Researching SWAps in Pacific Education

A study of experiences in Solomon Islands and Tonga

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Eve Coxon and Hilary Tolley

with

**Seu'ula J Fua and
Unaisi Nabobo-Baba**

Contents

Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ANZCIES	Australia and New Zealand Comparative and International Education Society
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
CDP	Coordinating Development Partner
CDU	Curriculum Development Unit
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CT	Coordination Team
DFID	Department for International Development
DP	Development Partner
EA	Education Authorities
EC	European Commission
ECE	Early Childhood Education
EFA	Education for All
EGRA	Early Grades Reading Assessment
EMIS	Education Management Information System
EPF	Education Policy Framework
ESCC	Education Sector Coordinating Committee
ESF	Education Strategic Framework 2007-2015
ESIRP	Education Sector Investment and Reform Programme
ESP	Education Strategic Plan 2004-2006
ESPER	Education Sector Public Expenditure Review
EU	European Union

GNI	Gross National Income
GoT	Government of Tonga
HDI	Human Development Index
HOD	Head of Department
IDA	International Development Association
IDG	International Development Group
IESP	Interim Education Sector Programme
ITA	International Technical Assistance
JICA	Japanese International Co-operation Agency
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MDPAC	Ministry of Development Planning & Aid Co-ordination
MEHRD	Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development
MEWAC	Ministry of Education, Women's Affairs and Culture
MFAT	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
MoA	Memorandum of Agreement
MoFT	Ministry of Finance and Treasury
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
NC	National Consultants
NEAP	National Education Action Plan
NERDP	National Economic Reconstruction and Development Plan
NGO	Non-government organisation

NZAID - NZAP	New Zealand Agency for International Development. Now known as New Zealand Aid Programme
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAF	Performance Assessment Framework
PBA	Programme Based Approach
PEAP	Provincial Education Action Plan
PEDF	Pacific Education Development Framework
PFEMM	Pacific Forum Education Ministers' Meeting
PIC	Pacific Island Countries
PIFS	Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
PIU	Project Implementation Unit
PMT	Project Management Team
PS	Permanent Secretary
RAMSI	Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands
ROC	Republic of China
RUPIE	Research Unit for Pacific and International Education
SBS	Sector Budget Support
SIEMIS	Solomon Islands Education Management Information System
SIG	Solomon Islands Government
SIP	Sector Investment Programme
SISTA	Solomon Islands Standardised Test of Achievement
SWAp	Sector-Wide Approach

TA	Technical Assistance
TEGRA	Tonga Early Grade Reading Assessment
TESP	Tonga Education Support Program
TSGP	Tonga School Grant Programme
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WB	The World Bank
WBTF	World Bank Trust Fund

Acknowledgements and Authors' Note

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- the permission granted by the appropriate authorities in Solomon Islands and Tonga to our undertaking the field research that has informed this report, and the very generous allocation of time, sharing of knowledge and inclusion in key events provided by so many 'stakeholders' within each country's education system. Their interest in the research and their collective views on the topic under study have made a crucial contribution to this report;

- the very open sharing of knowledge and information from NZAID officials in Wellington and each of the case study countries, and their continued interest in our findings and analysis; and

- the support provided through NZAID's International Development Research Fund, which contributed to field research and other costs involved in the study.

We draw attention to the report's continued use of the term NZAID: although now known as either the International Development Group (IDG) or the NZ Aid Programme (NZAP) within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, we decided to keep to NZAID because that is how it was known during the bulk of the research period.

We also note the time period covered by the research reported: the study began in October, 2008 and the submission of this report was to be November 30, 2010. Because of difficulties scheduling country visits (the need to fit country schedules as well as those of research team members) final data collection in each country was delayed; for Tonga until August, 2010 and for Solomon Islands until November, 2010. Thus the delay with development and submission of this final IDRF milestone report stems from delays with scheduling of final country visits. Findings reported for each country do not take into account education developments since those dates although footnoted comments may refer to possibilities arising from them.

PART ONE: Setting the Scene

An introduction to SWAps & their evolution as a global aid modality

Due to its perceived links to economic growth through the provision of human capital, education has always been awarded a central role as an agent of development. The belief in education as an instrument of economic growth persisted even through the pessimism of the 1990s, when the increasingly obvious anti-developmental consequences of structural adjustment programmes led to extensive questioning of aid's failure to promote economic development and reduce poverty. These critiques resulted in both a decrease in aid volumes and an increase in political debates about the concept of 'development' itself and how aid could be more effectively deployed to poverty reduction by focusing on the social sectors of health and education (Coxon & Tolley, 2005). The 1990 Education for All (EFA) commitment had begun the process of donors directing increased amounts of aid to social sectors/basic human needs, thus "education was at the core of the [aid] effectiveness debate" (Bermingham, Christensen, & Mahn, 2009: 132). But it was not until the early years of the new millennium that the persistent calls for 'better aid effectiveness' led to globally organized action.

International conferences and meetings, organized by various UN organizations and other key development agencies led to what Glennie describes as the globally agreed "Better Aid agenda" of the "new era of aid" (2008: 21,14). The latter term was coined to describe the period beginning in 2000 with the UN Millennium Summit which produced a set of globally agreed Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – including universal primary education and gender equity in primary and secondary education – to be met by 2015. This gave rise to more optimism regarding the aid/development nexus by providing a global agenda with the possibility of "combating poverty in it multiple dimensions" (van de Waerdt, 2008: 88).

Another international meeting that influenced aid donor countries was the Financing for Development conference held at Monterrey in 2002. Although the globally agreed target of 0.7% of GNI (gross national income) was being met by only a handful of countries (namely the Netherlands, Luxembourg and Nordic countries) the optimism of the new aid era led to a considerable increase in the aid budgets of most donor governments (Glennie, 2008: 13). A further aspect of the Better Aid agenda arose from the 2003 Aid Harmonization conference in Rome, which focused on the effectiveness of aid delivery. The key need identified was for donors to co-ordinate their aid contributions when working in the same recipient country and within the same sector, and to align these with the national sector plans of the country concerned.

The focus on the sector-wide approach as a Better Aid modality than the predominant project approach was reaffirmed through the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. The Paris Declaration, described as "a new paradigm of effective aid" (Menocal & Mulley, 2006: vii), represents an unprecedented level of consensus and resolve to reform the

delivery of aid and increase the quality of aid. As a result, development assistance is being increasingly influenced by the new aid agenda 'roadmap'. Underlying the Paris Declaration is the view that not only is a greater volume of aid needed to achieve the MDGs (by 2015), but that all parties should utilise aid more effectively, giving greater support to partner country efforts to strengthen governance and improve development outcomes. Five principles frame relationships for delivering more effective resources:

Box 1

The Paris Principles

Ownership – Developing country governments lead in developing national policies and implementing development;

Harmonisation – Donors streamline and harmonise their procedures to reduce transaction costs;

Alignment – Development partners support the national development strategies and priorities, institutions and procedures;

Mutual accountability – all parties jointly assess progress and both parties should be able to hold the other to account on performance and delivery;

Managing for results – All parties improve monitoring decision making and resource management.

(Eurodad, 2008; OECD, 2005)

Since 2005, "…'more and better aid' has become a stalwart of the development lexicon" (Glennie, 2008: 89), with a focus on the Paris principles and targets for aid quality and quantity. To date, 125 countries and 26 international organisations have signed the Paris Declaration (Glennie, 2008; OECD, 2009). This approach to aid delivery has become the means of promoting 'partnership relationships' between donors and aid recipients (now known as *development partners* and *partner countries* respectively), and between donors themselves. For many development agencies, sector wide approaches (SWAps) to aid delivery have emerged as a practical mechanism for implementing the commitments outlined in the Paris Declaration and the subsequent Accra Agenda for Action (2008).

Key components of the sector-wide approach

The shift from project to sector aid (Negin, 2010b: 2) was signalled with the publication of 'The Broad Sector Approach to Investment Lending' by the World Bank, in which Harold (1995, cited in ODI, 2008:4) introduced the concept of Sector Investment Programmes (SIP). The SIP concept was later criticised for its unrealistic and overly stringent pre-conditions. Although intended to be a coherent capital investment programme allowing different donors to select their respective components, the SIP ultimately became a multitude of

donor-earmarked, independent projects that took no consideration of sectoral recurrent costs, or the recalculation of priorities for unfunded components (UNESCO, 2007).

Under the guidance of Cassels, a more flexible terminology evolved and the concept of the SWAp emerged (Cassels, 1997). Ideally, a SWAp comprised the means of consolidating the support, review, monitoring and evaluation of different development agencies for the good of the sector-wide development plan of a country (UNESCO, 2007) – in other words, long-term partnerships to utilise development assistance to support nationally defined policies and strategies in the sector concerned.

It is common to read that there is no definitive exposition of a sector-wide approach; however, Williamson and Dom (2010: 40) reaffirm Foster's (2000) definition, stating that:

> The defining characteristics of a SWAp are that all significant funding for the sector supports a single sector policy and expenditure programme, under Government leadership, adopting common approaches across the sector, and progressing towards relying on Government procedures to disburse and account for all funds.

Notwithstanding this, considerable contestation still exists and the term is used increasingly broadly. For some, distinguishing a SWAp from a more the generic term *programme based approach* (PBA)[1] lies largely in the emphasis on the trajectory of change, as Williamson & Dom (2010:40) and the Overseas Development Institute (ODI, 2008:5) point out:

> Definitions of SWAps should be read in conjunction with the widely held view that "…a SWAp should not be seen as a blueprint, but rather as a framework setting a direction of change – towards better coordinated and more effective aid management".

Others place emphasis on stakeholders (governments, development partners, NGOs etc.) working together across the sector in harmonised partnership. Still others view a SWAp as predominately about financial management and aid modalities[2] (Negin, 2010b).

From a significant literature review the following SWAp components appear to be most commonly accepted as key features:

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[1] A PBA is intended to support domestically owned development 'programmes' which should include comprehensive planning and coordinated donor assistance in support of a poverty reduction strategy or sector strategy.

[2] It is important at this point to make a clear distinction between a sector wide aid delivery *approach* and an aid delivery instrument, or *modality*. A delivery approach is generally a framework or set of guiding principles, while an aid modality refers to the type of mechanism by which support is delivered; e.g. direct budget support, projects, pooled funding (Williamson & Dom, 2010).

The Key Features of a SWAp

Engagement of most or all significant stakeholders or funding sources to support shared sector wide policy and strategy

Comprehensive (sector wide) and coherent policy and expenditure framework

Partner Government ownership / leadership

Shared processes, planning and management procedures for managing sector strategy and work programme

Use of (or progress towards) government financial management systems and procedures

(ODI, 2008:4; Walford, 2003)

When does a SWAp begin?

As SWAps are seen as a process of change, obviously countries will not have all five of these features in place from the start. At some point, however, a decision is made between the Government and development partners to move into a SWAp (Walford, 2003). Of course, the exact context of that decision will be unique but it is generally presumed that certain preparatory activities have taken place that provide some degree of the following:

- development of a sector policy, strategy and programme;

- a sectoral expenditure program and strengthened financial systems;

- design of shared monitoring and reporting processes;

- government-led donor coordination within these frameworks, with common implementation and management arrangements and the use of government systems; and

- the participation of key stakeholders (Walford, 2003; Ward, Sikua, & Banks, 2004: 37).

