



**NEW ZEALAND  
FOREIGN AFFAIRS & TRADE  
Aid Programme**

# Halimar, Aprende no Descubre Susesu (HANDS)



## Mid-Term Review Report

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The HANDS Programme Mid-Term Review was undertaken by Whitelum Group. Whitelum Group provides independent evaluations, designs and technical services throughout the Asia and Pacific regions. The authors of this report are Keryn Clark, Belynda McNaughton and Maria Sufa.

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# 1

## Abstract

The purpose of the Halimar, Aprende no Descobre Susesu (HANDS) Programme mid-term review (MTR) is to assess progress towards outcomes, provide evidence of results and identify improvements for the remaining programme. The MTR will contribute to an evidence base to inform future policy and implementation of Early Childhood Education (ECE) in Timor-Leste.

The methodology included reviewing documents, interviews with ECE stakeholders, and observations of preschools in rural and urban areas.

The main findings are that the HANDS programme remains highly relevant to the priorities of the Governments of Timor-Leste (GoTL) and New Zealand. While the programme is well-regarded and has supported the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MEYS) to deliver quality ECE activities, progress towards the outcomes has been hampered by a period of political uncertainty. A solid foundation for improving the quality of pre-school services has been established, however more time is required for full implementation, and to see evidence of change.

At the outcome level, there has been an increase of 6.14% in 3-5 year-olds enrolled in pre-schools in the three years the review covered, however it is too early to see evidence that HANDS contributed to this change. It is also too early to ascribe programme activities to improved learning outcomes. Sustainability of HANDS supported interventions remain a concern, particularly in the absence of an agreed, affordable model.

Given fiscal constraints facing the MEYS and low enrolment rates, the MTR recommends that HANDS continues to support the MEYS to develop an accessible and affordable, quality pre-school model. To maximise the potential for results, the MTR also recommends that the NZ Embassy extends the current phase and considers funding a second phase of the HANDS programme.



# 2

## Executive Summary

The Halimar, Aprende no Descubre Susesu (HANDS) Programme is a Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MEYS) Programme. The NZ government has invested NZ\$12 million in the HANDS programme, implemented over five-years (2015-2020). HANDS aims to contribute to the Government of Timor-Leste (GoTL) educational goals through increasing access to quality pre-school education.

The long-term outcome (LTO) of HANDS is that *Early Child Education (ECE) for 3–5 year olds is improved in terms of access, quality and equity and improved learning outcomes for children especially in the area of literacy and numeracy.*

The HANDS Programme has three medium term outcomes (MTO): MTO1 focuses on increased access, with MTO 2 focusing on increased quality of pre-school teaching, and MTO3 focusing on increased quality of the pre-school system. These three MTOs are supported by four short term outcomes: increased enrolment, qualified and trained teachers, quality pre-school services and improved coordination, planning and use of pre-school services.

The HANDS programme includes seven outputs: Pre-school playgrounds, learning materials, pre-service teacher training, in-service training, pre-school inspectorate system, management and leadership of pre-schools services and community pre-schools.

The objectives of the mid-term review (MTR) are:

- **Objective 1:** to assess the extent to which strengthening early childhood education remains a priority for Timor-Leste and the New Zealand Aid Programme (Relevance)
- **Objective 2:** to examine the progress being made in achieving the HANDS outputs and short and medium term outcomes (Effectiveness)
- **Objective 3:** to review the cost effectiveness of the implementing partner's approach employed to deliver results (Efficiency)<sup>1</sup>
- **Objective 4:** Future design and support – to identify the key changes needed to deliver sustainable outcomes (Sustainability)

The MTR covers the period between June 2014 and December 2018. The MTR took place between January and April 2019.

### Summary Findings by Objective

**Objective 1 (Relevance):** The MTR found that the HANDS Programme is highly relevant to GoTL education sector priorities as evidenced through interviews and the

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<sup>1</sup> Implementing partners included Grow HR (managing contractor), CARE and the World Bank. UNICEF became an implementing partner in January 2018.



Government's 5-year plan.<sup>2</sup> The HANDS Programme also remains relevant to the New Zealand (NZ) development priorities in Timor-Leste and aligns with the New Zealand Aid Programme's investment priorities, as expressed in the New Zealand Aid Strategic Plan (2015-19).<sup>3</sup> More detail on the relevance of particular outputs in achieving outcomes is provided throughout this report.

*"HANDS is like gold - we value it highly..."*  
(MEYS official)

**Objective 2 (Effectiveness):** Due to significant delays, to an extent beyond the control of HANDS, overall progress towards the short- and medium-term outcomes is limited.<sup>4</sup> It is too early to determine whether the HANDS programme is contributing to the LTO – i.e. improved access, equity and quality of pre-school education. Summary findings relating to effectiveness are:

- Enrolment rates are trending upwards showing some improvement to access. Despite increasing enrolment since 2014, there is a large variance between municipalities and attendance is well below reported enrolment rates.<sup>5</sup>
- A 2017 mini Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA), shows literacy results have progressed marginally since EGRA was conducted in 2009.
- There is insufficient data to ascertain whether teachers are using child-centred, activity-based teaching practices, although anecdotal evidence suggests direct instruction is still preferred and remains common practice. This is not unexpected given limited routine professional development.
- Some aspects of systemic reform including leadership management and administrative practices have improved, in particular, increased data from the inspectorate, and initial changes in attendance and class sizes. There is modest progress toward the drafting of the Pre-school Management Law.
- Limited support for parental engagement due to the parental education component in the original HANDS design not being pursued as planned.
- Planned activities to strengthen leadership and management to strengthen the delivery of pre-school services has been delayed, particularly relating to National Directorate of Pre-School Education and municipal Offices of Education. There is a risk that with the existing resources, and workload in other areas, that this may not progress within the current phase.
- The MEYS (at all levels) report a high level of ownership of the HANDS programme. The role of the Programme Management Team (PMT), and the corresponding support by the HANDS programme to the PMT was highly commended. There is

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<sup>2</sup> Government of Timor-Leste, Programme of the Eighth Constitutional Government, Section 2.1 <http://timor-leste.gov.tl/?p=19915&lang=en#prog2.1.1>.

<sup>3</sup> New Zealand Foreign Affairs and Trade Aid Programme (2015) New Zealand Aid Programme Investment Priorities 2015-19

<sup>4</sup> Delays were due to both delays in gaining Ministry 'buy-in' largely due to the political instability resulting in limited MEYS budget for a period of approximately 18 months, and implementation challenges for Output 1, requiring HANDS adviser management time to resolve, resulting in less time for other outputs, particularly Output 6.

<sup>5</sup> Enrolment rates do not include those attending community pre-schools.



evidence of the high regard of the HANDS team, and the programme, by the MEYS and other stakeholders. This has contributed to increased momentum around early childhood education across government.

- The current results diagram (Figure 1) and the results framework (Appendix 2) need to be updated to reflect the changes to the HANDS programme.<sup>6</sup>

**Objective 3 (Efficiency):** Overall the MTR finds that the HANDS programme has used resources and their influence to provide value for money. With average annual expenditure of US\$1.8 million, the programme has built momentum for early childhood education, engaging with the MEYS on a wide range of key strategic areas for improved ECE.<sup>7</sup> Key additional findings are:

- Approximately 60% of the total expenditure is for technical assistance. While the MTR recognises that much of the HANDS approach is through mentoring and technical support, it is important that there is focused monitoring of the extent of skills transfer related to the significant investment.
- There have been delays in delivery of playgrounds, in-service training and strengthening leadership and management of ECE service delivery. HANDS plans as much as possible to achieve agreed targets by May 2020, however, it is important that the quality of delivery, including the quality of skills transfer is not jeopardised in trying to achieve these results.
- The MTR recognises the significant effort by the HANDS team to provide quality support in areas able to be progressed despite the political situation.<sup>8</sup> For the remainder of this first phase, HANDS should resource activities that progress towards the HANDS outcomes – for example support for routine professional development.

**Objective 4 (Sustainability):** The MTR identifies concerns as to the sustainability of HANDS supported interventions, particularly with a planned completion in May 2020. Many activities have experienced delays. While there are examples of skills transfer, there is limited evidence of institutional or systemic change and it is unlikely that interventions (and the benefits of those interventions) would be continued if New Zealand government support ceased at the end of this phase. These concerns need to be addressed in any future iteration of the Programme.

#### Key Considerations for Future Programming

- NZ support to the HANDS programme to continue to build the evidence around what works in the Timor-Leste context to develop a model for early childhood learning that is affordable and promotes greater accessibility. This is particularly important given the fiscal constraints. NZ as a trusted partner is well placed to support this policy dialogue, through HANDS and in collaboration with other partners.

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<sup>6</sup> The HANDS programme team are aware of this and plan to review both at the completion of this MTR. The first M & E plan was drafted in March 2016. A second M & E plan was drafted in January 2017 with a third version drafted in 2018. The MTR have reviewed the 2018 version.

<sup>7</sup> The average expenditure per year for the 3 years from 2016 to 2018 – including Grow HR, Care TL and World Bank. It does not include the UNICEF component for Component 7.

<sup>8</sup> From mid 2017 to mid 2018 there was a minority government, resulting in non-approval of their program and budget and limited resources to focus on the needs of pre-school education.



- NZ support to the HANDS programme to be more strategic, either through developing cost sharing agreements that incentivise good practice and/or piloting to demonstrate affordable options that build on evidence generated as the programme evolves.
- To improve 'school readiness' and promote a more holistic approach to child development, the future design should address the issue of parental engagement. School readiness also includes ensuring the primary school is ready for the child. A future design, could connect pre-schools with nearby primary schools, potentially through the cluster training/*Grupo Trabalho dos Professores (GTP)*.
- A more holistic approach to child development, fostered through parental engagement, could support communities, where needed, to prioritise pre-school construction, or related facilities (water supply, toilets) through the regular *Programa Nacional Desenvolvimento Suku (PNDS)* mechanism. Fostering community demand for early childhood education means that pre-school infrastructure is more likely to be valued and sustained.
- Promoting inclusive education requires community engagement to encourage parents of children with special needs to send and support their children at Pre-school. It is vital that this is complemented with support for teachers. Innovative technology could be considered as a way to provide tools to support teachers to identify children with special needs, low-cost strategies to support their learning and options for referral to services.
- The balance between support at national versus sub-national level is important. In the next phase, HANDS could increase support to effect change at sub-national level to increase opportunities for children to reach their full development potential and learning outcomes – e.g. school readiness, roll out teacher professional development, on-going mentoring and parental education. The MTR team is of the opinion that providing effective support to Municipal level will require a significant investment which is likely to be beyond the resources currently available within this phase of the HANDS programme
- Professional development of officials should be well targeted towards motivated individuals at different levels and those with potential to create systemic change.





# 3

## Background

*Children from the ages of three to five years will have access to early education in a pre-school that is close to the place where they live. They will develop skills and knowledge in preparation for basic education. Families, communities and local governments will be involved in the decision-making process and, through collaborative efforts, schools will be established that meet all the requirements of quality pre-school education.*

*Vision for Pre-school Education  
National Education Strategic Plan (2011-2020)*

The Halimar, Aprende no Descobre Susesu (HANDS) Programme is Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport programme support by funding of NZ\$12 million from the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) and is intended to be implemented over a five year timeframe (2015-2020). HANDS will contribute to meeting the Government of Timor-Leste (GoTL) educational goals by increasing access to quality pre-school education, with a focus on language skills development to assist children in their transition to primary school and beyond.

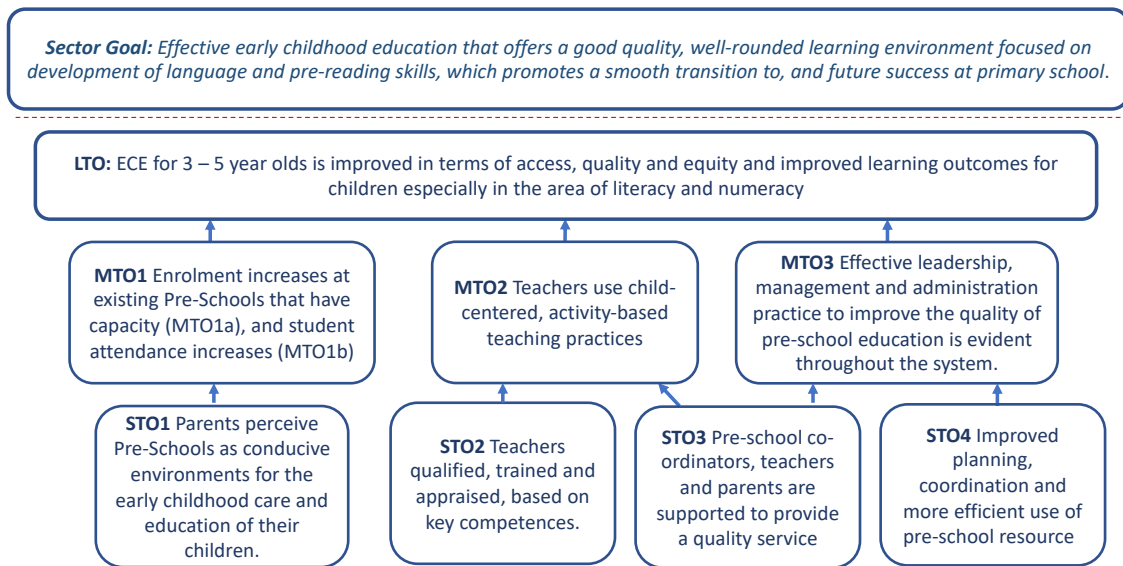
The pre-school education sector goal, also the goal for the HANDS programme, is that Timor-Leste will have *effective early childhood education that offers a good quality, well-rounded learning environment focused on development of language and pre-reading skills, which promotes a smooth transition to, and future success at primary school.*

The sector goal is drawn from the Ministry of Education Youth and Sports (MEYS) priorities as specified in the National Education Strategic Plan (NESP).

To contribute to the sector goal, the HANDS programme has the long term outcome that *Early Child Education for 3 – 5 year olds is improved in terms of access, quality and equity and improved learning outcomes for children especially in the area of literacy and numeracy.*

The HANDS Programme has three medium term outcomes (MTOs): MTO1 focusing on increased access, with MTO 2 focusing on increased quality of pre-school teaching, and MTO3 focusing on increased quality of the pre-school system. These three MTOs are supported by four short term outcomes (STO). These are provided in the HANDS programme theory of change (Figure 1)



**Figure 1: HANDS programme Theory of Change****Figure 1 HANDS Programme Theory of Change**

As part of the HANDS Design, a Mid-term Review was required. The mid-term review (MTR) was undertaken at the end of the third year with one year remaining. The review was delayed as with the uncertain political situation, engagement on future direction may have been difficult.

The review was undertaken by Whitelum Group. The team members were:

- Keryn Clark – Team Leader and M&E Specialist;
- Belynda McNaughton – International Early Childhood Education Specialist; and
- Maria Sufa – East Timorese Early Childhood Education Specialist.

## THE ACTIVITY

This phase of the HANDS Programme (January 2016 to May 2020) followed a transition period in 2015. At December 2018, HANDS completed its third year of implementation. The HANDS implementing partners are Grow HR International (management service contractor), the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MEYS), the Ministry of State Administration (MSA), *Programa Nacional Desenvolvimento Suku* (PNDS), the World Bank (WB) and UNICEF. Care International Timor-Leste (CITL) implemented the Learning Materials component (Output 2) of the activity which was completed in 2016.

The HANDS programme at the time of the mid-term review included seven output areas as follows:



Output	Details
1	Local communities across Timor-Leste are provided with the necessary resources and support to construct playgrounds (and where applicable fencing) for pre-schools.
2	New learning materials and storage equipment are purchased and distributed. (completed December 2016)
3	Teacher training (KAPPE, managed by WB, working with MEYS).
4	In-service teacher professional development.
5	Pre-School Inspectors (PSIs) training and support.
6	Pre-School sector capacity building and support
7	Community Pre-Schools implemented by UNICEF. <sup>9</sup> Included January 2018

A Parental Early Learning programme including strategies to target disadvantaged families was included in the original design, however, at the MEYS request, sub-contracting of this output to a Community Service Organisation did not proceed as planned.

### CONTEXT

In analysing the review findings, several contextual factors have been taken into account. These include:

#### 1. *The political context in Timor-Leste*

There has been a period of political uncertainty in Timor-Leste with a minority government from July 2017 and unanticipated parliamentary elections in May 2018. The elections resulted in a change of government. During the life of the HANDS programme, there have been three Ministers of Education.

This political uncertainty during this period reduced government's ability to implement its policy agenda, pursue reform, and deliver services across the board, including in relation to the pre-school education reform agenda. The full state budget was not promulgated from mid-2017 until early February 2019, resulting in limitations to MEYS funding of activities expected as part of its contribution to HANDS. Following the elections, a majority government has been in place since July 2018.<sup>10</sup>

#### 2. *The early childhood education operating and policy environment*

<sup>9</sup> Note, the evaluation terms of reference states that Output 7 is not included in this evaluation – refer to the Evaluation Scope below.

<sup>10</sup> The current Minister of Education, was previously the Vice Minister in a previous Government (until mid 2017). The Minister played a significant role in the establishment and early implementation of the HANDS programme.



