

# VESP View

## VANUATU EDUCATION SUPPORT PROGRAM

August 2018

Issue 12: Capacity Development to support the Ministry of Education and Training Devolution Strategy



**VESP is supporting the Ministry Devolution Strategy (MDS), intended to enable provinces to manage their schools in a way that provides guidance and assistance, with increased levels of decision making at the local level. Devolution is a large undertaking, a policy that will take the medium term to complete. The overall objective is to strengthen provinces to manage education, increasing quality of outcomes and access to schools for all children.**

The MDS is in three phases. Phase 1, almost completed, is the “readiness” phase and focuses on getting the staff in provinces ready for devolution by improving capacity to be able to support schools and teachers. There are more management staff appointed at provincial level, with new roles and responsibilities. The aim of devolution is to have these new provincial staff support their local schools, to make sure Ministry policies are followed, and teaching and learning are improved. It is also important that local communities are involved and that school rations and supplies (including learning materials) are delivered and used in classrooms. This is a new approach and provincial staff need training and encouragement so they can be confident in their new roles and support their schools.

### VESP Support to Devolution Capacity Building

There is a new provincial structure to be approved by the Public Service Commission (PSC) for program, school and teacher coordination. The roles of Provincial Education Officers and other senior posts are proposed to be redesigned to strengthen local management, planning and teamwork. The table below shows the support provided by VESP between April and August 2018 for the training required by Phase I of devolution.

	Number of staff trained	% of staff trained
Provincial Education Officers	5	83%
Deputy Education Officers	1	17%
Secondary Coordinators	1	17%
Primary Coordinators	1	17%
ECCE Coordinators	5	83%
Provincial Improvement Coordinators	5	83%
School Improvement Officers	22	71%
School Inspectors	8	67%
Provincial Trainers	11	58%
Finance	2.5	42%
Open VEMIS	4	80%
Maintenance	1	16%
Audit	0.5	10%



Each province is in a different state of readiness for devolution. Progress is uneven in how devolution is implemented. There is a good foundation, as well as commitment and willingness. Phase 1 training in all provinces will be completed in October 2018. After approval by PSC, selection of staff to permanent posts will follow, particularly for school improvement, school inspection and in compliance. Following appointment of these provincial roles and positions, Phase I of the MDS will be complete, with Phase II training and support scheduled to commence in 2019.

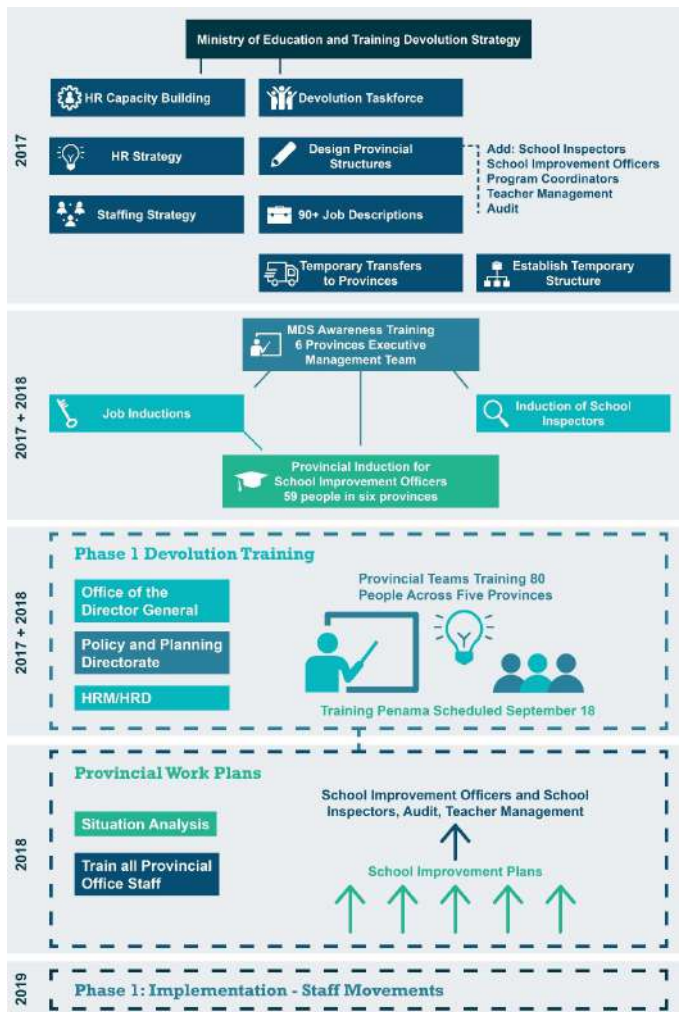
The training had some additional benefits – more than just the skills and knowledge for implementing Phase 1. All the teams attending training commented on how positive it was to actually plan the implementation together, they learned about each other’s job and how they could support each other. Most benefit was seen with the preparation of Provincial Work Plans which seemed to bring the team together and the content of the work plans reflected how input from different jobs/perspectives was used to create the plan for the first time.

*John Niroa, Trainer and School Support Specialist*

## Next steps

The long-term intent of devolution is for provinces to be resourced to deliver greater services directly to schools. This is through qualified Ministry staff making more decisions at the local level in order that positive change can happen in the management of schools and in teaching and learning. For the remaining Phases of devolution, the Ministry will specify the scale and the speed that it happens, so that support, services and resources can be provided more directly to schools. Increasing support and resourcing to the schools will help improve the student learning and the education outcomes.

The diagram below shows progress of the devolution to date and how the focus will move towards directly supporting schools and school improvement from 2019. In this way the benefits and efficiencies that are planned to be a result of the devolution can be felt in schools and in classrooms.



The new provincial structure with School Inspectors and School Improvement Officers is critical for services to schools, it is a good model and one we must make it work to support teachers and schools.

*Bergmans Iati, Director General of Education*



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