

Vanuatu Education Support Program

Project Component for Implementation
Strategy 2

**Strengthening
Early Childhood Care and
Education
(SECCE)**

DRAFT PROJECT DESIGN

19 July 2013

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Definitions, Acronyms and Abbreviations..... | 3 |
| EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | 4 |
| I. CONTEXT AND ANALYSIS..... | 4 |
| II. PROJECT DESIGN | 5 |
| III. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS..... | 6 |
| SECTION 1: CONTEXT AND ANALYSIS..... | 8 |
| I. COUNTRY AND SECTORAL CONTEXT | 8 |
| II. GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO EDUCATION PROBLEMS | 9 |
| III. VANUATU EDUCATION SUPPORT PROGRAM (VESP) | 11 |
| IV. ANALYSIS OF PROBLEMS IN CURRENT ECCE PROVISION..... | 12 |
| V. VESP SUPPORT TO ECCE TO IMPROVE SCHOOL READINESS | 13 |
| SECTION 2: PROJECT DESIGN | 15 |
| I. DESIGN PRINCIPLES | 15 |
| II. EXPECTED OUTCOMES AND OUTPUTS..... | 16 |
| III. OPERATIONAL MODALITY, FINANCING AND TIMESCALE | 18 |
| SECTION 3: IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS | 20 |
| I. PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING..... | 20 |
| II. PRIORITIES FOR PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION | 22 |
| Project Outcome 1: Quality improvement in Pilot Kindergartens..... | 22 |
| Project Outcome 2: Community Participation..... | 24 |
| Project Outcome 3: Piloting and Evaluation..... | 25 |
| Project Outcome 4: Support to National Program | 27 |
| IV. MONITORING AND EVALUATION | 27 |
| V. OTHER ISSUES | 28 |
| Appendix: Rationale for Strengthening ECCE in Vanuatu..... | 29 |

Definitions, Acronyms and Abbreviations

'Government' refers to the Government of Vanuatu

'Development partners' refers to the donors for the Vanuatu Education Support Program: AusAID, NZMFAT and UNICEF

'Implementing partner' refers to the NGO or private sector partner to be procured by the Ministry of Education to implement the Strengthening of Early Childhood Care and Education Project

| | |
|---------|--|
| ARNEC | Asia-Pacific Regional Network for Early Childhood |
| AusAID | Australian Agency for International Development |
| CC | Community Coordinator |
| DP | Development Partner |
| ECCE | Early Childhood Care and Education |
| ECD | Early Childhood Development |
| ELDS | Early Learning Development Standards |
| GoV | Government of Vanuatu |
| IP | Implementing Partner |
| KT | Key Teacher |
| MDG | Millennium Development Goals |
| MoE | Ministry of Education |
| M&E | Monitoring and Evaluation |
| NGO | Non-governmental Organization |
| NZMFAT | New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade |
| OECD | Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development |
| PPP | Public Private Partnership |
| VEJA | <i>Vanuatu Eli Jaelhud Asosiesen</i> |
| SBM | School Based Management |
| SECCE | 'Strengthening Early Childhood Care and Education' Project |
| TA | Technical Assistant |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |
| VANASTA | Vanuatu Standardised Test of Achievement |
| VANEGRA | Vanuatu Early Grades Reading Assessment |
| VEMIS | Vanuatu Education Management Information System |
| VERM | Vanuatu Education Road Map |
| VESP | Vanuatu Education Sector Program |
| VESS | Vanuatu Education Sector Strategy |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I. CONTEXT AND ANALYSIS