As at June 2018, there were 374 formal pre-schools across Timor-Leste – consisting of 239 government and 135 private pre-schools.<sup>11</sup> There has been a rapid increase in pre-schools numbers from May 2013, when 236 pre-schools were registered: 150 government and 86 private. An overall increase of 58.5% over 5 years.<sup>12</sup>

Even with the increase in pre-schools, there continues to be a gap in availability of pre-schools across Timor-Leste. While there is a total of 374 pre-schools, there are 442 *sucos* (villages) and 2228 *aldeias* (sub-villages) across Timor-Leste. The MTR was unable to obtain information on the mapping of pre-schools by *suco* or by *aldeia*.<sup>13</sup> The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) sector report notes that in some municipalities the nearest pre-school is over 10km away from households in the relevant catchment.<sup>14</sup>

The 2018 EMIS reports that there are 673 permanent or contracted pre-school teachers in Timor-Leste (419 teaching in government pre-schools, 254 teaching in private pre-schools).<sup>15</sup> In addition, it is estimated that there are approximately 440 'other' pre-school teachers.<sup>16</sup> Overall 91.8% of pre-school teachers are female (EMIS Jun 2018). The number of teachers has increased over the programme period from 2016 when there were 621 teachers (344 in government, 277 in private pre-schools).<sup>17</sup>

In terms of pre-school teacher training, under the Base Law for Education (14/2008), a minimum of a *Bacharelato* is required to enter the Teacher Career Regime. There were no available specialist *Bacharelato*, or other registered courses for pre-school teachers in Timor-Leste at the time of the MTR.<sup>18</sup>

There are few qualified teachers – the MEYS/WB/HANDS review of qualifications using HANDS generated data (August 2016) found that of the state-paid permanent pre-school teachers, 87% had a *Bacharelato*, its equivalent or higher (most without a specialisation in ECE pedagogy). Of the state-paid contract teachers, the

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<sup>11</sup> MEYS Education Management Information System (EMIS) 2018

<sup>12</sup> Refer to the HANDS Programme Design Document (June 2014) for the May 2013 data on pre-school numbers.

<sup>13</sup> The NESP states that "by 2030 children in all the 442 *sucos* will be able to go to a good quality pre-school which is a reasonable distance from their home".

<sup>14</sup> GPE Sector Analysis 2018

<sup>15</sup> This data is from the EMIS 2018, and EMIS 2016. There is a variety of data for pre-school teacher numbers. The Inspector General's report (Dec 2018) has a total of 1,316 pre-school teachers (source EMIS 2017) – likely to include volunteer teachers. The MEYS/HANDS/ WB ECTE Design Document has a total of 1247 pre-school teachers including 440 volunteer teachers (Composite Pre-school Teacher Dataset, August 2016, HANDS Programme sources from EMIS 2016)

<sup>16</sup> MEYS/HANDS/ WB ECTE Design Document – data sourced from EMIS 2016.

<sup>17</sup> Many of these 440 teachers are paid by Church organisations, NGOs etc. Some receive a community contribution. As yet, there is no official way of verifying the actual status of these teachers.

<sup>18</sup> The National University of Timor-Leste (UNTL) plans to commence a Licenciatura programme in Pre-School Education in 2019.



majority (95.3%) had Grade 12 or lower. Of the non-state contracted teachers, only 3% had *Bacharelato*, or *Licenciatura*.<sup>19</sup>

In 2018, approximately 300 state-paid teachers, without a *Bacharelato*, have commenced a part-time *Bacharelato* (in education although not early childhood specific). The course duration is expected to be 3 years.

Pre-school education policy is in its foundational stage. The National Directorate of Pre-School Education (DNEPE) was established in 2010 and staff were first appointed in February 2011. The national pre-school policy and curriculum were introduced in 2014.

## MID TERM REVIEW PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

### PURPOSE

The HANDS Mid-term review aims to provide MFAT, the Timor-Leste MEYS, Grow HR and other partners with information to:<sup>20</sup>

- review and validate the findings of the Evaluation of New Zealand’s Country Programme in Timor-Leste as they relate to the HANDS activity;<sup>21</sup>
- assess the progress towards the HANDS programme outcomes and the extent that the planned outputs of the HANDS activity have been realised;<sup>22</sup>
- identify improvements that can be made to managing, implementing and achieving sustainable results for the remainder of the HANDS’s pre-school programme;
- provide evidence on for sustainable outcomes of the HANDS programme and identify recommendations going forward; and
- contribute to the broader evidence base to inform future policy and implementation of Early Childhood Education activities in Timor-Leste both within and outside the New Zealand Aid Programme.

### OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the mid-term review (MTR) are:

- **Objective 1:** to assess the extent to which strengthening early childhood education remains a priority for Timor-Leste and the New Zealand Aid Programme (Relevance)

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<sup>19</sup> Page 6, Table 1 - MEYS/HANDS/ WB ECTE Design Document (2017) – data is drawn from the Composite Pre-school Teacher Dataset, August 2016, HANDS Programme sources from EMIS 2016

<sup>20</sup> The TOR for the HANDS Evaluation provides the purpose of the evaluation. The evaluation team has designed the Evaluation plan to meet the purpose provided by the commissioning agency.

<sup>21</sup> The Evaluation of the New Zealand Timor-Leste Country Programme was undertaken in October 2017.

<sup>22</sup> This aspect of the evaluation purpose has been slightly reworded to more closely reflect the timing of the evaluation.



- **Objective 2:** to examine the progress being made in achieving the HANDS outputs and short and medium term outcomes (Effectiveness)
- **Objective 3:** to review the cost effectiveness of the implementing partner's approach employed to deliver results (Efficiency)
- **Objective 4:** Future design and support – to identify the key changes needed to deliver sustainable outcomes (Sustainability)

The HANDS Programme Mid-Term Review Terms of Reference (TOR) is provided in Appendix 4.

### SCOPE

The scope of the mid-term review is as follows:

- The MTR covers the period between June 2014 and December 2018;
- The recommendations relate to a period of up to five years post 2020 (current HANDS programme end date);
- All components of the HANDS programme including those delivered by Grow HR International, PNDS (playgrounds), the World Bank and CITL; and
- The Community-based Pre-school Programme funded by MFAT and implemented by UNICEF was not included in the mid-term review, however its harmonisation with the other HANDS outputs will be evaluated.

### DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The HANDS Programme Evaluation Plan developed by the MTR team provides the full details of the mid-term review design and methodology.

This mid-term review aimed to generate findings that are utility-focused, credible, timely and relevant. The MTR used mixed methods where information collected through interviews, relevant documentation and administrative data was analysed against the key evaluation questions and sub-questions identified in the Evaluation Plan. Evaluative judgements on the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability were then tested with key stakeholders in the HANDS programme such as MEYS and MFAT.

The review commenced in January 2019, with an in-country visit from 3 – 16 February, 2019.

Data collection methods included:

- Document review – the HANDS programme and NZ Embassy Dili initially provided approximately 35 documents for review, this increased to over 200 documents by the end of the mission.
- Interviews – 69 people (34 female /35 male) – refer Appendix 4 for full list.
- 8 pre-schools visited in three municipalities; Dili (Caridade, Sagrada Familia, Esperansa), Liquica (Kassait, Boura and Leorema) and Baucau (Ostico and St Paulo) (4 rural, 4 urban).



- 5 Group Discussions – two with – parents, three with teachers.
- Validation workshop – 40 participants (MEYS, HANDS Programme, implementing partners, NZ Embassy).

#### Evaluative Questions and Analysis

- For each of the four MTR objectives, there are a number of evaluative questions – refer to Appendix 3. The question guides, and observation checklists used during the MTR aligned with those evaluative questions.
- The findings are presented in line with each of the four objectives.
- The analysis, to develop these findings, is based on these evaluative questions relating to the four objectives of the MTR.
- Objective 2 which addresses effectiveness, includes an assessment of progress towards achieving the proposed HANDS programme outcomes and the results relating to outputs.



# 4

## Overarching Findings

### RELEVANCE

#### Summary Findings - Relevance

*The MTR finds that the HANDS Programme is remains relevant to GoTL's education sector priorities.*

*The MTR finds that the HANDS Programme remains relevant to the New Zealand (NZ) development priorities in Timor-Leste and meets the priorities stated in the 2015-2019 NZ Aid Programme's Strategic Plan.*

*The MTR found that the findings of the evaluation of the New Zealand's Country Programme in Timor-Leste are consistent with the findings of this review of the HANDS programme.*

#### Relevance to the development priorities of GoTL

There is now clear momentum at all levels of the MEYS to strengthen early childhood education. There was a clear commitment and demonstrated understanding of the value of early childhood education, including an interest in play based learning. This was evident in interviews with the Minister for Education and her advisers, the Director General for Basic, Pre-School Education and Recurrent Education, Municipal Education officials, INFORDEPE and the Inspector General and his office.

The HANDS advisor team and the NZ Embassy in Timor-Leste have invested in maximising engagement with the MEYS. As a result, there was broad agreement from MEYS stakeholders that they have a high level of ownership of the HANDS programme. There was evidence that the HANDS advisor team (both national and international team members) are able to navigate the political landscape, remaining flexible and responsive to GoTL counterparts, while maintaining a focus on meeting





the long-term objectives articulated in the HANDS programme design.<sup>23</sup>

Stakeholders interviewed noted the positive role that the HANDS Programme plays within MEYS, in particular, the value of the technical advice provided in strengthening early childhood education.

The GoTL has committed to pre-school education as a priority in the Government's five-year plan (2018 to 2023) with an overall goal that "50% of children aged 3-5 years receive pre-school education by 2023".<sup>24</sup> The plan includes four priorities for pre-schools, including to "define a system of administration and management of preschools appropriate to the national reality, capable of ensuring the effectiveness of the teaching-learning process and the maximization of human and financial resources, while promoting the access of preschools to public financial incentives". This indicates the GoTL and MEYS commitment to developing an accessible and affordable system quality pre-school model. The National Education Strategic Plan (NESP) includes pre-school education as a priority pillar. The current Government has committed to the NESP.

Timor-Leste, however, faces a tight fiscal environment where the annual budget for pre-school education of approximately \$US1.396 million, plus salaries, falls well short of the estimated average of US\$9.2million year required for the implementation of the National Policy Framework for Pre-School Education in Timor-Leste.<sup>25,26</sup> Overall, the education sector budget is just under 10% of total State budget - below the international reference point of 20% of budget for education.<sup>27</sup> Refer to the section in Sustainability and Future Programme for further details on pre-school education financing.

The review found that the HANDS Programme remains relevant to GoTL's goal to strengthen early childhood education outcomes in Timor-Leste on the basis of the following factors:

- Overwhelming global evidence supports for the case for investing in early childhood development (ECD) to ensure children reach their full potential. ECD is included in Goal 4 of the SDGs which refers to "children having access to one year of pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education".
- MEYS data shows that in June 2018, only 20.4% of 3-5 year-olds attend formal pre-school – one in five children in this age group. As noted, the GoTL target is that 50% of children aged 3-5 years will receive pre-school education

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<sup>23</sup> These findings are similar to those of the Timor-Leste Country Programme Evaluation undertaken in October 2017.

<sup>24</sup> Government of Timor-Leste, Programme of the Eighth Constitutional Government, Section 2.1 <http://timor-leste.gov.tl/?p=19915&lang=en#prog2.1.1>.

<sup>25</sup> MEYS Pre-School Sector 5-year Costed Plan 2016-2020 – developed with support from UNICEF.

<sup>26</sup> Refer to Timor-Leste 2019 State Budget – Budget Book 2 (pg 345 & 346) and Budget Book 4A (pg 336).

<sup>27</sup> Lao Hamutuk, 2019 General State Budget, revised 11 February 2019.



by 2023. A key challenge is the limited number of pre-schools across the country and qualified ECE teachers. The inclusion of the community pre-school component (Output 7) within the HANDS programme is a strategy to address this challenge.

- Only 25% of teachers meet the minimum requirement of a *Bacharelato*. Approximately 22% of pre-school teachers are permanent, 32% are on state contracts and 48% are either privately contracted teachers or volunteers.<sup>28</sup> Pre-school teaching skills have been assessed as weak (refer to the section on Effectiveness below) and this is important focus area of the HANDS programme's support.
- Given the budget shortfall, there is a need to advocate for and support an affordable and accessible model of providing pre-school services for GoTL. NZ as a trusted partner is well placed to support this policy dialogue, through HANDS and in collaboration with other partners.

### **Continued importance to the development priorities of the GoNZ**

New Zealand is the major donor to the pre-school sector in Timor-Leste, and is a valued partner of the MEYS. Sector wide support the HANDS Programme comprises approximately 19 per cent of New Zealand's ODA to Timor-Leste in the period from 2016 – 2020. The NZ Government has contributed to the World Bank managed Multi-Donor Trust Fund for education in Timor-Leste – of which US\$1.2 million has been allocated to the implementation of Output 3 of the HANDS program. Additional support of NZ\$2.149 million was provided to UNICEF for the community pre-schools for the period from 2018 - 2021.

The New Zealand Aid Programme Strategic Plan (2015-2019) states that the skills and education sector is an investment priority – with a key focal area being to “strengthen the provision of education in the Asia-Pacific region”.<sup>29</sup> The HANDS programme clearly provides targeted technical, strategic and funding support to the MEYS, and others, to strengthen delivery of early childhood education services, providing a strong foundation from which children can reach their potential. A wide range of stakeholders, including the MEYS, implementing partners and other donors noted that New Zealand's experience in the ECD sector is highly valued.

As noted above, a key challenge facing the pre-school sector in Timor-Leste is that while the formal model should aim to be accessible by all, this is not affordable in the current budgetary environment, or in the near future. The recent inclusion of a community pre-school component in the HANDS Programme, acknowledges the need for affordable and sustainable models. NZ is well placed to provide technical

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<sup>28</sup> These percentages are from 2017 Design Document (MEYS/WB/HANDS). The design document notes the data sources is August 2016 HANDS data. The MTR team did not have access to this level of data for 2018.

<sup>29</sup> New Zealand Foreign Affairs and Trade Aid Programme (2015) New Zealand Aid Programme Investment Priorities 2015-19; pg 9.



and strategic advice to MEYS on options and strategies to look at a combination of models to the formal and informal pre-school sector to both support the increased access and quality targets.

### **Evaluation of New Zealand’s Country Programme in Timor-Leste**

The Evaluation of New Zealand’s Country Programme in Timor-Leste, undertaken in October 2017, included findings in relation to the HANDS programme.<sup>30</sup> The Country Programme Evaluation report noted that the MTR “*consider how well the alternative models are filling the gaps in the formal system, how to remove the constraints on the alternative models, and how to create a clearer, smoother transition from the alternative into the formal system*”.<sup>31</sup>

The Evaluation also found the while were that there was evidence of good programme practice and innovation, there remain inefficiencies with multiple implementing partners, leading to fragmented management arrangements. The MTR team has also assessed this area (refer to section on Efficiency below).

Another key concern of the evaluation was insufficient GoTL budgets to pre-school education and no evidence of increased GoTL funding to the sector. The country programme evaluation team recommended that the mid-term review consider two options:

- NZ (through HANDS) works with the MEYS to ‘maximise its vision within the constraints it is facing’ with a ‘focus on alternative pre-schools, at the same time as consolidating the foundations of the formal system’.
- Focus on the ‘establishment of an alternative pre-school system, subject to market mechanisms and outside of the needs of GoTL budgets’.

At the time of the MTR, the NZ Embassy had already agreed to proceed with the first option (from January 2018) through supporting UNICEF’s Community Pre-School model as another output under the HANDS programme. While the Community Pre-Schools Component (Output 7) was not included in the MTR’s Terms of Reference, findings by the MTR team related to improving access and affordability are discussed in the section on Sustainability and Future Programme.

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<sup>30</sup> One of the purposes of the Mid Term Review, is to review and validate the findings of the Evaluation of New Zealand’s Country Programme in Timor-Leste (October 2017) as they relate to the HANDS activity. This section provides a summary of this information.

<sup>31</sup> There has been agreement among stakeholders to use the terminology “community” pre-schools rather than “alternative models”



## EFFECTIVENESS

### Summary Findings - Effectiveness

As a result of significant delays to implementation, many of which were beyond the control of the HANDS programme, overall progress towards short and medium term outcomes has been limited. While it is too early to clearly state that HANDS interventions are achieving long-term outcomes related to improved access, quality and equity and learning outcomes, the MTR has the following overall findings related to effectiveness and impact:

- Enrolment rates are trending upwards over the last several years indicating some improvement to access. Despite this there is a large variance between municipalities and attendance is well below reported enrolment rates.
- A recent mini EGRA (2017) shows literacy results have improved marginally from the EGRA conducted in 2009.
- There is insufficient data to ascertain whether teachers are using child-centred, activity-based teaching practices, although anecdotal evidence suggests direct instruction is still preferred and most common practice. This is expected given limited roll-out of teacher training to date.
- Aspects of systemic reform including leadership management and administrative practices have progressed, in particular increased data from the inspectorate has improved the accountability of teachers and progress toward the implementation of the Pre-school Management Law.
- Support for parental engagement has been limited due to the parental education component not being pursued as planned in original design.
- Planned activities to strengthen the leadership and management to strengthen the delivery of pre-school services have been delayed, particularly relating to DNEPE and municipal Departments of Education. There is a risk that with the existing resources, and workload in other areas, that this may not progress within the current phase.
- The MEYS (at all levels) report a high level of ownership of the HANDS programme. Linked to this, the HANDS team and their support is held in high regard among MEYS and other stakeholders. This has resulted in increased momentum around early childhood education across government and facilitated access to officials at the highest levels.

