. The lowest rate was recorded for male's enrolment in the two Niuas (85.3%).

Table 1 Tonga Participation Rates

	<b>TONGA</b>	<b>Tongatapu</b>	<b>Vava'u</b>	<b>Ha'apai</b>	<b>'Eua</b>	<b>Two Niuas</b>
<b>Males</b>	<b>94.3</b>	94.3	93.4	95.7	96.3	85.3
<b>Females</b>	<b>94.8</b>	94.7	95.2	95.9	94.3	91.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>94.5</b>	<b>94.5</b>	<b>94.3</b>	<b>95.7</b>	<b>95.3</b>	<b>88.2</b>

#### Dependency Rate

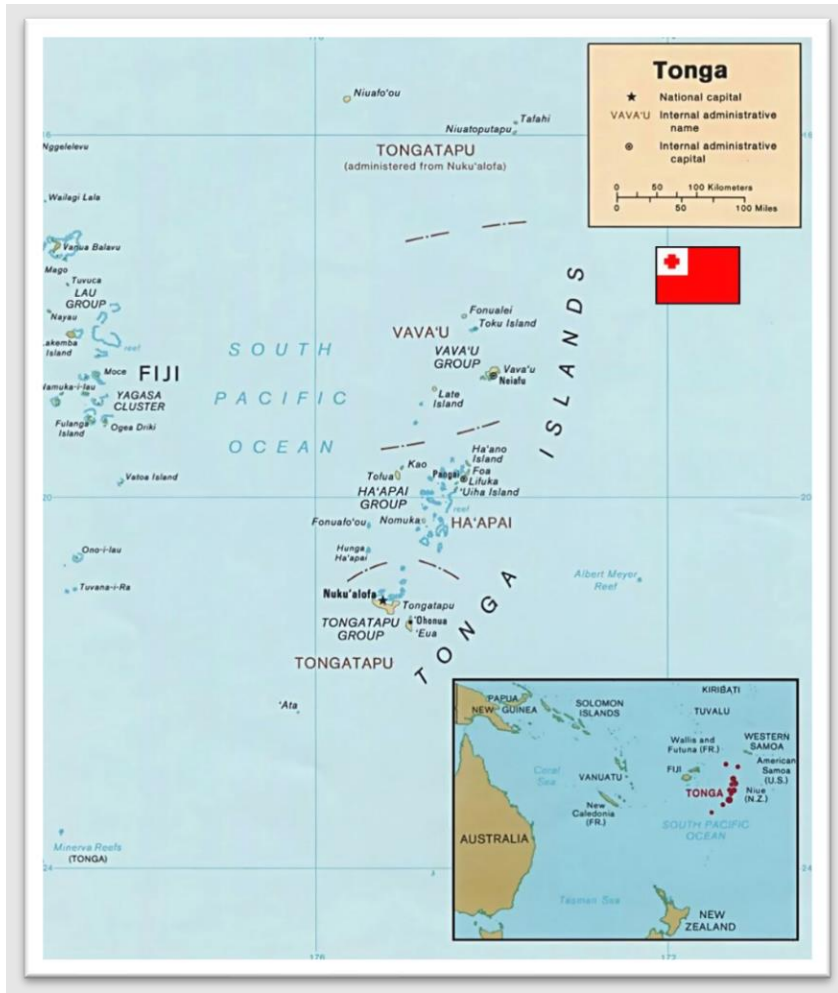
From the 2016 Tonga's Population and Housing Census, more males than females are less than 15 years of ages. Further, a high dependency rate of 82% of the total of Tonga's population falls within those under 15 and over 60 years old, with a higher dependency ratio for males (85%) than females (79%). This means for every 100 heads of population, 82 are in the dependent age groups.

Table 2 Tonga Dependency Data<sup>2</sup>

Dependency Age category	Total	Male	Female
Less than 15 (0 – 14 years of age)	36,534	18,996 (52%)	17,538 (48%)
Working age (15 - 59 years of age)	55,305	27,188 (49%)	28,117 (51%)
Older population (60 years & older)	8,771	4,048 (46%)	4,723 (54%)
Total	100,610	50,232 (50%)	50,378 (50%)
Children Dependency Ratio (< 15 years)	66	70	62
Aged Dependency Ratio (60 years & older)	16	15	17
Total Dependency Ratio	82	85	79

<sup>2</sup> 2016 Tonga's Population and Housing Census

About a third of the total population of Tonga are in the compulsory school age group, having a high rate of economic dependency. So, any plans for effective curriculum and content delivery must consider carefully the family's economic situation given the high dependency rate of this group.



(Source: <https://www.mapland.com/oceania/tonga/detailed-political-map-of-tonga-with-other-marks>)

Figure 1 Map of Tonga

The following map shows relative population densities and geographic locations

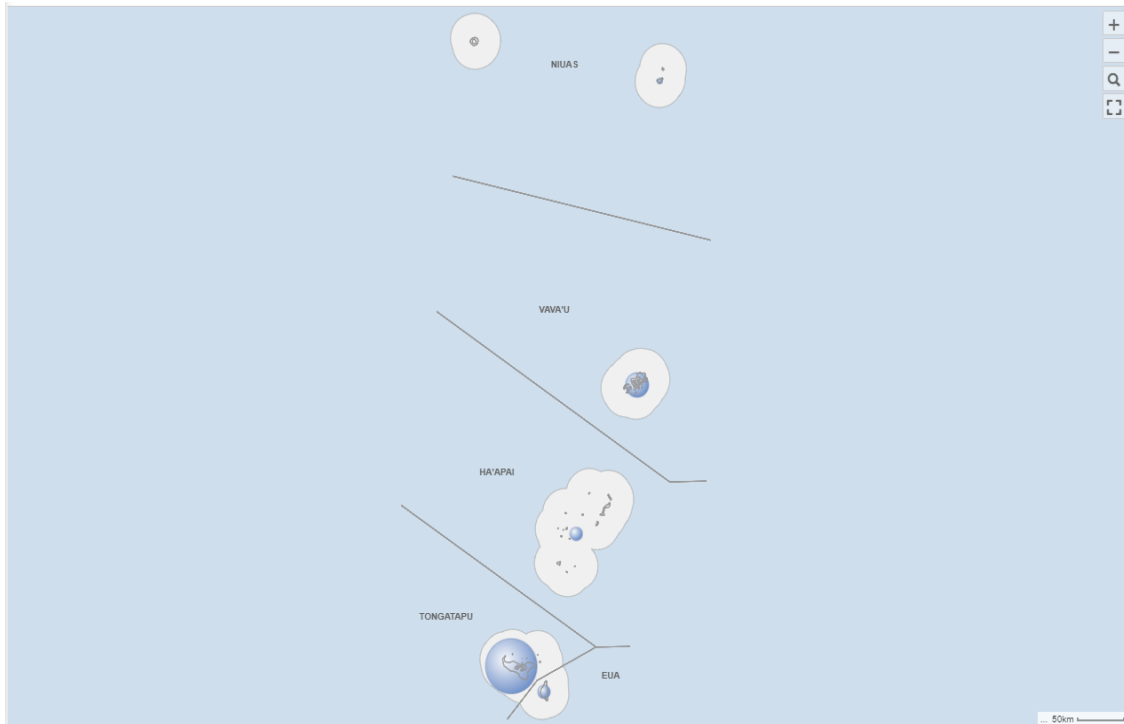


Figure 2 Population Density map of Tonga

Educationally therefore, isolation and remoteness are the most crucial equity challenges faced by the Tongan educational system.

The Tonga Statistics Department and UNICEF Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) Team have produced a fact sheet<sup>3</sup> and additional information on the situation of children and their vulnerabilities to COVID-19 based on data collected in Tonga in 2019. The Survey Findings Report and Thematic Snapshots from MICS will be released soon. However, some preliminary data show that 42 per cent of households in Tonga have access to both internet and computer, allowing that population of children to continue learning outside of classrooms through that modality, while other modalities will be required for the majority of children. Hence this proposal centres on a multimodal approach to delivery of teaching and learning. This means that providing of audio (radio), video (TV) and Internet based delivery systems in addition to printed materials will provide the widest possible access to rich and interactive learning which will ensure the ongoing connection between teachers and students, maximising the rates of return to school by children after any lockdown.

## 2.2 Educational Environment

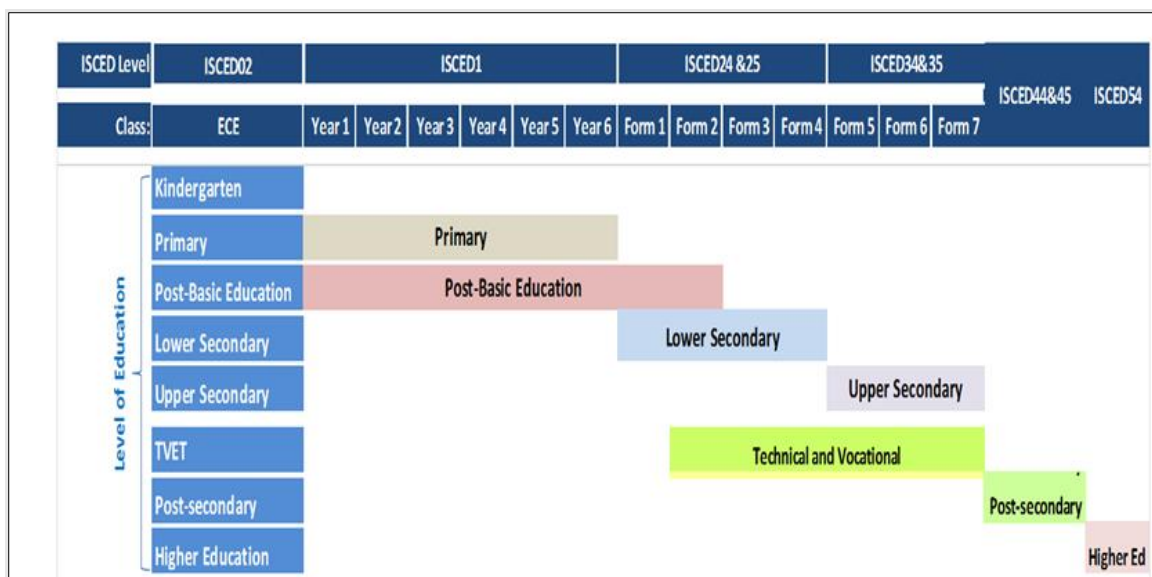
The Ministry of Education and Training (MET) is responsible for the administration and management of all education and training programs and learning activities. MET has made every effort *'to create an environment in which all education systems, communities, schools, teachers, students, donor and development partners, and the Ministry can work together in partnership and in harmony to achieve maximal benefit for all students at all levels, and in which all students can equitably access quality education that is relevant and sustainable'*<sup>4</sup>.

