

**Curriculum Monitoring Study  
Phase 1 Report  
(Milestone 19)**

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GOUVERNEMENT  
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FORMATION



GOVERNMENT  
OF THE REPUBLIC  
OF VANUATU  
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION  
AND TRAINING



Vanuatu Education Support Program (VESP) is managed by Coffey, a Tetra Tech company, on behalf of the Australian Government and supported by the New Zealand Aid Programme.

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# Abbreviations

CDU	Curriculum Development Unit
CIMS	Curriculum Implementation Monitoring Study
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
EAU	Examination and Assessment Unit
ISU	In-Service Unit (VITE)
MoET	Ministry of Education and Training
MQS	Minimum Quality Standards
SBM	School Based Management
SIO	School Improvement Officer
SIP	School Implementation Plan
SLMS	School Leadership Monitoring Study
TRG	Technical Resource Group
VESP	Vanuatu Education Sector Program
VITE	Vanuatu Institute of Teachers Education
ZCA	Zone Curriculum Advisers

# Executive Summary

This document provides a briefing on the outcomes of a Curriculum Implementation Monitoring Study (CIMS) implemented by the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) and supported by the Vanuatu Education Support Program (VESP). It examines the system response to the monitoring and provides ideas for future donor support to assist the MoET build on achievements to date.

The monitoring exercise was conducted between September 2016 and June 2017. It was designed to assess the progress and effectiveness of a number of initiatives being implemented by the Ministry with support through VESP, specifically the provision of learning materials and training of teachers and school leaders to roll out Vanuatu's new national primary curriculum to Years 1-3 in all schools over the period 2014-2018. The study represents the first stage of support for MoET to use evidence gained through monitoring and evaluation more effectively to inform decision making. This included establishment of a Technical Resource Group (TRG) within the Policy and Planning Directorate to oversee, guide and manage the implementation of this and future studies.

Concurrently with the CIMS, the TRG oversaw the School Leadership Monitoring Study (SLMS). The overall purpose of that study was to monitor initiatives designed to improve school leadership, including strengthening the role of principals in improving learning in the classroom. Given that the quality of leadership in a school has a significant impact on whether or not a new curriculum is successfully implemented, the curriculum team has also drawn on the SLMS to refine its approaches to curriculum implementation.

The CIMS applied a mixed methods approach following an explanatory sequential design<sup>1</sup> structure. The first stage of the study involved administration of a survey questionnaire to staff from 100 purposively sampled schools. The second stage of the study involved follow up with a selection of schools to participate in a qualitative survey (involving structured interviews and focus group discussions) to validate the information and data and to provide more in-depth knowledge and understanding around key questions. Twelve schools participated in the in-depth follow-up qualitative surveys for curriculum and eight schools for the school leadership study.

The key findings from the monitoring include the following:

- a) There seems to be good acceptance of the new curriculum directions which suggest teachers value the reform agenda although there are still those who are yet to be convinced, especially in the use of Bislama/vernacular as the language of instruction.
- b) The extent of implementation varies from province to province and from school to school within the same province.
- c) Principals have a significant effect on the extent and quality of curriculum implementation. A key factor that appears to influence implementation in schools is the principal's level of understanding and commitment to the new curriculum and associated policies.
- d) Although many teachers and provincial authorities report enthusiasm for the new curriculum, many suggest they do not yet deeply understand it or feel confident about how to apply it.

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<sup>1</sup> In the **sequential explanatory design**, the data are collected over the period of time in two consecutive phases. Thus, a researcher first collects and analyzes the quantitative data. Qualitative data are collected in the second phase of the study and are related to the outcomes from the first, quantitative, phase (Ivankova 2006)

- e) The materials and training provided were reported to be of good quality and contributed to increased awareness, understanding and acceptance of the new curriculum. Issues regarding timely provision of materials to teachers were identified in some contexts.
- f) Teachers mostly reported low levels of satisfaction with the quality and frequency of support from their school principals and provincial education office staff to implement the new curriculum although this is to be expected at this early stage of implementation.

Following a presentation to stakeholders by the contracted research team in July 2017, MoET managers, with support from VESP technical advisers, considered the findings and recommendations from the studies to inform a system response and provide a focus for future VESP support to the new curriculum roll out.

Overall, the curriculum team felt that the monitoring provided validation of the approach they are taking to implement the curriculum and provided a sound justification for the significant investment through VESP to ensure ongoing and integrated professional development and back up for teachers, principals and provincial support personnel. A summary of how the system has responded to each of the recommendations in the final CIMS report findings<sup>2</sup> and future directions for VESP support are summarised in the table below.

Recommendations	System response and priorities for ongoing VESP support
<p><b>1:</b> The quality of support provided to schools in support of the implementation of the new curriculum needs to be strengthened.</p>	<p>The Ministry has responded by exploring how VITE In-Service and the School Improvement Unit can collaborate with provincial office staff and school leaders to develop a strategic approach to improving the quality of support to schools. A recommendation has been made that one way to improve the quality of support is to identify and share successful practice in curriculum implementation between schools. This is in response to a finding from the CIMS showing that curriculum implementation across schools is variable. Where good practice is occurring should be understood and shared.</p> <p>VESP support in 2018 will prioritise capacity development of staff in provincial offices to build the threshold knowledge they need to effectively carry out their responsibilities to monitor and facilitate improved classroom learning. Training will also focus staff on strategies to identify where successful practice is occurring, establish lighthouse schools and then facilitate sharing of this successful practice.</p>
<p><b>2:</b> Increase understanding of teachers, principals and ZCA [sic SIOs] on the various elements of the new curriculum through capacity building and professional development.</p>	<p>To promote a shared understanding of the new curriculum across stakeholders MoET has commenced several actions including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of a set of succinct curriculum assessment and reporting guidelines for schools that synthesises expectations from many different policy documents.</li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> Final Report on the Monitoring of the Implementation of the Year 1 Vanuatu Curriculum September 2016 – June 2017, Raivoce and Pongi page 9