In determining a country's readiness for, or its broad stage of, SWAp development, Walford (2003) suggests a "breadth and depth" analysis, whereby breadth refers to the number of elements a country has in place and depth refers to how effectively the elements are implemented (2003: 4). She illustrates her idea of a breadth continuum in the following manner (ibid.):

Moving towards a SWAp | Meet minimum criteria | "In a SWAp"

(2-4 elements &/or limited 'depth' of some elements) | "In a full /extensive SWAp" (has all 5 elements all well implemented)
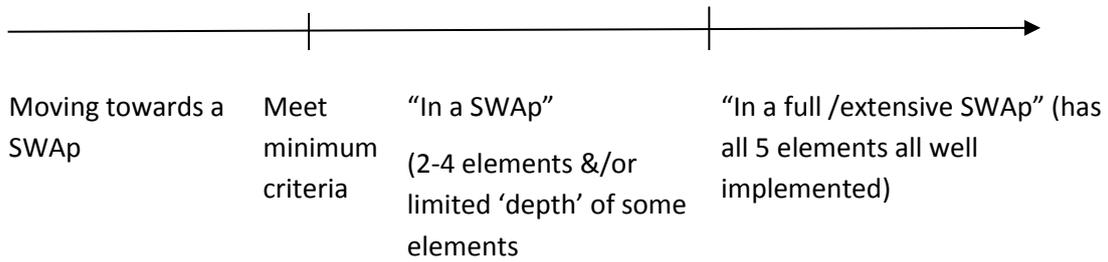
The ODI (2008) has developed this idea further, providing a "breadth- depth" model as a means of characterising and tracking the evolution of a SWAp in different contexts.

Figure 1: ODI (2008:5) model for defining a SWAP: Depth and Breadth
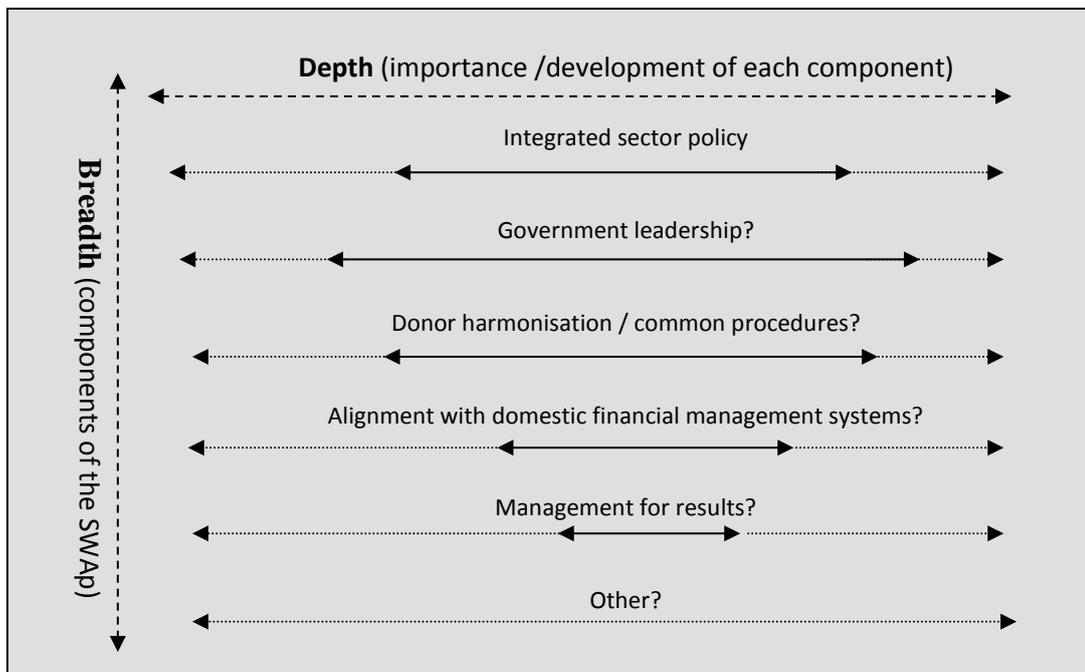
This research will draw on Walford's timeline and the ODI model for its analysis.

Introduction of SWAps to the Pacific region and Pacific education

Increasingly since 2000, in conjunction with various global Declarations and international and regional commitments entered into by official multilateral and bilateral development agencies active in the region, there has been clear convergence both in development objectives and delivery models in the Pacific. The sector wide approach is now being engaged in across the region by most of the major donors, including the Asian Development

Bank (ADB), the European Union (EU), World Bank (WB), and Australia's and New Zealand's international aid agencies (AusAID and NZAID respectively).

At the second Pacific Forum Education Ministers' Meeting (PFEMM) in 2002, NZAID[3] spearheaded suggestions that the region move away from the project approach and adopt a Sector Wide Approach as the primary mechanism for educational support and donor collaboration. With educational aid to the Pacific being provided largely through bilateral rather than multilateral channels (in the form of grants rather than loans), New Zealand's championing of the SWAp led to this becoming an increasingly dominant approach across the region, particularly in education.

As explained, a key feature of the sector wide approach is the harmonisation and co-ordination of partners' systems and a focus on the Better Aid agenda has strengthened across the region. Many Pacific governments are signatories to the Paris Declaration and in 2007 a set of Pacific Aid Effectiveness Principles, developed by the Pacific Forum Secretariat in close alignment with the Paris Principles, was endorsed by regional leaders. Further to this, the Pacific Education Development Framework (PEDF), released in March 2009 by the Pacific Forum Leaders, now identifies harmonisation as one of its guiding principles. Harmonisation is defined as:

> ... a shared commitment between countries and development partners to align development activities with partner countries' national priorities; and giving importance to the national leadership role in coordinating development assistance with a focus on managing for results (PIFS, 2009: 5).

To date, several Pacific states are in various stages of education SWAps including Solomon Islands, Tonga, Samoa, Vanuatu and Cook Islands. In all these cases New Zealand has been a prominent donor agency in providing education sector support to partner governments throughout. Although at the start of each education SWAp donor partners varied from case to case, AusAID now looks to be at the point of becoming a donor partner in all of them. For example, New Zealand's development partners in Samoa are the ADB and AusAID, in Tonga it has partnered with the World Bank and now AusAID, and, although previously the EU was involved in Solomon Islands under Stabex '99 arrangements, it is now looking to AusAID.

This strengthening of the AusAID/NZAID relationship is consistent with the 'Australia-New Zealand Partnership for Development Cooperation in the Pacific' signed by each of the two governments as a first step in implementing the Cairns Compact on Strengthening Development Coordination which was endorsed by all members of the Pacific Islands Forum in August, 2009.

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[3] In 2002 New Zealand's ODA strategy was overhauled and resulted in the formation of NZAID as a semi autonomous agency within MFAT. A single clear mission on poverty reduction was established, the MDGs were adopted as agency objectives, along with the adoption of a new approach to aid delivery – the sector wide approach, especially in education. Between 2003 and 2008, New Zealand's aid budget increased by almost 80% (Coxon & Tolley, 2010:189).

Rationale for the study

There is an extensive literature on various countries' experiences with SWAps, but it is notable that almost all derives from countries in sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and South America, most of which have large populations, large ministries and a large number of development partners. The dearth of literature exploring SWAp experience in small island states with small and highly dispersed populations, small ministries with staff often acting in multiple roles, high capacity and/or capability needs, and a much smaller number of donors, indicates that SWAp application is relatively new to, and therefore untested in, these contexts. This research therefore aims to provide initial analysis of the two earliest SWAps to be applied to education in Pacific Island Countries (PICs), namely Solomon Islands and Tonga.

A further area emerging within the 'education for development' research literature and relevant to the Pacific region is that of addressing the needs of 'fragile states'[4], including those in a conflict/post-conflict environment. This area highlights the intersections between aid effectiveness, good governance and the development of contextually appropriate education policies and strategies. It upholds the notion that the complex relationship between educational equality and state fragility needs careful contextual consideration, especially in relation to bilateral and multilateral interventions (Kirk, 2007).

This study speaks directly to a number of key aspects of (the then[5]) current NZAID policy and practice:

- It aims to provide a detailed and comprehensive account of how a SWAp works in practice. Through this it will provide a better understanding of the politics and practice of aid negotiation to better equip NZAID to plan and provide effective programmes of educational assistance.

- It seeks to clarify in-country issues affecting the quality and impact of aid provision and the construction of effective working partnerships.

- It will be relevant to a range of stakeholders in New Zealand and overseas – bilateral, multilateral, non government aid agencies, programme country governments and the international development research agencies.

Conceptual framing, broad research questions & methodology

There is a need - including from within aid agencies themselves- for better understandings about how, in practice, aid policies and programmes are negotiated and set in place. More than this, there is need to better understand how key stakeholders and partners view the relevance, quality and impact of aid provision. Furthermore, given the alacrity with which both multilateral and bilateral agencies are adopting SWAps as the preferred delivery

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[4] Fragile states are those unable or unwilling to provide basic services, including education, to the majority of their citizens. They also lack the capacity to implement pro-poor policies and may have recently endured violent conflict (Rose & Greeley 2006, cited in E. A. Cassity, 2007).
[5] See Authors' Note for explanation.

mechanism for the new millennium, we believe the findings from this research study will have the potential to impact development policy and practice.

As far as we have been able to ascertain, and as previously asserted, the only education SWAps reported in the international research literature pertain to those operating in large countries. This study's focus on the operation of SWAps in small island states generally, and those to education specifically, therefore provides the opportunity for a positive criticality towards the development policy and practices of both NZAID and its development partner in the two SWAp case studies explored, and the partner government agencies in both cases. There is also potential for the findings to have wider application: it is understood that 'lessons learned' from these initial education SWAps in the Pacific countries concerned are of interest to other education systems and other sectors (e.g. health) across the region.

Underpinning this research study is the desire to explore the evidence regarding the extent to which SWAps, as an approach to delivering aid, can address a key concern within wider development policy debates and specifically within 'education for development'. That is, whether a SWAp provides a more effective partnership for aid provision. The guiding questions for the research study were:

- How the international development architecture at the global and regional levels has influenced, informed and shaped NZAID's spearheading of the sector wide approach as a key delivery mechanism for the education sector in its Pacific development policy.

- The effectiveness of NZAID's attempts to contextualise SWAp design to an individual country/sector.

- The degree of stakeholder understanding of a SWAp and the extent to which stakeholders see a SWAp as a methodological partnership between the country and donors; that is, one that combines budget support/funding mechanisms with local ownership of implementation and monitoring systems.

- The perceptions and judgements of key stakeholders both in New Zealand and in each of the case study countries regarding the relevance, quality and effectiveness of NZAID's delivering education sector aid through a SWAp

- The presentation of research evidence from each case study to indicate the benefits or otherwise of the sector wide approach as a delivery mechanism for educational aid in these particular contexts and to the wider Pacific.