Table 3 Year Levels of Schooling in Tonga

<sup>3</sup> Tonga Statistics Department, "Tonga 2019 Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) Fact Sheet" (UNICEF, n.d.).

<sup>4</sup> Ministry of Education and Training website <http://www.edu.gov.to/about-us/roles-responsibilities.html>





Tonga’s education system consists of Early Childhood Education (ECE, 3-5 years old), primary education (5-10/11 years old), secondary and to post-secondary (11+ years old). Primary school levels are composed of Class 1 – Class 6, while secondary school (Lower and Upper) starts at Form 1 to Form 7; 12-13 years of compulsory schooling. Post-secondary education encompasses those in TVET and in tertiary and higher education. Note that this proposal caters for basic education, up to Form 2 of secondary schooling, according to the UNESCO definition<sup>5</sup>.

Below is the UNESCO’s Institute of Statistics 2020<sup>6</sup> school-age population by education levels in Tonga. The total student population in Tonga is 44,767, 80% (36,016) of which falls within the compulsory education age group.

Table 4 Tonga School Enrolment (2020, UNESCO)

Levels	Number
Pre-primary	4,984
Primary	14,746
Secondary	16,286
Tertiary	8,751
Total School Population	44,767

The Local Education Group in Tonga is made up of different education systems and each system is represented in the Tonga National Council of Directors of Eductaion Systems. The Council members include:

- MET
- Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga (FWC) (Siasi Uesiliana ‘o Tonga)

<sup>5</sup> <http://uis.unesco.org/en/glossary-term/basic-education>

<sup>6</sup> <http://uis.unesco.org/en/country/to?theme=education-and-literacy#slideoutmenu>

- Free Church of Tonga (Siasi Tau'ataina 'o Tonga)
- Roman Catholic Church (Siasi Katolika Loma)
- Ocean of Light International School
- Acts Community School
- Anglican Church (Siasi 'Ingilani)
- Seventh Day Adventist Church (Siasi 'Ahofitu)
- Tokaikolo Christian Church (Siasi Tokaikolo 'ia Kalaisi)
- Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints (Siasi 'o Sīsū Kalaisi 'o e Kau Mā'oni'oni 'I he Ngaahi 'Aho Kimui ni)

Almost all of Tonga's different education systems have schools in all of its islands. Tongatapu is the main island and the outer islands are made up of Vava'u, Ha'apai, 'Eua and the two Niuas (consisting of Niua Fo'ou and Niua Toputapu, two of the most remote islands of Tonga).

### Completion Rates

In the 2016 Census, the majority of those who dropped out of schools, did so for personal reasons (52%). School fees and other financial factors were not even rated as high, which means accessibility to education in Tonga then was not to do with lack of money to support students. For example, more than 95% of children have their own school uniforms and other resources relevant to their studies. The challenge however, as communicated in the 2016 Census lies *with improving access to the items that help to support study at home such as books suitable for their age, a study space/table and additional tutoring if needed.*<sup>7</sup> In a COVID-19 situation, these home resources must be considered for a successful delivery of teaching and learning at home.

About a third of the total population are of the compulsory school age (as of August 2020, Cabinet passed the law that the compulsory school age is from 4-18 years old) and dependent, so any plans for effective curriculum and content delivery will have to consider the breadth of work that is required to adequately cater for this group.

Looking at the school attendance by area, there is not much disparity in between urban and rural areas but breakdown by islands shows some disparity between islands. Vava'u shows not much disparity whilst Ha'apai, Eua and Ongo Niua shows disparity in the school attendance.

### Disability

With respect to disability, population statistics are shown in Table 5.

*Table 5 : Percentage population aged 3 years and above who have ever attended school by age group, sex and region<sup>8</sup>*

<sup>7</sup> 2016 Tonga's Population and Housing Census

<sup>8</sup> Tonga Disability Survey Report 2018

Characteristic	No functional difficulty			With functional difficulty			Total		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
<b>Age group</b>									
3-4	1.3	1.3	<b>1.3</b>	0.7	0.1	<b>0.4</b>	1.2	1.2	<b>1.2</b>
5-17	38.9	33.5	<b>36.1</b>	7.8	5.4	<b>6.6</b>	36.5	31.4	<b>33.9</b>
18-24	14.0	14.4	<b>14.2</b>	5.2	3.5	<b>4.4</b>	13.3	13.6	<b>13.5</b>
25-49	30.2	34.8	<b>32.6</b>	34.1	26.8	<b>30.5</b>	30.5	34.2	<b>32.5</b>
50+	15.5	16.0	<b>15.8</b>	52.2	64.2	<b>58.2</b>	18.4	19.5	<b>19.0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Area</b>									
Urban	23.2	22.9	<b>23.0</b>	20.6	22.3	<b>21.5</b>	23.0	22.8	<b>22.9</b>
Rural	76.8	77.1	<b>77.0</b>	79.4	77.7	<b>78.5</b>	77.0	77.2	<b>77.1</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Region</b>									
Tongatapu Urban	23.2	22.9	<b>23.0</b>	20.6	22.3	<b>21.5</b>	23.0	22.8	<b>22.9</b>
Tongatapu Rural	51.6	51.7	<b>51.6</b>	48.4	45.3	<b>46.9</b>	51.3	51.2	<b>51.2</b>
Vava'u	13.3	13.8	<b>13.6</b>	13.9	13.1	<b>13.5</b>	13.4	13.8	<b>13.6</b>
Ha'apai	5.7	5.7	<b>5.7</b>	10.7	11.0	<b>10.9</b>	6.1	6.1	<b>6.1</b>
'Eua	4.9	4.7	<b>4.8</b>	5.5	7.7	<b>6.6</b>	5.0	4.9	<b>4.9</b>
Ongo Niua	1.2	1.2	<b>1.2</b>	0.8	0.6	<b>0.7</b>	1.2	1.2	<b>1.2</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 5 shows those currently attending school in single years from 3 to 24 years, and it is interesting to note that school attendance for children with disability aged 3-11 is higher than those without disabilities, although rates for all children are low, possibly because the survey was conducted during the school holidays when children were not attending school. However, the general trend is that as age increases the proportion of those with disability, their attendance at schools decreases. The MET has the only dedicated Inclusive Education class in Nuku'alofa of 21 students who receive customized learning plans.

### 2.3 Preparedness - Tonga's Trial Days of Home Learning

Tonga has engaged in a project that is unique in the region – to implement two trial 'learn at home' days to prepare children, teachers and care givers for the possibility of children being unable to attend school and having to learn at home. The First Trial day was implemented June 30<sup>th</sup> and the feedback from it informed the design of learning activities for the Second Trial, which was held on September 8<sup>th</sup>,

The trial days were a central component of the GOT COVID-19 Education Planning, Preparedness and Response Framework (EPPRF)<sup>9</sup> (Phase 1, Preparedness and Prevention) in which national lockdown procedures have been trialed, in this case for the education sector. The aim of the 'learn at home' days was to prepare for learning continuity when schools are closed, and to familiarize children, teachers and care givers with the possible approaches that can be taken in times of social dislocation. While the immediate impetus for these trials was to prepare for school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the learnings from the Trial Days were also found to be a sound investment for future responses to natural hazards such as cyclones, given Tonga is cyclone prone between November and March.

The 'learn at home' trial was led by MET and supported by LEG, UNICEF and Inclusive Education. The latter is a social venture of Save the Children, and the trial was made possible through the financial support from the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) Catalytic Fund. Parents and care givers were provided with a daily schedule of learning for children in each

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.gov.to/press-release/tongas-covid-19-education-planning-preparedness-and-response-framework/>

year level to follow. This was distributed in print form and downloadable from the MET web site, and some lessons were delivered through radio and TV broadcasts. A dedicated free-call phone number was made available for parents to address concerns, and a comprehensive evaluation was carried out. The success of the Trial Days was reflected in the evaluations; a draft report is currently available from the MET.

Key findings of the First Trial Day identified the need for:

- a multimodal approach to education delivery in lockdown;
- additional audio and video educational resources to be developed;
- provision of relevant information and support for parents and care givers who would be teachers during lockdown; and
- capacity development for teachers to be able to deliver teaching and foster learning effectively to remotely located children using a range of technologies.

The second Trial Day was conducted on September 8<sup>th</sup> and while a complete evaluation has not been conducted, initial feedback indicates that the approach taken by the MET is supported by parents. The findings from the first Trial Day have been confirmed. In response to the question “I was able to easily follow the instructions and activities devised by the Ministry and my Teacher for my learning at home” over 55% either agreed or strongly agreed while over 57% of parents agreed or strongly agreed that “My child really enjoyed their learning at home”. There was also support for the range of delivery options proposed in this submission (print, radio, TV, online with SMS and telephone support) being combined appropriately. It has been noted that some of the most enthusiastic users of the online resources were located on outer islands, counter to some expectations.

