# Education Analytics Service (EAS)

Teacher Development Multi-Year Study Series:

TIMOR LESTE

Interim Report 2

Final

12 May 2020

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## Amendment History

| Version No. | Date | Brief description of change | Author |
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| 1 | 31 October 2019 | Draft report | Elizabeth Cassity<br><br>Jennie Chainey |
| 2 | 12 May 2020 | Final report | Elizabeth Cassity<br><br>Jennie Chainey |

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# Abbreviations and acronyms

| | |
|---|---|
| ACER | Australian Council for Educational Research |
| ALMA | Apoiu Lideransa liuhosi Mentoria no Aprendizajen |
| CBA | Curriculum Based Assessment |
| CFS | Child Friendly Schools |
| DFAT | Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade |
| EAS | Education Analytics Service |
| EDC | Education Section (DFAT) |
| EGMA | Early Grades Mathematics Assessment |
| EGRA | Early Grades Reading Assessment |
| EMBLI | Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education |
| EMIS | Education Management Information System |
| GTP | Grupu Traballu ba Professor |
| ICC | Intraclass Correlations |
| IEC | Independent Evaluation Committee (DFAT) |
| ODE | Office of Development Effectiveness (DFAT) |
| MoEYS | Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (Timor-Leste) |
| M&E | Monitoring and Evaluation |
| NGO | Non-governmental organisation |
| PHD | Partnership for Human Development |
| PLMP | Professional Learning and Mentoring Program |
| RTI | Research Triangle Institute |
| UNICEF | United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund |
| USAID | United States Agency for International Development |

# Executive summary

The purpose of this Interim Report is to present the findings from the second year of a multi-year study of Timor-Leste's Apoio Lideransa liuhusi Mentoria no Aprendizajen (ALMA) program. The study focuses on understanding the extent to which education stakeholders, including school leaders and teachers, develop teaching knowledge and change teaching practice over time. It also explores the extent to which participation in the ALMA program leads to improvements in learning outcomes for students. This study of the ALMA program is framed within the context Timor-Leste's introduction of a new National Basic Education Curriculum.

The overall aim of this study is **to investigate how this aid investment – the ALMA program – produces improved teaching quality and improved student learning.** This report provides an analysis of the initial findings related to three specific questions:

### Question 1.

To what extent does the ALMA program support improved teaching quality in Timor-Leste?

### Question 2.

To what extent does the ALMA program support the effective implementation of Timor-Leste's National Basic Education Curriculum?

### Question 3.

To what extent does teacher involvement in the ALMA program lead to improved learning outcomes for Timor-Leste students?

Teaching itself is a 'noise-filled' context. There are a range of contextual factors that enable and constrain investments in teaching. With this in mind, the methodology for this study recognises the various factors associated with teaching quality, the new curriculum and student learning outcomes.

The multi-year study uses a mixed methods approach to data collection and analysis, however no new student achievement data was available for inclusion in this second report. The original study design detailed in the *PLMP Evaluation Plan* relied on existing and planned quantitative data sources including a national Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) planned for 2019 and a Classroom Based Assessment (CBA), which would have contributed to research question 3 (student outcomes). However, there have been no further EGRA or CBA data collections since those conducted in 2017. Since the development of the *PLMP Evaluation Plan*, it has been determined that EGRA is unlikely to be administered in the near future. There is no other known student assessment data available that can be used to replace this data. In order to address this data gap and limitation, supplemental classroom observation data is planned to be collected in Phase 5 ALMA schools. This data will be analysed in year 3 of the study as part of the Final Report. The decision to collect this alternative data and modify the original study design to address this limitation was made in consultation with DFAT and MOEYS.

The option to collect qualitative data from non-ALMA schools was considered during the development of the original study design, to enable a comparison with ALMA participating schools. However it was ultimately determined that the inclusion of non-participating schools would contribute limited value to the case studies, as this methodology relies upon

stakeholder insights of the intervention itself. Instead, the decision was made to sample ALMA participating schools across multiple municipalities to provide a richer dataset. One limitation of studying multiple municipalities is the inability to monitor change over time using a single sample group. However, the multi-year research design presents an opportunity to study multiple population groups rather than just one subset. This allows for a wider breadth of analysis, which was a stated priority of the Government of Timor-Leste. The inclusion of multiple municipalities is particularly beneficial when considering research implications for policy goals as it allows a country-wide understanding of how the ALMA intervention impacts teaching quality and student learning. This decision was made in close consultation with DFAT and MoEYS.

This report discusses new qualitative data collected during the second series of case studies in 2019. The data collections include:

- Case study data collected in Bobonaro and Viqueque municipalities.

- Interviews with senior education stakeholders in the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, Timor-Leste.

Overall, the second year of this study found that the ALMA investment is associated with improved teaching quality and supports effective implementation of the curriculum. The relationship between student learning outcomes and the ALMA program is less clear, but there are indications of increased student engagement. The findings and recommendations from the second year of the study are relatively consistent with those in the first year, indicating similar ALMA outcomes nationwide.

## Summary of findings

The following indicative findings have emerged from this stage of the study:

| | |
|---|---|
| | **Finding 1.**<br><br>ALMA is effective in supporting improved teaching quality through facilitating instructional leadership and empowering school leaders to assist teachers.<br><br>• School leader and mentor support alongside peer learning supports teachers' confidence, preparation and sense of responsibility.<br><br>• Lead teachers build and share their knowledge with their peers through participation in the Leaders of Learning program and Grupu Traballu ba Professor (GTP). |
| | **Finding 2.**<br><br>ALMA is effective in improving teacher knowledge and motivation, self-confidence and preparation through peer reflection forums and the use of educational technology by school leaders to support teachers through feedback and observation.<br><br>• GTPs show some effectiveness in strengthening teacher knowledge on lesson planning, subject matter and pedagogical approaches.<br><br>• Mentor and leader observations and feedback are effective in improving teaching knowledge. |
| | **Finding 3.**<br><br>ALMA is effective in supporting implementation of the National Basic Education Curriculum through facilitating a peer learning process for teachers to prepare, review and present lessons, provide feedback, share challenges and workshop solutions. It is also effective in supporting teachers and school leaders to utilise and access lesson plans and materials.<br><br>• ALMA is effective in supporting teachers and school leaders to utilise and access lesson plans and materials.<br><br>• Mentor observations and feedback enable teachers to immediately address challenges they experience in the classroom.<br><br>• School leader and mentor feedback is effective in helping align teaching practice with the curriculum. |

**Finding 4.**

The introduction of student-centered approaches learned through ALMA has led to observed improvements in students' well-being and engagement in lessons.

- ALMA supports some teachers to evaluate students' learning progress.

- ALMA is associated with improvements in student interest in lessons, which is perceived to have led to changes in academic student learning outcomes in some schools.

- The impact of ALMA on student attendance is inconclusive with a range of opinions from stakeholders.

**Finding 5.**

ALMA has facilitated improved communication between different levels of education stakeholders. The use of educational technology has supported municipal and national level monitoring and efficiencies in communication and reporting.

- ALMA educational technology facilitates efficient information sharing and effective classroom observations.

- Access to the curriculum through tablets enables school leaders to monitor and observe teachers and their delivery of lessons against the lesson plans.

- Ongoing technical challenges with the tablets limit their usability.

**Finding 6.**

There are some ongoing risks to program sustainability following completion of ALMA in a cluster.

- Despite multiple teachers expressing their wish to continue GTPs, there are significant barriers to facilitation including travel distance, road conditions, weather and competing commitments including study programs.

- Many school leaders reported challenges with tablets that prevented them from actively undertaking classroom observations, monitoring and reporting requirements. These challenges included: limited understanding of operational functionality; software updates changing useability; hardware faults; and, unreliable access to electricity and internet connectivity.

- Lack of sufficient inspectors and mentors to support school leaders, and the fact that some schools in Phase 1-4 municipalities had not received support from ALMA post-phase completion is a sustainability risk.

# Summary of lessons and recommendations

The multi-year study of ALMA has completed its second year, and there are a number of lessons and possible recommendations that can be considered in future programming. Investigating two different municipalities in Phase 3 provides a good opportunity to explore any differences in implementation and provides insight into the sustainability of the program from the perspective of a wider range of stakeholders. Some risks and proposed recommendations include the following:

- Reduction in program activities without the presence of active program interventions.

  Recommendations might include scaling down mentor support while transitioning, and scaling up inspectorate support. Other recommendations might include encouraging clusters to rotate peer learning groups and school leaders to facilitate within-school peer learning groups, and introducing accountability measures using tablets. A final recommendation might also include additional training for mentors to support ongoing teacher understanding of the curriculum.

- The absence of succession plans limits the effective management of leadership transitions, which can lead to institutional capacity gaps.

  Recommendations might include a component to the *Leaders of Learning Program* to support leadership change management. Another recommendation could be to extend the current arrangement beyond promising female teachers to a wider cohort of teachers, and to provide induction training to newly deployed municipal and school leaders posted to ALMA schools and clusters.

- Limited resources to support program activities such as the Grupu Traballu ba Professor[1] (GTPs).

  A recommendation might be to consider periodic resourcing to support school monitoring and peer-learning activities. A second recommendation would be to document and disseminate information about ALMA and its outcomes to encourage more widespread knowledge and support for the program. A final recommendation would be to support school communities to continue program components in less-costly ways.

- Limited access to school feeding programs and long distances for rural students to travel to schools are persistent challenges in improving student attendance and school learning outcomes. Limited school infrastructure, and teacher and classroom shortages are also ongoing challenges in a number of schools.

  While ALMA has supported teachers and school leaders in implementing the new curriculum despite these challenges, a recommendation might include possible Government strategies to address student participation in school and deteriorating school infrastructure.

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[1] Previously known as Peer Learning Group (PLG)

The second collection of case study data also gathered evidence on gender and disability inclusion. Whilst school leaders and teachers widely recognise educational equity as a human right and endeavour to incorporate inclusive teaching practices, many indicated that they had limited knowledge and training in terms of implementing equitable systems at schools. One possible recommendation could be to integrate gender and disability inclusion in future curriculum review and training for school leaders, teachers and mentors. The need for additional training in gender and disability inclusion was also mentioned by Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport stakeholders.

# 1  Introduction

In 2014, the Office of Development Effectiveness (ODE) in close consultation with the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's (DFAT) Education Section (EDC) conducted an evaluation of Australia's recent and current investments in teacher development including desk reviews of 27 bilateral Australian aid investment programs. The findings of that evaluation, presented in the report *Investing in Teachers[2]*, found almost no data on outcomes that could be attributed to DFAT's teacher development investments, and determined that it was impossible to judge whether teacher development has led to improved teaching practices or improved student learning outcomes.

Recommendation 3 of the evaluation stated that DFAT should work systematically to improve its monitoring and evaluation of the outcomes of investments in teacher development[3]. In its management response, DFAT committed to 'support a multi-year study on teacher development investments in Laos and Timor-Leste to evaluate the effects of teacher development on teacher knowledge, teacher practice and student learning'.[4]

To implement that commitment, a Conceptual Framework was prepared by DFAT's Education Analytics Service (EAS), managed by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), with a view to frame and guide teacher development multi-year studies in Timor-Leste, Lao PDR and Vanuatu, and to ensure a minimum of consistency across the studies (ACER, 2017). In each of these countries, reform of the primary education curriculum is underway. The teacher development studies are investigating teaching quality and student learning through the implementation of pedagogical practices and strategies promoted in the curriculum reforms in each location. Specifically, and as agreed with various stakeholders during the scoping of each study, the focus is on investigating changes to the repertoire of teaching skills used, rather than on investigating teacher competence in core domains.

This report constitutes the second Interim Report of a multi-year study of Timor-Leste's ALMA[5] program and aims to identify the outcomes of participation in this program. In particular, this study seeks to understand the extent to which the ALMA program supports leaders and teachers to develop teaching knowledge and to change teaching practice over time, and the extent to which teacher participation in ALMA leads to improvements in learning outcomes for students.[6]

## Timor-Leste's ALMA program

In 2013, the Timor-Leste Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS) began a staged development of a new curriculum for pre-school to Grade 6, to improve literacy and numeracy. The new National Basic Education Curriculum organises subject content into sequenced and scripted lessons for each grade level to support teachers to implement the

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[2] ODE (2015).

[3] ODE (2015). p.8

[4] ODE (2015). p.12

[5] In January 2019 the Professional Learning and Mentoring Program (PLMP) was officially changed to Apoio Lideransa liuhusi Mentoria no Apredizajen (ALMA). This report will refer to the program as ALMA. The program is still referred to as PLMP in some document names and appendices, if prepared prior to the name change.

[6] For more detail, refer to Appendix B: Overview of the Professional Learning and Mentoring Program.

new curriculum, and to ensure content uniformity across classes and schools. It also proposes new pedagogies that aim to transform teaching and learning approaches in Timor-Leste, moving from traditional teacher-centred approaches to student-centred ones. Work on the earliest grades was completed in 2015. To introduce the new curriculum, the MoEYS used a cascade training model. The MoEYS provided training for local education leaders who then provided training for teachers in their school clusters. The training was aligned to the phased rollout of the new curriculum beginning with Grades 1 and 2 in 2015.

The ALMA program commenced in 2016 and aims to supplement the MoEYS teacher training by supporting continuous teacher professional development, strong school leadership, systems to assess student learning outcomes and systems to support and evaluate teacher performance. The ALMA program includes the following core components:

- Leaders of Learning Program
- School-based peer professional learning groups
- Mentor support from educational and local mentors[7]
- Educational technology to enable efficient information sharing and monitoring.

ALMA was developed in partnership by DFAT and MoEYS, with contributions provided by the Governments of Timor-Leste and Australia. Each phase of ALMA has historically covered 50 per cent of school clusters in two municipalities within a 10 to 12 month period of implementation and an additional six months of consolidation phase. As of 2019, ALMA has been rolled out in 100 per cent of schools in one municipality (Lautem) only, an adjustment to address some of the key challenges faced in the previous phases such as, misunderstanding and the discontent between ALMA and non-ALMA schools. Other ALMA program updates in 2019 include: refresher training for school leaders in all Phase 1-3 municipalities to address some sustainability concerns outlined in the Interim report 1; updates to teacher observation forms in Eskola; and, chat groups on the school leaders' tablets.

## Objectives of study

The broad question that frames this study of Timor-Leste's ALMA program is:

*To what extent does this aid investment produce improved teaching quality and improved student learning?*

Three specific questions related to this broad question are being investigated:

1. To what extent does the ALMA program support improved teaching quality in Timor-Leste?
2. To what extent does the ALMA program support the effective implementation of Timor-Leste's National Basic Education Curriculum?
3. To what extent does teacher involvement in the ALMA program lead to improved learning outcomes for Timor-Leste students?

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[7] While the original model of ALMA included 'international' and 'national' mentors, in 2019 these two categories were referred to as 'educational' mentors to reflect MoEYS's ownership of ALMA.

The purpose of this report is to investigate the extent to which ALMA has improved teaching quality and student learning to date through:

- presenting the interim findings for each of the three above questions
- identifying key lessons to make judgements and recommendations for the program.

This report begins with a summary review of the methodology for the overall ALMA multi-year study. It then presents the findings of the second series of two case studies in Bobonaro and Viqueque municipalities. The first Interim Report[8] provided an exploration of the student achievement data in ALMA and non-ALMA schools, however no new student achievement data was available for inclusion in this report. The conclusion presents an overall synthesis of the findings from the first Interim Report, and considers implications for ALMA based on evidence emerging from the research.

# 2  Methodology

A key feature of the ALMA study is its multi-year duration, which acknowledges the complex nature of teacher development and that sustained change in teaching practice takes time. It also recognises the scale of the program investment, and enables an agile and adaptive approach that is responsive to contextual affordances and limitations. The *PLMP Evaluation Plan*[9] and the *Teacher Development Multi-Year Studies – Conceptual Framework*[10] provide the rationale and overall approach for this study.

The ALMA study uses existing and newly collected data. By using these two types of data, the scope is broadened as much as possible given the human and financial resourcing for the study, and reflects proportionality. The ALMA study adopts a mixed methods approach utilising both quantitative and qualitative methods. This ALMA Interim Report 2 includes only newly collected data for the 2019 reporting period.

## Qualitative

Case study methodology enables rich descriptions of programs and stakeholder insights, and is ideal for the multi-perspective analysis required for the ALMA study. For year two of the case study series, two municipalities that implemented ALMA Phase 3 were selected. Phase 3 was selected because it is established, has been working for a few cycles and provided an opportunity to investigate the sustainability of the program. Investigating two different municipalities in Phase 3 provides a good opportunity to explore any differences in implementation by municipality.

