

MFAT Management Response to Evaluation of TA for Curriculum Development Centre

About this document

This document describes the programme's response to the evaluation.

Evaluation report title:	Evaluation of New Zealand Support to the Curriculum Development Division (CDD) of the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (MEHRD), Solomon Islands
File title of final pdf report:	SOLS EDU CDD Final Report 28042015 Allen and Clarke
GDM Link to final pdf report:	SOLS ED CDD Evaluation Final Report - PDF SOLS ED CDD Evaluation Infographic
GDM Link to final Word report:	SOLS ED CDD Evaluation Final Report - Word version
AMS Activity Number:	A10386
Activity Manager:	Carolyn Wilson
Programme:	Solomon Islands
MFAT response approved by:	David Nicholson, Director, PAC DEV
Approved date:	November 2015
Evaluation cost to MFAT:	NZ\$55,777.00

Approval

Approval of the MFAT Management Response to Evaluation	
Approved by:	
Signature: David Nicholson (Director)
Date:	29 October 2015

MFAT Management Response

Evaluation team members

Members of the evaluation team were all from Allen and Clarke Limited:

Name	Role
Patricia Vermillion Peirce	Evaluation Manager and Lead Evaluator (Allen & Clarke)
Jacqui Haggland	Education Adviser and Evaluator (Allen & Clarke)
Kate Dreaver	Education technical Adviser (Cognition Education Limited)
Paul Houliston	Evaluation Supervisor, quality control (Allen & Clarke)

The purpose of this evaluation was to establish independent advice to inform MFAT's future funding decision in support of CDD.

Key findings/conclusions of the evaluation

The key findings/conclusions of the evaluation are:

Conclusion 1: The Activity was relevant to the Solomon Islands context and provided assistance to the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (MEHRD) Curriculum Development Division (CDD) in a relevant, cost effective although not always efficient way.

Key findings:

- Curriculum materials are appropriate to the Solomon Islands National Curriculum Statement (NCS), however they did not connect learning progressions as expected;
- Material content is relevant to the Solomon Islands' current and ongoing needs;
- The Activity was relevant to New Zealand and Solomon Islands' Government needs¹; and
- Teachers need further support to implement learner-focused and outcomes-based education.

Conclusion 2: The Activity was somewhat effective, with 71% of effective practice indicators confirmed during the evaluation, the greatest in delivery of key outputs (the curriculum materials). Materials were well received and evaluated as substantially better than those they replaced. However, their potential was not fully realised as widespread improved learning outcomes are not yet evident.

¹ MEHRD capacity to manage technical assistance (TA) remains limited. Despite improvements in MEHRD senior leadership, the current MEHRD restructure is not bedded in and all divisions remain inadequately staffed, including at management level. Thus, MFAT engaging TA to assist MEHRD in technical areas such as curriculum development remains highly relevant.

Key findings:

- The Activity contributed to the development of a wide range of curriculum materials that engage learners and provide them with adequate support in their classroom-based learning, however materials cannot be taken from the classroom so students' time utilising them is very limited;
- The materials provide some foundational knowledge for teachers, supporting them to understand aspects of effective teaching and learning and providing them with confidence however materials are not always accessible to teachers;
- The materials enable students to learn through activities, however learner progressions and teacher planning processes for progression steps could be clearer, as presently materials do not build enough pedagogical or content knowledge and classes tend to remain teacher rather than student-centred;
- The materials' assessment activities and approach are aligned with good assessment practice.
- The Activity developed local capabilities and skills of some local individuals (i.e. Principal Curriculum Development Officers (PCDOs)) through the process of developing curriculum materials. However TA was not always used effectively and overall capacity building within CDD was limited because: PCDOs at times considered the support inappropriate for the overall requirements; organisational changes at CDD meant some functions were taken up by other agencies; personality clashes and the short term nature of TA inputs resulted in limited relationship building between some TAs and PCDOs; and
- A lack of leadership, and poor project and staff management by CDD managers adversely impacted on PCDO contributions and affected timely completion of some materials (mathematics and health).

Conclusion 3: 55% of evaluation indicators suggested that while the Activity approach of using short term TA should have been more efficient, delays and inefficiencies largely caused by limited engagement in CDD prevented the full benefits of the Activity being realised.

