



P.R.I.D.E
The University of the South Pacific



**COMMONWEALTH
SECRETARIAT**



**GOVERNMENT OF SAMOA
Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture**

CASE STUDY

Effectiveness of Multi-grade teaching in Samoa 2008



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Preface and Acknowledgement

Multi-grade teaching is not a new phenomenon. It has been a feature of education in both developed and developing countries and Samoa is among this group. The implementation of multi-grade teaching training for all Government primary schools in Samoa is one of the on-going in-service training programs with a focus on upgrading teachers' skills on multi-grade teaching.

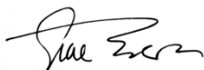
This Case Study provides a contextual background on how and why multi-grade teaching emerged in the country as an alternative mode of education delivery. A historical overview provides the status of multi-grade teaching prior to the introduction of the Commonwealth Secretariat module in 2006 and the lessons learned from the initial phase.

It also links to the strategic plans of the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture namely the Education Policies and Strategies (1995-2005) and the Strategic Policies and Plan (July 2006-June 2015) (SPP). This multi-grade teaching project addresses one strategy in the SPP for quality of teaching services.

I appreciate and acknowledge the invaluable contribution provided by the Commonwealth Secretariat for the technical and financial support in providing the *Resource Materials for Multi-Grade Teaching* which assisted our Team to conduct the training of teachers. I also acknowledge the Pacific Regional Initiative for the Delivery of Basic Education (PRIDE) for the financial support that enabled the Ministry to produce resource materials, organize and conduct the training of all its primary teachers and fund the evaluation survey.

I am grateful for the contribution provided by Malaefono Tauā Faafeū, Assistant Chief Executive Officer of the Samoa Bureau of Statistics for conducting and analyzing the survey which reflected the impact of the multi-grade teaching training. The recommendations and issues raised by this study envisage feed-forward and assistance to improve teaching and learning processes.

I acknowledge with many thanks the great work and the dedication of my staff in the organization and implementation of the multi-grade teaching programs. A special thank you to Malama Taaloga Faasalaina - Principal Education Officer Teacher Development for the overall co-ordination of this study, and, particularly his contribution as a Team writer in this important report.



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Executive Summary

The Multi-grade Teaching Resource Materials produced and developed by the Commonwealth Secretariat and adapted for Samoa have provided an answer to one of the strategic teaching and learning development needs identified in the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture's current Strategic Policies and Plan (SPP). Multi-grade syllabuses on English, Samoan, Mathematics, Science and Social Science were developed for any grade combination from Years 1 to 8. The primary teachers were all trained on how to adapt the existing curriculum to produce multi-grade syllabuses. Multi-grade timetables were also developed to implement the syllabuses.

Multi-grade teaching approaches were introduced and incorporated into our system in the mid-1990s. Various in-service training programs had been launched to improve the quality of teaching and learning in rural areas and schools facing teacher shortages. A Technical Assistant, Murray Lake, carried out a survey in 2002 on quality teaching and learning in primary schools. One of his recommendations was to develop more resources to support those teachers teaching more than 2 classes. The SPP 2006 -2015 includes training in multi-grade teaching as a strategy to improve teacher training standards and ensure teacher quality.

An Action Plan was developed for the Short Term and it focuses on in-service training for primary teachers. The Mid-Term Plan targets the principals to conduct and facilitate professional development within their schools. The Long-Term Plan is for pre-service training to address this need for multi-grade teaching skills, as well as the needs of new curriculum developments in the school system. The teacher training institution, currently the Faculty of Education of the National University of Samoa, has to take these into consideration.

This study has two parts, Part A consisting of the historical overview and the status of multi-grade teaching prior to the introduction of the three Modules discussed in the training prepared and written by Malama Taaloga Faasalaina.

Part B which was written and put together by Malaefono Tauā Faafeū is the case study illustrating the impact of the training as mentioned above. It also provides recommendations and identifies the support required by multi-grade teachers.

The implementation of the Short-term plan was fully supported financially by Pacific Region Initiative for Delivery of basic Education (PRIDE). The production of resource materials and support for Facilitators and Trainers were all made possible by the funds from PRIDE.

PART A

Background of Multi-grade Training in the Samoa Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture and the Commonwealth Secretariat

Most Commonwealth developing countries are increasingly confronted with a shortage of teachers as they move to meet Education For All and Education Millennium Development Goals. Teacher shortages affect education systems in two main ways: firstly, the capacity to provide well trained and qualified teachers, and secondly to provide sufficient numbers to assure the attainment of the defined pupil-teacher ratios according to national standards. The provision and deployment of teachers is often a problem in small schools located in remote sparsely populated areas.

The Commonwealth Secretariat multi-grade teaching module was first introduced in 2006 in Fiji for five Commonwealth Pacific countries (Kiribati, Fiji Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu and Samoa). In 2007, a second training workshop convened by the Commonwealth Secretariat in



collaboration with the Samoan Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (MESC). The workshop brought together the original group of country teams with the addition of Papua New Guinea, to review the progress made with the multi-grade teaching program at country level and also to address specific

challenges related to the multi-grade curriculum changes, timetabling and training of teachers on multi-grade techniques.

The first workshop resulted in participants from the five Commonwealth Pacific countries developing country based action plans. Once endorsed by respective ministries of education, the action plans would guide multi-grade teaching interventions at national level. The progress reports presented by the country teams in Samoa provided clear evidence that

the Secretariat's decision to prioritise multi-grade teaching to support achievement of universal primary education in the Pacific was a relevant strategy within the Pacific.

The second workshop gave the participants the opportunity to learn from the progress made by Samoa in implementing multi-grade teaching in various schools. Samoa outlined the following specific steps that it had implemented;



- Adopting the Education Strategic Policies and Plan for the period July 2006 – June 2015, to incorporate multi-grade teaching as a strategy to improve teacher training standards and ensure teacher quality.
- Conducting a comprehensive needs analysis to support the definition of key interventions in the area of multi-grade teaching.
- Training of 141 trainers from all government primary school to carry out the training of 781 primary teachers.
- Printing copies of multi-grade teaching modules to support the training of teachers.
- Developing multi-grade syllabuses for English, Samoan, Mathematics, Science and Social Science for primary education (year 1-8). These templates were distributed to all primary teachers during the training.
- Developing and implementing a timetable for multi-grade classes.

The workshop participants also had the opportunity to view Samoa's achievements during school visits and observations in multi-grade classes. The school visits confirmed the implementation of multi-grade teaching pedagogy at school level and participants observed a practical school based teacher training session attended by 45 teachers

Samoa's case indicates how multi-grade teaching can be implemented. Most small states of the Commonwealth face similar challenges imposed by geographic and economic conditions. They are also confronted with similar challenges in terms of the organization and delivery of

education. It is under these circumstances that multi-grade teaching becomes particularly relevant.

Multi-grade teaching in Samoa

Multi-grade servicing and reforms within the Samoa Education Policies and Strategies 1995 – 2005

The issues and constraints of multi-grade teaching in Samoa are also experienced by other Pacific Island countries and some developed countries. Samoa has been facing the problem of an insufficient supply of primary teachers for a number of years. Remoteness or isolation of some schools is not the only issue. The roads infrastructure around the islands has improved and about 96.5 percent of the schools are built near the main roads. Figure 1 illustrates the locations of all the rural schools on the islands of Samoa. The allocation of teachers according to a teacher/student ratio makes it inevitable for very small schools to have multi-grade classes.

A report on primary teachers In-Service Training in 2002 by Murray Lake under the Education Sector Project I (ESPI), discussed issues concerning challenges and opportunities that teachers of multi-grade classes face. Many of those challenges still exist. There are special instructional skills and approaches required by these teachers. Teachers who are unprepared for such classrooms are unlikely to successfully meet these challenges and they are poorly placed to capitalize on the opportunities. These are latent opportunities only and

it requires the teacher to adopt alternative strategies and practices appropriate to the classroom structure. Samoan educational policy strongly supports the view that the classroom teacher is the key to effective learning and that the quality of teaching plays a critical role in student achievement.



Promulgation of national quality education strategic policies and sophisticated aids are significant, in the final analysis, no diagnosis of an education system; ... can bypass the heart of the system as the teacher...

Delivery systems are important, support system are vital, national policies often have major impact. Yet in the final analysis somebody has to make the actual system work. In the overwhelming majority of cases, that somebody is the local teacher. Thus the teacher can properly be viewed as the key to the quality of education.

(Murray Lake, 2002)

The Samoa Education Policies and Strategies 1995-2005 recognised that the overall teacher-student ratio of 1:27 conceals extremes as low as 1:10 and as high as 1:70 in primary schools.

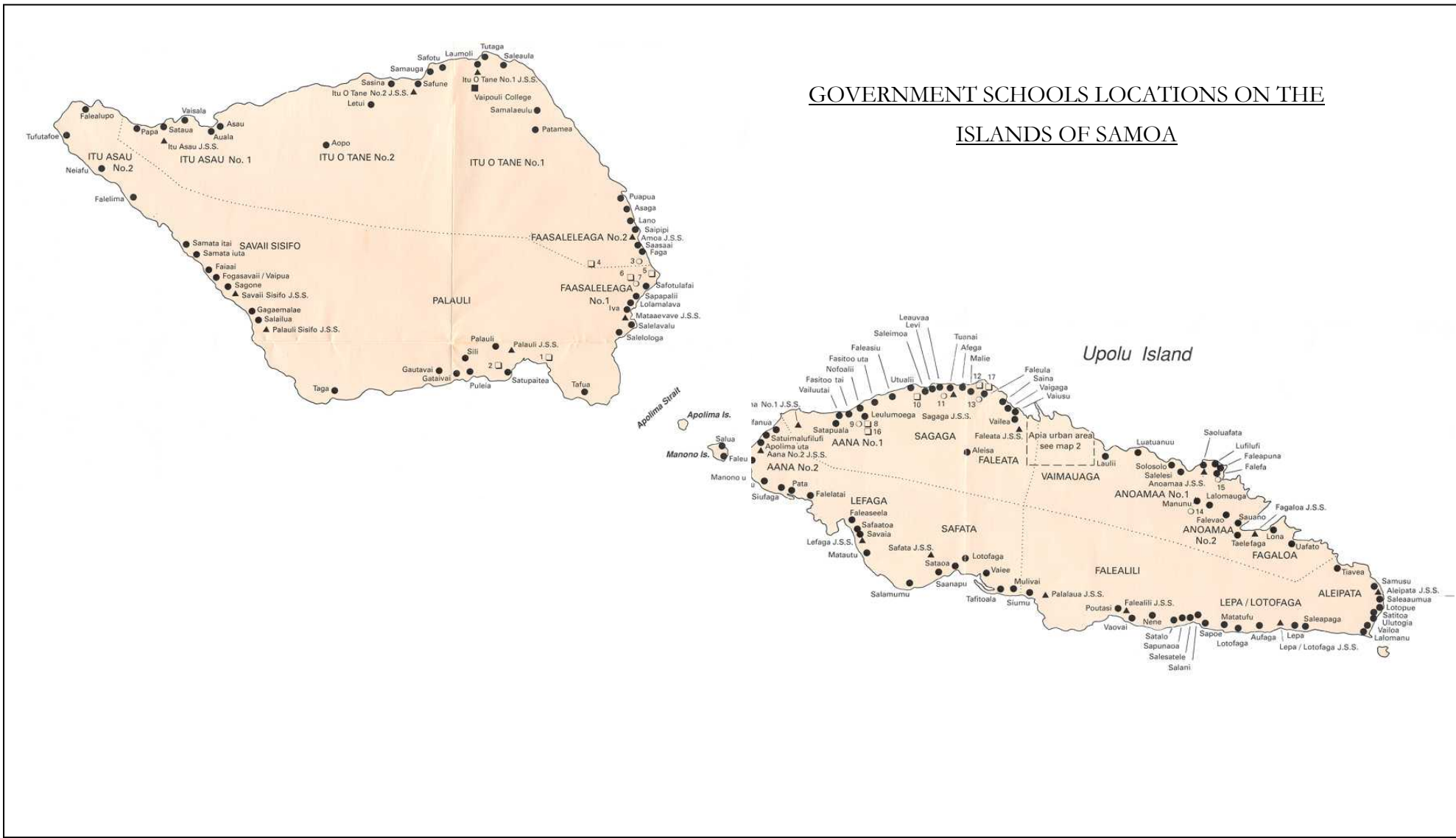
The Education Sector Project (ESP I, 2002) reported that eighty eight of the 141 government primary schools (62 percent) had one or more multi-grade class. It stated that there was an increasing awareness that these class structures, and in particular small schools in which they most frequently occur, can indeed provide a quality education if teachers are well equipped with the required skills.

The Education Policies and Strategies 1995-2005 for renewed primary structures were set based on a teacher-student ratio of:

- 1:30 for single-grade classes (maximum 40)
- 1:25 for dual-grade classes (maximum 30); and
- 1:20 for multiple-grade classes (maximum 25)

The changes such as instructional processes were incorporated into the manuals most commonly referred to as Schemes. In-Service training for primary teachers were conducted as a coherent and structured sequence of activities derived from the identified needs of educational personnel and designed to meet teachers' needs. The Education Policies and Strategies 1995-2005 emphasised improvement of methods of delivery and strengthening literacy and numeracy skills; provisions made for regular reviewing of curricula scope and sequence across all subject areas; and instructional times for each subject, at each level of primary schooling to be established and monitored.