The MTR has assessed progress against the Results Framework as per the 2018 Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, drawing on the data collection during the in-country mission and a document review including the including the draft Annual Programme report dated December 2018. In terms of a long-term outcome (LTO), the programme seeks to improve access, quality and equity for children especially in the area of literacy and numeracy. To establish progress towards this LTO, we



considered progress towards the three MTOs, the STOs and the outputs (also referred to as components). Each of the summary findings are further analysed in the sections on each MTO, STO and outputs below.

The HANDS programme has evolved since the original design, with significant changes at the output level. As a result, despite progress at the output level, there are areas where outcomes and or corresponding indicators are not as relevant or no longer fit within the theory of change. For this reason, the section on Effectiveness includes progress against the Results Framework, where possible, including issues and comments on the ongoing relevance of the HANDS theory of change. This is in-line with the evaluation ToR relating to the results framework, and performance targets. As there have been changes, and that some of the indicators are not relevant, or data is not available, for some MTOs, it has been limited evidence of the extent of progress towards outcomes. This is further detailed in each of the MTOs below.

As per the evaluation questions, this section also highlights unintended consequences, benefits to stakeholders and changes in context that have constrained progress. Equity, as a cross cutting theme, is referenced as appropriate throughout the findings.

### **Increasing access (MTO1)**

#### **MTO1: Increased enrolment at existing pre-schools**

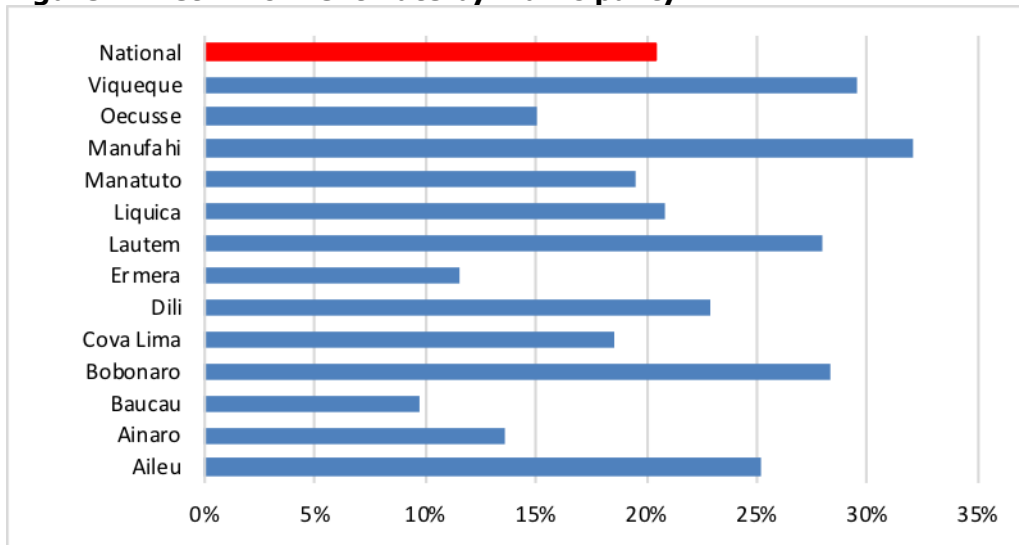
To achieve increased access, the HANDS programme theory of change assumes that if parents perceive pre-schools as a conducive and safe environment for their children, enrolment will increase. The design included three outputs to strengthen parents' attitudes to pre-school – the existence of a playground, the supply of learning materials and parental engagement. The parental engagement component was removed from the programme in the early phase of implementation at the request of MEYS.

**Regarding access, the Net Enrolment Rate (NER) has increased from 14.26% in 2015 to 20.4% in 2018 (an increase of 6.14% over 3 years). There are however, major major variations between municipalities with the lowest NER in Baucau at 9.71% (refer**

Figure 2 below).

It is too early for playgrounds to have contributed to the increase in NER in pre-school. At the time of the review, PNDS advised that 20 playgrounds had recently been completed, with 6 remaining to be completed. With the exception of some earlier prototypes (at Caridade and Hera), the playgrounds visited by the team, although in the final stages of completion were not yet open for children and teachers advised it was too early to know whether they were likely to increase enrolment in the future. While learning materials were delivered to 303 pre-schools in 2016, no parents mentioned learning materials as a reason for enrolling their children in pre-school.



**Figure 2: Net Enrolment Rate by Municipality**

The EMIS data shows an increase of approximately 30% nationally in the number of formal pre-schools over the programme period - with 287 pre-schools in 2015 increasing to 374 in 2018. The increase in the numbers of pre-schools is far higher than the corresponding increase in NER, suggesting that the location of new pre-schools is not necessarily matched with potential demand.

While the EMIS records an increased NER, the 2018 PSI reporting (Term 1 and 2) shows that average attendance across municipalities is, on average, 21% lower than average class sizes reported in EMIS data.

With DNEPE and the Inspector General's Office, the HANDS programme has supported a "Pre-school Access/*Matrikula* Campaign". The campaign aims to "ensure pre-schools teachers teach the required number of classes and hours, and the right number of students are enrolled". DNEPE and the HANDS programme identified two areas where access could be increased:

- Through increasing the number of pre-school teachers that teach the required teaching time per day, i.e. teaching both shifts, Group A (3-4yrs) and Group B (5yrs), one after the other. Data collected by the PSI in showed an increase from 8% in 2018 to 25% in late 2018/early 2019.<sup>32</sup> PSI data shows that 90% of pre-schools are teaching separate sessions of Group A and B however often in parallel rather than one after the other. The GoTL required implementation would result in more pre-school classes available in each pre-school.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Preliminary results of the school inspections to monitor enrolment and attendance – dated 19 March 2019.

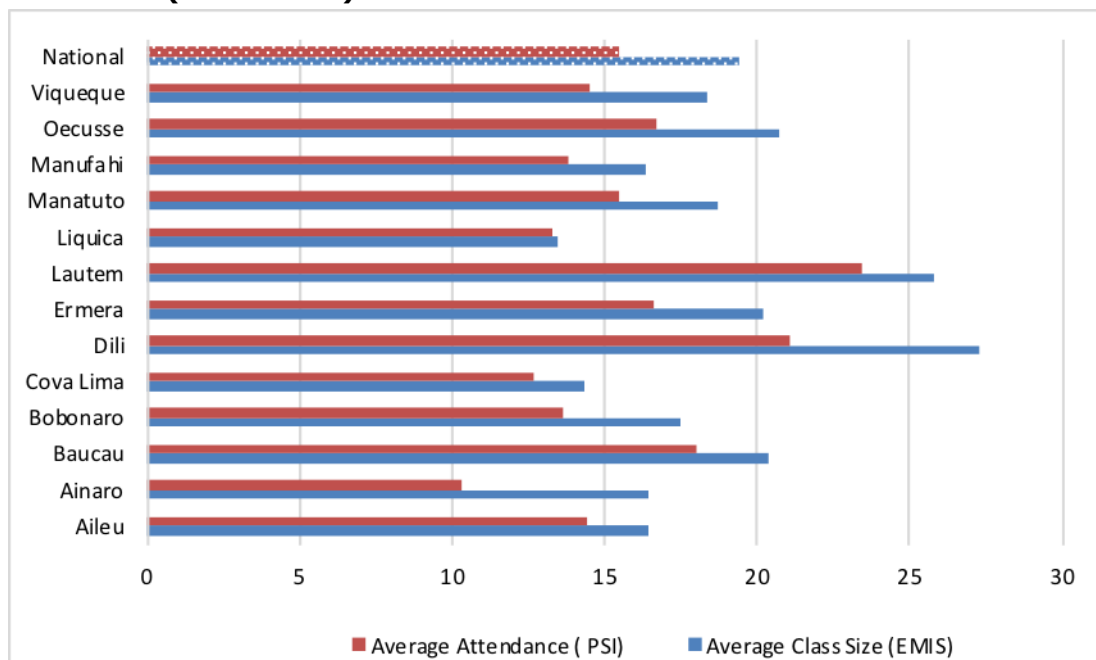
<sup>33</sup> As a result of teaching parallel classes, many pre-school teachers are not teaching the required hours as per the education law.



- Low attendance in comparison to the maximum students per class. PSI data (June 2018) showed the average class size (attendance) to be 15.4 students per class, well below the maximum capacity of 25 students/class. In March 2019, PSI data collection showed an average attendance of 17.5 students per class.<sup>34</sup> It is important to note that increases in student attendance may be impacted by a range of factors.

The access campaign (2018/19) focused on pre-school coordinators, teachers, municipal directors and EMIS data collectors. UNICEF has also developed a campaign which uses communication materials to encourage greater GoTL investment in ECD.<sup>35</sup>

**Figure 3: Comparison of the average attendance (PSI 2018) and Average Class Size (EMIS 2018)**



The MTR understands the importance of teachers completing their required hours. However, in discussions with parents and teachers (noting the small numbers interviewed), parents often commented that pre-school sessions following each other was impractical given work and other commitments, and preferred the parallel classes. This was particularly the case if they had two children in pre-school in separate groups. Improved understanding of the barriers to parents bringing their children to pre-school in urban and rural areas, teaching conditions and any options to mitigate those barriers, would be useful in increasing attendance. The variations in data across municipalities warrant further investigation<sup>36</sup> and suggest

<sup>34</sup> The preliminary results are from PSI data collected from 302 PS, from a total of 374 PS.

<sup>35</sup> These links for the videos were provide in the HANDS Programme Annual Report 2018.

<sup>36</sup> Due to time constraints the MTR team was unable to investigate these variations further.



a one size fits all approach (or rule) may not be the best solution to promote attendance.

**STO1: Parents perceive pre-schools as a conducive environment for the early childhood care and education of their children.**

Play-based learning is a new concept for Timor-Leste. Teachers and parents are traditionally more familiar with whole class teaching and direct instruction of academic skills, common in the primary school model.<sup>37</sup> The original design assumed that playgrounds would promote a focus on play-based learning, including use of the outside area for learning and also support the development of gross-motor skills. While welcomed by teachers and parents, consultations at the school level, suggested that having a playground wasn't a high priority for the pre-school. This could reflect either that the play-based learning concept wasn't well understood by the community (including teachers) and/or point to more pressing needs that those interviewed (teachers, parents) believe impact on learning.

With the exception of having a scheduled time for recess, teachers hadn't received any guidance on how to incorporate the outdoor playground into students learning. In all consultations, teachers more commonly referred to the need for more learning materials in the classroom, in particular readers, further pre-school training and buildings as the biggest challenges affecting access and quality learning. Parents consulted were predominately focused on the need for access to water, fences, adequate class room size and safe buildings.<sup>38</sup> A playground is symbolic of play-based learning and has certainly increased the profile of pre-schools in many of the communities and within government. In play-based learning however, the definition is broad and its role in learning is multi-faceted. While there are plans for HANDS to support additional aspects of play-based learning, at the time of the review the construction of playgrounds had been the main output. The playgrounds alone have limited potential to promote play-based learning and to date the potential role of teacher and parents in facilitating learning through play has not yet been realised.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Research and evidence all point to the role of play in children's development and learning across cultures (Shipley, 2008). Children have a right to play under the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNICEF, 1989).

(<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1476718X15579741>  
<http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/our-publications/every-child-magazine/every-child-index/every-child-vol-16-3-2010/play-based-learning-free-article/>

<sup>38</sup> Two of the eight pre-schools visited had very small class rooms, would have been crowded if 25 students attended. The MTR team recognize that in other schools that overcrowding may be as a result of teachers combining groups A and B.

<sup>39</sup> While there is no one definition of play, there are a number of agreed characteristics that describe play. Play can be described as:

- pleasurable-play is an enjoyable and pleasurable activity. Play sometimes includes frustrations, challenges and fears; however enjoyment is a key feature
- symbolic-play is often pretend, it has a 'what if?' quality. The play has meaning to the player that is often not evident to the educator





### Output 1 Playgrounds

At the output level, there are several factors discussed below that have had, or will have, an impact on reaching the end of programme target of 150 playgrounds, in particular construction delays, increased unit costs, capacity of *Programa Nacional Desenvolvimento Suku* (PNDS) and concerns around longer term sustainability.

There have been significant delays since the programme commenced including political and policy uncertainty, a change in contracting arrangements and necessary changes in key personnel. While political and policy uncertainty has been beyond the control of HANDS, the other delays were necessary to ensure the quality and timely roll-out of the playgrounds. Quality concerns with the organization initially contracted to deliver the playgrounds, resulted in Grow, the HANDS management services provider contracted by MFAT, taking over the direct management of this output. Several prototype iterations were produced before agreement was reached on three designs (small, medium and large) that maximised the use of local materials, including local wood and bamboo, a starter kit of galvanized steel hardware components and a plastic slide procured centrally by HANDS. In an effort to provide a quality playground and ensure remote locations were included, unit costs have increased from the original estimate in the design of USD \$3,000 to approximately USD\$4,200 for the large, most popular design.

Grow used their experience and networks to pursue the use of the Government's *PNDS*, to rollout the construction of the playgrounds at the village level. This has involved a significant amount of coordination between MEYS and the MSA. In 2017 and 2018, PNDS did not receive its government budget allocation for PNDS grants and was therefore able to receive HANDS funding for *sucos* and use its operational capacity to implement Phase 1 of the Playground construction component.<sup>40</sup> PNDS officials welcomed the opportunity to learn new skills and for a donor to use an existing government system to deliver a small infrastructure project at the community level. Guidelines for the administration of pre-school playgrounds were developed with HANDS support and complemented the PNDS Programme Operations Manual, including *suco* grant applications and grants, financial tracking, monitoring and reporting and roles and responsibilities. However, the Phase 1 approach of having two playgrounds across every municipality, including one in a rural/remote location, stretched the capacity of the PNDS team to rollout in a timely manner. This was compounded by implementation taking place during the wet season and the concurrent construction of Community Police Posts, also funded by

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- active-play requires action, either physical, verbal or mental engagement with materials, people, ideas or the environment
  - voluntary-play is freely chosen. However, players can also be invited or prompted to play
- process oriented-play is a means unto itself and players may not have an end or goal in sight  
self-motivating play is considered its own reward to the player (Shiple, 2008).

<sup>40</sup> The operational capacity of PNDS is supported the by the Australian Government funded [PNDS Support Program](#).



New Zealand through PNDS. While the design was appropriate for the context, and those viewed by the team appeared to be well-built, the team had some concerns around some rough 'finishings' including sharp surfaces and protruding bolts which raised safety concerns for children.

Local ownership of the playgrounds appeared to be low among the pre-school parents and broader community with legitimate concerns being raised about maintenance at all levels. These concerns are discussed further under the section on Sustainability.

The management of the pre-school component was a new addition to the HANDS Grow contractor responsibilities, not envisaged in the original design. Given the high profile nature and visibility of the work, and the level of coordination across ministries required, significant HANDS human resources were diverted to the implementation of this component.<sup>41</sup> HANDS reporting (and confirmed through interviews) suggests this has had a direct impact on the progress under Output 6.<sup>42</sup>

### *Output 2 Learning Materials*

All teachers interviewed reported the need for additional quality learning materials. These needs were different depending on the location of the school. Urban schools preferred books and readers to be delivered by the MEYS as other materials could be purchased locally. During 2016, there was a one-off distribution of learning materials through CITL to 303 pre-schools based on a MEYS approved lists of items that would support the new curriculum. There was a strong urgency on the part of MEYS for these materials to be delivered within a short time frame, to coincide with the roll out of the new curriculum and to supplement some materials that MEYS had already delivered to some pre-schools. As a result, the implementing agency, CITL, was under pressure to meet the timeframes and unable to share samples with MEYS. Early monitoring by HANDS highlighted some of the materials were not appropriate or poor quality and these were replaced by CITL. Generally, teachers welcomed the materials and many items were still visible in the schools visited by the team. Follow up reporting and our consultations highlighted many teachers believed they would have benefited from additional socialisation on the use of the materials (beyond what they received during the training on the new curriculum).<sup>43</sup> This could have also covered proper storage and explained how some of the materials (especially some games) were to be used. The Materials Production Team uses a Reference Group of experienced teachers and trainers to review teacher training modules – this approach could be expanded to include the review of learning materials for pre-school.

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<sup>41</sup> Two Ministers including the New Zealand Ambassador attended the opening of one of the first playgrounds to be completed.

<sup>42</sup> Refer to 2018 HANDS Programme Annual Report (Draft)

<sup>43</sup> CARE International TL Final Report



From classroom observations and interviews it appears that there is limited use of local materials, and knowledge of what local materials could be used/made for classroom use. Further concerns around sustainability of this component (Learning Materials) are discussed under the section on Sustainability.