Clusters were selected based on the inclusion of a central school covering Grades 1-9, and the number of related branch/filial schools with higher student populations. Clusters with central

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[8] Education Analytics Service (2019). *Teacher Development Multi-Year Study Series: Timor-Leste Interim Report 1*. Canberra: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

[9] Education Analytics Service (2017). *PLMP Evaluation Plan*. Melbourne: Australian Council for Educational Research.

[10] Education Analytics Service (2017). *Teacher Development Evaluation Conceptual Framework*. Melbourne: Australian Council for Educational Research

schools of Grade 7-9 only were excluded.[11] Eskola data (literacy and numeracy, counting observations, peer learning groups, teacher observations and teacher competency) was used to assess intensity of activity, and patterns in student and teacher performance when selecting schools.

Stakeholder interviews[12] and teacher group interviews[13] were the primary data collection methods for the ALMA case studies. The ACER research team worked in partnership with Belun, a Dili-based non-governmental organisation (NGO), to collect the data. Fifty-three interviews[14] were conducted with ALMA school leaders (school directors, school coordinators, adjuntos), inspectors, municipal directors and teachers in May 2019.

Four teacher group interviews were conducted to investigate the experiences of teachers participating in the GTP – two in Raifun Maliana and two in Mundo Perdido. Year one of the study included observations of GTP sessions as a data collection method, to document the facilitated peer learning component of ALMA. The research team determined these observations were sufficient for the purpose of gaining insight into the GTP processes, and replaced this method with the teacher group interviews for year two of the study. This strategy enabled a deeper understanding of the experiences of teachers participating in the GTP. This methodology adaptation enabled the collection of a richer dataset, which subsequently allowed a more in-depth understanding of system level factors, GTP outcomes, and risks to sustainability.

Five interviews were also conducted with senior level stakeholders in the MoEYS, Timor-Leste (See Appendix H 'field research schedule' for further detail). Interviews were recorded in Tetun and transcribed into English for analysis.

| Type of stakeholder | Number interviewed |
|---|---|
| Teachers | 38 |
| School leaders | 11 |
| Inspectors | 2 |
| Municipal education directors | 2 |
| MoEYS representatives | 5 |

To conduct the analysis, the ACER team used QSR NVivo 12 Pro. Data was coded aligned with themes identified in the Conceptual Framework.[15] [16] A test of inter-rater reliability (Cohen's κ)

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[11] Timor-Leste's basic education system (Grades 1 to 9) is organised into clusters. Each cluster has a central school and several branch/filial schools. School directors and adjuntos are located at central schools, and are expected to provide support to branch/filial schools. Each branch/filial school has a school coordinator.
[12] Refer to Appendix E 'interview guides'
[13] Refer to Appendix F 'group interview guide'
[14] Refer to Appendix G: 'consent form'
[15] EAS, 2017, Teacher Development Evaluations: Conceptual Framework
[16] Refer to Appendix A 'conceptual model' which illustrates the customized model for ALMA study

was performed on a random sample of the qualitative data. The analysis showed, on average, an acceptable level of agreement between two independent coders (κ = 0.66, p < .0005).

# Teaching quality, student engagement and student learning outcomes

The case study methodology described above enables the research team to explore the complexity of teachers, the curriculum and the impact on student learning outcomes. Evidence about student engagement is an important indicator of student performance and completion, especially without student achievement data.

There is a significant body of research in the international literature that explores the relationship between student engagement (including well-being and interest in lessons), learning and achievement. In other words, there is general consensus that student learning outcomes are holistic and combine to include students' academic performance, engagement in school and well-being. Lawson & Lawson (2013) present a concept of engagement that connects student agency (prior knowledge, experience, and interest at school, home and in the community) and its ecological influences (peers, family and community) to the organizational structures of school (p. 433).[17] This means a broad conceptualization of student engagement and learning outcomes acknowledges the wider contextual and socio-economic aspects of education, and the powerful influences of these aspects on children's learning outcomes.

A number of studies have found that higher levels of engagement in school is linked with improved performance. In fact, research documents that student engagement is a robust predictor of student achievement and behaviour in school, regardless of socioeconomic status.[18] Student engagement is considered the primary model for understanding student dropout and promoting school completion.[19]

Teacher support is important as students who perceive teachers as creating a caring and well-structured learning environment are more likely to be engaged in school (p. 270).[20] Klem and Connell (2004) conclude from their study that links between teacher support, student engagement, and academic performance and commitment are important predictors of whether or not students complete school and achieve economic self-sufficiency in the long term (p. 270). The research on student learning outcomes and student engagement is important in considering the concept of attribution, discussed in the following section.

# Limitations

There are some limitations to this Timor-Leste study. First is the issue of attribution in a study investigating teaching quality and student learning outcomes. Attribution is easier to establish

[17] Lawson, M.A. and Lawson, H. A. (2013). New conceptual frameworks for student engagement research, policy, and practice. *Review of Educational Research 83*(3), 432-479.

[18] Klem, A. M. and Connell, J.P. (2004). Relationships Matter: Linking teacher support to student engagement and achievement. *Journal of School Health 74*(7), 262-273.

[19] Christenson, S.L., Reschly, A.L. and Wylie, C. (2012). *Handbook of Research on Student Engagement*. New York, Dordrecht, Heidelberg, London: Springer.

[20] Klem, A. M. and Connell, J.P. (2004). Relationships Matter: Linking teacher support to student engagement and achievement. *Journal of School Health 74*(7), 262-273

when there is a clear causal relationship between the outcome and any preceding outputs. Teaching itself is a 'noise-filled' context. There are a wide range of contextual factors that enable and constrain productive investments in teachers, teaching and education communities, for example, budgetary constraints, and political priorities within schools and the larger national context. While there may be relationships between various factors associated with student learning outcomes, direct causal relationships are difficult to determine.

Second, the qualitative case studies are not intended to generalise the impact of ALMA across Timor-Leste. Case studies are intended to explore the experience of the investment by educational stakeholders in a small sample of schools, but across a multitude of variables. In this way, the case studies are intensive rather than extensive. The ability to extract this level of detail from ALMA is an important part of the overall study design.

For Interim Report 1 the quantitative data analysed for the first year of the ALMA study included the CBA and EGRA data collected as part of the DFAT-funded *Lessons learned an early assessment (2017) of two innovations in basic education in Timor-Leste* (referred to as the 2017 World Bank Study).[21] The CBA measures the extent to which the content of the new curriculum has been mastered by Grade 3 students.[22] The CBA was administered to all 6,326 students in the target classes in all schools in both ALMA and non-ALMA schools, and was conducted in Tetun. The EGRA implemented in 2017 used selected components of the EGRA which had been used previously in 2009 in Timor-Leste, to allow the examination of differences between 2009 and 2017.[23] EGRA was administered to each child individually in Tetun.[24]

However, there have been no further EGRA or CBA data collections since those conducted in 2017. During the scoping visit to develop the *PLMP Evaluation Plan* in 2017 a range of existing and planned data sources were identified, including a national EGRA (planned for 2019), which would have contributed to research question 3 (student outcomes). New data purposefully collected for this study, namely case study data and classroom observations, would contribute to answering research question 1 (teaching quality), research question 2 (implementation of the new curriculum) and research question 3 (student outcomes). However since the development of the *PLMP Evaluation Plan*, it has been determined that EGRA is unlikely to be administered in the near future.

As a solution to this data gap, supplemental quantitative data will be collected via streamlined classroom observations in Phase 5 ALMA schools with schools sampled from previous case studies. This will be analysed and reported in year 3 of the study as part of the Final Report. Observation provides evidence about the classroom environment, student and teacher interactions and student dispositions to learning. This enables triangulation of the case study data with observations, enriching this data with observations related to all three research

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[21] World Bank (2018). *Lessons learned from an early assessment (2017) of two innovations in basic education in Timor-Leste*. Final Draft, 25 January 2018.

[22] Students were assessed on basic reading, mathematics, and Tetun and Portuguese language.

[23] World Bank (2018). *Lessons learned from an early assessment (2017) of two innovations in basic education in Timor-Leste*. Final Draft, 25 January 2018.

[24] The six components of the EGRA used in this assessment were Letter Knowledge, Word Reading, Non-word Reading, Text Reading, Reading Fluency and Reading Comprehension.

questions – teachers' implementation of the new curriculum and pedagogies, student outcomes, and importantly sustainability of these changes.

# 3   ALMA in context – findings

## Bobonaro (Raifun Maliana cluster) and Viqueque (Mundo Perdido cluster)

### 3.1.1   Introduction

Bobonaro is a forested and mountainous municipality, located in the far west of Timor-Leste and bordering Indonesia and the Savu Sea. Rough road conditions and limited access to electricity and telecommunications present challenges for schools. Additionally, limited human and physical resourcing and overcrowded classes creates a challenging learning environment at schools.

Bobonaro municipality was included in ALMA Phase 3, which began in February 2017 and completed in early 2018. It was implemented in seven clusters in Bobonaro. The research team conducted interviews in four schools in Raifun Maliana cluster comprised of a very large central school covering Grades 1-9 and three branch/filial schools covering Grades 1-6. The total student population for Rainfun Maliana cluster is 2,500. [25]



Viqueque is located in the eastern part of Timor-Leste in a mountainous region with dense forest and many rivers. There are a number of remote schools due to its geography and rough roads that are sometimes impassable during the rainy season. Very remote schools struggle with getting consistent access to the internet or signals for mobile phones, and there are very long distances between schools. In addition, overcrowded classrooms, limited teaching and learning resources and decaying infrastructure present challenges for teachers, principals and their students.

Viqueque municipality was included in ALMA Phase 3 (25%) and Phase 4 (25%). ALMA has been implemented in nine clusters in total in Viqueque across the three phases. The research team conducted interviews in five schools in Mundo Perdido cluster. This cluster was also included in Phase 3 of ALMA, which began in February 2017 and completed in early 2018. Mundo Perdido cluster has one large central school covering Grades 1-9, one branch/filial school covering Grades 1-9, two branch/filial schools covering Grades 1-6 and two branch/filial schools covering Grades 1-3. The total student population for Mundo Perdido cluster is 1,486. [26]

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[25] Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (2017). Education Management Information System (EMIS). Dili: MoEYS.

[26] Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (2017). Education Management Information System (EMIS). Dili: MoEYS.

Phase 3 was selected because it is established, has been working for a few cycles in Bobonaro and Viqueque and provided an opportunity to investigate the sustainability of the program. Investigating two different municipalities in Phase 3 provides a good opportunity for comparison to explore any differences in implementation and outcomes.

The findings from the Bobonaro and Viqueque case studies are organized by key themes emerging from the overarching research question 'to what extent does this aid investment produce improved teaching quality and improved student learning?'

### 3.1.2 To what extent does the ALMA support improved teaching quality in Timor-Leste?

#### Context

There are a range of challenges for schools in Bobonaro and Viqueque. In particular, limited human and physical resourcing and overcrowded classes creates challenging teaching and learning environments at schools. MoEYS respondents noted similar challenges to those described by teachers, school leaders and other education stakeholders in Bobonaro and Viqueque. For example, one government respondent explained how resourcing and infrastructure constraints could impact on teaching quality:

> Only one teacher is too difficult with 50 or more students. Classroom size and class size is a challenge. Furniture is not proper or enough. Difficult for teachers to design a room for full participation (of students).

MoEYS respondents also provided insights into other contextual aspects which affect teaching quality, noting supporting teaching capacity needs to be an ongoing commitment. One respondent raised the need to support teachers in teaching combined, or multi-grade, classes as very few teachers have a background in multi-grade teaching.

Respondents also discussed the challenge of school leaders and teachers who have been in their positions for a very long time and have not adapted to new ways of thinking. One respondent explained that teachers had a range of capabilities, and some were willing to change practice while others were not. The respondent said that age difference could be a factor impacting whether or not teachers changed their practice. For example:

> Then we have other group of teachers who are mostly of younger ages and taking the opportunities very well. I am saying this because we are in touch with the monitoring team and directly inspecting them.

Some of the respondents also discussed the challenges within the Government of Timor-Leste that prevents the recruitment of new teachers. A MoEYS respondent added that national level political factors can influence some decisions around recruitment for school staff:

> We expect that the Ministry or the human resources, the National Directorate for Human Resources, will do recruitment for school leaders. They were supposed to do it two or three years ago. But, due to the political situation, and also the capacity of the Directorate, they cannot do the recruitment.

All of the issues noted and discussed above have an impact on teaching quality.

## Teacher knowledge

### Key findings

Finding 1. GTPs are effective in strengthening teacher knowledge on lesson planning, subject matter and pedagogical approaches, and provide an opportunity to develop an understanding of lesson planning in the new curriculum.

Finding 2. GTPs provide school leaders and teachers with the opportunity to discuss challenges and resolve issues.

Finding 3. Mentor and leader observations and feedback are effective in improving teaching knowledge.

### Discussion

Multiple respondents across both municipalities including **teachers, school leaders and municipal level education stakeholders attributed improvements in teacher knowledge to ALMA**. This knowledge included subject matter and pedagogical methods. One municipal education stakeholder from Bobonaro advised:

…with [ALMA] their knowledge has increased…it's helped them with understanding the learning process.

The GTP was widely identified as an effective intervention to strengthening teacher knowledge in both Bobonaro and Viqueque. GTPs typically involve teaching simulations and feedback, and small group discussions with teachers grouped by grade and subjects taught.

Multiple school leaders and teachers advised the GTP component has been instrumental in building teaching capacity, particularly in the areas of lesson planning, content knowledge and pedagogical approaches, in addition to resolving specific challenges experienced in the classroom. National and municipal level education stakeholders agreed, emphasising the **value of the GTPs in providing a forum for teachers to collaborate**. One municipal education stakeholder noted:

> …the GTP helps them because they can get information there that increases their technical understanding, their pedagogical understanding… This supports their preparation of lesson plans.

One MoEYS respondent further noted the importance of GTPs and working groups at schools developed through ALMA. He suggested this was important in solving problems at the schools or cluster:

> I think they need to perform, and also identify what challenges they have… So we expect twice a month or once a month for a few teachers to come together and discuss what challenges they face and among themselves they can solve the problem.

Many teachers and school leaders from Viqueque were specific in stating the **GTP was responsible for building their capacity through peer learning and reflection**. Teachers noted a general sharing of ideas and peer support as helpful to their practice:

> We feel like there is a change because we get training from ALMA, through government support. We now know things that we didn't from this training. It affects our capacity (in a good way), teachers, and methods of teaching in the classroom.

Monthly GTPs were convened throughout 2018 in Bobonaro, and hosted in rotation by various schools within the cluster. However at the time of data collection, the GTPs had not been held in 2019. Most respondents from Bobonaro agreed that when the GTPs were active, they were effective in building knowledge through providing a platform for teachers to share expertise, support each other to resolve specific challenges, examine lesson plans and discuss new topics together.

Several teachers from Viqueque shared similar reflections about how they could improve their knowledge about implementing the curriculum and teaching through the peer learning. GTPs were convened regularly in Viqueque throughout 2018, and less frequently in 2019. One teacher from Viqueque advised:

> GTP always helps, whatever challenges we face in our teaching period and we cannot solve them alone, through GTP we can do it together. A teacher has an issue then we will solve them together. That's what's good from GTP.

Respondents from Bobonaro reported that **teachers utilised the GTPs by recording challenges they experienced in the classroom, and referring to these real life examples to discuss with their peers**. One teacher explained:

> …if we face a difficulty, we write down which page it was, which lesson, then when we go to the GTP we can ask the others if they know about this…

Another Bobonaro respondent emphasised the value of collaborating with teachers from other schools to draw on a wider pool of expertise for particular subject areas:

> If we are really facing a problem, then we can start to understand it at the GTP. Because all the schools come together, so there are teachers with more experience than us and they can explain it clearly.

A number of respondents in Bobonaro and Viqueque reported that **peer learning, observations and feedback from school leaders and mentors has helped them improve their knowledge about effective teaching**. Teachers reflected that their capacity has increased as a result of mentors identifying areas for improvement, and highlighting when teachers stray from the curriculum. One teacher from Bobonaro commented:

> …there has been a real change. Sometimes those of us who are teaching, we don't follow what's in the book. But they came in and accompanied us, so they could give us ideas or give us a way to improve and increase our knowledge.

Teachers and school leaders from Bobonaro also emphasised the **value of mentoring and peer learning in helping teachers understand lesson plans**. Teachers highlighted the value of being able to examine lesson plan content together, including deciphering the sometimes formal language to make the content more accessible.