The broad methodological approaches to data collection and analyses included:

Literature review

A thorough policy and documentary analysis on SWAps was undertaken including critical literature addressing recent global development agenda; official NZAID documents and working materials; official development and education sector policy and strategy

documents, and education statistics information from the two countries; and documents and working materials of donor partners in each SWAp.

Talanoa and narrative inquiry

A key concern in developing the research proposal for this study was that culturally appropriate research approaches and methods be utilised. Central to the success of the research has been the involvement of two senior researchers indigenous to the region, both with excellent reputations as 'insider' researchers, dominant in the field of 'education for development', and knowledgeable about and skilled in Pacific research discourses such as *talanoa.*

According to Nabobo-Baba (2006:27): "*Talanoa* refers to a process in which two or more people talk together, or in which one person tells a story to an audience of people who are largely listeners". Although not all talanoa protocols were observed in all researcher/ participant encounters, protocols guiding the appropriateness of approaching people to seek information, how to ask questions and the types of questions etc. were followed (ibid:28).

The *narrative inquiry* research approach is presented in the same section as *talanoa* because of their methodological compatibility - insofar as the relationship between researcher(s) and participant(s) is a key aspect of each, and, importantly, because 'story-telling' is central to both. Narratives (stories) represent a participant's interpretation of the experiences of a certain time in relation to the topic being researched. Thus, those being researched give 'voice' to their experience and through interaction with the researcher meaning is constructed.

Both *talanoa* and narrative researchers collect data through research methods such as semi-structured interviews and focus group sessions. Semi-structured and focus group interviews were carried out with the officials from New Zealand's aid agency and Ministry of Education representatives in each country. Where possible, representatives of key non-government bodies were interviewed as well as officials in the respective NZ High Commissions, other donor partner representatives, and other government officials from each country.

The team made two visits to Tonga and three to Solomon Islands during the research period. A total of 48 participants were interviewed (either individually or in focus groups) and many key informants were interviewed more than once.

Case study and comparative analysis

Case study research aims to explore the wider context of the research focus in order to understand how things happen and why. For this study, the dynamics of each country context are explored (albeit briefly) to give greater insight into the enablers and challenges presented within the education SWAp experiences of both countries. While a direct comparative analysis across the two case study countries was not considered appropriate, findings that have generic value in ascertaining the extent to which key components of a SWAp have been met in each case study are highlighted in the Analysis Rubric (see Figure 2).

Limitations of the study

Due to some constraints - mainly in terms of the high cost of extended in-country research time - it has not been possible to engage extensively with NGOs (especially the churches), school managers and educational communities. Therefore, the research has not been able to examine the extent to which their roles have been enhanced by a sector wide approach.

Another limitation relates to the second aspect of the original design for this research study; that is, the intention to explore whether a SWAp obtains better results from educational systems in recipient countries -especially through more equitable provision, wider access, student performance, and greater relevance to wider economic and social objectives. We soon became aware that in-depth pursuit of this focus was well beyond the parameters of the study, and not just in terms of the limited budget and researcher availability.

As we delved deeper into the research literature and became more engaged in aid effectiveness debates, we became aware of the distinction between the <u>sector wide approach</u> (i.e. the SWAp) as a description of a partnership relationship focused on strengthening education sector capacity, and the workings of the <u>education sector programme.</u> In other words, the knowledge that "the SWAp does not define the sector programme" (Pedersen & Coxon, 2009:13). Thus, our focus became that of exploring the SWAp for each country as a partnership, a way of working to strengthen the delivery of education services, rather than on the educational outcomes of those services. Accepting that the sector wide approach and the sector programme are conceptually distinct, however, does not preclude an exploration of the former giving rise to knowledge and understanding of education programme achievements and challenges. Although not the focus of the analysis in the later sections of this report, some comments and conclusions regarding education provision and outcomes are included.[6]

Further comment

The processing of findings has been a formative process, very much dependent on when the team has been able to spend discussion time together, either in person or electronically. The team presented initial findings as a panel at the 2009 ANZCIES conference held at the University of New England in Armidale, NSW and gained from the ensuing academic discussion. Further refinement of our findings was prompted by an invitation to contribute to a *Just Change* issue on 'Aid Harmonisation' (both included in the April 2010 Milestone Report). Two members of the team also drew on the study to present individual papers at the WCCES, Istanbul, in 2010. These papers are still in draft.

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[6] Worth noting here is that during the research study period two of the researchers were involved in reviewing either the education sector programme and/or the sector wide approach in each of the case study countries. Education achievements and challenges are explored fully in the documents subsequently provided to NZAID (see Coxon, 2008; Coxon & Tolley, 2010; Pedersen & Coxon, 2008; Pedersen & Coxon, 2009).

PART TWO: SWAps in Education: Solomon Islands and Tonga

The Sector Wide Approach in Solomon Islands Education

Context

Made up of 992 islands, the Solomon Islands spans more than 1.35 million square kilometres of ocean; administratively it is divided into nine provinces. Over 90 percent of the 530,000 (approx) inhabitants are Melanesian. Approximately 84 percent live in rural areas and it is estimated that 60 percent of the population live in communities of less than 200 people, relying on subsistence farming and fishing (MFAT, 2007) with limited employment or cash-generating opportunities. The terrain ranges from ruggedly mountainous islands to low lying coral atolls. Infrastructure, particularly transport and communication, is poor. These features impact substantially on the delivery of rural public services including education. With the majority of the population Christian, the Church plays a major role within communities and in the provision of education.

Amongst the Solomon Islands population, however, there is a vast diversity of cultures and languages (87 listed language groups), and a range of ethnic and other community groupings whose loyalties are sub-national. Despite efforts to expand government services in the decades following independence from Britain in 1978, the Honiara-centred state had minimal influence beyond its boundaries, resulting in recurring challenges to government legitimacy and state unity.

The destabilising conflict suffered by the country between 1998 and 2003 left an essentially bankrupt government and the central state on the point of near-collapse. Following extensive regional consultation, the Australian-led regional intervention force, RAMSI (the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands), was deployed in July 2003 to restore law and order and re-establish other essential systems (MFAT, 2007; World Bank, 2005). As elaborated in the National Economic Recovery and Development Plan (NERDP): 2003-2005, education development was seen as a key component of Solomon Islands' broader economic recovery, social restoration and development strategy, and in urgent need of assistance.

On the latest Human Development Index (HDI), Solomon Islands rates 123rd out of 169 countries, a slight rise since 2007 when it was 129th out of 177 countries. Although now in the 'medium' rather than 'low' human development category, it still holds the second lowest ranking for the Pacific (UNDP, 2010). Its education indicators are of considerable concern: adult literacy levels are 69 percent for men, 56 percent for women. Primary school access is estimated at 80 percent and primary completion (up to Yr6) is 60 percent of initial enrolment. Transition to junior secondary schooling is 31 percent and enrolment in senior secondary just 15 percent.

Solomon Islands was the first Pacific state to undertake a sector wide approach in education with the development of the Education Sector Investment and Reform Plan (ESIRP) in 2004.

Impetus for the SWAp

Faced with the major task of reconfiguring education aid dleivery, two key agents were instrumental in spearheading a move towards developing a sector wide approach within the Ministry of Education and Human Development (MERHD). One was New Zealand's newly formed (in 2002) international development agency, NZAID, which was heavily influenced through the secondment of a UK DFID official with SWAp experience gained in Uganda and other parts of Africa (see Ward, 2002). The other was Solomon Islands' then Permanent Secretary for Education who, having recently completed his doctorate in New Zealand, was well known to NZAID and strongly believed that *"there has got to be a better way"* to approaching education development. His experience of discrete time-bound projects with constant flows of International Technical Assistants (ITA), who were generally seen to work for the donors rather than the Solomon Islands government, had less than impressed him*.

The Education Sector Investment and Reform Plan 'ESIRP' (nomenclature reminiscent of SIPs), was launched in 2004 and was originally intended to encompass all forms of formal and informal educational activity (NZAID, 2006). The partnership of the three main agencies involved - the Solomon Island Government (SIG) through MEHRD, the European Commission (EC) and NZAID - was formalised in a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in June 2004. The partners agreed to a sector wide approach managed by SIG; i.e. with the responsibility for overall supervision of the ESIRP assigned to the Permanent Secretary, MEHRD and the senior management team. This 'Arrangement' effectively operationalised the SWAp model as a mechanism to support the implementation of the Education Strategic Plan 2004-2006 (ESP), and cemented the shared understandings, commitments, terms and conditions agreed by the partners. The ESP has since moved through its second phase guided by the *National Education Action Plan 2007-2009* (NEAP) and is now in its third phase.

It is interesting to note here that none of the more formal minimum criteria / infrastructure considered necessary for introducing a SWAp (see Box 2) existed in the Solomon Islands in 2003. As one NZAID staff member mused, *"The Solomon Islands SWAp was floated on a sea of hope."* But it did have considerable political backing and strong leadership. Because of the lack of foundation, the initial phases necessarily concentrated almost exclusively on putting these in place, resulting in considerable capacity building effort at ministerial level. Much of this development has been facilitated by an NZAID-funded ITA working within the MERHD as the sector coordinator[7].

There is obvious commitment and optimism among the MERHD staff with significant progress made in policy development and data collection. There has also been a consistently strong government commitment to education, helped by MEHRD's Permanent Secretary 2003-2005 becoming the Minister for Education until 2007 and then holding the office of Prime Minister until August 2010. During the life of the SWAp, the percentage of

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[7] This role has more recently been refined to 'education sector advisor'.

GDP committed to education has gradually risen and receives a higher amount of government funding than any other sector (Solomon Star, 2011). It should be noted that the SIG now funds approximately 80 percent of the education sector programme with DPs making up the remaining 20 percent.

Implementing the SWAp

The involvement of only two donors at the outset, NZAID and the EU, was a deliberate decision by the Solomon Island authorities who saw it as an advantage in terms of building relationships and making initial progress under the SWAp. To quote the then Permanent Secretary for Education:

> Our experience encouraged us to identify which donors were more likely to work in ways that suit us through a SWAp arrangement - they agreed to our request that they guide and lead [the ministry] to an extent but not overpower; let them learn from their mistakes … and provided really good technical advisors – a key ingredient of the SWAp success; we know who we want and they work for us (Pedersen & Coxon, 2009: 8).

The early engagement with the EU, however, proved to be somewhat incongruous with a SWAp, especially its necessity for the establishment of a standalone Project Implementation Unit (PIU) within MERHD to handle all EU funded activities, and its onerous reporting and decision making processes. As a result, the EU's bureaucratic procedural policies reduced its effectiveness as a SWAp partner and its current involvement in the sector has declined significantly. The strong relationship that developed between the government and NZAID, however, has been maintained and strengthened. Within the Ministry it is generally felt that NZAID's commitment to and appreciation for the sector wide approach has materialised in them managing *for* results rather than *by* results.