This submission responds to these findings and the GOT is strongly in support of the teaching and learning approaches which have been devised and tested during the Trial Days.

## 3.0 COVID-19 Tonga Accelerated Resilience Response Program

### 3.1 Summary

Program name	COVID-19 Tonga Accelerated Resilience Program
Implementing agency	MET
Grant agent	Save the Children
Duration	14 months
Start date	1 November 2020
End date	31 December 2021
Value	US\$ 749,982 (TOP 1.7m)

### 3.2 Background and Consultations

At the time of writing, Tonga has been spared a COVID-19 outbreak due to the rapid closure of its air links and its geographic isolation. In preparation for an outbreak and the closure of schools, the MET has conducted two 'Trial Days' where schools were closed, and school children were supported through home schooling. The Trial Days have been evaluated and have provided invaluable information from all stakeholders in the Tonga education system to guide a full response to COVID-19, should it arrive in Tonga. This GPE application for accelerated funding responds to the needs identified in the Trial Days for better mitigation of the risk of future school closures.

COVID-19 has the potential to have a devastating impact on an isolated location such as Tonga. Should the virus enter the country, strong measures to ensure safety would be required. Schooling may have to stop on some (or all) islands, and children may need to stay home for some time. Learning continuity in this context would require innovative strategies. In this new reality marked by uncertainty, children may be more vulnerable due to school closures, lockdowns and other stressors.

MET has developed and published Tonga's COVID-19 Education Planning, Preparedness and Response Framework (EPPRF) and convened a COVID-19 Technical Working Group to coordinate the strategies in the plan. The plan is aligned with Tonga's National COVID-19 Action Plan<sup>10</sup> and has two priority outcomes:

**Outcome 1** - The physical and emotional health of learners and teachers across all education levels is supported through safe learning environments

**Outcome 2** - The education system is more resilient, and all students have access to continuing educational opportunities

After consultation with the EC and in consideration of the findings of the Trial Days, MET has been proactive in responding to the two priority outcomes. Outcome 1 can be addressed internally by MET, given the focus to the development of the outputs from Outcome 2 of the EPPRF for the GPE COVID-19 accelerated funding window. These outputs are as follows:

Output 2.1 Home-schooling guides for ECE, IE, Primary and Secondary students are developed

Output 2.2 Audio lessons for ECE, IE and primary students and video lessons for secondary students are produced to complement home-schooling packages

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<sup>10</sup> TONGA's National Action Plan for COVID-19 was developed by Tonga's National Emergency Management Committee and the National Task Force for Covid-19

- Output 2.3     Develop home-based learning and support guidance and modality for parents
- Output 2.4     Develop teachers' capacity so they are effective in using new modes of distance/flexible learning
- Output 2.5     Update / develop MET policies and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) on preparedness, response, disaster risk reduction, and resilience building

These outputs are in line with the National Education in Emergencies Policy goal 1: *To be better prepared for and to respond and recover after an emergency* and form part of the Tonga Strengthen Disaster Risk Reduction Management program. MET aims to strengthen system resilience and speed of response to a future COVID-19 outbreak (or other disaster).

The selected outputs and activities were endorsed and developed into a Concept Note which was reviewed by the EC and refined by MET, finalized and endorsed by the EC on (9<sup>th</sup> April 2020). MET has selected Save the Children as the accredited grant agent and this decision and this program were endorsed by the LEG on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

### 3.3 Objective, Outcome and Outputs

The program implements key mitigation and resilience activities in Outcome 2 of the Response Framework for the Tonga education systems.

*Table 6 COVID-19 Program Goal, Outcome and Outputs*

<b>Tonga Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Program / Policy Goal</b>	
Schools are better prepared to face climate change and natural disasters	
<b>COVID-19 Education Planning, Preparedness and Response Framework (EPPRF)</b>	
<b>Outcome 2</b> - The education system is more resilient, and all students have access to continuing educational opportunities	
Output 2.1 <sup>11</sup>	Home-schooling guides for ECE, IE, Primary and Secondary students are developed
Output 2.2	Audio lessons for ECE and primary students and video lessons for secondary students are produced to complement home-schooling packages
Output 2.3	Develop home-based learning and support guidance and modality for parents
Output 2.4	Develop teachers' capacity so they are effective in using new modes of distance learning
Output 2.5	Update/develop MET policies and standard operating procedures (SOPs) on preparedness, response, disaster risk reduction, and resilience building

### 3.4 Program Beneficiaries

The program will be national in scope.

Under Output 2.1, the grant will provide guides to families in the form of daily schedules for children's learning activities, in print and downloadable form. The schedules will provide

<sup>11</sup> These outputs address outputs 2.1 – 2.5 in the COVID-19 Education Planning, Preparedness and Response Framework (EPPRF)

consolidated daily plans and direct children and parents when and how to use print and other resources from schools in addition to radio, TV and online home-schooling lessons. The comprehensive guides will be available for emergency response in all five regions for all of the government and community school student population<sup>12</sup>: Additional copies will be made available from schools and downloadable from the MET web site.

- 2066 ECE and IE students (48 percent female) at up to 120 ECE centres
- 17093 primary students (48 percent female) at up to 132 primary schools
- 2185 secondary students in Forms 1 and 2 (47% female) at up to 54 schools

Under Output 2.2, the radio and TV broadcasts will be delivered and recorded for later use via online streaming or download. These broadcasts and recordings could reach an estimated 50 percent of ECE, primary and secondary (up to Form 2) students in all five regions (including recipients of learning materials from schools):

- 1033 ECE students (48 percent female)
- 8547 primary students (48 percent female)
- 1092 secondary students in Forms 1 and 2 (47% female)

Students at private schools and ECE centres would also be able to receive and use radio and TV lessons, extending the reach of the output.

Under Output 2.3, an estimated 200 families will receive the guide in hardcopy to prepare them for lockdown.

Under Output 2.4, the grant will provide training for approximately 80 teachers (60 percent female) at 60 schools with those 80 providing mentoring for an additional 240 teachers.

Under Output 2.5, the grant will capitalise on the learnings from the other outputs by embedding new practices in policy to ensure lessons learned are implemented long term. Up to 20 schools will have reviewed their policies and practices.

In total, up to 2066 ECE and IE students (if the home-learning materials are used) and 14063 primary students will benefit from the grant<sup>13</sup>.

### 3.5 Vulnerable Populations

MET is sensitive to how home schooling may exacerbate inequity and disadvantage. For example, children from poorer families may be helping with subsistence agriculture, have less access to basic stationery or technology or lack a suitable place for children to work. To mitigate this, home-schooling materials will need to be developed in different media (physical, radio, TV and SMS for interactive feedback). Guidance for parents needs to take into account literacy levels and the likely circumstances in a wide range of homes, including those living in rural areas.

The home-schooling packages, broadcasts and guides will be developed initially in Tongan for ECE and primary schools, except for English as a subject of study. For secondary schools these will be developed in English, except for the subject of Tongan Studies which will be developed in Tongan. As children with disabilities are particularly vulnerable, Tonga's existing provision for these children will be supported with customized learning packages, as was

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<sup>12</sup> Private schools and ECE centres are excluded from GPE funding.

<sup>13</sup> Annual Statistical Digest, 2014. Tonga Ministry of Education.

trialed on Trial Day 2. This may include the provision of adaptive technologies (e.g. screen readers) if appropriate.

### 3.6 Results Chain

The *key problem* during the COVID-19 pandemic will be the impact of school closures for social distancing on children's learning. The *root causes* for this problem will be the abrupt school closures and the lack of appropriate standardised inclusive home-schooling materials, teachers untrained in distance/flexible learning including student support and broadcasting lessons, and lack of guidance to parents and caregivers.

*Assuming* that home learning will sustain learning outcomes (or reduce loss of learning) and that caregivers – if supported – are willing and able to provide a safe, supportive and conducive learning environment in the event of school closures, the rapid provision of home-schooling resources in a range of modalities coupled with guidance to caregivers and training for teachers will be necessary. These materials will need to be standardised across Tonga, made appropriate for the children and families by their teachers, aligned to the national curriculum, inclusive, and simple to use.