Multiple respondents also advised GTPs have been effective in supporting teachers to generate creative solutions to respond to the challenges faced by resourcing constraints. Conversely, one teacher identified limited teaching resources as an obstacle that has prevented them from improving their knowledge.

## Beliefs and attitudes towards teaching

### Key findings

> Finding 1. ALMA has contributed to changes in beliefs and attitudes towards teaching, in particular improvements to teacher motivation and self-confidence.

> Finding 2. School leader and mentor support alongside peer learning helps teachers feel more confident, better prepared and increases their sense of responsibility.

### Discussion

Multiple respondents reflected that **ALMA has led to changed beliefs and attitudes towards teaching, and in particular improvements to teacher motivation and self-confidence**. One Bobonaro school leader observed support provided through ALMA has led to teachers becoming more engaged in teaching:

> The big change here is that the teachers are more active and that they are really interested in preparing themselves, increasing their own capacity, to be able to teach the children well.

Teachers reported the **mentoring component of ALMA has led to improved self-confidence** because they feel more certain of their teaching skills. One teacher from Bobonaro commented:

> I feel confident and I'm happy because we have this plan, and if we aren't implementing it right then they show us the way.

A number of interviewees from Viqueque agreed that **observations have had a positive impact on classroom practice**. One municipal stakeholder said that teachers care more about their practice after ALMA:

> …the coordinators are now conducting the observation in the classrooms, which has given a good impact. In the past, they did not care about the classroom.

Teachers suggested that ALMA helped them feel more confident and motivated in their teaching. One Viqueque teacher added that the new curriculum structure and observation by the school leader made him happy in his work:

> I feel motivated even though I faced so many difficulties. I am happy that curriculum had already planned everything out and I would need to follow through.

One government respondent **suggested that changing teachers' beliefs and attitudes might contribute to improved student attendance rates**. The respondent specifically suggested training for teachers (in addition to ongoing training for school leaders) might support keeping students in school:

> I'd like to see the support for special training for the teachers so the kids who are in first and second year would remain in schools. If not, the kids would refrain from coming to schools because the teachers tend to be hostile. As result, children who enrolled would drop out because the method that is used is not attractive.

## Teacher professionalism

### Key findings

Finding 1. ALMA supports teachers to be more prepared for classes, and improves punctuality and attendance.

### Discussion



A large number of respondents reported they perceived a relationship between ALMA and changes in teacher professionalism. School leaders and municipal level education stakeholders observed **improved attendance rates and punctuality of teachers from ALMA participating schools**, compared to those who have not participated in ALMA. Multiple respondents observed **teachers invest more effort into preparing lesson plans since ALMA began**. In particular, a Bobonaro municipality education stakeholder attributed this change to the GTP component which has enabled teachers to acquire the required subject matter and pedagogical knowledge required to effectively prepare for lessons. He observed:

> …the ones who have been part of the pilot program, they have much better quality in their preparation of the lesson plans. This has really helped them.

A school leader from Viqueque agreed teacher professionalism has improved as a result of ALMA, observing:

> After the [ALMA] I talked to the teachers and I can say that their manners in teaching had improved, because they are professional teachers.

Some government respondents specified that **teachers' attendance and punctuality, in addition to preparation, are important qualities that impact teacher professionalism**. One respondent described preparation as an important part of professionalism:

> In terms of the quality, of preparation for lessons, changes in methodology, and also with teachers' punctuality, these things have changed. If we compare with the past, the teachers didn't prepare well and also when they taught, they didn't have anyone giving them feedback.

## Teaching practice

### Key findings

Finding 1. Mentoring and peer learning components help teachers improve their practice.

Finding 2. GTPs provide an opportunity to discuss and reflect on teaching practice through sharing and troubleshooting challenges, and sharing expertise.

Finding 3: Mentor observations and feedback enable teachers to immediately address challenges they experience in the classroom.

### Discussion

Multiple respondents attributed improvements in teaching practice to ALMA. Teachers and school leaders across both case study sites highlighted the **mentoring and peer learning components of ALMA as particularly effective in supporting teachers to improve their teaching practice**.

Bobonaro respondents specifically mentioned changes toward student-centred learning and improved adherence to the curriculum as examples of improved practice. School leaders and teachers reported **ALMA has helped teachers incorporate strategies to encourage student participation, through facilitating group activities, incorporating discovery learning approaches, providing targeted support to students and encouraging student contributions in class discussions**. Respondents in Bobonaro further observed teachers speak less frequently and encourage students to speak more often.

One school leader attributed the incorporation of discovery learning to the GTP:

I think there have been lots of changes. You can see it in their teaching practice, in their method. For example, for science, they don't just talk they take the students outside for practical things…The GTP solves problems.

A teacher from Viqueque further explained they **apply what they learn in GTP to the classroom**:

So when other teachers were demonstrating in front of the class, we would take note and observe so that we can go back to our school and apply it to our students. This is what being a teacher is, to teach the students.

Bobonaro teachers also highlighted the value of adopting creative approaches in the classroom to facilitate learning, and their school leaders attributed this change to ALMA. A female leader teacher advised:

…when the [ALMA] program started running, there was a change. It made it easier for teachers to have the students work in groups…we look for ways to make the classroom more lively… we use songs, drama, tell a funny story.

Multiple respondents reported that **mentor and school leader support effectively enable teachers to immediately address challenges they experience in the classroom**, through observing classes, identifying opportunities for improvement, and providing constructive feedback and guidance.

Conversely, one teacher from Bobonaro did not observe any change to their teaching practice as a result of ALMA, and a teacher from Viqueque shared that the **persisting challenge of overcrowded classrooms creates barriers to implement what they learn from ALMA**:

> The disadvantage is that we had to handle large number of class since the implementation of this program, which was about 44-45 young students. It's hard to control them although we had grouped them. There is change in our teaching practice. We use every different method…

## Assessment

### Key findings

> Finding 1. ALMA supports some teachers to evaluate students' learning progress.

### Discussion

The research team queried respondents about assessment in follow up questions about perceptions of student achievement. However, few respondents gave specific examples of learning about student assessment through ALMA. Teachers who did comment on assessment suggested **learning how to evaluate students in various ways has helped them understand students' learning capabilities**. One teacher from Viqueque said that observing her students was a method of finding and supporting under-performing students. Other interviewees said that they 'evaluated' their students' learning progress through individual exercises, group work, grades and observation.

Teachers and school leaders from Viqeuque mentioned they **learned about evaluating – or assessing – students from mentors and the GTP**s:

> We learn from GTP and follow this when we go to school. The coordinator would observe us and evaluate the students. Students are evaluated through the exercise that they have, group work, and from their grades. Then we would do correction together on the board.

## School leadership

### Key findings

> Finding 1. ALMA supports school leaders to understand instructional leadership and empowers leaders to become more actively involved in strengthening teaching quality, through the Leaders of Learning program and observations.

> Finding 2. ALMA supports improved teaching quality and student learning through classroom observations and supporting teachers with professional development.

> Finding 3. ALMA enables lead teachers to improve their knowledge and then share this acquired knowledge with their peers through participation in the Leaders of Learning program and GTP.

Discussion



Multiple respondents across Bobonaro and Viqueque observed school leaders have increased engagement in the classroom as a result of ALMA. The **Leaders of Learning program was identified as being effective in improving understanding of instructional leadership and strengthening school leadership capacity** by changing perceptions about the role of school leaders and equipping participants with the knowledge required to effectively support teachers. A Bobonaro municipal level education stakeholder observed ALMA has motivated school leaders to focus on improving teaching, indicating a shift to instructional leadership:

> …the leaders are putting in effort, they are pushing their teachers to improve the quality of their preparation for classes.

Multiple school leaders in both municipalities reported the **ALMA leadership training coupled with the classroom observations have facilitated their shift to instructional leadership**. This is achieved through building leader capacity to support teachers to better understand pedagogical concepts, implement student-centred approaches and effectively manage classrooms. A school leader from Viqueque explained these complimentary components:

> [ALMA] empowers me to support my fellow teachers in the field. This is because I received trainings and things from this program to empower the teachers, observing their teaching in case they stay off from the teaching plan, we need to remind them, giving feedback. The things that I received from this training gives me knowledge.

A school leader from Bobonaro conveyed how **classroom observations have enabled leaders to reinforce the application of student-centred approaches**:

> …teaching is centred on the students…active participation of the students. So while we're doing monitoring we're looking at these things.

Another Bobonaro school leader observed how **ALMA has helped increase engagement and strengthen relationships between school leaders and teachers**:

> It makes us more active… we are closer with the teachers because we are monitoring them every day… things the teachers don't understand but we do understand, we need to explain it to them….

A leader teacher from Bobonaro further explained the benefit of including female lead teachers in the leadership training. Whilst training has built capacity, **the GTP then provides an opportunity to share this acquired knowledge with peers who may not have access to professional development opportunities**:

> For the teachers who haven't done any of the [ALMA] training, they can all come to the GTP and we can share what we've learnt at training.

A Viqueque inspector also observed that ALMA has **changed the way that the central school leaders interact with filial schools**, which is important for school improvement:

> Before the [ALMA] program, sometimes the school leaders didn't visit the filial schools and meet the coordinators, and to conduct the observation…However, after this program is implemented, the school leaders conduct the observation…The leaders to the teachers. Likewise to the coordinators or the vice school director, they are now closer to teachers.

At the same time, the inspector mentioned that there were still difficulties in reaching all schools in the cluster due to remoteness and accessibility to those schools.

A number of respondents, from teachers to school leaders to inspectors said that the continuation of observation and feedback about teaching methods needs to be ongoing in terms of eventually improving teaching quality.

## Educational technology

### Key findings

Finding 1. ALMA educational technology facilitates efficient information sharing and effective classroom observations.

Finding 2. Tablets distributed to school leaders as part of ALMA are an important part of classroom resourcing, observation and teacher support.

### Discussion

Municipal level education stakeholders and school leaders from Bobonaro highlighted **the educational technology component of ALMA as a tool that facilitates efficient information sharing and effective classroom observations**. One municipal level respondent explained the tablets have eased the need for school leaders to source hard copy materials as they are able find the required information electronically and then share this directly with the teachers. However, multiple Bobonaro teachers requested that tablets be distributed to teachers as well as school leaders, to ensure they have consistent access to the online resources.

One teacher explained:

> …if the Coordinator isn't there, then we can't do the singing because the music is in the tablet. We have to be able to hear it first. It's difficult.

Another teacher suggested a solution to this could be utilising GTPs to allow teachers who have already learnt songs through the tablet to then teach others.

School leaders from both municipalities highlighted the **effectiveness of the tablets in facilitating the observation and feedback process, by providing access to online resources and forms**. However some school leaders noted **unreliable internet connectivity is a**

**challenge when relying on the tablets**, and can prevent school leaders from being able to complete the observation forms.

### 3.1.3 To what extent does the ALMA support the effective implementation of Timor-Leste's National Basic Education Curriculum?

#### Context

A number of shared challenges within the educational context of both sampled case study sites have the potential to hinder the effective implementation of the National Basic Education curriculum including inadequate infrastructure and teaching resources, an ambitious and stringent curriculum, limited or unreliable internet connectivity and language barriers.

Inadequate infrastructure and teaching resources were consistently identified as a challenge in both municipalities. For example, a lack of cabinets, storage facilities and libraries has had an impact the effective implementation of the curriculum as it is difficult to keep materials secure and in good condition. Limited teaching and learning resources create challenges in facilitating activities with students without the required materials such as books or didactic materials.



Additionally, the new curriculum involves an ambitious five classes of 50 minutes each, per day. Although teachers acknowledged benefits of the new curriculum including the provision of set lesson plans, many teachers shared students (particularly younger students in Grades 1-4) struggle to keep up with the pre-determined schedule. Time constraints to teach the curriculum was another issue mentioned by teachers and school leaders. In addition, limited or unreliable internet connectivity was a recurring challenge identified in both municipalities, which created difficulties in accessing the online resources and thereby reducing the impact of ALMA.

Language barriers further compound the challenges of implementing the curriculum, as relying on teaching resources in either Portuguese or Tetun language limits the accessibility of the content and creates confusion amongst teachers and students. Multiple teachers identified language barriers as a major challenge to implementing the curriculum

Whilst these contextual factors fall outside of the scope of the program investment, ALMA has supported teachers and school leaders to respond to some of these issues. At the same time, some of these barriers have impacted the potential reach of ALMA. For example, teachers in Bobonaro explained that resourcing constraints limit the effectiveness of the GTP as teachers cannot always conduct teaching simulations accurately without the required materials as specified in the lesson plans. This challenge is replicated in the classroom, where teachers struggle to implement what they have learnt without the required resources.

## Access to the curriculum and classroom resources

### Key findings

Finding 1. ALMA educational technology increases access to online resources, alleviating some resource constraints.

Finding 2. Access to the curriculum through tablets enables school leaders to monitor and observe teachers and their delivery of lessons against the lesson plans.

Finding 3. Ongoing technical challenges with the tablets limit their usability.

### Discussion

In terms of access, school leaders and stakeholders in municipal and national level government suggested that **teaching, school leadership and district staff had better access to the curriculum because of the tablets and training provided by ALMA**. A Viqueque municipal education stakeholder observed:

> I see that everything is good with this tablet, because all the things that is needed is there. All the manuals are in there. They just have to open and look for it. They have had training recently, and using this tablet is really an advantage.

One inspector added:

> If we don't have those tablets, it would have made it difficult for teachers to conduct the learning process. With the tablets, they can see which pages and which lessons need to be done in the classroom.

MoEYS respondents commented on increased access to the curriculum and materials as a result of the tablets and training provided as part of ALMA. One respondent said that the **lesson plans in the tablets and the support of the mentors provided teachers access to the curriculum and that the curriculum is implemented in schools**:

> Because all the lesson plans are in the tablet, from the first one right through. The mentoring program is to look at if the teacher is following the lesson plan or not, and in one period where should they be up to, it's a way of checking. I think this has been really helpful because it guarantees that this curriculum can be implemented well.

Multiple teachers requested their own tablets, suggesting this would better assist with lesson preparation by removing the burden of carrying the hard copy curriculum. They explained the size and weight of the book limits teachers in preparing lessons because they are not able to physically carry the resource home with them.

Respondents also identified the **tablets as an enabling factor that have assisted in effectively conducting observations, monitoring teaching quality and uploading reports to the MoEYS**. In Bobonaro, respondents advised the resources provided on the tablets allow school leaders to observe teaching and measure directly against the curriculum and lesson plans, which has led to improvements in adhering to the curriculum. Multiple school leaders reflected on the value of having online access to the lesson plans, for the purposes of accurate classroom observations. One Bobonaro school leader commented:

> We have the lesson plans on the tablet, so we do the monitoring based on that. If they aren't teaching what is in the lesson plan, then after monitoring we call them and give them feedback.

At the same time, a number of respondents noted **some technical challenges with using the tablets**, including gaps in user technological capacity, broken tablets that are not repaired, limited understanding of tablet functionality, software updates that impact useability, and unreliable access to electricity and internet connectivity.

## Teacher support

### Key findings

Finding 1. School leader and mentor feedback is effective in helping align teaching practice with the curriculum.

Finding 2. ALMA educational technology, mentor support and leadership components have led to improved support for teachers to implement lessons.

Finding 3. Opportunities for improving mentor capacity to provide constructive feedback exist.

### Discussion

A range of respondents from both municipalities reported that **observations by school leaders and mentors were effective in supporting the implementation of the new curriculum**. In Bobonaro, respondents highlighted the value in providing feedback to teachers on how aligned their practice is with the curriculum, correcting deviations and providing guidance on pedagogical approaches. In Viqueque, respondents specifically mentioned feedback on lesson plans developed from the curriculum as beneficial.

Multiple teachers credited their own improved adherence to the curriculum to the mentor and leader observation and feedback component of ALMA, as it facilitates a process whereby **teachers can receive direct feedback on their practice, level of interaction with students, pacing, how closely they follow the lesson plans, and to clarify areas of confusion**. A teacher from Bobonaro explained:

> …it's good because they come and if we aren't teaching properly then they can guide us. They go online and then they look at our lesson plan and teaching, then they explain it to us.

Teachers from Viqueque agreed that school leaders and mentors have helped them by providing feedback on areas for improvement:

> It's really helpful because after their monitoring, they would give suggestions or feedback about what we have done. For examples they would say 'you are doing great, but you need to improve this…' so we know which part to improve. Those comments are really helpful.