Key Findings:

- The development process was suitable to achieve quality materials, but experienced inefficiencies and delays: tasks were not always coordinated well and there was some minor overlap between separate contracted parties (i.e. editing functions between TA and the publishing company);
- Short term advisers allow for expertise across a range of subjects; and
- Lack of engagement between advisers and partner counterparts contributed to higher than necessary contractual costs due to production delays.

Lessons for MFAT

Lessons that MFAT can take from the evaluation are:

No.	Lesson	Programme response
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No.	Lesson	Programme response
1	<p data-bbox="277 248 694 282"><u>Relevance and Sustainability</u></p> <p data-bbox="277 327 694 589">Clear establishment of roles and responsibilities, and timely management processes and planning in activity design are critical when utilising a short-term TA input model of support.</p> <p data-bbox="277 790 694 1361">Without local counterparts (e.g. CDD management and PCDOs) completely buying-in to the activity approach, output delivery (including the important but time-consuming iterative process for development of learning materials) and being appropriately consulted on their availability, short-term support is unlikely to be truly successful or sustainable (i.e. TA will not be used efficiently).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="713 327 1391 741">➤ This issue was noted during activity implementation in respect of poor time and project management by CDD managers. To mitigate, a broader suite of support that includes mentoring in project and human resource management is needed within MEHRD divisions (similar issues are common across SIG departments so this lesson is widely relevant), and should be a core requirement of any future support in curriculum development specifically. <li data-bbox="713 790 1391 1205">➤ MFAT should engage in-depth and early in the planning and development stages of the next SI education sector activity design and early in implementation to foster greater buy-in and ownership of sub-activities with relevant divisions of MEHRD, planning short-term TA as part of a wider supporting packages. Isolated projects can only achieve limited success. "Hold" or review points should be built into short-term activities to ensure issues delaying implementation can be resolved. <li data-bbox="713 1254 1391 1599">➤ Closer monitoring of progress and enactment of timely risk mitigation strategies related to delays and capacity building by IDG Activity Managers in collaboration with partner organisation management is a wider learning from this activity that can be applied across other activities in order to better manage or reduce cost overruns and/or delays in implementation.
2	<p data-bbox="277 1621 694 1957"><u>Communication regarding availability of materials was poor.</u> Investing time in post-production distribution and training (i.e. the full development, production, and delivery cycle) should be considered for any future phases.</p>	<p data-bbox="713 1621 1391 1727">Agree distribution and training in use of materials should be at the centre of any future investment in curriculum material development.</p>

No.	Lesson	Programme response
3	<u>Teachers need further support to implement learner-focused and outcomes based education;</u> development of materials alone will not ensure they are used as intended.	As above; also appropriate levers could be considered to foster buy-in across all curriculum development processes and generate greater ownership of teacher training and development (e.g. contractual arrangements identify completion of payment milestone processes and targets, including evidence of material delivery and evaluated teacher training). Strategic support for critical influencers (support of complementary systems, processes and projects) should be included in Activity design and scope to support sustainability and impact.

Recommendations for MFAT

We recommend the following:

No.	Recommendation	Programme response
1	<u>MFAT modifies or develops a funding package for future support to CDD that is coordinated with MEHRD areas of greatest need in quality education and opportunity for impact on student achievement.</u> The package should encourage efficient delivery and effective, sustainable results as a funding condition (utilising contractual 'levers'), ideally aligning and coordinating funding streams to promote systematic, sustainable approaches while managing redundancies and overlapping work.	Support beyond 2014-15 for CDD will be considered in the design process for the 5 th phase of our education sector support (2016-2020). This will include consideration of recommendations from the curriculum development supplier (contractor Uniquet) and this evaluation undertaken by Allen and Clarke. Post recommends that no further support is provided for curriculum material development until the MEHRD restructure has been completed and core roles are filled by local staff, as this will contribute to the strategic leadership that was identified as the major constraint under this activity.
2	<u>CDD develops and implements quality review and management processes and procedures</u> with employees to improve consistency, timeliness, appropriate, linked content across curriculum materials and enable monitoring efficient and effective use of TA and funding.	The evaluation team are in agreement with Post's recommendation.
3	<u>MFAT and MEHRD clearly define and manage roles and responsibilities of TAs and counterparts, ensuring buy-in of individuals and management</u> partnered with the MEHRD division, identifying and using appropriate project management and employee management practices	

Further programme response

Quality of evaluation report:

- Readability issues were identified but improved between the draft report and final version following extensive feedback. The movement of large sections of text to appendices improved the readability of the main report; however style and formatting could overall have been more reader-friendly. Expectations for structure, content and length of reports need to be provided and understood before the evaluation starts.
- The recommendations section of the report was well-honed and pragmatic.
- The two page infographic summary of key evaluation findings was very useful despite a few inaccuracies (which were addressed on finalisation of the report).