Figure 1: Primary, Secondary schools are built on the coastal sides of the islands.



Lessons learnt and modifications in the current nine year strategic policies and plan (2006 – 2015)

In 2007, 64 percent of Government primary schools had multi-grade classes.. The movement of teachers away from the teaching profession can not be avoided. The implementation of the compulsory education legislation is one other factor which increases the teacher/student ratio. It appears that multi-grade teaching will continue to be a feature of education in Samoa. It is therefore critical that teachers have the skills to be effective and confident multi-grade teachers.

The MESC Strategic Policies and Plan, July 2006-June 2015 identifies specific problems which hinder the teachers' performance as well as the children's learning progress.

- With the implementation of the approved teacher-student ratio of 1 teacher per 30 students in Government primary schools, it is inevitable that the small schools will have teachers with multi-grade classes.
- The number of new entrants continues to increase and there has been an improvement in retention rates. This has not been matched by a corresponding increase in teacher numbers in primary schools
- There is still a general lack of creativity in the teaching approaches. Most teachers still dominate the teaching and learning process while students' various learning styles are not well catered for.
- High rate of primary teacher attrition
- No multi-grade syllabuses for multi-grade classes

Primary school enrolment has increased by eleven percent since 1994. In 2006 there were 1038 primary teachers (Schools Census, 2006) with 1039 in 2007 (Schools Census, 2007).

Policy statements were developed to improve the teaching and learning processes. There were also documents of all in-service training and resource materials supplied to all schools. Of concern however, all the support provided, was more appropriate for the mono-grade class, despite obvious multi-grade trends. Strategic pedagogies were provided for teachers

with two or more levels from mono-grade schemes. Table 1 below lists some of the in-service training which assisted the process of improving quality education.

Table 1 – In-service training provided to support quality teaching

Training	Date	Details
<i>Teacher Education Quality Improvement Project (TEQIP)</i>	1991 – 1996	Focused on improving the quality of teachers and teaching - provided training in the use and piloting of an in-service Resource Kit, a specially prepared kit designed to assist and guide classroom teachers
<i>Multiclass teaching in primary schools</i>	1992	a handbook for teachers in the Pacific – a book full of practical suggestions for teachers – these were distributed to schools for teachers to use
<i>Early Primary Literacy Development Project (EPLDP)</i>	1996 – 1997	provided good quality curriculum resource materials for the primary years
<i>Basic Education for Life Skills (BELS 1 & 2)</i>	1993-5, 1995-7	aimed to strengthen the quality of primary education and literacy and management of education systems
<i>Basic Education for Literacy Skills (BELS 3)</i>	1997 – 2000	provided an integrated approach to the enhancement of primary teacher education. – based on a whole school approach
<i>Primary Education Materials Project (PEMP 1 & PEMP 2) – PEMP 1</i>	1996 – 2000; 2002-3	development of student materials for Years 4-8 in Social Science, Science, Mathematics, English, and Samoan – resources provided references to the schemes used in primary schools. PEMP 2 was for student materials for Years 1-3.
<i>Primary Teachers In-Service Training Project (PTISTP)</i>	2003 – 5	provided a course at improving the standard of teaching and learning in primary schools – it was focused on the notion of “good teaching” using an article by Jere Brophy to provide twelve principles as a basis for discussion and change. - thematic approach was the strategy emphasised

These projects and many others were implemented by MESc to improve teaching effectiveness.. The in-service training, as reflected, touched implicitly on strategic approaches pertaining to multi-grade teaching. The thematic approach normally used in mono-grade situations was introduced in the training as an appropriate strategy for multi-grade situations.

The support of the new strategic policies and plan (2006 – 2015) for the multi-grade teaching action plan

The Education Policies and Strategies 1995-2005 built on achievements of previous years and provided a firm foundation for further development to sustain the momentum of Government reforms and to realise the National vision: “For every Samoan to achieve a better quality of life” (SDS/2005-2007). The future will always hold uncertainties and external factors will be a risk to achieving the Ministry’s Vision of: “*A quality holistic education system that recognises and realises the spiritual, cultural, intellectual and physical potential of all participants, enabling them to make fulfilling life choices*” (SPP/2006-2015). The Ministry believes that an attractive, dynamic and motivated teaching profession of qualified, trained and committed teachers would encourage and improve student learning despite the types of classes they teach.

Multi-grade teaching was adopted as one of the strategies to improve teacher quality. The workshop in Fiji coordinated by the Commonwealth Secretariat encouraged the workshop participants to develop action plans based on the ideas emphasised by the resource materials provided. The Action Plan in Table 2 was developed and recommendations from the workshop in Fiji complemented a policy action (SPP/2006-2015) on quality of teaching services. The MESC Core Executive supported and approved the implementation of the multi-grade Action Plan and using the Commonwealth Secretariat Resource Materials (CSRM) as supporting documents for primary teachers’ training.



Table 2 – Portion of the action plan with regards to planning

Portion of the action plan on multi-grade		
Recommendation	Modules content	Capacity Building
Short Term (2007 – 2008)	Coordinate & implement In-service Training (Terms 1 & 2) 2007-2008 and pilot multigrade curriculum.	Principals, SROs, Primary Curriculum Officers (PCOs), teachers
	Review the training with multi-grade teachers	PEO TD
Medium Term (ongoing)	Up-skilling of school personnel by school Principals	Teachers and Volunteers
Long Term	Faculty of Education to develop a course on multi-grade teaching.	Pre-service teachers, teachers and principals
	Finalise curriculum	PCOs

The acceptance of the recommendations was due to their direct linkage to the previous in-service training and the strategies emphasised in the Strategic Policies and Plan 2006-2015. There are 141 government primary schools and each has a Principal who has the responsibility of ensuring that teachers under their supervision are well informed of the best teaching methods. The short term plan deals with in-service training of all teachers while in the long term, the Faculty of Education needs to prepare teachers for teaching in multi-grade situations. The MESC Curriculum (Primary) Division are responsible for the developing and review of multi-grade documents (syllabuses) for all core subjects as well as guides or manuals to support syllabuses (long term).

Short Term Plan: In-service training for teachers

The in-service training of teachers within the ministry is an ongoing process. Training is aimed at upgrading teaching skills or for in-servicing additional resources to assist teaching and learning. There are also teaching and learning constraints raised by teachers in the performance appraisal process. The MESC Core Executive responds and approves in-service training as a means to resolve issues and assist teachers to successfully execute their roles and responsibilities. The science of teaching requires regular in-servicing processes to

ensure teachers are provided the support to enhance their teaching skills. It improves and sustains quality education.

The coordination of the multi-grade teaching training aimed at;

- improving the quality of teaching approaches so all students benefit and have an equal opportunity to learn,
- producing support materials and multi-grade syllabuses for primary schools,
- training all primary Principals to become trainers and to be able to assist his/her staff on multi-grade teaching approaches,
- teachers to be able to develop and implement multi-grade teaching and learning programs for multi-grade classes,
- School Review Officers to become familiar with the procedures and the monitoring processes,

The ministry has policies for all in-service training to be conducted during the first two terms of every school year. Evaluation and pre-planning would occur during the last school term. Table 3 summarises the organisation of the proposed multi-grade training.

Table 3 – Training outcomes, outputs, activities and inputs

Training Summary	Indicators	Means & Sources of Verification	Risks & Important Assumptions
<p>Outcomes</p> <p>1 multi-grade manuals developed and produced</p> <p>2 all primary teachers be equipped with knowledge and skills of multi-grade teaching</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ writers develop and design manuals and multi-grade syllabuses for the training ▪ Principals be trained as trainers on multi-grade teaching strategies ▪ All primary teachers are trained by principals with skills and strategies on multi-grade teaching. 	<p>1 Multi-grade manual to be completely developed and printed</p> <p>2 Enter attendance to database system</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ preparation of resources may delay the training ▪ some teachers may not attend the training
<p>Outputs</p> <p>Every teacher develops and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teachers have multi-grade syllabuses to assist planning 	<p>Evaluation forms to be filled in by</p>	<p>Teachers with high classes' rolls may</p>

implements a teaching and learning program for multi-grade classes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develops multi-grade resources for multi-grade classes ▪ School Review Officers monitor and report on progress of the project. 	<p>participants.</p> <p>analyze and produce report on participants' evaluation</p>	face new challenges.
<p>Activities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 select writers for project 2 coordinate training and provide all resources required for the training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Select writers to write resources for the training ▪ Select trainers ▪ Prepare budget ▪ Allocate teachers in groups ▪ Prepare all means of communication 	<p>Provide list of trainers from pelican system</p> <p>List of all schools and teachers within each school</p> <p>Prepare letters of communication</p>	Selection of trainers, i.e. some principals are almost at retiring age so there has to be an option of substituting by a First Assistant.
<p>Inputs</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 MESC to provide writers and trainers 2 MESC to coordinate and manage the project 3 PRIDE provides funds for the project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Coordinator to prepare report on progress of project. ▪ Submit report to ACEO ▪ Supervise the monitoring process ▪ 	Produce and submit report of project to Core Executive and PRIDE National Coordinator.	Funding may delay the development of the project

Training content

The MESC coordination team decided that the training content would be based on the Commonwealth Secretariat Resource Materials (CSRM). There are relevant approaches in the CSRM which need to be revisited or introduced. Such approaches suit the Samoa context and the rural schools situation as discussed before. The CSRM has seven modules:

Module 1 - *The Introduction to Multi-grade Teaching*

Module 2 - *Effective Teaching and Learning in Multi-grade Classrooms*

Module 3 – *Classroom Management and Organisation*

Module 4 – *Approaches to Teaching in Multi-grade Classes*

Module 5 – *Instructional Resources and Resource Management*

Module 6 – *Assessment and Evaluation*

Module 7 – *Planning a Programme of Instruction for Multi-grade Classes*

The modules produced by the Commonwealth Secretariat provided quality pedagogical strategies. Many of the strategies and techniques had been covered by in-service training as defined in Table 1. There were however, ideas that needed re-visiting for the sake of improving delivery teaching processes aiming for high student achievement. Therefore, to ensure relevancy, the training was customised to ensure maximum effectiveness.

The three modules recommended as the main content of the training were, Modules 1, 2 and 7. Module 1 provided a discussion of the multi-grade phenomenon and refreshed ideas already in existence. The examples such as; why multi-grade; is there a need in Samoa; the characteristics, advantages and challenges of multi-grade



teaching, would be discussed with teachers who would then reflect on issues and situations found in their schools. Module 2 portrayed instructional skills and approaches on effective teaching and learning in multi-grade classes. Module 7 was a major focus of the training. It discussed approaches teachers already practise such as subject-based curricular and integrated curricular. It also discussed in detail and cited examples of adapting the national curriculum for multi-grade teaching. This module dealt with the management of the curriculum for multi-grade classes; the multi-grade timetable, and the planning for instruction

The training design

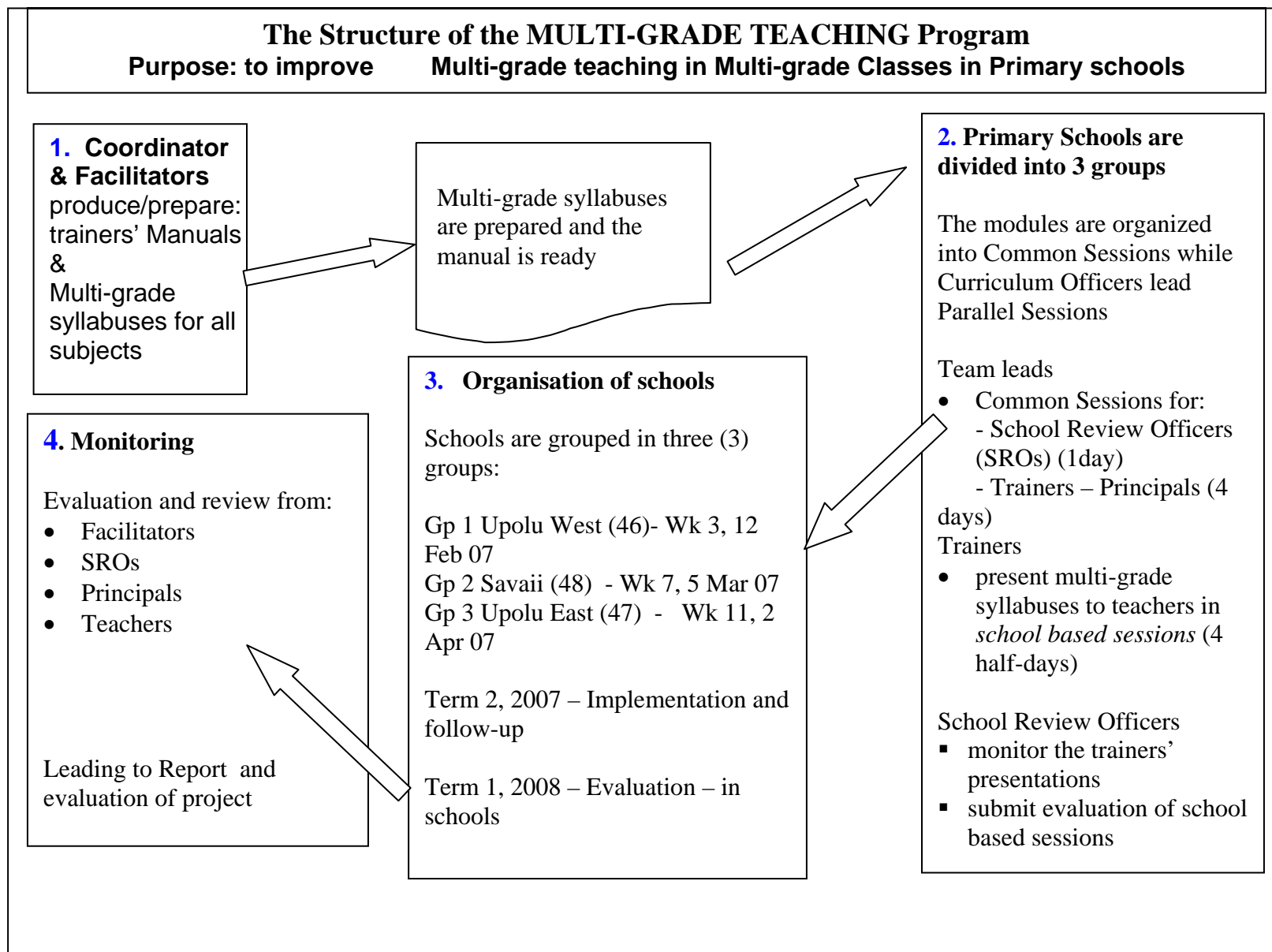
The programme was designed for the training of all primary teachers. The purpose was to train every primary teacher in the skills of multi-grade teaching. Teachers often get transferred from one school to another. Also the teachers could be transferred from an urban to a rural school, or vice versa.