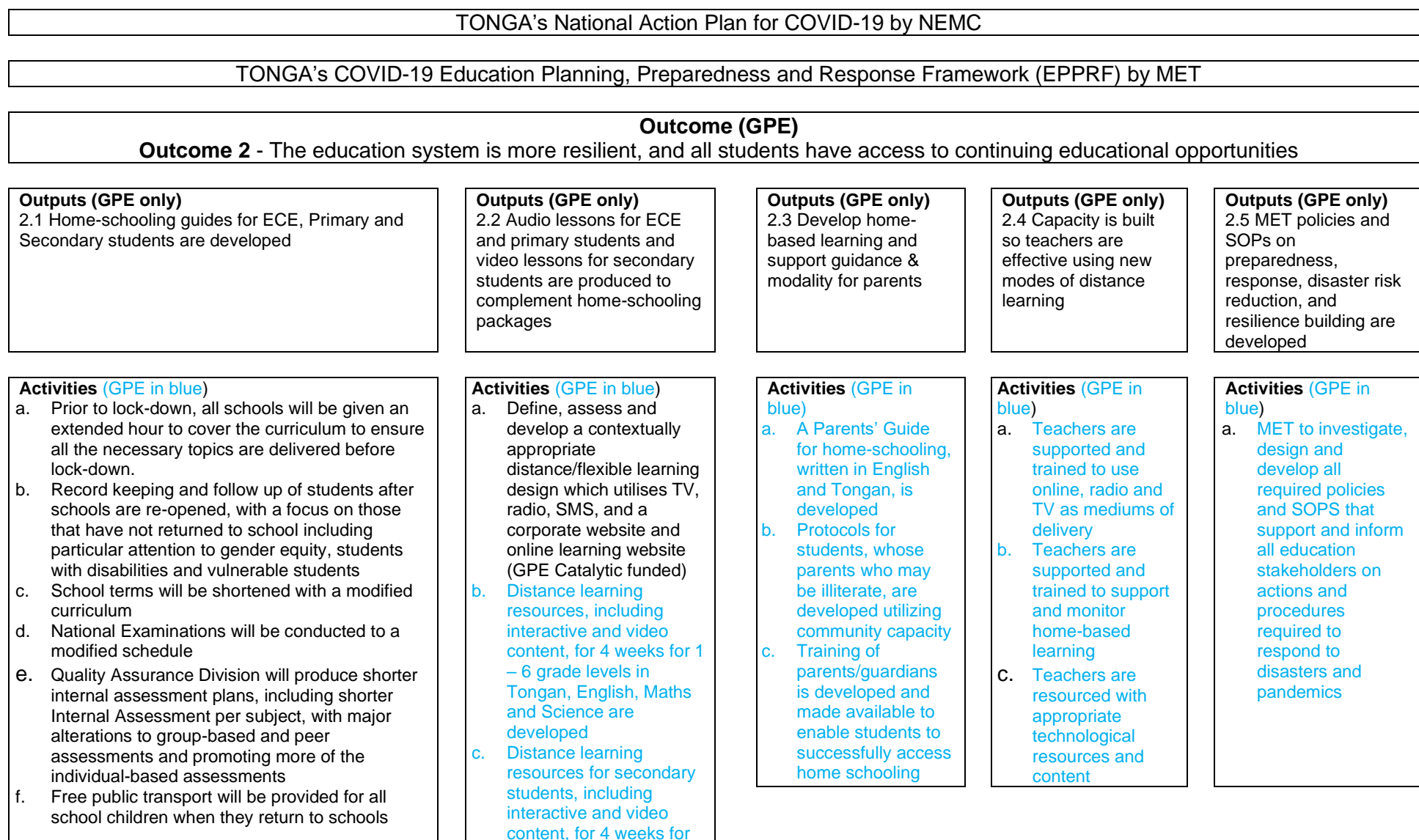
To establish this mechanism to respond, mitigate and rapidly recover from a COVID-19 outbreak, MET and its school systems have learnt a great deal from the two Trial Days that were implemented. The learnings from these days have fed into the design of a series of *activities* in the response plan as follows:

- a) The development of home-schooling guides for each year level (i.e. ECE, primary, secondary to Form 2) which will cover print resources from schools complemented by lessons broadcast by radio for ECE and primary, and by television for secondary.
- b) The print and broadcast resources above will be supplemented by online resources allowing the radio and television programs to continue to be accessed on demand via downloads or streaming.
- c) An essential element is providing simple guidance to parents and caregivers to complement the lessons, some samples of which were prepared during the Trial Days. All these materials (a – c) will need pre-testing, production and hosting for quick access during school closures. This process has been well tested and evaluated in the Trial Days.
- d) Comprehensive training will be provided to teachers to allow them to continue to engage socially with their children while they cannot attend school. Education in Tonga relies heavily on strong relationships between teachers and pupils and parents. This social context is essential to maintain social connection and increase the likelihood of children returning to school when they re-open.
- e) Learnings from these changes will be embedded in policy and practice through review of national policies and SOPs for responses to emergencies, such as pandemics and cyclones. This will greatly increase the sustainability of the outcomes of the project.

If children and caregivers have rapid access to inclusive home-schooling materials, broadcasts and guidance, they are more likely to be able to continue to learn at home during school closure, reducing learning loss and being better prepared to return to school once the emergency is over.



Figure 3 COVID-19 Results Chain



- g. Tuition fees for all secondary children will be paid by the Government, but scholarship students exempted
- h. Tongan scholars who are on scholarships overseas and are studying in higher education will be paid an extra stipend to help with their living expenses while studying overseas
- i. Paper-based learning guides for ECE, primary and secondary school students will be made available and sent home with the students
- j. Higher education courses will be delivered online through Moodle. Access by students were made through their IDs and use of their own purchased WI-FI data
- k. Additional learning support will be given to students when they return to school after lockdown
- l. Minor school repairs will be carried out

- subjects in each year level
- d. An ECE pre-school curriculum teaching/resource kit based on PEARL for parents and ECE pre-school teachers is developed
- e. Distance learning resources are developed which cater for children in remote islands, children with disabilities and vulnerable

**Key Problem**

Children’s learning outcomes could suffer during school closure, leading to long-term impacts on learning, grade repetition and completion

**Root Causes**

Schools may close suddenly  
 During school closures, MET does not have materials for home learning  
 Teachers lack skills in supporting children learning from home  
 Parents and care givers do not feel supported to enable them to supervise home learning  
 Schools do not have infrastructure to provide learning resources for home learning and require central support from MET

**Assumptions**

Home learning will sustain or improve children’s learning  
 Caregivers are able to prioritize and support home learning if they have clear instructions and support  
 The children’s home environments are conducive to home learning with access to appropriate technologies  
 MET is able to produce age-appropriate and inclusive home-schooling broadcasts and materials  
 Schools can effectively support their teachers to deliver instruction to children learning at home

### 3.7 Activities

Output 2.1 Home-schooling guides for ECE, Primary and Secondary students are developed.

Budget	US\$32,843 (TOP74,553)	
Responsible MET officers	Seilose Fifita Ponepate Taunisila Soana Kaitapu Matelita Taufa Mele'ana Puloka	Primary Schools Secondary Schools Early Childhood Ed Inclusive Ed TNCDES
Lead MET division	Curriculum Development Division	
Location	Nuku'alofa	

#### *Activities*

Output 2.1 will fund the development and printing of guides for ECE, primary and high school (up to Form 2) students and parents. The guides will contain daily schedules of lessons and activities. The resources for the lessons, directly designed for the Tonga curriculum, will cater for at least four weeks of activities are either already available from schools or being developed by MET with support from UNICEF and EC partners to ensure continuity of learning in the event of further extended school closures caused by COVID-19 or other emergencies. The lessons - in two languages - will be trialed in areas where schools are closed and are expected to be available for approval and production by December 2020.

Guides to four weeks of activities will be produced in hardcopy and downloadable form for all levels from ECE to Form 2. The guides will inform parents what resources their children need and what they should be doing throughout the day.

GPE accelerated financing will be used to adapt the lessons for children with disabilities (e.g. transcripts and audio versions). The GPE funding will also pay for one monitoring visit to the provinces to ensure delivery of the guides. SCA will support MET to provide orientation with principals and provincial education officers remotely. In the event of school closures, the pre-prepared lessons will be used immediately. This process has been well tested on the two Trial Days.

#### *Complementarity*

The standardised home-schooling lessons will be aligned with the existing national curriculum. MET will be supported in the development of the packages by a SCA technical adviser funded by initial GPE COVID-19 funding working closely with the Curriculum Development Unit (CDU) and the Professional Development Unit. The consultant will also support the development of a strategy to monitor and assess the effectiveness of the home-schooling packages. Save the Children and other EC members will provide technical input, particularly in ECE, social and emotional learning, inclusion and early grade literacy and numeracy. Development of the home-schooling guidelines for teachers will be conducted by MET with support from SCA. Teachers will be informed of the lessons made available in Output 2.2 and receive training in their best use in Output 2.4.

#### *Modality*

Procurement and distribution of the home-schooling guides will be managed by the MET's CEO's Office using GOT procurement and distribution systems. They will be delivered in

person via schools and also be downloadable. Helpdesk support will be provided by a free-call number, as has been successfully tested in the Trial Days.

### *Risks and Mitigation*

To reduce fiduciary risks involved in the procurement, Save the Children will embed a short-term Procurement Specialist within MET.

Output 2.2 Audio lessons for ECE and primary students and video lessons for secondary students are produced to complement home-schooling packages

Budget	US\$350,251 (TOP795,070)	
Responsible MET officers	Seilose Fifita	Primary Schools
	Ponepate Taunisila	Secondary Schools
	Soana Kaitapu	Early Childhood Ed
	Matelita Taufu	Inclusive Ed
	Mele'ana Puloka	TNCDES
Lead MET division	Curriculum Development Unit	
Location	Nuku'alofa	

### *Activities*

Output 2 will finance the production of radio lessons and SMS advice for parents for the ECE and primary to accompany home-schooling packages. These lessons will be in English and Tongan and promote safe, inclusive and effective home learning practices aligned with international guidance, best practice and the local culture and context. Video lessons will also be produced for secondary students. Broadcasts will be designed to quickly adapt to changing response messaging but will emphasize inclusion, psycho-social support (PSS) and child protection. International and local best practice in radio<sup>14</sup> lessons and SMS feedback<sup>15</sup> will be fundamental in the development process (for example, Interactive Radio Instruction). A total of 20 lessons will be produced for each package.

GPE accelerated financing will pay for the pre-testing (probably with families who were involved directly in the Trial Days), review, finalization and approval of these broadcasts. These will be uploaded to the MET website and delivered by a specialist learning platform for secure, reliable and rapid use in future emergencies. Each package of radio and video lessons will be made available for download and streaming via a dedicated Content Delivery Network (CDN) with localized services to minimize cost and bandwidth limitations<sup>16</sup>.

### *Complementarity*

This activity will be delivered by MET in collaboration with SCA to ensure strong complementarity with the packages and national learning outcome targets. The new broadcasts will complement the support, information and communication materials currently provided by the MET via its web site. Orientation to teachers and education officers in the new broadcast capability will be conducted by distance mode supported by SCA.

