

Background

Education support for Vanuatu has been part of New Zealand 's development assistance for over 40 years. The Education Assistance Programme 2003-2006 was initially based on the recommendation of a previous 2001 review that the same activities, in the main, be continued. The focus remained on basic education: improving student learning by funding support for English language curriculum development and resource materials; in-service training for teachers, principals, head teachers, bursars and senior education officers; and capacity building in the Ministry of Education.

In 2006 Vanuatu Government and development partners agreed to work together to develop a sector-wide approach in education from 1 January 2008. Principle donor partners plan to phase out existing projects and programmes and to align support to the Ministry of Education's sector strategy and work programme. The New Zealand Agency for International Development (NZAID) is committed to following this process. The strategy is under development by the Ministry and donor partners will complete a joint assessment in early–mid 2007 to determine an agreed partners' support programme of education in Vanuatu .

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this review was to:

assess outcomes from the Education Assistance Programme
provide lessons to inform discussions between the Government of Vanuatu and NZAID about future New Zealand assistance to the education sector in the transition to a sector-wide approach.

The objective of the review was to evaluate how effectively the Programme has:

- delivered the intended outputs
- contributed to outcomes from the point of view of key stakeholders.

Main Findings

Achievement of Objectives

The review found that progress had been made in most areas of the programme including:

- diploma TESOL teacher training
- a variety of workshops
- curriculum revision
- development and provision of reading materials
- assistance to the Ministry on human resource development and restructuring.

The progress took place during a period of change with restructuring and devolution to Provinces, a new Sector Strategy and change of personnel in Vanuatu and NZAID.

Equity

While the review found it difficult to get sufficient information on equity issues in education, what they were able to gather indicated that men were more likely to get access to

scholarships and in-service opportunities, held more senior positions in Government, and that male Dip. TESOL graduates were more likely to move to senior non-teaching positions. These trends were in contrast to findings of the Literacy survey and follow-up studies that showed girls outperforming boys.

Management and Ownership

The review found that opinions varied on the effectiveness of management and the management approach. At a senior level, some felt that an external management services contractor was too expensive, not readily available when expertise was needed and communication was lacking despite many reports. At a lower level, staff were appreciative of the work of the team and the support received. There was a feeling that Vanuatu was ready to take a greater leadership role in managing its own programme.

The review concluded that reports were of a high quality (if a little long), that consultants generally worked in isolation from one another and that the programme coordinating committee had not been effective. This meant some stakeholders were not adequately informed about the programme.

Key Issues and Learning for NZAID

One of the key issues was the scope of work, which put alongside other donor efforts meant that Ni-Vanuatu counterparts were stretched to undertake and complete all programme activities. This was also complicated by delays in training until restructuring had been completed and delays in finalising curriculum and materials in some areas until policy decisions had been made. This resulted in some under-expenditure. The review commented that at one day in June 2006 there were 101 consultants working in Vanuatu in the education sector.

Key sustainability issues for the future were identified including how Vanuatu manages the issue of bilingual education and how the education system can respond to the high level of youth unemployment and urban draft.

Follow-up

The Review of the Vanuatu New Zealand Education Assistance Programme made 14 recommendations, which were supported by the Vanuatu Ministry of Education. NZAID noted general support for 12 of the recommendations as long as they were in line with the Vanuatu Education Sector Support Plan and Vanuatu Education Sector Strategy. It considered that the recommendation that the Ministry of Education should reinforce decentralization was outside NZAID's mandate and that the recommendation for assistance with the Vanuatu Institution of Technology and Institution of Teacher Education merger was not educationally sound.

To request a copy of the full report email aidevaluation@mfat.govt.nz and quote the reference number - Eva0722.