### **MT02 Teachers use child-centered, activity-based teaching practices**

There is currently no systematic way to measure whether teachers are using child-centered, activity-based teaching practices. As a consequence, the MTR team cannot report directly against the specific indicators in the Results Framework. However, based on consultations and observations, the MTR team has made the following observations.

To date, there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate progress towards this outcome. Pre-service training (output 3) has been delayed due to agreement with the National University regarding the delivery of the pre-service pre-school training. At the time of the MTR, the HANDS programme (MEYS, WB and HANDS advisory team) were planning a redesign of this output. With respect to in-service training (output 4), the focus to date has been on material development, focusing on appropriate modalities for delivering pre-school training and initial pre-school teacher training on key topics. This is further detailed below.

The 2014 Pre-school curriculum includes “learning always comes through Game or Play Development” as a guiding principle. There is an assumption that use of the curriculum, in particular, the scripted lesson plans, will result in more teachers using child-centered and activity-based teaching practices. Teachers received extensive training from INFORDEPE between 2015 and 2016 as part of the introduction of the new curriculum, however, due to budget constraints and other delays, INFORDEPE has provided limited pre-school teacher training to all pre-school teachers since this time. Early monitoring of the training for the introduction of the curriculum (in 2015), supported by HANDS, suggested teachers were still using teacher centered practices in 2016.

Observations, findings from the HANDS Gender Audit (2018) and other anecdotal evidence from stakeholders gathered by the team, suggest teachers continue to use teacher-centered practices, with rote and choral learning consuming a large proportion of the time on task. While learning corners were, to varying degrees, set up in pre-schools, the team observed limited use of corners for integrated play and learning. The Gender Audit (2018) also found that teachers believed that playgrounds were more appropriate for boys than girls, recommending that a module that covers the value of playgrounds be included in future training.

Although inspectorate reporting has data on number of teachers following lesson plans, there is limited evidence that teachers are using play-based learning practices, and is not a focus of the inspectorate reporting or recommendations.



While early on in HANDS it was envisaged that the inspectors could support teachers on pedagogy, and several trainings provided, HANDS have recognized and consultations also suggested that inspectors were not best placed to advise experienced teachers on new pedagogical approaches. Generally, inspectors were well educated and enthusiastic but in particular, more recently contracted officers, did not have education backgrounds or qualifications. In recognition of this, inspectors use factual and less subjective observations that can be proxy indicators for good teaching and this approach was more aligned with their skillset and understanding of their role. This is also reflected in the reporting checklist (FIR) which currently does not make any explicit reference to use of child-centered or activity-based teaching practices. The methodology includes feedback to teachers and agreed tasks for improvement.

Under KAPPE (Output 3), a syllabus for Play module is near completion, likely to be rolled out in 2019. As per STO 1, currently playgrounds have been the main HANDS intervention to promote a culture of play within the pre-school.

## **STO2 Teachers qualified, trained and appraised, based on key competences**

### *Qualifications (Output 3)*

There has been no increase in the number of teachers with a pre-school qualification at the time of the review as a result of HANDS support.<sup>44</sup> The original intent of the design was to introduce accredited certificate level courses for approximately 400 unqualified teachers (the majority already on the payroll). However, as the Base Law for Education (Law/14/2008) requires all teachers to have a *Bacharelato*, HANDS was requested to pursue the development of a Pre-school specific *Bacharelato* with UNTL. Unfortunately, after lengthy negotiations over multiple options including significant investment by HANDS in UNTL's professional development, UNTL has decided to pursue a *licenciatura* with the University of Minho (Portugal) commencing in 2019.<sup>45</sup>

In an effort to move towards this outcome, potentially at a later time, HANDS has supported the development of a Pre-school Teacher Competency Framework. These competencies are guiding the development of modular training suitable also for in-service and have informed the development of a curriculum framework, currently in draft.

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<sup>44</sup> Several overseas scholarship programs include awards for pre-school qualifications and have had students return to Timor-Leste in recent years with Bachelor and Master degrees in Early Childhood Education.

<sup>45</sup> A Licenciatura is the equivalent of a Bachelor or Undergraduate degree



### Teacher Training (Output 4)

With HANDS support, approximately 600 permanent and contract teachers received one end of trimester training on Child Development in April 2017.<sup>46</sup> This training was through a centralized week-long, 'train the trainer' model at INFORDEPE that was subsequently implemented in the municipalities. Feedback from the training suggested that the training was not comprehensive enough and training materials were too complicated for many trainers to understand.<sup>47</sup> Anecdotal feedback from the field during the review suggested that teachers appreciated the training but were wanting more. Moreover, given volunteer teachers are excluded from this training, approximately 35% of teachers/facilitators were not involved, including those involved in community pre-school models supported by UNICEF and other NGOs.

**Table 1: Pre-school Teacher Training supported by HANDS**

Teacher Training	Coverage	Type	Date
New Curriculum Training	All teachers including volunteers (approx. 900)	Centralised	April, Aug, Nov 2015
Phonics Training	150 Dili Teachers 489 from Municipalities	Centralised	August 2016 Dec 2016
Child Development	29 Trainers and 560 Teacher from 12 municipalities	Centralised	2017
Facilitator Training	46 Trainers from 12 municipalities 8 Trainers from Dili	Regional	2018
Classroom Management (Pilot)	3 municipalities (Atauro, Bazartete, Vikeke vila)	GTP pilot	2018

(Source: HANDS and INFORDEPE training budget data provided 6 February 2019)

The centralised training model previously used by INFORDEPE has proven expensive<sup>48</sup>, particularly in light of a tight fiscal environment. Given this context, HANDS is investigating the use of the *Grupo Trabalho dos Professores* (GTP) – currently under development, which uses facilitated and peer learning at the *município or posto* level. HANDS has supported the INFORDEPE Professional Development that involved Skills for Facilitators has been rolled for the new

<sup>46</sup> At this time INFORDEPE had no systematic approach to training. The decision to carry out training on Child development was based on the result from a self-assessment/training needs analysis carried out with teachers by Charles Darwin University. The result of this analysis informed a Teacher Development Plan and training topics for the next 3 years were approved. The analysis noted that teachers preferred a more personalised approach to training.

<sup>47</sup> HANDS 2017 Q2 Progress Report

<sup>48</sup> For Centralised training 90% of the allocated INFORDEPE budget was going to Teacher allowances (HANDS 2016 Annual Report)



selected facilitators and there have been several pilots of a recently developed Class Room Management module at the end of 2018 - see Table 1.

Guidelines for *GTP* were under development at the time of the MTR. The *GTP* has been effective in primary schools, and pre-schools visited were familiar with the concept and supportive of the approach. The local model is likely to be more suited to the high proportion of female teachers who would find it difficult to leave family and travel to Dili for an extended period. It also allows teachers to attend professional development activities, without needing to leave their teaching duties.<sup>49</sup> While primary schools have been able to use their subsidy to pay for travel to rotating venues, it was unclear if pre-schools could use their subsidy for travel or whether it would be sufficient. Consequently, the HANDS draft 2019 budget allocates funds to assist teacher travel costs to attend cluster professional development opportunities. One existing pre-school *GTP* visited by the team collected contributions from the teachers to assist with running the monthly workshop. One municipal government also provided support to an existing *GTP*.

At the time of the MTR only 56 trainers had been identified to support the *GTP*/clusters.<sup>50</sup> This number is currently insufficient to cover all the clusters being established nationwide. There is also a gap in the ability of the system to provide on-going mentoring to teachers, a potentially effective way of upskilling teachers. Depending on availability of trainers or potential mentors (from civil society or private sector) in each municipality, this gap may be filled through a variety of approaches in the future and shouldn't be restricted to a one size fits all approach.

#### *Teacher Appraisal (Output 4 and 5)*

A Teacher Professional Development plan was developed in 2017 and HANDS, along with Charles Darwin University, has sought to improve the ability of INFORDEPE *Gabinete Peskiza* to monitor trainings. This support has, however, been constrained by the limited roll-out of training (due to limited GoTL budget) that can be subsequently monitored. As part of the HANDS Gender Audit (2018), there were some observations undertaken of teachers (using Stallings methodology) however this was more for research purposes rather than part of systematic appraisal.

HANDS have invested significant support to establish a pre-school inspectorate within MEYS. Part of their duties include teacher observation and feedback, however, their focus is more on compliance with the checklist (FIR) than appraising pedagogical practices of the teachers. While overall the feedback on PSI was positive, several experienced teachers and trainers suggested that they should focus less on ensuring teachers comply with lesson plans timeframes and focus

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<sup>49</sup> The MEYS were clear about the need to minimize teachers attending training (as a participant or as a trainer) and not being available to teach their classes.

<sup>50</sup> An additional 25 facilitators were trained in March 2019.



more on encouraging and praising the ability of teachers to innovate, cater for diverse students' needs and adapt the curriculum and teaching accordingly.

**MTO3 Effective leadership, management & administration practice to improve the quality of pre-school education across the system.**

The HANDS results framework includes two indicators to demonstrate progress towards MTO3:

- The first indicator and target, is that at least 50% of the targets included in the MEYS 5-year costed plan (2015) have been achieved by the end of 2020. As the 5 year costed plan (2015) has not approved, this indicator is out of date and has not been utilised in measuring progress
- The second indicator is that the Manual for School Inspectors' includes a section on pre-schools. This has partly been achieved, however this indicator is more of an output, than an indicator of progress towards MTO3. This is further detailed in Output 5 below.

More broadly, the MTR found there has been progress as follows:

- 26 Pre-school Inspectors (PSI) have been trained and are implementing the MEYS system for monitoring pre-schools. Further engagement with MEYS and other donors on strengthening the sustainability of the PSI is required, and acknowledged by the HANDS programme.
- The inclusion of the development of the Pre-school Management Decree Law within the MEYS 5-year programme is a positive step towards improved management of the pre-school education system.<sup>1</sup>
- The Programme Management Team (PMT) agreed the integration of the UNICEF implemented Community Pre-school Programme within the HANDS Programme.

There have been delays in progress of some key areas related to achieving MTO3. Factors that have contributed to these delays include:

- Changes in the GoTL and MEYS since June 2017, and limited budgets, have led to a lack of clarity by senior Ministry officials regarding MEYS policy, planning and implementation.
- Senior HANDS programme team members have had to commit time to other component (or output areas) which has resulted in less time to commit to planning, coordination and options for improved pre-school management.

Further analysis on each of the STOs (STO3 and STO4) and their contribution to MTO3 follows.

**STO3 Pre-school coordinators, teachers and parents are supported to provide a quality service**

As noted in MTO1 above, the parental engagement component was removed from the HANDS programme during inception, limiting strategies to engage parents in pre-school education. Thus the main components to achieve STO3 and contribute to



MTO3 have been through improved teaching skills of pre-school teachers (Output 4), and increased monitoring and support by pre-school inspectors (Output 5).

#### *Teacher Training (Output 4)*

The details of teacher training are provided in the discussion relating to MTO2 and STO2 above. Findings relevant to MTO3 (and STO3) indicate that, the roll out of training aimed at improving the skills of teachers to deliver quality early childhood education has been limited since early 2017 – with the focus being on the development of high quality training materials. Table 1 above provides a summary of teacher training supported by HANDS. While there is potential for change, it is too early for this review to determine if the approach of pre-school teacher training through the *GTPs* has led to teachers and coordinators being supported to deliver quality pre-school services at the school level

In response to INFORDEPE having no pre-school training budget from most of 2017 and all of 2018, and the feedback from the roll-out of the Child Development Training, HANDS supported the development of a Materials Production Team to work alongside INFORDEPE on the establishment of quality teacher training materials to complement the 2014 Pre-school Curriculum. The development of materials is guided by both the Pre-school Teacher Competency Framework and the Teacher Training Curriculum Framework (in draft). The process for materials development is good practice, with various techniques being employed, including peer review by Charles Darwin University and University of Waikato, testing of the readability and the establishment of an active teacher reference group to review the materials.

Furthermore, training materials are now being developed in a modular format, which are suitable for use in the *GTPs* and in the future may prove beneficial should there be a way for teachers to receive credit for their in-service training and or be given recognition of prior learning for a qualification. Pre-existing materials developed as part of HANDS will be revised to fit under this framework and meet the quality assurance processes now in place.

#### *Inspectors (Output 5)*

A total of 26 municipal based pre-school inspectors (2 PSI per municipality) have been receiving support in the form of coaching and mentoring, ICT upskilling to use tablets and a motorcycle and fuel. Four of these positions are permanent, while 22 remain on contract. The tablet-based reporting system provides up to date information on administrative quality of pre-school education across Timor-Leste. Pre-school coordinators interviewed by the MTR team welcome the support to the

#### **Individual Teacher Assessment**

- Starting the school day & lesson
- Classroom management & other aspects of quality
- Enrolment
- Dialogue between the PSI and teacher - using examples of what has been done well, not so well.
- School feeding programme
- Health and safety
- Pre-school management

**Figure 4 Summary of PSI Teacher Assessment Form (FIR - 2018 version)**





Inspectorate from HANDS. The data collected through tablets and subsequent analysis is highly valued at national level. Increased communications through “What’s App” have promoted visibility and accountability of the work of pre-school inspectors.

The quality of the training/mentoring was highly valued by pre-school inspectors – it was described as relevant, regular, motivational. However, our consultations suggested there was a potential gap in coordination at the municipal level, potentially resulting in the duplication of information being collected. Pre-school focal points (also municipal based) continued to collect their own data on student attendance to inform the subsidy and school feeding program. While data sharing was taking place in the municipal office visited, there were often discrepancies which were not always resolved to the satisfaction of all parties involved.

Regarding the specific School Inspector’s Manual, the MTR understands from the Inspector General that the manual is awaiting final approval.<sup>51</sup> Some stakeholders expressed concern regarding the degree to which this manual is suitable for the context and whether the existence of such a document will change the PSI behaviour. However, our consultations found that the ongoing monitoring and coaching by the HANDS team has been effective in upskilling pre-school inspectorates and was highly regarded by the inspectors themselves, particularly when compared to other training models used across the Inspectorate. There are however concerns from the MTR team regarding potential over-emphasis on compliance rather than a system that promotes pre-school improvement with a view to improving the quality of teaching and learning.

Linked to the indicator for STO3, by 2020, all pre-schools are visited at least 3 times/year to provide support to teachers. 264 pre-schools from a total of 381 were visited in the first 7 months of 2018 (69.3%). The data noted some pre-schools have been visited once, while one pre-school was visited 10 times.

Support for another Pre-school Access campaign in 2018/19 is evidence that the data generated by the PS Inspectors is being used by decision makers to improve delivery of services. The campaign aimed to both improve the quality of pre-school services (MTO3) and increase access to pre-school (MTO1) through improving teacher compliance, in particular that teachers teach the required number of hours.

In early 2019, PSIs assessed the results from the campaign, demonstrating small positive changes aligned with key campaign indicators against the 2018 Baseline.<sup>52</sup> In terms of a quality service, the data (from 302 schools) shows the following:

- There has been a reduction in teachers absenteeism without a valid reason from 60% to 44% (a reduction of 16%).

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<sup>51</sup> The MTR team was unable to obtain a draft of the manual.

<sup>52</sup> This data was provided from the PSI reporting in the period of late 2018 to early 2019 – report dated March 2019.



- There has been a 15% increase in the number of separate Group A and B classes (from 77% in 2018 to 88% in late 2018/early 2019).
- A 17% increase (increase from 8% to 25%) of teachers teaching double shifts.

While there appears to be a small increase in enrolment and attendance, it is difficult to know whether these will be sustained over time. The MTR team found limited analysis on the FIR data related to the quality of teaching and learning.

#### **STO4 Improved planning, coordination and more efficient use of pre-school resources.**

The Results Framework Indicators for this outcome are not applicable as they relate to: school development plans (which are not in use); and percentage of playgrounds that are maintained (of which only some have recently been completed).

More broadly, the main components that contribute to STO4 are Output 5 and Output 6.<sup>53</sup> Output 5 is that “*Pre-School Guidance Inspectors are trained to support Pre-School coordinators, teachers and parents* and is detailed above (refer STO3).

The HANDS programme reporting provides progress towards STO4 against four sub-components at national, municipal and pre-school level: planning, coordination, service provision and monitoring and evaluation. There have been mixed results in progressing these strategies across all sub-components. Key MTR findings relating to Output 6 workplans are:

##### *Policy, legislation and planning:*

- the drafting and approval for the Pre-school Management Law is included in the MEYS 5-year programme (2018-2023) demonstrating a positive step towards improved management of the pre-school education system. The current focus being supported by HANDS through Grow HR and UNICEF is on the legal options to incorporate community pre-schools into the range of pre-school services provided within the Timor-Leste pre-school system (underway). In 2019, HANDS plans to provide financial support for the MEYS legal adviser and the *Gabinete Jurídico*, to consult and draft the Pre-school Management Law.
- Support for accreditation and licensing is progressing. Initial accreditation was undertaken in 2015 when 304 pre-schools received certification.<sup>54</sup> HANDS supported the system with the introduction of forms required for applications

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<sup>53</sup> Output 6 is described in a range of ways - the phrasing is similar, however in each case, the phrasing is more at an outcome level than at an output level. This is further discussed in the section on M&E.

