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Principles and general objectives of education

Education should holistically develop and inculcate in every child the fundamental ethical, moral, social, spiritual, and democratic values. Furthermore the objectives of education should emphasize the need for children to:

- develop a sense of pride in their identity as citizens of Fiji through creative expressions in their learning experiences;
- be motivated and trained to be lifelong learners;
- be nurtured in order to live and fully participate in the global village; and be better prepared for the world of work where rapid change is inevitable.

The mission of the Ministry of Education is to develop all children to their full potential, nurture them to be better citizens who care and love for one another, have a deep sense of patriotism for their country and be able to participate fully in its social and economic development. The provision of education in Fiji is based upon a core of intrinsic and enduring values. These are: cultural understanding, empathy and tolerance; human rights, human dignity and responsibility; safety and security for all; civic pride; honesty, fairness and respect for truth and justice; integrity; environmental sustainability; peace and prosperity; flexibility; lifelong learning; compassion; sense of family and community; faith; and creativity. (MOE, 2007 and 2009).

According to the National Curriculum Framework of 2007, school education in Fiji will support the learning and development of positive attitudes in all children and students and empower them with a firm foundation of knowledge, skills and values to maximize their potential to meet the challenges of living in a dynamic Fiji and in the global society. Education in schools will contribute to the spiritual, intellectual, cultural, social, emotional, aesthetic and physical development of students who will have reverence for God. They will grow into healthy, happy and caring citizens. Students will be committed to: cultural, multicultural, and religious understanding and tolerance; harmonious living; global co-existence; and the promotion of environmental sustainability. Students will be informed, creative, responsible and productive citizens contributing to a peaceful, prosperous and just society. (MOE, 2007).

Laws and other basic regulations concerning education

The **Constitution of the Republic of the Fiji Islands** was adopted on 23 September 1988, amended on 25 July 1997 and became effective from 28 July 1998. The amended Constitution of 1997 was revoked and abrogated by the Revocation Decree No.1 of 10 April 2009 of the President and Commander in Chief of the Republic of the Fiji Military Forces. Section 39 of the Constitution stipulates that every person has the right to basic education and to equal access to educational institutions.

The **Education Act** of 1978 specifies that the Minister of Education may, with the consent of parliament, by order, specify any area or areas of Fiji in which all children of such age or ages as may be specified in such order shall be required to attend a school. The Minister may make regulations to secure that every child of the age specified in such order shall receive education in a school.

The **Compulsory Education Regulations** of 1997 and subsequent **Orders** of 1997, 1998 1999 and 2000 (issued for completion of compulsory education in different districts) provide for the gradual achievement of compulsory education for children aged 6-15 years. Compulsory school attendance requires that school attendance at grade 1 shall be compulsory for all children turning 6 years old by 30 June of any year. Children shall be required to remain at school until they have completed grade 8 or Form 2 level education, or at the end of the year the child turns 15 years of age. It has been observed that the minimum age for completion of compulsory education varies throughout Fiji from 12 to 15 years. The Annual Corporate Plan 2009 of the Ministry of Education stated that the Education Act was to be reviewed by December 2009. In this context, the Ministry of Education invited stakeholders to provide their views on issues including: compulsory education; fees and levies; management of schools; rights of parents and students; rights of school management; disciplinary procedures; examinations and assessments; curriculum; religious education; communities and health and safety. (ILO, 2009). In August 2009 the Ministry of Education announced the decision to enforce a policy for all students to complete 12 years of education, in order to ensure that students do not drop out of school until they have completed Form 6.

The mandate to develop the Fiji National Qualifications Framework was established through the amendment of the Fiji National Training Act in 2000 and is now known as the **Training and Productivity Authority Act 2002**. This amendment resulted in a number of changes in the role of the Training and Productivity Authority of Fiji and one of which is the responsibility to develop the National Qualifications Framework and make provisions for the registration and approval of training courses, training providers, facilities and qualifications.

The **Higher Education Promulgation No. 24** of 2008 provides for the establishment of the Higher Education Commission, and regulated the establishment, recognition, operation and standard of universities and other higher education institutions. The **Higher Education Regulations** dated 23 November 2009 (which came into force in January 2010) contain additional specifications related to the applications for recognition and registration of higher education institutions.

The **Teachers Registration Board Promulgation No. 25** of 2008 provides for the establishment of the Board responsible to the Minister for the registration of persons qualified to be registered as teachers and keeping teacher registration in Fiji under continuous review.

The **Fiji National University Decree No. 39** of 2009 provides for the establishment of the Fiji National University to serve the needs of the post-secondary and higher education sector.



The **Higher Education (Qualifications) Regulations** of 2009 (which came into force in January 2010) provide for the establishment of the Fiji Qualifications Council whose primary role is to administer the Fiji National Qualifications Framework (approved by the Higher Education Commission) for registration of national standards and qualifications.

Administration and management of the education system

Fiji comprises some 330 islands in the heart of the Pacific ocean, of which about one-third are inhabited. There are two major islands, Viti Levu and Vanua Levu with over 80% of the total population; other main islands are Taveuni, Kadavu, Gau and Koro. English is the official language. However, under the new language policy Fijian and Hindi have become compulsory in all schools as part of the school curriculum.

The **Ministry of Education** (also in charge of national heritage, culture and arts, youth and sports) is responsible for the administration and management of education policy and delivery of educational services. It provides the curriculum frameworks, policy guidelines and directions, and qualified teaching personnel that support all schools in the delivery of quality education for students. The Ministry is also charged with responsibility for ensuring that standards in education are met and maintained and the human, physical and the financial resources allocated to education by the government are appropriately directed and expended. In terms of school governance, there are four main **Education Divisions** (central, eastern, northern and western), each managed by a Divisional Education Officer. Each Division comprises one or more **Education Districts**, each administered by a District Senior Education Officer. There are nine Education Districts, four in the western division, two in the central, two in the northern, and one in the eastern division. Less than 2% of schools in Fiji are government schools (two primary and 13 secondary schools, as well as six vocational centers and two teacher training colleges in 2008). The majority of schools are either grant-aided or private, and are owned by churches, private providers and communities. All government schools/colleges have a **Board of Governors**. All non-government registered or recognized schools are managed by properly constituted controlling authorities. The controlling authority (usually a Committee) appoints a manager whose name is submitted to the Permanent Secretary for Education.