The Curriculum Officer for each subject, (English, Samoan, Mathematics, Social Science and Science), was responsible for the development of multi-grade syllabuses for different types of level combinations. They were also assigned to facilitate the training of trainers.

Table 4 below details the structure of the training program. It defines the four stages and the schedule of the training as well as the involvement of all primary schools.

The selection of trainers had to be aligned with one of the ministry's key concepts, namely, sustainability. The Principals of the 141 government primary schools were selected as trainers. They coordinated, facilitated and conducted training in their respective clusters and were responsible for training teachers within their schools and any new teacher posted to the school. This is part of the medium term plan.

Table 4 – Structure of the multi-grade teaching training for all primary schools



The principals were also responsible for leading on-going professional developments on multi-grade skills and multi-ability approaches. The trainer's role was to:

- (i) prepare programme; (ii) identify tasks for each presenter, (iii) identify resources needed, (iv) prepare activities, (v) prepare registration lists,
- ensure teachers participate in each training,
- collect all necessary resources,
- prepare and collect evaluations,
- assist teachers within school whenever needed.

The 21 School Review Officers (SROs) took up the roles of supervisors in their respective districts. Their roles were to:

- attend and take part in the information sessions,
- take part in the selection of trainers,
- organize schools within the district into clusters,
- organize trainers to do training in clusters,
- inform all teachers in district regarding training plans,
- supervise school-based training,
- collect registration lists and evaluation forms,
- assist and monitor each school's multi-grade professional development sessions.

By the end of the training, all primary teachers had multi-grade syllabuses and timetables. The organisation and facilitation of the multi-grade training was funded by the Pacific Regional Initiative for the Delivery of Basic Education (PRIDE).

Medium and Long Term Plans

Under the Ministry's School Improvement policy, every school must provide annual plans. A required component of the annual plan is a professional development plan for teachers. The School Review Officers are responsible for monitoring the implementation of all aspects of the annual plans including each school's professional development plan. As mentioned before, the Principals are responsible for the planning and implementation of the school's professional development plan and the SROs monitor and provide input as required. The ministry implements

an annual performance appraisal for all teachers. These appraisals are analysed by the Teacher Development Unit. The teachers are invited to indicate in the appraisal, areas in which they require improvement. Multi-grade teaching issues are often reported. These are presented to the Core Executive.

The sustainability of quality teaching is the responsibility of the Faculty of Education (FOE) and MESAC. Teachers graduating from FOE should have the skills to teach effectively in the classrooms and this includes skills in multi-grade teaching. The high rate of teacher attrition from the service has threatened the quality of teaching and learning. The concerns regarding the preparation of teachers for multi-grade teaching have been raised with FOE and copies of the Resource Materials from the Commonwealth Secretariat have been provided to them.

Currently the primary curriculum is under-going a major review in all core subjects. It is hoped that by 2010 the new curriculum will be implemented. The issues and recommendations raised by multi-grade teachers during the multi-grade teaching training strongly indicate that multi-grade syllabuses must be designed and developed to guide multi-grade teachers.

The multi-grade teaching training has highlighted the need to provide more support for the multi-grade teachers. The current curriculum review will consider further interventions with regards to multi-grade teaching.

PART B

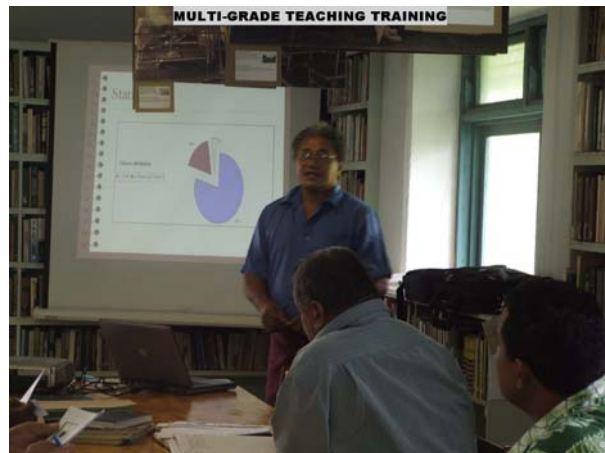
The Effectiveness of MG teaching (MGT) in Samoa 2008

Teaching of more than one grade/class in Primary Schools (PS) is not a new phenomenon in Samoa as discussed in Part A. In 2006, 64 percent of government primary schools had teachers with 2 to 4 classes of different grades. What was more worrying was the fact that Multi-grade (MG) teachers' major resources were Mono-grade (MNG) syllabuses and timetabling. Some training had been conducted on multi-grade theories before but in the end teachers were given the choice to decide on how best they could deliver such in the classrooms. This was a problem which called for immediate and long-term actions.

Training of Curriculum-Officers

Fortunately for Samoa, PRIDE provided financial support to assist MESC with its proposed MGT plan of action. PRIDE offered full financial support for all MGT training and consultations, the printing of MGT resource materials, the purchase of equipment and materials, monitoring and evaluation activities, and all other MGT related activities.

In August of 2006, MESC conducted training for all Primary Curriculum Officers on multi-grade teaching. The Team of 3 participants who attended the Commonwealth workshop in Nadi including the Principal Education Officer



(PEO) Teacher Development, PEO Primary Curriculum and School Review Officer conducted this training with the support of their respective Divisions, the Curriculum, Materials and Assessment Division (CMAD) and the School Operations Division (SOD).



Development of MGT syllabuses and MGT timetabling

The success of this first MGT training resulted in the CMAD calling in all their Curriculum Officers to immediately start working on designing, writing and producing the first ever set of written materials called “MGT syllabuses” and “MGT timetabling” for all core subjects (English, Mathematics, Samoan, Social Science, Science) and across all primary school grades (Year 1-Year 8) for MG teaching. This was a challenging exercise for the Division especially when the task was required to be completed within a short period of time.

The new MGT syllabuses and MGT timetabling were designed specifically for MG teaching in all subjects and grades. They were considered to be more appropriate and effective for MG teaching than the existing MNG materials, although the MNG materials were maintained as the main resource materials.

All these new materials in addition to the Commonwealth textbook were printed for the teachers’ training in the beginning of 2007.



Training of Trainers and Teachers

When the Textbooks, MGT syllabuses and timetabling were all in place, training was conducted for the selected Trainers from Primary School Principals with School Review Officers as Supervisors.

The Trainers then trained the primary school teachers during the months of February – April 2007, except for one group which was conducted during the second Commonwealth Secretariat



workshop in Samoa in June of 2007. Members and participants of the Commonwealth contingents had the chance to visit and observe this last MGT training in the district of Safata. This was evidence to the Commonwealth and other Pacific island countries that Samoa was moving on with MG teaching.



Training Evaluation

For MESC, the national MGT training was a *golden opportunity* to reinforce the significance and relevancy of MG teaching to all teachers in Samoa. This was one of the strategies to cope with the increasing number of schools with multi-grade teachers, especially in the rural and the less-populated schools.

Time	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri
7:45	Assembly				
8:00	ENGLISH				
9:00	MATHEMATICS				
10:00	SAMOAN				
11:00	INTERVAL				
11:30	WRITING				
11:40	BASIC SCIENCE				
12:20	Social SCIENCE				
1:00	SINGING	READING	ART	READING	SPORTS

As mentioned, the MGT training focused on three major modules, but greater emphasis was given to the application of the MESC newly developed MGT syllabuses and Timetabling based on the existing MNG curriculum.

To provide the Ministry with feedback on the training, the participants were given evaluation forms.

The main purpose was to find out whether the teachers had accepted and understood the usefulness of MG teaching in Samoa, and, more importantly, whether they had gained enough knowledge and understanding on how to apply the lessons learnt to their classroom teaching.

The Evaluations questions were:

Question 1: *Found the MGT training useful and understanding of what to do next*

Question 2: *Able to adapt MGT syllabuses to provide effective MGT teaching*

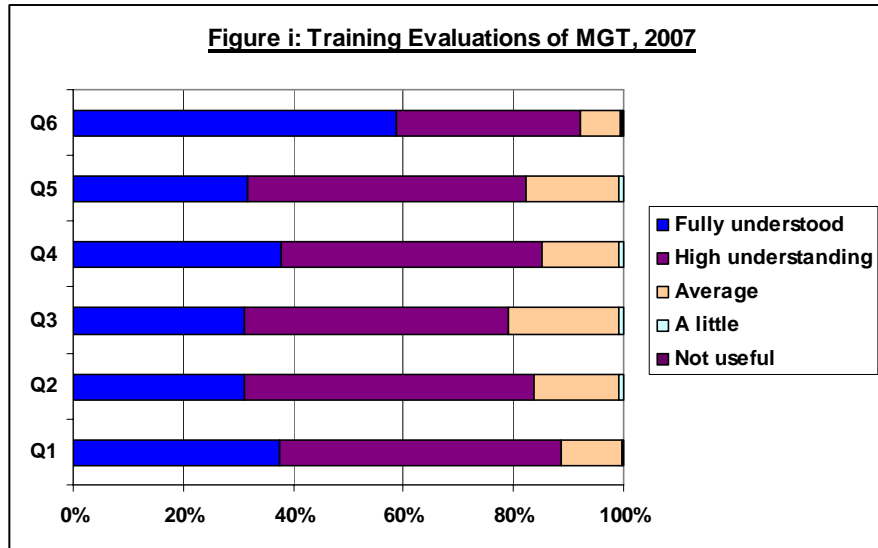
Question 3: *Able to develop a suitable MGT timetable*

Question 4: *Able to develop different plans*

Question 5: *Able to provide full support to pupils in MGT classes*

Question 6: *Trainers were well prepared in the MGT training*

The trainees were asked to rank their level of understanding from the highest to the lowest level of understanding in all the six questions. The PEO Teacher Development collected and compiled this data as shown below in Figure i: Trainees Evaluation of MGT, 2007



The Evaluation results showed that more than 80 percent of trainees were in the range of High and Full level of understanding of all the six issues covered.

This was sufficient evidence that the majority of teachers were well prepared and highly positive to move on with MG teaching using their new MGT syllabuses, timetabling, and, lessons learnt in the training.

In September 2007, three months after the training, a Monitoring survey was conducted by the PEO TD for all teachers (Multi-grade and Mono-grade) to find out how they were coping with the MGT materials and the resources of the training. The aims of the Monitoring survey were to find out:

- *Whether teachers understand the objectives of the multi-grade training*
- *How teachers demonstrate the strategies discussed in the training*
- *Impact of training on what they have been practicing in their classes*
- *Challenges they face during implementation of multi-grade syllabuses or developing timetable*
- *Changes and achievements on pupils' learning and teachers' instructional planning*

Performance indicators were provided for each teacher to comment on. Listed below are the indicators and the teachers' responses (Yes means they understand and apply; No means they either understand but the indicator is not applicable to the situations due to being a MNG teacher)

Performance Indicators	Yes	No
The teacher understands some strategies that he/she might use to adapt the curriculum to multi-grade or multi-ability teaching	811	45
The teacher develops a programme that suits the needs of the pupils	827	41
The teacher identifies factors to be considered in developing a suitable timetable for multi-grade or multi-ability classes	764	104
The teacher develops a timetable that meets the needs of the class?	785	80
Prepares weekly plans that enables him/her to coordinate the teaching in his/her multi-grade or multi-ability class effectively	792	75
Prepares a daily plan that interests and motivates pupils	774	93
Prepares individual lesson plans that give a clear indication of the organisation of lessons	701	163
Identifies the different grade and ability levels within the class	839	29
Provides materials and lessons to meet the needs of different ability levels	785	81
Provides extra assistance for students experiencing difficulties with learning	801	62
Provides extension programs for gifted and talented students	737	130

The information was compiled, analyzed and then results were discussed with School Review Officers for further actions to improve MGT.