<sup>54</sup> 299 pre-schools were fully accredited and 5 pre-schools received conditional accreditation



for pre-schools to become licensed and reference documents on the processes and standards. The next round of pre-school accreditation has been delayed until 2020, to provide time to for MEYS and Municipal Department of Education (DoE) to support for pre-schools to achieve the proposed higher standards. It is important to ensure that an affordable model becomes the focus on an accredited model.

- Pre-school Matricula Ministerial Diploma – this activity focus on Pre-school Access Campaign - “Making sure pre-schools teachers teach the required number of classes and hours, and the right number of students are enrolled”.<sup>55</sup> The MTR findings are described in Output 5 above.
- Teacher Discipline Decree Law – focus is in “Promoting a high standard of teacher behaviour”. While initially delayed, HANDS supported the IGED to socialise the Decree Law commenced in the last quarter of 2018, and the team expect completion in 2019. The target as per the HANDS monitoring framework is that “70% of Pre-School comply with “Quadro Pessoal” in 2018 & 80% in 2019”. PSI assessments found that as at December 2018 20% of teachers were teaching the required number of shifts; an increase from 8% of teachers teaching the required shifts at baseline). The same assessments found that in 44% of cases of pre-school teacher absenteeism, the teacher did not have a valid reason.<sup>56</sup> 80% of all schools and 85% government schools displayed the campaign posters informing parents and teachers of the key features of the Decree Law.

#### *Leadership, mentoring and professional development*

There have been delays in support for leadership mentoring and professional development within DNEPE. An all-encompassing capacity development plan was developed in early 2018. However while there has been some support such as support for DNEPE annual planning, there has been limited progress in targeting support to strengthen leadership and management. This is both due to the political uncertainty and that HANDS own human resource capacity has been absorbed in other areas, particularly the implementation of Output 1 (Playgrounds). The HANDS programme management is aware of this, and have documented the challenges.<sup>57</sup>

With the exception of supporting pre-school inspectors, HANDS has had limited engagement with municipal level Education Offices. At the GoTL level, limited funding has been available for decentralized activities, including the implementation of pre-school support. This has resulted in different municipal governments implementing decentralised approaches to varying degrees.

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<sup>55</sup> HANDS Annual Programme Report, Dec 2018.

<sup>56</sup> Refer to Education and Inspection presentation (dated Feb 2019) prepared for the PMT.

<sup>57</sup> In the design, the playground component (Output 1) was initially to be implemented by another partner. However due to quality concerns, this component was taken on by Grow HR. This has resulted in significant Grow HR resources being directed to Output 1.



The HANDS target is that “by 2020 65% of DNEPE and Municipal staff are trained and are effective in relevant management skills”. While there is currently limited measurement of “effective in relevant management skills”, based on interviews with DNEPE, the HANDS team and other stakeholders, it is unlikely that this target will be achieved by 2020.<sup>58</sup> The MTR team is of the opinion that providing effective support to Municipal level (noting there are 13 municipalities) will require a significant investment which is likely to be beyond the resources currently available within this phase of the HANDS programme.

### **Approach and Ownership**

The HANDS programme and the NZ Embassy, have adopted a collaborative and flexible approach to skills transfer and systems strengthening.<sup>59</sup> Since inception, the HANDS programme has strategically recruited and mentored a team of highly skilled and well-regarded national advisers and technical staff. The national team has been supported by a small team of international staff.

The HANDS adviser team are well-regarded by government and other stakeholders. This has enabled them to effectively engage with senior education officials and at Ministerial level so that early childhood education is on the agenda at the highest level.

The MTR team found a high level of Ministry ownership of the HANDS programme and strong GoTL engagement in implementation and policy decisions. The plans reflect the priorities of the MEYS and the relevant Directorate. Annual HANDS programme plans are produced in Tetum. Interviewees particularly noted that the Programme Management Team has been an effective means of building Ministry ownership. This approach has supported, and is likely to continue to support evidence-based policy making. This is particularly important in terms of the MEYS considering affordable options for increasing access to pre-school education.

The high level of PMT support has been a key contributor to Ministry ownership. There is a possibility in early 2019 of changes to PMT membership, and this is likely to require significant engagement by HANDS team members to build the understanding and ongoing commitment of new team members. The HANDS team are aware of this, and equally that there may be changes of senior municipal level officials who may need further support.

### **HANDS Programme Monitoring Evaluation and Learning**

This section responds to the evaluation questions relating to the results framework theory of change (TOC) and performance targets. An overall assessment of the monitoring, evaluation and learning systems is provided in Appendix 5.

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<sup>58</sup> The HANDS Results Framework states this data will be collected from capacity development advisor reports, training records, performance evaluations and parent interviews.

<sup>59</sup> The approach used by the HANDS programme provides a sound basis for utilizing a “thinking and working politically” approach - refer [TWP](#).



The MTR found that:

- The results diagram and framework do not accurately reflect pathways of change. For this reason, in the effectiveness section, the MTR has not always been able to provide a direct link between the outputs and progress towards the outcome. The current results diagram (Figure 1) and the results framework (Appendix 2) need to be updated to reflect the changes to the HANDS programme.<sup>60</sup> The HANDS programme team are aware of the need for a review, and noted that they were waiting for the completion of the MTR inform the review.
- The analysis of issues, opportunities and priorities are addressed in each of the MTOs above, however in summary the key areas that the MTR recommends that need further consideration in the results diagram:
  - GoTL develops an affordable and sustainable model of pre-school education that is both accessible, and provides sufficient quality of services.
  - Promote greater parental awareness of the importance of pre-school education, identify and support strategies to reduce the barriers facing parents in sending their children to pre-school.
- As part of reviewing the theory of change, identify the key assumptions, and means to monitor that they continue to hold. The current M&E Plan does not contain assumptions.
- The performance targets need to be reviewed. The details, as to whether the current performance targets are achievable (and/or relevant) are discussed in each of the MTO sections. Recommendations are provided in each MTO section.
- The indicators are largely quantitative which does not always provide an analysis of progress towards the outcomes.
- The HANDS programme M&E System aims to “work with and through existing MEYS M&E systems, where possible, rather than creating a separate M&E system”. While this is a positive approach, the HANDS programme has limited human resources to strengthen M&E systems within the MEYS. The HANDS programme has worked with the pre-school inspectors as a means to collect relevant data, and established system for the Research Office (*Gabinete Pesquisa*) at INFORDEPE to monitor the outcomes of teacher training.
- It is worthwhile noting that the Pre-School sector situation analysis undertaken in 2015 (HANDS inception) found that “improved data management is required to strengthen effective Monitoring and Evaluation, and evidence based decision making”. Through the Inspectorate, HANDS has supported the collection, analysis and sharing of relevant monitoring data that

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<sup>60</sup> The first M & E plan was drafted in March 2016. A second M & E plan was drafted in January 2017 with a third version drafted in 2018. The MTR have reviewed the 2018 version.



relates to pre-school service delivery. The sharing of this data, has supported it's use in decision making, and as contribution to policy development.



## EFFICIENCY

### Summary Findings – Efficiency

Overall the MTR finds that the HANDS programme has used resources consistent with value for money principles. With an approximate annual budget of US\$1.5million, the programme has built momentum for early childhood education, engaging with the MEYS on a wide range of key strategic areas for improved ECE.

Key findings are:

- Approximately 60% of the total expenditure is on technical assistance. It is important that there is deliberate monitoring of skills transfer and capacity building outcome associated with this significant investment of programme resources.
- There have been delays in delivery, particularly relating to playgrounds, in-service training and strengthening leadership and management of ECE service delivery. HANDS plans as much as possible to achieve targets by the May 2020, however, it is important that the quality of delivery, including the quality of skills transfer, is not jeopardised.
- Regarding implementation, there has been significant effort in the preparation of quality support to ECE services. It will be important for HANDS to support activities that progress towards the HANDS outcomes in 2019 – for example targeted skills transfer and rolling out of teacher training.

### *Implementation*

Stakeholders provided positive feedback on the implementation of the HANDS programme. HANDS programme team members work well together and HANDS human resources are utilised effectively across the programme in accordance with demand for support requires.

With a minimal budget from January to May 2020, activities will need to be largely completed by December 2019. This will likely result in a significant workload in 2019. This is particularly the case for the finalisation of the playgrounds, the delivery of in-service training and strengthening systems for improved pre-school services. There is a risk that these time pressures may affect the quality of the delivery of these components.

For Component 3 – pre-service training, there has been significant delays, due to a major change in the delivery mechanism (refer MTO 2 above). Thus at December 2018, less than a third of the trust fund budget, had been expended. A re-design of this component being undertaken.

As noted, due to implementation and quality concerns Grow HR took over the delivery of the Playgrounds component. The parental engagement was cancelled, and Grow HR engaged closely with the implementation of the Learning Materials and the KAPPE. This change has resulted in a more cohesive delivery of the overall



HANDS programme. This is also the case for the addition of the Community Pre-schools component to HANDS in January 2018. Grow HR have demonstrated flexibility and a commitment to quality of delivery of the overall HANDS programme.

The HANDS team has efficiently dealt with delays due to political and policy uncertainty through focusing on areas where they can progress. For example, for the in-service training, the roll-out of training was delayed with HANDS focusing on developing comprehensive, quality assured, flexible training materials (e.g. modules, videos etc) against a Teacher Competency Framework. The MTR believes that this was an appropriate decision. However, now that INFORDEPE does have funding for training it is important that teacher training commences in this final year. The MTR has a similar finding in relation to HANDS progressing with targeted areas for improved leadership and management of pre-school services (refer to Effectiveness – MTO3)

The delivery of the 150 playgrounds in pre-schools across the country has been a major undertaking and has required significant resourcing from the HANDS programme. While this has affected the programme's ability to engage on leadership and management, this was also affected by changes in government, this component was also delayed for other reasons. PNDS now does have funding for new projects in 2019, with this workload, stakeholders interviewed noted the importance that this strategy of PNDS delivering playgrounds should be reviewed in light of the change. Additionally, as noted above, the HANDS programme team have noted that the unit cost per playground is slightly higher than originally budgeted for.

There are some potential efficiencies that could be gained from leveraging existing activities, such as:

- If the programme continues with the playground component, then the building of playgrounds could engage parents in ways that they can support pre-schools. This will require additional engagement with PNDS and additional resources, and the MTR team recognises that with the high level of workload in delivering playground targets, and the additional workload of the PNDS programme that it would be a challenge to leverage this opportunity (see below).
- With the MEYS, engage with the DFAT funded education programme at identifying strategies to strengthen the sustainability of the Inspectorate General's activities in pre-school and basic-school monitoring. See the section on Future programme for further details.
- The regular supply of learning materials is a high priority for teachers. Further consideration could be given to aligning a core list with HAND supported professional development including increased use of local materials for learning and training to support them using these materials. This is potentially more efficient (and effective) than a stand-alone output delivering learning materials.





*Use of resources to provide value for money*

Much of what the HANDS programme delivers through the GROW HR team is technical and mentoring support. As Table 2 shows, approximately 62% of the overall HANDS programme expenditure is for technical assistance and salaries.<sup>61</sup>

**Table 2 Technical assistance against HANDS budget - by component**

Component	Total Expenditure	Salaries & Fees	%
Non-output specific costs	2,584,408	1,862,708	72%
1 - Playgrounds	470,561	164,161	35%
2 - Learning Materials	383,226	-	0%
3 - Pre-service training	300,598	251,641	84%
4 - Continuing Education	781,333	419,303	54%
5 - Inspection	806,383	576,185	71%
6 - Systems strengthening	196,781	124,878	63%
<b>total</b>	<b>5,523,291</b>	<b>3,398,876</b>	<b>62%</b>

While the MTR team recognises that much of the HANDS activities are through mentoring, technical skills, strategic engagement, it is important that sustainability of these activities are maximised and that skills transfer is monitored and learning is acted upon.

*Outputs align with budgeted expenditure***Table 3 HANDS Programme Budget & Expenditure (2016-2020) by component**

HANDS Expenditure and Budget 2015 - 2020 (USD)							
Output	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Jan - May 2020	TOTAL (USD)
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Budget	Budget	
Non-output specific costs	136,001	875,724	735,215	654,746	526,000	72,650	\$3,000,336
1 - Playgrounds	-	102,171	64,507	301,489	499,137	-	\$967,304
2 - Learning Materials	47	345,409	-	-	-	-	\$345,456
3 - Pre-service training	-	-	149,293	151,305	142,428	-	\$443,026
4 - Continuing Education	3,181	148,768	252,632	376,752	411,000	1,000	\$1,193,333
5 - Inspection	-	279,337	257,031	270,015	213,410	5,000	\$1,024,793
6 - Systems strengthening	1,693	61,082	73,481	60,525	105,000	10,000	\$311,781
<b>total</b>	<b>140,923</b>	<b>1,812,491</b>	<b>1,532,159</b>	<b>1,814,832</b>	<b>1,896,975</b>	<b>88,650</b>	<b>\$7,286,030</b>

The expenditure for each output generally aligns with the original budget agreed for that year, and with the HANDS design document. There was reduced expenditure in 2017 due to delays in overall implementation. Table 3 provides a summary of expenditure and budget for the period against the different components.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>61</sup> These costs are from the HANDS consolidated budget prepared in Feb 2019 for the PMG. Note the technical assistance costs are salaries and consultancy fees only and do not include related staff expenses.

<sup>62</sup> Table 2 includes expenditure to date (2015 to 2018) and then budget for 2019 and 2020.



Approximately 41% of the total expenditure/budget are for non-output specific costs (of which approx. 70% has been for salary costs). The MTR understands from interviews that a portion of the management costs have contributed to the programme delivery across all outputs (including those implemented by other partners), and to engaging with the MEYS and other stakeholders to build ownership of the HANDS supported ECE initiatives.

#### *Donor Alignment and Coordination*

There is evidence of strong collaboration with UNICEF and the World Bank who are major actors in supporting the MEYS in pre-school education. NGOs (national and international) working with the pre-school education sector all valued the support that HANDS programme provides to MEYS and the linkages that they have with those organisations. In terms of the wider MEYS coordination with DFAT, while there is ongoing coordination there are opportunities to further strengthen collaboration particularly in relation to Output 5 and 6.

## **SUSTAINABILITY AND FUTURE PROGRAMME**

### **Summary Findings for Sustainability**

The MTR team along with other stakeholders, had several concerns around the sustainability of HANDS supported interventions, particularly if the programme was to complete as scheduled in May 2020.

The review found that:

- Many activities supported by HANDS have experienced significant delays and are not as far progressed as planned.
- While there have been some examples of skills transfer among staff, there is limited evidence of institutional or systemic change
- It is unlikely that interventions or the benefits of those interventions would be continued if MFAT funding (and support) ceased at the end of this phase.

Sustainability can be interpreted in many ways. For the purposes of this mid-term review, the MTR team defined sustainable interventions as those that result in systemic change and are planned to continue or be maintained and progressed, through the MEYS (or with engagement from other stakeholders – parents, community groups) once the HANDS support has completed.<sup>63</sup>

Specific sustainability concerns with HANDS interventions to date include:

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<sup>63</sup> This definition was agreed in the MTR Evaluation Plan



### *Playgrounds*

In relation to the construction of playgrounds, the team has concerns about the community ownership of the playgrounds, which is likely to affect their longer-term sustainability. While *PNDS* is a Community Demand Driven (CDD) mechanism, HANDS only used 6 out of the 12 phases in the regular programme (See Appendix 6). It appears that *PNDS* was chosen as a preferred delivery mechanism because of its ability to implement small scale infrastructure at *suco* level, and to lesser extent to harness community participation and ownership - a key philosophy of CDD programmes. Given the funds were only to be used for playgrounds, phases related to community consultations around relative priorities and accountability in the community were truncated, potentially impacting on longer term community ownership and accountability.<sup>64</sup>

While the Memorandum of Understanding between MSA and MEYS on the building of playgrounds and their maintenance, noted the crucial role of the Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs), the team found limited evidence of PTAs functioning at the pre-school level. At the time of the review, maintenance plans remained in draft and consultations suggested there were different expectations by stakeholders as to who is responsible for maintenance. While the MOU between MEYS and MSA stipulated that the playgrounds would be handed over to the municipal government (and responsible for maintenance), other documentation suggests that communities would be responsible, hence tools were left at the schools and the design maximised the use of local materials. Given there is currently no agreed maintenance plan for the 26 playgrounds near completion, sustainability of these playgrounds is at risk. A prototype viewed at Hera, built 2 years ago, is already in disrepair, highlighting a potential lack of ownership and a maintenance system by the municipal government and/or the pre-school community. While there has been a significant focus on prototyping and ensuring a quality design, there has been less of a focus on how to foster community ownership or maintenance agreements that will promote longer term sustainability of the playgrounds.

### *Learning Materials*

While learning materials were welcomed by the schools, it was very much a one off distribution. Given MEYS budget constraints, there is currently no routine system for distribution of learning materials or their replacement at the Pre-school level. Apart from Dili private pre-schools, interviewees did not use their concessions to purchase learning materials. Interviewees had not received materials since the MEYS/ CITL distribution in 2016. A system for replacing core learning materials including support for greater use of local materials should be considered as part of the development of an affordable pre-school model.