MOE is headed by the Minister, assisted by the Permanent Secretary and three Deputy Secretaries, the latter overseeing administration and finance, professional services, and primary/secondary education. The Administration and Finance office of the Deputy Secretary comprises three sections: administration, finance, and human resource management. The **Deputy Secretary for Primary/Secondary Education** oversees the overall performance of primary and secondary schools and provides support to the Minister and the Permanent Secretary on policy issues. The office is responsible for the development of school, teaching staff and management committees and Divisional and District Education offices in the following main areas: staffing of all primary and secondary schools, and teacher training colleges; management and industrial issues with staff unions and with school management committees; school establishment, school size, upgrading and downgrading of schools and location; affirmative action programmes for under-performing schools and also for rural remote schools; schools Monitoring and Review; coordination of School Management Board matters; and coordination of the



Fiji Teachers' Registration Board. The **Deputy Secretary for Professional Services** (DSP) facilitates the formulation of government policy and strategy in relation to the curriculum, technical and vocational education and training (TVET), examinations, testing and assessment work, teacher education and training, school advisory work and review, provision of library services and teaching-learning resources to schools. Under DSP are: the Curriculum Advisory Services, TVET, Examination and Evaluation Unit, Library Services and the National Substance Abuse Council.

The main role of the **Curriculum Advisory Services** (CAS) is to provide, facilitate, support and promote quality in the curriculum and excellence in the teaching and learning of subjects from kindergarten to Form 7, and to ensure quality and relevance education. CAS comprises the following units: Curriculum Development, Careers, the Education Resources Centre, Schools Broadcast Unit, Basic Education Management and Teacher Upgrading Project, Kindergarten Curriculum Consultancy, and two important projects dealing with citizenship education and family life education. The Curriculum Development Unit is responsible for: the development and evaluation of the school curriculum for kindergarten to Form 7; the mounting of in-service courses for teachers, upgrading them on curriculum content and teaching and learning methods; the provision of professional advice and assistance to teachers through visits to schools; and the assistance provided in the preparation of classroom and national assessment work. The **Examinations and Assessment Unit** administers the Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (LANA) and four external examinations, e.g. the Fiji Eight Year Examination (FEYE), the Fiji Junior Certificate Examination (FJCE), the Fiji School-leaving Examination (FSLCE), and the Fiji Seventh Form Certificate Examination (FSFCE).

The **Education Forum** provides advice to the Minister for Education on: education policy directions; current educational development and planning; and educational issues and their proposed solutions. The Education Forum meets once every term and is chaired by the Permanent Secretary for Education. Membership consists of those selected in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Education Act.

In August 2007 the Cabinet agreed to the establishment of a **Higher Education Advisory Board**, attached to the MOE, responsible for advising the Minister of Education on the direction to be undertaken in developing the higher education sector. In the initial phase of its work, the Board is in charge of: redrafting the Higher Education Bill; conducting stakeholders' consultations on the Bill; setting guidelines and criteria for the establishment and recognition of higher education institutions in Fiji; and establishing a register for higher education institutions. The Higher Education Bill was promulgated in October 2008. Since the promulgation, the Board has developed regulations and policies to enable the implementation of the legislation once it commences. The regulations include the Higher Education Regulations 2009 and the Higher Education (Qualifications) Regulations 2009. In January 2010 the **Higher Education Commission** has started to process the recognition and registration of award-conferring, post-secondary education providers. The Commission will review higher education institutions every five years to ensure that they continue to meet the criteria for which they were registered. It will also foster cooperation among higher education institutions and linkages between institutions and industry. Working with the Commission is the **Fiji Qualifications**



Council whose primary role is to administer the Fiji National Qualifications Framework (approved by the Higher Education Commission) for the registration of national standards and qualifications. The Council is governed by the Higher Education (Qualifications) Regulations 2009. The Council will accredit vocational and trade qualifications and the providers offering such qualifications. It will review its qualifications every 5 years to ensure adherence to acceptable and relevant standards of teaching and assessment. In May 2010 there were three provisionally registered self-accrediting institutions (University of South Pacific, National University and the Training and Productivity Authority of Fiji) and another 27 provisionally registered institutions; the Higher Education Commission has granted recognition to 36 institutions.

The **Training and Productivity Authority of Fiji (TPAF)** is a statutory organization established under the Training and Productivity Authority of Fiji Act of 2002 and succeeds the former Fiji National Training Council (FNTC). TPAF falls under the ambit of the Ministry of Labour and its Board is supplemented by three Councils that oversee the functions of the Authority, namely the National Training and Productivity Council (NTPC), the National Quality Awards Council (NQAC), and the National Standards and Accreditation Council (NSAC). TPAF coordinates technical and vocational training and is in charge of establishing a National Qualifications Framework under the guidance of the NSAC that will benchmark training and qualifications in the technical and trade areas against a national standard based on the needs of local industries and which will be comparable with overseas qualifications. TPAF offers short duration courses and workshop that are industry focused, and also courses up to advanced diploma level in various disciplines.

The **Teachers Registration Board**, established in 2008, is responsible to the Minister of Education for: the registration of persons qualified to be registered as teachers; keeping teacher registration in Fiji under continuous review and to make reports and recommendations to the Minister thereon; and collaborating with employing authorities, teacher education institutions, the teaching profession, teacher organizations and the general community in relation to standards of courses of teacher education acceptable for the purpose of teacher registration and to advise the Minister accordingly.

The **Secretariat of the Pacific Board for Educational Assessment (SPBEA)**, whose headquarters are in Fiji, is an intergovernmental, regional organization set up in 1980 to assist the region and member countries to develop assessment procedures towards national/regional certificates. SPBEA has a membership of nine countries (Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Samoa, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu), plus Australia and New Zealand who are the main donors. The Board administers two regional senior secondary school qualifications, the Pacific Senior Secondary Certificate (PSSC) and the South Pacific Form Seven Certificate (SPFSC), beginning in 1989 and 2004 respectively. These two qualifications replaced New Zealand-based qualifications.