### *Modality*

MET will lead the development of the radio and television broadcast scripts for lessons and SMS content for interaction based on the standardised home-schooling packages described in Output 2.1 and guidance for parents in Output 2.3. Delivery arrangements for the broadcasts will be negotiated by MET with local carriers as has been done on the two Trial Days. The MET will be supported by a short-term Save the Children Education Specialist who will provide technical support and guidance. Recording of the radio scripts will be sub-overlaid to the national radio station and broadcast in the two National languages. An equal number of male

<sup>14</sup> For example, the [Education Development Center](#).

<sup>15</sup> For example, the [EdTech Hub](#).

<sup>16</sup> <https://knowledge.kaltura.com/help/enterprise-content-delivery-network-ecd-overview>

and female actors/presenters will be used and all scripts will be checked for inclusivity, positive messages and cultural appropriateness before recording.

Trial of the scripts will be conducted by MET supported by a short term Save the Children Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) Specialist using a caregiver survey and easy-to-administer child learning assessment. The trial will include families of children with disabilities as was done on Trial Day 2.

#### *Risks and Mitigation*

To reduce the risk of the broadcasts not being available during a crisis, the program will take care to ensure digital audio files are stored securely on multiple offsite redundant hosting servers and widely available.

Output 2.3 Develop home-based learning and support guidance & modality for parents.

Budget	US\$19,863 (TOP45,088) <sup>17</sup>	
Responsible MET officer	Tangikina Steen	Office of the CEO
	Mele'ana Puloka	TNCDES
Lead MET division	Office of the CEO	
Location	Nuku'alofa	

### *Activities*

Output 2.3 will finance the development, testing and printing of Home School Guidelines for Parents and Guardians. The guidelines will be produced for the parents of ECE students, the parents of primary students and the parents of secondary students, to reflect the different learning needs of their children and acknowledging that parents may have children in more than one sector. The short Guidelines will be designed for a low literacy environment and will include concise, contextually and culturally relevant messages to caregivers on how to enable and support effective home-schooling (and play) for children, including those with disabilities (for example, as a poster). The Guidelines will be aligned (and refer to) the packages and broadcasts developed in Output 2.1 and 2.2. Broadcasts would, for example, include the same messages as the guidance to caregivers.

GPE accelerated financing will pay for the pre-testing (possibly with families already familiar through the Trial Days), review, finalization and approval of the Guidelines. These will be uploaded to the MET website, printed and distributed to parents through schools, maintaining parents' links with their child's school. The distribution and secure storage will be funded under Output 2.1.

### *Complementarity*

Guidelines will be based on the latest international guidelines on home learning adapted for the Tonga context.<sup>18</sup> Best practice examples from other similar countries will be used during the development process. Key messages will reinforce ECE and parenting programs from the churches, Save the Children, UNICEF and others. The home-schooling guidelines for parents and caregivers will be complementing the development of guidelines for teachers on the use of the standardized home-learning package, led by MET with support from SCA.

### *Modality*

MET will lead the development of the Guidelines supported by a Save the Children Education Specialist who will provide technical assistance and guidance. The pilot testing of the Guidelines will be conducted at the same time as the broadcasts to reduce evaluation costs. Delivery will follow the same process as Output 2.1 overseen by a short-term Procurement and Compliance Specialist embedded in the MET.

### *Risks and Mitigation*

The risk of rejection of the guidance by parents is seen to be low due to the success of the two Trial Days, however, care will be taken to field test and iterate messages with a diverse range of caregivers and stakeholders (Output 2.2 field testing). MET will pay particular attention to using inclusive and diverse images and ensure the language level is appropriate

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<sup>17</sup> Some costs for this output are included in other outputs – see section 3.15

<sup>18</sup> For example, <https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse/solutions>

for the audience. Save the Children will provide specialist review from their inclusion and child protection teams.



Output 2.4 Capacity is built so teachers are effective using new modes of distance learning

Budget	US\$192,496 (TOP436,965)	
Responsible MET officers	Liuaki Fusitu'a	Inst. Of Education
	Isikeli Oko	Quality Assurance
	Sela Tapa'atoutai	Professional Dev
	Tangikina Steen	Office of the CEO
	Mele'ana Puloka	TNCDES
Lead MET Unit	Professional Development Unit	
Location	Nuku'alofa	

### *Activities*

Output 2.4 will finance the development of capacity in teachers to create and deliver lessons using distance/flexible education methods. The training will include both IT skills for media development as well as pedagogy development. Teachers will learn how to develop learning resources that can be used for remote instruction during emergencies while maintaining communication with families. Training will be provided by Education specialists expert in flexible delivery methodologies for teachers. Local support in training sessions as well as ongoing coaching will be provided by the Professional Development Unit of the MET. This training and ongoing coaching will allow teachers to maintain connection with their pupils, and to develop skills in supporting children's learning while not attending school. In this intervention, 80 teachers will be provided laptops to build online content for sharing with their own classes as an initial catalyst. They will then become Ambassadors and engage with their peer teachers to share their expertise. In this way local Ministry staff and teachers will be trained on the use of appropriate designs and pedagogy for distance/flexible resources and teaching methods. Teachers will then be able to develop appropriate online learning materials and content in line with Tonga's curriculum. The development of teachers' capability is a key sustainability strategy.

### *Complementarity*

The implementation of these activities will support the successful implementation of activities in outputs 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3. Teachers in locations close to children's communities, with existing connections with children from their school, are best placed to support learning at home. Teachers are best placed to interpret learning guidance for students and will be able to respond to local issues by providing supplemental guidance in addition to the centralized instruction in output 2.2. This includes support for care givers in output 2.3. Teachers are also best placed to communicate with children, via telephone, sms or online methods. The teacher development program will build explicit skills in these tools.

### *Modality*

MET will use existing school sites in which teachers can access online training while maintaining social distancing requirements with children at home. This will allow teachers to be effectively supported by MET staff and ensure their training is delivered effectively. Teachers' access to technology through the provided laptops is central to this mechanism.

### *Risks and Mitigation*

The MET will manage the procurement and rollout of the technology with support from the Save the Children short-term Procurement Specialist embedded within the MET. Training will

be led by Save the Children education experts with local support from staff of the Professional Development Unit of the MET who are experienced in conducting teacher training in Tonga.

Output 2.5 MET policies and SOPs on preparedness, response, disaster risk reduction, and resilience building are developed

Budget	US\$11,029 (TOP25,035)	
Responsible MET officer	Saipalesi Unu	Primary Schools
	Ponepate Taunisila	Secondary Schools
	Isikeli Oko	QA and DRR
	Manu 'Akau'ola	Finance and DRR
Lead MET division	Quality Assurance Division	
Location	Nuku'alofa	

### *Activities*

Output 2.5 will finance the review and revision of MET policies and SOPs on preparedness, response, disaster risk reduction, and resilience building through a series of consultation meetings with experts from the Pacific Education Cluster and the Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience in the Education Sector, accessed through SCA, to raise awareness of effective disaster risk reduction strategies in the education sector, share best practice and provide template documents for a process of supported localization to Tonga. In addition, a program of public awareness messaging on wide range of hazards, and more generally for COVID-19 preparedness, home schooling, family safety and resilience will be developed by the MET with this support.

### *Complementarity*

This activity supports the long-term sustainable change in the MET and its schools provided by the other outputs. By ensuring the review of policies and SOPs on preparedness, response, disaster risk reduction, and resilience building, MET will be better equipped for emergencies such as pandemics in the future.

### *Modality*

Much of this output will be delivered remotely through expert consultations, with local meetings and activities coordinated by the MET as social distancing protocols will allow.

### *Risks and Mitigation*

This is a small component, with minimal financial risks. The modality proposed has been used many times with success. Support from MET officers to attend act upon consultations will be ensured.

### 3.8 Budget

Please refer to Tonga COVID-19 budget for further details.

Table 7 COVID-19 Budget Summary

<b>Outcome 2 - The education system is more resilient and all students have access to continuing educational opportunities</b>		<b>TOP\$<sup>19</sup></b>	<b>USD</b>
Output 2.1	Home-schooling guides for ECE, Primary and Secondary students are developed	74,553	32,843
Output 2.2	Audio lessons for ECE and primary students and video lessons for secondary students are produced to complement home-schooling packages	795,070	350,251
Output 2.3	Develop home-based learning and support guidance & modality for parents	45,088	19,863
Output 2.4	Develop teachers' capacity so they are effective in using new modes of distance learning	436,965	192,496
Output 2.5	Update/develop MET policies and standard operating procedures (SOPs) on preparedness, response, disaster risk reduction, and resilience building	25,035	11,029
<b>Program management and quality</b>			
PMU, operational costs, audit and Grant Agent support costs		324,747	143,501
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>1,701,459</b>	<b>749,982</b>
Agency fee (7%)		119,172	52,499

### 3.9 Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning from Evidence

#### *Responsibility*

The MET will be responsible for monitoring the program supported by an embedded Save the Children MEAL Specialist. MET and the MEAL Specialist will prepare a program MEAL Plan immediately following program effectiveness.

#### *GPE Monitoring and Evaluation Guidance*

The program will collect and report on relevant core GPE indicators and follow standardized program reporting as described in the GPE M&E Guidance for COVID-19 Accelerated Funding Grants.

#### *Monitoring*

The key monitoring activities to measure output-level targets will be:

1. Activity reports (e.g. meeting minutes, workshop reports, technical review reports);
2. Distribution reports (e.g. number of materials procured, shipped or distributed, number of broadcasts uploaded, downloads);

<sup>19</sup> Exchange rate of 2.27 TOP to 1 US\$.

3. Supervisory reports (e.g. reports of training sessions, verification of new policy); and
4. Attendance records (e.g. number of students who return to schools once reopened).

In the event of school closures in a particular region which trigger distribution of the guides and broadcast of lessons, additional monitoring activities will be required:

5. Audience surveys (e.g. caregiver survey).

The program will develop and use a set of standard monitoring tools and maintain an intermediate beneficiary database to track involvement of MET officers and stakeholder staff.