School leaders also attributed improved lesson sequencing to the mentor support. One school leader from Bobonaro shared:

> When the [ALMA] mentors were still active, they were great. They always gave good recommendations. If our teachers weren't implementing the lesson plans in the classroom, our mentor always suggested… They had to go right through to the conclusion, so then the students could understand…

The importance of mentor support was affirmed by **government respondents, who reflected mentors support school leaders to support teachers in implementing the curriculum**. For example, one respondent reflected on how he had observed teachers change over time, again acknowledging the importance of mentors in ALMA:

> But, with the mentors going in, who can work with each teacher individually, the schools who are included in the mentors program, then the training of the teachers started to change. They were able to understand properly how to use the lesson plans, how to use the didactic materials, because someone was accompanying them.

This was reinforced by another MoEYS respondent who highlighted the value of mentor feedback in helping teachers improve their practice:

> …I've also observed that there has indeed been a change, because the mentors go and observe them and give them feedback immediately. They can immediately and directly fix problems that each person is facing.

School leaders from both municipalities shared that **ALMA has supported them to help teachers implement the new curriculum**. One school leader from Viqueque noted an important aspect of ALMA was to constantly 'remind' teachers to align their practice with the curriculum:

> ALMA support the teachers by facilitating me as the coordinator so that I can help the teachers. Do the teaching based on lesson plan, the number of lesson because everything has been written and we just need to follow the current curriculum.

Two teachers from Bobonaro provided **critical feedback on the mentor support**. One advised the mentors do not always provide feedback as part of the observation process, and the other

teacher expressed feeling pressured to follow lesson plans even if students are not able to keep up. This suggests additional mentor training on their role requirements and techniques for delivering constructive feedback could be beneficial.

### 3.1.4 To what extent does teacher involvement in the ALMA lead to improved learning outcomes for Timor-Leste students?

#### Context

Respondents noted a range of reasons outside of ALMA that impact student learning outcomes. These include factors related to inconsistent student attendance like distance for students to travel to school or poor weather, and the fact that they may be hungry or tired. Ambitious curriculum content and issues related to use of language were also mentioned as challenges by numerous interviewees. Finally, some respondents identified a major challenge to improving student learning outcomes is the ambitious curriculum which is too demanding for young children.

Despite these barriers, respondent perceptions indicate ALMA has helped improve student learning outcomes, including wellbeing and interest in lessons. Teachers and school leaders also talked about the importance of involving parents in school, which they suggested could help improve attendance and learning outcomes. Teachers are aware of these issues, and some discussed the kinds of activities they do to create an engaging learning environment.

In terms of the curriculum and the improvement of student learning outcomes, the issues discussed by respondents above suggest that improving students' academic and wellbeing outcomes is achievable. But the numerous contextual factors may have an impact on expectations for improvement.

#### Academic outcomes

##### Key findings

> Finding 1. ALMA is associated with improvements in student interest in lessons, which is perceived to have led to changes in academic student learning outcomes in some schools.

##### Discussion

Respondent perceptions from Bobonaro and Viqueque of **student learning outcomes varied, with some observing improved academic outcomes since the implementation of ALMA and others expressing no noticeable change**. One school leader discussed how an improvement in student self-esteem impacts academic outcomes. Some teachers commented on **change in academic student learning outcomes that they perceived was associated with interest and engagement in the classroom**:

> The change in them is having being brave to answer questions and speak up...There is academic improvement in the class room as well.

At the same time, an inspector noted the **challenge of determining changes in student learning outcomes due to the absence of reliable assessment tools to measure change as a result from ALMA**.

A couple of government respondents expressed opinions about the impact of ALMA on student learning outcomes. One commented about the **lack of assessment at a national scale and also highlighted the complexity of reviewing how ALMA has impacted teaching practice**:

But unfortunately so far there hasn't been an assessment yet. Specifically, to identify how much progress has been made in students' learning that's been positively affected by [ALMA]. But, I think something longer, assessing students' learning outcomes, specifically when we want to know particularly for more interventions, like from one particular person, I think this is not easy.

Another respondent was concerned that some students continue to struggle with reading:

Some kids enrolled themselves and yet after a year, they still cannot read. So I see that our focus should be on the first and second year coupled with books for them to read. We need to strengthen our training to the teachers.

## Student attendance

### Key findings

Finding 1. The impact of ALMA on student attendance is inconclusive with a range of opinions from stakeholders.

### Discussion

Respondents had mixed views on changes to student attendance, with some observing increases in attendance as a result of ALMA, and others insisting there was no change. Some teachers attributed an improvement in attendance to ALMA, while others suggested **ongoing contextual issues, especially lack of teachers, resulting in ALMA not having any impact on improving student attendance**.

One government respondent said that there need to be a **focus on retaining students in the first years of school**, and a way to do this is through an 'attractive' method of teaching.

One school leader said that **parents should be involved in ensuring that their children attend school regularly**. He also discussed how the school should liaise with parents to improve student attendance:

What I see is that we give more attention to a particular student that needs more attention, like, the naughty one or skipping class…I would advise to the teacher, 'please call the attention of the parents, please ask why their child is not coming to school for two of three days already?'

Two school leaders also noted school feeding programs may also contribute to the increases in student attendance and participation.

## Student interest in lessons

### Key findings

Finding 1. ALMA supports the incorporation of student-centred learning and creative approaches, which has led to increased student engagement, participation and interest in lesson.

### Discussion

Multiple teachers said that **implementing student-centred learning approaches have led to increases in student engagement, participation and interest in lessons**. A school leader reflected that student interest could be linked to ALMA strategies that support developing students' interest in lessons:

> The good thing about ALMA... is that all the teachers are focusing on the students.

One teacher noted the most important change to student learning has been that **students now support each other to learn**. Teachers said that student learning activities like group work and allowing students to express their ideas had improved interest in lessons:

> The change is that most of them are now active in the group. Another thing is that they also gain knowledge from the group presentation, they get the results and that serves as their lesson as well.

A number of respondents reflected on **changes to students' interest in lessons as a result of what they had learned from ALMA**. They suggested that the activities they had learned through ALMA in terms of implementing the curriculum improved students' interest in lessons. One teacher reflected that students are more engaged in learning as a result of lesson plans included in the curriculum:

> There has been a change because when we teach, the students do the activities themselves… In the past we didn't use lesson plans and we, the teachers, did most of the talking…But now, we just orient them and then they are the ones who do it.

A government respondent reiterated the **importance of creativity and the ability of teachers to implement a lesson plan creatively, as an aspect that improves students' interest in lessons**. In addition to ALMA, they said that the lesson plans in the curriculum were designed to support teachers who have not had any teaching education. Another respondent discussed the notion that quality is not only about students' academic learning outcomes."

> Quality is not only student results, students need to have confidence of expression….

Multiple school leaders observed the change in teaching practice has positively influenced student participation, and one school leader expressed their view that one part of their role is to encourage the students to actively participate in the learning process. Another school leader observed students are more motivated and interested because they are encouraged to be more active in the classroom, which challenges them to think so they can contribute.

## Student wellbeing

### Key findings

> Finding 1. The introduction of student-centred approaches learnt through ALMA has led to observed improvements to children wellbeing.

### Discussion

Respondents observed improved student wellbeing as a result of change in teaching practice from ALMA and the new curriculum. Multiple teachers reported that **changed teaching practice towards more student-centred approaches have led to children seeming happier, more confident, independent and creative**. One teacher advised:

> In my class the children are very confident. They really like it, they're happy. When I teach them they all want to participate.

Two school leaders concurred with these observations, and one specified:

> [the students] …are happy because we give them freedom to discover things for themselves in the lesson.

A teacher observed that ALMA has led to **students using initiative and being more creative as a result of the activities being facilitated in the classroom**. One teacher provided an example of how they create a supportive environment in the classroom:

> …we call them up to the board, then when they do it we all clap for them… We support them and motivate them so they feel good.

Other teachers attributed the range of activities they now use in the classroom – like singing and group discussion – as impacting student well-being in that the **students are not afraid to express opinions**. As one teacher said:

> There is difference, the change is that they are not shy anymore, which signifies that their improvement is because of the group activities. Before they would sit in a line so they would be shy to talk to each other.

A school coordinator specified that **teachers are integral to students' self-esteem**:

> For the case of the students to have the self-esteem, basically depends to the teachers in this school.

Overall, respondents noted improved wellbeing and confidence of students to engage in learning activities. School leaders and teachers frequently referred to activities learned through ALMA as contributing to this change.

### 3.1.5   Equity

#### Disability

Almost half of the teachers interviewed in Bobonaro advised they did not have any students with disabilities in their class and were unable to provide input into the extent to which ALMA has supported disability inclusion. There were similar findings in Viqueque where teachers reported that parents often do not send a child to school if he or she has a disability. **It is likely that teachers are unable to identify students across the full spectrum of impairments, and also that children with disabilities are kept out of the school system**. A government respondent acknowledged that training and knowledge of disability is important for school leaders and teachers. Large class size was also mentioned as an issue that makes it difficult for teachers and school leaders to identify students with special needs. The respondent explained:

> They also need to introduce knowledge of the disability students for the school leaders. How to identify students with special needs and how to help them… Because they don't have any knowledge to identify students with special needs or disabilities.

**Of the teachers who have taught students with disabilities, most reported they have attempted to incorporate inclusive practices by reducing barriers and providing additional support and attention**. Example strategies put forward to reduce physical barriers for students with sight and hearing impairments by seating them at the front of the class, repeating instructions, ensuring they are included in group work, and instructing other students to provide assistance.

**Of the teachers who had students with disabilities, most reported experiencing challenges to support them due to the ambitious curriculum content and limited availability to provide extra support**. Many teachers acknowledged the importance of including students with disability, but expressed limited capacity to implement inclusive practices. Those teachers

who had students with disabilities in their classrooms currently or in the past said those students often dropped out of school in the early years.

Teachers iterated an awareness of the importance of disability inclusion and the right of children with disabilities to access education. Many teachers explained they had a readiness to adapt learning environments to reduce barriers for students with physical disabilities. At the same time, **teachers face significant challenges and limited knowledge on how to effectively support students**. One school leader further highlighted the issue of high dropout rates of children with disabilities, and noted a knowledge and capacity gap for teachers to implement inclusive practices in the classroom.

A number of respondents said that **more training is needed to identify the needs of students with disabilities, and importantly how to include students with disability appropriately in the classroom**. A municipal education stakeholder said that while teachers may have the capacity to identify and/or include students with disabilities in their classrooms, they lack the training and knowledge to effectively support those students:

> I think they have the capacity in this area, but still they need to be trained to update their knowledge…What we need is that teachers need to be trained continuously, so that they can upgrade their knowledge.

## Gender

Multiple respondents in Bobonaro and Viqueque recognised that **boys and girls have an equal right to participate in the classroom. They discussed gender inclusive strategies currently being implemented including encouraging boys and girls to work together in groups, and selecting both boys and girls to present to the class equally**. One teacher talked about a strategy in terms of supporting girls and boys to participate equally:

> There should not be boys-only or girls-only sitting arrangement, they have to be mixed up. For example, balance number between boys and girls like two boys and two girls etc. They always have maximum participation. Involve them in group work.

Some respondents said they observed no real difference in boys and girls, but the kinds of activities they use to encourage boys and girls to engage with each other are different. As a result of some activities, they said that girls engaged more actively in class, than boys, but this is based on teachers' observations.

The majority of teachers confirmed they implement these types of approaches in the classroom to promote gender equality. However one teacher advised they still separate students by gender. The reasoning for this approach was due to a perception that children are more comfortable when separated from the opposite gender.

One teacher further advised they promote gender equality in the classroom by specifically explaining equal rights to access education regardless of gender.

### 3.1.6  School and system outcomes

The following sections discuss emerging evidence on school and system level outcomes by municipality and national government.

## School level outcomes – Bobonaro

A number of respondents observed that ALMA has effectively supported **school leaders to develop an understanding of instructional leadership, strengthened their capacity to support teachers to improve teaching quality, and improved relationships between schools**.

According to a municipal level education stakeholder, school leaders have an improved understanding of effective leadership and management because of ALMA:

> …we now have people who, we can say they have a good understanding about leadership. They can transform into leaders who can implement things, who can become good managers…

Another respondent provided a specific example of supportive leadership since ALMA was implemented:

> In the past, if their teachers arrived late, they would go straight away and tell them off in front of the students. Then after [ALMA] came, they shared information, then they started to change. They understood that if their teachers do something wrong, they shouldn't just go and speak to them straight away in front of the students.

School leaders and teachers agreed that **ALMA has strengthened relationships across schools, with multiple respondents identifying the GTP as instrumental by providing a forum for teachers and school leaders from various schools to collaborate and actively support each other**. A municipal level education stakeholder agreed, further noting:

> Through the GTP, their communication is much better… between one affiliated school and another.

Another school level outcome has been that **leaders are now focusing on teaching quality**. One municipal level education stakeholder noted:

> The leaders are putting in effort, they are pushing their teachers to improve the quality of their preparation for classes.

Multiple school leaders advised the **educational technology component of ALMA has been effective in standardising classroom monitoring though improving access to lesson plans**, which provides a basis for comparison. One accessibility challenge was noted with the educational technology – the small font size on tablet screens can be a barrier for users with sight impairments.

## School level outcomes - Viqueque

Respondents commented on the **improved communication across all levels of the school, where inspectors, school leaders and teachers can talk to one another about issues**. An inspector reflected on the school outcomes as a result of ALMA:

> [ALMA] creates a channel for the leaders to get close and to get to know of their teachers in the school. From inspector to coordinator. This had never happened before, teachers and leaders were on their own paths.

A number of teachers and school leaders in Viqueque discussed the **importance of involving parents in supporting their children in school as an outcome that would improve children's attendance and learning outcomes**. A school coordinator described the importance of involving parents to sustain the program and quality of education in general. He stated:

> In school, we teach about 30 to 40 students per classroom. We can't solely focus on one student, while ignoring the others. So, we will need support from the parents. Continue to remind their children to keep studying at home. Parents and teachers should work with each other, along with the whole community. Community must support the school that is located within it.

A few teachers commented that **meeting with other teachers at neighbouring schools was an important outcome of ALMA**, and enabled them to solve problems and improve teaching. Many teachers and school leaders credited improved communication to the GTP. For example:

> When there are some lessons that we think is difficult to teach, we would contact the coordinator to get in touch with fellow teachers from other school…We don't walk alone, when a lesson is too difficult to teach we won't teach, we consult first with the others.

## School level outcomes - Government

Government respondents acknowledged the **overall change at the school level, and this starts with the training of school leaders through ALMA**. This in turn creates a system that involves the participation of all school stakeholders in a cluster. One respondent reflected on the overall school level outcomes for ALMA through leadership training:

> But the positive aspect that so far we can assess, one is that the school leaders are training in order to perform, to perform well. So they are training in how the school principal deal with school management, and also teacher activities. We can see through active participation of the school leaders, the school director, deputy school director, and down to the affiliated school coordinators, and also some potential teachers that [ALMA] intentionally chooses to be involved in the training, mentoring and classroom observations.

## System level outcomes – Bobonaro

Two major system level outcomes were observed to be a result of ALMA in Bobonaro:

- improved efficiency in monitoring and reporting processes
- institutionalisation of standards of practice.

Multiple school leaders noted the **tablets have been instrumental to increasing the efficiency of monitoring and reporting processes**. One benefit has been the streamlining of national

level reporting requirements by enabling real time reporting through the provision of online forms.

One municipal level education stakeholder observed **ALMA has positively impacted the regional level by institutionalising standards of practice**. This is highlighted in the example below:

> …a concrete example that is a result of the [ALMA]… they are being taught how to work together. The success of a cluster isn't just at the Central school, it goes right out to all the affiliated schools… they are travelling to the affiliated schools, even though they might be far away.

ALMA was further credited with **improving relationships between municipal level and school level education stakeholders**:

With [ALMA], the experience I've had is that I've been able to get to know my teachers, my school leaders, their limits. I've been able to discover each of their limitations.

## System level outcomes – Viqueque

Two system level outcomes were discussed as a result of ALMA in Viqueque:

- improved communication among all education stakeholders from the municipal to the school level
- use of tablets that has enabled access to information and ability to monitor school outcomes.

One system outcome expressed by a municipal education stakeholder was that ALMA had **improved lines of communication from teachers and school leaders through to inspectors and senior municipal education officials**.