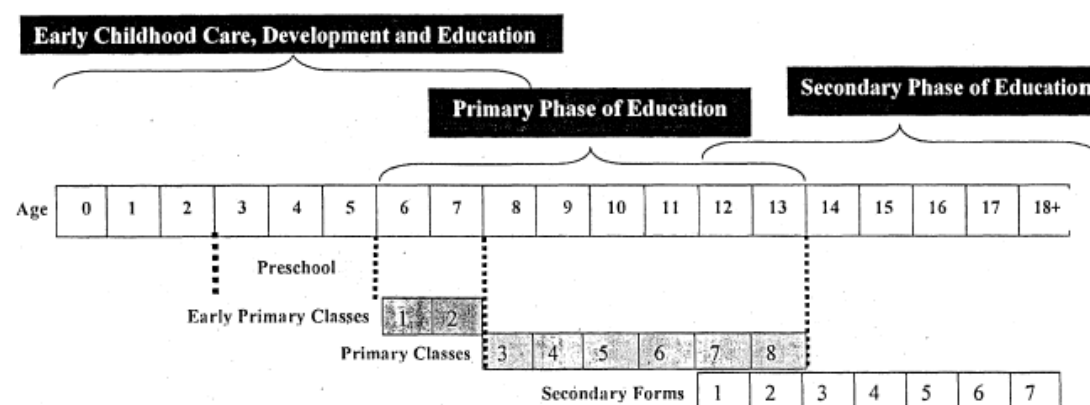
The **University of South Pacific (USP)** is the premier provider of tertiary education in Fiji and the Pacific region and an international centre of excellence for teaching, research consulting and training on all aspects of Pacific culture, environment and human resource development needs. Established in 1968, USP is

jointly owned by the governments of 12 member countries: Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Samoa. The University has campuses in all member countries. The main campus, Laucala, is in Fiji. The Alafua Campus in Samoa is where the School of Agriculture and Food Technology is situated, and the Emalus Campus in Vanuatu is the location for the School of Law. The academic Schools, Institutes and Centres at the University of the South Pacific are organized into three faculties and led by Deans. These are: the Faculty of Arts and Law; the Faculty of Business and Economics; and the Faculty of Science, Technology and Environment. Each faculty comprises of a number of schools which offer a wide range of academic programmes and courses at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. USP is governed by its own Council, which includes representatives of the member country governments, academic staff, students, community and business leaders, the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, Secretariat of the Pacific Community, the American Council of Education, the Privy Council, Australia and New Zealand. The Senate is the academic authority of the University, responsible for matters such as teaching and research. The Council and the Senate are served by committees working in such areas as finance, human resource management and academic planning. Other committees deal with special projects and the day-to-day work of the University. The University also offers programmes through distance and flexible learning in a variety of modes throughout its 14 campuses.

The Department of Social Welfare, under the **Ministry of Women, Social Welfare and Housing**, is in charge of childcare initiatives and services.

Structure and organization of the education system

Fiji: structure of the education system



Source: Ministry of Education, 2008.

Pre-school education

In terms of the Early Childhood Education Policy of 2007, early childhood care, development and education (ECCDE) is an overarching term for any kind of service that promotes health, growth, care, development and learning for children aged 0-8



years. Early childhood development (ECD) is an informal programme catering for children aged 0-3 years; support is given to parents and families to enhance their child rearing practices, parenting skills and further understanding of child development. Playgroup is an informal programme, involving parents, families and qualified care givers for children aged 0-5(6) years. Preschool education is a half-day program for children aged 3-5(6) years under qualified ECCDE teachers. Preparatory kindergarten is a half-day day programme for for 5-year-olds under qualified ECCDE teachers. Day/Childcare centers offer a full-day programme to children aged 0-6 years under qualified ECCDE teachers, health workers and care givers. The Montessori programme is a half-day programme for children aged 2-5(6) years based on the Montessori methods and concept of learning.

Primary education

Primary school covers grades (or classes) 1-6 or grades 1-8; grades 7 and 8 (or Forms 1 and 2) are considered as intermediate education, covering two years of senior primary school or Forms 1 and 2 of junior secondary school. The first two years of primary school (grades 1 and 2) are considered as early primary education. At the end of grade 6, pupils sit the Fiji Intermediate Examination and in the eighth year students sit the Fiji Entrance Examination/Eighth Year Examination. A new test, the Fiji Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (FILNA) is now administered in grades 4 and 6, replacing the Fiji Intermediate Examination. Primary education (grades 1-6) is compulsory and the entry age is 6. In 2010 the Fiji Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (FILNA) was administered to pupils in classes 4, 6 and 8, and the Fiji Eighth Year Examination (FEYE) was administered to pupils in class 8.

Secondary education

Secondary school covers Forms 1 to 6 (or 7) or Forms 3-6 (or 7). Junior secondary schools offer Forms 1 to 4. At the end of Form 4, students sit the Fiji Junior Certificate (FJC) examination which assesses students' achievement in Forms 3-4. At the end of Form 6, students sit the Fiji School-leaving Certificate (FSLC) examination which assesses Forms 5 and 6 work. After the successful completion of Form 6, students can either continue in secondary schools in Form 7 or pursue a foundation level course at a university. At the end of Form 7, students sit the Fiji Seventh Form Examination. Form 7 is equivalent to the foundation programme offered by the University of the South Pacific; the passing of the Fiji Seventh Form Examination provides access to tertiary education. Technical and vocational education is offered in secondary schools in the form of technical/vocational subjects. Some secondary schools offer two-year vocational programmes leading to a certificate and preparing students for the employment market. There are also many private vocational schools that offer vocational courses and provide accreditation for the achievements by students. Other main providers of technical and vocational education and training are the Fiji Institute of Technology and the Training and Productivity Authority of Fiji.

Higher education

Higher education is offered in three universities, including the University of South Pacific (USP), colleges and other higher education institutions. The two teacher training colleges under MOE provide two-year diploma/advanced certificate



programmes (including 16 weeks of teaching practice) for the training of primary and secondary school teachers. A one-year diploma programme is also offered preparing secondary school teachers in industrial arts and agricultural science subjects. The college programmes are recognized by the USP. Students who have completed the diploma programme can get 10 units cross-credited to the USP Bachelor's of Education Primary programme. Students graduating with the advanced certificate in early childhood can get seven units cross-credited towards the B.Ed (ECE) programme. The USP offers preliminary and foundations programmes forming a pathway to degree-level study. A wide range of one-year certificate qualifications in vocational fields (including teacher education) are offered. Programmes leading to a higher education diploma normally take two years to complete. A bachelor's degree typically requires three years of study. A postgraduate certificate or diploma normally takes one year to complete; master's degree programmes last two years. The minimum duration of a doctoral degree programme is three years' full-time or four years' part-time study.