### *Evaluation*

A *Learning from Evidence Plan* will be produced before program effectiveness as a part of the program's MEAL Plan. MET is committed to sharing learning across the LEG members and all reports and knowledge products will be publicly available, including the two evaluation reports.

#### *a) Learning and adaptation*

COVID-19 is a fast-moving pandemic where adaptation and rapid response may both be necessary to ensure continuity of learning. In line with GPE guidance, the grant will have two MEAL Plan evaluation and learning objectives:

1. Learn continually from evidence and apply that learning effectively to enhance program effectiveness; and
2. Generate knowledge and evidence on the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of grants.

The Grant Agent and PMU will support MET to efficiently collect evidence, make recommendations, coordinate with other development partners and iterate the program implementation. There will be a monthly learning meeting to course-correct and key learning will be summarized and reported to the EC. The program will utilize the GPE guidance questions for relevance, effectiveness and efficiency. Learning will be summarized in a final evaluation and learning report and disseminated to local stakeholders via the LEG.

#### *b) Evaluation of draft materials*

MET, supported by Save the Children, has already conducted two Trial Days where materials were tested and delivery processes evaluated. MET will conduct one in-project evaluation to trial the draft home-schooling broadcasts and guidelines for caregivers. The trial of the new materials will generate learning in the usage and effectiveness of the draft home-schooling broadcasts and caregiver guidance in the event of further school closures.

The trial of draft materials will involve supplying home-school lessons and guidelines to a sample of families in locations where schools are closed and conducting four weeks of radio, TV broadcasts with SMS support. The impact and usage of the materials will be measured through i) caregiver knowledge, attitudes and practices survey, ii) child learning assessment and iii) teacher evaluations. The key evaluation questions will be:

- How frequently were the materials used?
- What was the impact of the materials on children's learning, including children with disabilities?
- What was the impact of the materials on caregiver's knowledge, skills and attitudes, including caregivers of children with disabilities?

- What were the key external factors in the success (or otherwise) of the materials?
- How can the materials be improved?

### *Reporting*

The embedded MEAL Specialist will support MET to complete bi-monthly survey reports as per the GPE COVID-19 Accelerated Funding Guidelines. The program will produce Quarterly Reports summarizing outputs and implementation progress for the Senior Management Team (SMT), EC and LEG. The implementation completion report will use the standard GPE [template](#).

### 3.10 Results Framework

The results framework includes relevant core GPE indicators for COVID-19 accelerated funding.

Table 8 COVID-19 Results Framework

Outcome/output	Indicator	Baseline	Target (31 December 2021)	Means of verification
Output 2.1 Home-schooling guides for ECE, Primary and Secondary students are developed	Number and % of children supported with inclusive home-based learning programs by location, age-group, disability and sex <sup>20</sup>	0 (0%)	If radio, TV lessons and SMS are used in conjunction with existing school materials: <sup>21</sup>  ECE: 2066 (997 female) Primary: 17093 (8148 female) Secondary Form 1 and 2: 2185 (1024 female) <b>Total:</b> 21344 students (10169 female)	Distribution records Broadcast logs Server logs Caregiver survey
Output 2.2 Audio lessons for ECE and primary students and video lessons for secondary students are produced to complement home-schooling packages	Number of audio and video broadcast lessons produced (developed, pre-tested and approved)  Number of alternative materials distributed (disaggregated by type and accessibility <sup>22</sup> )	0 (0%)	Minimum 120, up to 400	Lesson catalogue
Output 2.3 Develop home-based learning and support guidance	Number of parents and caregivers reached through mechanisms to inform parents and community	0	200	Distribution records Server logs Caregiver survey

<sup>20</sup> GPE COVID Core Indicator 1.1 (Mitigation and response)

<sup>21</sup> Assumes children will have print materials from their school. In the event of no school closures, no data will be reported. Does not include students from private ECE centres or schools.

<sup>22</sup> For example, video, audio, transcripts

Outcome/output		Indicator	Baseline	Target (31 December 2021)	Means of verification
	& modality for parents	leaders of distance learning content and teaching methods disaggregated by age-group, sex and disability status of child <sup>23</sup>			
Output 2.4	Develop teachers' capacity so they are effective in using new modes of distance learning	Number and % of teachers trained in multimodal delivery for remote students (Disaggregated by gender, level of education taught, and geographical region <sup>24</sup> ) Number and % of teachers with new teaching competencies	0	80 Ambassador teachers Up to 240 other teachers supported by ambassadors	Ambassador teacher survey
Output 2.5	Update/develop MET policies and standard operating procedures (SOPs) on preparedness, response, disaster risk reduction, and resilience building	Number of schools with reviewed policies (disaggregated by level of education and region) <sup>25</sup>	0	20 schools with reviewed policies	Activity reports

<sup>23</sup> GPE COVID Indicator 1.11 (Mitigation and response)

<sup>24</sup> GPE COVID Core Indicator 1.13 (Recovery)

<sup>25</sup> GPE COVID Core Indicator 2.3 (Recovery)



### 3.11 Donor Coordination and Aid Effectiveness

The program has been designed by the MET in coordination with the LEG. The cost of trialing the proposed processes has been met by the GPE catalytic grant (US\$86,000).

In the event of school closure (including remote communities) the MET and education authorities will distribute learning materials to parents in the affected provinces. The GPE contribution will add rapid response learning materials in the form of radio and TV lessons, and ongoing learning support via downloadable and streamed versions in addition to telephone and SMS support for families. The GPE contribution will be complemented by contributions to parallel projects from other donors, as indicated in the table below. MET is coordinating these donor's contributions.

Table 9 Development partner contributions to COVID-19 Contingency Plan

Development partner	Contribution	Value (USD\$)
MFAT, NZ	Tonga Education Support Assistance	2.8 million over 3 years
MFAT, NZ	Certificate in Technical and Vocational Skills (CITVS)	
World Bank	Skills & Employment for Tongans (SET)	3.5 million over 3 years
MFAT, NZ	Tonga Skills	7.5 million over 3 years
Government of Australia	APTC	3 years in kind support
UNICEF	Disaster Risk and Reduction Training	50,392.00
UNICEF	ECE Curriculum	81,000.00

### 3.12 Implementation arrangements

#### *MET*

The overall responsibility for the grant is the CEO at MET reporting to the Hon Minister. The Senior staff group at MET through the Project Management Unit (PMU) will provide oversight of achievement of program activities.

Output 2.1 will be managed by the Curriculum Development Unit (CDU) supported by the Project Management Unit. Monitoring of distribution to secure school sites will be the responsibility of the CDU.

Output 2.2 will be managed by the CDU. Delivery arrangements will be supported by the MET ICT Division. The trial of the materials will be managed by CDU under the Education Services Unit

Output 2.3 will be managed by the Office of the CEO.

Output 2.4 will be managed by the Professional Development Unit who will be responsible for the selection and support of the Ambassador Teachers.

Output 2.5 will be managed by the Quality Assurance Division which will manage the policy development process.

### *MET COVID-19 Technical Working Group*

The MET COVID-19 Technical Working Group (TWG) will ensure effective implementation of the GPE activities as part of their overall responsibility to implement the Contingency Plan. This will include technical input on material design. The TWG is made up of:

- CEO, MET
- Curriculum Development Unit
- Quality Assurance Unit
- Professional Development Unit
- IT Unit

### *Program Management Unit (PMU)*

The Grant Agent will embed a small short-term PMU into MET to provide additional technical advice, compliance and fiduciary support due to the high demands on the Ministry during the COVID-19 emergency. PMU staff will be hired by Save the Children in consultation with MET, with Tongan locals preferred. The Program Manager will be accountable to both the Save the Children Director of Programs and the CEO, MET. The other short-term PMU staff will report to the Program Manager with technical supervisory lines to relevant function heads in MET and Save the Children.

The PMU staff will have nominated counterparts and a skills transfer mandate to increase sustainability including on-the-job training and technical advice. The PMU will support MET to develop and implement quarterly implementation plans and cash forecasts and ensure that activities, financial management and procurement are conducted efficiently. The PMU roles are:

- Program Manager (260 days)
- Procurement Specialist (70 days)
- Finance Specialist (130 days)
- MEAL Specialist (200 days)

Consistent with GPE grant management elsewhere, the PMU will be strengthened by one short-term Child Protection Specialist technical adviser (10 days), Disability Inclusion Specialist Adviser (5 days) and a full-time remote project manager in Save the Children Australia. Save the Children will provide oversight, performance management and technical support to MET as part of its Grant Agent role, including short-term specialist technical assistance for communications, child protection and health promotion through a Program Support Unit (PSU).

