Context: Background Information

Salient Features: Basic facts and salient features of teacher education in the country, including present and emerging issues and challenges

East Timor/Timor Leste gained independence in 1999 after 24 years of Indonesian rule and over 500 years of Portuguese colonization. In the ensuing years, the country has been administered by the UN and then a National Government. During this time, the new government has worked to rebuild many of the state institutions previously administered by Indonesia and destroyed in their subsequent withdrawal. The country has worked to build technical expertise as well as rebuild much of the infrastructure and develop materials relevant to this context.

In education, the entire sector is still being developed. Many schools were destroyed and teachers returned to Indonesia. It is estimated the primary school sector lost 20 percent of its teachers and the pre-secondary and secondary schools lost 80 percent. Under UN administration, many volunteer teachers were taken into schools and these people continue to teach as the country’s birthrate soars and the demand for schools increases. A school typically has a staff that contains either of the following qualifications: (a) Attendance at SKG: the secondary school equivalent program that prepared teachers (Indonesian); (b) KPG: post secondary school teaching course (Indonesian); (c) No teaching qualifications, with or without secondary, pre-secondary or even primary school education.

Framework: Education framework, vision, and policies

Framework for Education -- At present there is an inadequate legal basis for activities of the various government-controlled institutions, communities and church organizations in the education sector. Additional legislation must be prepared and enacted to ensure effective governance arrangements for the sector. These include the following:

• Basic law on education.
• Organic law for the Ministry of Education, Youth, Culture and Sports.
• Regulation to govern tertiary education institutions.
• Law or charter to provide the legal basis and future development of the National University.
• Regulations to govern the establishment and operation of nongovernment schools.

Introduction of necessary legislation and regulations will facilitate specification of the respective roles to be played by the government, church, NGOs, local communities and parents in the management of education. The formulation of the basic law on education and the organic law for the Ministry is underway with assistance from TFET, while the other above-mentioned regulations will need to be undertaken with support from CFET and future donor assistance.

Vision -- The Ministry has identified and adopted the following key objectives and program priorities for the five-year period, 2004-2008:

• Establish an appropriate policy, legal and regulatory framework for the education sector;
• Promote universal quality primary education with emphasis on the following: improved equity, access and coverage; improved student achievement and overall quality; and reduced drop-out and repetition;
• Hasten the effective re-introduction of Portuguese and Tetum in schools;
• Rationalize the provision of tertiary education; and
• Build the capacity of the Ministry for educational management and service delivery.

Policies and Programs for the Medium-Term--

**Developing policies and plans, including the legal and regulatory framework, and monitoring and supervision systems.** The Government is strengthening its capacity for educational planning and policy development, school supervision, and monitoring of student achievement through a system of periodic examinations.

**Promoting equity, quality, access and coverage of basic and secondary education, through the following actions:**

• Build/establish 20 new primary schools in sucos with significant number of children, but without their own primary school.
• Build 15 new pre-secondary schools in sub-districts most in need.
• Rehabilitate at least 15 percent of the current primary and pre-secondary school classroom stock.
• Identify at least 20 percent of primary schools, which are unable to provide the complete 6 grades, and expand their capacity to a complete standard.
• Promote gender balance in educational participation targeted towards girls.
• Improve water and sanitation in schools.
• Install laboratories and libraries in secondary high schools.
• Build housing for teachers in schools located in remote areas.

**Promotion of gender equality in education.** The Ministry will develop and implement more targeted policies to promote participation of girls in the education system, including (a) an educational and social mobilization campaign to change the view of tradition bound families on the importance of girls education, (b) a review of the curriculum and textbooks to identify and correct gender stereotypes, (c) a review school location standards to address more effectively the concerns of parents regarding the safety of their daughters when the schools are distant from their homes, (d) provision of adequate water and sanitation in schools and separate toilet facilities for girls, (e) the recruitment of more women teachers, and (f) greater gender balance in positions of educational administration.

**Improvements in internal efficiency through the following :**

• Reduce by 20 percent the existing dropout and repetition rates in both primary and pre-secondary education. These measures will improve the net enrollment ratio and reduce the number of overage children in the school system.
• Implement a robust school health program, particularly among primary school children to reduce health-related causes of absenteeism and eventual dropout and repetition.
• Initiate and provide a school feeding program, targeted at 20 percent of the primary school children, focused on schools in the poorest communities.

**Step up teacher training** to improve student achievement and overall quality through the distribution of teaching materials and guides to all primary schools and the adoption of new primary education syllabi. (see details below)

**Reintroduction of Tetum and Portuguese in schools.** (see details below)
Rationalizing the provision of tertiary education. One of the challenges and concerns identified in the NDP and the EPF is the development of a high quality tertiary education system in Timor-Leste, which is responsive to the higher level manpower and professional needs of the economy; meets basic international accreditation standards; provides equitable access to all socio-economic classes based on individual capacity; and provides research and intellectual leadership necessary in a democratic and transparent society.