The school year consists of 41 weeks in total, divided into three terms.

The educational process

Curriculum development in Fiji started in 1968 with the establishment of the Curriculum Development Unit (CDU). Since that year the CDU has progressively revised the various curricula at different paces in different periods. In most of these processes the focus was mainly aimed at localizing the curriculum at all levels. In 1970, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UNESCO launched the Curriculum Development Project. Curricula for Forms 1 to 4 were developed. The development of the junior secondary level curriculum was supported by the UNDP's South Pacific Regional Secondary School Curriculum Development Project. This project produced extensive resource materials which were developed by the Ministry.

Following the Education Commission Report of 2000, the first National Education Summit took place in 2004, which resulted in the Suva Declaration, mapping the major directions for education during 2006-2016, including the need to change the school curriculum and its delivery, and to develop a national curriculum framework. The Fiji Education Sector Programme (FESP), funded by the European Union and AusAID, has supported the development of a new National Curriculum Framework (NCF) for Fiji that has been approved by the Curriculum Council and satisfies the long held need for curriculum reform. The NCF articulates Fiji's philosophy and beliefs about education, details the key learning areas, supports the needs of all children including those in remote, rural and disadvantaged schools in primary, secondary and Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sectors of education (kindergarten to Form 7).

The NCF is organized using six Foundation Areas of Learning and Development (FALD) for early childhood, and seven Key Learning Areas (KLAs) for the primary and secondary levels of schooling. The curriculum is grouped into these areas and is described using essential learning outcomes for all students. The outcomes are broad statements about what students should understand, value and be able to do as a result of the teaching and learning in early childhood programmes and schools. An outcomes approach promotes relevance in the curriculum, flexibility in



teaching and learning styles, teaching for learning, and assessment for learning. The outcomes support learning experiences at increasing levels of understanding, skills, complexity and depth. They provide a clear focus for teaching, learning and assessment. The NCF is inclusive of all children and students from preschool to Form 7, including those with special needs. It is culturally inclusive and takes into account the multicultural and multilingual contexts in which the curriculum is implemented.

The NCF reflects the importance of providing children and students with an education informed by a clear set of ethics, morals, and values. Through consultation and consensus, a set of values was identified during the development of the Ministry of Education's Strategic Plan 2006-2010. The educational values to be addressed in the curriculum are: cultural understanding, empathy and tolerance; human rights, human dignity and responsibility; safety and security for all; civic pride; honesty, fairness and respect for truth and justice; integrity; environmental sustainability; peace and prosperity; flexibility; lifelong learning; compassion; sense of family and community; faith; and creativity. The curriculum also takes into account the principles of socio-constructivism and the four pillars of learning identified by the UNESCO International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century, i.e. learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be.

An outcomes based approach has been adopted and adapted to meet emerging educational needs. The NCF has developed outcomes at three levels: Major Learning Outcomes (MLOs); FALD and KLAs, and subject outcomes; strand and content learning outcomes. These outcomes are the focus of all teaching, learning and assessment. The new curriculum encourages an integrated and interdisciplinary approach particularly at early childhood and the primary levels of schooling. Seven MLOs apply to all children and students from preschool to Form 7: be empowered learners; communicate effectively; conduct investigations; make decisions; select and use information; show enterprise; understand change, balance and relationships. The learning outcomes in six FALD and seven KLAs contribute to the achievement of the MLOs. The curriculum perspectives that underpin the NCF emerge from the following areas crucial to any educational framework: careers, citizenship, environmental sustainability, literacy, numeracy, religion, special needs, and values, attitudes and behaviour. These important perspectives are usually best integrated across the curriculum. The foundations of these perspectives are laid down in the early years, although the teaching of them at this level may be largely informal. All teachers will consider these perspectives in all FALD and KLAs.

FALD are broad areas that encompass fundamental aspects of early childhood education, and provide the foundation for future learning and living. The areas are: aesthetics, creativity and the arts; learning to know; language, literacy and communication; living and learning together; physical development, health and well-being; spiritual and moral. Seven KLAs have been identified which accommodate all of the traditional subjects in the curriculum. Each KLA subject has sets of learning outcomes that show a progression from simple to increasing levels of complexity as students' progress through school. The KLA subjects are supported by syllabuses that provide a picture of the total span of the students' schooling, and allow for continuity and consistency. The seven KLAs are: expressive and creative arts; healthy living and physical education; language; mathematics; science; studies of society and economic development; technology.



The major purposes for assessing children and students' achievements and competencies are to: inform and to improve their learning and development; inform decision making in order to improve teaching and teaching methods; select and rank students; and provide certification. The National Policy for Assessment, Reporting and Monitoring 2007 gives guidance about the role and purpose of these important aspects of the NCF. This policy unifies existing policies about assessment, reporting and monitoring. In the Fiji Islands, the most important purpose of assessment is to support child and student learning. However, the third purpose of assessment has received considerable emphasis. Examination results are used to rank and select students at several transition points such as between Form 6 and Form 7. As more places become available in secondary schools, more students will have the opportunity to proceed to the next stage of education. As this happens, the need for selection will diminish as will the need for some of the examinations. Instead, other types of assessment will become more evident and focus more strongly on the first and second purpose for assessment, namely to improve learning and to provide information about the quality of education. Assessment procedures will be systematic and ongoing. Classroom and school-based internal assessment will be emphasized up to class (grade) 8/Form 2. From Form 3 to Form 7, teachers use a combination of internal and external assessment (examinations and internal assessment tasks). Both internal and external assessments will assess achievement of the learning outcomes as described in the syllabuses. New approaches to examinations and tests such as the Fiji Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (FILNA) are designed to provide information to the system, teachers, children and parents/guardians about learner achievements, Information from these new tests is used by the system to monitor learner achievements over time and to support improvements in their learning. The National Policy for Assessment, Reporting and Monitoring, 2007 is applicable at all levels of schooling. (MOE, 2007).