The number of donors involved in the sector has grown gradually and, in order to engage all active DPs within the sector-wide programme, an education sector donor coordination group has been established. NZAID was the initial (and current) Coordinating Development Partner (CDP) of the group. In collaboration with MEHRD, NZAID drew up a "Statement of Partnership Principles between Solomon Islands Government and Development Partners". This Statement reaffirms the Development Partners' commitments to the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra communiqué (OECD, 2005/2008), as well as the Pacific Principles on Aid Effectiveness (PIFS, 2007). Any development partner working in the education sector in Solomon Islands is encouraged to sign the Statement to demonstrate support for shared working principles and objectives. To date, another seven bilateral and multilateral agencies have signed up: Australia, Japan, Taiwan, UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Bank and the ADB. Although all the donors contribute to the ESF/NEAP in various ways, NZAID is currently the only donor that works through SIG processes and provides funding through sector budget support mechanisms – it is reported, however, that the ADB and AusAID are close to doing so. This highlights an important point raised by Cassity (2010):

that whereas there appears to be an increasing trend among donors to support SWAps in education, actual practice indicates that many are, in fact, a long way from aligning with country systems.

Despite their having signed the Statement, many DPs indicate an intention to maintain their own ways of doing things. UNICEF and UNESCO activities, for example, remain largely unaligned to MERHD's work schedule, being instead tied to their own timelines and technical assistance. It was noted that UNICEF, in particular, "… *needs to learn to attend our meetings and align with ministry of education and fit into our schedule*". Similarly, Japan's development agency, JICA, and the Republic of China (ROC Taiwan) generally tend to maintain their traditional project approach, "*But we are trying to get them on board*".

MEHRD's strong leadership and sense of ownership is a major strength and the SWAp appears to be successful in upholding ministry plans and processes. However, the country's inability to conform to expected preconditions at the start of the initiative, and the resultant focus on building capacity within the ministry thereafter, has met with criticism and concern; that the substantial resources spent on education through the SWAp arrangement has been overly concentrated on the top, with little visible or tangible improvement at school and classroom level.

The recent implementation of the Fee-Free Basic Education Policy which, from the beginning of 2009, has seen the regular disbursement of grant funding to all schools (Y1-F3) goes some way to addressing this concern. Focused on increasing more equitable access to education, this funding is designed to cover the costs of teaching and learning materials (in addition to the new curriculum materials already being supplied to schools), basic maintenance and fuel. While this relieves parental contribution costs, contribution towards infrastructure and school development is still often sought from parents. The extent to which this policy has increased overall student enrolments has yet to be analysed (ongoing).

The Sector Wide Approach in Tonga

Context

The Kingdom of Tonga is an archipelago consisting of over 170 islands, 36 of which are inhabited, with a land area of about 700 square kilometres stretching along an 800 kilometre north-south line. The islands are divided into three main groups: Vava'u in the north, Ha'apai in the middle, and the largest island, Tongatapu, to the south. Tongatapu is home to over 70 percent (72,000) of the total population[8] of whom about 30 percent (24,000) live in the urban areas of the capital, Nuku'alofa.

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[8] The population was determined to be almost 102,000 in the 2006 Census (TDoS, 2006)

Polynesian by ethnicity, Tongans represent the majority of the inhabitants and traditional Tongan custom and the Christian faith feature strongly in everyday life. Tongan is the official language of the country, along with English.

The modern Tongan polity has been shaped by its unique heritage. It has been under continuous monarchical rule for over 1000 years and is the only remaining Polynesian Kingdom; it has never lost indigenous governance; and for over 130 years the country has been governed through a centralised state structure and parliamentary government (Coxon, 1988). This cultural and linguistic homogeneity, plus the long-standing existence of a 'strong' centralised state have significant educational effects. Tonga has a very long-standing tradition of providing virtually universal access to six years of compulsory, free primary education and reported adult literacy rates of close to 100 percent

The most recent Human Development Index (UNDP, 2010) ranks Tonga 85th out of 169 countries, still the highest in the region despite a fall since 2007 when it was ranked 55th out of 177 countries. Education indicators are also the highest in the region: adult literacy at 99 percent; primary school access at 100 percent; a primary (Year 6) completion rate of 95 percent; transition to junior secondary schooling is 95 percent and enrolment in senior secondary, 70 percent.

Despite its relatively strong human development indicators and long-standing provision of universal primary education, however, the Government of Tonga has recognised the need to improve the quality of education delivery in order to meet the challenges of a changing society as well as an increasingly mobile population. Some of the key criticisms of the Tongan education system have included the issues of equity – particularly in distribution and allocation of resources. More resources are perceived to be benefitting government owned schools over church owned and private schools. As in other countries of the Pacific, the increasing unemployed youth population has led to questions over the quality and relevance of education; many Tongan youth neither find jobs in the formal sector nor are prepared to return to semi-subsistence lifestyle.

Hence, despite figures of near universal access to primary education and relatively high participation in secondary education, the issue of access to attainment is still a challenge. Also, with the heavy emphasis placed on examinations, the secondary curriculum is widely perceived as not providing young Tongans with the knowledge and skills needed for the development of sustainable livelihoods in their island communities.

Impetus for the SWAp

Between 2002 and 2004, the Ministry of Education, Women and Culture (MEWAC) engaged in a consultative process to align the education sector with the demands of the 21st century and to meet the demands of the Government of Tonga's (GoT) National Strategic Development Plan 7. One of the key objectives of the Development Plan was investing in people to promote higher sustainable economic growth and financial stability. This placed significant emphasis on the education sector.

In 2004, the Cabinet approved the Education Policy Framework 2004 – 2019 which has three specific goals aimed at improving:

- equitable access and quality of universal basic education up to Year 8;
- access and quality of post-basic education; and
- the administration of education and training.

Around the same time, the GOT also indicated its willingness to move towards a sector-wide approach in education, with two key features in mind. One was the intention to coordinate and align all official aid to education within the Education Policy Framework through a Tonga Education Support programme (TESP). Notable here is that during the life of the SWAp, donor funding to Tongan education has grown ten-fold and by 2010 accounted for approximately 25 per cent of total education sector spending ('Atiola, Esau, Lavemaau, & Minford, 2010: xi).

The other key feature was based on an understanding that a sector wide approach would involve the government working with non-government stakeholders across the education sector. This is an important point as, for well over a hundred years, education in Tonga has operated under separate systems –government operated schools and a number of church and private school systems. Whereas, the provision of primary education has been largely a state responsibility, the majority responsibility at secondary school level has been under non-government systems. Despite this tacit but generally workable agreement, there has long been a 'distant relationship' between government and the other educational providers.

Implementing the SWAp

With the launch of Tonga's Education Sector Programme (TESP) in 2005[9], Tonga became the second Pacific nation to introduce a sector wide approach to education aid delivery. Again, NZAID played a principal role, this time partnering with the World Bank. The launch and later progress of the programme was delayed by various unforeseen external events and poor design which did little to improve partner relationships, although some events did emerge as catalysts for change, resulting in some very successful achievements (see below).

Prior to introducing the sector wide approach, the relationship between donors and national education agencies in Tonga had at times been one of mistrust and suspicion. Tonga's long history of strong educational commitment clashed with the generally perceived donor rule of engagement: *give money without proper supervision and the funds will be mismanaged*.

This attitude seems to have persisted into the early stages of the SWAp causing severe tension to the relationship between MEWAC and NZAID, with New Zealand taking on the

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[9] The launch was delayed by the public service strikes in July/August 2005. Subsequent pay-rises resulted in substantial redundancies at the end of the '05/'06 financial year. Other external events that impacted on progress of the SWAp can be attributed to the death and official mourning of King George Tupou IV in September 2006 and the socio-political unrest in November 2006. In 2009 reforms to the public service resulted in the necessity for staff to take (or lose) all accrued leave entitlements before the end of the year. In effect significant numbers of staff went on leave for several months at a time, some as long as six months.

lead role in the implementation of the approach and coordinating sector support to the 'partner' government.

Serious concerns arose early in several areas of the SWAp, not least its poor financial design. Originally, the World Bank agreed to provide a US$5-6m loan to Tonga for educational reform with New Zealand providing grant funding. Subsequently, however, New Zealand indicated that it could make an additional grant fund available (increasing NZAID's total contribution up to NZ$14m) which meant that that the IDA credit could be significantly reduced. Rather than lose the WB loan facility entirely, and access to the WB technical expertise seen as necessary for successful implementation of the education programme, an "innovative" two-pronged financial agreement was finally reached between the Government of Tonga (GOT), the World Bank and NZAID[10]. First, the WB loan amount was reduced to US$1m[11] and second, NZAID's additional funds (approximately NZ$3m) would be made available to the GOT through a WB managed Trust Fund (WBTF) [12]. The remaining NZAID funds (approximately NZ$11m) were given directly by NZAID as grant funding to the education sector, via the Ministry of Finance. With Tonga not drawing on the loan until the very final stages of the first phase of TESP, all donor funding was effectively supplied by New Zealand.

This "cumbersome" funding arrangement led to activities under the SWAp being separated into two funding clusters: Cluster 1 being activities funded by NZAID's additional grant funding provided through the WBTF; and Cluster 2 the activities that would be funded by direct sector budget support to the GOT provided from NZAID's original grant. Thus, rather than these activity clusters being driven by the education strategic plan, they were determined by the complicated funding arrangement designed under the SWAp, administered either through a World Bank trust fund – using World Bank procedures – or as direct budget support. The effect of this initial arrangement undermined the acceptance of the TESP as a locally-led sector wide programme, and resulted instead with it being regarded more as a standalone 'project' imposed from outside; indeed, original World Bank documents refer to the Tonga Education Sector *Project*.

As time went on these arrangements became increasingly irritating to the GOT and NZAID, and relationships began to buckle. This was mainly due to:

- the unwieldy processes demanded by the WBTF (including its own monitoring/reporting system);
- a lack of awareness in NZAID/WB of the capacity of MEWAC - both in terms of staffing and the systems needed to run a SWAp;

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[10] This arrangement was proposed "to keep the Bank heavily involved in the SWAp" (including joint supervision, technical assistance, technical analysis and policy dialogue); NZAID letter dated 22 February 2005 to A/M MFAT.
[11] This was not drawn down until 2010.
[12]. It should also be noted that the WBTF agreement was expensive – not only since it involved four currencies and transfers between five bank accounts, but funds from the grant (US$ 200,000) were also paid to the WB to manage the Trust Fund!

- MEWAC's failure to discuss/ clarify their capabilities, together with NZAID failing to define clear communication and decision making processes; and

- a lack of support from donor Head Offices in moving from one funding modality to another.

The uncomfortable relationship between MEWAC and NZAID was aggravated further by the personnel inside both organisations at the time: Ministry leadership was in need of serious support and the personnel within NZAID could have been less micro-managerial and displayed greater cultural sensitivity. By late 2008, however, there had been changes of staff on both sides. MEWAC employed a highly experienced and extremely well regarded Tongan national as TESP adviser, NZAID had decentralised more authority to its Tongan office and its personnel in both Wellington and Nuku'alofa had changed. With these significant changes, both MEWAC and NZAID resolved to improve their working relationships and to restore trust. Of late, NZAID has worked hard not to be seen to be micromanaging MEWAC activities by taking a more 'stand-back' approach to ministry engagement.