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<sup>64</sup> The most common priority for *PNDS* funding in communities is water supply systems.



### *Cost sharing*

There have been informal cost-sharing agreements made between New Zealand and GoTL on what aspects of the HANDS programme will be supported by New Zealand funding and for how long. Unfortunately, GoTL has been unable to fulfil many of its commitments, such as INFORDEPE covering the routine rollout of pre-school teacher training and the operational costs of the new pre-school inspectorate including fuel and tablets by the 4<sup>th</sup> year of the programme. Long term sustainability of HAND supported interventions will be dependent on MEYS's ability to absorb new costs (e.g., for the Pre-school inspectorate) or reallocate funding within budget lines to more efficient ways of working (e.g., using the *GTP* model for routine teacher training).

### *Inspectorate*

While the Inspectorate positions are being funded by GoTL, 22 of the 26 of these positions remain on contract. This means their salaries are not part of the MEYS recurrent budget and are at risk of being reallocated to other priorities or being withdrawn. Furthermore, the ability of MEYS to take over the operational costs associated pre-school inspectors' tablets and travel has not yet been acknowledged. While this can be partly attributed to the slow progress as result of the GoTL budget issues, there remains a question about whether the approach of supporting a separate cadre of pre-school inspectors with different ICT needs is affordable by Ministry. Going forward, experience from other countries shows the Inspectorate should take the form of a 'lean model'<sup>65</sup> that targets key priorities for MEYS and known drivers to improve teaching and learning, complemented by ongoing professional development of officers to support this focus. The MTR team is of the view that the current approach could be refined further in the current phase, using less questions so that there is improved targeting of specific areas that are more likely to promote quality school improvements and ideally align with the focus of the HANDS programme.

The Primary School Inspectors are receiving support from DFAT through PMLP (now ALMA) and this approach is using different tablets and methods of reporting.<sup>66</sup> There are pros and cons to various approaches being used by pre-school and primary school inspectors. Further alignment of the work being supported by HANDS and PMLP is required to improve the sustainability (and efficiency) of the inspectorate system within MEYS. Without broader system reform and resourcing

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<sup>65</sup> See example from Ghana <https://www.ukfiet.org/2018/the-art-of-school-inspections/> (Accessed March 2019) and a meta-analysis of other countries by CfBT at <https://www.educationdevelopmenttrust.com/EducationDevelopmentTrust/files/f8/f804e1bd-2f43-4afc-948d-65e11852c171.pdf> (accessed in April 2019)

<sup>66</sup> The name of PMLP has recently changed to ALMA – which is the Tetum acronym for Leadership Support through Mentoring and Learning.



for pre-schools it is unclear the extent to which the inspectorate function will lead to quality improvement at the pre-school level.

#### *Financing Pre-school Education*

While the MEYS has committed funds to pre-school education in the 2019 budget, it is unlikely to be sufficient to meet the GoTL's 2023 target. The annual budget of approximately US\$1.396 million (plus salaries) falls well short of the planned US\$9.2 million/year. While there are more 3-5 year olds in pre-school than in 2015, there still is a significant budget shortfall (and less time to reach the 50 per cent target).<sup>67</sup>

The 2019 budget papers report that pre-school education services account for approx. 1.7 per cent of the total education budget (excluding salaries, allowances etc). In comparison, basic education is approximately 5.8 per cent of the total education budget.<sup>68</sup> The amount committed to pre-school education services is approximately US\$1.396 million plus salaries.<sup>69</sup> The percentage of funds to INFORDEPE and the Inspector General's office for pre-school activities in 2019, was not available to the MTR team. MEYS receives a total budget of almost 10 per cent of the total 2019 state budget, below the international reference point of 20 per cent of budget for education.<sup>70</sup>

In 2015, UNICEF supported MEYS to develop a five-year costed plan (2016-2020) to meet the pre-school education target of access for 50 per cent of 3-5 year olds by 2020.<sup>71</sup> The budget for this plan totalled US\$46 million over 5 years (approx. \$9.2 million/year). Of this budget, approximately 91 per cent is for the expansion of the pre-school system to meet potential increased enrolment to 50 per cent of 3-5 year olds.

#### *Affordable options*

The provision of pre-school for all 3-5 year olds through a formal system by 2030 is an ambitious target for MEYS.<sup>72</sup> Given the tight fiscal environment described above, systemic change will only be achieved through GoTL adopting affordable reforms over the long term. Several high level officials interviewed by the team recognised this predicament as constraining longer term sustainability and were open to discussing alternative lower cost options, cognisant that this would take time. The current model of formal pre-school for 3-5 years old that GoTL aspires to is currently inaccessible to a large percentage of the population and universal access

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<sup>67</sup> At the time of drafting the 5 year costed plan, the EMIS for June 2014 reported 15.6% of 3-5yr olds enrolled in pre-school, as compared to 20.4% (EMIS June 2018)

<sup>68</sup> Government of Timor-Leste, *Orcamento Geral do Estado*, 2019. Livro 2.

<sup>69</sup> Overall, salaries and allowances account for 74% of the education budget.

<sup>70</sup> Lao Hamutuk, 2019 General State Budget, revised 11 February 2019.

<sup>71</sup> The MTR was advised that this plan was presented to MEYS but never actioned in anyway.

<sup>72</sup> Refer to the NESP, Page 77.



is likely to be unaffordable for GoTL.<sup>73</sup> It is timely that New Zealand and HANDS to continue work with other donors to support ongoing policy dialogue with the GoTL around the development of an affordable model of pre-school services that can cater for increased quality services to 3-5 year olds. Ultimately there is a need to balance global interest in increasing participation in ECE and each country's own financial, socio-cultural history and context.

With the GPE support, MEYS has recently conducted a sector analysis and this will inform a new Education Sector Plan (under development). This provides an opportunity to further discuss affordability options across the sub-sector including:

- an efficient mode for professional development (including training modalities);
- Certificate level recognition for pre-school teachers to be introduced as a pathway to tertiary (*Bacharelato* and *Licenciatura*) qualifications;
- a system where the formal pre-schools prioritise one year of pre-primary education (i.e. for 5-year olds<sup>74</sup>); and
- a complementary community pre-school model especially for rural/remote areas.

The team recognises implementing some of these options would require changes to policy and laws, and therefore requires considerable policy dialogue at the highest of levels and planning over several years. Given the momentum around early childhood education and strong relationships the HANDS team now has with MEYS and other stakeholders, it would be a lost opportunity not to use this 'relationship' capital to advance discussions on an affordable framework. Without such a framework or at a minimum, agreement on affordable approaches, any investment from New Zealand in the early childhood sub-sector is unlikely to be sustainable by GoTL in the longer term.

In terms of professional development, HANDS has positioned itself well with support focusing on the modular topics under the draft teaching curriculum framework. This approach promotes sustainability as it enables flexibility in training modalities in the future, through either using more affordable options such as *GTP* or distance learning options. Close work by the HANDS team with INFORDEPE officers has also promoted skills transfer in relation to systems and processes for quality materials development.

### **Future Design and Support**

#### *Affordable model*

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<sup>73</sup> The current budget for pre-school is approximately \$1,396million (plus salaries) and is unlikely to change in the near future. Given this is currently only partly supporting 20% of children to access pre-school, it would be unrealistic to expect this figure could be increased by 500% to cater for 100% of children enrolling.

<sup>74</sup> In resource poor contexts, it might be more realistic and affordable for Governments to start by focussing on providing one year of quality, pre-primary schooling before expanding to include 3 and 4 year olds. This is consistent with the SDG 4 target for pre-primary education.



Beyond the current phase, HANDS support should continue to build the evidence base it is developing around what works in the Timor-Leste context. In particular, support should align with a model for early childhood learning that is affordable and promotes greater accessibility across the Timorese population. HANDS financial support alone is unable to provide increased pre-school coverage at an adequate standard across Timor-Leste. Therefore support should be used strategically either through cost sharing agreements that incentivise good practice and/or piloting and demonstrating affordable model options that build on the existing evidence base. Where approaches are successful in improving access and quality, these should be communicated widely with GoTL, followed by support to systemise these ways of working as part of a longer-term sustainability strategy.

#### *Broader education system issues*

The MTR team identified several broader systems issues impeding improvement to early childhood development and constraining further progress of HANDS interventions. Alongside efforts to pursue an affordable framework for early childhood education, where possible New Zealand and HANDS should find opportunities to also use their 'relationship' capital to promote reform where needed within the broader system outside of the HANDS program. As part of greater coordination and harmonisation, HANDS could look to leverage support from other donors with a mutual interest in broader systems reform, to tackle key bottle necks and constraints.

#### *School readiness*

Adjustments to the original design have meant that implementation has not included certain fundamental interventions that improve the 'school readiness' of children and a more holistic approach to early childhood development.<sup>75</sup> In particular, the omission of a parental engagement component has potentially constrained progress towards outcomes. Parents are the most influential factor on a child's development in the early years and parenting programs combined with early childhood education intervention have proven most effective in other low resource contexts.<sup>76</sup> For this reason, for the rest of Phase 1, HANDS should look at where parental engagement can be included and further promoted within existing outputs. The Phase 2 design should consider low cost options to increase parental engagement and education, through a multi- pronged approach, including

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<sup>75</sup> 'School readiness' is a global term recognised as a viable means to help young children reach their full developmental potential and lifelong learning. It focuses on the readiness of the child to enter school, the readiness of the school to provide an optimal learning environment and the readiness of the family to help their children make a smooth transition to school. (See UNICEF [https://www.unicef.org/publications/files/CFS\\_School\\_Readiness\\_E\\_web.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/publications/files/CFS_School_Readiness_E_web.pdf)) Accessed March 2019

<sup>76</sup> See Lancet Series on Child Development (2011): [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(11\)60555-2/fulltext?version=printerFriendly](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(11)60555-2/fulltext?version=printerFriendly) Accessed March 2019



tapping into existing systems at the village level and programs (supported by GoTL and other donors) and consider lessons learned from NGOs who are already active in this area. For example, this might involve building on the reach of existing health interventions to provide messaging around stimulation, play and story-telling. This might look different in different municipalities depending what is currently working and where. Pre-school teachers are also a well-placed and respected resource in the communities to convey these parenting messages. As part of the development of teacher training resources, key concepts to be conveyed to parents could also be included. In locations where there currently isn't sufficient demand to run two classes, teachers could be encouraged to do parenting classes that target particular child development issues relevant to those communities (e.g. pre-school attendance, positive parenting, nutrition).

The concept of school readiness also includes ensuring the primary school is ready for the child. Timor-Leste has quite distinct management structures for pre-schools and primary schools, even when the former are attached to primary schools, resulting in limited collaboration or communication. Child development is enhanced when there is smooth transition from pre-school (or the home) to primary school. In future phases, HANDS could look at ways to connect pre-schools with nearby primary schools. One option might be involving Year One teachers in some of the GTP meetings as a way to establish stronger relationships while at the same time introduce more activity-based learning techniques into the early grades. At a minimum, through creating some links between primary and pre-school teachers, teachers can discuss the needs of pre-school students as they prepare to transition. Ideally, students might be able to visit a primary school prior to commencing in the following year as a way of reducing the anxiety faced by many students when they start in primary school.

As noted earlier, the construction of playgrounds implemented through PNDS is not necessarily going to lead to an increase in enrolment or sustainable infrastructure if there isn't demand from the community.<sup>77</sup> However, as part of a more holistic approach to child development, fostered through parental engagement and education, as part of a Phase 2, HANDS could support communities, where there is need, to prioritise pre-school infrastructure (beyond playgrounds) and or other priorities such water supply and access (i.e. roads to pre-schools) through the regular PNDS mechanism. If there is genuine demand from the community for this infrastructure, it is more likely to be sustained.

### *Inclusive education*

Promoting inclusive education in future phases requires further investigation by the HANDS team. Just improving access through more accessible models and

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<sup>77</sup> Important to note that a recent meta-evaluation of CCD projects globally showed that school construction (on average) did not lead to increase enrolment or an increase in test scores. (See [http://www.3ieimpact.org/sites/default/files/2018-08/CDD-brief-wp30\\_0.pdf](http://www.3ieimpact.org/sites/default/files/2018-08/CDD-brief-wp30_0.pdf) ). Accessed March 2019.





community engagement will promote inclusion and give more children the opportunity to attend pre-school. Community engagement around encouraging students with special needs to attend school will increase demand and enrolment, but it is vital that this is complemented with support for teachers. Pre-school teachers need to be equipped with some basic tools on the ability to identify children with special needs and low-cost strategies to be able to include them in their classroom, support their learning and where possible the ability to refer them to other services as needed. This may also be an area for piloting, where teachers can be encouraged to use technology and open source software (via mobile phone applications) to help them to identify children and basic support strategies. Where possible, HANDS should look at lessons learned from other donors or programs and leverage support where things are working well.<sup>78,79</sup> In the Pacific, countries have benefitted from piloting approaches in several schools (i.e. supporting model inclusion schools) before scaling up across the country.<sup>80</sup>

#### *National versus Local level support*

Education reform requires a systems-based approach that seeks to understand and influence change at multiple levels within the system. Given HANDS relative size and comparative advantage, the programme should remain targeted and focused within its mandate of supporting early childhood education while understanding the broader context. Getting the balance right between support at the national versus local level is important. Given the current emphasis at the national level in terms of establishing momentum and a strong policy base, future phases HANDS could increase support focused at the local level. This would include increased support for school readiness including roll out of teacher professional development, on-going mentoring support and parental education programs. Similarly, the capacity needs across the Ministry at national and municipal level are very high. Professional development should be targeted on motivated individuals at different levels and those with potential to create systemic change. A well targeted approach to professional development combined with flexibility to respond to needs or the ability to pursue particular issues should a “door open” is crucial to achieving long term systemic change.

#### *Local solutions to local problems*<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Lessons learned from a recent evaluation of Australian Aid’s “Development for All” Strategy highlights the importance of starting small and scaling up, a twin track approach and working in partnership with Disabled People’s organisations. See <https://dfat.gov.au/aid/how-we-measure-performance/ode/strategic-evaluations/Documents/development-for-all-evaluation.pdf>

<sup>79</sup> NZ scholarships/Certificates targeted to build the expertise around inclusive education

<sup>80</sup> See example at <https://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Documents/access-to-quality-education-programme-end-of-programme-evaluation-report.pdf> (Accessed March 2019)

<sup>81</sup> See <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2013/07/03/Local-Solutions-for-Local-Problems> (Accessed March 2019)



Currently there are gaps in municipal capacity to implement decentralised programs across government. This relates to the need for clear systems, processes and resource flows. This contributes to a lack of clarity about roles and responsibilities, and impacts on decision making. Despite this predicament and the lack of resources reaching many pre-schools, there are likely to be some examples of pre-schools that are working well. HANDS should be investigating examples of 'positive deviance' at the school level and, where possible, learn from these pre-schools. This might include looking at pre-schools that have increased enrolment or attendance (i.e. using PSI data) in recent years or consider those students who have performed well in EGRA (and attended pre-school) to identify what have been the factors that have contributed to this change. Generally, the *GTP*, while already being utilised at primary level as a local solution to professional development, remains a relatively new idea for pre-schools. The MTR team were fortunate to meet members of the Bazartete *GTP* for pre-school teachers, which has already been functioning for several years. It is important that the HANDS team learns from these already existing mechanisms, adding targeted support as needed and avoid the temptation to stifle them with top down bureaucracy, systems and processes that might undermine local structures and initiatives. Research and data collected from these examples should be communicated widely and in particular used to influence policy at the municipal and national level.



# 5

## Lessons Learned

The HANDS team, despite making limited progress towards outcomes, have developed a range of lessons learned or in some cases 'principles' for ways of working that have had a positive influence on the direction of the programme, enhancing its ability to achieve outcomes in this phase but also into the future. These lessons are highlighted throughout the report and are summarised below:

- The HANDS team have prided themselves on providing high quality inputs. They have invested time in developing strong relationships of mutual trust with counterparts in MEYS. The quality advice and close working relationships are highly valued by stakeholders. Where issues have arisen in the team due to skills mis-match, poor quality outputs or the inability of advisers to communicate effectively with stakeholders, these have been dealt with swiftly by the management team. Furthermore, being co-located at the MEYS National Office along with the ability to be flexible and responsive to MEYS has enabled the team to gain traction on issues related to early childhood education and the broader MEYS reform agenda despite a relatively small budget.
- Related to the above point, the HANDS programme has also recognised the value of recruiting high performing individuals, and those with leadership potential, supporting their professional development over the long term. The development of a strong team of recognised local and international experts has given credibility to the programme and built a cadre of local early childhood advocates that are able to influence decision makers at the highest level now and into the future, beyond the life of HANDS.
- The construction of playgrounds has been extremely resource intensive and has not delivered on the assumptions that they would lead to increased enrolments or a greater focus on play-based learning. The use of local knowledge, local materials and local construction systems and processes has now resulted in a more durable and culturally appropriate playground for pre-schools (than proposed by the original international contractor). However, given the evidence around what is more likely to lead to improved access and the more pressing needs of many of the pre-school communities, the MTR team is of the view that construction of playgrounds as an output in itself is not a priority area for future HANDS investment.