A number of stakeholders said that the **use of tablets has enabled more system-wide levels of access to information and the ability to monitor outcomes**. A municipal education stakeholder said:

> The big advantage that I see is that the coordinators of the branch school that have tablet can operate the gadget and access to information. E.g. what time they log in to school, we can track that.

## System level outcomes – Government

The following system level outcomes were expressed by national government respondents. Both outcomes are related to education technology as part of ALMA.

- real-time monitoring through the tablets has enabled senior level Ministry members to understand school level successes and challenges.
- use of technology has reduced the cost of some services in the Ministry of Education.

Given their roles within MoEYS , a number of government respondents **reflected on the system-wide outcomes of ALMA, and education technology was an important change**. They commented specifically on aspects of ALMA, for example one respondent discussed the tablets:

> So, my dream for this (ALMA) is that it can become something, it can become, maybe I can say it become like a big fruit tree in the Ministry of Education. Because the online

monitoring system, we can say that this is really advanced. Timor has just achieved independence but with this we are advancing. That's why we want it to be permanent within our education system.

Another respondent said:

Now, with the tablets we can see the progress of teachers in the classroom. We can know from the observation reports the leaders always send to us. We would know for sure that there is teaching activity. Back in the day, we wouldn't know. People can sign the list and then we would have no idea if any teaching activity took place or not.

One respondent suggested that **technology had not only improved communication between system and school levels, but enabled cost savings within the Ministry**:

Another thing that I feel has been really important has been the introduction of technology into the education system. This has had a big advantage for education, particularly for reducing the cost of services. For example, now the school leaders in the [ALMA] program, they have iPads so they can access Konversa… for us to distribute invitations, we don't have to spend money on drivers who take the invitations to the Municipalities. We just scan it and send it through Konversa… This is a small example of the impact on costs and how technology can really help.

## Sustainability

The ability of schools to sustain inputs to improve teaching quality, support teachers to implement the new curriculum and improve student learning outcomes is a significant challenge. The following section reports on respondent perspectives on the long term outlook of ALMA outcomes.

### 3.1.7 Bobonaro and Viqueque

Respondents from both municipalities described a number of challenges to the sustainability of ALMA. They specifically mentioned technical issues with the tablets, as well as internet and communication in remote areas – there are a number of remote schools in Mundo Perdido. The issue of remoteness also impacts on the ability of teachers and coordinators to attend GTPs because of the distance to travel. Some respondents said that not enough training, or the need for more consistent training was a challenge to sustainability. A number of teachers and school leaders noted time constraints and competing work commitments as significant challenges to participating in ALMA activities.

#### GTP

**GTPs were identified as a potential enabler to achieving the sustainability of ALMA**. Multiple teachers in Bobonaro and Viqueque reported seeing the benefits of the GTP, **enjoyed participating and actively engaged in the GTPs when they were active**. However, while GTPs were consistently highlighted as an effective component of ALMA, **they were not active at the time of data collection within either of the case study sites and had either not been run at all or very infrequently in 2019**. The major barriers to attending GTPs, when they were being facilitated, included travel distance, road conditions, weather and competing commitments including study programs. Multiple teachers expressed their wish to continue

GTPs, but were reportedly reliant upon municipal and school leaders to lead the coordination of such activities.

A number of respondents in Viqueque suggested that the **GTPs should continue at the branch/filial schools, particularly because of distance challenges**. This suggestion is reinforced by the experiences shared by teachers from Bobonaro who highlighted the benefits of a rotating GTP design when it was being implemented. Although GTPs in Bobonaro also did not continue past 2018, some leaders adopted this model within their schools to encourage ongoing peer learning amongst their teachers.

## Educational technology

A large number of respondents in both municipalities reported technological issues prevented them from actively undertaking classroom observations, monitoring and reporting requirements. These challenges included:

- limited understanding of operational functionality
- software updates changing useability
- hardware faults
- unreliable access to electricity and internet connectivity.

## Competing commitments

School leaders and in both municipalities reported the **demand on their time to conduct observations as well as fulfil their teaching obligations was challenging**. This issue is also related to under resourced schools and overcrowded classrooms, as school leaders are required to fill in for teachers when they are absent. One school leader explained the challenge of managing the workload:

> We try to work together to improve our school, but I have too much work to do, I need to do administration work as well as teaching (two classes).

Teachers from Bobonaro experienced similar time constraints, facing barriers to participate in the GTPs due to other commitments such as training or school related activities scheduled on Saturdays.

## Continued and expanded support

Multiple respondents across both municipalities **expressed their wish for ALMA to provide ongoing support such as mentoring, and to expand program reach to include all schools and teachers within the respective municipalities**. Additionally, respondents suggested expanding **training to include teachers would support sustainability as it would help to prepare them for leadership changes**. A municipal education stakeholder suggested ALMA implementation across the country so "our education sector can move forward."

Respondents agreed that **ongoing mentoring and training for teachers and leaders is important to promote continuous professional development, and to ensure intellectual and experiential knowledge developed through ALMA can be sustained within schools**. A number of leaders noted the value of the leadership training, but suggested a need for further capacity building including technical support.

One **risk factor identified by multiple respondents across the municipalities was the potential impact of municipal level and school level leadership changes on program**

**sustainability, which create institutional knowledge gaps**. These kinds of leadership changes have reportedly created barriers for the continuation of GTPs, indicating a need for inducting new leaders into the ALMA model.

One school coordinator advised:

> I think we need to continue the [ALMA] program, because for me as someone who is still new, I still need more training…If I only do the training for one or two days, how can we expect me—someone new to this, to enact change. Many challenges, therefore we need consistent trainings.

### 3.1.8   Government

National government respondents reflected on a number of challenges to the sustainability of ALMA. They were able to reflect on challenges at a system level. **Noted challenges included lack of sufficient inspectors and mentors to support school leaders, and the fact that some schools in Phase 1-4 municipalities had not received support from ALMA post phase completion**. Remoteness of some filial schools was recognized as a challenge in addition to some clusters not continuing GTPs after the ALMA rollout was complete.

They also mentioned the **politics and structure of the wider MoEYS where ALMA was not recognized as a program in other units of the Ministry**. Funding coordination among donors was also noted as a challenge. All respondents spoke about system challenges that need to be addressed by the MoEYS. They also made some suggestions about the way forward.

#### Institutionalising interventions

Respondents expressed the following concerns about the lack of inspectors and mentors. One respondent mentioned issues originating in the MoEYS:

> There is lack of supervision from Ministry side because not sufficient school inspectors.

In terms of mentoring as conceived in the ALMA model and involving inspectors in a mentoring role, a respondent said:

> That's why I think it's a challenge, because it's not focused yet on providing training for the inspectors in each municipality… They need ongoing training for the inspectors, so then the inspectors can help to continue to organize the school leaders. Then the program will continue to operate. This is a challenge that I can see now, there isn't enough ongoing training for the inspectors.

A respondent reflected that an important enabler is **to include the inspectors as pedagogical mentors in ALMA as they are part of the permanent structure of the MoEYS**:

> (The) inspectors in the municipalities, now they also have tablets, they are also doing mentoring, doing classroom observations. They have become the keys to guarantee sustainability into the future, when the program finishes… But the inspectors, they are part of the permanent structure. That's why I said earlier that the key for sustainability is the inspectors.

Respondents had a number of suggestions related to program sustainability. **A number of them recognized the importance of the Ministry's role in sustaining the program**. They talked about supporting inspectors to develop a mentor role that focused on pedagogical support of teachers and school leaders:

> Without mentors, I'm a little bit pessimistic about how much change we can have soon… the risk is serious if the schools continue with no mentors. Number one is to improve the number of school inspectors. This is a recommendation.

### 3.1.9  Ongoing training and budget

Government respondents expressed **concern about system level management and budget that present challenges to the sustainability of the program**. One respondent also acknowledged the need for more consistent mentors, and suggested it was a budget issue:

> Therefore, would be great to add more mentors. The Ministry is trying to address this, but currently having financial and budgetary issue. No money. It is not something that can be resolved immediately.

Another respondent talked about sustainability issues after the rollout of ALMA is complete in a municipality. The respondent raises **concerns about the next generation of school leaders and retaining the knowledge from ALMA**:

> But, after the [ALMA] period, the frequency in the classroom decreases, because there are no more mentors… the next risk is when we recruit new school leaders. Then those who have knowledge of [ALMA] are gone… If we don't train them, they are gone, everything will be gone.

#### Dissemination of program knowledge

In commenting on knowledge of ALMA throughout the MoEYS and among other stakeholders, another respondent discussed the issue with the compartmentalized nature of work in the Ministry – in other words, **other directorates not associated with ALMA were not aware of the significance of the program**:

> In this Ministry we have a problem with how compartmentalized the work is… Some people have just heard the name, others don't even know the name of a program. This is one of our challenges. The solution is that we need to do dissemination or do something so that everyone is on the same page with how important this work is for developing the quality of education… This is also important with the other stakeholders. Like in Timor we have a network of NGOs who look at big issues like education. If possible, they should know about this program so then they don't also become an opposition to this program [ALMA].

Government respondents said that documenting and disseminating program outcomes, ongoing training and including inspectors as permanent parts of ALMA are some things that would enable program sustainability.

## 4  Conclusion

This second Interim Report provides an analysis of findings related to the three specific questions guiding this multi-year investigation of the ALMA program. This report includes findings from the qualitative field research conducted in Bobonaro and Viqueque municipalities, and from interviews conducted with senior education stakeholders based in the MoEYS in 2019. It also considers these findings with the results of Interim Report 1, which included case studies in Aileu and Manufahi, as well as an examination of the results from the 2017 World Bank Study using two assessments (CBA and EGRA).

To reiterate, this research provides insight into the broad research question:

> *To what extent does this aid investment produce improved teaching quality and improved student learning?*

Three specific questions related to this broad question were investigated:

1.  To what extent does the ALMA program support improved teaching quality in Timor-Leste?

2.  To what extent does the ALMA program support the effective implementation of Timor-Leste's National Basic Education Curriculum?

3.  To what extent does teacher involvement in the ALMA program lead to improved learning outcomes for Timor-Leste students?

## Review of key findings

The research undertaken in the two school clusters specifically addressed Questions 1 and 2, with possible implications for Question 3. In addressing these questions, there are a number of indicative findings emerging from the second phase of research on ALMA.

First, that ALMA has been effective in supporting improved teaching quality through facilitating instructional leadership, empowering teachers to build their knowledge and change beliefs and attitudes toward teaching, and increasing access to information. Second, that ALMA has been effective in supporting implementation the new curriculum through supporting teachers to align their practice to the curriculum, and enabling leaders to effectively monitor teaching against the curriculum. Third, that ALMA has led to improved student engagement, participation and interest in lessons, which are factors linked with improved student learning outcomes. The research on student engagement and student learning outcomes was discussed in section 2.1. The overall findings are summarised under each research question below.

***To what extent does the ALMA support improved teaching quality in Timor-Leste?***

Case study research in Bobonaro and Viqueque municipalities and with national government stakeholders indicates that ALMA is effective in supporting improved teaching quality through:

- Strengthening teacher knowledge on lesson planning, subject matter and pedagogical approaches.

- Improving teacher motivation, self-confidence, preparation, sense of responsibility, punctuality and attendance.

- Providing opportunities for teachers to discuss and reflect on teaching practice, and share challenges and expertise.

- Enabling teachers to immediately address challenges they experience in the classroom through mentor and leader observations and feedback.

- Building school leader capacity to incorporate instructional leadership be more actively involved in strengthening teaching quality, through the Leaders of Learning program and observations.

- Building capacity of leader teachers and providing a forum for them to share this acquired knowledge with their peers.

- Increase access to information through educational technology.

***To what extent does the ALMA support the effective implementation of Timor-Leste's National Basic Education Curriculum?***

Case study research in Bobonaro and Viqueque municipalities and with national government stakeholders indicates that ALMA supports the effective implementation of Timor-Leste's National Basic Education Curriculum through:

- Facilitating a peer learning process for teachers to review lesson plans, share challenges and workshop solutions.

- Enabling efficient information sharing and effective classroom observations.

- Enabling teachers and school leaders to access lesson plans and materials for teaching, alleviating resource constraints.

- Empowering teachers to align teaching practice with the curriculum.

***To what extent does teacher involvement in the ALMA lead to improved learning outcomes for Timor-Leste students?***

The extent to which teacher involvement in ALMA leads to improved learning outcomes for Timor-Leste students cannot be determined at this stage due to limited availability of performance data and is an area for further investigation. However preliminary findings indicate:

- ALMA supports the incorporation of student-centred learning and creative approaches, which has led to increased student engagement, participation and interest in lesson.

- Improvements in student interest in lessons as a result of ALMA is perceived to be linked to improved academic student learning outcomes in some schools.

- The introduction of student-centred approaches learnt through ALMA has led to observed improvements to children wellbeing

## Key lessons, barriers and recommendations

Investigating ALMA rollouts in two different Phase 3 clusters provided a good opportunity for comparison to explore differences in implementation, outcomes and program sustainability. Both Bobonaro and Viqueque stakeholders were experiencing the post-intervention stage, and facing some difficulties with building on the skills they learned from ALMA over a year prior to case study data collection.

### 4.1.1   Program recommendations

A number of sustainability risks were identified during the analysis, which have implications for lessons learned and any possible future recommendations for the program. These risks are ongoing recommendations and were identified in Interim Report 1. However, with additional insights gained from year 2 data collection, further recommendations have been suggested. Some of these risks include:

1. Reduction in program activities without the presence of active program interventions

   *Recommendations:*

   - Develop a 'phase-out' strategy to determine how program interventions can be withdrawn while ensuring self-sustaining change. Possibilities within such a strategy could include scaling down mentor support during a transition period, scaling up inspectorate support which would require ongoing training for the inspectorate and institutionalising the role of the inspectorate in ALMA.

   - Develop a 'phase-over' strategy to support school communities to sustain activities after intervention withdrawal. Possibilities within such a strategy could include encouraging a rotated GTP design or within-school GTP models in the event of ongoing funding limitations. Other possible strategies could include introducing constructive accountability measures facilitated by the education technology, that 'checks in' with municipal and school leaders when there is an extended period between observations or GTPs.

   - Increase the long-lasting impact of mentor support by including curriculum training for mentors to increase their capacity to support teacher understanding of curriculum content.

2. The absence of succession plans limits the effective management of leadership transitions, which can lead to institutional capacity gaps

   *Recommendations:*

   - Include a succession plan component in the *Leaders of Learning Program* to support school leadership change management. Possibilities could include extending the current arrangement beyond promising female teachers to a wider cohort of teachers, and providing induction training to newly deployed municipal leaders and school leaders who have been posted to ALMA schools.

   - Continue periodic refresher school leader training or peer-learning sessions including educational technology component, including head teachers.

3. Limited resources to support program activities such GTPs

   *Recommendations:*

   - Periodic resourcing to support continuation of peer-learning activities and school monitoring.

   - Documenting and disseminating information about ALMA and its program outcomes, to encourage more widespread knowledge and support for the program.

- Support school communities to develop strategies to continue program components in less costly ways, such as rotated GTPs and within-school GTP models.

The recent case study collection also collected evidence on gender and disability inclusion. Whilst school leaders and teachers widely recognise educational equity as a human right and endeavour to incorporate inclusive teaching practices, there are significant capacity gaps to implementing equitable systems at schools.

*Recommendation:*

- Develop gender and disability inclusion training for school leaders, teachers and mentors to cover topic areas such as identification, inclusive attitudes and values, and inclusive teaching strategies which enable the curriculum to be delivered in ways to suit the learner.

A number of respondents in the recent case study collection reflected on system level outcomes as a result of ALMA. Improved communication between different levels of stakeholders at the national, municipal and local levels was reported. Educational technology has supported efficiencies in communication and reporting.

*Recommendation:*

- Support the improvement of communication among different levels of education stakeholders to understand and support ALMA.

### 4.1.2   Study recommendations

One limitation for the overall investigation is the availability of student learning outcomes data. The last administration of EGRA and CBA was conducted by the World Bank in 2017, and it has been determined that EGRA is unlikely to be administered in the near future. While this provides a modest baseline for the study, it is not possible to reliably measure trends in student learning outcomes.

Future directions for this study include the following:

- Continue applying case study design to collect and document ALMA experiences and insights in additional phases and clusters.
- Include school level participation data in upcoming case studies.
- Include supplemental quantitative data collected from streamlined classroom observations in Phase 5 ALMA schools and a selection of schools from previous phases.