In the medium term, the investment effort will focus on building the capacity of the Ministry to develop governance structures and mechanisms to ensure that appropriate standards are developed and implemented for the existing 18 private institutions, which currently offer a range of tertiary education services to the public. This effort will include the establishment of a tertiary education council, accreditation system for academic programs and courses, and related regulatory mechanisms. The Government will also continue to support the development requirements of the National University of East Timor (UNTL), primarily focused on the continuing strengthening of its faculties particularly those that are vital for the development of the economy and the civil service such as polytechnics, education, agriculture and public administration.

Supporting a robust program of overseas scholarships, particularly at the graduate level and those requiring high specialization vital for national development, including the following proposals:

- Improvement of the UNTL library ($500,000);
- Laboratories for improving the teaching of mathematics, chemistry, biology and physics ($1.0 million);
- Hiring of overseas experts for curriculum review and evaluation/accreditation of all tertiary education institutions ($600,000);
- Continuing capital development in key UNTL faculties such as engineering in Hera ($5.9 million); and
- Local scholarships for needy, but qualified students ($60,000).

Building capacities for education management and service delivery, including decentralization of budget management to the district level, building the capacity of school headmasters to manage small school funds and block grants for school improvement, and experimenting on the merits of involving communities and parent associations in helping manage schools and monitoring key educational variables such as the availability of teaching materials at school level, regular attendance of teachers, student absenteeism and its causes, and similar important variables in the teaching/learning process. The key features of the program include:

- Delegation to district and school heads of certain authorities related to personnel management such as teacher selection, assignment and discipline; and experimental management of funds which may be best handled at district and school level such as for minor school repairs;
- A pilot grants-to-schools scheme will be implemented through training and distribution of funds to the school committees.
- The Ministry’s low budget execution in the first three quarters of FY2003/04 is to be improved through closer monitoring of expenditures.

Strategic Plan: strategies and plan of the country on teacher education, training and development

Teacher recruitment -- The education programs above described would require recruitment of additional teachers. In the case of primary schools an additional 1,500 teachers would be needed to bring the student-teacher ratio down from 40:1 to about 30:1. In the case of junior secondary schools, approximately 450 additional teachers would be needed to maintain the current student teacher ratio at 25:1. A small number of additional teachers would also be required to maintain the current student-teacher ratio. To the extent that the additional 2,025 teachers are to be permanent civil servants, there is an issue related to Government policy on the size of the Civil Service. There are now 12,062 permanent civil servants, which exceeds the intended mature size of the service of 12,000 personnel. To address expected constraints in increasing the size of the teaching force, the Ministry will explore alternative ways of reducing additional teacher requirements, including adopting double shifts in urban schools where the availability of transportation and electricity is not a serious constraint; multi-grade teaching where this is appropriate in order to reach more rural children, and distance learning techniques. In the longer term, adoption of strategies to reduce the number of overage students through correct age enrollment and reduction of dropout and repetition rates will reduce the number of teacher requirements.

Teacher Training -- Many of the 7,825 teachers currently employed, including the volunteer teachers, have had only minimal training and most have no formal teaching qualifications. The immediate priority is to improve the skills and qualifications of existing teachers. Courses have now been designed for both primary (D2) and secondary (D3) levels of qualification, and training programs for the first batch of 1,000 teachers has been launched by the Institute for Continuing Education (ICE). The program is supported by 117 Portuguese trainers and 170 Timorese trainer trainees. The TFET funded study that assesses teacher-training requirements will be completed later in the year and will give further insight into the options and strategies for teacher training. The Government will expand the D2 and D3 programs to reach an additional 1,000 teachers in the next three years, at a cost of about $3.3 million. The current five-year program is largely funded by Portugal and addresses teacher quality issues for teachers already in the teaching service.

In order to provide for the pre-service teacher requirements of the system, the Ministry proposes to establish a pre-service teacher training program focused at primary education teacher requirements, at an estimated cost of $1.5 million in the next three years. The Ministry’s Institute for Continuing Education (ICE) will manage these programs.

For the longer term, the prevailing view is that all teachers should have a basic university degree. Given the MDGs for 2015, the total number of teachers may eventually stabilize at somewhere around 9,000 to 10,000, which suggests an annual need for 450-500 university trained replacements. A three-year university program for teachers would then imply a total of 1,350-1,500 undergraduates at any one time. The capacity of the tertiary education system for effective training of this number of teachers will need to be evaluated once the most immediate and pressing needs for training the existing cadre of teachers is well underway. This university program would need to be supplemented with an ongoing in-service training program for teachers in the work force.