In comparison to the sometimes tense relationships between Development Partners themselves, and between DPs and MEWAC, it appears that relationships between government and non-government education authorities have been strengthened by the SWAp arrangement. Efforts have been made to improve dialogue with the non-government systems and the progress that has been made is largely seen to be due to the successful implementation of the Tonga school grants programme (TSGP); in particular the involvement of the national consultants (NC). Although it is not the intention of this report to identify education sector programme achievements (see p.9) one area that can be seen as directly attributable to the education sector wide approach in Tonga is the Tonga School Grant Programme (TSGP) and the activities that have taken place under it. Following a pilot in 2007 a grant formula was reached and a soundly implemented process with good accountability was reported (Coxon & Tolley, 2010). The critical factor to the success of this programme was the contracting of experienced former ministry officials[13] as national consultants who visited every school and were able to formulate positive relationships with senior school management. These positive relationships facilitated the introduction and establishment of a suite of financial and accountability processes to support both ministry and school transactions which were very positively audited in 2009 (Coxon & Tolley, 2010). In working closely with schools over the TSGP, the national consultant team was also instrumental in strengthening the capacity of schools towards self management, particularly in terms of training schools in the principles and techniques of resource allocation, financial management, governance and accountability.

The deliberate pooling of people from various educational systems to work together on the TSGP has proven successful, although no formal lines of communication have yet been established. A large part of the challenge of maintaining and developing these relationships rests on the leadership within the MEWAC and its senior management being able to

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[13] A silver lining to the extensive MEWAC redundancies referred to in footnote 9

continue to draw in and encourage the various non-government systems to engage with MEWAC.

There is still a sense that TESP is a MEWAC 'policy division project' and the underlying conditions have not predisposed a smooth implementation of a sector wide approach in Tonga. The recently proposed Interim Education Support Programme (IESP)[14] has attempted to reposition the reform process more in line with SWAp methodologies, in particular strengthening cross- and inter-sector communication and subsuming all components/ activities through MEWAC's existing operational and budget framework. It also included the establishment of more formal development partners' commitment to align to local processes through signing a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA).

The Interim period will also be an important time to develop mechanisms for the further long-term programme of support to MEWAC although, despite reservations, the next phase is already being referred to colloquially as TESP II. In this respect, with the World Bank not expecting to engage, it appears that partnership will be primarily between MEWAC, the NZ Aid Programme (NZAP) and AusAID, with NZAP taking on the role of coordinating development partner.

PART THREE: Analysis of the sector wide approach in each case study country

Analysis Rubric

Figure 2 is a visual reflection of research analysis in terms of how the authors view the progression of the key SWAp components within a country.

With reference to Appendix 2, which sets out the rubric indicators, the authors drew on the research data to formulate Figure 2 followed by a discussion of each component.

As noted earlier, each country's findings covers the period from the beginning of the SWAp until the end of the respective field research period; that is, August 2010 for Tonga and November 2010 for Solomon Islands. It is acknowledged that further developments have taken place since these times, both within the New Zealand aid programme and in each case study country. For example, both countries have undergone significant political change in recent months. Furthermore, AusAID is now indicating a clear intent to join the SWAp in each country, although it is unclear the extent to which it is prepared to follow in-country processes and systems already in place (as New Zealand has done).

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[14] Designed to cover the interim period between the end of TESP 1 and the start of the second phase of TESP (approximately mid 2010-11).

Figure 2: Progress of Case Study Countries in key SWAp components
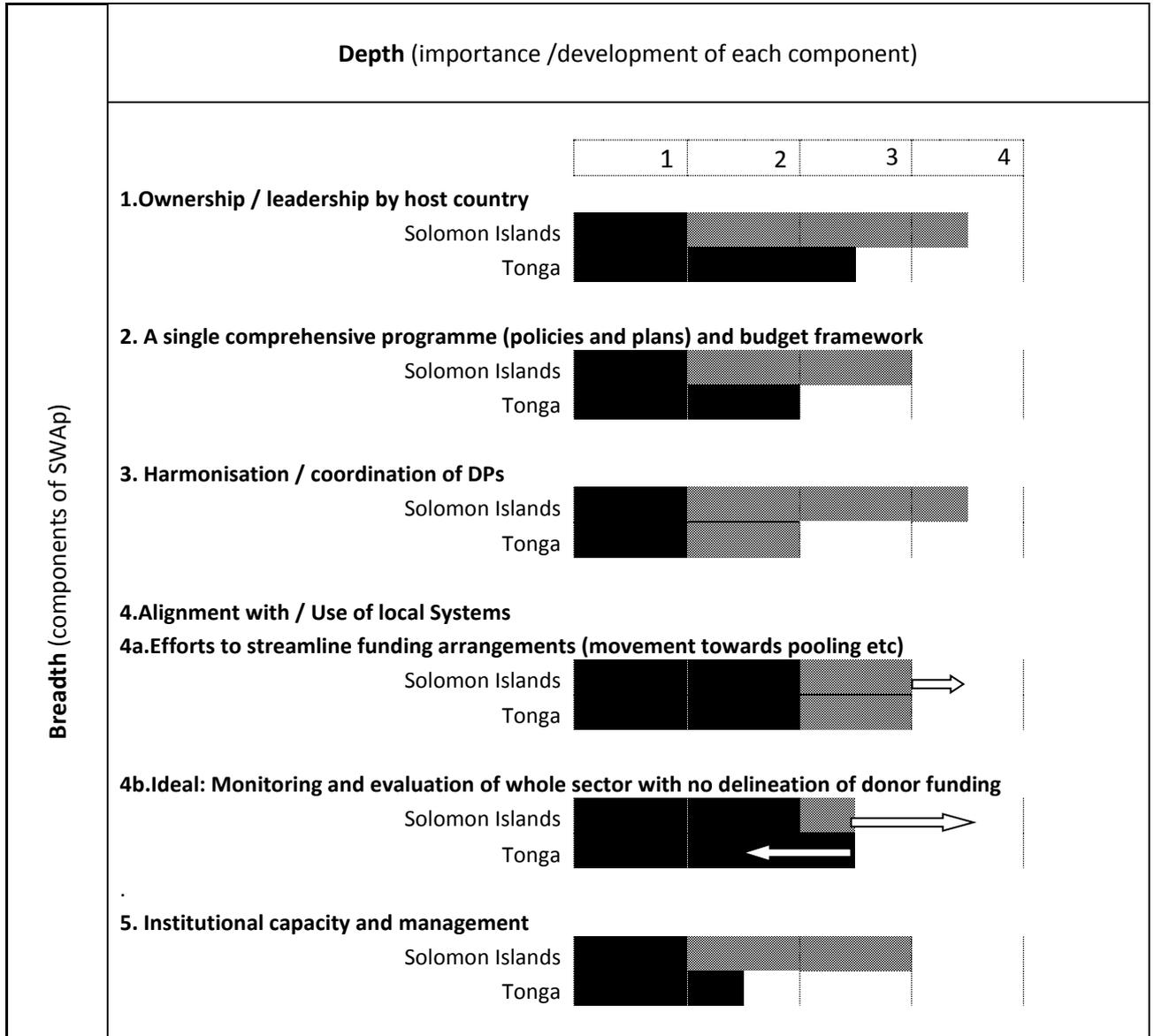
Key: ■ - Stage at introduction of SWAp; ▒ - Movement during SWAp; ⟷ - Moving towards.

1. Ownership / leadership by host country

Effectively, the Solomon Islands SWAp was introduced onto an almost clean slate – the 1998-2003 Tensions had all but destroyed governmental infrastructure and service delivery systems.[15] However, as described earlier, national political will and donor commitment were strong at the inception of the SWAp and have been maintained throughout. The ITA Education Advisor[16] played a central role in the re-establishment of Ministry systems and processes, and the inclusive nature of this assistance has led to the generation of a strong sense of local ownership and palpable confidence, especially evident in the Permanent Secretary and her senior management team. Significant progress has been made in delegation and communication within the Ministry:

> *Before … there was a Project Management Team [PMT] which looked after all the work of the ESIRP SWAp. That has now changed … to a Coordination Team as it was not clear what the roles and responsibilities were between Heads of Department [HOD] and the PMT. Now we have a set hierarchy. The collective management team has the Minister, the PS, the Under Secretaries and the Sector Advisor[17] who are responsible for all the planning in the sector development. Under that, there is the Coordination Team made up of the Sector Secretary, the Under Secretaries of Planning, Accounts and Administration, and the Sector Advisor. Under that, we have HOD group who meet every month. The Coordination Team meets fortnightly and its major role is to advise the PS; it takes the job of doing the work of the PS collectively to advise her.*

> *[T]he main role [of the Coordination Team] is to look at the activities and programmes going on in each division, updating and taking decisions about what needs to be done, and basically supporting the implementation of programmes. We report to the PS and the meetings are chaired by the US Administration. That is the overall objective coming to decisions that the PS can accept and approve or not.*

As with any government, continuity of key government staff at the top level is unpredictable. Concern over this issue has been voiced,

> *…now we have an enthusiastic Minister and Prime Minister but we need permanence of governance and consistency of leadership. Only the Under-Secretary level remains stable - the PS can change just like that. So we need sustained political will and strong management. Strong political and*

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[15] This is not to deny the ongoing historical and other influences shaping the education and development environment.
[16] Previously, 'sector coordinator'.
[17] ITA.

> *institutional leadership to maintain commitment and momentum of reform*.

Significantly for the Solomon Islands, however, is the fact that the position of the PS has remained relatively stable in the MERHD. Having been the Director of Policy and Planning at the start of the SWAp and prior to her promotion in 2006, the PS has remained closely involved throughout. This leadership stability, political commitment and the development of a coordination team within the MERHD which communicates regularly with the PS, subsectors and donors, has undoubtedly facilitated MERHD's development of a strong sense of local ownership.

A sense of political resilience is now apparent as one interviewee remarked:

> *I don't think any political changes – or a change of PS - will change this now, because most of the people will be still here and they will require this. And what we are doing is not in isolation of global initiatives; we still follow EFA , Human Rights and children's rights with UNICEF, MDGs with UNDP etc. So a new government can't come in and say how to do things – it has already been said in global aspirations already … In the SWAp there is this agreement that the government must maintain funding to the MERHD at 22 percent - that is the stabilising factor. But through political interventions we have managed to exceed that to 32 percent… but whether that will continue ….*[18]

The twice yearly Education Sector Coordinating Committee Meeting (ESCC) is a valuable opportunity for a wide group of stakeholders – including other ministry and provincial government representatives, donors, trade unions and teachers - to come together and learn about and discuss new policies, proposals and activity implementation.