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staging a national curriculum implementation symposium in November 2017 to deliver key messages and share success stories across key stakeholder groups.</li> </ul> <p>VESP will continue to help the curriculum initiatives build from opportunities presented by the devolution process commenced in 2017. In particular, VESP will support the Ministry’s desire to establish professional learning communities (PLCs) in provinces to build threshold knowledge about the new curriculum. VESP will provide technical expertise to deepen understanding and develop materials and facilitate implementation of PLC action plans. The aim will be to develop sustainable learning communities that contribute to a culture of ongoing professional reflection and improvement.</p>
<p><b>3:</b> Increase parental and community involvement in the teaching and learning process.</p>	<p>The next phase of the Ministry’s community advocacy campaign (the “Right Age” campaign) is currently will commence in 2018. The aim of the next phase will be to deepen the community’s understanding of the curriculum reform agenda, particularly as it relates to adoption of the language policy, the new more child-centred approaches to teaching, learning and assessment and ways that parents can support children’s learning. A national coordinator has been engaged who, with continuing international technical assistance, will support the Ministry’s Communications Committee to design, manage and evaluate the campaign.</p>
<p><b>4:</b> Develop national tools to be used by the provincial offices and principals in monitoring various aspects relating to the implementation of the new curriculum.</p>	<p>The Curriculum Development Unit of MoET is developing a curriculum implementation rubric that may be used by schools and provincial office staff to identify how well a school is progressing and where additional support is required. It is anticipated that the curriculum implementation rubric will form part of the training to occur at the curriculum symposium in November 2017 and will be followed up in 2018 through the provincial school improvement support mechanisms being established as part of the devolution process.</p> <p>VESP will continue to support ongoing school leadership development particularly in the area of School Improvement Planning that is responsive to both internal and external school monitoring. CDU, VITE In-service and the School Improvement Unit will collaborate to develop and trial tools designed to assist school planning, monitoring and reporting based on the Minimum Quality Standards that relate to teaching practice and student learning outcomes.</p>
<p><b>5:</b> Use data from the monitoring process to address those factors that are negatively influencing the ability of teachers and the school to fully implement the new curriculum as expected.</p>	<p>The Ministry has started using data from the monitoring study as recommended and the responses to recommendations 1-4 above reflect these deliberations. In summary, the Curriculum Development Unit of the Ministry, with VESP support, is taking a multifaceted approach which involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of the Curriculum Implementation Advisory Group as a forum to explore approaches to supporting professional learning that harness the collective wisdom of people working in schools</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Active engagement with “lighthouse” schools throughout the process of developing learning and teacher training materials to share successful practice and ensure that these are grounded in real classroom contexts.</li><li>• Working with the VITE In-service Unit and the School Improvement Unit to refine approaches for monitoring whether curriculum materials are received by schools and disseminated to teachers.</li><li>• Developing a school improvement and accountability resource to provide planning frameworks and internal monitoring resources to help school principals develop School Improvement Plans and reporting processes that are focussed on student learning.</li></ul>
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The approaches above indicate a shift commensurate with decentralisation of education support and services so that emphasis is on local solutions to challenges. Ultimately, curriculum improvement will be linked to the School Improvement Planning (SIP) and school review processes. Inquiry should also be aligned at the system level, so that policies and priorities can be identified and responded to in ways that align at the provincial, school and classroom levels. Based on the findings of the studies the Ministry has identified the areas for VESP annual planning for 2018 that link curriculum development with the broader agenda of decentralisation and improving the quality of leadership.

## Conclusion

The curriculum implementation monitoring study provides the Ministry of Education and Training with an evidence-based platform for reviewing approaches to supporting curriculum implementation. Findings suggest that there has been progress typical of what you would expect in this early stage of a curriculum reform agenda. While teachers and principals do not yet fully understand the theoretical underpinnings of an outcomes-based approach they are nevertheless experimenting with the new learning areas and designing learning programs to ensure students achieve the outcomes.

An area that requires improvement is associated with limited and low quality of ongoing support reported by school staff. It might be unreasonable to expect provincial officers to provide the breadth and depth of support required by the many schools in their jurisdiction when they have limited experience and confidence with the new curriculum themselves. Other factors such as poor access to remote schools, limited funding and so forth no doubt influence frequency of school visits. For these reasons, possible alternative approaches to professional learning and support are identified and described in this report. The MoET is already exploring the notion of school clusters who provide support to each other through establishment of lighthouse schools and identification of curriculum champions to provide support to other schools. VESP can play a role to support these professional learning communities to exist and thrive.

Furthermore, support must be provided for the Ministry to leverage from the decentralisation agenda to assist provincial offices in the future so that a culture of local solutions to local challenges can evolve. This means empowering provincial office staff to identify learning support needs and to explore alternative strategies that give schools access to timely and needs based support. This also means addressing systemic issues where the teachers, principals, provincial staff and central government are not entirely clear on their roles and responsibilities for the different levels of management and governance related to curriculum implementation.



The study strongly confirms that provision of materials and training support to teachers is important but does not represent the complete “education package”. There needs to be continued and considerable effort and investment placed in to the training, support and professional mentoring of school principals.

In conclusion, the monitoring study provided an opportunity to MoET, through the formation of the TRG, to initiate, implement and manage future studies to assess progress of curriculum implementation. This has been an important step in the process to strengthen MoET’s ability to utilise the resources and tools supported through VESP and underpins a broader approach to build a culture of monitoring and evaluation within the Ministry.

# 1 Introduction

In September 2016, the Ministry of Education and Training contracted the services of an independent organisation to conduct a Curriculum Implementation Monitoring Study (CIMS). The study was completed over a nine-month period from September 2016 through to June 2017. It was administered by the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) with funding and technical assistance through the Vanuatu Education Sector Support Program (VESP). The Terms of Reference for the study is provided in Annex 1.

In August 2017 the research team presented its findings in an oral presentation to stakeholders and in the *Final Report on the Monitoring of the Implementation of the Year 1 Vanuatu Curriculum* (June, 2017) provided in Annex 2.

This document provides a briefing on the outcomes of the monitoring exercise and examines the system response to the report's findings and recommendations and provides ideas for future donor support to assist the MoET build on achievements to date.

## 1.1 Context for the CIMS

Curriculum monitoring is an initiative within the Vanuatu Education Support Program (VESP), which provides targeted support to the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) to improve the standard of education across primary schools in Vanuatu. VESP is funded through a joint arrangement between the Australian Government aid program (Australian Aid) and New Zealand Government aid program (New Zealand Aid).

VESP commenced in September 2013 and the first phase is due for completion in January 2019. The focus of the first phase is on improving literacy and numeracy outcomes for children in the early years of schooling (Kindergarten to Year 3) with support being implemented through five interrelated strategies, one of which is to train and support teachers to implement the new primary curriculum approved in 2012.

VESP has been supporting MoET to implement this strategy in a number of areas since 2014 including:

- Development and distribution of teaching and learning materials;
- Teacher training and professional development in the new curriculum;
- Instructional leadership training for principals;
- Improved approaches to class based assessment and reporting;
- development of national literacy and numeracy minimum standards;
- Establishment of a national literacy and numeracy standardised testing instrument;
- Implementation of a new language policy that endorses the vernacular or Bislama as the language of instruction in Years 1-3.

The Curriculum Implementation Monitoring Study was commissioned through VESP in 2016 and represents first stage support for MoET to monitor, reflect on and refine implementation of the new curriculum in Years 1-3. The intent of the study was to help establish a culture of performance development where the MoET continually monitors initiatives and uses evidence to refine and improve practice.

The study was oversighted by a Technical Resource Group (TRG) established within the MOET Policy and Planning Directorate to guide, manage and monitor the external consulting team engaged to conduct the studies.

The CIMS provides data in relation to Intermediate Outcome 1 from the VESP Results Framework: *Schools implementing the new curriculum in years 1-3 (literacy and numeracy)*. VESP technical and operational assistance being provided to achieve this outcome focuses on providing classroom materials and training for teachers and school leaders to implement the new national curriculum in Years 1-3. The roll out timeline for this is as follows:

2014-15	An enabling phase that included consolidation of policy and processes, materials development, awareness raising, training of trainers and distribution of some “starter” literacy and numeracy kits
2015	Year 1 curriculum implemented in schools
2017	Year 2 curriculum implemented in schools
2018	Year 3 curriculum implemented in schools

Implementation of the new curriculum in Years 1-3 presents many challenges for all education stakeholders. The new Language Policy requires that all students in Year 1-3 are taught in their mother tongue by teachers who are expected to adopt the new teaching, learning and assessment practices described in the Vanuatu National Curriculum Statement (2010), the Vanuatu National Language Policy (2015) and the MoET Assessment and Report Policy (2015).