Partner organisations contributions

- CDD management and PCDOs willingly contributed their time and honest feedback to the evaluation information gathering phase. Their input has been picked up in the key findings, lessons learned and recommendations sections of this response.

MFAT follow up actions

This table lists actions that MFAT will undertake in response to the findings, lessons and recommendations of the evaluation.

**Opportunities for support beyond 2014/15 for CDD will be considered as part of the next phase of our wider education support (2016-19) in consultation with MEHRD and DFAT. This will include consideration of recommendations from the Supplier and recent evaluation undertaken by Allen and Clarke in early 2015. The refresh of the education sector Activity Design is under way at present and due to be completed by June 2016.

Lesson learned / Recommendation	Action	Who will action	When	Resource Implications
<p>Lesson 1: <u>Relevance and sustainability</u></p> <p>Clear establishment of roles and responsibilities, and timely management processes and planning in activity design are critical when utilising a short-term TA input model of support.</p> <p>Without local counterparts (e.g. CDD management and PCDOs) completely buying-in to the activity approach, output delivery (including the important but time-consuming iterative process for development of learning materials) <i>and</i> being appropriately consulted on their availability, short-term support is unlikely to be truly successful or sustainable (i.e. TA will not be used efficiently).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ MFAT to engage early with MEHRD senior management, relevant MEHRD divisions and other key stakeholders throughout the 5th phase of education activity design** and early stages of implementation to foster greater buy-in and ownership, especially where considering short term education TA. ➤ Education Sector ADD 2016-2020 to thoroughly assess and describe MEHRD divisions capacity for active management and monitoring of local staff and potential TA/counterpart relationships, especially where future support of curriculum development is deemed appropriate. 	<p>MFAT Education Activity Managers and design team (DM, Second Secretary, DO Solomon Islands, design contractors)</p>	<p>Sept 2015 – June 2016</p>	<p>Time, design TA contract value</p>

Lesson learned / Recommendation	Action	Who will action	When	Resource Implications
Lesson 2: If engaging in further curriculum development activity, invest resources in post-production communication and distribution.	No immediate action; appropriate conditionality/funding levers around MEHRD and EA teacher support to be considered as part of education design**. E.g. incentivise delivery of materials and training through partial payment up front, followed by staged payment on delivery of resources and completion of teacher training.	Education Activity design team	By June 2016	Time, design TA contract value
Lesson 3: Teachers need support to implement outcomes based education; development of materials alone will not ensure they are used as intended.				
Rec 1: MFAT modifies or develops a funding package for future support to CDD that is coordinated with MEHRD areas of greatest need in quality education and opportunity for impact on student achievement.	Support beyond 2014-15 for CDD will be considered in the design process for the 5 th phase of our education sector support (2016-2020). This will include consideration of recommendations from the curriculum development supplier (contractor Uniquet) and this evaluation undertaken by Allen and Clarke. Post recommends that no further support is provided for curriculum material development until the MEHRD restructure has been completed and core roles are filled by local staff, as this will contribute to the strategic leadership that was identified as the major constraint under this activity. The evaluation team are in agreement with Post's recommendation.	Education Activity design team	By June 2016	Time, design TA contract value
Rec 2: CDD develops and implements quality review and management processes and procedures				
Rec 3: MFAT and MEHRD clearly define and manage roles and responsibilities of TAs and counterparts, ensuring buy-in of individuals and management				

Dissemination plan

The evaluation will be shared with partner organisations, MFAT staff and other stakeholders in the following ways:

No.	Method of dissemination	Responsibility of	When
1	Evaluation report published on the New Zealand Aid Programme website	The Development Support Officer of the Evaluation Team (DSE)	September 2015
2	Evaluation report distributed to the following stakeholders: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- PACDEV and SED- Uniquist- CDD and MEHRD Senior Management	Carolyn Wilson (DO Solomon Islands, PACDEV)	September 2015

Report Release Checklist

Note: This checklist must be used for all evaluations that will be published in full on MFAT's website. Where the report has been commissioned by a partner organisation and is published on their website, MFAT should simply seek written permission from the partner to provide a link to the published evaluation from our website. Attach a copy of the partner's permission to this MFAT Response to Evaluation template in lieu of this Report Release Checklist.