Such has been the quality of the capacity development within the ministry and the strong central leadership that has developed, that the role of the ITA has shifted from sector coordinator to sector advisor and may soon become unnecessary. Indeed, one interviewee noted that *"Most of us are starting to drive in the second phase"*

In Tonga, by contrast, the education ministry has been long characterized by a historically developed system of top-down management through which Tonga has achieved the strongest educational outcomes in the Pacific. Therefore, at the start of its SWAp the institutional climate in Tonga's education ministry was far beyond what existed in Solomon Islands. Despite strong leadership in the past, however, educational leadership during the first decade of the millennium was not particularly robust. Amidst a turbulent political

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[18] The political environment shifted at the end of 2010 with the election of a new government. The recently announced significant increase to the education vote is encouraging.

environment[19], the uncertain leadership, combined with what one key participant described as *"the cumbersome funding arrangements proposed by the DPs"*, clumsy implementation (which led to the 'project mentality' prevailing) and the perceived micromanagement by NZAID, all contributed to a sense of 'imposition' rather than a locally led and driven partnership arrangement[20].

> *…sometimes we need to remind the donors that we should be driving the project. There's been a lot of things that we have had to negotiate and discuss with the donors. It's not been easy and even under the current arrangement I don't think it's a full SWAp with Tonga because we still have to go through a lot of difficulties in financial management, reporting and requirements from the donors.*

> *[W]hen the SWAp started we felt we were always being dictated to – do this, do that! But then we said "no" and whatever we suggested from then on worked. Like the National Consultants team.*

> *They don't want to call it [the next phase, 2011 onwards] TESP 2, something similar but not that! They see that TESP is more popular than MEWAC and people see TESP as different from MEWAC.*

Local ownership is particularly manifest in the recruitment of the National Consultants team who worked with schools during the introduction of the Tonga School Grants Programme and School-Based Management scheme, and were re-recruited to continue their successful work with schools in 2010. However, due to managerial delays, "*local staff didn't get the work done in time*", this was not a seamless contract renewal and resulted in a six month gap and the loss of some original team members. Similarly, the grants payments to the schools were late because somebody…

> *…didn't do their homework … and wasn't careful with deadlines, so the application was late … Normally we send in the application for payment at the end of April because it has to go the Philippines – the WB loan dept there. They then do their internal part and we hope by the beginning of June the money is here.*

Stronger leadership might have avoided these unnecessary and unproductive delays.

Overall, the research indicates that the SWAp experience has not allowed the already existing strong sense of educational ownership to grow in Tonga, whilst in Solomon Islands there has been considerable growth from a very low base.

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[19] See footnote 9.
[20] Since the end of the field research undertaken in Tonga, a new Minister of Education and CEO, MEWAC have been appointed who are likely to remedy this situation.

2. A single comprehensive programme (policies and plans) and budget framework

As previously noted, few formal policy and planning processes existed in post-conflict Solomon Islands at the outset of the SWAp. Thus, the first five years responded to an ambitious and fairly unrealistic sector plan. This has since developed into the National Education Action Plan (NEAP) which now forms the central planning document. Considerable policy development has taken place since the SWAp began, including the establishment of planning and budgeting processes. The Public Expenditure Review (2009), initiated under the Swap arrangement, identified several funding gaps which later informed current prioritization. However, it was not until late 2010 that the NEAP was realistically costed.

According to one MEHRD interviewee:

> *In terms of policies, we have two main activities left – the senior secondary school policy – and then the review of the Education Act – this is crucial. Now when all the policies are finished we will feel comfortable to be able to say, "Now we can use these developments and achievements within the ministry and confidently review the Act" … So this will be a big step forward.*

> *Some things are now ready for review, so we are now reviewing the Teachers' Handbook. Now none of these things would have happened if we hadn't had the SWAp – we have the NEAP, long term strategic plans and things like that and this SWAp came in to quickly address these issues in order for us to move forward quickly. Because with the SWAp most of the activities are attached to the plan and they are financed. So we have moved faster in the last six years than ever before.*

The planning and policy approach is slowly trickling down to schools, especially in relation to the school grants programme. The recent implementation of Fee-Free Basic Education Policy has seen the regular disbursement of grant funding to all schools (Y1-F3) from the beginning of 2009. Focused on increasing more equitable access to education, this funding is designed to cover the costs of teaching and learning materials (in addition to the new curriculum materials already being supplied to schools), basic maintenance and fuel. While this relieves parental contribution costs, contribution towards infrastructure and school development is often still sought from parents. The extent to which this policy has increased in enrolment overall is yet to be analysed.

Communicating the policies to the wider community remains a challenge, however. As pointed out,

> *…[MEHRD has] no follow-up system for people who take the policy seriously to say 'let's make it happen'. Our biggest challenge is to make*

> *that transfer of design and plans into real action - and our biggest problem is people – it's not funds or finance, its people.*

The strengthening, of the Provincial Education Authorities is also urgent. Structural reform is now a priority within the Ministry and an independent review of the entire education system was undertaken in 2010 and was enthusiastically received by MEHRD.

The final stages of the research indicated that clear value of the sector wide approach, in terms of planning, is being recognised:

> *By having a SWAp, by having a NEAP, by having a budget in place to support the NEAP, we are able to negotiate with DPs like UNICEF and say, sorry your interests are part of a wider context. You need to adapt to us do and also your reporting and budgeting. We do the same with the World Bank. Even with AusAID. It helped us very much. … [We can] also relate to our human resources and budgeting. It has helped us to focus and come to ideas that we need more qualitative support for early grades, more support for TVET, specialised leadership training. TVET was never part of a wider context – now they are a sub-sector. We now know what human resources are needed … because we have been talking about it since 2004.*

However, while policy production has been prolific during the life of the Solomon Islands SWAp and clear progress has been made in prioritizing activities under the NEAP, accurate costing procedures and a mid-term expenditure framework (MTEF) are seen by DPs as requiring development. A challenge to this SWAp precondition can be seen in the following comment, *"No, you can't say the MTEF is developed. We have done a costing … an MTEF cannot be made at this time because … there is no resource clearly available from the government so where do we aim at?"*.

As previously explained, Tonga was relatively mature in its educational processes at the start of the SWAp. Following a donor-led review of the education sector in 2003, the Tonga Education Policy Framework 2004-2019 was prepared on behalf of the GOT by two ITA (Catherwood & Levine, 2004). This Policy Framework provided a comprehensive statement of long term sectoral goals and highlighted the policy areas that needed to be developed. However, as Coxon and Tolley (2010) noted, the early years of the SWAp were marked by a lack of careful planning of the reform process, by both MEWAC and the DPs, and the articulation of policies and the development of strategies for their implementation remains outstanding. This stagnation may be due to the Education Policy Framework (EPF) being seen as DP-led and deficient in some areas. As such it has never been totally accepted by key players within MEWAC[21].

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[21] It is the authors' understanding that new MEWAC leadership will address the deficiencies of the EPF as a priority.

In Tonga there was less acceptance of the need to raise capacity within the MEWAC from the beginning; as one interviewee explained *"Tonga has sufficient expertise and didn't need expats"*. This perception could arise from local knowledge of how strong the education ministry had been in the past, or it could be the result of working alongside a number of expensive and largely ineffective ITA contracted through the World Bank to enhance MEWAC management capacity. Whichever, at the time our study was underway it was clear that management skills across MEWAC were in need of strengthening, especially in areas of programme planning, forecasting, costing, budget control, monitoring and reporting. Despite the considerable capability that exists within MEWAC, the structures and procedures that would enhance the capacity required for achieving a fully prioritized and costed sector plan, supported by clearly articulated policies, were yet to be established. It is acknowledged, however, that the drafting of a new Education Act is ongoing through TESP. This is an important step as it will provide the necessary mandate for the development of policies and strategies arising from the EPF, such as the raising of the school leaving age, greater harmonisation of government and non-government schools, per capita based operational funding, early childhood education, inclusive/special needs education, and TVET, as applied to secondary schooling.

3. Harmonisation / coordination of DPs

A key focus of investigation here was the level of common understanding of the concept of a sector wide approach among the stakeholders. Early in the research the authors asked participants from each case study country as well as in New Zealand to explain their understanding of the concept of a sector wide approach. Not surprisingly, responses were varied and wide ranging as demonstrated by the following small participant sample:

> *It's a model where development partners provide the funding /support to developing country ministries guided by a nationally owned strategic plan. It's pooled funding through a government's own systems. Development partners share mutual responsibility.*

> *A SWAp is aligning planning, budgets, reporting and management with what's going on in the sector. It is aligning donor support in a seamless manner to avoid multiple reporting.*

> *SWAps are a way of working, a dynamic continuum. Sector wide has to be across ministries but it also has to be sector deep involving all the institutions (churches etc). Ideally it should be locally led.*

> *SWAps are an approach for donors to come together and put funding into one basket. The ministry develops its own programme and it allocates funding from the basket.*

> *Ideally it is trying to achieve a partnership – should be a harmonising process. We draw up the plans and priorities; donor role is to assist with support – financial and TA. But the reality is different...*
>
> *A SWAp is when all stakeholders work together - different development partners contribute to the whole sector based on the sector programme. The whole sector includes ECE, Basic Education, TVET, Higher Education and ideally non-formal and adult education.*

Two distinct themes are prevalent: one concerns some form of new funding mechanism, which will be followed up in the next section. The other responds to some level of harmonisation amongst the various stakeholders – although this is not confined to relationships between donors, or between governments and donors, this section will focus mainly on aspects of the government – DP relationship and levels of coordination among the donor community.

Before proceeding with that discussion, however, it is acknowledged that the concept of 'harmonisation' under a sector wide approach has as much to do with harmonising and strengthening government divisions and actions, inter- ministerial relations, and links between government and non-government systems. Due to the aforementioned constraints of this research study, we did not undertake in-depth investigation into the SWAp effects on non-government systems. Nevertheless, mention must be made again of the role that the national consultants in Tonga have played in the significant progress that has been made in improved relations between MEWAC, Education Authorities and schools[22].

> *[The national consultants] have been good ambassadors for the ministry in schools. It has really helped. It has even helped within the ministry and helped the divisions talk to each other. We have come a long way with working on our partnership issues. Everyone has a better idea of what the whole big picture is. They now see things more strategically. Rather than just working for CDU or Schools or something.*

Similarly, in Solomon Islands the annual ESCC meetings have been instrumental in encouraging communication between the wider sector stakeholders.

With regard to Solomon Islands/MEHRD and DP relationship, the personal choice of donor involvement at the outset of the SWAp (NZAID and the EU[23]) has done much to establish local ownership and trust of the DPs. Despite numerous NZAID in-country and head office personnel changes, the strong professional and collegial relationships between NZAID and

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[22] "… building confidence in teachers and principals is good and [with local consultants] it is non-threatening … someone who can help them sort out their problems".
[23] The problematic EU bureaucracy has been discussed earlier.

MERHD, which were well-established at the outset, have remained positive and respectful, with both sides willing to listen.

Moreover, during the life of Solomon Islands SWAp, NZAID has worked closely with MEHRD not only in terms of funding and the workings of the Ministry, but also in developing more harmony and coordination between the DPs. As already outlined, Partnership Principles have been developed which have been signed by all DPs involved in education, although not all participate in the SWAp. NZAID has taken on the role of Coordinating DP and facilitates strengthening MEHRD's coordination and partnership with Ministry of Finance.