The Survey on Effectiveness of MG teaching in Samoa, 2008

After **one-year** of implementation of MG teaching in Samoa, the Statistical Survey on the Effectiveness of MG teaching was carried out

Objectives

The main objectives of the survey were:

- a. To find out if the MG training in 2007 was ever helpful to the teachers when lessons learnt were put into practice and what ways it should be improved for future trainings;*
- b. To find out if MG teachers had ever used the MG syllabuses in teaching, what pros and cons they had encountered when implemented, and, the way forward;*
- c. To find out if MG teachers had ever used the MG timetables in teaching, what pros and cons they had encountered when implemented, and, the way forward; and, lastly;*
- d. To find out the social perceptions and attitudes of MG teachers towards MG teaching whether they were in support or not of the new curriculum changes and teaching strategies*

Methodology

By the time of the survey in April 2008, there was a total of 141 government primary schools of which 88 schools or 62 percent were MG. In the survey planning, the initial design was to target a sample of MG schools from both islands of Upolu and Savaii to conduct a small case study.

However, due to the small numbers of MG teachers in the respective schools, a full coverage of all existing MG government schools in Samoa was taken into consideration. This approach was also seen as the best opportunity to interview the previous participants of the MG training in 2007. Therefore the survey's original timeframe was extended to include all of the 88 MG schools in Samoa.

After the **literature review** on the MG situation in Samoa, the **Survey questionnaire** was developed and written in the Samoan language to meet the aims of the study. It was designed in a user-friendly format for teachers to fill in their personal responses. Some teachers were interviewed, but most preferred to fill in the answers themselves. Hence, freedom of expressions was obviously more interesting on paper than face to face interviews.

With the great assistance from the PEO-TD and SROs, non-response from MG teachers was avoided. However, non-responses surfaced in some parts of the questionnaire as will be shown in the results.

The **data** was collected, coded, entered, and, analyzed using Excel and SPSS. The latter is a very popular software for Statistical Analysis by researchers and statistical institutes around the world and it would be ideal for MESC to purchase this useful software.

Given the fact that all MG schools were included in the survey instead of a sample of schools, the estimation of statistical errors was not necessary. Hence control was focused more on non-statistical errors.

The survey followed the following timeframe and the next chapter will discuss the survey results.

ITEM	ACTIVITY	TIME
1	Literature review & planning	March 2008
1	Questionnaire design & printing	April 2008
2	Fieldwork interviews & data collection in Upolu & Savaii	May 2008
3	Data entry, analysis of results & report writing	June – July 2008
4	Printing of final reports	August 2008
5	Presentation & dissemination of results	August 2008

SURVEY RESULTS

1 Characteristics of Multi-grade Teachers in Samoa

MG teachers by district and sex

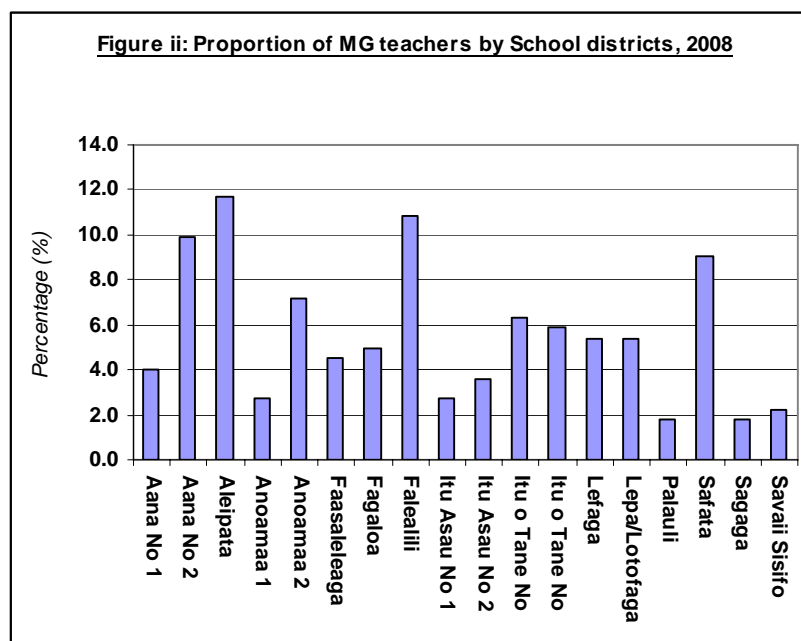
MG teachers in Samoa are distributed all over the 3 islands: Manono, Savaii and Upolu where the capital of Apia is located. MESC is located at Malifa within the capital area and it is the main center of contacts for all teachers and education personnel.

The survey found out that a total of 222 MG teachers were teaching in 88 primary schools in Samoa of which 22 percent were males and 78 percent were females. The vast sex disparity in the teaching services confirms the notion that teaching is a female-oriented profession in Samoa.

The distribution of data by School districts revealed that MG schools were located in the more rural and remote districts of Samoa (Table 5).

Table 5: MG teachers by School districts and sex, 2008				
School Districts	Male	Female	Total	Row (%)
Aana No 1	1	8	9	4.1
Aana No 2	3	19	22	9.9
Aleipata	8	18	26	11.7
Anoamaa 1		6	6	2.7
Anoamaa 2	2	14	16	7.2
Faasaleleaga No 2	1	9	10	4.5
Fagaloa	5	6	11	5.0
Falealili	6	18	24	10.8
Itu Asau No 1		6	6	2.7
Itu Asau No 2	2	6	8	3.6
Itu o Tane No 1	2	12	14	6.3
Itu o Tane No 2	3	10	13	5.9
Lefaga	1	11	12	5.4
Lepa/Lotofaga	4	8	12	5.4
Palauli	1	3	4	1.8
Safata	8	12	20	9.0
Sagaga	1	3	4	1.8
Savaii Sisifo	1	4	5	2.3
Total	49	173	222	100
<i>Column (%)</i>	<i>22.1</i>	<i>77.9</i>	<i>100</i>	

In terms of teachers distribution by School districts, Aleipata district had the highest proportion of teachers (11.7 %), followed closely by Falealili -10.8 percent, Aana No 2 -10 percent, and, Safata with 9 percent. (Figure ii).



MG teachers by different MG classes

A number of reasons could cause MG settings such as: isolated communities, limited school resources, costs of school maintenances, small school population, poor infrastructure, and etc. According to MESC, the main cause of MG in Samoa is the shortage of teachers supply.

Because of teacher shortage, MESC allocated the number of teachers to each school every year based on the estimated number of pupils enrolled in a year. This is usually referred to as Teachers Posting. Ideally, any school with a total roll of 240 and above will get a full staff of 8 teachers or more based on the teacher/pupil ratio of 1:30. Hence all other schools below that number will get fewer teachers causing MG classes.

When the Posting is completed at the beginning of every school year, the School principals of primary schools will then decide on the number of classes per teacher. In a MG setting, the MG classes can be Year 1 & 2 or Year 3 & 4, or even a combination of 3 to 4 classes depending on the size of the school.

Figure iii below reflected the different combinations of MG classes found in the survey by School districts and also the proportions of MG teachers undertaking these different MG classes. For instance, in MG classes Year 5 and 6, about 21 percent of MG teachers were teaching those classes while 18 percent were teaching Years 7 and 8 together.

Table 6 provides detail data of the distribution of the different MG classes by the respective School districts.

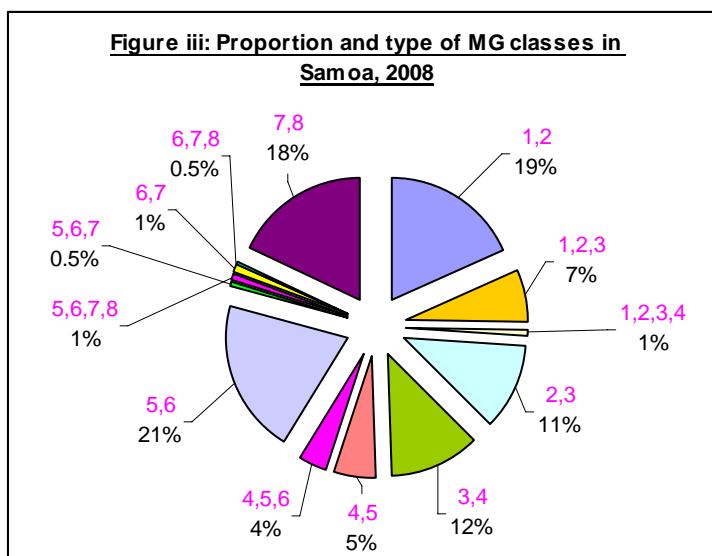


Table 6: Combination of MG classes by School districts, 2008

School district	Combination of MG classes													Total
	1,2	1,2,3	1,2,3,4	2,3	3,4	4,5	4,5,6	5,6	5,6,7	5,6,7,8	6,7	6,7,8	7,8	
Aana No 1	3			1	1	1		2					1	9
Aana No 2	5	3		1	2	1	1	4					5	22
Aleipata	4	2	1	1	3		2	5		1			7	26
Anoamaa 1	2			1	1	1		1						6
Anoamaa 2	4	1	1		2	1	1	2		1			3	16
Faasaleleaga No 2	1			3	1	1		3					1	10
Fagaloa		4					3					1	3	11
Falealili	6				6			7					5	24
Itu Asau No 1	2	1			1			2						6
Itu Asau No 2	3			1	1	1							2	8
Itu o Tane No 1	3	2		1	1	3		1	1		2			14
Itu o Tane No 2	1	2		3	1		2	1					3	13
Lefaga	3				3			3					3	12
Lepa/Lotofaga	3			1	2			4					2	12
Palauli				1				3						4
Safata	1			5	2	2		5					5	20
Sagaga				3				1						4
Savaai Sisifo				3		1		1						5
Total teachers	41	15	2	25	27	12	9	45	1	2	2	1	40	222
<i>Column (%)</i>	<i>18.5</i>	<i>6.8</i>	<i>0.9</i>	<i>11.3</i>	<i>12.2</i>	<i>5.4</i>	<i>4.1</i>	<i>20.3</i>	<i>0.5</i>	<i>0.9</i>	<i>0.9</i>	<i>0.5</i>	<i>18.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>

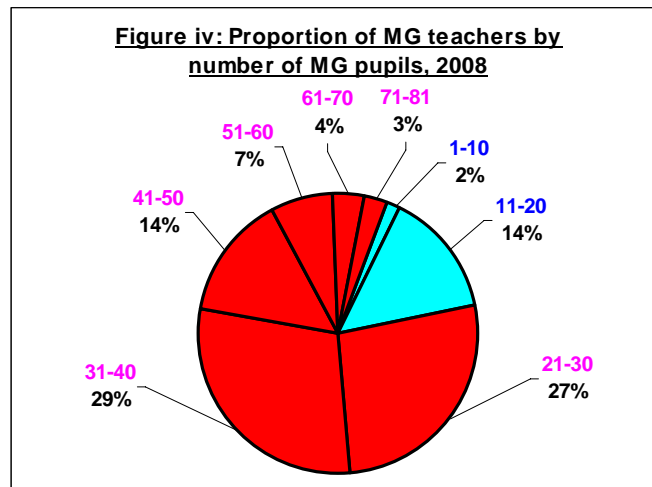
MG classes by total number of pupils

According to MESC, the approved teacher-student ratio is 1:30 in MNG teaching and 1:20 for MG teaching. These ratios would ensure that the students not only receive high quality education but the teachers would also deliver their best teaching services to the students.

However, the survey results revealed a different picture of the numbers of pupils that MG teachers had been teaching on the field. Table 7 listed the range of the number of pupils taught by the MG teachers at the time of the survey.

The data reflected that, in reality, the student/teacher ratio was much higher in practice than the so-called MG policy. For instance, a total of six teachers as shown below were teaching MG classes in the range of 71-81 pupils altogether. Figure iv also depicted these proportional distributions.

Table 7: MG classes by the total number of pupils, 2008									
MG classes	Number of pupils								Total
	1-10	11-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	71-81	
1,2		3	6	17	9	1	4	1	41
1,2,3		2	3	3	3	2	2		15
1,2,3,4			1	1					2
2,3		1	2	8	6	4		4	25
3,4		3	11	10	2	1			27
4,5			1	4	3	2	2		12
4,5,6		4	3	1	1				9
5,6		7	14	14	5	4		1	45
5,6,7						1			1
5,6,7,8		1		1					2
6,7					2				2
6,7,8	1								1
7,8	3	11	18	6	1	1			40
Total	4	32	59	65	32	16	8	6	222



As shown in Figure iv, only 16 percent of MG teachers (36) were fortunate to meet the MG policy requirement but the majority consisting 84 percent were teaching more than 20 pupils of different grades as shown in red colour. It is difficult to imagine how one teacher can perform his/her outmost best with such big numbers of pupils with two or more different grades in a day. It is also difficult to imagine how students in such settings will receive high quality education in such crowded classrooms.

The results reflected that the number of teachers in MG schools was far from the required standard ratio. It reflected the lack of awareness and monitoring of what teachers are going through on the field. It is no doubt that such situations will only increase poor teaching performance and much worse is the fact that students will not have the same access to high quality education as students in less numbered classes or MNG classes.

On another note, if this is the reality with MG classes, then it poses the question if teachers in MNG are also undergoing the same stressful situations.