VESP has provided specialist technical support and guidance to the MoET since 2014 as it implements these policies. The program has supported development and distribution of teacher guides and literacy and numeracy materials, including sets of readers in Bislama which are also being provided in 59 local vernaculars for over 250 schools. The use of these materials requires a significant pedagogical shift for teachers in the classroom. It is expected that it will take some years for all teachers to engage with and benefit from new approaches to teaching and learning and to adopt formative approaches to assessment. Coupled with expectations that teachers will firstly teach in the mother tongue through Years 1-3, then support students’ transition to English or French by Year 7, adds an additional layer of complexity to the challenges facing them.

These challenges are amplified by the fact that close to 45% of all teachers have limited formal training. Most of those who do have formal training were not educated in a system that promoted and understood the new curriculum paradigm. The remaining teachers in the workforce have limited formal training, with some never progressing beyond a primary school education. It is therefore a significant expectation that all teachers can adopt new frameworks for their teaching and learning. Nevertheless, examples of successful practice are beginning to emerge. These indicate that providing teachers with training and support, albeit limited, is beginning to contribute to better classroom practice and improvement in teaching and learning.

Concurrently with the CIMS, the research team also conducted a School Leadership Monitoring Study (SLMS) on behalf of the Ministry. The overall purpose of that study was to monitor initiatives being supported through VESP designed to improve school leadership. As the quality of leadership has a significant impact on whether or not a new curriculum is successfully implemented, the Ministry has also drawn on findings from the SLMS in relation to how principals and provincial support personnel see their roles in respect of supporting teachers as they implement change in classroom practice through the new curriculum implementation.

## 1.2 Purpose and approach to the study

The CIMS was commissioned one-year after the primary schools began implementing the new curriculum. The purpose of the study was to:

- determine the extent to which implementation of the new curriculum in Years 1-3 is occurring as intended, and
- understand why implementation might be successful or less successful in particular contexts to inform future practice.

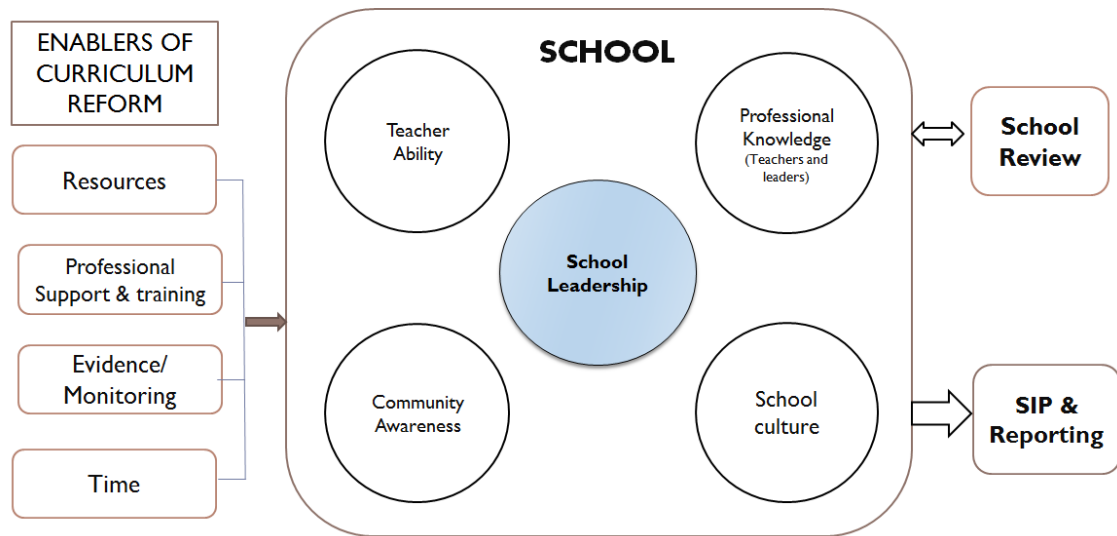
The framework to explore these two questions was comprised of four elements: support, receptivity, understanding and practice.

<b>Support</b>	Type of support teachers encountered (including people within and beyond their schools) and how useful or valuable they perceived this support to be.
<b>Receptivity</b>	Extent to which teachers and school principals regard the new curriculum, their confidence in implementing it at the school and the degree to which they perceive the implementation to be feasible.
<b>Understanding</b>	How teachers and school principals understand the key elements of the new curriculum (including the vision and mission, literacy and numeracy outcomes and indicators, student-centred learning, inclusive classroom environment, classroom assessment approaches and the values promoted by the new curriculum) and their views about the extent of shift required or offered to implement and support the new curriculum.
<b>Practice</b>	the extent to which practices that reflect the intentions of the new curriculum are becoming clear in both the teachers' and principals' roles and practices.

A formative approach was adopted so the MoET could use evidence from the study to strengthen its processes and approaches to the curriculum implementation.

The connected and concurrent SLMS also sought evidence regarding the extent to which school leaders take an active role in improving learning in the classroom.

It is well documented in education research literature that the role of the principal is a significant variable that influences school improvement and adoption of education reform agendas. It is also acknowledged that school leadership is an important enabler of improved student achievement. Research confirms that school leaders who focus on teacher pedagogy and practice are more likely to have the greatest impact on student achievement. Principals and school support personnel must have knowledge and understanding of the new curriculum and the expected changes to teaching and learning to occur as well as the personal qualities and social and interpersonal skills necessary to lead and manage curriculum reform. Figure 1 below illustrates the link between the two studies.



**Figure 1: The Link Between the two studies**

This association between curriculum implementation and school leadership was the rationale used by the MoET to conduct the CIMS and the SLMS concurrently using the same research consultancy. Another reason was for economies of scale given that the two methodologies were similar and combining them presented an opportunity to triangulate data from the leadership study and the curriculum study with regard to the extent to which effective leadership is associated with curriculum implementation in Vanuatu.

## 2 Findings

### 2.1 Curriculum Study

The curriculum monitoring confirmed that materials for the new curriculum were distributed to schools as planned and the Year 1 curriculum is being implemented in most schools. Most schools had also commenced Year 2 implementation. The study shows that the materials were well received by the majority of teachers although it was noted there are still those who are yet to be convinced, especially in regards to the use of Bislama/vernacular as the language of instruction.

The study report notes that the extent of implementation varies from province to province and from school to school within the same province. Some explanations for variable implementation is provided in the report, for example, there were instances where schools had received the new curriculum but were slow in sharing it with teachers or teachers had only recently received the materials and were not able to commence using them. This is to be expected at such an early stage of the reform agenda and the case study components of the report provide valuable insights for the ministry to use to understand the constraints for some schools and provinces.

The monitoring also confirmed that the general approach to the implementation being supported through VESP has made a significant contribution to increased awareness and application of the new curriculum. At this stage in a full-scale curriculum reform it is typical to expect that teachers report increased awareness and are beginning to experiment with reforms and the monitoring confirms that this is the case.

The summary report from the monitoring study is provided in Annex 1 and a full copy of the individual school case studies is available from the Ministry. Some key findings from the survey and interviews are highlighted below. These findings relate to the four elements of the research framework: receptivity, support, understanding and practice. Participant responses were assessed based on a 4-point Likert scale that is described in Table 1 below.