There is also acute awareness among the staff in MERHD and NZAID's Solomon Islands office of the importance of personal relationships in maintaining positive donor –government relationships. Such awareness is not seen to be shared by other donors as the following comment indicates, *"…it is important to have the right people in place and [to know] how we fit in and how we can make the whole thing move".* As another interviewee put it, *"In talking about cohesion and coordination in a SWAP, we talk about people; the outcomes are so closely related to people."*

This need is starkly underscored when considering the aforementioned turbulent relationships between MEWAC and NZAID for much of the initial SWAp phase in Tonga. With a complete change in staff, relations now appear to be calmer and on a more even keel. As one interviewee commented *"… [now] we have a say with the SWAp, but it all depends on personalities".* Latterly, NZAID is reported to have become more aware of the need to understand *"when to drive or not to drive".*

Both GOT and NZAID demonstrated an awareness of the need for more coordination and harmonisation with other intergovernmental agencies and donors beyond NZAID and World Bank. But as one ministry official pointed out, *"we are following the donors' requirements and the financial requirement of the Ministry of Finance and a number of times they draw conflict and so the partnership becomes a myth because we know for sure who's driving it…"* As a donor representative pointed out, however, *"[i]t's a long term iterative process that relies on building trust".*

In spite of efforts to overcome Tonga's early problems with its development partners in the SWAp, however, there has been little movement towards the development and acceptance of a set of partnership principles to guide donor practice within and beyond the SWAp. Thus, harmonisation and coordination progress has been slow.

4. Alignment with / Use of local Systems

4a.Efforts to streamline funding arrangements (movement towards pooling etc)

Much of the detail regarding the original funding arrangements in both countries has been recounted in earlier sections. In both cases time has matured these arrangements making them more workable, with New Zealand becoming the more influential partner under the SWAp donor partnership in each case study country and the one more willing to channel its support through the local system. In the Solomon Islands support was clearly tagged towards primary education, and therefore not technically sector budget support (SBS), but as MEHRD has developed, and financial control was moved from MERHD to MoFT, New Zealand's support has become less earmarked with a clear indication that full sector support could be on the cards[24].

> Our principle is strong. We send in our budget firstly to the government and we only negotiate with the donors when we have the SIG approval. Then we go to the DPs with the gaps. The only thing we pre plan – because it is part of the recurring budget - is all the TA from New Zealand, which is linked to specific areas. We will do the same with AusAID when they sign with the bilateral agreement – it's all approved - we are just waiting for that final signature ... maybe February.

Funding in Tonga has always been via the Ministry of Finance – albeit through a convoluted route. Strengthening of financing processes and accountability mechanisms within both MEWAC and Treasury has been taking place since 2007, to the point where the systems are considered robust enough to ensure transparent processes and strong accountability measures (Pedersen & Coxon, 2008). Despite some inefficiencies remaining and a lack of timeliness in transferring information between ministries, it is NZAID's intention to continue funding through the Ministry of Finance but specifically earmarked at educational funding and tagged to particular areas; as commented by an NZAID official, *"I don't think we are at the stage yet where we would feel comfortable with sector budget support in terms of untagged or un-earmarked"*

Overall, the research evidence has shown that both countries have made progress from their respective starting position. In addition, Solomon Islands demonstrates signs of even greater pooled funding resources in the future.

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[24] It is acknowledged that the widening of the donor partnerships in 2011 may have an impact on this, with AusAID indicating its interest in TVET.

4b. Ideal: Monitoring and evaluation of whole sector with no delineation of donor funding

Due to the functioning of the EU arrangement in Solomon Islands donor activity reviews were carried out separately. However, significant progress has been made and there is clear understanding within MEHRD of the need to undertake whole sector monitoring and evaluation. Additionally, the reviews which are undertaken by independent consultants are paid close attention by the relevant MEHRD officials.

Further development in this area includes and a schedule of school visits by M&E teams[25] charged with assessing access, quality and management. Individual school visits remain too infrequent, however, due largely to personnel and resource limitations within the Provincial Education Offices and capacity weaknesses within the Inspectorate. Another key development in this area was the Performance Assessment Framework (PAF). Late in 2010 MEHRD produced the 2007-09 PAF – this was a significant achievement, although due to delays in data delivery was based largely on relatively old data.

There is awareness of need for greater capacity in data collection, monitoring and evaluation and need for analytical capacity to support Government proposals. The overall lack of measurement in relation to improved service delivery is noted, *"… what we are not doing is measuring – we can't, we don't have the amount of research to warrant it or the time to measure the SWAp in terms of improved service delivery at school level, which was an assumption of international literature about SWAps".*

The development of the education management information system (SIEMIS) to establish baseline data has started but the poor level of returns from schools[26], especially those in Honiara, together with technical and management problems, is hindering progress*.* As stated, *"The system is good in itself, but you need some simple disciplines / management to sustain it."* The administration of standardized testing in Years 4 and 6 (SISTA) does form the basis for some baseline data in specific areas

Historically, through regular school census, Tonga has collected and analysed its educational data manually, and detailed annual reports covering all schools and other educational institutions were produced in timely fashion. The benefits of moving to an effective electronic management information system were recognised at the start of the SWAp. Despite a promising start with the contracted services of a regional organisation, attempts to move to an electronic system have proved to be unsuccessful and by the end of this research MEWAC was still without a functioning EMIS. Neither have the ministry's long standing and largely manual processes of data collection, analyses and reporting continued

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[25] The teams include staff from a variety of stakeholder institutions including ministries, private education authorities and donors.
[26] Reported to be only just over 60%.

to the extent they were undertaken in past decades. Although some data collection from schools has been carried out during the life of the SWAp, the exercise was cancelled in 2010.

The recently undertaken Tongan version of the World Bank's Early Grade Reading Assessment (TEGRA) has provided some baseline data for future monitoring, evaluation and impact analysis, especially in regards to the bilingual primary curriculum reform underway. Also worth noting is that all Tongan primary schools are visited for monitoring purposes on a very regular basis by MEWAC officials including the TSGP team.

However, because MEWAC's lack of systematic monitoring and evaluation processes (data collection, analysis and reporting) has been noted as of concern in a number of reviews undertaken during the course of the SWAp, and given the researchers' knowledge of previous achievement in this area, it is concluded that MEWAC's capacity in this area has effectively deteriorated during the SWAp period.

In neither country case was any evidence found on progress towards measuring the impact of their SWAp on poverty reduction, although there is awareness of need to evaluate whether and how the SWAp has had impact on the quality of education.

5. Institutional capacity and management

MEHRD has undergone obvious strengthening of capacities in its system-wide planning and, as previously noted one interviewee commented, *"… most of us are starting to drive in the second phase"*. There has been, and remains, a clear desire to build further capacity within MERHD, and considerable effort and progress has been made towards achieving a critical mass within the Ministry. Gaps prevail in some areas, however, most notably in teacher management within the central ministry, most provincial and some church Education Authorities. The bottom-up planning required for the now mandatory whole school development plans (WSDP) has exposed the urgent need for building management capacity at school level. The growing awareness of the need for greater capacity in data collection, monitoring and evaluation, along with the need for analytical capacity to support government is also recognised.

In Tonga, the lack of emphasis on the need to raise capacity within MEWAC has led to a neglect in some vital areas, most notably the need for budgetary planning, policy development and data collection and analyses. Where local capacity has been built up, it is clear that this has *"improved the working relationships between us and the church … and within MEWAC itself. MEWAC is better co-ordinated … more communication ... more harmony."* While there have been some impressive achievements with potential impact at school level, including the recruitment of high performing national consultants to work in such areas as curriculum development and through the TSGP, overall capacity at an institutional level has been stymied by weak leadership and the lack of a whole-sector vision.

Overall Analysis of Findings

To draw an overall analysis of the findings the authors return to Walford's (2003) continuum. As we hope we have made clear throughout this report, each country is contextually unique and began its SWAp experience from a different starting point. The rubric (Figure 2), at first glance therefore, tends to convey each SWAp in terms of a comparison of components (breadth). While we have discussed the depth of each component in the text (i.e. how effectively each component is implemented), our intention here is to attempt to visualise this combination and determine each country's overall position on the SWAp continuum towards achieving a 'full SWAp'. In other words, where on the continuum each case study country can be placed in achieving the 'ideal' components so often referred to in the literature.

		Tonga	Solomon Islands	

| Moving towards a SWAp | Meet minimum criteria | "In a SWAp" (2-4 elements and/or limited 'depth' of some elements | | "In a full /extensive SWAp" (has all 5 elements all well implemented) |
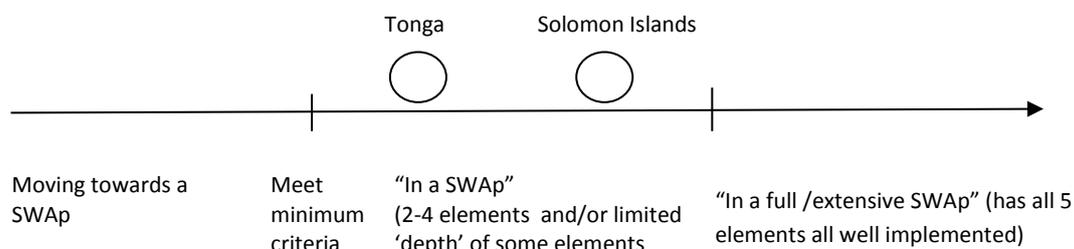
Walford (2003)

As Walford acknowledges, such a diagram raises the question of whether the SWAp 'process' is expected to continue moving towards more use of government systems and/or pooled/sector funding under government control and management in order to achieve the benefits of the approach. A definitive answer cannot be given to this question as it presumes a blueprint and ignores context. Determining where a country sits and in what direction it is moving – either collectively or within individual components – can, however, provide a useful tool for debate in terms of a country's motives for engaging in a SWAp and should help to inform strategic thinking and planning around future aid delivery. Some countries may choose to remain with several or limited SWAp elements and not progress to the 'full or extensive SWAp' because it better fits their circumstances.

PART 4: Conclusions

From our analyses of the international literature of donor and country perspectives on SWAps, a number of conclusions - both positive and negative – can be drawn (see Brown, Foster, Norton, & Naschold, 2001; Buchert, 2002; Hutton, 2004; Riddell, 2002, 2007b; Rodriguez, 2005; Rose & Greeley, 2006; Smith, 2005; Virtue, 2003). These are tabled in Appendix 1. An overall conclusion about the effectiveness of sector-wide approaches to education aid delivery is summarized by Riddell (2007a: 24) as follows:

> What seems to be coming both from individual professionals and researched evaluations is cautious optimism, that the jury is still out on impact, that intractable implementation problems are not resolved speedily, and that attention to process – and a wider berth, therefore, for different types of impact indicators – may be required.

Riddell's phrase 'cautious optimism' is very much applicable to the findings from our two case studies, as are his references to intractable implementation problems, and the need for attention to process rather than a focus on impact measurement.