With the new developments and better teaching strategies on MG teaching, MESCC needs to consider other means of alleviating the shortage of teachers especially the stressful workload on MG teachers.

2 Effectiveness of the 2007 Multi-grade Trainings

⌚ MG training by district and sex

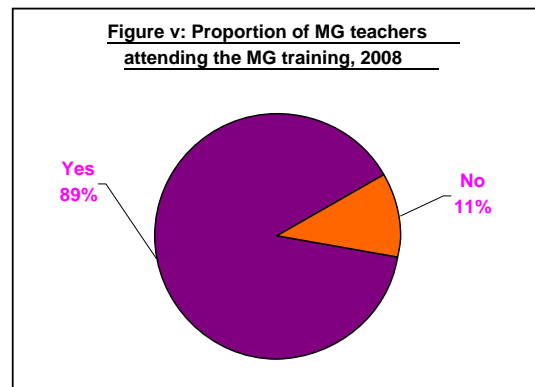
The MG training was organized for all teachers in Samoa hence included both MNG and MG teachers from all islands.

The trainings aimed at:

- ➔ Introduction of the Use of Multi-grade teaching in Samoa;
- ➔ Managing the Curriculum in a MTG Class;
- ➔ Managing the Timetable in a MTG class; and,
- ➔ Planning for Instruction.

All these areas were discussed with reference to the Commonwealth Textbook and demonstrated using the new MG syllabuses. It was expected that after the training, the teachers would apply the learnt skills and knowledge in any MG settings.

Given that this survey only covered MG schools, the survey found out that training attendance by the 222 MG teachers was quite high as 89 percent. The other 11 percent were not available to the training due to various reasons while some were new teachers. Fortunately, they were trained later by their working colleagues and trainers in the schools but it was not the same experience as those who attended the national group trainings.



When the training attendance was shown by School districts, the results reflected a very high training turn-up in all districts except for Falealili where about half of teachers did not attend the MG training in 2007 as shown in Table 8.

Table 8: MGT training attendance by school districts, 2008			
School district	Attended 2007 training		Total
	Yes	No	
Aana No 1	9		9
Aana No 2	21	1	22
Aleipata	24	2	26
Anoamaa 1	6		6
Anoamaa 2	16		16
Faasaleleaga No 2	9	1	10
Fagaloa	9	2	11
Falealili	14	10	24
Itu Asau No 1	6		6
Itu Asau No 2	8		8
Itu o 'Tane No 1	13	1	14
Itu o 'Tane No 2	12	1	13
Lefaga	11	1	12
Lepa/Lotofaga	11	1	12
Palauli	4		4
Safata	17	3	20
Sagaga	3	1	4
Savaii Sisifo	5		5
Total	198	24	222

🌀 **Lessons learnt from the 2007 MTG training**

After a year of application and implementation of what teachers have learnt from the MG trainings, the survey asked the MG trainees to reflect on any training areas that they have learnt needed more improvement on the field. *(Note that only the 2007 trainees were included in this question).*

Table 9 listed those reflections by the proportions of responses. It is important to note that the MG teachers' overall feedback showed they were highly in favour of MG teaching. More importantly they were very willing to pursue this teaching strategy as reflected in their positive reflections.

As shown in the data table, more than one-third (37%) of MG teachers were already willing to push further for a national MG syllabus and timetable. All the other responses requested further improvements in different areas of MG teaching except for 15 percent who did not respond to the question.

The survey results indicated that MG teachers in Samoa were already in a desperate situation to find solutions to their stressful MG workload. Hence, it is important that MESC puts up with the recommended challenges to ensure that MG teaching in Samoa is strengthened and working well for teachers and students.

Table 9: Lessons learnt based on the 2007 MGT training, 2008

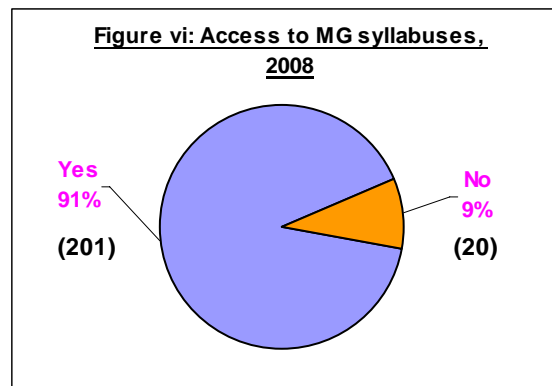
Lessons learnt on the field due to implementation of training ideals of 2007	Total	Percent (%)
Its time to produce a national MG syllabus & timetable	74	37.4
Improve quality of the new MG syllabuses & timetables	26	13.1
Need regular MG trainings for MG teachers	19	9.6
Need more training on "thematic approach"	18	9.1
Need more training on MG lesson planning	9	4.5
Produce activities for MG lessons	6	3.0
Need more training on assessments & evaluation of MG classes	4	2.0
Trainers need to use MG classes for training demonstrations	3	1.5
Need to specify MG syllabus for slow-learners	2	1.0
MG is not effective in overcrowded rooms	2	1.0
MG teachers need to meet and share experiences	1	0.5
Need more training on groupings of skills	1	0.5
Training was well done for MG	2	1.0
<i>Not Stated</i>	<i>31</i>	<i>15.7</i>
Total	198	100.0

3 Effectiveness of the Multi-grade syllabuses

🕒 Access to the Textbook & MG syllabuses

The Textbook and the new MG syllabuses were distributed to all teachers who had attended the MG trainings in 2007. Copies were also available at MESC for teachers to use as their main resource materials. It was very important that all MG teachers have access to these resource materials every year in order to deliver quality education for all.

However, the survey found out that 9 percent of MG teachers did not have the MG syllabuses with them for teaching. Some teachers reported their syllabuses being misplaced or even got torn during the year and were not replaced.



The MG syllabuses for each subject combined several stapled A4 pages. It was designed and developed in a short-time period hence the compilation was simple and quick enough to meet the training deadline in the previous year. It was also a new attempt by the responsible division hence the possibility of changes will most likely to take place.

It is important for teachers and School principals to ensure that teaching resources must always be complete in the classrooms and readily available at all time for delivering of best teaching services not only by the existing teachers but also the new-incoming teachers.

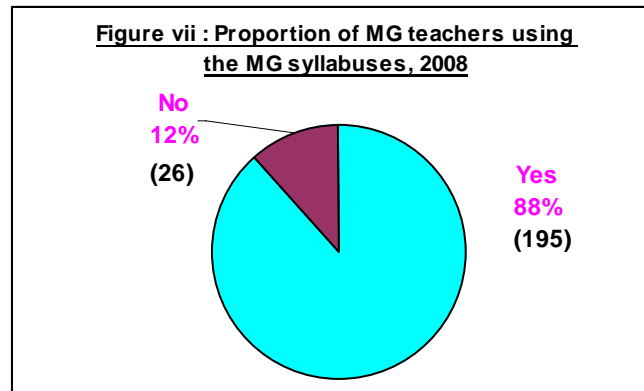
😊 Use and application of the MG syllabuses

The development of the MG syllabuses across all subjects and grades was a deliberate response to provide MG teachers with the best approach in MG settings.

The survey revealed that in practice about 88 percent of MG teachers were able to implement this approach on the field. This indicated the huge interests of MG teachers to adapt to the new curriculum changes in their teaching strategies.

The other 12 percent continued to apply the MNG curriculum in their MG classes. Like any other new initiative, not everyone will be able to adapt to new changes. Accordingly, the teachers in Samoa were given the choice to choose the best approach of teaching their MG classes. In spite of

this setback, an overwhelming proportion of teachers were very enthusiastic in the implementation of the new MG teaching.



☺ Use of MG syllabuses by School district

To provide more insights on the use of MG syllabuses, Table 10 revealed the number of MG teachers who have implemented the MG syllabuses by School districts.

The data helps to show the location of MG teachers who were not confident enough to apply the new MG teaching methods either due to lack of interest or needs more training.

Table 10: MG teachers using the MG syllabuses by School districts, 2008				
School districts	Use of MG syllabuses			Total
	Yes	No	NS	
Aana No 1	7	2		9
Aana No 2	18	4		22
Aleipata	24	1	1	26
Anoamaa 1	6			6
Anoamaa 2	12	4		16
Faasaleleaga No 2	8	2		10
Fagaloa	11			11
Falealili	21	3		24
Itu Asau No 1	4	2		6
Itu Asau No 2	8			8
Itu o Tane No 1	13	1		14
Itu o Tane No 2	11	2		13
Lefaga	12			12
Lepa/Lotofaga	12			12
Palauli	4			4
Safata	18	2		20
Sagaga	2	2		4
Savaii Sisifo	4	1		5
Total	195	26	1	222

☺ **Use of MG syllabuses by MG classes**

Figure viii also shows the proportion of MG syllabus usage by the combined number of pupils that MG teachers had been teaching at the time of the survey. And it is surprising to note that MG teachers with the highest number of pupils also had the highest proportions of non-usage compared to the small numbered classes. Naturally, one would have thought that MG syllabuses would have been more useful to the most populated classes than smaller ones. This was not the case at the time of the survey.

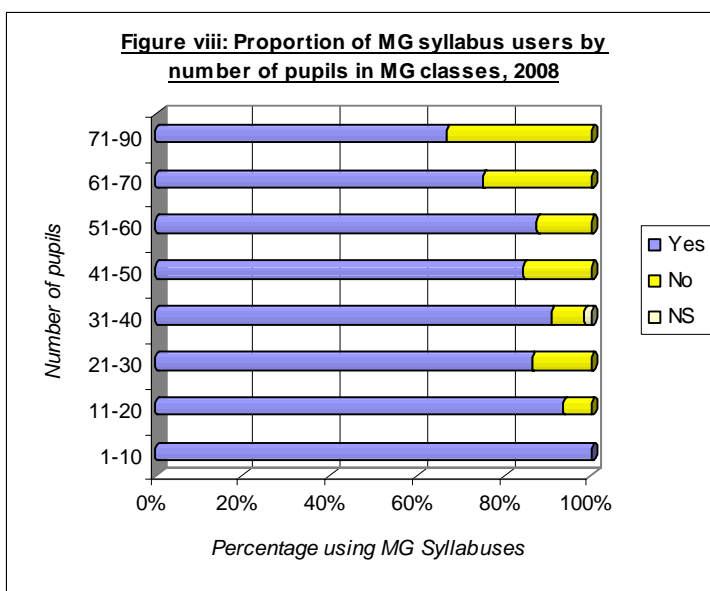


Table 11: MG syllabus users by the number of pupils in MG classes, 2008				
Number of pupils in MG classes	Use of MG syllabuses			Total
	Yes	No	NS	
1-10	4			4
11-20	30	2		32
21-30	51	8		59
31-40	59	5	1	65
41-50	27	5		32
51-60	14	2		16
61-70	6	2		8
71-81	4	2		6
Total	195	26	1	222

⌚ The Advantages of MG syllabuses

In order to find out the effectiveness of the MG syllabuses in practice, the MG teachers who have actually implemented the syllabuses in their classes were asked to comment on the advantages of these resources.

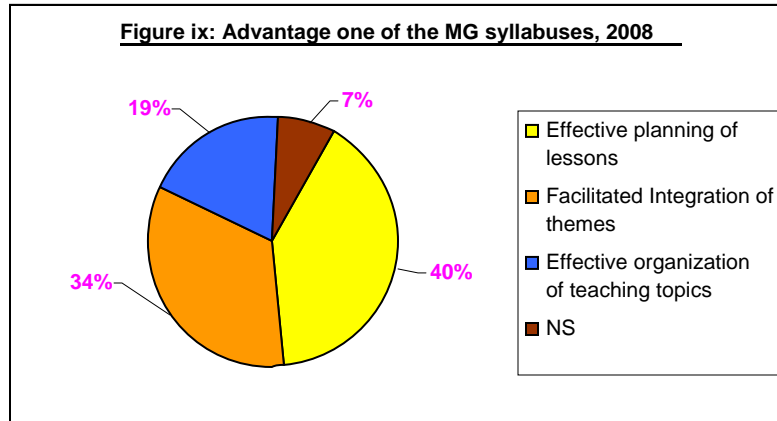
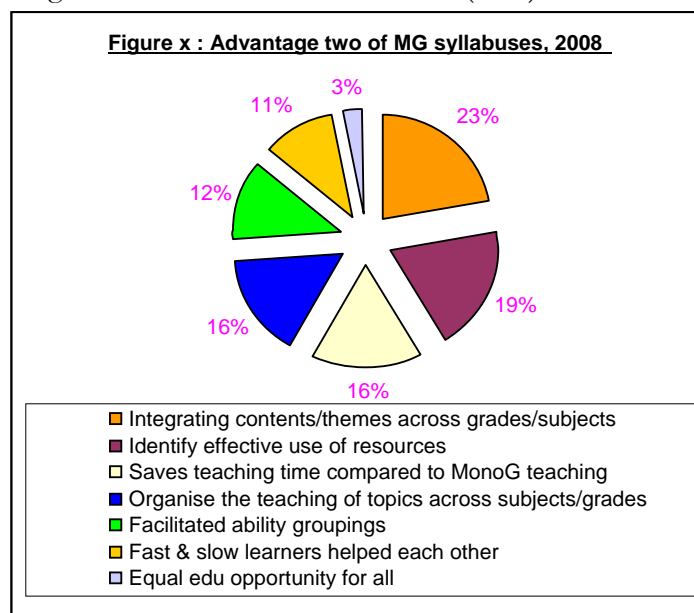


Figure viii clearly reflected that of the total 195 teachers who moved on and applied the MG syllabuses, 40 percent reported it helped them produced effective planning of lessons, 34 percent stated it facilitated the integration of themes to teach across grades and subjects, and, 19 percent confirmed that the MG syllabuses greatly assisted them in effective organization skills for MG teaching.