Sources: Timor-Leste: Education and Training Sector Investment Program, Ministry Of Education, Youth, Culture And Sports & Secretariat Of State For Labour And Solidarity

Important national information/issues on politics, economics, language, etc.
The general policy on the use of language in schools is clear. Instruction is to be in Portuguese and Tetum. Implementation from Grade One has now progressed to Grade Four. Within the medium term, a new generation of primary school students shall have completed instruction in the official languages (in reality, primarily in Portuguese since Tetum has been determined at this point as still inadequate and requires development to be a language for instruction, particularly in technical subjects such as science and mathematics). A major challenge to be addressed in the medium term is how to effectively bridge the language transition in pre-secondary school for this cohort of primary school graduates who are no longer proficient in the Indonesian language as it has been dropped as a subject. The current batch of teachers in pre-secondary schools is still proficient only teaching in the Indonesian language and continue to use textbooks in this language. Since teachers in secondary education are largely subject specialized, they will need effective training for proficiency in teaching in Portuguese in their subject specialization. Otherwise, this could result in undue deterioration on the quality of instruction and student learning. As mentioned, massive teacher training in the Portuguese language is already ongoing with assistance from Portugal.

However, there will be a need to supplement this effort with the development and provision of appropriate textbooks, teaching guides and other learning materials to hasten the transition to the official languages and to reduce possible adverse effects on student learning achievement. There is also a need in the medium term to plan and provide for similar transition requirements for senior secondary education, to ensure that the transition in six to seven years’ time will be effective.

Sources: Timor-Leste: Education and Training Sector Investment Program, Ministry Of Education, Youth, Culture And Sports & Secretariat Of State For Labour And Solidarity

Highlights

Regarding the institution offering a three-year, Australian accredited primary school teaching qualification: it is located in Baucau, the nation’s second biggest city. Entry is secondary school certificate. The first 51 graduates of this program entered schools in September 2006 and 50 have since graduated in October 2007. There has been tension between the Ministry of Education and this teacher institute since it is a private college.

Regarding the national University program, it has no graduates yet. The National University has continued to provide two-year subject specific teacher training programs for pre- and secondary teachers, in Science, Mathematics, and English.

Regarding In-service training, it is supposed to be coordinated through the National Centre for Professional Formation, the in-service arm of the Ministry of Education, but this center has not been proactive in developing or leading teacher formation in the country: it serves as an information archive and venue for program delivery, if the program organizers are aware of its existence, which is rare.

The main in-service program in the country is run and financed by the Portuguese government, designed to develop teachers’ ability to use and teach in Portuguese. There are further modules that cover the curriculum and teaching methodology. The program is taught by both Portuguese and suitably qualified Timorese teachers. The qualification is the three level Bacheralato and teachers across the country must attend this in their non-teaching time, usually several afternoons a week. In reality, teachers are spending teaching time traveling to and from their place of study as well.
The UNICEF-supported in-service program, Child Friendly Schools, provides school support in PTA formation, School administration and teacher development and is operating in about 500 of the 800 primary schools throughout the country. However, the in-service component is very small as the Ministry has not committed the staff resources needed to support the program. The program has offered teachers workshops in child friendly practices, developing school-based professional learning teams and some curriculum areas, such as reading. The structure of cluster groups of schools is in place, but not being used effectively. This program has also handled the roll out of the national curriculum to all teachers so that by December 2007, all teachers in East Timor have been provided with a copy of the curriculum and received orientation on how to use it. Note: this is the first curriculum developed for Timor by Timorese writers.

The Brazilian mission provides in-service for pre-secondary teachers in Dili and Baucau, providing certification to teachers who have not attained a secondary school education themselves. This is due to finish in January.

In-service training is provided by Children in Crisis in the Eastern region, a module program in methodology.

**Teacher Education Institutions:**

**Number of institutes**  
Pre-Service: - One education institution offering a three-year, Australian accredited primary school teaching qualification *
- The National University has begun a teacher education program for primary school teachers **
- Several small, private universities, mainly in Dili and Baucau, offer teacher training, but the accreditation process has not been completed for many of these  
In-Service: Many in-service agencies operating in the country, both through the government and other NGOs.

**Teacher Education Curricula (i.e. content of TE programs).**

In 2006, the final version of teacher competencies was presented to the Ministry of Education. These were devised in consultation with a wide range of teaching and government groups and were planned to be the basis for ongoing teacher training with eventual links to supervision and competency-based pay and incentives. The Ministry is yet to endorse or make any further moves on these.

**Educational Networks:**

There is no professional teacher association or union operating in Timor Leste.

**Standards (Licensing of Teachers – Initial and Continuing):**

At present there is no licensing or certification processes linked to pay: all pays are standard across the country, regardless of qualifications, experience or hours taught per month. (Current pay is US$150). A school director (principal/head teacher) is paid the same as a classroom teacher and has no particular training or support for this role.