- Given the issues related to some inferior or inappropriate learning materials being procured and delivered under Output 2, a key lesson learned has been to ensure that sufficient time for MEYS to see samples of any learning materials going to pre-schools and clear instructions need to be provided is built into the programme timeframes. Following the good practice of the Materials Production Team, learning materials could also be tested by the reference group or at the classroom level before being distributed to all schools.
- Through efforts to support INFORDEPE provide continuous professional development to pre-school teachers, HANDS has learnt that a centralised training model and or cascade train the trainer training is expensive and often ineffective. Given these findings, the HANDS programme is supporting INFORDEPE to use an existing system (known within the basic education system) of cluster based training (*GTP*). This is also in line with feedback provided by pre-school teachers that stated they preferred a more personalised/tailored approach to professional development. Furthermore based on feedback from the Child Development training, the HANDS team has invested significantly in the quality assurance of module development and training guides.
- The HANDS team has learnt through monitoring the practices of pre-school teachers after the matriculation campaign, that a focus on the supply side issues alone e.g. ensuring that Group A and Group B are taught separately is insufficient to change teacher practices or increased enrolment or attendance. Similarly, the MTR team has also demonstrated that despite a large increase in the number of pre-schools, enrolment while increasing has not been commensurate with this increase in facilities, suggesting there are other factors impacting enrolment and attendance. Further understanding of the context including municipal variations, barriers to access and teaching conditions is required.
- Feedback from the pre-school teachers (and observations from the MTR team) suggest that the Inspectors should not be relied on solely to support improving teacher pedagogy or a focus on play-based learning. This also reflects their skillset and mindset which is currently more orientated towards compliance. The HANDS team are currently investigating options through the *GTP* and use of local trainers as a more effective way of supporting teacher continuous professional development. Noting it will take time to build a cadre of expertise that is accessible to the municipalities.



# 6

## Conclusion and Recommendations

### **CONCLUSION**

The HANDS Programme is considered a flagship of the New Zealand's aid programme in Timor-Leste. It is well regarded by a wide range of stakeholders. The HANDS programme is aligned with New Zealand Aid programme priorities, and the priorities of the Timor-Leste Government.

The programme provides niche support to strengthen early childhood education in Timor-Leste. Despite delays partly due to a period of political uncertainty, a high performing, well regarded team has effectively engaged MEYS counterparts and leaders to establish quality foundations for improving pre-school services. HANDS has worked with the MEYS on strategies to improve access to pre-school. While there has been an increase of 6.14% in 3-5 year olds enrolled in pre-schools in the 3 years the review covered, there is limited evidence that HANDS has contributed to this change. The HANDS programme has three medium term outcomes, although the programme has largely focused on delivering at component or output level. Given contextual and programmatic changes since the design and the adaptive nature of the programme, there is a need for a review of the theory of change and results framework to ensure progress can be measured.

While a solid foundation for pre-school services has been established, there are sustainability concerns and more time is required in order to see evidence of change as a result of these activities. Also, given the fiscal constraints facing the MEYS, the MTR recommends that the HANDS programme, with partners, supports the MEYS to develop an accessible and affordable pre-school model that can be sustained and supported in the future. To promote future sustainability, the MTR recommends that the NZ Embassy considers an extension to allow key activities to progress to an extent that they generate valuable learning for use in design of a next phase.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

The MTR has made recommendations that inform the remaining period of the HANDS Programme as well as the design of a future programme. We have prioritised the recommendations as follows:

- High – to be completed in this phase
- Medium – to be considered in potential extension and/or future phase

### 1. The NZ Embassy should continue to provide technical, strategic and funding support to early childhood education in Timor-Leste.

- Extend the current phase of the HANDS programme to align allow sufficient time to identify learning and options for an affordable model, to inform the design of a follow-on phase. **High Priority**
- Commence planning for a HANDS redesign for a follow-up phase, drawing on the findings and recommendations from this mid-term review, and any further learning from the outcomes of Phase 1 HANDS programme components. **High Priority**
- Continue to engage in targeted policy dialogue with GoTL, MEYS and other donors on options for increased funding to the education sector, and in particular increased funding to early childhood education. **Medium Priority**

### 2. The NZ Embassy and the HANDS programme to work with other partners to support MEYS development of an accessible and affordable early childhood education model.

- HANDS programme partners (Grow HR, UNICEF and WB) with MEYS to develop an agreed process, to identify and assess affordable options to deliver early child education in the context of TL. **High Priority**
- With UNICEF, review the design and implementation approach of the community pre-schools programme to ensure that relevant information required for policy decisions on an affordable model is being collected, or able to be collected. **High Priority**
- UNICEF and MEYS (with support from the HANDS programme) develop a comparative costing of the options to enable the MEYS to identify an affordable model to deliver pre-schools services including teacher qualifications and professional development. Options include the formal model, and the formal and community pre-school model combined. This model should demonstrate costs by percentage of 3-5 years olds accessing, and potentially an option that focuses in prioritising 5-year olds. **High Priority**

### 3. Until the end of Phase 1, the HANDS Programme implements strategies to maximise the quality and sustainability of pre-school playgrounds. Strategies could include:



- consult with partners to reduce playground construction targets to a number that is politically palatable and achievable by the end of HANDS Phase I, based on remaining budget and *PNDS* capacity (and/or consider alternative delivery mechanisms). **High Priority**
- work with *PNDS* to find potential efficiencies in implementation for remaining playgrounds (e.g. leverage *PNDS* regular activities). **High Priority**
- strengthen pre-school parental engagement/ownership in early stages of playground discussions. **High Priority**
- prioritise work on agreed maintenance plans for playgrounds and communicate this to stakeholders. **High Priority**
- support teachers as part of the roll out of the “Play” module to use the outdoor playground for learning. **High Priority**
- consult with partners on an exit strategy for playgrounds by the end of Phase 1. **High Priority**

#### **4. HANDS Programme to support a more holistic approach to child development through increased parental engagement & education (Current and future phases) (MTO1).**

- Establish a greater understanding of barriers to, and motivators for enrolment and attendance – including urban, rural, remote variations. **High Priority**
- Consider/pilot opportunities for increased parental engagement across all components of HANDS **High Priority** e.g.
  - engage (and educate) parents (mothers and fathers) strategically during playground planning discussions;
  - include a key concepts for parents section in Teacher training modules; and
  - work with municipal government on community engagement (discuss inspector data with parents, campaigns).

#### **5. HANDS Programme to increase focus on improving the quality of pre-school teaching in the classroom including:**

- Based on the INFORDEPE budget, prioritise the rollout of core modules (in particular the “Play” module in the remainder of the HANDS programme period (to May 2020) – through support for trainers and *GTP* activities. **High Priority**
- With INFORDEPE (Peskiza), monitor what works and why, to provide an evidence base for further development of training modules and the overall approach to training pre-school teachers. **High Priority**
- Consider and/or pilot options for ongoing pre-school teacher mentoring (longer term), recognising this might look different in different municipalities. **Medium Priority**



**6. HANDS Programme to further strengthen the pre-school inspectorate system to contribute to quality teaching and learning in pre-schools including:**

- Refine the pre-school inspectorate model further to prioritise questions related to key priorities for MEYS and known drivers of school improvement. **High Priority**
- Engage with the inspectorate, and with ALMA (PLMP) to transition to an efficient, aligned on the need for broader Inspectorate reform including a sustainable approach to reporting and ICT across the inspectorate. **High Priority**
- Use the launch and socialisation of the Inspection Manual to promote further alignment of the pre-schools inspectorate with the broader inspectorate covering primary and secondary schools and reinforce a focus on quality teaching and learning. **High Priority**
- Develop and implement an exit strategy for the HANDS support to the pre-school inspectorate. **High Priority**

**7. HANDS Programme to improve leadership and management at national and municipal level (MTO 3)**

- Revisit Workplan (Output 6) and Capacity Development plans - prioritise areas for support and professional development, with what can realistically be achieved between now and the end of this phase of HANDS. **High Priority**
- Dedicate HANDS advisory support and resources to what is identified. **High Priority**
- Be opportunistic in relation to Municipal support (defer comprehensive approach to HANDS beyond 2020). **Medium Priority**
- Utilise any learnings from ALMA/PMLP that involves sub-national support for strengthened pre-school management systems. **Medium Priority**
- Develop clear strategies to maximise skills transfer from HANDS programme advisers to key MEYS staff. Developing a more deliberate approach to monitoring skills transfer will enable HANDS to understand successes and identify where further engagement and/or different strategies are required. **High Priority**

**8. The HANDS programme should strengthen their Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning through the following:**

- Revise the Theory of Change and the Results Framework to reflect the changes to the HANDS programme. **High Priority**
- Determine realistic targets for 2019/2020, and use these targets to demonstrate progress towards the HANDS programme outcomes. **High Priority**





- Review the indicators to ensure that they reflect data that can be collected within the timeframe. Develop key evaluative questions (qualitative indicators) at the MTO level, to provide a framework for analysis of progress towards outcomes. **High Priority**

**9. For phase 2 of HANDS, the design team, NZ Embassy and the HANDS programme consider and agree upfront with MEYS more deliberate approaches to sustainability including (*all Medium Priority*):**

- Develop a sustainability matrix with stakeholders that covers each component which outlines what are realistic goals in relation to sustainability and measure progress through a participatory process every 6 months.<sup>82</sup>
- Promote/incentivise cost sharing between pre-school and GoTL (MEYS) and where appropriate set targets or plan for phase out of New Zealand's pre-school funding.
- Support on-going policy dialogue around the development of an affordable model of pre-school services (See Recommendation 2).
- Use the new planning and policy reforms from the Education Sector Plan (being developed) and community pre-school model options/evidence as an opportunity to discuss affordability options across the sub-sector.
- For subsequent phases, HANDS to only support aspects of an affordable model for early childhood learning - pilot and demonstrate model options/build evidence base, communicate success.
- Identify broader systems issues impeding improvement to early childhood development. Use influence with MEYS and leverage support from other donors to tackle these issues.

**10. As part of the next design phase, the NZ Embassy, the design team and the HANDS programme consider the following (*all Medium Priority*):**

- Continued focus on a sustainable approach to teacher training and mentoring that improves teacher practice in the classroom.
- Increase focus on all aspects of school readiness including parental engagement and education, transition to primary including support for Year 1 teachers
- Investigate opportunities to leverage initiatives that promote inclusive education.
- Consider balance of support at national and local level and where possible support local solutions for local problems, not necessarily a one size fits all.

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<sup>82</sup> See examples of sustainability strategies <http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/dcdndep/31950216.pdf>



- Investigate the use of PND systems to incentivise greater community engagement in pre-schools through increased menu of options related to pre-school.
- Targeted institutional reform and professional development with GoTL based on an affordable model and lessons from HANDS phase 1.



## Appendices

Appendix 1	Abbreviations
Appendix 2	HANDS programme results framework (2018 version)
Appendix 3	HANDS MTR Evaluation Questions
Appendix 4	List of Interviewees & Group Discussions
Appendix 5	Input to HANDS Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
Appendix 6	Summary of PNDS phases



**APPENDIX 1: Abbreviations**

<b>ALMA</b>	<i>Apoiu Lideransa liuhosi Mentorina no Aprendizajen/Leadership Support through Mentoring and Learning.</i>
<b>CBPS</b>	Community-based Pre-schools
<b>CDD</b>	Community Demand Driven
<b>CITL</b>	CARE International Timor-Leste
<b>DFAT</b>	Australia Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
<b>DNEPE</b>	<i>Direção Nacional da Educação Pré-Escolar / National Directorate of Pre-School Education</i>
<b>DoE</b>	Department of Education
<b>ECD</b>	Early Childhood Development
<b>ECE</b>	Early Childhood Education
<b>EGRA</b>	Early Grade Reading Assessment
<b>EMIS</b>	Educational Management Information System
<b>FIR</b>	<i>Formatu Inspesaun Rutina / Routine Inspection Form</i>
<b>GoNZ</b>	Government of New Zealand
<b>GoTL</b>	Government of Timor-Leste
<b>GHRI/Grow HR</b>	Grow Human Resources International Ltd (HANDS Managing Contractor)
<b>GPE</b>	Global Partnership for Education
<b>GTP</b>	<i>Grupo Trabalho dos Professores / Pre-school Clusters</i>
<b>HANDS</b>	Halimar, Aprende No Descubre Suceso
<b>ICT</b>	Information and Communication Technology
<b>IGED</b>	<i>Inspeção Geral Educação / Office of the Inspector General for Education</i>
<b>INFORDEPE</b>	<i>Instituto Nacional de Formação de Docentes e Profissionais da Educação/ National Institute for Teacher Professional Development</i>
<b>KAPPE</b>	<i>Kuaifikasaun Akademika ba Profesor Pre-Eskolar/ Academic Qualification for Pre-School Teachers</i>
<b>LTO</b>	Long term outcome
<b>M&amp;E</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation
<b>MEYS</b>	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport
<b>MFAT</b>	New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
<b>MTO</b>	Medium Term Outcome
<b>NZ</b>	New Zealand
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Government Organisation



<b>PHD</b>	Partnership for Human Development
<b>PLMP</b>	Professional Leadership and Mentoring Programme (now ALMA)
<b>PMT</b>	HANDS Programme Management Team
<b>PNDS</b>	<i>Programa Nacional Desenvolvimento Suko</i> National Programme for Village Development
<b>PS</b>	Pre-School
<b>PSI</b>	Pre-School Inspectors
<b>PTA</b>	Parent-Teacher Association
<b>STO</b>	Short Term Outcome
<b>ToR</b>	Terms of Reference
<b>UNTL</b>	<i>Universidade Nacional de Timor-Leste</i>
<b>WB</b>	World Bank



## APPENDIX 2: HANDS Programme Results Matrix

Long Term Outcome				
Results	Draft Indicator(s)	Draft Baseline Information (B) and Targets (T)	Draft Data Sources	Comments from HANDS
<i>ECE for 3 – 5 year olds is improved in terms of access, quality and equity, and with improved learning outcomes for children, especially in literacy and numeracy</i>	QUALITY AND EQUITY Improved literacy and numeracy outcomes for boys and girls  ACCESS Numbers of children enrolled and attending pre-school in Timor-Leste	<b>LEARNING OUTCOMES</b> <b>B:</b> Scores based on 2015 administration into study into learning outcomes (literacy = 35%; numeracy = 48.2%) <b>T: 2020:</b> 10% increase into literacy and numeracy scores  <b>ACCESS</b> Baseline – GER = 16.86% (2015) (Females = 17.57%; Males = 16.2%) <b>Target</b> – 10% increase in GER by 2020  Baseline – NER = 14.26% (2015) (Female = 14.95%; Make = 13.62%) <b>Target</b> – 5% increase in NER by 2020	UNICEF 2015 baseline data  EGRA 2011 Report 2018 onwards EGRA Reports  EMIS Data (GER AND NER)	Note: the long-term outcomes will be beyond the end date of a programme such as HANDS <sup>83</sup>
Medium Term Outcomes				
Results	Draft Indicator(s)	Draft Baseline Information (B) and Targets (T)	Draft Data Sources	Comments
<i>MTO 1 Enrolment increases at existing Pre-Schools that have capacity (MTO1a), and student attendance increases (MTO1b)</i>	a) % enrolment increase in schools which are currently under capacity	MTO1a <b>B:</b> To be established in 2018 <b>T:</b> By 2020 N% increase in enrolment at schools which are under capacity (to be decided once baseline available)	Study of capacity in schools as part of the study of <i>Quadro Pessoal</i> currently under way. <i>Matricula</i> data will also provide information related to this.	<i>Quadro Pessoal</i> not yet finalised. PSIs will validate and collect this information for central collation.