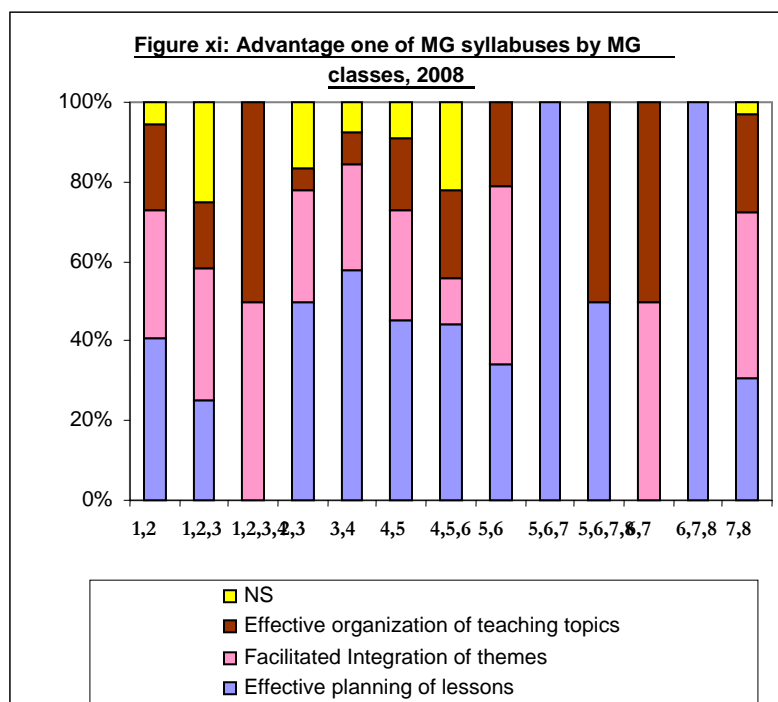
Figure ix showed the second advantages that MG teachers wanted to report. It revealed other advantages like the effective use of available resources across grades/subjects (19%), it helped in saving teaching time (16%), it facilitated ability groupings (12%) and it also encouraged fast and slow learners to work together and learn from each other (11%).



The reported advantages implied the substantial effectiveness of MG teaching and the MG syllabuses in Samoa and this is very encouraging for MESC's next plan of actions.

Advantages one by MG classes

When the first advantages were distributed by teachers in different MG classes, a range of positive responses were also shown. For instance, 100 percent of teachers undertaking 5, 6, 7 and 6, 7, 8 classes reported that MTG syllabuses helped them made effective lesson plans, while, teachers undertaking classes 1,2,3,4 and 6,7 have experienced effective organization of topics & efficient integration of themes across subjects/grades for teaching their classes. Other different combinations of MG classes showed various proportions of the advantages they have experienced on the field as also shown in the data in Table 12.



MG classes	Effective planning of lessons	Facilitated Integration of themes	Effective organization of teaching topics	NS	Total
1,2	15	12	8	2	37
1,2,3	3	4	2	3	12
1,2,3,4		1	1		2
2,3	9	5	1	3	18
3,4	15	7	2	2	26
4,5	5	3	2	1	11
4,5,6	4	1	2	2	9
5,6	13	17	8		38
5,6,7	1				1
5,6,7,8	1		1		2
6,7		1	1		2

6,7,8	1				1
7,8	11	15	9	1	36
Total	78	66	37	14	195

Advantages by School district

In the School districts, the districts of Sagaga and Aana No 1 have shown that the greatest advantage to MG teaching was the effective planning of lessons, while, the experience from Itu Asau No 1 and Palauli districts noted the efficient integration of themes or thematic approach as the greatest advantage in MG teaching. Lepa/Lotofaga on the other hand mostly experienced the effective organization skills of teaching topics from MG teaching.

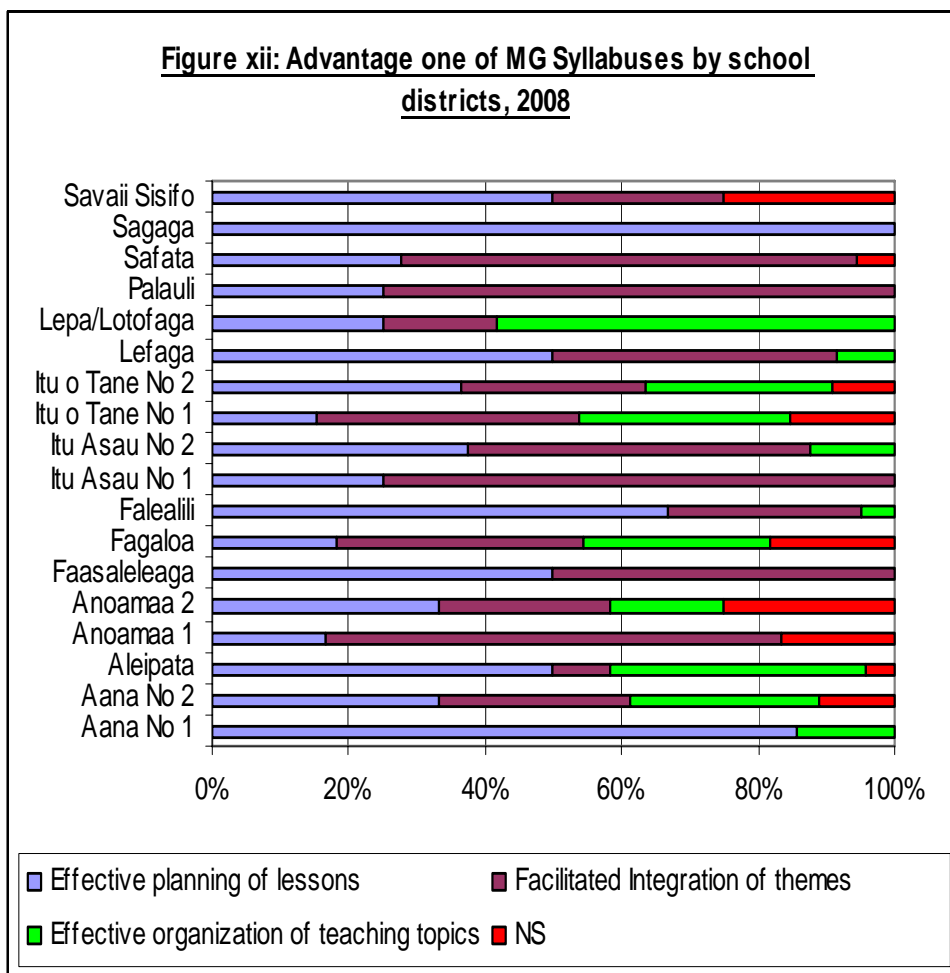
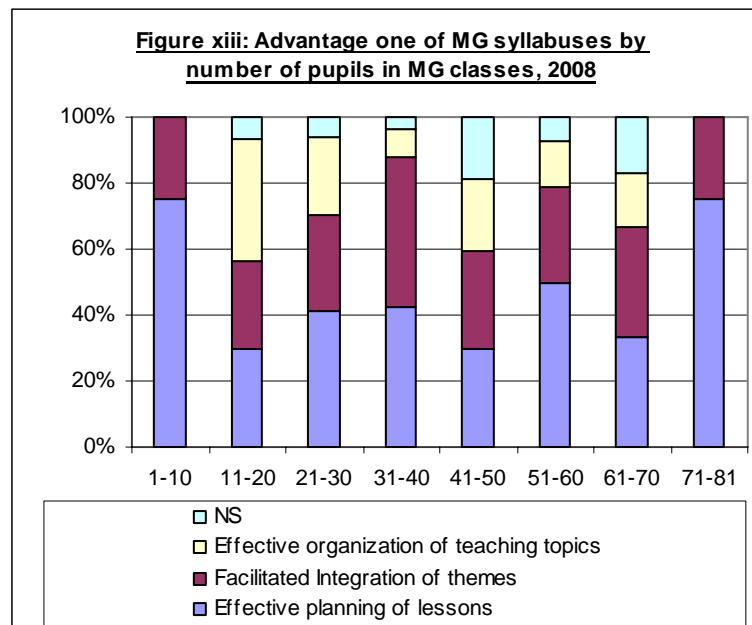


Table 13: Advantage one of MG syllabus by School districts, 2008					
School districts	Effective planning of lessons	Facilitated Integration of themes	Effective organization of teaching topics	NS	Total
Aana No 1	6		1		7
Aana No 2	6	5	5	2	18
Aleipata	12	2	9	1	24
Anoamaa 1	1	4		1	6
Anoamaa 2	4	3	2	3	12
Faasaleleaga No 2	4	4			8
Fagaloa	2	4	3	2	11
Falealili	14	6	1		21
Itu Asau No 1	1	3			4
Itu Asau No 2	3	4	1		8
Itu o Tane No 1	2	5	4	2	13
Itu o Tane No 2	4	3	3	1	11
Lefaga	6	5	1		12
Lepa/Lotofaga	3	2	7		12
Palauli	1	3			4
Safata	5	12		1	18
Sagaga	2				2
Savaai Sisifo	2	1		1	4
Total	78	66	37	14	195

⊙ **Advantages by number of MG classes**

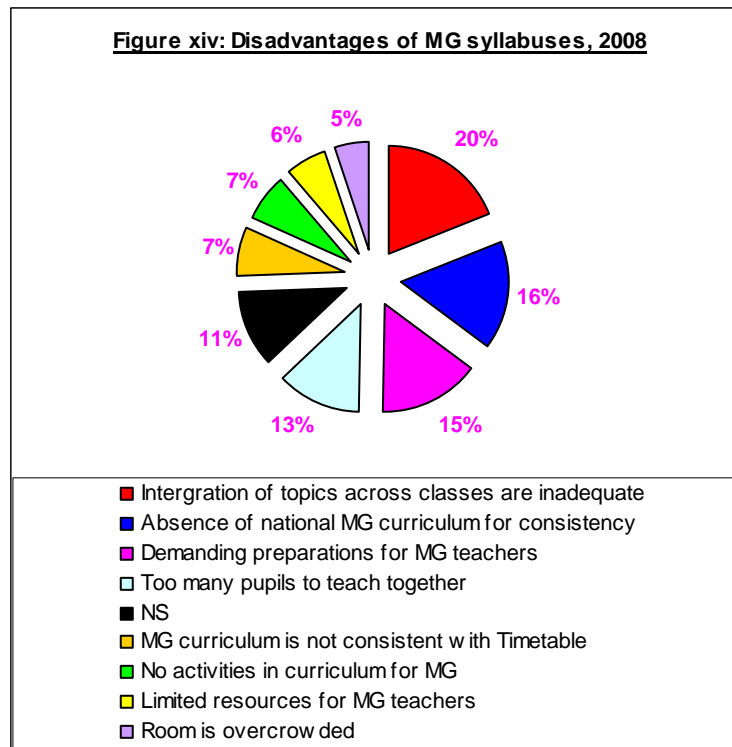
It is also important to determine how MG teachers in big/small classes felt about the MG syllabuses. The data results clearly showed that the effective lessons plan was the most advantage to the highest and lowest numbered classes (Figure xiii).



⌚ The Disadvantages of MG syllabuses

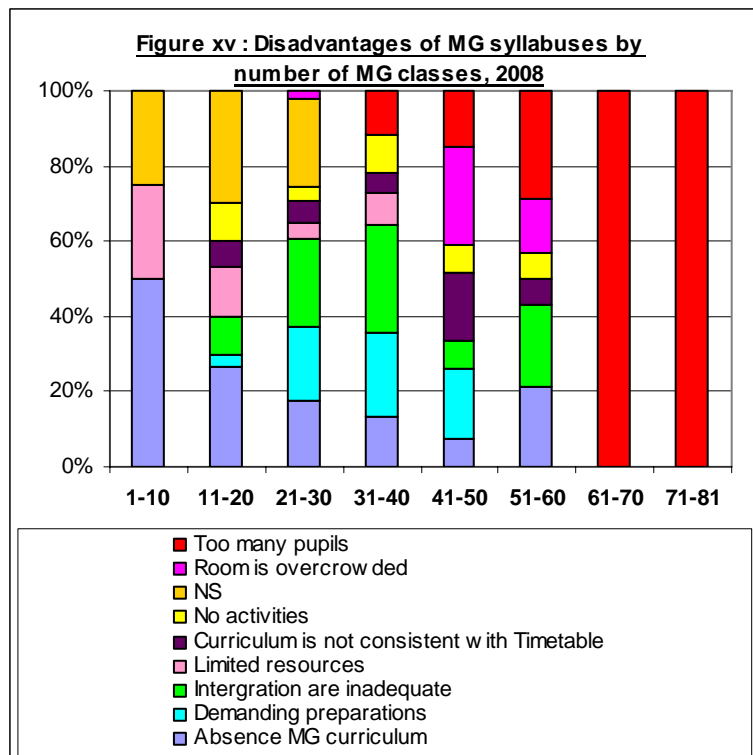
The MG teachers who actually implemented the MG syllabuses (195) were also asked to comment on any disadvantages that they have experienced in teaching MG classes. A range of responses are shown below but the highest proportion of MG teachers (20%) stated that the integration of topics across classes were inadequate while 16 percent believed that the lack of a national MG syllabus for consistency of teaching was the major problem.