Rating	Descriptor
Rating 4	This indicates the situation where the teacher or supporting agent carries out the necessary actions that results in the implementation being successfully carried out.
Rating 3	This indicates the situation where the teacher or supporting agent carries out the necessary actions, but there is recognition that the implementation requires strengthening in some aspect.
Rating 2	This indicates the situation where the teacher or supporting agent has yet to carry out any significant level of behaviour-changing action which has a positive effect on the implementation of the curriculum.
Rating 1	This indicates the situation where the teacher or supporting agent has not carried out any level of behaviour-changing action which might have a positive effect on the implementation of the curriculum.

**Table 1: Likert Scale for survey responses**

### Receptivity

Approximately 75% of teachers surveyed as part of the study expressed positive views about the new curriculum. Figure 2<sup>3</sup> below summarises the views of the schools by province with regard to the new curriculum.

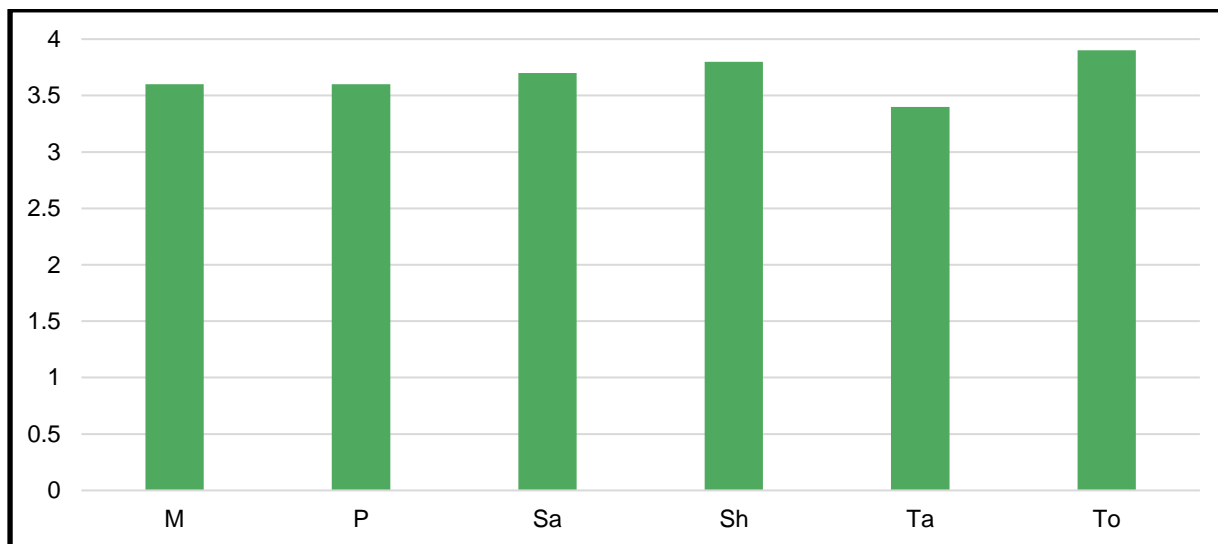


Figure 2: Teachers perceptions of the new curriculum

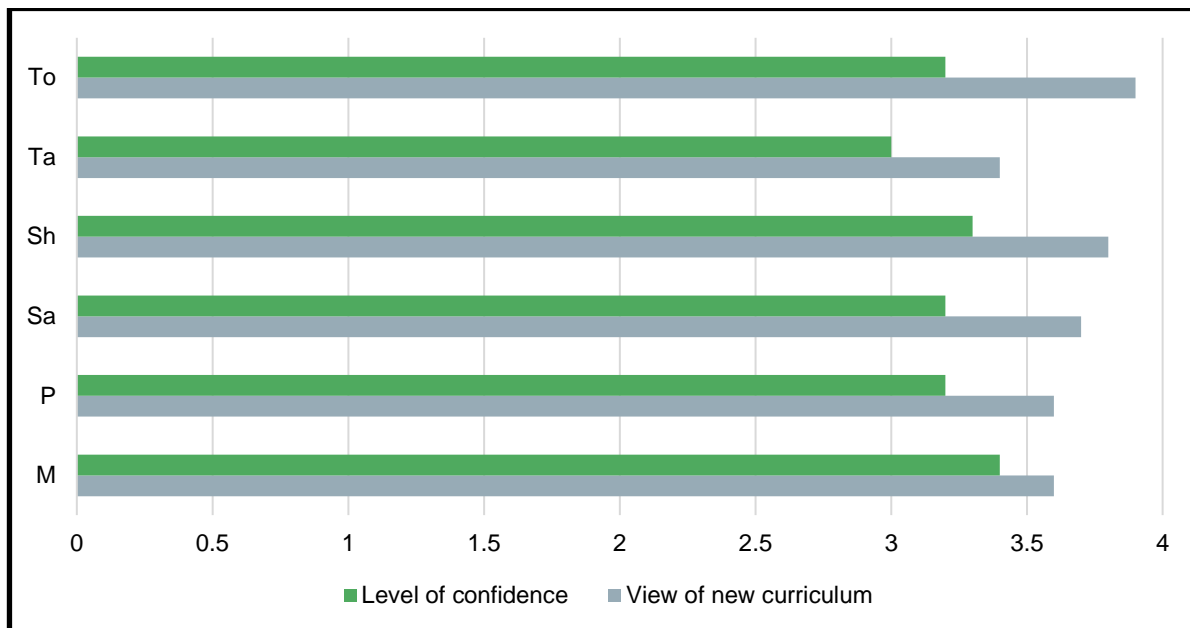
The graph shows that across each of the provinces teachers score on average just over 3.5 on a 4-point scale. This means that teachers are showing through their actions, a high degree of receptivity for the new curriculum.

The study report also suggests that the new curriculum has been positively received by most teachers and regarded as flexible and well organised. Importantly, teachers report that the opportunity to use Bislama (or the vernacular) makes the new curriculum more accessible and has contributed to improved student engagement.

Teacher perceptions about the content of the new curriculum were positive and teachers indicated a growing confidence in using it. Figure 3 below summarises the findings from the questionnaire survey regarding teachers' receptivity and confidence to use the new curriculum.

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<sup>3</sup> Legend for Provinces: M-Malampa, P- Penama, Sa –Sanma, Sh-Shefa, Ta- Tafea, To-Torba



**Figure 3: Receptivity and confidence in use of new curriculum**

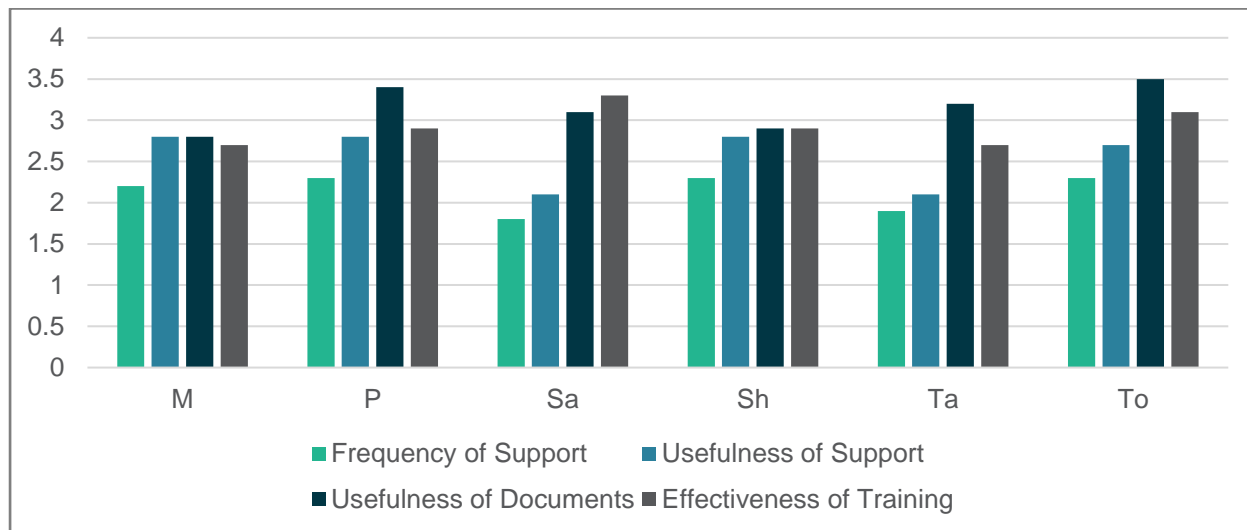
Evident from the illustration is consistent reporting across all provinces regarding receptivity of the new curriculum although there is slightly lesser confidence to implement it in some provinces. This is to be expected at this early phase of a curriculum reform agenda. The findings suggests that the investment to date in providing teacher and classroom materials has been worthwhile and is contributing to the uptake of the new curriculum.