<sup>83</sup> "MFAT would not generally expect to see its achievement directly contributing to the goal-level as there will be a number of factors contributing to and other factors affecting the achievement of the goal. It is usually expressed as an intention and is usually at a sector, population, government or country level. It may link to the programme strategy, depending on the context." (p.3) MFAT (2013), Guidance on Developing a Results Framework

	b) % attendance of Pre-School children aged 3-5, disaggregated by sex, district, type of school	MTO1b: Data not available – T: By 2020 80% of children attend regularly	School records of student daily attendance  PSI monitoring visit report	Recommendation 14 of Annual Report to HANDS supporting roll audit.
MTO2 <i>Teachers use child-centered, activity-based teaching practices.</i>	% of time that Pre-School children are engaged in activity based learning	B: Estimated 90% teacher directed activity. T: By end of 2020 children are engaged in activity-based learning for over 50% of time	Observation reports: activity tracking Pre-School Coordinator reports PS Inspector reports	PSIs can undertake this observation after development of a competency-based tool and training in its use
MTO3 <i>Effective leadership management and administration practice to improve the quality of Pre-School education is evident throughout the pre-school system</i>	No. of targets stipulated in the ME 5 year plan related to Pre-School access and quality that are met <sup>84</sup>	B: 0 (2016) T: By end of 2020 50% targets are achieved according to quality standards and timelines stipulated.	ME performance data / performance reviews	The ME 5 year plan was not approved. It is anticipated that the updating of the National Education Strategic Plan will address this
	Manual for schools including section on pre-schools is used and results aggregated for reporting to Minister	B: School inspector manual contains no guidance on inspection of pre-schools T: 2020 Sections of manual relating to pre-schools developed and is used by pre-schools	Monitoring visits Mid-term program evaluation Inspectorate Auditor reports monitoring PSGI compliance	Manual development is under way with a dedicated TA working on this
<b>SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES</b>				
<b>Results</b>	<b>Draft Indicator(s)</b>	<b>Draft Baseline Information (B) and Targets (T)</b>	<b>Draft Data Sources</b>	<b>Comments</b>

<sup>84</sup> The five-year action plan is still in a state of flux and may be superseded by the sub-sector action plan to be developed under GPE



<i>STO1 Parents perceive Pre-Schools as conducive environments for the early childhood care and education of their children</i>	Attitudes of parents as measured by attitudinal survey (Male / Female/municipality)	B: 67% of parents feel that the physical environment of schools could be improved T: Less than half of parents feel that the physical environment of schools could be improved	Attitudinal survey measured through semi-structured interview and focus groups	Concluded 2016
<i>STO2 Teachers qualified, trained and appraised based on key competences</i>	% of teachers qualified <sup>85</sup>	B: 27% qualified (HRMIS data). <sup>86</sup> T: By end of 2020, 30 teachers have begun a qualification leading to a recognised pre-school qualification	PMIS/HRMIS and paper personnel files in DNRH	
<i>STO3 Pre-schools, co-ordinators, teachers and parents are better supported to provide quality service</i>	Number of visits per PS by PSGIs	B: 0 Official records of support visits to schools by Pre-School Inspectors. T: By 2020 on average all Pre-Schools are visited by Pre-School Guidance Inspectors at least three times a year for the purposes of support	ME Policy and guidelines ME HR records; M&E Reports 2015 Accreditation reports	259 records of support visits in 2016; 1795 visits in 2017
<i>STO4 Improved planning, coordination and more efficient use of Pre-School resources</i>	% of schools that have a school development plan that shows how they are addressing recommendations from the previous year's accreditation report	B: 2015 0 schools have official easily available SDP T By end of 2020 50% have school development plan linked to accreditation requirements	PSI records Accreditation assessments	To be collected through PSIs
	% of schools that adequately maintain their playgrounds	B: 2015 No playground maintenance plans in place T. 2020: 90% of school implement their playground maintenance plan		

<sup>85</sup> Teacher data set baseline with teacher classifications pending

<sup>86</sup> This data needs to be verified







## Monitoring of HANDS Outputs

OUTPUT	KEY INDICATOR	BASELINE and TARGET	DATA SOURCE
1. Local communities across Timor-Leste are provided with the necessary resources and support to construct playgrounds (and where applicable fencing) for preschools	1. 1. No. of Pre-School playgrounds and fencing built in existing Pre-Schools	B: Data collection in progress T: By end of 2020, at least 150 of the existing Pre-Schools have playgrounds and fences provided by the HANDS programme	Inspectors to collect data on existing playgrounds status using tablet app M&E Report
2. New learning materials and storage equipment are purchased and distributed to 307 preschools across Timor-Leste	2. 1. No of Pre-Schools provided with new learning materials and storage	B: 0 materials provided by HANDS T: By 2017 100% of existing Pre-Schools have new materials to support the curriculum implementation	M&E Reports CITL completion report and signed distribution lists EMIS reports
3. Pre-service teacher training courses in ECE designed and implemented	3.1 No. of relevant Pre-School teacher training courses developed	B: 0 T: By 2020 1 Pre-School teacher-training course developed	M&E Reports ME Policy and Guidelines
	3.2. No. of Pre-School teachers who begin pre-service training in ECE from an accredited training provider (Male / Female / disaggregated by municipality) <sup>87</sup>	B: No existing courses in ECE T: To be decided in conjunction with WB and ME based on project design. May be measured after HANDS has ended	M&E Reports Provider audit

<sup>87</sup> If a category of qualified Teacher Assistant is approved then an indicator and target will be developed for this

4. In-Service Teacher Training - Existing <sup>88</sup> teachers receive professional development / training	4.1. No. of Pre-School teachers who receive in-service training (Male / Female, disaggregated by municipality)	B: 900 teachers have participated in in-service training T: 2016 Numbers trained annually maintained at 900	M&E Reports Provider audit
	4.2. No. of support days provided	B: Ad hoc support only T: 2020: Each teacher receives on average two visits per year days of in-school support per year	Professional development plan Monitoring reports of visits by PSIs
5. Pre-School Guidance Inspectors are trained to support Pre-School coordinators, teachers and parents	5.1. No. of Pre-School Inspectors who are trained and deployed to municipalities to give support	B: 0 T: 2020: 26 Pre-School Inspectors are trained and deployed in municipalities and provide high quality support to Pre-School teachers	ME Policy and guidelines ME HR records M&E Reports
6. Education staff at national and municipal level are supported to provide stronger leadership and coordination of the preschool sector	6.1 No. of ECE Working Group actions from minutes that relate to service coordination	B: Irregular meetings T: 2020: Monthly ECE Working Group records regular actions in meeting minutes (70% of service coordination action items are met).	ECE Working Group Minutes ME Policy document analysis
	6.2 % of ME Pre-School Directorate and municipal staff trained in relevant management skills disaggregated by sex / municipality	B: Data not available or required T: 2020 65% of ME Pre-School Directorate and district staff are trained and are effective in relevant management skills	Capacity Development Advisor Reports Training records Performance evaluations Parent interviews

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<sup>88</sup> Existing refers to teachers who are teaching in pre-schools. This includes not only those teachers who are in pre-schools at the start up of HANDS but those who join pre-schools and benefit from training during programme implementation



	<p>6.3 Pre-School licencing<sup>89</sup> and accreditation systems developed and implemented</p>	<p>B. 2016 300 Pre-Schools licenced and accredited using minimum accreditation standards</p> <p>T. 2020 Enhanced accreditation standards developed and used for all pre-schools and all licencing applications for new pre-schools are considered within 6 months of registration</p>	<p>Accreditation database</p> <p>Accreditation Reports</p> <p>Report verifications</p>
	<p>6.4 Teachers are allocated to Pre-School as required under the Quadro Pessoal (Staffing Profile) and teach the required contact time.</p>	<p>B. Quadro Pessoal not in place</p> <p>T 70% of Pre-School comply with QP in 2018 &amp; 80% in 2019</p>	<p>Human Resources datasets</p> <p>Quadro Pessoal Guidelines</p> <p>PSGI monitoring reports</p>

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<sup>89</sup> Note: Licensing in this context means that a pre-school meets the standards set by MEYS. Accreditation means that it is registered with the MEYS



### APPENDIX 3: Mid Term Review Evaluation Questions

#### HANDS Mid-Term Review Key Evaluation Questions

**Objective 1: to assess the extent to which strengthening early childhood education remains a priority for Timor-Leste and the New Zealand Aid Programme (Relevance)**

- Does the Activity continue to be relevant for the GoTL? Why? What evidence exists to demonstrate that early childhood education remains a priority for the government?
- Does the Activity continue to be relevant to the New Zealand Aid Programme? Why? What are the critical factors that sustain the importance of the Activity for NZ Aid Programme?

**Objective 2: to examine the progress being made in achieving the HANDS outputs and short and medium term outcomes (Effectiveness)**

- What progress has been made in achieving intended outcomes and outputs, as outlined in the HANDS Programme Results Framework? What factors are impacting on whether the results are achievable or not? And if not what needs to change?
- How do the different stakeholders view progress? Do the different stakeholders still regard the results as achievable? Why and why not?
- Is the results framework still relevant? Are there any issues, opportunities or priorities arising in the implementation which were not considered during the initial design? Are the assumptions in the theory of change outlined in the results framework still valid?
- Are the performance targets achievable? What changes, if any are recommended?
- Are there any unexpected outcomes?
- What factors are enhancing or constraining progress towards intended outcomes (e.g. management of risk, project management arrangements)?
- To what extent have changes in the operating environment (prompts – partnerships, political situation, partner capacity, resourcing, etc] in Timor-Leste impacted the Activity's progress? How could these challenges be addressed in the future? What are the implications of this for the remainder of the Activity?
- To what extent is the activity providing benefits to stakeholders? (explore by component)
- To what extent is local ownership of the Activity developing?



### **HANDS Mid-Term Review Key Evaluation Questions**

#### ***Objective 3: to review the cost effectiveness of the implementing partner's approach employed to deliver results. (Efficiency)***

- What could be done differently to improve implementation?
- Are resources (human resources, funding, other) being used in the best possible way in order to provide value for money?
- How well do the outputs to date align with the budgeted expenditure? What factors contribute to alignment or misalignment and how can these issues be addressed to strengthen impact and influence of the Activity?
- How does this Activity align with work other donors are undertaking in early childhood and basic education in Timor-Leste? Are opportunities for better coordination being adequately leveraged by those responsible for implementation? What helps and/or hinders them doing this well?

#### ***Objective 4: Future design and support – to identify the key changes needed to deliver sustainable outcomes (Sustainability)***

- To what extent are the activity interventions likely to continue (be sustained) after MFAT's funding has concluded?<sup>90</sup>
- What actions could be taken to improve sustainability and desired outcomes?
- How have MFAT's aspirations for sustainability been communicated to MEYS. Are the MFAT/HANDS Program facilitating the GoTL to fulfil these aspirations?
- What are the priorities in the East Timorese early childhood education sector that New Zealand should focus its support in the future?

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<sup>90</sup> In considering sustainability, the evaluation team has focused on those interventions that result in systemic change and are planned to continue, through the MEYS (or other stakeholder – parents, community groups) once the Activity is completed.



## APPENDIX 4: Interviews and Group Discussions

### Interviews

No	Name		Role/Position	Organisation
1	Vicki Poole	F	New Zealand Ambassador	New Zealand Embassy
2	Gabrielle Isaak	F	Deputy Head of Mission	New Zealand Embassy
3	Augusto Soares	M	Senior Development Programme Coordinator	New Zealand Embassy
4	Richard Hellyer	M	HANDS Liaison Officer /Grow HR Director	HANDS Programme team (Grow HR)
5	Stuart Mathews	M	International Support Services Adviser/Grow HR Director	
6	Bas Boonstoppel	M	Pre-School Inspector Adviser	
7	Dr Pedro Ximenes	M	Senior Advisor - INFORDEPE	
8	Dr Barbara Thornton	F	Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist & Technical Oversight Adviser	
9	Milka Pinheiro	F	National Pre-School Professional Development Advisor	
10	Lucia de Araujo	F	Teacher Professional Development Pre-School Technical Adviser	
11	Zulmira da Cruz Soares Pinto	F	Teacher Professional Development Pre-School Technical Adviser	
12	Marta Ferraz	F	Teacher Professional Development Pre-School Technical Adviser	
13	HE Dulce de Jesus Soares	F	Minister of Education, Youth and Sport	
14	Justino da Costa	M	Advisor	
15	Debbie Katzman	F	Minister's Principal Advisor	
16	Cidilio Leite	M	Director General Basic and Preschool Education and Recurrent Education	
17	Abelina da Costa	F	Director, National Directorate of Pre-School Education (DNEPE)	
18	Alfredo de Araujo	M	Director National Directorate Partnerships and Cooperation	
19	Jose Monteiro	M	Inclusive Education Directorate	
20	Barbara Oliviera	F	Legal Adviser - MEYS	
21	Evaristo Maria de	M	Inspector General (IGED)	Office of the



No	Name		Role/Position	Organisation
	Jesus			Inspector General (MEYS)
22	Domingos Belo Soares	M	Inspector Superintendent - Dili	
23	Manuela Sequeira	F	Preschool Inspector - Dili	
24	Azita Moniz Mota	F	Preschool Inspector - Dili	
25	Luis da Silva	M	Preschool Inspector - Liquica	
26	Julio da Silva Xavier	M	Preschool Inspector - Liquica	
27	Manuel Atoc	M	President	INFORDEPE
28	Mateus dos Reis	M	Vice President	
29	Ivan Ximenes	M	Chief of Department – Pre-school	
30	Nuhar dos Santos	F	Pre-school Education Focal Point	
31	Leotes Lugo Helin	F	Chief of Education	UNICEF
32	Sangay Jamtsho	M	Education Specialist	
33	Susiana Iskandar	F	Senior Education Specialist	WB
34	Eric Vitale	M	Trust Fund Financial Officer	
35	Adelaide Camoes	F	Education Specialist	
36	Sonia Moniz	F	Adviser to World Bank for KAPPE	
37	Peter Raynes	M	Country Director	CARE TL
38	Shoaib Danish	M	Program Coordinator	
39	Romana de Oliviera	F	Caridade Pre-school Coordinator	Caridade Pre-school
40	Cornelio Guterres	M	Principal	Sagrada Familia Pre-school
41	Teo Ximenes	F	Advisor	PHD
42	Ester Correia	F	Education Program Coordinator	
43	Cecilia Albertina da Costa	F	Coordinator Ostico Pre-school	Ostico Pre-school, Baucau
44	Januario Natalio Jose Augustino Cabral	M	Director of Education, Baucau	Department of Education Baucau
45	Celestino Simoens	M	Superintendent Inspector, Baucau	
46	Ermenglido da Costa Pereira	M	Inspectorate Office	
47	Carlos Barbosa	M	Pre-School Education Focal Point	
48	Acacio Ximenes	M	Pre-School Inspector - Baucau	
49	Augustinha Menejes	F	Pre-School Inspector - Baucau	
50	Dulce Guterres Junior	F	Director PNDS	PNDS
51	Teuku Mizansujah	M	Senior engineer adviser	
52	Secundino F. Moreira	M	Chief of Administration Finance Unit	
53	Fiona Hamilton	F	Team Leader PNDS-SP	





No	Name		Role/Position	Organisation
54	Marcio J. Marcal	M	Chief of operation program Unit	
55	Carlito Alves	M	Engineer	
56	Ema de Sousa	F	Program Manager Education	Alola Foundation
57	Dulce Lopes	F	Coordinator	
58	Lucena Allen	F	Program Officer Teacher Training	
59	Yvone Dikson	F	Program Coordinator Edu T.T.	
60	Agustinha Boavida Ximenes	F	Parents Program Coordinator	Mary Mackillop East Timor
61	Anabela Saldanha	F	Literacy Trainer	
62	Gertrudes Da Silva	F	Literacy Coordinator	
63	Amandio Sarmento	M	M/C Coordinator	World Vision Timor-Leste
64	Humbelino Pereira	M	Association Operation Manager	
65	Aguida Catarina Freitas	F	Education Manager	Plan International Timor-Leste
66	Jose Felix	M	Early Childhood Education Coordinator	Child Fund Timor-Leste
67	Clare Chivell	F	Counsellor	DFAT
68	Fernando da Conceicao	M	Vice Dean UNTL	UNTL
69	Oscar dos Santos	M	Pre-school teacher	Baura Pre-school



**Group Discussions (KC to move some of these up to the list of interviewees)**

<b>Group No.</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Role/Position</b>
1	Esperansa Pre-school Parents	Mixed	Parents – Dili.
2	Sta Rafael Pre-School, Teachers and GTP Group	Mixed	Pre-School Teachers and Inspectors - Bazartete
3	Edy Goncalves Octavio Barreto Maria Lucia Morais Ester dos Santos Hercilia de Araujo Belinha Alves Pereira	Mixed	Pre-school Teachers Reference Group
4	Joao Paulo II Pre-school parents	Mixed	Parents - Baucau
5	Joao Paulo II Pre-school Teachers	Female	Teachers - Baucau



## **APPENDIX 5: Monitoring and Evaluation Feedback**

The MTR team met with the HANDS M&E advisers to specifically discuss the M&E Plan, theory of change and results framework. A summary of the considerations in revising the M&E Plan, TOC and results framework identified by the MTR are as follows:

- The HANDS team should review the programme logic to determine what changes need to occur in order to contribute to the LTO (improved access, quality and equity of pre-school education). For example, to increase access to pre-school (MTO1) may require an understanding of both the demand (enrolment, participation) and supply side (class room capacity, extended pre-school services e.g. community pre-schools). In terms of demand, both motivators and barriers are worth considering.
- While there are existing HANDS programme components, it is important that the programme logic is developed based on what changes are required, and not driven by what components exist. This will assist in identifying if there are key gaps in the programme logic, that can impact on progress towards outcomes.
- To demonstrate performance, the M&E Plan should include clear information as to how the performance targets are being measured, and to ensure that the relevant information required is available to measure performance exists. This would include: the data collection tool to be used, who will collect & analyse data, how often/when the data will be collected.
- Currently the M&E Plan includes indicators, and targets, however in some cases, the indicator is outdated, the data is not possible to collect, the targets do not match the indicator (& in some cases the baseline). It is recommended that all indicators are reviewed to ensure they are appropriate to demonstrate change to the STO and MTO and that they can be measured.



**APPENDIX 6: PNDS Phases**