As expected 15 percent complained of demanding preparations by MG teachers while the other 13 percent raised the issue of too many pupils to teach in such settings. It is not difficult to imagine the difficulty one teacher has to go through when trying to teach 2 to 3 groups of pupils with different abilities in each of the 2 or 3 different grades at the same time and in the same classroom. Other disadvantages are also listed which were just as important for MESC to take into great considerations (Figure xiii).



⌚ Disadvantages by the Number of MG classes

The distribution of disadvantages by the number of pupils in MG classes again helped to reflect how teachers in different class sizes felt about the MG syllabuses. As expected, teachers in the highest populated classes felt that there were too many pupils in the class to implement the MG syllabuses. The medium sized classes emphasized that integration of the themes across classes were not sufficient as well as too much preparations to be made for MG teaching. The least numbered classes believed that a National MG syllabus would have helped to solve all MG issues mainly the consistency of teaching among all MG teachers.



🌀 The Major Recommendations to improve MG syllabuses

The last survey question on MG syllabuses was a recommendation from the MG teachers on the issues that would help to strengthen and improve the quality of MG syllabuses for MG teaching.

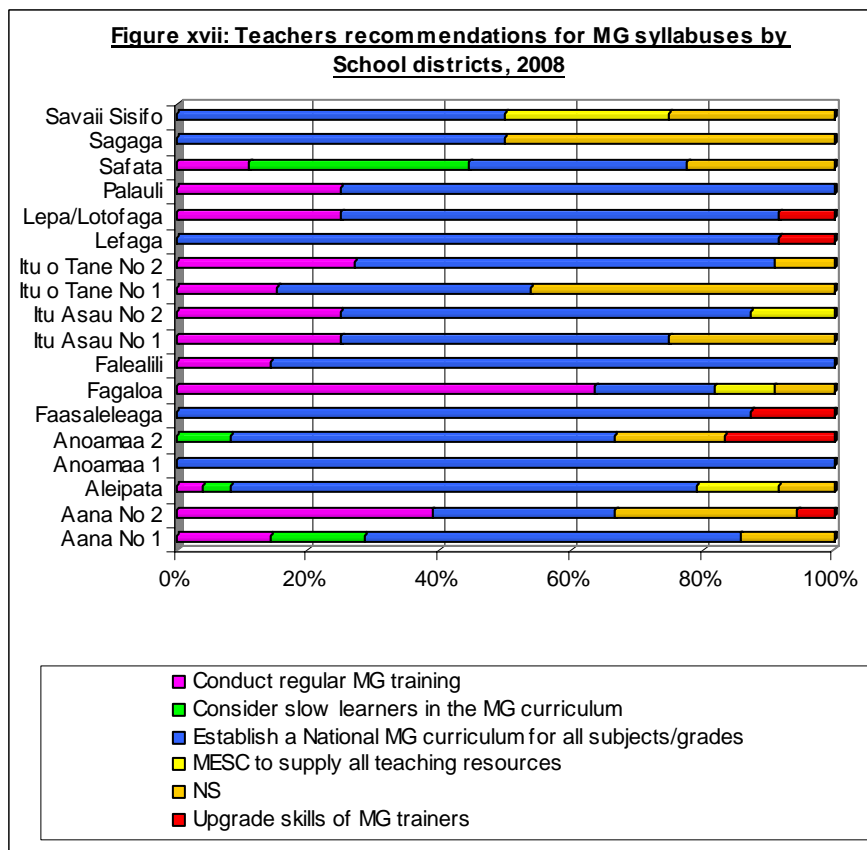
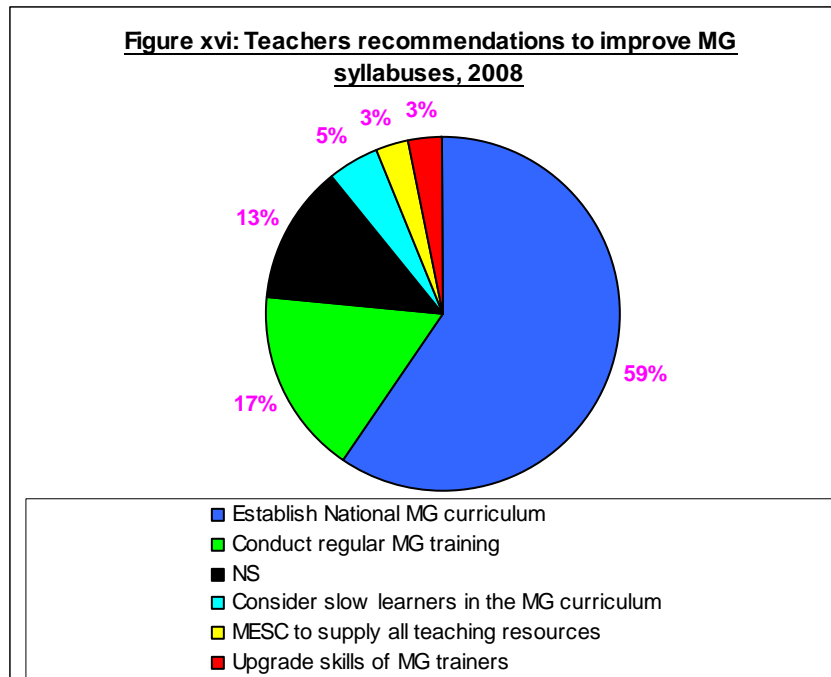
Figure xvi obviously showed that two-third (59%) of MG teachers had recommended MESC to go further than MG syllabuses and establish **National MG curriculum for MG teaching** while 17 percent wanted the MG training to be conducted on a more regular basis.

When the data was distributed by School districts (Figure xvii), it reflected a strong support in **all** School districts for a **change** to MG syllabus.

According to the survey responses, a national MG syllabus will improve the performance of teachers in MG settings by:

- ◆ *saving time on preparations for multi level classes*
- ◆ *provides scheduled instructions to follow easily on a daily basis*
- ◆ *more time spent in teaching than lesson planning and integrating of topics*
- ◆ *more time spent on evaluations and assessments of the classes*
- ◆ *more time spent with the slow-learners, and lastly,*
- ◆ *the MG schools will have the **same** syllabuses to follow for consistency instead of teachers developing their own different syllabuses to follow in their own time.*

The overall outcome of these recommendations is to achieve high quality education for the children of Samoa and also to deliver the best teaching services in a professional manner.



⊙ The application of the MG timetabling

The MG timetable was also developed by the Curriculum division to guide the MG teachers in the timing of their lesson plans and activities of the week and daily work. The survey results revealed that only 41 percent (113) of MG teachers fully adhered to this change of timetabling while half (90) managed to implement it but not all the time and the other 9 percent (19) did not use this type of timetabling at all. Table 14 clearly shows the distribution of the use of timetabling by School districts.

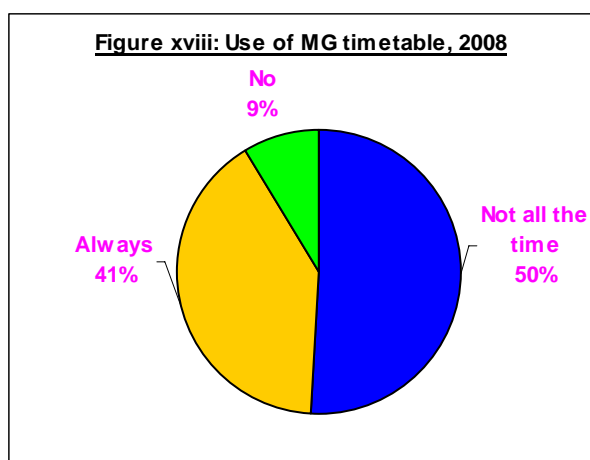
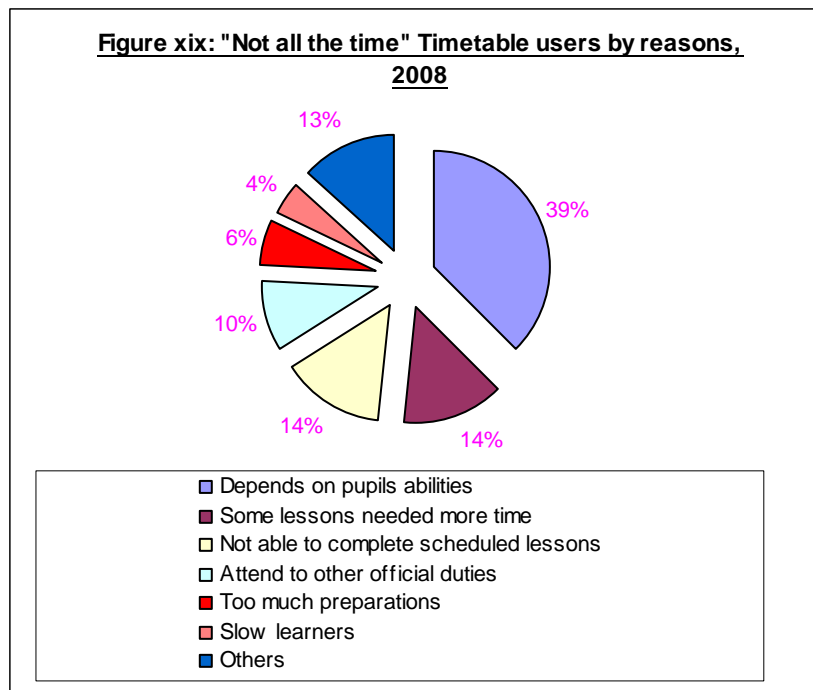


Table 14: Use of the MG timetable by School districts, 2008				
School districts	Always	Not all the time	No	Total
Aana No 1	3	4	2	9
Aana No 2	7	14	1	22
Aleipata	16	9	1	26
Anoamaa 1	3	3		6
Anoamaa 2	3	11	2	16
Faasaleleaga No 2	4	3	3	10
Fagaloa	8	3		11
Falealili	16	8		24
Itu Asau No 1	1	4	1	6
Itu Asau No 2	1	7		8
Itu o Tane No 1	7	4	3	14
Itu o Tane No 2	2	7	4	13
Lefaga	9	3		12
Lepa/Lotofaga	5	7		12
Palauli		4		4
Safata	3	16	1	20
Sagaga	1	2	1	4
Savaaii Sisifo	1	4		5
Total	90	113	19	222

For the teachers responding “Not all the time”, they were further asked to specify the main reason for their actions.

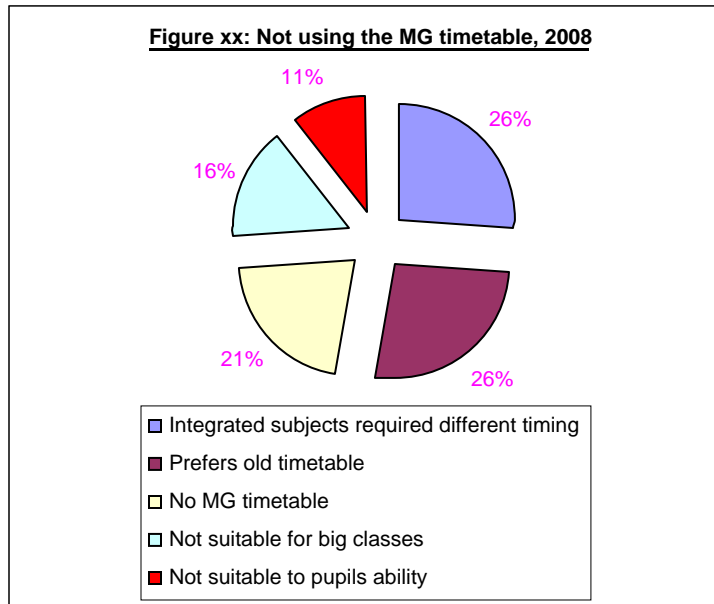


As shown in Figure xix, 39 percent of teachers stated that the MG timetable was used but it was based on the abilities of the pupils. Accordingly, it was not ideal to follow the scheduled time when the pupils needed more time to absorb the lessons. Likewise, 14 percent mentioned that they did not manage to complete their scheduled lessons within the given time hence not able to follow the timetable. Another 14 percent of teachers also raised the issue that not all subjects or lessons have the same time requirements. For instance, other subjects like Mathematics needed more time in a MG setting than Social Science subjects hence it was not possible to follow the timetable on time.

It is also important to note that 10 percent of teachers mentioned other official duties like trainings, meetings and visitations by government and non-government officials as activities impacting on their scheduled lessons.

MG teachers not using the MG timetable

Of the 9 percent (19) of MG teachers who did not use the timetable at all, one-quarter (5) mentioned that the integrated subjects or lessons had different time requirements to teach and another quarter (5) still believed they can teach MG classes using the MNG timetables. Again the lack of resources caused the other 21 percent (4) not to use the MG timetable while the rest did not think the MG timetable was suitable for MG classes.