**Support**

Teachers report very positive views regarding the quality of curriculum materials and training they have received to date. School staff were however less favourable in their views regarding access to quality and ongoing support for curriculum implementation. Figure 4 summarises feedback from schools regarding access to ongoing support for implementing the new curriculum across a range of metrics. The major finding was that teachers reported low levels of support from their school principals and provincial education officers to implement the new curriculum.

*“After my training I received extra support from the ISU trainers and the ZCA. The ZCA has been very helpful. She assisted in delivering some of my lessons. Teachers in our school work together and we have some difficulties with the new curriculum”*  
 (Teacher, Shefa Province)



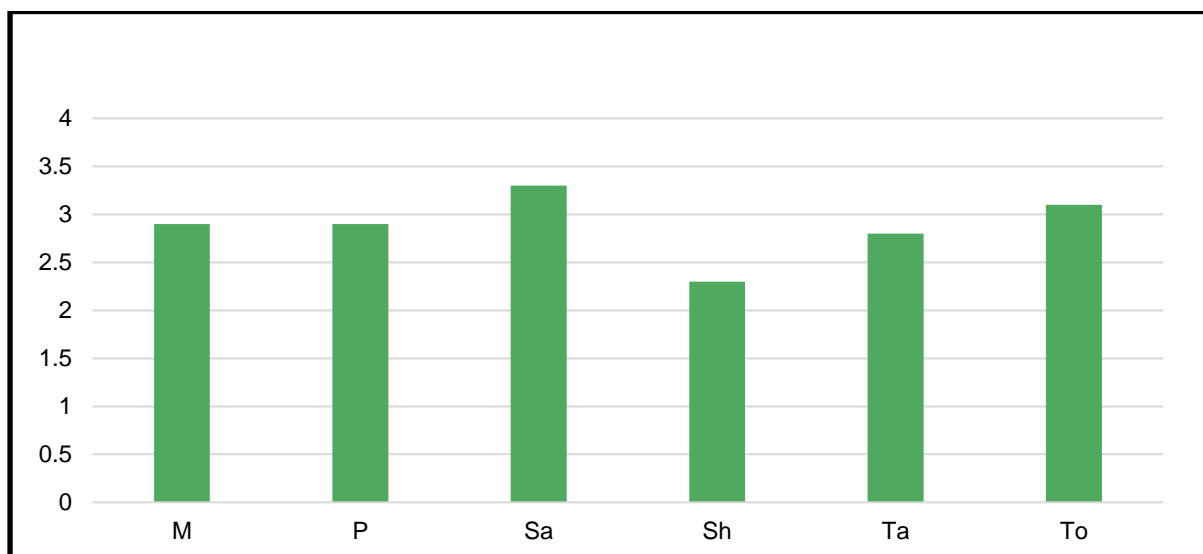


**Figure 4: Assessment of support provided**

The graph suggests concern about the frequency and usefulness of support across the provinces that should be addressed as a priority. It was observed that even when support is provided, it is often not considered very good. Interestingly, the CIMS reports a strong correlation between the level of support provided by educational leaders and the use of the curriculum by schools. This suggests that the investment to date in training/awareness raising for principals in the new curriculum and instructional leadership has been worthwhile and should continue.

**Understanding**

The evidence from the surveys indicate that teachers have variable understanding of the purpose and content of the new curriculum. Many teachers and provincial authorities report enthusiasm with the new curriculum but many also report they do not fully understand the content of the curriculum and how it should be applied. This also influences teacher confidence to use the new curriculum. Figure 5 below summarises the key findings with regard to school staff understanding of the new curriculum as reported in the questionnaire survey. Results are disaggregated by province.



**Figure 5: Understanding of the new curriculum**

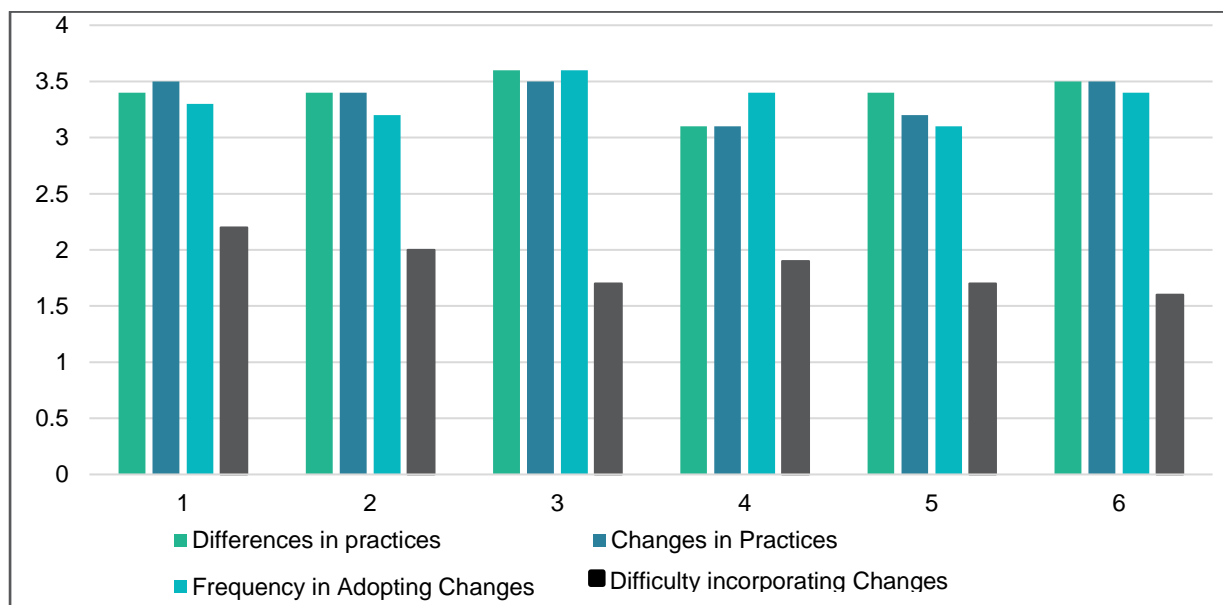
The results illustrated in the graph show significant variability between provinces - one point of a four point scale represents 25%. Significant variability in understanding between teachers is typical at this stage of a curriculum reform agenda and the more detailed information from the case study schools needs to be explored with each of the provinces so they can understand some of the particular barriers at work in their context.