### *Local Education Group (LEG)*

In Tonga, the function of the LEG is carried out by the Tonga Council of Directors of Education Systems, the CEO of MET is a member. For this project an EC will be co-led by Save the Children and the MET. The EC will provide coordination, support and advice to the MET, particularly with regards to the EPPRF. The EC will approve any changes to modality caused by the rapidly changing situation. Program progress will be reported at least monthly to the EC by MET supported by the Grant Agent. The EC will respond to any further school closures. The membership of the EC is:

- Ministry of Education and Training
- Tonga National Council of Directors of Education Systems (LEG)
- Save the Children

- UNICEF
- Australian High Commission, DFAT
- New Zealand High Commission, MFAT

In the event the EC is deactivated, coordination, technical support and oversight of the grant will be provided by the LEG. The LEG will receive and give feedback on draft reports, approve any changes to program implementation or modalities and ensure coordination with other development partner activities. The GPE grant will be a standing agenda item. The LEG members are:

- Hon Minister, MET (Chair)
- CEO, MET (Alternate Chair)
- President of TCDES & President of Education, Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga (FWC), Siasi Uesiliana 'o Tonga
- Director of Education, Free Church of Tonga, Siasi Tau'atina 'o Tonga
- Director of Education, Roman Catholic Church, Siasi Katolika Loma
- Co-Director of Education, Ocean of Light International School
- Co-Director of Education, Acts Community School
- Director of Education, Anglican Church, Siasi 'Ingilani
- Director of Education, Seventh Day Adventist Church, Siasi 'Ahofitu
- Director of Education, Tokaikolo Christian Church, Siasi Tokaikolo 'ia Kalaisi
- Director of Education, Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints, Siasi 'o Sīsū Kalaisi 'o e Kau Mā'oni'oni 'I he Ngaahi 'Aho Kimui ni

#### *Save the Children UK and Save the Children Australia*

Save the Children Australia is anticipating receiving accreditation to act as a Grant Agent and hence to act as Grant Agent for this proposal. If this is not forthcoming in a timely fashion, Save the Children UK – a member of the Save the Children Alliance – holds an existing Financial Procedures Agreement with GPE and will be responsible for executing the agreement in relation to funding received for the program. Save the Children UK will subsequently enter into a member-to-member agreement with Save the Children Australia (SCA), that will define the responsibilities of each entity about financing and flow of funds; administration, reporting and compliance.

Inclusiv Education Pty Ltd is its nominated partner in this proposal. Inclusiv Education is a Social Venture of Save the Children with specialist expertise in Education Technology in developing countries. Inclusiv Education is 55% owned by Save the Children Australia. Inclusiv Education has a Memorandum of Understanding with the MET. Save the Children provides risk and financial management oversight, operational support and funding subsidies for work undertaken in Tonga.

The GOT will sign a Grant Agreement (or equivalent) with Save the Children Australia (SCA) which defines the responsibilities, scope of work, fiduciary and procurement arrangements and dispute mechanism. SCA's previous experience with GPE grants means that the arrangements described here will be ready for implementation immediately on project commencement.

#### *Disbursement*

Grant funds will be transferred to SCA's USD account as grant income. Funds will then be disbursed into the GOT Development Fund Account held with the Reserve Bank of Tonga in

the local currency. MET will request disbursement via a Disbursement Letter contingent on expenditure to date and the next activities in the implementation plan agreed with the Grant Agent and EC (or LEG).

#### *Financial Management*

Financial management will use GOT processes, templates and rules as described in Public Finance Management and Economic Act and relevant Ministry of Finance Financial Circulars. To mitigate risks, high value activities will require a No Objection from the Grant Agent before expenditure and a project transaction ledger will be maintained. A PSU Finance Specialist will be embedded to provide direct support. Income and expenses from the program will be managed through the GOT accounting system in the national Financial Management Information System. Program income and expenses will be reported in the national budget and quarterly budget reviews. The PSU will support monthly budget v actual expenditure reports and the Save the Children office will conduct spot-checks to reduce over or under-expenditure and risk of fraudulent activities.

#### *Procurement*

Procurement will use GOT processes, templates and rules. A Procurement and Compliance Specialist will be embedded in the MET to assist with large procurement activities (laptops and IT equipment).

#### *Audit*

The MET Internal Audit Unit will provide an audit report. A full program audit at the end of the program will be conducted by an external auditor hired by Save the Children. Audit reports and resulting action will be shared with the LEG.

#### *Program Implementation Manual (PIM)*

Detailed implementation arrangements will be described in the PIM. These will include financial management and procurement processes, flow charts, checklists and templates. The PIM will include the MEAL Plan and planning, budget and reporting templates. MET, supported by the PSU, is responsible for the writing and updating of the PIM.

### 3.13 Risks and mitigation

Tonga is considered to be one of the world's most vulnerable countries to natural hazards.<sup>26</sup> Annual losses from disasters is estimated at 14 percent of Gross Domestic Product.

Violence against women and girls is common; around half of Tonga women have experienced non-partner physical or sexual violence or both since they turned 15 (often from male family members).<sup>27</sup> Health outcomes for Tonga's people are further harmed by tropical infectious diseases, often caused by poor water and sanitation in rural areas. The country has very limited capacity to deal with large numbers of COVID-19 infections.

Finally, travel is difficult and arduous. Frequent bad weather affects sea travel and the country is prone to extreme weather leading to landslides.

To mitigate these risks, Save the Children adheres to a strict Security and Safety Policy and regularly reviews current and emerging risks in discussion with the GOT and LEG members.

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<sup>26</sup> [Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery.](#)

<sup>27</sup> <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/countries/fiji/co/tonga>

The PIM will contain a full risk matrix and mitigation strategies but the highest risks are summarized below:

Table 10 High Risks Matrix

Risk	Risk rating	Mitigation strategies	Risk rating after mitigation
<b>Safety and security</b>			
Major disaster in one or more target provinces resulting in suspension or restriction of activities and/or reprioritisation of resources/staff.	High	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Emergency Preparedness Plan in place.</li> <li>2. All program staff inducted in Plan.</li> <li>3. Pre-position equipment and medical supplies in vehicles and provincial offices.</li> </ol>	Moderate
Vehicle accident involving program staff, education staff or beneficiaries during program activity leading to injuries or loss of life.	High	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Safety and Security Management Plan in place.</li> <li>2. Safety and Security Manager in place and journey management plans for all activities</li> <li>3. First aid equipment, GPS trackers and life jackets and emergency beacons in all program vehicles and dinghies.</li> <li>4. All program staff inducted in Plan.</li> <li>5. Regular review of security situation in provinces.</li> </ol>	Moderate
COVID-19 outbreak leading to suspension of activities and travel and/or widespread unrest and/or illness.	High	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Emergency Preparedness Plan in place.</li> <li>2. All program staff inducted in Plan.</li> <li>3. Pre-position equipment and medical supplies in vehicles and provincial offices.</li> <li>4. Medical evacuation of sick staff.</li> </ol>	Moderate
Child protection or gender-based violence incident involving program or partner staff leading to harm to beneficiaries, conflict or reputational damage	High	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Child protection, gender equity and safe guarding questions during selection, and training for all program staff.</li> <li>2. Safeguarding plan and checklist for all workshops and activities.</li> <li>3. Child safeguarding policy and code of conduct.</li> <li>4. Complaints Response Mechanism operational.</li> <li>5. Program monitoring data and reporting disaggregated by sex and disability.</li> </ol>	Moderate
<b>Political, economic and governance</b>			

Risk	Risk rating	Mitigation strategies	Risk rating after mitigation
Change in leadership at GOT/MET leading to instability, change of priorities and lack of engagement.  Dispute over program activities or direction.	High	1. Participatory program design including MET, LEG and EC. 2. Embedded specialists. 3. Active TWT. 4. Strong success of and support for Trial Days methodology.	Moderate
<b>Operational and fiduciary</b>			
Difficulty recruiting key personnel or high turnover of personnel.  Lack of capacity in program and/or MET staff.  Overreliance on PMU.  Difficulty in managing project remotely	High	1. Robust recruitment process including technical assessments. 2. Competitive remuneration packages. 3. Performance-based contracts. 4. Professional development opportunities and targeted training. 5. Rapid capacity needs assessment and plan. 6. Skills transfer from embedded PMU and technical advisers. 7. Strong collaboration between MET and SCA built in GPE Catalytic funded project	Moderate
Fraud or theft of program materials	High	1. Use and strengthen GOT financial management and procurement processes. 2. Financial management and procurement assessment conducted during effectiveness/start up and regularly afterwards. 3. Regular audits and spot checks. 4. Monthly budget v actual expenditure reports. 5. Rigorous background checks on program staff. 6. Electronic transfer of funds where applicable.	Moderate

### 3.14 Safeguards

MET and Save the Children will put in place a range of safeguards for children and vulnerable adults. All data will be disaggregated by gender and, where applicable, by disability.

#### *Personnel*

All PSU staff and technical advisers will be vetted prior to recruitment, receive mandatory induction training in child protection and gender, and will sign the Save the Children Code of Conduct. All program staff and MET officers with access to schools and families (for example, during the evaluation of the draft materials) will abide by Tonga's Minimum Service Standards

for Schools<sup>28</sup>. All personnel involved in the program will receive training in safeguarding and child protection.

Travel risk assessments will always be conducted for program travel and mitigation protocols will be followed. Particular care will be taken for female staff or education officers travelling to isolated areas. Counselling, debriefing and support will be made available for any personnel involved in safety incidents. If necessary, Personal Protective Equipment will be provided for staff traveling during an outbreak.

Support from SCA includes on-demand technical assistance from Child Protection and Safeguarding and Gender Advisers.

### *Activities*

Workshops, meetings and visits outside of Nuku'alofa will have a risk assessment prior to implementation using an inclusion and safety checklist to ensure staff and beneficiaries are safe and healthy during travel and the activity. This may include an assessment of the security and weather situation, water and sanitation and consultation with provincial education officers, EC members and the police.

The checklist will include essential elements for inclusion and safety such as reducing the risk of sexual violence, provision of baby sitters, taking account different modes of transport, and ensuring the venue has adequate hygiene and sanitation.

### *Child Safeguarding*

Specific safeguarding activities include:

- Complaints' response mechanism overseen by the Country Director;
- Research ethical approval for materials trial;
- Anonymisation of data;
- Consent for photographs and video;
- Consent for data collection and student assessment;
- All program staff terms of reference will include safeguarding and gender responsibilities;
- Enumerators trained in safeguarding;
- Review of all materials and textbooks for gender and disability inclusion;
- Sufficient operational budget for safeguarding activities; and
- Coordination and reporting with EC and LEG members.