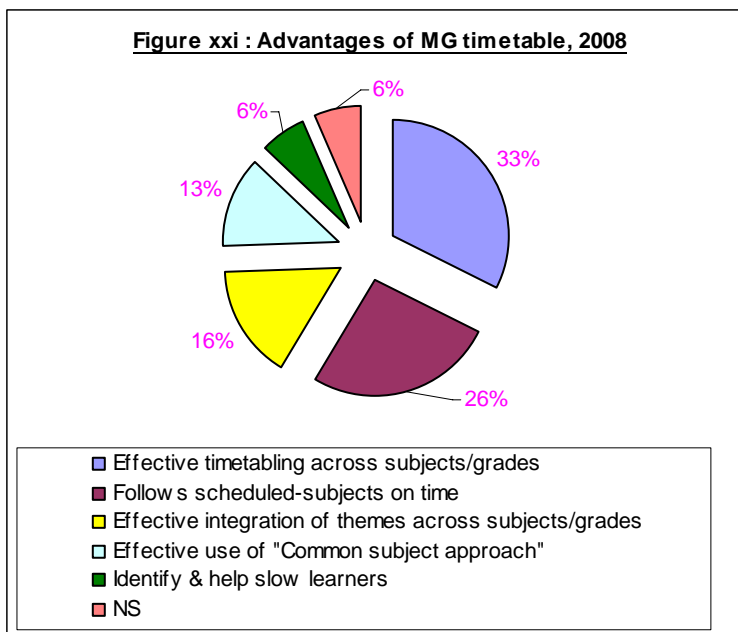


🕒 The Advantages of the MG timetables

The survey asked both the teachers who were using the MG timetables and those who used it from time to time to comment on the advantages of applying this type of timetabling in their MG classes.

Table 15 and Figure xxi clearly shows the responses from the teachers. One-third (33%) of teachers experienced that this MG timetabling was effective in the timing of lessons across subjects and grades, a quarter of teachers experienced the ability of following their scheduled lessons on time, while, 29 percent reported that the MG timetable was effective with teaching integrated themes and the use of “common subject approach”. It is also important to note that 6 percent of teachers believed that this timetabling had enabled them to identify the slow learners quickly in class.

Table 15: Advantages of the MG timetable, 2008	
Advantages of the MG Timetable	Total
Effective timetabling across subjects/grades	66
Follows scheduled-subjects on time	53
Effective integration of themes across subjects/grades	32
Effective use of "Common subject approach"	26
Identify & help slow learners	13
NS	13
Total	203



Advantage of MG timetabling by the Number of MG classes

The following data (Table 16) clearly distributed the teachers' responses by the number of MG classes they were undertaking at the time of the survey. It is obvious that only teachers with MG classes of the total pupils below 61 stated that the MG timetable had helped them in developing effective timetables across subjects and grades. It is also interesting to note that MG classes below 21 did not think that the MG timetable helped them to identify slow learners.

Table 16: Advantages of MG timetabling by Number of MG classes, 2008							
Number of MG classes	Develop effective integration of themes across subjects/grades	Develop effective timetabling across subjects/grades	Effective use of "Common subject approach"	Follows scheduled-subjects on time	Identify & help slow learners	NS	Total
1-10	1	2	1				4
11-20	4	12	5	6		2	29
21-30	9	18	8	13	4	2	54
31-40	6	18	8	24	2	4	62
41-50	2	11	3	6	2	4	28
51-60	6	5		2	1	1	15
61-70	3		1	1	2		7
71-81	1			1	2		4
Total	32	66	26	53	13	13	203

⌚ Advantage of MG Timetable by the School districts

The distribution of Timetable Advantages by School districts identified specific areas that each district experienced on the field. For example, most teachers who reported effective timetabling across subjects/grades were from Aleipata, Falealili and Safata, while the advantage on following the scheduled timetable mostly hailed from the districts of Aana No 2 and Falealili again.

Table 17: Advantages of MG timetabling by School districts, 2008							
School districts	Develop effective integration of themes across subjects/grades	Develop effective timetabling across subjects/grades	Effective use of "Common subject approach"	Follows scheduled-subjects on time	Identify & help slow learners	NS	Total
Aana No 2		7	2	7	2	3	21
Aleipata	1	14	2	5	1	2	25
Anoamaa 1	3		2			1	6
Anoamaa 2	5	1		4		4	14
Faasaleleaga No 2	1	4		1	1		7
Fagaloa	2	5	1	2		1	11
Falealili	2	11		10	1		24
Itu Asau No 1	3			1	1		5
Itu Asau No 2	2	2		4			8
Itu o Tane No 1	2	2	1	4	1	1	11
Itu o Tane No 2		2	1	5	1		9
Lefaga		3	9				12
Lepa/Lotofaga	1	4	1	4	2		12
Palauli		1		2	1		4
Safata	4	8	3	3	1		19
Sagaga	2				1		3
Sava'i'i Sisifo	1	2		1		1	5
Total	32	66	26	53	13	13	203

⌚ The Disadvantages of MG timetable

In order to improve and strengthen MG teachings it was important to note all issues both negative and positive for responsive actions. The following Table specifies the data on Disadvantages of the MG timetable. As expected the majority of teachers (31%) have experienced that in MG settings, it was difficult to arrange sufficient time for teaching and at the same time also do the evaluations of the multi-classes involved. During the survey some teachers mentioned the extension of teaching hours in the mornings or afternoon for MG classes.

Table 18 : Disadvantages of MG Timetabling, 2008		
Disadvantages of the MG timetable	Total	Percent (%)
Insufficient time for MG teaching/assessments	62	30.5
Timetable is often delayed due to slow learners	35	17.2
Inconsistencies between Timetable & Curriculum	23	11.3
Big delay when MG teacher is sick/ in a meeting	10	4.9
Cannot integrate all subjects across grades	9	4.4
No problem	1	0.5
NS	63	31.0
Total	203	100

Another 17 percent of teachers raised their concerns about slow learners who usually caused delays in the teachers' preparations and there must be another way of dealing with them in class. It is also important for Subject-organizers to take note of the inconsistencies between the MG syllabuses and Timetabling in order to solve this problem as raised by 11 percent of teachers. Last but not the least, the problem of teachers becoming absent due to maternity leave, sick leave, overseas leave or on other official duties will greatly impact on MG classes particularly when there are no teacher substitutes arranged by MESC as it is in many other countries like New Zealand and Australia.

Table 19 shows where the problems of MG timetabling were mostly common in the School districts. The identification of the districts and the problems they have experienced will also help MESC to identify appropriate solutions to improve MG teaching.

Table 19 : Disadvantage of MG timetable by School districts, 2008								
School Districts	Big delay when MG teacher is sick/ in a meeting	Cannot integrate all subjects across grades	Inconsistencies between Timetable & Curriculum	Insufficient time for MG teaching/assessments	No problem	Timetable is often delayed due to slow learners	NS	Total
Aana No 1			2			2	3	7
Aana No 2	2	2	3	3		3	8	21
Aleipata				8	1	8	8	25
Anoamaa 1		1	1			1	3	6
Anoamaa 2			3	3		2	6	14
Faasaleleaga No 2	1		2	3			1	7
Fagaloa			3	2		1	5	11
Falealili		1		10			13	24
Itu Asau No 1		2	2				1	5
Itu Asau No 2	3		2	2		1		8
Itu o Tane No 1		1		7			3	11
Itu o Tane No 2			1	5			3	9
Lefaga		1		9		1	1	12
Lepa/Lotofaga		1	1			9	1	12
Palauli	1			2			1	4
Safata	3			6		7	3	19
Sagaga			1	2				3
Savaii Sisifo			2				3	5
Total	10	9	23	62	1	35	63	203

🕒 **Teachers recommendations to improve MG timetabling**

Like the MG syllabuses, MG teachers were also asked to provide realistic recommendations to improve MG timetabling for their teaching careers. Table 20 shows that about two-third of teachers strongly recommended MESC *to rearrange the current timetabling to meet the needs of the MG syllabuses*. Other challenges are clearly defined in the data table for MESC to take into considerations.

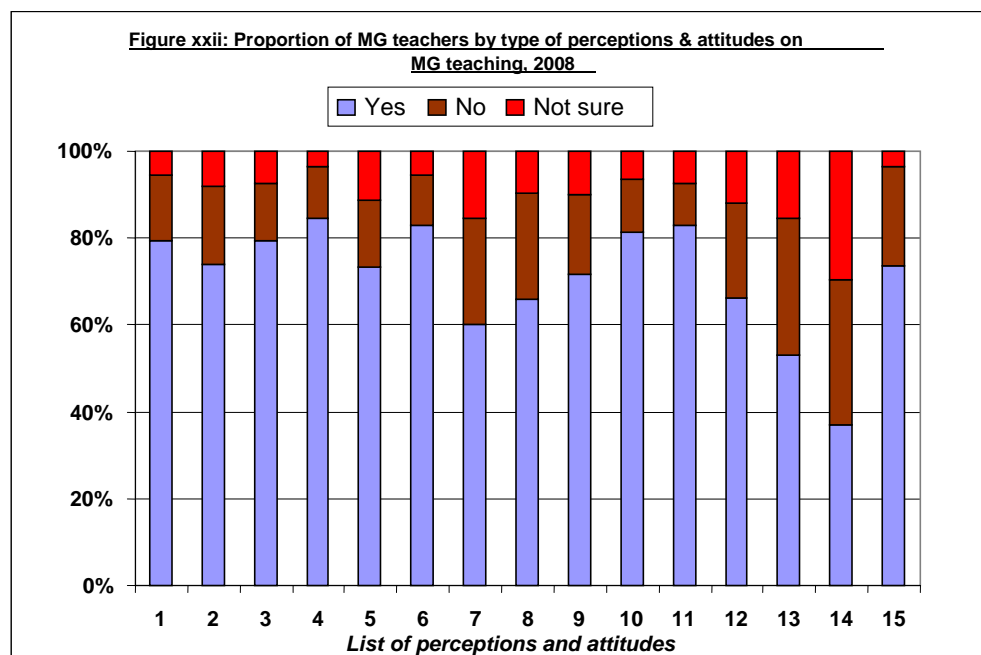
Table 20: MG teachers recommendations for MG timetable, 2008		
Recommendations to improve MG timetable	Total	Percent (%)
Rearrange MTG timetable to match MTG syllabuses	114	<i>56.2</i>
Timetable must accommodate the different abilities of students	23	<i>11.3</i>
Conduct regular MG training for teachers	12	<i>5.9</i>
MG teaching can be successful if teachers perform well	10	<i>4.9</i>
Cut down subjects per day to extend teaching time	7	<i>3.4</i>
Need more teachers	5	<i>2.5</i>
Do not recommend Year 1 as an MG class	4	<i>2.0</i>
No problem	4	<i>2.0</i>
Increase salaries of MG teachers	2	<i>1.0</i>
NS	22	<i>10.8</i>
Total	203	100

5 Teachers' perceptions & attitudes towards MG teaching

The successes and failures of any project such as the MG teaching in Samoa depended largely on the social perceptions and attitudes of the persons implementing the activities. Hence it was important for the study to find out these factors in order to find out where MESC stands at this stage of the project and where the project is heading for the way forward. Table 21 lists the 15 Issues which were put across the MG teachers to indicate their opinions of such issues relating to MG and MNG teaching in Samoa. The results are depicted on Figure xxii and it is up to MESC to interpret how they feel about these results.

Table 21: List of 15 Issues on Perceptions and Attitudes towards MG Teaching in Samoa

1	Samoa needs MG teaching due to teacher shortages
2	MG pupils work along better with other classmates than MNG pupils
3	MG teachers can continue to help slow-learners in the next level because the teacher remains, not MNG teacher
4	MG students can revise work in the next level from lower level classmates
5	Lower level MG students learn more quickly than MNG due to higher level classmates
6	Higher level MG feel more confident due to more responsibility in MG classes
7	MG students are more competitive and hard working than MNG
8	MG students are more independent due to one teacher and multi-classes
9	Smart pupils learn more quickly in MG due to independent work than MNG
10	More teaching methods & skills learned in MG than MNG
11	More organizational skills learned in MG than MNG
12	More skills in allocation & use of limited resources in MG than MNG
13	Better assessments & evaluations in MG than MNG due smaller classes
14	MG pupils are generally smarter than MNG students
15	I am happy to support MG teaching



The study ends with the following recommendations that may be helpful for the way forward on MG teaching in Samoa.

- ” It is important to carry out regular evaluations of MG teaching in Samoa to identify issues and gaps, and also to have regular contacts with teachers on the field
- ” There is a need to conduct regular MGT trainings to support and strengthen the skills of teachers on the field
- ” There is a need to find other possible means of minimizing the shortage supply of teachers to ease the workload on MG teachers like short-term teacher substitutes
- ” The high number of pupils in MG classes needs immediate attention
- ” It is important that all teachers have full supplies of teaching materials and resources in the classrooms
- ” **It is high time that MESC develops a National MG Curriculum to ease the workload of MG teachers and for consistency of teaching across all schools in Samoa**
- ” And lastly it is recommended that the Research Unit (PPRD) be responsible for all Evaluations and Surveys not only to produce reliable data for policy-making but also to provide an independent review of activities in other Divisions. It is recommended that they purchase and use SPSS for statistical analysis or any other similar software.