

# VESP View

## VANUATU EDUCATION SUPPORT PROGRAM

March 2018

Issue 7: Diploma External Course to deliver  
Effective Teaching and Learning



**The Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) is developing a strategic plan to upgrade the qualifications of its teachers over the next 5-10 years. As part of this, the Vanuatu Institute of Teacher Education (VITE) has been testing out ways of delivering Diploma units to practising teachers through an external study mode.**

### An innovative training method

The Government of Vanuatu is committed to offer a well-managed education system, improving the quality of education in all six provinces. The Government has set the minimum standard of qualification required for teachers as a bachelor degree in education but a large number of teachers in the system are qualified to certificate level only or are not qualified at all.

To provide schools with qualified teachers, it is essential to focus not only on pre-service training for new teachers but to also provide in service training opportunities for teachers already in the system to achieve a qualification. As a first step, the focus is to upgrade the teaching force to at least diploma level with the longer-term goal of every teacher in the system having at least a bachelor level qualification.

The provision of formal teacher training through in service is very new for VITE and the institute has a major task ahead to restructure itself to provide a single pathway for both new and existing teachers to achieve a qualification. To prepare itself for this role, VITE has been trialling approaches to deliver units by external study to primary teachers without an appropriate qualification. This mode of delivery uses distance education resource tools such as study guides, activities and assignment directions, mentoring and phone communication arrangements with provincial trainers and lecturers as well as face-to-face workshops and zone cluster study group.

The activities undertaken so far show that they are all engaged energetically in making changes at their respective schools by improving support for marginalised children, raising awareness within the communities and increasing engagement among teachers and students.

### The Effective Teaching and Learning unit as a start

The first unit in the in-service diploma course to be developed for external delivery was *Effective Teaching and Learning*. In October 2016, a targeted selection process was conducted to identify teachers to participate in a trial of the unit. The trial was initially conducted in Shefa, Penama and Malampa. Following modifications to the unit, the training was then offered to teachers in Torba, Sanma and Tafea.

The unit introduces the basic principles of effective teaching and learning. It explores how to promote student learning, the different approaches and strategies that can be used in a classroom and the type of classroom management skills that are considered as good teaching practice. The training started with one week of face-to-face workshop to introduce this new study method, familiarize the teachers with the self-study guide and build their confidence for the following 14 weeks of self-study from their islands.

The unit is the first of its kind developed by VITE to address Policy Priority 1 in the MoET corporate plan to improve the quality of primary teachers in Vanuatu by developing a basic understanding of the new primary curriculum and its role in guiding quality teaching in all classrooms.

### Success stories

The distance education model has been warmly welcomed by the teachers who found the learning tools very practical and useful for their development. It also offered a unique opportunity to teachers who do not have the opportunity to attend several weeks of training away from their home due to financial or family reasons.



## Jenny Nierre, Teacher in Tanna

Jenny Nierre has risen up from the loss of both her parents as a teenager while also having to drop out of school at Year 8 to become a community teacher in her village in Tanna.

She first started teaching kindergarten children after the school council asked her to cover during another teacher's maternity leave in 1994. After this experience, she developed a strong interest in teaching and continued to be a community teacher for the next 20 years. The external study trial was a unique opportunity for her to improve her teaching skills and start a journey to achieve a formal qualification through the program. While still in the process of getting a diploma, she was recently ranked by the Ministry as one of the two best performing teachers in the whole country. Jenny is genuinely dedicated to helping others, whether they are children or other members of the community. In March 2018, she received the Andy Lynch Award for Excellence in the Community Sector from the Australian High Commissioner, Jenny Da Rin.

"I found the unit very interesting as I developed my teaching skills and discovered various teaching approaches to promote students' learning. It was challenging sometimes because my education level isn't high enough but at least I have a positive approach."



## What's next?

The trial of the external delivery model involving 114 teachers was evaluated in 2017. The evaluation provided many valuable lessons about the challenges ahead for VITE to extend the opportunity to more teachers in Vanuatu and develop the full set of units needed to complete the full diploma course. A second unit, Assessment & Reporting, is currently being developed to be available as an online version and as a text book version.

"The unit lessons have been very helpful inside the classrooms. I've tried some of the new methods. Some of the students who used to struggle in their learning have slowly caught up with the other students and they are now at the same stage of learning.", Auiden Wedung, Teacher in Gaua



"The unit content is helpful. I learnt to use group activities more often. When they work in a group, if one student doesn't understand the others can help them. When they explain something to each other with their own words, it is easier for them to understand. Also, now, I involve parents in the learning of their children. Together, we find solutions to support the learning of the children. The unit really improved my way of teaching. My colleagues asked me to share my learning with them. Even the Principal asked for my help.", Joy Buleura, Teacher in Pentecost

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