NAME OF THE REPORT: EVALUATION OF NEW ZEALAND SUPPORT TO THE CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT DIVISION OF THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT (SOLOMON ISLANDS)

AUTHOR(S): ALLEN AND CLARKE (PATRICIA VERMILLION PEIRCE, KATE DREAYER, JACQUI HAGGLAND, PAUL HOULISTON AND ERIC KRASSOI PEACH)

REPORT MONTH AND YEAR: APRIL 2015

All evaluation reports should be able to be publicly released in accordance with the principle of availability (Section 5 of the Official Information Act (OIA)). However, this principle can be overridden if there is 'good reason' (as set out in the OIA) to withhold information. Use this checklist to help you decide if sections in the evaluation report should be withheld.

If any of the answers to these questions is 'yes' then:

- A hard copy of the report should be marked up with brackets around the information to be withheld, and the OIA section under which the information is to be withheld noted (refer to MFAT Style and Practice Guide OIA Requests)*
- The PDF copy of the report that is submitted to the Development Support Officer (DSE) for the library and public release will have the withheld information whited out and the reasons for withholding noted in the margins. The following note should be placed in the report: Certain information in this report has been withheld in accordance with the Official Information Act and the grounds for withholding, as at the time of publication, are noted in the margins.*

If you are unsure whether a good reason to withhold exists seek advice from the IDG staff member responsible for OIAs or the MFAT corporate legal team.

OIA Section 6 Conclusive Reasons: Are there words in the evaluation that are likely to:

- | | | |
|--|------------------------------|--|
| a) Prejudice the security or defence of NZ or NZ's international relations? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| b) Prejudice the entrusting of information to the Government of NZ on a basis of confidence by (i) the Government of any other country or (ii) any international organisation? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| c) Prejudice the maintenance of the law? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| d) Endanger the safety of any person? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| e) Damage seriously the NZ economy? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |

OIA Section 7 Special Reasons: Are there words in the evaluation that are likely to:

- | | | |
|--|------------------------------|--|
| a) Prejudice the security or defence of the Cook Islands, Niue, Tokelau or the Ross Dependency? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| b) Prejudice relations between the governments of NZ, and governments of the Cook Island and Niue? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| c) Prejudice the international relations of the governments of the Cook Islands or Niue | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |

OIA Section 9 Other Reasons: Are there words in the evaluation that need to be withheld to:

(Note: There is need to balance Section 9 grounds for withholding against 'public interest considerations'. Consider the negative consequences from release, and whether or not these consequences are outweighed by the public interest in access to the information.)

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|---|------------------------------|--|
| a) Protect the privacy of natural persons? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| b) Protect trade secrets and commercial positions? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| c) c)Protect information that is subject to an obligation of confidence where release of the information would be likely to i) prejudice the supply of similar information from the same source and it is in the public interest that such information should continue to be supplied or (ii) otherwise damage the public interest? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| d) Avoid prejudice to measures protecting the health or safety of members of the public? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| e) Avoid prejudice to the substantial economic interests of New Zealand? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| f) Avoid prejudice to measures that prevent or mitigate material loss to members of the public? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |

- | | | |
|--|------------------------------|--|
| a) Maintain the constitutional conventions including the confidentiality of advice tendered by ministers and officials? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| b) Maintain effective conduct of public affairs through free and frank expressions of opinion and protection from improper pressure or harassment? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| c) Maintain legal professional privilege? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| d) Enable a minister department or organisation holding information to carry out commercial activities without prejudice or disadvantage? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| e) Enable a minister, department or organisation holding the information to carry on negotiations without prejudice or disadvantage? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| f) Prevent the disclosure or use of official information for improper gain or advantage? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |

Other Reason: Is there any other reason for withholding information?

- | | | |
|---|------------------------------|--|
| • If the answer is yes then seek advice from the IDG staff member responsible for OIA or the MFAT corporate legal team. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
|---|------------------------------|--|

RECOMMENDATION

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Withhold selected parts, noting sections of the OIA applying to these in a copy of the report that is filed, and white-ed out in the copy of the report to be forwarded to the Development Support Officer (DSE) for public release and the library |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Release entire report |

Signed by Carolyn Wilson (Activity Manager)

Signed by Helen Bradford (Deputy Director)

Date: 16/9/15