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<sup>28</sup> Tonga Ministry of Education, Minimum Service Standards for Schools

### 3.15 Implementation

<b>Outcome 2 - The education system is more resilient and all students have access to continuing educational opportunities</b>	<b>TOP</b>	<b>USD</b>	
Output 2.1 Students have adequate learning materials and access to learning opportunities	74,553	32,843	4%
Output 2.2 Develop distance/home-based learning content with various modes of delivery	795,070	350,251	47%
Output 2.3 Develop home-based learning and support guidance & modality for parents	45,088	19,863	2.6%
Output 2.4 Build teachers' capacity to be effective using new modes of distance learning	436,965	192,496	26%
Output 2.5 MET policies and SOPs on preparedness, response, disaster risk reduction, and resilience building are developed.	25,035	11,029	1%
<b>Program management and quality</b>			
PSU, operational costs, audit and Grant Agent support costs	325,747	143,501	19%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1,702,459</b>	<b>749,982</b>	
Agency fee (7%)	119,172	52,499	

Code	Activity	Description	Total (TOP\$)	Total (US\$)	Implementer	Location	Nov-20	Jan-21	Feb-21	Mar-21	Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21	Sep-21	Nov-21	Dec-21
<b>Outcome 2 - The education system is more resilient and all students have access to continuing educational opportunities</b>																
<b>Output 2.1 Home-schooling guides for ECE, Primary and Secondary students are developed</b>																
2.1.1	Adapt lessons for different abilities (video, audio, transcripts)	20 days TA in-country	16,000	7,048	MET	Nuku'alofa										
2.1.2	Social Inclusion and Safeguarding		9,453	4,164	SCA	Nuku'alofa										
2.1.3	Paper-based learning guides for families will be made available and sent home with the students		-	-		Schools										
2.1.4	ECE/IE lessons		800	352	MET	Nuku'alofa										
2.1.5	Primary lessons		800	352	MET	Nuku'alofa										
2.1.6	Secondary lessons		400	176	MET	Nuku'alofa										
2.1.7	Deliver guides to five regions		12,000	5,286	MET	National										
2.1.8	Orientation training for headteachers and provincial education officers		9,000	3,965	MET	National										
2.1.9	Monitoring visits to delivery sites	1 visit per region x 2 officers x 3 days	-	-												
		Flight	15,000	6,608	MET	National										



		Accommodation	7,500	3,304	MET	National												
		DSA	3,600	1,586	MET	National												
2.1.10	Upload HLPs to MET website and inform public by Facebook	Facebook advert			MET	National												
			<b>74,553</b>	<b>32,843</b>														
<b>Output 2.2 Audio lessons for ECE and primary students and video lessons for secondary students are produced to complement home-schooling packages</b>																		
2.2.1	PSU: Education Specialist	International technical adviser	12,517	5,514	SCA	Remote												
2.2.2	PSU: Education Technology Specialist	International technical adviser	88,000	38,767	SCA	Remote												
2.2.3	SCA: Child protection technical adviser	International technical adviser	12,517	5,514	SCA	Nuku'alofa												
2.2.4	EdTech online safety adviser	International technical adviser	2,200	969	SCA	Nuku'alofa												
2.2.5	Write radio broadcast	40 lessons x 3 HSPs x 1 days per lesson	40,800	17,974	MET	Nuku'alofa												
2.2.6	Write SMS support scripts	40 SMS x 3 HSPs x 0.2 days per lesson	8,160	3,595	MET	Nuku'alofa												
2.2.7	Write Video lessons	40 lessons x 3 HSPs x 1 days per lesson	40,800	17,974	MET	Nuku'alofa												
2.2.8	Translate and record radio and TV broadcasts	40 lessons x 3 HSPs x 0.5 days per lesson	20,400	8,987	MET	Nuku'alofa												
2.2.9	Pilot radio, SMS and Guidance (Output 2.3) in one region		-	-	MET	Nuku'alofa												
	Print	Guidance x 200 families	2,000	881	MET	Nuku'alofa												
	Distribute	10% of printing	34	15	MET	region												
2.2.10	Broadcast and stream radio and TV lessons	20 lessons (one month)	6,800	2,996	MET	region												
2.2.11	Text SMS support messaging	4 weeks of lessons	2,000	881	MET	region												
2.2.12	Integrated mobile text messaging & learning platform project cost	project duration	179,095	78,897	SCA	Nuku'alofa												
2.2.13	Technology support services Project cost	project duration hosting and backup	112,933	49,750	SCA	National												
2.2.14	Video distribution platform 1 year	project duration	221,964	97,782	SCA	Nuku'alofa												
2.2.15	Travel to region (baseline and endline KAP caregiver survey)	Flight	6,000	2,643	MET	region												
2.2.16	One week training, one week baseline, one week endline	Accommodation	26,250	11,564	MET	region												
		DSA	12,600	5,551	MET	region												
2.2.17	Upload radio and SMS HLPs to MET website and inform public by Facebook	Funded by MET	-	-	MET	National												
	Telcom costs		-	-	MET	National												
			<b>795,070</b>	<b>350,251</b>														
<b>Output 2.3 Develop home-based learning and support guidance &amp; modality for parents</b>																		

2.3.1	Develop, print and distribute parents' guide to home-schooling.																		
2.3.2	Production of poster	See TA	-	-															
	Graphic design	3 days national TA	2,400	1,057	MET	Nuku'alofa													
	Printing	1 per 20% of students; included in HLCs	42,688	18,805	MET	Nuku'alofa													
	Distribution	Included in Output 2.1	-	-	MET	Nuku'alofa													
2.3.3	Trial of Guidance	Included in Output 2.2	-	-	MET	Nuku'alofa													
2.3.4	Monitoring of distribution	Included in Output 2.1	-	-															
2.3.5	Upload Guidance poster to MET website and inform public by Facebook	No cost	-	-															
			<b>45,088</b>	<b>19,863</b>															
<b>Output 2.4 Develop teachers' capacity so they are effective in using new modes of distance/flexible learning</b>																			
2.4.1	Purchase and deliver laptops to teachers		200,000	88,106	MET	Nuku'alofa													
2.4.2	Provide training in IT skills	International technical adviser 20 days	44,000	19,383	SCA	Remote													
2.4.3	Provide training in multimodal teaching	International technical adviser 20 days	44,000	19,383	SCA	Remote													
2.4.4	Provide user support - Coaching and Mentoring	1 day per month national TA	25,200	11,101	SCA	Remote													
2.4.5	Workshop costs		2,432	1,071	SCA	Nuku'alofa													
2.4.6	Teacher Trainer		60,666.7	26,725	MET	Tonga													
2.4.7	Education Tech Officer		60,666.7	26,725	MET	Tonga													
			<b>436,965</b>	<b>192,496</b>															
<b>Output 2.5 Update / develop MET policies and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) on preparedness, response, disaster risk reduction, and resilience building</b>																			
2.5.1	Consultation meetings to raise awareness with school leaders on disaster readiness	International technical adviser 10 days	12,517	5,514	SCA	Remote													
2.5.2	Workshops with school leaders and MET staff to review policies	International technical adviser 5 days	6,259	2,757	SCA	Remote													
2.5.3	Develop draft policies	International technical adviser 5 days	6,259	2,757	SCA	Remote													
			<b>25,035</b>	<b>11,029</b>															
<b>2. Program management and quality</b>																			
	PMU in country																		
PMQ.1	Program Manager	Reporting, coordination, staff management	84,500.0	37,225	SCA	Tonga	po												
PMQ.2	MEAL Corordinator	Lower level coordination support, finance logistics etc	60,666.7	26,725	SCA	Tonga													
PMQ.3	Learning from Evidence Plan		5,000	2,203	SCA	Tonga													
PMQ.4	Finance, Admin Officer		24,266.7	10,690	MET	Tonga													

	PSU Remote		-	-													
PMQ.5	Grant Agent Quality Assurance		39,548	17,422	SCA	Remote											
PMQ.6	Program Manager - SCA Oversight		94,583	41,667	SCA	Remote											
PMQ.7	External Audit/Monitoring		17,182	7,569	SCA	Remote											
			<b>325,747</b>	<b>143,501</b>													

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**1,702,459      749,982**

## Appendix: Letter to Tonga Council of Directors of Education Systems from CEO, MET.



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING  
P O Box 61, Nuku'alofa, TONGA  
(Please address all replies to the Chief Executive Officer)

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Tonga Council of Directors of Education Systems  
Nuku'alofa  
TONGA

22 October 2020

Dear Directors

Malo e lelei and hope all is well with you and your education system. As previously communicated to you, the Ministry of Education and Training (MET) is developing a response plan for COVID-19. This will allow us to strengthen our systems to ensure our learners are safe and continue to have access to quality learning should we need to respond more directly to the threat of COVID-19 in Tonga. In order to implement the plan, the Ministry is applying for funds through the UNESCO's Global Partnership for Education (GPE).

I now attach the plan for your reference along with the application for GPE support. The application focuses on the capacity building of our teachers to develop and implement home-based learning with a strong emphasis on pedagogy and supporting student learning. Although this will have a strong emphasis on the use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) and other mediums apart from face-to-face teaching, the Ministry is aware that we will need to provide learning through a range of modalities to reach all of our learners, including the most vulnerable. The application will also include some work with community representatives and parents who can act as support people as well as facilitators for our children's learning at home.

As an important partner in the education and training sector, the Ministry seeks your endorsement of this package. Such an endorsement will signal your willingness to support MET in implementing those activities where they align with your programs.

Your review of the application and endorsement would be greatly appreciated. An email is an acceptable form of communication for this or alternatively, you can provide your signature on the next page as evidence of your support of this application.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any queries.

Respectfully

*Dr Tangikina Moimoi Steen*

CEO – Ministry Of Education and Training  
Vuna Rd Nuku'alofa TONGA

*An investment in knowledge pays the best interest – Benjamin Franklin*

**Tonga Council of Directors of Education Systems (TCDES)**