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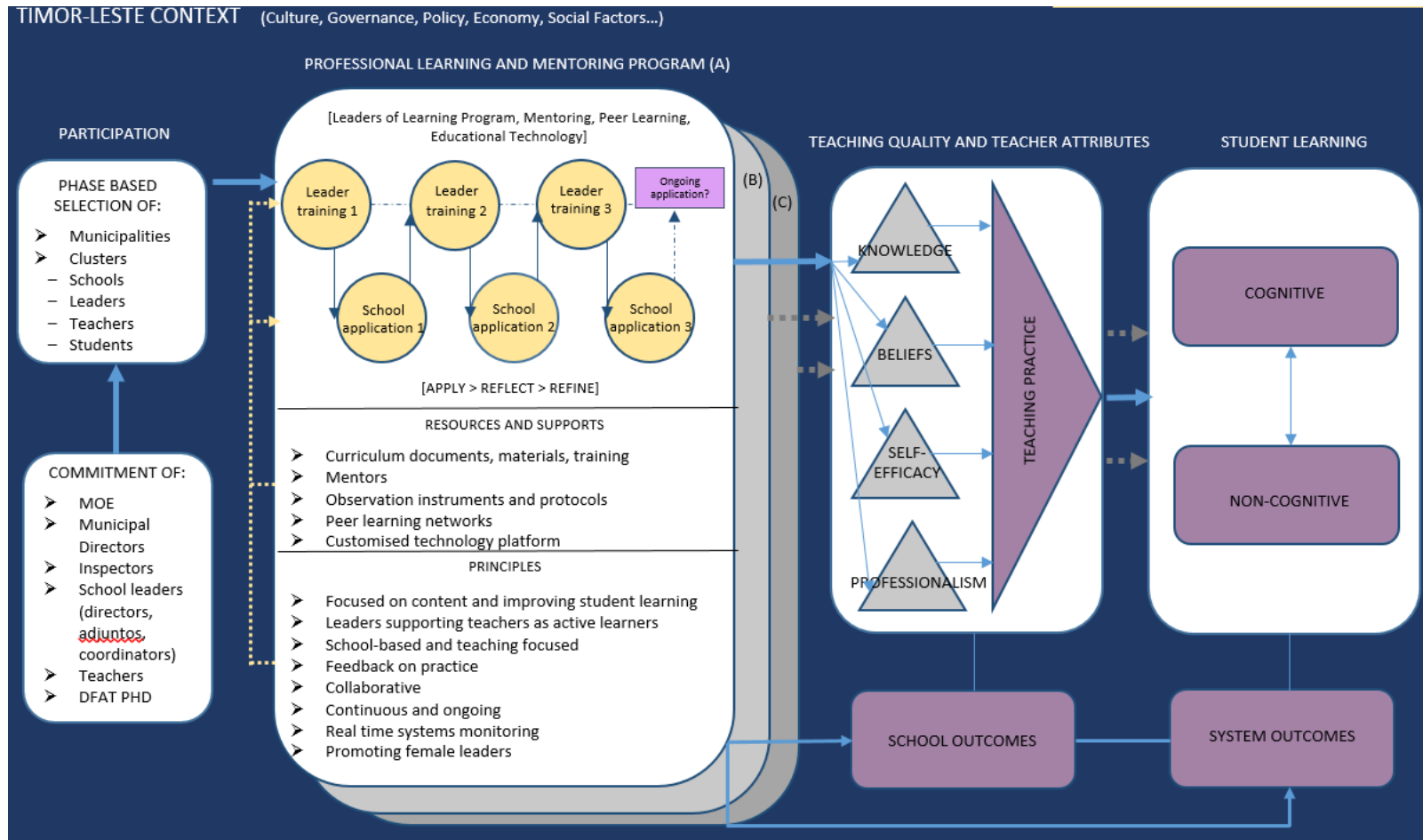
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# Appendix A: Conceptual model



TIMOR-LESTE CONTEXT (Culture, Governance, Policy, Economy, Social Factors…)

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND MENTORING PROGRAM (A)

[Leaders of Learning Program, Mentoring, Peer Learning, Educational Technology]

PARTICIPATION

PHASE BASED SELECTION OF:
- ➤ Municipalities
- ➤ Clusters
- − Schools
- − Leaders
- − Teachers
- − Students

Leader training 1 → Leader training 2 → Leader training 3 → Ongoing application?

School application 1    School application 2    School application 3

[APPLY > REFLECT > REFINE]

RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS
- ➤ Curriculum documents, materials, training
- ➤ Mentors
- ➤ Observation instruments and protocols
- ➤ Peer learning networks
- ➤ Customised technology platform

COMMITMENT OF:
- ➤ MOE
- ➤ Municipal Directors
- ➤ Inspectors
- ➤ School leaders (directors, adjuntos, coordinators)
- ➤ Teachers
- ➤ DFAT PHD

PRINCIPLES
- ➤ Focused on content and improving student learning
- ➤ Leaders supporting teachers as active learners
- ➤ School-based and teaching focused
- ➤ Feedback on practice
- ➤ Collaborative
- ➤ Continuous and ongoing
- ➤ Real time systems monitoring
- ➤ Promoting female leaders

(B)
(C)

TEACHING QUALITY AND TEACHER ATTRIBUTES

KNOWLEDGE
BELIEFS
SELF-EFFICACY
PROFESSIONALISM

TEACHING PRACTICE

STUDENT LEARNING

COGNITIVE

NON-COGNITIVE

SCHOOL OUTCOMES

SYSTEM OUTCOMES

# Appendix B: Overview of the Professional Learning and Mentoring Program

Since independence, the Timor-Leste Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) has been working to develop a model of basic education suited to the needs and conditions of its students. In 2013 the MoEYS developed a new curriculum for pre-school to Grade 6, to improve literacy and numeracy.

The new National Basic Education Curriculum organises subject content into sequenced and scripted lessons for each grade level to ensure content uniformity across classes and schools. It also proposes new pedagogies that aim to transform teaching and learning approaches in Timor-Leste, moving from traditional teacher-centred approaches to student-centred ones.

Student-centred learning seeks to address the individual learning needs and interests of individual students. Scripted lessons support teachers with little or no formal education training implement the new curriculum, in accordance with student-centred learning approaches.

The new content and pedagogies included in the National Basic Education Curriculum require significant change and new learning for Timor-Leste teachers. Some teachers have little or no formal training and therefore limited knowledge of either subject content or teaching pedagogies. Most teachers – with or without qualifications – have traditionally employed a predominantly autocratic teaching style.

To introduce the new curriculum, the MoEYS uses a cascade training model. The MoEYS provides training for local education leaders who then provide training for teachers in their school clusters, aligned to the phased rollout of the new curriculum beginning with Grades 1 and 2 in 2015.

Developed in partnership between DFAT and MoEYS, the Professional Learning and Mentoring Program aims to supplement the MoEYS teacher training and new curriculum materials by supporting:

- continuous teacher professional development
- strong school leadership
- systems to assess student learning outcomes
- systems to support and evaluate teacher performance.

The ALMA has been designed to build leadership and teacher capacity and support the effective implementation of the National Basic Education Curriculum as it is released in stages. The program includes a number of core components identified in the research literature to be important to supporting teacher learning and changed teaching practice. These are:

- Leaders of Learning Program: the building of leadership capacity through a program of leadership training known as 'Leaders of Learning Program', comprising three two-day training sessions which are held three to four months apart. The

purpose of the leadership training is to build school leaders' understanding of student-centred learning and equip them to support teachers in the implementation process. After each training session, school leaders are provided with educational leadership tasks to implement in their schools with the support of their accompaniers and which involve applying their learnings from the leadership events. School leaders include Inspectors, Directors, Deputy Directors (Adjuntos), Coordinators and Municipal Directors who are chosen to participate based on their demonstrated leadership skills and initiative. Where there are no female school leaders in a particular municipality, high performing female lead teachers are invited to participate.

- School-based peer professional learning groups (Strengthening of the GTPs): the establishment of school-based peer professional learning groups which involve teachers of 'like' year levels across a cluster of schools meeting regularly for the purpose of learning from each other, discussing common issues, and problem solving.

- Mentoring: the provision of on-the-job mentor support from international, national and local mentors, to support school leaders to apply their learning from the leadership training, and to support teachers to implement the new curriculum. This includes through setting up and supporting teacher-led peer learning groups, conducting classroom observations and giving feedback to teachers, and conducting student achievement testing.

- E-learning: the use of technology to enable efficient information sharing and monitoring. Each school leader and mentor is given a tablet with custom-built apps and a dashboard to use to collect, store and submit observation data, to retrieve program information, and to engage in collegial networking. . There are applications for a teacher observation checklist and mini literacy/numeracy test. Data from observations and testing is uploaded as it is completed so that data is available in real-time. Tablets also allow school leaders to film classes and provide feedback.

## Goal

The overall program goal is to improve student literacy, numeracy and holistic educational outcomes, where holistic education refers to students' wellbeing, social skills, self-confidence, critical thinking and creativity.

## ALMA rollout

The ALMA is being implemented nationally with a range of implementing partners, using a geographically phased approach across multiple years. The commitment to the program through the Australian Embassy Partnership for Human Development (PHD) is for a minimum of five years, with an extension anticipated to ten years.

Each phase covers a 10-12 month period with a 6 month consolidation phase; coverage in each municipality is around 50 per cent of clusters in that location.

# Appendix C: Detailed methodology

A key feature of the ALMA program study method is its multi-year duration, which acknowledges the complex nature of teacher learning and that sustained change in teaching practice takes time. It also recognises the scale of the program investment, and enables an agile and adaptive approach that is responsive to contextual affordances and limitations.

The ALMA program study uses existing and newly collected data. By using these two types of data, the scope is broadened as much as possible given the human and financial resourcing for the study, and reflects proportionality. The ALMA program study adopts a mixed methods approach utilising both quantitative and qualitative methods. The ALMA program Interim Report 2 includes only newly collected data for the 2019 reporting period.

## Qualitative

New data was collected through case studies. Case study methodology was selected to provide rich descriptions of program details and outcomes. Through case studies, detailed information was obtained about the kinds of affordances and constraints that work to support or disrupt program success, and important contextual information gathered to assist the interpretation of program results. The ALMA program case studies are comprised of individual interviews with key stakeholders. The first year of the study included mentors, municipal level education officials, school leaders and teachers. For the second year of the study, government representatives were included to gain a better understanding of the national and system level outcomes and factors that impact ALMA. The first year of the study also included GTP observations. For the second year of the study, the research team decided to conduct teacher group interviews focusing on the GTPs, to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of teachers participating in the GTP. These adaptations to the methodology enabled the collection of a richer dataset, which subsequently allowed a more in-depth understanding of system level factors, GTP outcomes, and risks to sustainability.

Examples of the specific information the case studies provide to investigate the research questions include:

**To what extent does the ALMA program support improved teaching quality in Timor-Leste?**

- What is the nature of changed teaching practices?

- Which teaching practices have been more/less easy to transform?

- What supports have teachers found to be most helpful to improving their practice?

- What barriers have prevented teachers from making changes to their practice?

- What have been the effects of changed teaching practices on teacher behaviour and attitudes?

- Are teachers and leaders better able to support children with disabilities in the classroom?

To what extent does the ALMA program support the effective implementation of Timor-Leste's National Basic Education Curriculum?

- Which aspects of the curriculum have been more/less easy to implement?

- What supports have teachers found to be most helpful to implementing the new curriculum?

- What barriers have prevented teachers from implementing parts of the new curriculum?

To what extent does teacher involvement in the ALMA program lead to improved learning outcomes for Timor-Leste students?

- What do teachers (and other stakeholders) regard to be the most significant changes to student learning?

- What effects have there been on student learning in areas beyond academic subjects?

- Are girls and boys equally participating and active in classroom learning?

# Method

Individual and group stakeholder interviews were the primary data collection methods for the ALMA program case studies. Interview guides were updated from year one of the study, to address each of the overarching questions articulated in the evaluation plan and described above. The ACER team worked in partnership with Belun, a Dili-based NGO, to collect the data. This was a continued partnership from the first year of the study. The research team also undertook field visits at sampled clusters in Bobonaro and Viqueque municipalities to explore ALMA program in context. Cluster and school selection is described in Sampling.

# Instrument design

## Interviews

The research team updated interview guides from year one of the study to conduct semi-structured individual interviews with a range of education stakeholders including national government representatives, municipal directors, inspectors, school directors, school coordinators, adjuntos, and teachers. The research team developed new interview guides to conduct semi-structured group interviews with teachers, that focused on the GTP component of the ALMA program. This strategy enabled a range of perspectives about the teaching investment to be collected at national, municipal and local levels.

## Instrument translation

The interview guides underwent translation by an independent translator, and linguistic review by the in-country research organisation.

## Sampling

Purposeful sampling was utilised to select the case study sites based on specific criterion (phase, municipality, cluster, school), and with input from DFAT Post and the in-country research organisation.

## Phases and municipalities

For ALMA program Case Study 1, Phase 2 and Phase 4 were selected. Phase 2 was selected because the ALMA program intervention concluded in 2016, and it provided an opportunity to investigate the sustainability of the program. Phase 4 was selected because it provided an opportunity to explore the program during the implementation of a new phase. The selection of Phase 2 and Phase 4 provided a good comparison for investigation. Phase 1 was excluded as it is considered the pilot phase.

For ALMA program Case Study 2, Phase 3 was selected for both sample sites because it is established, has been working for a few cycles and provided an opportunity to investigate the sustainability of the program. Investigating two different municipalities in Phase 3 provided a good opportunity to explore differences in implementation and outcomes.

## Clusters and schools

Clusters were selected based on the inclusion of a Central School covering Grades 1-9, and the number of schools with higher student populations. Clusters with Central Schools of Grade 7-9 only were excluded.

| Phase | Municipality | Cluster |
|-------|--------------|---------|
| 3 | Bobonaro | Raifun Maliana |
| 3 | Viqueque | Mundo Perdido |

## Schools

Eskola data (literacy and numeracy, counting observations, peer learning groups, teacher observations and teacher competency) was used to assess intensity of activity, and patterns in student and teacher performance when selecting schools.

## Scoping visits

Scoping visits to the sample sites were conducted Belun and DFAT Dili Post to confirm logistical details, interview times and official communication requirements. For example, determining road access and travel times to schools, locating available accommodation for the research team and identifying catering options for participants. This approach was highly effective for the first case study and so replicated in the second year.

## Field research training

ACER delivered a 2 day in-country training to build the capacity of the field researchers to undertake ALMA program case study data collection[27]. The training program included:

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[27] Refer to appendix D 'Field Research Training Outline' for further detail.

- Overview of the ALMA program

- Research ethics and child protections

- Case study methodology

- Data collection techniques

- Data collection instruments

- Roles, responsibilities and logistics

- Mock interviews.

## Data collection

### Field visits

Field visits were a key part of the case studies. The research team had the opportunity to observe key stakeholders in their education environments, and gain an appreciation of the challenges and successes for teachers and their schools. Importantly, field visits enabled the team to understand how a teaching investment is experienced by key stakeholders in their contexts.

After each day of data collection in the field, ACER conducted debrief sessions with the Belun researchers. The purpose of these sessions was to discuss any problem encountered with the interview and school visit process, and make decisions as a team about how to address those problems.

### Interviews

Semi-structured individual and group interviews were conducted with key stakeholders. Interviews were recorded in Tetun and transcribed into English for analysis. Research participants included:

- National government representatives

- Municipal directors

- Inspectors

- School leaders (directors, adjuntos, coordinators)

- Teachers.

### Quality assurance

The ACER research team accompanied the in-country research team to provide a quality assurance and oversight role. The ACER team observed all of the interviews and conducted daily debrief session with the in-country research team to enable the team to reflect on any emerging issues and experiences, and immediately address those issues. [28]

The value of debriefs as a quality assurance mechanism was demonstrated during the second case study year, when field researchers reported some of the terminology in the interview guides were creating confusion amongst participants. The ACER research team were able to

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[28] Refer to appendix I 'Field research debrief tool'

troubleshoot this with the Tetun language proficient field researchers and the issue was rectified in the field, which prevented a data gap.

## Data analysis using NVivo

To conduct the analysis, the ACER team used QSR NVivo 12 Pro. Data was coded aligned with themes identified in the Contextual Framework. A test of inter-rater reliability (Cohen's κ) was performed on a random sample of the qualitative data. The analysis showed, on average, an acceptable level of agreement between two independent coders (κ = 0.66, $p < .0005$).