According to the National Policy for Curriculum Assessment and Reporting, effective January 2008, the system, schools (including preschools) and teachers must: develop valid and reliable assessments; use a comprehensive range of assessments over time to make informed judgments about student achievement and progress; support teacher engagement in moderation to enhance confidence in and consistency of teacher judgments of student achievement and progress; design assessments that are equitable and relevant for all students and appropriate for their phase of development; make criteria for assessments explicit to those being assessed; report regular and relevant information to parents or guardians on student progress and achievement; use information from student achievement assessments to guide decision-making; use assessment methods from preschool to class (grade) 2 to support learning and development and not for the selection and ranking of students.

In 2008 the major focus of the activity has been on curriculum development and at the school level in the delivery of professional development and training programmes for heads of schools and teachers. All school heads and management committees have had awareness training. The first phase of syllabus and curriculum materials development has focused on early childhood and primary school. Early Childhood Care Development and Education Guidelines have been developed and trialled. Work progressed on the development of classes (grades) 1-6 and Forms 3-4 syllabi in all KLAS. A Distance Education pilot in class 3 reading was implemented. The draft Distance Education material was reviewed, refined and implemented



through broad consultation. A monitoring and evaluation study was completed in 2008. The review of KLA based curriculum modules for classes 3 and 4 was completed and trialled in 14 schools. (MOE, Annual Report 2008).

Pre-primary education

As mentioned, in terms of the Early Childhood Education (ECE) Policy of 2007 early childhood care, development and education (ECCDE) is an overarching term for any kind of service that promotes health, growth, care, development and learning for children aged 0-8 years. Early childhood development (ECD) is an informal programme catering for children aged 0-3 years; support is given to parents and families to enhance their child rearing practices, parenting skills and further understanding of child development. Playgroup is an informal programme, involving parents, families and qualified care givers for children aged 0-6 years. Preschool education is a half-day program for children aged 3-6 years under qualified ECCDE teachers. Preparatory kindergarten is a half-day day programme for 5-year-olds under qualified ECCDE teachers. Day/Childcare centers offer a full-day programme to children aged 0-6 years under qualified ECCDE teachers, health workers and care givers. The Montessori programme is a half-day programme for children aged 2-6 years based on the Montessori methods and concept of learning.

ECE experiences aim to promote the total learning and development of the child, namely, social, emotional, physical, spiritual, language and cognitive skills. Such a holistic approach will ensure the child's optimum learning development and equip young children with the necessary knowledge and skills for later schooling. In terms of the National Curriculum Framework of 2007, ECCDE programmes enhance and extend early learning and development significantly when they support and affirm family roles. This perspective underpins the early childhood curriculum, which cannot be seen in isolation from children's prior learning and their ongoing learning from home and in the community. Children with disabilities need early intervention, so that they benefit to the greatest extent possible from early education and future educational experiences. The purpose of these programmes is to provide children with an environment that will promote their optimum development. This means providing a variety of experiences that will foster the child's: cultural, aesthetic and creative development; intellectual or cognitive development; language development (promoting the child's mother tongue or own language first); moral and spiritual development; physical development, health and well-being, and social and emotional development.

Examinations such as written or oral tests should not be used to assess children in the preschool or early years of primary school. Teachers are advised to use a range of observation strategies and other qualitative processes for monitoring learning and development in these years. At times, other properly trained professionals may use specially designed tests to assess children's growth and development in some of the foundation areas of learning and development such as in physical development, health and well-being. (MOE, 2007).

The Ministry of Education is primarily responsible for the monitoring of ECE and its management is under the responsibility of their respective controlling authorities or school management committees. The Ministry of Health and the



Ministry of Works and Energy are other government agencies responsible mainly for the monitoring of indicators on child health and improved water source. The Senior Education Officer (SEO), Kindergarten is primarily responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of preschool curriculum, programmes and initiatives. Other stakeholders include the education officers from the Districts and the Lautoka Teachers' College. The Curriculum Advisory Services Unit (CAS) works directly with the SEO Kindergarten in the development and implementation of the new curriculum framework for preschool education. (MOE, 2008).

In terms of the Policy on Early Childhood Education, effective January 2007, ECCDE management committees must ensure that buildings, grounds and equipment (indoor and outdoor), are safe and developmentally appropriate for children. Qualified ECCDE teachers must deliver quality programmes that are developmentally and culturally appropriate. ECCDE management committees are responsible for funding all operations including staff salaries and maintenance of ECCDE centers. Recognized ECCDE centers in rural and disadvantaged communities will continue to receive salary grants from MOE.

ECE centres are managed by school management committees who are also responsible for the selection and recruitment of teaching staff. In 2006 there were 559 centers, each supervised mostly by a single teacher; the total enrolment of 5-year-olds was 18,267 children and the gross enrolment rate was estimated at 47.2%. There has been a major shift towards the Ministry of Education taking up the responsibilities of the training of ECE teachers and the development of the ECE curriculum.

Primary education

As mentioned, primary school covers classes (grades) 1-6 or grades 1-8; grades 7 and 8 (or Forms 1 and 2) are considered as intermediate education, covering two years of senior primary school or Forms 1 and 2 of junior secondary school. The first two years of primary school (grades 1 and 2) are considered as early primary education. At the end of grade 6, pupils sit the Fiji Intermediate Examination and in the eighth year students sit the Fiji Entrance Examination. A new test, the Fiji Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (FILNA) is now administered in grades 4 and 6, replacing the Fiji Intermediate Examination. Primary education (grades 1-6) is compulsory and the entry age is 6. Section 29 of the 1978 Education Act stipulates that primary schools are: schools in which full time instruction is given from the first year to the eighth year of formal education or for any shorter period; and intermediate schools, being schools in which full time instruction is given to the pupils in the seventh and eighth or the sixth, seventh and eighth years of formal education.

In terms of the National Curriculum Framework of 2007, the purpose of primary education is to develop all children to their full potential by offering them the essential basic skills, knowledge and attitudes they will need in society. The support of parents and guardians is essential. Primary education will build on the education provided at early childhood level, and will continue to address the emotional, cultural, intellectual, physical and spiritual needs of all children. It will prepare students for life in the Fiji Islands and ensure that they begin to understand their place in the world as members of a global community. It will also prepare students for education at the secondary level, encouraging them to develop their individual abilities, interests and



skills. Children and students with disabilities may need special educational intervention in order that they benefit from all that education has to offer. Primary education will promote a love for learning, and of the values, virtues and moral dispositions we as a nation advocate and strive to uphold. (MOE, 2007).