**Practice**

It is too early in the curriculum reform agenda to expect teachers have made a full pedagogical shift aligned to the new curriculum. This is because curriculum implementation is not a single event. Rather, it is a process that takes several years to accomplish involving ongoing decisions, actions and corrections. Teachers typically move through four stages implementing a new curriculum: Stage 1 - Awareness; Stage 2 - Engagement; Stage 3 – Refining; Stage 4 – Embedding.

Evidence from this study suggests most teachers who have been trained in the new curriculum have increased awareness and are beginning to engage with the new curriculum and are adjusting their teaching practices. Findings from the study also show that teachers are trying to implement new curriculum but are not yet consistent or confident. Once again the study findings highlighted the importance of school principal engagement with the curriculum reform agenda. It was observed that teachers’ ability to adopt and incorporate changes is significantly dependent on engagement and support from the school principals and provincial administrators.

Figure 6 below illustrates the extent to which school staff (principals and teachers) that participated in the questionnaire survey describe changes to their teaching practices.



**Figure 6: Change in behaviour and practice of teachers**

The illustration shows that most teachers report significant change to behaviour and practice. It is felt that this may be attributed to the shift in the language of instruction used by teachers rather than actual pedagogical shifts associated with teaching and learning and assessment. However, as indicated above

it is to be expected at this stage of the implementation that most teachers are at the first step (awareness) of the ladder with some showing evidence of having moved to step 2 (engagement).

## 2.2 School Leadership Study

The School Leadership Study surveyed the same sample of 100 participants as the Curriculum Study and also conducted case studies in 8 schools (four of which were common to both studies). The study focussed on three areas of leadership - leadership for learning; leadership for quality improvement; and leadership for improved access. For the purposes of this report, the findings from the first area - leadership for learning – were taken into account to confirm the important role that the school principal has to play in the curriculum reform agenda. This includes engendering a positive school climate, informing and engaging community, developing staff and monitoring progress. All of these ultimately impact on the student learning outcomes. The rubric used in the study to assess responses in relation to the principal’s role as a curriculum leader is provided in Table 2 below.

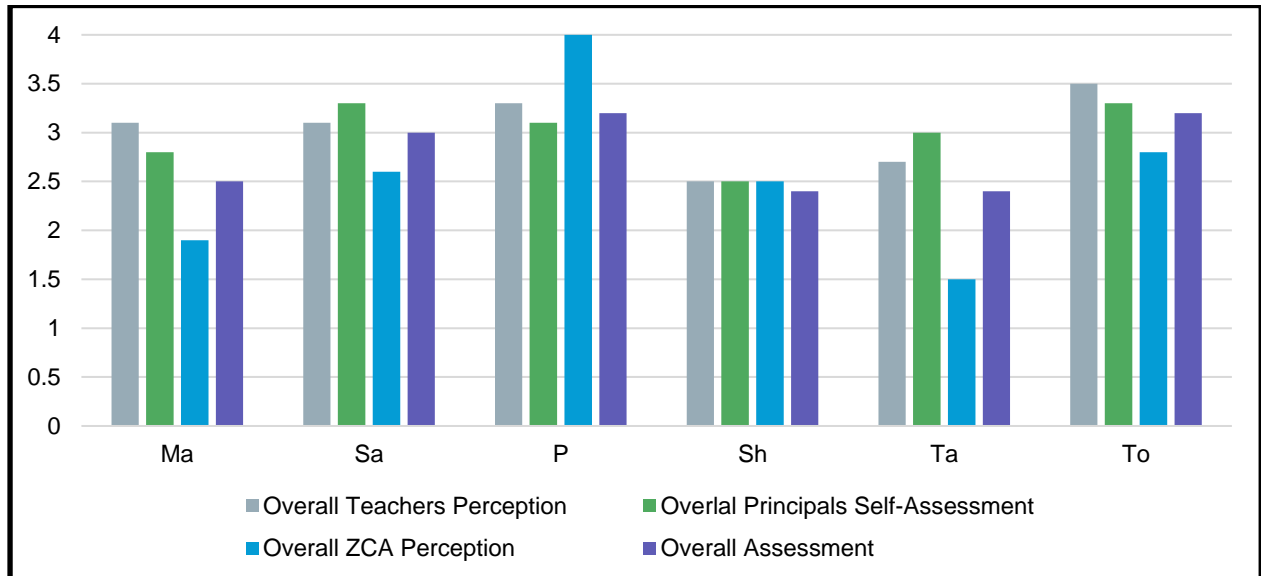
Key Question	Rating	Descriptor
To what extent is the Principal involved in defining the learning environment in the school	3.5-4.0	Fully involved. Takes the lead not only in defining the learning environment but takes the lead in all actions necessary to create an environment conducive for learning. The involvement of the Principal is crucial to achieving the outcome of the actions taken.
	2.5-3.4	Partially involved. Provides the necessary support to those implementing the various actions necessary to achieving a conducive learning environment. Support of the Principal has an influence in achieving the outcome of the actions taken.
	1.5-2.4	Minimally involved. Provides limited support to the implementation of necessary actions but not directly involved in implementing the necessary actions. Involvement of Principal has minor influence in defining the learning environment in the school.
	1.0-1.4	Not involved in any of the actions carried out by the school to improve the learning environment. Having a conducive environment in the school depends on what others, especially teachers, in the school carry out with or without the support from the Principal.

**Table 2: Leadership response assessment rubric**

It is evident from the results that many principals struggle to come to terms with their role and responsibilities in relation to educational leadership and how best to effectively engage with teachers to improve classroom practice and student learning outcomes.

Figure 7 provides a quick snapshot of the perceptions of teachers, principals and ZCAs with regards to the level of their involvement in supporting teachers with the new curriculum. The results are fairly

consistent across all provinces, however ZCA's generally assess their contribution less than teachers and principals, except in Penama.



**Figure 7: Leadership for Learning**

The report indicates the case studies confirmed there is a wide variability of leadership capabilities and styles ranging from examples of outstanding leadership for learning in some schools to total disengagement of the principal from the learning process in others. It was noted that in most cases principals are also acting as teachers thus combining two roles which leads to a level of confusion over roles and responsibilities. It is also acknowledged in the report that most school principals have limited leadership training and are not clear in their understanding of their important role supporting teachers in their schools, including to implement the curriculum reform. Some principals are also the senior classroom teachers and perceive leadership role as managing the administrative elements rather than being responsible for leading curriculum change.

There is also scope for provincial education authorities to provide more consistent support, in order to promote effective leadership and provide on-going support to schools in the new curriculum delivery. However, the report notes that there are strong examples of where good school leadership is being demonstrated and the new curriculum benefits are being felt in the classroom.

*“By delegating her (the Principal) responsibilities for the academic program of the school to teachers, it means she is able to fulfil her leadership responsibilities while being committed to her on-going teaching responsibilities (year 6) including supporting the shift from the teacher-centred approach to the child-centred approach. She integrates the approach to her year 6 class and it provides an example to us.”*

*(Teacher, Tafea Province)*

### 2.3 Overall findings

In summary, observations from the curriculum monitoring are:

- There seems to be good acceptance of the new curriculum directions which suggest teachers value the reform agenda although there are still those who are yet to be convinced, especially in the use of Bislama/vernacular as the language of instruction.