NVivo 12 Pro was selected by ACER for analysis for the following reasons:

- It provides an audit trail of the data and analysis, giving greater transparency and visibility of the process

- It provides an efficient way for the team to organize the research

- It provides the team with a range of methods to compare and synthesise the data

- It provides a way of testing the reliability of the analysis.

## Limitations

There are some limitations to the Timor-Leste case study related to context-specific issues.

### Data availability

This study was not part of the original design for DFAT's ALMA program investment. As such, this study uses data that is available, supplemented by new data collections where feasible, and the data collections may not entirely be fit for purpose for each study.

For Interim Report 1 the quantitative data analysed for the first year of the ALMA study included the Classroom Based Assessment (CBA) and Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) data collected as part of the DFAT-funded Lessons learned an early assessment (2017) of two innovations in basic education in Timor-Leste (referred to as the 2017 World Bank Study). However, there have been no further EGRA or CBA data collections since those conducted in 2017, and it has since been determined that EGRA is unlikely to be administered in the near future.

As a solution to this data gap, supplemental quantitative data will be collected via streamlined classroom observations in Phase 5 ALMA schools with schools sampled from previous case studies. Observation provides evidence about the classroom environment, student interactions and student dispositions to learning. This will enable triangulation of the case study data with observations, enriching this data with observations related to all three research questions – teachers' implementation of the new curriculum and pedagogies, student outcomes, and importantly sustainability of these changes.

### Generalisability

The qualitative case studies are not intended to generalise the impact of ALMA program across Timor-Leste. Case studies are intended to explore the experience of the investment by educational stakeholders in Timor-Leste. In this way, the case studies are intensive (rather than extensive), and investigate small samples but a multitude of variables. The ability to

extract this level of detail from ALMA program is an important part of the overall design of the study.

Socio-economic, cultural and political contexts may also affect how a teaching professional development investment is received and taken up by teachers. Some of these external factors may provide insight into teaching quality, particularly as generated from qualitative evidence.

## Attribution

Attribution seeks to identify how a given activity specifically resulted in an identified outcome. Attribution is easier to establish when there is a clear causal relationship between the outcome and any preceding outputs. For example, that immunising children resulted in fewer cases of that disease. In education, attribution is difficult to establish, as it is hard to identify the specific factor that resulted in an outcome. For example, are children performing better in standardised tests because of teacher training, or the availability of textbooks, or changes to the school curriculum? Whilst even these factors could be tracked within the school context, they do not include other extraneous factors such as, improved nutrition, change in the availability of light in order for the student to read or complete homework, or extra tuition outside school.

Teaching itself is a 'noise-filled' context. There are a wide range of contextual factors that enable and constrain productive investments in teachers, teaching and education communities, for example, budgetary constraints, and political priorities within schools and the larger national context. While there may be relationships between various factors associated with student learning outcomes, direct causal relationships are difficult to determine.

# Appendix D: Field research training outline

## Day 1 – Wednesday 15 May

| Time | Agenda |
|------|--------|
| 9 - 9.10 am | Welcome |
| 9.10 - 9.20 pm | Introduction of trainers and participants |
| 9.20 - 9.30 pm | Partnership objective and research goal |
| 9.30 - 9.40 pm | Training agenda overview |
| 9.40 - 10.30 am | PLMP overview and background |
| 10.30 - 11am | Break |
| 11 - 11.30 pm | Introduction to year 2 |
| 11.30 - 12 pm | Research ethics and professionalism |
| 12 – 1 pm | Lunch |
| 1 - 1.30 pm | Child protection |
| 1.30 - 2 pm | Confidentiality |
| 2 – 2.30 pm | Break |
| 2.30 – 3 pm | Future directions – ALMA/PLMP |
| 3 - 4pm | Debrief / Q&A |

## Day 2 – Thursday 16 May

| Time | Agenda |
|---|---|
| 9 - 10.30 am | Data collection: interviews |
| 10.30 – 11am | Break |
| 11 am - 12.30 pm | Mock interviews |
| 12.30 – 1.30 pm | Lunch |
| 1.30 - 2 pm | Data collection: group interviews |
| 2 - 3 pm | Mock group interviews |
| 3 – 3.30 pm | Break |
| 3.30 - 4.30 pm | Field trip logistics |
| 4.30 - 5 pm | Debrief/Q&A |

# Appendix E: Interview guides

## INTERVIEW GUIDE:

PLMP Municipal Directors and Inspectors

## Municipal Director / Inspector information

**Name:**

**Role:**

**Cluster:**

**Municipality:**

## Administration notes

The purpose of this interview is to understand the experiences of Municipal Directors and Inspectors in the PLMP context. Municipal Directors and Inspectors should be invited for a one-on-one interview with the research team. This interview will cover a range of issues that focus on the role of Municipal Directors and Inspectors in supporting the PLMP.

The research team should work in pairs, with one leading the interview. The supporting researcher should audio record the interview and make detailed notes of the interview responses.

It is important to remember that this is intended to be a semi-structured conversation, not a formal interview. The interview guide outlines the topics to discuss in the interview. These are presented through a list of questions. All topics must be covered in adequate depth.

Through this guide, sections presented in italics should be read aloud to the Municipal Director and Inspector.

The first part of the interview – Introduction – provides Municipal Directors and Inspectors with information about the purpose of the interview, introduces them to the research team, and explains the participation and consent process.

The second part of the interview – Questions – provides the framing questions for the interview.

There are 11 framing questions and some suggested probing questions to encourage elaboration of the questions as needed.

## Introduction

*Thank you for making the time for this interview.*

*(Introduce the research team)*

*We are conducting a study of the Professional Learning and Mentoring Program (or PLMP).*

*Our visit today is focused on understanding how PLMP supports schools, teachers and students. We are interviewing Inspectors like you who have supported the PLMP to learn about your experiences. We are interested in your views of the program and its impact.*

*You do not need to answer questions that make you feel uncomfortable or that you do not want to answer. You can also withdraw and stop taking part at any time. We have 11 questions to ask you and the interview is expected to take approximately one hour.*

## Voluntary participation:

- *Your participation in this study is voluntary.*
- *You can decide to stop at any time, even part-way through the interview for whatever reason.*
- *If you decide to stop participating, there will be no consequences to you.*
- *If you decide to stop we will ask you how you would like us to handle the data collected up to that point.*
- *This could include returning it to you, destroying it or using the data collected up to that point.*
- *If you do not want to answer some of the questions you do not have to, but you can still participate in the research.*

**Consent Form:**

*Please read and sign this form regarding your privacy rights and consent.*

*(Read through the consent form with the participant)*

*Do you have any questions before we begin?*

## Questions

### Opening

Q1:     Can you please tell us about yourself – your professional history and your current role as a [Municipal Director / Inspector]?

Probes:

- What is your highest academic qualification (e.g. postgraduate degree, bachelor's degree, diploma, tertiary certificate, or high school certificate)?

- Have you completed a teacher training qualification? If yes, what level (e.g. certificate, diploma, bachelor, or postgraduate)?

- How long have you been a [Municipal Director / Inspector]?

- What PLMP activities are part of your role as [Municipal Director / Inspector]?

- Who do you work closely with on PLMP (e.g. teachers, school leaders, mentors)?

***We are interested in learning about the impact of PLMP on teaching quality***

Q2:     What do you see as the most important changes to school leaders since implementing PLMP?

Q3:     What do you see as the most important changes in teachers and teaching quality in your municipality since implementing PLMP?

Probe: Do you see any changes related to:

- teaching practice

- teachers' knowledge

- teachers' beliefs and attitudes (including confidence and motivation)

- professionalism (including commitment and attendance)

- teachers' abilities to support children with disabilities in the classroom

- teachers encouraging the equal participation of boys and girls in classroom learning

Q4:     In what ways do the PLMP activities help teachers improve their practice?

Probe: For example:

- Mentoring

- Peer learning sessions

- Observation and feedback

- Student assessment

Probe: How has PLMP changed the way teachers work together?

Q5:     In what ways has PLMP helped teachers to implement the 'new' curriculum?

Probe: Can you think of anything that makes it difficult for teachers to change their practice?

Probe: Can you describe those difficulties that teachers have experienced?

Q6:     How do inspectors assist school leaders to help teachers?

Q7:     What are the most significant important changes you have seen to school leaders since implementing PLMP?

***We are also interested in learning about the impact of PLMP on student learning and at the school level***

Q8:     What changes do you see in schools in this municipality as a result of PLMP?

Q9:     How is PLMP different from other teacher support programs?

Q10:    What do you think are the risks for PLMP sustainability?

Q11:    Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your experience with PLMP?

Interviewer Notes and Observations

Please record below any observations or comments about the interviewer or interviewee:

INTERVIEW GUIDE:

## Government

## Government Respondent information

**Name:**

**Role:**

**Office/Department:**

## Administration notes

The purpose of this interview is to understand the experiences of the Government of Timor-Leste (GoTL) in designing and implementing the PLMP. GoTL Respondents should be invited for a one-on-one interview with the research team. This interview will cover a range of issues that focus on the role of GoTL in supporting the PLMP.

The research team should work in pairs, with one leading the interview. The supporting researcher should audio record the interview and make detailed notes of the interview responses.

It is important to remember that this is intended to be a semi-structured conversation, not a formal interview. The interview guide outlines the topics to discuss in the interview. These are presented through a list of questions. All topics must be covered in adequate depth.

Through this guide, sections presented in italics should be read aloud to the Government Respondent.

The first part of the interview – Introduction – provides Government Respondents with information about the purpose of the interview, introduces them to the research team, and explains the participation and consent process.

The second part of the interview – Questions – provides the framing questions for the interview. There are 13 framing questions and some suggested probing questions to encourage elaboration of the questions as needed.

## Introduction

*Thank you for making the time for this interview.*

*(Introduce the research team)*

*We are conducting a study of the Professional Learning and Mentoring Program (or PLMP).*

*Our visit today is focused on understanding your experiences in designing and implementing the PLMP. We are interviewing Government representatives who have been involved with the PLMP to learn about your reflections on PLMP and how you see it going into the future. We are interested in your views of the program and its impact.*

*You do not need to answer questions that make you feel uncomfortable or that you do not want to answer. You can also withdraw and stop taking part at any time. We have 13 questions to ask you and the interview is expected to take approximately one hour.*

## Voluntary participation:

- *Your participation in this study is voluntary.*
- *You can decide to stop at any time, even part-way through the interview for whatever reason.*
- *If you decide to stop participating, there will be no consequences to you.*
- *If you decide to stop we will ask you how you would like us to handle the data collected up to that point.*
- *This could include returning it to you, destroying it or using the data collected up to that point.*
- *If you do not want to answer some of the questions you do not have to, but you can still participate in the research.*

**Consent Form:**
*Please read and sign this form regarding your privacy rights and consent.*

*(Read through the consent form with the participant)*

*Do you have any questions before we begin?*

## Questions

### Opening

Q1:    Can you please tell us about yourself – your professional history and your current role in the Ministry of Education?

Probes:

- What role did you play in the development of PLMP?

- How are you currently involved with PLMP?

***We are interested in learning about the impact of PLMP on teaching quality***

Q2:    What do you see as the most important changes to school leaders since implementing PLMP?

Probe: Do you see any changes related to:

- support of improved teaching practice

- professionalism (including commitment and attendance)

- teachers' abilities to support children with disabilities in the classroom

- teachers encouraging the equal participation of boys and girls in classroom learning

Q3:    Can you comment on changes in teachers and teaching quality since implementing PLMP? If YES, in your opinion what are the most important changes to teachers and teaching quality since implementing PLMP? If NO, please go to Q4.

Probe: Do you see any changes related to:

- teaching practice

- teachers' knowledge

- teachers' beliefs and attitudes (including confidence and motivation)

- professionalism (including commitment and attendance)

Q4:    In what ways has PLMP helped teachers to implement the 'new' curriculum?

Probe: Can you think of any barriers that make it difficult for teachers to implement the 'new' curriculum?

*We are also interested in learning about the impact of PLMP on student learning and at the school level*

### Student learning

Q5:    Can you comment on changes to student learning? If YES, in your opinion what are the most important changes to student learning since implementing PLMP? If NO, please go to Q6.

Probe: Do you see any changes related to:

- Student academic learning

- Student interest in lessons

- Student attendance

Probe: What do you see as the most important changes for children with disabilities?

Probe: Are there differences between boys' and girls' learning outcomes since the implementation of PLMP? If YES, can you describe those differences between boys' and girls' learning outcomes?

*School level*

Q6:     What changes do you see in schools as a result of PLMP?

Q7:     What kinds of PLMP activities should receive Government support?

- Support of the Leaders of Learning training?

- Support of ongoing mentoring in schools? If yes, how often?

- Support of regular peer learning sessions? If yes, how often?

- Use of the tablets and observation tools for school leaders?

- Use of data from Eskola?

- Other activities?

Probe: How could these activities be improved?

Q8:     Are there any ways that PLMP could work better for school leaders, teachers, schools and school clusters?

*Sustainability*

Q9:     In what ways does the education system make it challenging to implement PLMP?

Probe: Challenges related to:

- budget to support PLMP

- school, teacher, school leader capacity to sustain PLMP

- terrain/geography between schools in clusters

Q10:    In what ways does the education system make it easy to implement PLMP?

Probe: Support related to:

- cluster structure

- political support

- school, teacher, school leader support

Q11:    What do you think are the sustainability risks for PLMP?

Q12:    What kind of role do you see for Government with PLMP in the future?

*Other*

Q13:    Is there anything you would like to tell us about your experience with PLMP?

Interviewer Notes and Observations

Please record below any observations or comments about the interviewer or interviewee:

## INTERVIEW GUIDE:

## PLMP School Leaders

## School Leader information

**Name:**

**Role:**

**School:**

**Cluster:**

**Municipality:**

## Administration notes

The purpose of this interview is to understand the experiences of School Leaders (Coordinator, Director, Adjunto) in the PLMP context. School Leaders should be invited for a one-on-one interview with the research team. This interview will cover a range of issues that focus on the role of School Leaders in supporting and mentoring teachers in the PLMP.

The research team should work in pairs, with one leading the interview. The supporting researcher should audio record the interview and make detailed notes of the interview responses.

It is important to remember that this is intended to be a semi-structured conversation, not a formal interview. The interview guide outlines the topics to discuss in the interview. These are presented through a list of questions. All topics must be covered in adequate depth.

Through this guide, sections presented in italics should be read aloud to the School Leader.

The first part of the interview – Introduction – provides School Leaders with information about the purpose of the interview, introduces them to the research team, and explains the participation and consent process.

The second part of the interview – Questions – provides the framing questions for the interview. There are 14 framing questions and some suggested probing questions to encourage elaboration of the questions as needed.

## Introduction

*Thank you for making the time for this interview.*

*(Introduce the research team)*

*We are conducting a study of the Professional Learning and Mentoring Program (or PLMP).*

*Our visit today is focused on understanding how PLMP supports teachers and students. We are interviewing leaders like you who participated in the PLMP, to learn about your experiences. We are interested in your views of the program and its impact.*

*You do not need to answer questions that make you feel uncomfortable or that you do not want to answer. You can also withdraw and stop taking part at any time. We have 14 questions to ask you and the interview is expected to take approximately one hour.*

## Voluntary participation:

- *Your participation in this study is voluntary.*
- *You can decide to stop at any time, even part-way through the interview for whatever reason.*
- *If you decide to stop participating, there will be no consequences to you.*
- *If you decide to stop we will ask you how you would like us to handle the data collected up to that point.*
- *This could include returning it to you, destroying it or using the data collected up to that point.*
- *If you do not want to answer some of the questions you do not have to, but you can still participate in the research.*

**Consent Form:**

*Please read and sign this form regarding your privacy rights and consent.*

*(Read through the consent form with the participant)*

*Do you have any questions before we begin?*

## Questions

### Opening

Q1:     Can you please tell us about yourself – your professional history and your current role as [Coordinator/Director/Adjunto]?

Probes:

- What is your highest academic qualification (e.g. postgraduate degree, bachelor's degree, diploma, tertiary certificate, or high school certificate)?

- Have you completed a teacher training qualification? If yes, what level (e.g. certificate, diploma, bachelor, or postgraduate)?

- How long have you been [Coordinator/Director/Adjunto] of this school?

- What PLMP activities have you participated in?

- Who do you work closely with through PLMP (e.g. teachers, other school leaders, mentors)?

***We are interested in learning about the impact of PLMP on teaching quality***

Q2:     In what ways do the PLMP activities help you as [Coordinator/Director/Adjunto]?

Probe: For example:

- How does the Leaders of Learning training help you support teachers in your school and district??

- How do the tablets and observation tools help you as a school leader??