Special education is not a separate stage of education. It refers to organised services and learning for those children and students with disabilities, learning difficulties, communication or behaviour difficulties, and sensory or physical impairments. The degree of disability varies considerably and is not always obvious to the untrained eye. Special education does not have its own curriculum. It aims to enable students with disabilities to gain access to the curriculum in a range of settings in the educational system. Special education allows all children and students with disabilities to develop their individual educational potential. Some of these children and students need to attend special schools because they require specialist teaching and sometimes special facilities. Provision is also made for these young people to receive an education in mainstream regular schools when they are ready and able. Special education also provides specific services, instructional strategies, resources and learning for children and students so that they can participate in the general curriculum and develop the skills/competencies needed for participation in the general curriculum. After receiving specialist support for their disabilities, children and students can transfer to mainstream schools and enjoy living and working together with their peers as they do in real life. The purpose of special education is similar to the purpose of elementary and secondary education: to prepare children and students to lead productive independent lives as citizens and members of the community. (*Ibid.*).

Seven KLAs have been identified in the 2007 National Curriculum Framework which accommodate all of the traditional subjects in the curriculum. Each KLA subject has sets of learning outcomes that show a progression from simple to increasing levels of complexity as students' progress through school. The KLA subjects are supported by syllabuses that provide a picture of the total span of the students' schooling, and allow for continuity and consistency. The seven KLAs are: expressive and creative arts; healthy living and physical education; language; mathematics; science; studies of society and economic development; technology. In grades 1-6 the subjects are: the arts; healthy living and physical education; language (Fijian, Hindi, English, Rotuman,, Urdu, Mandarin, French, Tamil, Punjabi); mathematics; science; social studies; and technology. (MOE, 2007).

A compulsory language programme based on the use of Fijian and Hindi would be implemented to complement English. This new programme would begin in 2008 at class (grade) 5 level at primary schools and at Form 3 level at secondary schools. It is earmarked to start from class 5 mainly because classes 1-4 concentrate on socializing the child into the schooling process and, at the same time, children are introduced into the teaching and learning of English. The courses would start at beginners' level and gradually progress in proficiency year by year as students progress through school. Students would be assessed at class 6, class 8, Form 4, and Form 6 levels. Certificates would be given to students after completion of study at each level and after passing the assessment tests.



According to the National Policy for Curriculum Assessment and Reporting, effective January 2008, the schools and teachers will: issue a formal report for each primary and secondary school student at the end of each term; maintain accurate records of students' achievements; report on student achievement and developmental progress in all of the foundation areas of learning and development or in relation to all of the key learning area subject outcomes from the appropriate syllabuses; report student achievement using a system of grades from A-E for each primary and secondary student only; ensure that all grades are accompanied by descriptive statements that emphasize what students have demonstrated they can do; include information about students' social, physical and emotional development, attitudes and behaviours; ensure that informal reports about students' progress are made to parents or guardians; ensure regular meetings with parents and guardians at the discretion of the school but at least twice a year.

The Fiji Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (FILNA) test was introduced for the first time in classes 4 and 6 in 2004. It is a standardized test of achievement designed to measure standards of literacy and numeracy, based on the current curriculum and used to determine levels of performance of students at years 4, 6 and 8. FILNA measures student achievement in literacy and numeracy because achievement in these two areas is considered the best predictor of student achievement in other subjects. The focus of the assessment is to use information from student results to plan for improvement in learning and teaching. FILNA uses the Rasch Model to locate the test items on scale, from the least difficult to the most difficult questions. It is able to locate students according to their responses to the questions, based on the average level of difficulty of the questions they responded to. The outcomes-based approach used in the FILNA test reflects a central focus on the learner. It is consistent with the new National Curriculum Framework and the current trend in educational assessment, which is assessment for learning. Three different types of reports are produced from the FILNA: individual student report, class report and item analysis report.

According to the Ministry of National Planning, in 2008 the primary school net enrolment ratio was estimated at 96.3% for girls and 95.3% for boys. The proportion of pupils starting class 1 and progressing until class 5 was 96.7%. Primary completion ratio is recorded to be 100% over the period 2000-2005. However, in 2008 it had declined to about 97%. (Ministry of Planning, 2010). According to the Bureau of Statistics, in 2009 there were 721 primary schools with 129,444 pupils enrolled and 5,173 teachers. The average pupils/teacher ratio was 25:1.

Secondary education

As mentioned, secondary school covers Forms 1 to 6 (or 7) or Forms 3-6 (or 7). Junior secondary schools offer Forms 1 to 4. At the end of Form 4, students sit the Fiji Junior Certificate (FJC) examination which assesses students' achievement in Forms 3-4. At the end of Form 6, students sit the Fiji School-leaving Certificate (FSLC) examination which assesses Forms 5 and 6 work. After the successful completion of Form 6, students can either continue in secondary schools in Form 7 or pursue a foundation level course at a university. At the end of Form 7, students sit the Fiji Seventh Form Examination. Technical and vocational education is offered in secondary schools in the form of technical/vocational subjects. Some secondary



schools offer two-year vocational programmes leading to a certificate and preparing students for the employment market. There are also many private vocational schools that offer vocational courses and provide accreditation for the achievements by students. Other main providers of technical and vocational education and training are the Fiji Institute of Technology and the Training and Productivity Authority of Fiji.

According to the 1978 Education Act middle schools are educational establishments in which full time instruction, mainly of a practical nature, extending over a period of two or three or four years, is given to pupils who have completed the sixth year of formal education. Secondary schools are educational establishments in which full time instruction is given in general, technical, commercial and/or agricultural subjects, extending over a period of from two to six years, to pupils who have completed the full primary school course; and in which instruction may also be given to part time pupils. Technical institutes provide full or part time instruction in general, technical or commercial subjects up to trade, sub-professional or professional level.