In terms of the first objective of this research study: **to what extent do SWAps provide a more effective partnership for aid provision,** broad findings that apply in varying degrees to both case studies include:

- Development Partner dialogue and harmonisation have improved, but there is a long way to go. A number of DPs providing support to the education sector in each of these countries remain outside the sector-wide planning and SWAp arrangements.

- NZAID has been much more willing than other DPs to align with partner country systems. Despite this, there is still the tendency to defer to the system requirements of the larger DPs when it comes to financial management and procurement.

- It appears that the establishment of SWAps has not substantially reduced transaction costs. Furthermore, because of capacity building and institutional strengthening needs within each ministry, there continues to be a quite high level of dependence on international and national technical assistance.

- The focus on capacity building of the centre has delayed delivery of enhanced education services to stakeholders (i.e. teachers and children in school) and thus 'more effective aid'.

- Instigating an effective sector-wide approach requires an acute sensitivity to individual country contexts and a flexibility of approach that some DPs find uncomfortable; thus some have difficulty in coming to terms with it.

- There is a need for greater recognition of the necessity for coordination and communication across *all* sector stakeholders – including NGOs and church and private education authorities – and, in some cases, greater recognition and acknowledgment of particular agencies' roles within the sector.

A broad conclusion in terms of our findings pertaining to the different SWAp experiences between the two case study countries is that, despite starting from a significantly 'lower' base in terms of education management and service delivery, Solomon Islands progress towards meeting key SWAp components is stronger than Tonga's. This finding, which goes against the grain of initial expectations regarding SWAp effectiveness, has been reinforced by recent literature. Although earlier writings emphasized the need for certain preconditions, including political stability and a high level of local capacity before entering a SWAp, as Negin (2010a: 7) comments, "… some commentators have recently noted the

value of whole-of-sector approaches in fragile states lacking strong institutional capacity in order to develop harmonized approaches to strengthening governance". We are in agreement that the fragility of Solomon Islands state structures, such as MEHRD at the outset, combined with strong political will to develop the institutional capacity for the improvement of education governance and delivery of basic education services, rendered it fertile ground for a SWAp. Our research suggests that, rather than the previous assumption that very low sectoral capacity and weak delivery of services are serious impediments to SWAp implementation, such weaknesses, if addressed through appropriate partnership relationships with understandings that a lengthy time may be required before results become clear, can lead to an effective SWAp.

Worth noting here, however, is that New Zealand adheres to the World Bank's listing of fragile Pacific states, which includes Tonga. Tonga has long proved itself a regional leader in its ability and willingness to provide basic services, including education, to the majority of its citizens. It is assumed that the label of 'fragile state' has been attached to Tonga because of the outbreak of serious violence in 2006. We disagree with this – although Tonga is in a period of political transition, its state structures and overall institutional capacity are relatively strong. Tonga's education SWap might have been more effective had Tonga's historically developed education leadership in the region been recognized by the Development Partners at the outset.

With regard to the second objective in our original design, **whether this modality obtains better results from educational systems in recipient countries,** although we have argued (see p. 10) that in-depth investigation into this objective was both beyond the study's parameters and inappropriate given the distinction between a SWAp as a partnership relationship and the education sector programme, we do recognise that an education SWAp is not an end in itself. Rather, it is the means to more effective service delivery throughout the education system. Because both of our case-study country SWAps were focused on primary education, we will draw some tentative conclusions about their effectiveness in improving service delivery to primary schools in their respective systems.

In the case of the Solomon Islands, the implementation of a fee-free policy to basic education appears to have contributed to increased primary education enrolment rates[27]. Of significant benefit to primary school teachers and students and supported through the SWAp, was the development of a new, needs-based, culturally relevant and appropriate national primary school curriculum plus high quality and relevant teaching and learning materials. Also noted is the upgrading of the primary pre-service teacher education programme and the graduation of 250 previously untrained teachers through the teachers-in-training programme. Both the pre-service and in-service teacher development initiatives resulted from the contracting of consultants through the SWAp.

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[27] Although conclusive evidence is not yet available.

Key challenges in Solomon Islands primary education that remained largely unaddressed at the end of our research include: irregular attendance and low primary completion; girls' retention being less than boys; a very high proportion of untrained and under-trained teachers; and high teacher absenteeism. The failure to develop more effective strategies to address the crucial situation of untrained teachers is the most glaring omission of the SWAp's first six years of implementation – this is despite a number of reviews on how to address this often-stated concern and a number of strategically and educationally sound recommendations made. While there is no doubt that the upgrading of the pre-service teacher education programme will lead to benefits down the track, it can be concluded that the considerable SWAp investment in this area would have been of more strategic benefit if directed into an expanded in-service programme.

When considering Tonga's improvements in service delivery to primary schools it is interesting to reflect on how MEWAC measures up in this area as compared to their progress in meeting key SWAp components. The benefits accruing to Tongan primary schools through the five-year SWAp include the very successful Tonga School Grants Programme. Because Tonga has long had universal and compulsory primary education, the TSGP's success does not relate to improved access so much as improved school community participation and school and classroom resourcing. And, as already noted, much of the success can be attributed to the outstanding work of the national consultant team. The other major development for Tongan primary schools has been a curriculum reform programme. Little progress was made in the Curriculum Reform Programme in its first two years, despite (or because of) a considerable budget completely dedicated to the costs of six international technical assistants. After significant changes recommended in the mid-term review, however, progress was rapid and effective resulting in a full range of bilingual teaching and learning materials at every level of Year 1-8 classes. The trialling of the materials involved teachers in almost every primary school thus providing them with valuable in-service development. A three year teachers' professional development framework commenced in early 2010 to support the introduction of the new curriculum with all Class 1-8 teachers. The notable aspect of the change of direction was the replacement of most of the expensive international technical assistance team with local consultants.

Our final comment is that although the Tonga SWAp has not been particularly strong in terms of a partnership relationship, or in progress towards meeting key SWAp components, this did not prevent MEWAC delivering a high level of service to its primary education system, which is likely to lead to improved educational outcomes. It must be concluded also that the flexibility of the SWAp funding arrangement through NZAID, and the eventual recognition by the DPs of existing education capacity within Tonga, facilitated this.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Key Findings from the Literature

Box 3: The Implications of adopting a sector wide approach to aid delivery	
Country Perspective	**Development Partner Perspective**
Recognising the need to focus on strengthening capacities in system-wide planning *"There is no point in saying that the government is in the driving seat if it does not know how to drive – teach us to drive first"* [28]	
• Need for considerable capacity building effort – a critical mass across public administration and within the education system at all levels – ministry, local governments, schools teachers, community. Bottom-up and top-down. "Sector wide planning does not replace the need for school planning"[29] • Improve capacity for data collection, monitoring and evaluation. Permanent analytical capacity to support government • Continuity of key government staff to maintain commitment and momentum of reform	• Need to re-skill DP staff (both in-country and in HO) to engage in sector or cross sectoral policy dialogue; understand relationship between education and poverty reduction; undertake long term planning; • Low quality of analysis of how SWAps reduce poverty and their impact on it • Continuity of key funding agency staff
Political influences	
• Implicit and explicit political influence – access easier to show than improved learning outcomes • Strong political driving force (e.g. Dr Sikua in Solomon Islands was Minister of Education and Prime Minister; previously PS.) • State will and capacity go hand in hand. Without the capacity to make and implement policy, well-intended political commitments may be unrealised • Need to link SWA to MTBF and civil service reform • Effective coordination and partnership with Ministry of Finance	• DP decisions are not apolitical – may affect partner country "selection" • Clear coherent and consistent messages

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[28] Direct quotation from a Rwandan in Smith (2005) p. 453
[29] Smith (2005) p. 454

SWAps are complex, evolving dynamic long-term process that depends on flexible and adaptive learning by all:	
• Greater country ownership or token participation? • Recognition of NGOs in education delivery and as stakeholders and donors. • Greater coherence of donor support and funding predictability • Donor coordination reduces time govt has to spend consulting individual DP missions. Some governments will not meet individual donor missions after signing an MOU. • Who coordinates the DPs – donor rep or country?	DPs may be resistant to new ways of thinking; e.g. • Accepting common reporting methods; more recipient driven conditionality, and the need for flexibility. • Policy dialogue tension between ideas of good policy – recipient versus DP. • Respecting the principle of using govt systems wherever possible • Conflict between national policy alignment and "best practice" • Conflict between educationalists and economists • Some DPs believe that harmonisation should not include procurement as it won't maximise respective CA[30] • Better communication with other DPs but expense of bringing DPs together – who pays? • Civil Society and Private sector involvement in forming policy is low- need for better understanding of CSO role in education processes.
The problem of raising the quality of education	
• Quantitative improvements have become common – greater access – but expansion is often accompanied by deterioration in quality • No blue-print for priorities. Consensus around setting them needs to be negotiated within a particular context • Supporting teachers, curriculum, resources as drivers of change	• DP preference for a particular sub-sector
Mutual accountability – puts the ball in both courts	
Governments and DPs should not expect immediate results from a SWAp. Long-term commitment of all partners is essential. Not a quick fix.	

Sources: (see Brown, et al., 2001; Buchert, 2002; Hutton, 2004; Riddell, 2002, 2007b; Rodriguez, 2005; Rose & Greeley, 2006; Smith, 2005; Virtue, 2003).

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[30]Comment made by JICA (Riddell, 2002, p. 38)

Appendix 2: Rubric Criteria Template

	Component
1	**Ownership / Leadership by host country** 　1. Not at all 　2. Attempted but ineffective 　3. Moving towards 　4. Clear and effective
2	**A single comprehensive programme (policies and plans) and budget framework:** 　1. No adequate Sector programme 　2. Sector plan complete and accepted by key stakeholders 　3. Programme prioritized with coherent policies 　4. Programme fully-costed and realistic
3	**Harmonisation / coordination of DPs:** 　1. Some attempts at coordination, no formalised partnership principles 　2. Formalised partnership principles and co-ordination by lead DP 　3. Formalised partnership principles but could be more inclusive/effective 　4. DP coordination formalized, inclusive and effective
4	**Alignment with / Use of local Systems**
4a	**Efforts to streamline funding arrangements (movement towards pooling etc)** 　1. Each DP retains control of their funds 　2. Mix of local and DP financial management systems 　3. Local systems used for earmarked funding 　4. Fully pooled DP sector budget support
4b	**Ideal: Monitoring and evaluation of whole sector with no delineation of donor funding** 　1. No M&E 　2. Established, accepted processes for monitoring school and system performance. 　3. DP and partner government undertake and coordinate M&E of DP funded activities within sector 　4. MOE undertakes M&E of whole sector to feedback and inform sector development including under a SWAP arrangement – i.e. internally led and managed
5.	**Institutional capacity and management** 　1. Low institutional capacity, poor management 　2. Good level of institutional capacity, unclear management /leadership 　3. SWAp strengthens institutional capacity, leadership: 'good governance' principles accepted 　4. Strong institutional capacity and leadership, 'good governance' (Transparent, accountable, effective, efficient, responsive etc.)

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