- The extent of implementation varies from province to province and from school to school within the same province.
- Principals have a significant effect on the extent and quality of curriculum implementation. A key factor that appears to influence implementation in schools is the principal's level of understanding, and commitment to, the new curriculum and associated policies.
- Although many teachers and provincial authorities report enthusiasm for the new curriculum, many suggest they do not yet deeply understand it or feel confident about how to apply it.
- The materials and training provided were reported to be of good quality and contributed to increased awareness, understanding and acceptance of the new curriculum. Issues relating to the timely provision of materials to teachers were identified in some contexts.
- Teachers mostly reported low levels of satisfaction with the quality and frequency of support from their school principals and provincial education office staff to implement the new curriculum although this is to be expected at this early stage of implementation.

### 3 System Response

This section describes early MoET responses to the recommendations from the CIMS.

Following completion of the monitoring study, the consultancy team made presentations to the Ministry of Education and Training. Subsequently, findings were discussed by the Curriculum Implementation Advisory Group comprising membership of the Curriculum Development Unit, VITE in-service, VITE Pre-service, The Examinations and Assessment Unit (EAU) and School-based Management (SBM). Further discussions were then held between the leadership teams from the respective work units and the VESP Curriculum Implementation Adviser to consider a systemic response to the recommendations presented in the study.

An outcome of these meetings were revisions to the 2018 to 2020 curriculum implementation plan, specifically regarding materials development, support and training.

A brief description of how the Ministry of Education and Training, with VESP support, has responded to each of the recommendations made in the CIMS support are described below.

**CIMS Recommendation 1:** The quality of support provided to schools in support of the implementation of the new curriculum needs to be strengthened.

**MoET Response:** Early stage discussions between VITE In-service and other MoET stakeholders has commenced with regard to enhancing support for schools to implement the new curriculum. A strategic approach to identifying and sharing successful practice in curriculum implementation has been suggested as an area to be explored in 2018 by the VITE In-Service Unit and relevant provincial office staff. This is in response to findings from the CIMS showing variability of curriculum implementation across schools and provinces. The idea of training staff in provincial offices to identify schools showing good progress with implementing the curriculum and then facilitating sharing of successful practice is considered a possible approach to developing the capability of other school staff in the future. Those schools identified as showing successful practice may be labelled “lighthouse schools” as potential centres of excellence and hubs for further curriculum research and development.

An approach that uses more of the people who are actively engaged in implementing the curriculum is considered a positive step forward to support other schools to implement the new curriculum. The current approach of using trained provincial staff who have never in fact implemented the new curriculum in a school context has shown not to be effective in some contexts. This means provincial staff must be supported to shift their focus from being disseminators of knowledge to identifying and sharing successful practices. This approach aligns with the MoET devolution agenda that has been supported through VESP.

Furthermore, VITE In-service will explore approaches to professional learning that will adopt a smaller scale, spaced learning approach. This involves teachers engaging with training on one aspect of the curriculum and then returning to their workplace to put their new learning into practice. They will then reconvene to share the progress they are making and identify additional support that may be required. Provincial office will staff facilitate the training and then review the efficacy of their support.

The MoET recognises that principals are key to curriculum implementation. The School Improvement Unit is in the early stages of conceptualising how leaders may have ongoing access to training and support to plan, implement and monitor curriculum implementation. Early suggestions include developing a suite of resources to support school improvement planning and reporting comprising self-reflection instruments and planning and reporting templates linked to the relevant Minimum Quality Standards for primary schools.

**CIMS Recommendation 2:** Increase understanding of teachers, principals and ZCA on the various elements of the new this curriculum through capacity building and professional development.

**MoET Response:** Work has already commenced with VESP technical support to develop a simple curriculum assessment and reporting guideline for schools that synthesises the expectations from the range of policy documents related to curriculum implementation – the National Curriculum Statement, the Syllabus, the Language Policy, the Assessment and Reporting Policy etc. Anecdotal evidence from the monitoring and other activities suggests that many teachers and principals are overwhelmed by these documents so it has been agreed that concise guidelines for schools, coupled with information sessions will assist in developing a shared understanding about the basic expectations of what schools are meant to do when implementing the new curriculum.

Furthermore, it has been agreed by the Curriculum Implementation Advisory Group to host a curriculum implementation symposium in November of this year. At the symposium clarification will be provided to curriculum support staff in provincial offices regarding their expectations. Training will also be provided at the symposium about how these officers can monitor the progress of implementation of the curriculum in the schools under their care.

Finally, in recognition of the need to do more to ensure principals understand the new curriculum and have confidence to lead implementation in their schools, new approaches are being explored. While training in instructional leadership supported through VESP has contributed to increase understanding of the shifting role of the school principal it is recognised that more support is required to develop the capability of schools leaders to plan for and monitor curriculum implementation. This will require ongoing professional learning support for school leaders including development of materials and training modules.

**CIMS Recommendation 3:** Increase parental and community involvement in the teaching and learning process.

**MoET Response:** The next phase of the Ministry's community advocacy campaign (the "Right Age" campaign) is currently being planned to commence in 2018 will focus on the new curriculum. The aim of the next phase will be to deepen the community's understanding of the curriculum reform agenda, particularly as it relates to adoption of the language policy and the new, more child-centred approaches to teaching, learning and assessment. A national coordinator has been engaged and with continuing international technical assistance, will support the Ministry's Communications Committee to design, manage and evaluate the campaign.

**CIMS Recommendation 4:** Develop national tools to be used by the provincial offices and principals in monitoring various aspects relating to the implementation of the new curriculum.

**MoET Response:** The curriculum development unit is in the final stages of developing a curriculum implementation rubric that may be used by schools and provincial office staff to make judgments with regard to how a school is progressing implementing the new curriculum. The tool will have a formative purpose. In other words it will be designed so that schools and provincial office staff can identify how well a school is progressing and where additional support is required. It is anticipated that the curriculum implementation rubric will form part of the training to occur at the curriculum symposium in November 2017.

CDU is also working with the monitoring and evaluation unit in the Ministry of Education and Training to develop a system approach to monitoring curriculum implementation through provincial offices. At this early stage of conceptualization it is thought that internal monitoring will use the curriculum implementation rubric and a complimentary checklist. Monitoring will be undertaken by trained provincial office staff who will report the extent to which schools are implementing the new curriculum. The idea that provincial office staff will enter data onto the system database that will be accessible at both the central and provincial office level is being explored. This will empower the Ministry of education

to monitor and report the extent to which the curriculum is been implemented across the system at any moment in time. The Ministry of Education and Training will be able to triangulate this data with data from external monitoring initiatives.

**CIMS Recommendation 5:** Use data from the monitoring process to address those factors that are negatively influencing the ability of teachers and the school to fully implement the new curriculum as expected.

**MoET Response:** The Ministry has started using data from the monitoring study as recommended and the responses to recommendations 1-4 above reflect these deliberations. In summary, the Curriculum Development Unit of the Ministry is taking a multi-faceted approach which involves:

- Use of the Curriculum Implementation Advisory Group as a forum to explore approaches to supporting professional learning that harness the collective wisdom of people working in schools
- Active engagement with “lighthouse” schools throughout the process of developing learning and teacher training materials to share successful practice and ensure that these are grounded in real classroom contexts.
- Working with the VITE In-service Unit and the School Improvement Unit to refine approaches for monitoring if curriculum materials are received by schools and disseminated to teachers
- Developing a school improvement and accountability resource to provide planning frameworks and internal monitoring resources to help school principals develop School Improvement Plans and reporting processes that are focussed on student learning.