- Are there any other PLMP activities that have helped you?

Probe: How could these activities be improved?

Q3:     In what ways has your role changed with PLMP?

Probe: Do you see any changes related to:

- Your ability to support teachers in the classroom

- Your role in improving teaching quality and student learning

- Number of visits to schools in your cluster

- Accountability for student learning results

Q4:     What do you see as the most important changes to teachers and teaching quality since implementing PLMP?

Probe: Do you see any changes to:

- Teaching practice

- Teachers' knowledge

- Teachers' beliefs and attitudes (including their confidence and motivation)

- Professionalism (including their commitment and attendance)

Q5:      Can you think of anything that makes it difficult for teachers to make changes to their teaching practice?

Probe: Can you describe those difficulties that teachers have experienced?

Q6:      In what ways has PLMP helped teachers to implement the 'new' curriculum?

Probe: Can you think of anything that makes it difficult for teachers to implement the 'new' curriculum?

Probe: How do you support teachers to assess student learning?

***Mentors***

Q7:      How do PLMP mentors assist you to support teachers in their work?

Q8:      How do inspectors assist you to help teachers?

***Peer learning***

Q9:       What happens at the Saturday peer learning sessions in your cluster?

Probe: How do they decide on which topics to work on?

Probe: How do the sessions help the teachers?

Probe: How could the sessions be improved?

***We are also interested in learning about the impact of PLMP on student learning and at the school level***

***Student learning***

Q10:     What are the most important changes to student learning in your school since implementing PLMP?

Probe: Do you see any changes related to:

- Student academic learning

- Student interest in lessons

- Student attendance

Probe: What do you see as the most important changes for children with disabilities?

Probe: Are there differences between boys and girls learning outcomes since the implementation of PLMP? If YES, can you describe those differences between boys and girls learning outcomes?

Q11:     What do you see as the most important changes to student wellbeing since implementing PLMP?

Probe: What do you see as the most important changes for children with disabilities?

Probe: Are there differences between boys' and girls' wellbeing since the implementation of PLMP? If YES, can you describe those differences between boys' and girls' wellbeing?

***School level***

Q12:     What changes do you see in your school and other schools as a result of PLMP?

***Sustainability***

Q13:     What do you think are the sustainability risks for PLMP?

***Other***

Q14:     Is there anything you would like to tell us about your experience with PLMP?

Interviewer Notes and Observations

Please record below any observations or comments about the interviewer or interviewee:

INTERVIEW GUIDE:

PLMP TEACHERS

## Participant

**Cluster:**

| Teacher | School | Teaching Year Level |
|---|---|---|
| *Participant's response* | *Participant's response* | *Participant's response* |

## Administration notes

The purpose of this interview is to understand the experiences of teachers in the PLMP context. Teachers should be invited for a one-on-one interview with the research team. This interview will cover a range of issues related to teachers' experiences of PLMP, and how PLMP has contributed to teaching and student learning.

The research team should work in pairs, with one leading as the focus group moderator. The supporting researcher should audio record and make detailed notes of the discussion.

The research team should work in pairs, with one leading the interview. The supporting researcher should audio record the interview and make detailed notes of the interview responses.

It is important to remember that this is intended to be a semi-structured conversation, not a formal interview. The interview guide outlines the topics to discuss in the interview. These are presented through a list of questions. All topics must be covered in adequate depth.

Through this guide, sections presented in italics should be read aloud to the teacher.

The first part of the interview – Introduction – provides teachers with information about the purpose of the interview, introduces them to the research team, and explains the participation and consent process.

The second part of the interview – Questions – provides the framing questions for the interview. There are 10 framing questions and some suggested probing questions to encourage elaboration of the questions as needed.

## Introduction

*Thank you for making the time for this interview.*

*(Introduce the research team)*

*We are conducting a study of the Professional Learning and Mentoring Program (or PLMP).*

*Our visit today is focused on understanding how PLMP supports teachers and students. We are speaking with teachers like you who participated in the PLMP, to learn about your experiences.*

*We are very interested in learning more about what has changed at your school because of PLMP, and what parts of the program have been helpful for you. We are interested in your views.*

*You do not need to answer questions that make you feel uncomfortable or that you do not want to answer. You can also withdraw and stop taking part at any time. We have 10 questions to ask you and the interview is expected to take approximately 30-45 minutes.*

## Voluntary participation:

- *Your participation in this study is voluntary.*
- *You can decide to stop at any time, even part-way through the interview for whatever reason.*
- *If you decide to stop participating, there will be no consequences to you.*
- *If you decide to stop we will ask you how you would like us to handle the data collected up to that point.*
- *This could include returning it to you, destroying it or using the data collected up to that point.*
- *If you do not want to answer some of the questions you do not have to, but you can still participate in the research.*

## Consent Form:

*Please read and sign this form regarding your privacy rights and consent.*

*(Read through the consent form with the participant)*

*Do you have any questions before we begin?*

## Questions

### Opening

Q1:     Can you please tell us about yourself – your professional history and your current role as a teacher?

Probes:

- What is your highest academic qualification (e.g. postgraduate degree, bachelor's degree, diploma, tertiary certificate, or high school certificate)?

- Have you completed a teacher training qualification? If yes, what level (e.g. certificate, diploma, bachelor, or postgraduate)?

- How long have you been a teacher?

- What PLMP activities have you participated in?

- Who do you work closely with through PLMP (e.g. teachers in your school, teachers at other schools, school leaders, mentors)?

Q2:     When someone says PLMP, what do you think of?

*We are interested in learning more about what's changed because of PLMP*

Q3:     In what ways has your practice changed because of PLMP?

Probe: Any changes related to:

- Teaching practice

- Knowledge

- Beliefs

- Attitudes (including confidence and motivation)

- Professionalism (including commitment and attendance)

- Your ability to support children with disabilities in the classroom

- The way you encourage the participation of boys and girls in classroom learning?

Q4:     What do you see as the most important changes to student learning since PLMP was implemented?

Probe: Any changes related to students':

- Academic learning

- Interest in lessons

- Attendance

Probe: What do you see as the most important changes for children with disabilities?

Probe: Are there differences between boys and girls learning outcomes since the implementation of PLMP? If YES, can you describe those differences between boys and girls learning outcomes?

Q5:     What do you see as the most important changes to student wellbeing since implementing PLMP?

Probe: What do you see as the most important changes for children with disabilities?

Probe: Are there differences between boys' and girls' wellbeing since the implementation of PLMP? If YES, can you describe those differences between boys' and girls' wellbeing?

Q6:     How do you work with teachers at your school and at other schools?

*We are interested in learning about how parts of PLMP are helpful to you*

Q7:     In what ways do the PLMP activities help you?

Probe: For example:

- Mentoring

- Saturday peer learning sessions

- Observation and feedback

- Student assessment

Q8:     How do the school leader and mentor help you implement the 'new' curriculum?

Probe: Can you think of anything that makes it difficult to implement the 'new' curriculum?

Probe: How do you assess student learning?

Q9:     What are some ways that PLMP could work better for you and your school?

Q10: Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your experience with PLMP?

*Interviewer Notes and Observations*

*Please record below any observations or comments about the interviewer or interviewee:*

# Appendix F: Group Interview Guide

## Teachers – PLG/GTP

### Teacher information

**Municipality/Cluster:**

| No. | Teacher | School | Teaching Year Level |
|-----|---------|--------|---------------------|
| 1 | *Participant's response* | *Participant's response* | *Participant's response* |
| 2 | *Participant's response* | *Participant's response* | *Participant's response* |
| 3 | *Participant's response* | *Participant's response* | *Participant's response* |
| 4 | *Participant's response* | *Participant's response* | *Participant's response* |
| 5 | *Participant's response* | *Participant's response* | *Participant's response* |
| 6 | *Participant's response* | *Participant's response* | *Participant's response* |
| 7 | *Participant's response* | *Participant's response* | *Participant's response* |
| 8 | *Participant's response* | *Participant's response* | *Participant's response* |

## Administration notes

The purpose of this group interview is to understand the experiences of teachers participating in the Saturday peer-learning sessions ("PLG"/"GTP").

The research team should work in pairs, with one leading as the group interview moderator. The supporting researcher should audio record and make detailed notes of the discussion.

It is important to remember that this is intended to be a semi-structured conversation, not a formal interview. The interview guide outlines the topics to discuss. These are presented through a list of questions. All topics must be covered in adequate depth. Each participant must be given opportunities to share their individual experiences.

Through this guide, sections presented in italics should be read aloud to the teacher.

The first part of the interview – Introduction – provides teachers with information about the purpose of the group interview, introduces them to the research team, and explains the participation and consent process.

The second part of the interview – Questions – provides the framing questions for the interview. There are 5 framing questions and some suggested probing questions to encourage elaboration of the questions as needed.

## Introduction

Thank you for making the time for this group interview.

*(Introduce the research team)*

We are conducting a study of the Professional Learning and Mentoring Program (or PLMP). One of the components of PLMP is the Saturday peer-learning group ("PLG" / "GTP").

Our visit today is focused on understanding your experiences of the Saturday peer-learning group ("PLG"/"GTP") process.

You may have each had different experiences, and this is ok. We would like to hear from everyone's perspective, even if they are different.

## Voluntary participation:

- *Your participation in this study is voluntary.*
- *You can decide to stop at any time, even part-way through the interview for whatever reason.*
- *If you decide to stop participating, there will be no consequences to you.*
- *If you decide to stop we will ask you how you would like us to handle the data collected up to that point.*
- *This could include returning it to you, destroying it or using the data collected up to that point.*
- *If you do not want to answer some of the questions you do not have to, but you can still participate in the research.*

## Consent Form:

Is there anyone here who has not participated in an interview and signed the consent form yet? Please read and sign this form regarding your privacy rights and consent.

*(Read through the consent form with the participant)*

Do you have any questions before we begin?

## Questions

### Opening

Q1:      Can you please each tell us about yourself – the school you teach at and the grades you teach?

Q2: Can you tell us about the last PLG/GTP you attended?

Probes:

- When was it?

- How many people attended?

Q3: What do you generally do at the PLG/GTP?

Probes:

- What is the purpose of the PLG/GTP?

- Are there group activities? If yes, how are they organised? Who decides what the activities are?

- Are there teaching simulations? If yes, are they organised? How are the teachers leading the simulations decided?

- Are there group discussions? If yes, are they organised? How are the discussion topics determined?

Q4: Are the PLGs/GTPs helpful? Why or why not?

Q5: How can the PLGs/GTPs be improved?

# Appendix G: Consent form

<div style="background:#1d5c6e;color:#fff;text-align:center;padding:1em;">

## PLMP Case Study Research
## Participant Information Statement

</div>

Thank you for making the time to speak with us. The Australian Council for Education Research (ACER) is conducting a study of the Professional Learning and Mentoring Program (or PLMP). ACER is a research organisation based in Australia, please visit www.acer.org

ACER is conducting research to understand how PLMP has improved teacher quality and student learning. ACER is interested in your views of PLMP. The research is part of a program exploring support to teachers and teaching quality.

ACER will be interviewing school leaders, teachers, inspectors, mentors, education officials, DFAT and PLMP program staff to understand their experiences with PLMP.

The information gathered will be used to assist the Australian Government, Government of Timor-Leste and interested stakeholders to understand the impact of PLMP, so that improvements can be made to PLMP.

Your participation in this study is entirely **voluntary**. You do not need to answer questions that make you feel uncomfortable or that you do not want to answer. You can also withdraw and stop taking part at any time.

Interviews are expected to take approximately one hour.

If you consent, the interviews will involve an audio recording and photographs. Audio recordings will assist in note taking and analysis of responses. Photographs may be used for reporting and disseminating this research.

## Questions/further information about the project

If you have any questions or require further information please contact:

> Dr Elizabeth Cassity
> Senior Research Fellow
> Elizabeth.Cassity@acer.org

# PLMP Case Study Research
# Participant Consent Form

I,……………………………………………………………………… [PRINT NAME], agree to take part in this research study.

I agree that:

- I understand the purpose of the study, and what I am asked to do.

- I have read the Participant Information Statement and have talked about my involvement with the researchers if I wanted to. The researchers answered my questions and I am happy with their answers.

- I understand that being in this study is completely voluntary. I do not have to participate. Nothing will happen if I choose to stop participating.

- I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time.

- I understand that if I decide to stop participating, I will have the option of having the data returned to me, destroyed, or only used up to the time I wanted to stop.

- I understand that I may refuse to answer any questions I do not want to answer.

- I understand that information that is collected during this project will be stored securely and will only be used for purposes that I have agreed to.

- I understand that the results of this study may be published, and that publications will not contain my name or any identifiable information about me, unless I agree otherwise.

- I understand the interview will be audio-recorded to assist in note taking and analysis of responses.

- I understand the researchers may photograph me and use the images for reporting and disseminating this research.

  ☐ **Yes, I am happy to be photographed and for my image to be published.**


Signature: _____

Printed name: _____

Date: _____

# Appendix H: Field research schedule

| Dates | Location | Activity |
|---|---|---|
| Monday 13th May | Australian Embassy | DFAT briefing - First Secretary Education, Nutrition, Disability and ANCP & Senior Coordinator Education and Disability |
| Monday 13th May | PHD | Meeting with Partnership for Human Development – ALMA team |
| Monday 13th May | Esplanada | Field research briefing - Senior Coordinator Education and Disability & Belun Field Coordinator |
| Tuesday 14th May | MEYS | Government interviews |
| Wednesday 15th May | Belun | Field research training |
| Thursday 16th May | Belun | Field research training |
| Friday 17th May | MEYS | Presentation of interim findings to MEYS |
| Friday 17th May | MEYS | Government interview |
| Monday 20th May | Esplanada | Meeting with ICFP (Bacau Teachers College)<br>Travel to Maliana |

**Raifun Cluster (Bobonaro) – data collection**

| Dates | Location | Activity |
|---|---|---|
| Tuesday 21th May | EBC 1,2,3<br>Raifu | Teacher interviews<br>School Leader interview<br>Director interview<br>Adjunto interview<br>Debrief with research team |
| Wednesday 22th May | EBF 1,2<br>Guelocaer | Teacher interviews<br>School coordinator interview<br>Debrief with research team |
| Thursday 23th May | EBF 1,2<br>Moleana | School coordinator interview<br>Teacher interviews<br>Inspector interview<br>Debrief with research team |
| Friday 24th May | EBF 1,2 Ritabou | Teacher interviews |

| Dates | Location | Activity |
|---|---|---|
| | | School Coordinator interview<br>Municipality Education Director interview<br>Leadership refresher training observation |
| Saturday 25th May | EBC 1,2,3 Raifun | Group interview with teachers on PLG/GTP<br>Travel back to Dili |

**Mundo Perdido Cluster (Viqueque) – data collection**

| Dates | Location | Activity |
|---|---|---|
| Sunday 26th May | Viqueque | Travel to Viqueque |
| Monday 27th May | EBF 1,2,3<br>Loihunu | Inspector interview<br>Teacher interviews<br>School coordinator interview |
| Tuesday 28th May | EBF 1,2<br>Bahaneo and Liaruca | Teacher interviews<br>School coordinator interview - Bahaneo, Liaruca, Butao |
| Wednesday 29th May | Municipal Education Office | Municipal Education Director Interview<br>Debrief with research team |
| Thursday 30th May | EBF 1,2<br>Maimi | Teacher interviews<br>School coordinator interview |
| Friday 31th May | EBC 1,2,3<br>Mundu Perdido | Teacher interviews<br>School director interview<br>Adjunto interview |
| Saturday 1st June | EBC 1,2,3<br>Mundu Perdido | Group interview with teachers on PLG/GTP<br>Debrief with research team<br>Travel back to Dili |

# Appendix I: Field research debrief tool

## DAILY DEBRIEF NOTES:

PLMP STUDY FIELD RESEARCH

### Debrief information

**Municipality:**

**Cluster:**

**ACER Researcher**

**Belun Researchers:**

**Meeting Date:**

### Administration notes

The purpose of daily debrief sessions with ACER and Belun researchers is to document the team's field research experiences. The research team will meet to discuss the interviews and day's experiences at the conclusion of data collection for the day (usually in the afternoon). The debrief sessions will enable the team to reflect on any emerging issues and experiences, and discuss how to address these during the sessions. The sessions will also give some indications of themes that may emerge during analysis of data.

### Debrief notes

| Discussion point | Notes |
|---|---|
| Key themes emerging | |
| Issues that may have affected the interviews | |
| Feedback from Belun research coordinator | |

### Additional notes: