

VESP View

VANUATU EDUCATION SUPPORT PROGRAM

May 2018

Issue 9: The Ministry of Education and Training devolution strategy



In line with the Ministry of Education and Training objective of improving the management of education in Vanuatu, the implementation of the devolution strategy should continue until the end of 2020.

Improving education services - starting with a comprehensive assessment

In late 2014, the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) started on a journey of improving the delivery of education. The Ministry conducted a comprehensive assessment of its current and future capacity needs, with support through VESP. A series of consultation workshops were held in all provinces, involving senior officers, school communities and principals. The Capacity Assessment Report of 2014 identified the Ministry's priorities for improving its organisational capacity to deliver services. The report was approved in 2015 and a detailed Management Action Plan (MAP) prepared in consultation with a Steering Committee. In May 2015, the MAP identified activities to strengthen capacity to deliver education services.

The Ministry's six key areas for strengthening

The MAP is structured around 6 key areas for development of staff and systems. They are: Effective Governance; Teacher Management; Teacher Development; Provincial Strengthening; Continuous Improvement; and Strengthening Human Resource Management (HRM) and Human Resource Development (HRD). The Provincial Strengthening was identified as the highest priority by the Steering Committee.

Strategies and activities were developed in response to each of the six key areas. A Ministry Devolution Strategy was developed to support management of education services closer to the Provincial communities.

"The Ministry's approach to devolution is focused on schools. Its overall goal is a more efficient and reliable education service delivery with expanded support to schools, heads, principals, teachers and staff"
Minister of Education and Training, Hon. Jean-Pierre Nirua

The central MoET is delegating aspects of school improvement, school inspection and compliance and financial accountability to provinces. As a result, in some areas the devolution strategy transfers authority from the central Ministry to Provincial Education Offices. Schools can then access support services more easily, while the Provincial Education Officers can better respond to school needs and priorities, through their on-ground knowledge and local resources.

This is a major undertaking for the Ministry and Provinces to deliver better education services across Vanuatu.

Goal: Strengthen the MoET staff and system capacities



The three-phase approach to Devolution

The Ministry's strategy is structured around three phases, from 2018 through to 2020.

The first phase started in early 2018 and aims at **expanding services and support to provinces and schools**. Functions and jobs already located in provinces have been either redesigned or roles expanded to support the schools. The number of staff required in the provinces have been increased with job descriptions identified. Provincial office staff are receiving on-going support. Devolution training is currently rolled out to the staff in all provinces to define the new roles and responsibilities required for implementation of the phase 1. In addition, the training includes a work plan for the School Inspectors and for the School Improvement Officers.

The second phase will identify further options to strengthen service delivery by refining Central Ministry functions and placing additional posts in provinces. Phase 2 will first focus on Education Services and Finance. The objective is to **expand services and support to all the stakeholders**. Phase 2 also has a focus on continuous improvements.

The last phase is all about **Central Ministry Efficiencies**. It would be a functional review of Ministry Divisions/Directorates to integrate and streamline Ministry strategic and governance functions, policy inputs and executive management to further strengthen provincial service delivery. The focus will also include Boards at Ministry and at provincial levels.

The Benefits of Devolution

The benefits and outcomes of the devolution include:

- ✓ A stronger focus on the development of plans, national priorities and strategies, quality standards, systems and reporting, as well as monitoring compliance by MoET
- ✓ Increased autonomy and accountability for education services delivered in Provinces
- ✓ More responsiveness to local communities
- ✓ Improved management of Ministry's teacher workforce
- ✓ Improved management of schools and their facilities
- ✓ Provincial management and monitoring of School Improvement Plans and school rationalisation, in partnership with communities
- ✓ Devolution of some decision-making in HRM, finance, assets, procurement and facilities, the teaching service and oversight of schools
- ✓ Provincial management of teacher performance and development to support qualification and teacher registration
- ✓ Management of School Support Centres, including School Improvement Officers working to support clusters of schools



Devolution Training for Shefa provincial education officers



Maintaining the level and quality of basic education services across Vanuatu is a complex task involving thousands of teachers, parents and supportive communities. The Ministry's devolution moves some decision making closer to these schools

and communities. This strategy reflects Provincial leaders and managers can better understand their local conditions and resources, and are well placed to help schools deliver education for all children, no matter how remote their location.

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