## 4 Opportunities for On-Going Support

The next phase of VESP will provide an opportunity to further advance gains made during the first phase of implementing the new curriculum in Vanuatu. This section describes how VESP may respond to findings from the CIMS to tailor future support to the Vanuatu context based on two key principles:

- a) Sharing and radiating successful practice builds a learning nation
- b) Local solutions to local challenges build ownership and sustainability.

The curriculum implementation monitoring study emphasises that teachers and school leaders are key if the curriculum reform agenda is to be successful. We also know from other studies the quality of teachers and school leaders is very important if we expect any curriculum reform agenda to improve learning outcomes. While ongoing development of materials is important, the next phase of curriculum implementation must focus on development of the capability of principals and teachers to implement the new curriculum. Described below are possible areas where MoET could continue to benefit from technical and operational support:

- Continue timely development of quality materials to support teachers during the roll out of the new curriculum into Years 4-6 and associated resource materials for classroom use.
- Assist the Ministry of Education to identify and establish lighthouse schools where curriculum implementation is going well in each of the provinces. These schools should be provided intensive support to improve their practice. In this way the Ministry of Education and Training can demonstrate how the curriculum may be implemented in different contexts by radiating successful practice to others. This is a complex proposal and will require ongoing support to the MoET to determine how lighthouse schools are identified, supported and then provided opportunity to share good practice. One approach might be a model that involves grants to learning communities comprising lighthouse schools, schools in their cluster and provincial offices.
- Continue training and support for school principals to design School Improvement Plans that are informed by internal and external school monitoring processes focussed on student learning. Further support will be given to refine a school improvement and accountability resource to provide planning frameworks and internal monitoring resources for school principals.
- Assist with establishment of a Literacy Centre of Excellence in each provinces that is resourced to explore innovative approaches to supporting students transition from learning in the vernacular to learning in English or French. This proposal from the curriculum team acknowledges the importance of local solutions to local challenges and will provide the technical expertise to help schools or clusters of schools to meet the challenge of language transition. The lessons learned from this initiative can be leveraged by the MoET to support other schools to adopt tailored and contextualised language transition approaches rather than a one size fits all approach.
- Continue support to the VITE In-service and the School Improvement Unit to develop evidence-based approaches to teacher and leadership training in areas identified as fundamental for successful curriculum implementation. This means that support needs to be provided to the in-service unit to design and deliver professional learning and strategically monitor and review the effectiveness of training in collaboration with provincial office staff.

- Support MoET to set up a process for identifying champions of the curriculum reform agenda who are located in schools and can take a lead in deepening curriculum understanding among teachers in other schools.
- Assist the MoET to strategically respond to data from VANSTA administered in 2017 and again in 2019 when the first cohort for the new curriculum reaches Year 4. It is recommended that this strategic response evolves to a National Literacy Strategy that explores approaches to specifically improve literacy teaching and learning in the early years. This may include development and utilisation of a literacy developmental continuum so teachers may monitor student literacy development and identify intervention strategies. The literacy strategy may also encompass a tablet trial and development and trialling of digital reading materials to assist language transition.
- Establish processes that promote sustained review into the effectiveness and utility of curriculum implementation. It is apparent from the study that implementation of the new curriculum is both ambitious and aspirational. It is not a one or two-year endeavour and requires a long term view and commitment at all levels of MoET and within their local communities. Implementation will also require sustained inquiry and monitoring at both school and system levels. Ideally, inquiry will be strategic and supported by tools that may be adopted at a system and school level.

The approaches above indicate a shift commiserate with decentralisation of education support and services. It acknowledges that for the next phase of curriculum implementation support must be provided to the MoET to identify and share good practice. This requires development of tools and processes including monitoring instruments to demonstrate effectiveness. The emphasis must be on local solutions to challenges. As with any devolution agenda, the idea of shifting accountability from the centre to the provinces and ultimately school leadership must occur.

Ultimately, curriculum improvement will be linked to the School Improvement Planning (SIP) and school review processes. Inquiry should also be aligned at the system level, so that policies and priorities can be identified and responded to in ways that align at the provincial, school and classroom levels.

Based on the findings of the studies the Ministry has identified the following broad areas for VESP annual planning for 2018 that link curriculum development with the broader agenda of improving the quality of school leadership:

- Strengthening school leadership
- Improving the quality of teaching
- Improving communication to inform community
- Ongoing monitoring of curriculum implementation
- Establishing “lighthouse schools” to radiate successful practice and provide a basis for comparison moving forward.
- Develop performance management processes for *School Principals and teachers* linked to the *MQS* and the *Vanuatu Professional Standards 2,3)*
- Develop professional learning, training and support linked to *MQS, SIP* and the *Vanuatu Professional Standards for school principals and teachers (1,5,6,7,9, 11)*
- Develop tools and processes for monitoring school operations and effectiveness (4, 10 )
- Improving support for school improvement linked to *MQS* and *SIP* (10)
- Engage school principals in curriculum implementation training programs with teachers (7,8)

## 5 Conclusion

The curriculum implementation monitoring study provides the Ministry of Education and Training with an evidence-based platform for reviewing approaches to supporting curriculum implementation. Findings suggest that positive progress typical of what you would expect in this early stage of a curriculum reform agenda. While teachers and principals do not yet fully understand the theoretical underpinnings of an outcomes-based approach they are nevertheless experimenting with the new learning areas and designing teaching and learning programs to ensure students achieve the outcomes.

An area that requires improvement is associated with limited and low quality of ongoing support reported by school staff. It might be an unreasonable task to expect a provincial office staff to provide the breadth and depth of support required by the many schools in their jurisdiction when they have limited experience and confidence with the new curriculum themselves. Other factors such as poor access to remote schools, limited funding and so forth no doubt influence frequency of school visits. For these reasons, possible alternative approaches to professional learning and support are identified and described in this report. The MoET is already exploring the notion of school clusters who provide support to each other. This includes approaches such as establishment of lighthouse schools and identification of curriculum champions to provide support to other schools. VESP can play a role to support these professional learning communities to exist and thrive.

Furthermore, support must be provided to the Ministry to leverage from the decentralisation agenda. While much support has been provided to central office more support needs to be provided to the provincial offices in the future so that a culture of local solutions to local challenges can evolve. This means empowering provincial office staff to identify support needs and to explore alternative strategies to ensuring all schools have access to just-in-time support. It also means addressing systemic issues related to curriculum implementation where the teachers, principals, provincial staff and central government are not entirely clear on their roles and responsibilities for the different levels of management and governance.

The study confirms that provision of materials and training support to teachers is important but does not represent the complete “education package”. There needs to be continued and considerable effort and investment placed in to the training, support and professional mentoring of school principals.

In conclusion, the monitoring study also provided an opportunity to MoET, through the formation of the Technical Reference Group, to initiate, implement and manage future studies to assess progress of curriculum implementation. This has been an important step in the process to strengthen MoET’s ability to utilise the resources and tools supported through VESP and underpins a broader approach to build a culture of monitoring and evaluation within the Ministry.

## **Annex 1**

### **Curriculum Monitoring Study – Terms of Reference**

## **Annex 2**

### **Final Report on the Monitoring of the Implementation of the Year 1 Vanuatu Curriculum (June, 2017)**