In terms of the National Curriculum Framework of 2007, secondary education will continue to provide all young people with basic skills, knowledge and values. It should enable them to engage in productive and satisfying employment and/or be prepared to enter tertiary education immediately after completion of secondary schooling. Secondary education will ensure that all students have the opportunity to develop essential knowledge, skills and attitudes in a broad range of subjects of their choice that will enable them to become productive citizens. In choosing subjects students will give careful consideration to possible career pathways. Students such as those with disabilities or special gifts will need particular educational interventions. Secondary education will assist young people to be enterprising, creative, productive and law-abiding citizens of Fiji. Secondary education will seek to fulfil the expectations of parents/guardians and the community by ensuring that students have a firm grounding in moral and spiritual values which will in turn help define their role as good citizens of Fiji.

Seven KLAs have been identified in the 2007 National Curriculum Framework which accommodate all of the traditional subjects in the curriculum. The KLA subjects are supported by syllabuses that provide a picture of the total span of the students' schooling, and allow for continuity and consistency. The seven KLAs are: expressive and creative arts; healthy living and physical education; language; mathematics; science; studies of society and economic development; technology. In Forms 1 and 2 (and grades 7 and 8) the subjects are: the arts; family life, physical education and sport, and health education (under KLA healthy living and physical education); language (Fijian, Hindi, English, Rotuman, Urdu, Mandarin, French, Tamil, Punjabi); mathematics; science; social studies; and technology. In Forms 3 and 4, arts are split into art, craft, music, dance and drama; social studies into commercial studies and social sciences; in the case of technology several options are offered, including agricultural science, home economics, graphic arts, technical drawing or woodwork, metalwork, office technology. In Forms 5-7, biology, chemistry and physics are introduced (KLA science), as well as history, geography, accounting and economics (KLA studies of society and economic development); options under technology are expanded. (MOE, 2007).



Assessment procedures are the same as in primary education and follow the National Policy for Curriculum Assessment and Reporting, effective January 2008. The Fiji Junior Certificate Internal Assessment Programme (FJC IA) was nationally implemented in 2007. All Form 3 students are now on the new programme. The Fiji Junior Certificate Assessment Policy 2007 provides the framework, procedures and guidelines for the conduct of Internal Assessment (IA) and Examination for the FJC. The policy shall be based on a two-year programme of study which begins in Form 3 and is completed in Form 4. At the Form 3 level the course work will be internally assessed by teachers and curriculum advisors using common, practical tasks and this will comprise the first part of the FJC course assessment requirement. At the Form 4 level the course work will be externally examined and this will comprise the second part of the FJC course assessment requirements. A student's achievement in the Form 3 IA subjects will be reported on the FJCE Result Notice as a mark out of 100. Schools will report each student's achievement on the IA tasks to their parents progressively during the student's Form 3 year. A student's achievement in the FJC Examination will be reported on a student's FJCE Result Notice as a mark out of 100.

A student will study seven subjects in Form 3. In any one year, a full-time student will be internally assessed in a maximum of seven subjects or a minimum of six subjects. Compulsory subjects include: English; basic science; commercial studies; mathematics; social science; either home economics or woodwork & technical drawing or metalwork & technical drawing or graphic design & technical drawing; either agricultural science or office technology or a vernacular (Fijian, Hindi, Urdu, Rotuman, French). Compulsory core subjects include: physical education, art and craft, and music. Optional core subjects include family life or religious/values education. The FJC Results Notice will report a student's moderated IA score, exam scaled score and the combined scaled mark. These three marks are reported separately on the Result Notice. A student's Result Notice provides a profile of the student's achievement of different subject outcomes across both Form 3 and Form 4. Every candidate is awarded a FJC which shows their grade for every subject sat. The grades are from 1 to 9 with grade 1 as the highest and grade 9 the lowest. A student's grade is determined from the combination of the IA and FJC Examination scores.

According to the Fiji Seventh Form Certificate Examination Regulation revised in 2007, a student shall be eligible to enter Form 7 if he/she has obtained at least 50 marks in English and an aggregate of at least 250 marks in English and in the best three other subjects in the Fiji School-leaving Certificate Examination. In any one year, a full-time candidate may enter for the examination in a minimum of four subjects including English, up to a maximum of five subjects. In every subject in which practical work or project work is prescribed, each candidate for the subject shall have his/her practical or project work internally assessed by the school. Every candidate shall be awarded a certificate which shows the grade of every subject sat. The grades shall be from 1 to 9 with grade 1 as the highest and grade 9 the lowest. For the purpose of selection, marks are aggregated for English plus the best 3 other subjects for all full-time candidates and all extra-mural candidates who appear for English and three other subjects.

In terms of the National Curriculum Framework of 2007, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) aims to facilitate sustainable economic and



social development by providing students with the knowledge, values and attitudes necessary to perform technological skills in both the formal and informal sectors of the economy. Students with disabilities will benefit from TVET and it can help them to lead regular lives. TVET is designed to deliver a holistic, enhanced, student-centred approach to learning by applying the most effective, flexible and appropriate teaching and learning modes and technologies. It aims to encourage independence, innovation, creativity and problem-solving skills through flexible approaches to learning, and thus prepare students for the future. TVET seeks to promote a sound work ethic and to raise learner-awareness of the importance and dignity of technical and vocational education in both the social and economic development of the nation. It offers a pathway to higher education, and provides students and early school leavers with transferable skills needed for employment in a wide range of employment opportunities. (MOE, 2007).

According to the Bureau of Statistics, in 2009 there were 172 secondary schools with 67,072 students enrolled and 4,273 teachers. The average students/teacher ratio was 16:1. There were also 69 technical and vocational schools with 2,387 students enrolled.

Assessing learning achievement nation-wide

Information is not available.

Teaching staff

There are two teachers colleges managed by the Ministry of Education, the Lautoka Teachers College (LTC) and the Fiji College of Advanced Education (FCAE). Overall, most of primary teachers have a teacher training college qualification. The main function of the LTC is to provide pre-service training and in-service teacher education and training of primary school teachers in the country. In 2008 the LTC programmes have been re-accredited by a group of educationist both local and overseas. The LTC programmes are recognized by the University of the South Pacific (USP). Students who have completed the two-year diploma programme will be able to get 10 units cross-credited to the USP three-year Bachelor of Education, Primary programme. Students graduating with the Advanced Certificate in Early Childhood Education (ECE) will have seven units cross-credited towards the Bachelor of Education, (ECE) programme. Diploma students spend a total of 16 weeks over the two year period on teaching practice. One of these practicum's involves trainees living in a rural school for six weeks which have multiple-class (multi-grade) teaching. They would be posted to rural schools. Multi-class teaching is the norm rather than the exception in many schools, and it is difficult for rural schools to recruit and keep qualified and experienced teachers.

The FCAE is the only government institution which trains secondary school teachers. Many teachers complete their secondary teacher training certificate course on an in-service mode during school breaks. The college offers a one-year and a two-year diploma programme. Teaching practice involves 12 weeks in schools. The one-year diploma programme prepares teachers to teach industrial arts and agricultural science subjects. The two-year diploma programme prepares students for teaching in



the following subjects: accounting and economics; mathematics and science; English and social science; counselling/Fijian studies; counselling/Hindi studies; English and Fijian studies; English and Hindi studies; physical education/music, art and craft; and home economics. Counselling/Fijian studies and Counselling/Hindi studies were introduced as new subjects in 2007. FCAE graduates get cross-credit award of USP courses for a Bachelor of Education programme in the following disciplines: 10 courses are being cross-credited to FCAE graduates majoring in English/social science; 13 courses in mathematics and science; eight courses in accounting and economics; and seven courses in home economics. FCAE was planning to upgrade the diploma in education programme to a bachelor of education qualification in the future. The college was also looking forward to introducing a diploma programme in mathematics and computer studies and upgrading the one-year programme for industrial arts and agricultural science to a two-year programme.

The School of Education at USP offers three-year in-service Bachelor of Education programmes in early childhood, primary, secondary and special education. Admission to the in-service Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood), consisting of 22 courses, is granted to teachers having at least three years' teaching experience at the early childhood or junior primary level after obtaining a Diploma in Early Childhood Education (or equivalent) from a recognized tertiary institution. The Bachelor of Education (Primary) consists of 22 courses including a 14-week school practicum; admission is open to those having completed the requirements for a USP one-year Certificate in Teaching (Primary), or possessing a primary teacher training qualification from a teachers training college. The Bachelor of Education (Secondary) consists of 22 courses, including a practicum, and is open to those having completed the requirements for a two-year USP Diploma in Teaching (Secondary), or possess a Diploma in Education (Secondary) from a from a teachers training college. A one-year postgraduate diploma in education is also offered, also as part of a two-year master in education.

The College of Humanities and Education (School of Education) of the newly established Fiji National University offers certificate, diploma and bachelor in education programmes in early childhood (one- or two-year certificate programmes), primary, secondary and technical and vocational education and training (TVET). A one-year postgraduate diploma in education is also offered replacing the diploma in tertiary teaching. The new B.Ed (TVET) programme is for in-service teachers, educators and trainers, has a strong focus on technical and vocational education with teaching majors in two subject areas, is theoretical as well as practical-oriented and activity-based, and encourages self-directed learning. The Fiji Institute of Technology also offers secondary teaching certificate in TVET programmes.

In 2008, out of 4,512 teachers, 2,667 were civil servants, 490 were civil servants on probation, and 1,355 were temporary civil servants. All teachers are expected to register under the Teachers Registration Board established by the Promulgation No. 25 of 2008. (MOE, Annual Report 2008). The functions of the Board are: (a) to be responsible to the Minister for the registration of persons qualified to be registered as teachers; (b) to keep teacher registration in Fiji under continuous review and to make reports and recommendations to the Minister thereon; (c) to confer and collaborate with employing authorities, teacher education institutions, the teaching profession, teacher organizations and the general community in relation to



standards of courses of teacher education acceptable for the purpose of teacher registration and to advise the Minister accordingly; (d) to undertake relevant review and research projects; (e) to promote the teaching profession; (f) to develop, formulate and improve professional teaching standards attuned to the needs of students and of a professional work force; and (g) to develop, formulate and maintain a code of professional ethics for the teaching professions. According to the Promulgation, no person shall be permitted to teach at a school in Fiji unless the person is a holder of a certificate of registration. The following requirements apply for registration: (i) having successfully completed an approved course and qualification relating to teacher education and training from a recognized institution, and at least one year of full-time teaching to the satisfaction of the Board; (ii) having contributed to educational practice and having the qualification and experience that, in the opinion of the Board, are sufficient to warrant registration; or (iii) has complied with any requirements of the Board during any period of provisional registration; and having good character and being certified by a registered medical practitioner as medically fit to be a teacher. The main categories of teachers are: principals, vice-principals and assistant principals; heads of departments for assistant teachers for secondary schools; and head-teachers, assistant head-teachers, executive teachers and assistant teachers for primary schools.

According to MOE, in 2006 over 99% of primary and secondary school teachers were trained. In the same year, 55.8% of primary teachers and 51.4% of secondary teachers were females. The proportion of females at leadership positions in schools at both secondary and primary was very low (9.3% at the primary and 11.6% at the secondary level), and even lower was the proportion of females who take up school management positions. (MOE, 2008).

A survey was conducted in 2005 in 28 schools, including 16 secondary and 12 primary schools located both in accessible and less accessible islands and areas within these islands (Viti Levu, Vanua Levu, Taveuni, Kadavu, Yasawas, Ovalau). The schools had a total of 671 teachers with 416 teachers returning completed questionnaires. It was found that the average (mean) number of work hours per week was 46.9 with primary teachers working on average 44.6 weekly hours and secondary teachers 47.6 hours. While the weekly working hours were thus similar, primary teachers had a considerably higher teaching load with an average of 36.8 weekly hours, compared to 26.7 hours for secondary teachers (29.2 hours for all teachers). Workdays of nine hours or more, i.e. 45 weekly hours, were common for around 33 % of primary and 40 % of secondary teachers. The pay of teachers is relatively low; however, frustrations often stem from poor promotion opportunities, poor administration of schools and lack of teaching resources, rather than the salary level. Teacher shortage, particularly in the sciences and mathematics, has been an issue since the late 1980s with the increased migration of skilled people from Fiji. In recent years however, the small number of teachers leaving service every year has not been enough to create vacancies for all new graduates. Despite the general oversupply of teachers, especially among new graduates, there is a shortage of qualified experienced teachers. Some subject areas (mathematics, sciences, IT, business and accounting) face considerable staff shortages at secondary level. (Australian Research Council, 2009).



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For updated links, consult the Web page of the International Bureau of Education of UNESCO: <http://www.ibe.unesco.org/links.htm>