1. Vanuatu has high levels of poverty and vulnerability, with challenges to development from its geography, its linguistic and cultural diversity, the inaccessibility of many of its communities, rapid population growth and urban migration, environmental problems and weak economic growth. These have impacted on education provision: despite high levels of government funding, Vanuatu is unlikely to meeting the Millennium Goal of universal primary education completion. Only 37% of pupils enrol in primary education at the correct age, and there are high levels of repetition and drop-out from primary school. Whilst there is high gender equity, there are major problems of access for children with disabilities. And well over half of all children in primary school are failing to adequately achieve the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Yet these skills, and the post-primary education skills that build on them, are vital for Vanuatu's development.
2. There are particular problems in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE). Only 60% of children attend kindergarten (*'kindy'* in Bislama, the official language of Vanuatu alongside English and French). 70% of those enrolling are overage when they enrol and are therefore overage when enrolling at primary level. The quality of instruction in many kindergartens is poor. And, contrary to government policy, there is little provision for children with disabilities.
3. The Government of Vanuatu (GoV) recognises education as a priority sector, and within this, the importance of ECCE. With Development Partner (DP) support, it has established a national ECCE policy and new curriculum, put in place National and Provincial ECCE Coordinators and published a national ECCE framework to set out ECCE standards and guide development.
4. GoV has also established a Vanuatu Education Sector Strategy (V ESS) and a Vanuatu Education Road Map (VERM) for taking this forward. The goal of both is increased access, improved quality and strengthened management of the education system. In the light of problems implementing the VERM and a realisation of the need for more emphasis on early years learning, GoV and DPs agreed, in 2012, a 5-year program focusing on early years education. This is entitled Vanuatu Education Support Program (VESP). The Intended Program Outcomes for VESP are:
 - Literacy and numeracy of children in early years education reach national standards;
 - All girls and boys, including those with disabilities, are able to access early years schooling;
 - More children enrol at primary school;
 - Children stay at primary school longer (without repeating).The strengthening of ECCE is seen as a key strategy for achieving these outcomes, particularly through making children ready for school. (See Appendix A for Rationale.)
5. Low enrolment in ECCE is a combination of insufficient kindergartens and inadequate demand. ECCE teachers are funded by fees; buildings, equipment and materials are provided by community resources rather than by government. Poorer communities

cannot afford the necessary resources and poorer parents cannot pay the fees and other costs. At the same time, some parents and communities do not see ECCE as a priority.

6. The quality of instruction in some kindergartens is low because of lack of materials and more especially because many ECCE teachers are untrained, under-qualified, and unmotivated. Few teach effectively, and only 18% use mother-tongue instruction despite this being crucial for learning to read and write. Nevertheless, the community-based approach to ECCE has many benefits and Government is seeking to continue community responsibility whilst providing capacity building to strengthen ECCE.
7. The Ministry of Education (MoE) is developing the VESP Implementation Strategy for strengthening ECCE with the objective of improving school readiness and thereby achievement of the VESP objectives. A key element of this is to test new approaches and assess the feasibility, efficiency and results of different models of ECCE delivery. This will be undertaken through a pilot study of alternative approaches to ECCE in 60 communities. The pilot is to take into account other forms of ECCE to the traditional *kindy*, the problems of isolated communities and affordability for poorer parents. The pilot will also examine the scope for public-private partnerships.
8. Besides the pilot, MoE is also providing training nationally in the roll-out of the new curriculum, basic supplies of materials, undertaking research and strengthening public/community awareness
9. MoE is contracting an Implementing Partner (IP) to implement the pilot study through a component of VESP entitled the 'Strengthening of ECCE Project' (SECCE). SECCE is will also provide minor support to some of the national activities, particularly in relation to teacher-training for the new curriculum, procurement and distribution of materials.

II. PROJECT DESIGN

10. The project design takes a holistic view of ECCE in line with the MoE *Vanuatu Early Childhood Care and Education Policy*. ECCE is taken to include formal and informal programs. The pilot is designed to allow rigorous evaluation of the impact of its changes to the traditional *kindy* whilst focusing on improving ECCE standards in the poorer or isolated communities in which it is based, the children of which are its primary beneficiaries. The design also includes an emphasis on children with special needs.
11. The design takes on board the MoE commitment to mother tongue and bilingual education and the potential for improvements through public-private partnerships. In regard to cost-effectiveness, it balances the need to adequately resource the design and investigation of innovative approaches with the need to reduce ongoing running costs to allow for sustainable mainstreaming.
12. The Project Purpose is to increase the number of pre-school children that are ready for primary school as a result of accessing quality ECCE learning. This feeds in to the VESP Program Outcomes listed in paragraph 4 above and the VESP/VERM goal.
13. There are four project outcomes. The first three of these relate to the pilot: (1) improved quality of ECCE in pilot communities; (2) increased support for ECCE in pilot communities; (3) innovations to improve cost-effectiveness are piloted and evaluated. The fourth outcome, reflecting SECCE's minor support to the national MoE program, is strengthened MoE support to national delivery of ECCE.

14. The intermediate outcomes and outputs for quality improvement focus on: teacher training; better use of learning resources; kindergarten management; and provision for children with special needs.
15. The intermediate outcomes and outputs for community support involve: community awareness raising including the establishment of ECCE champions; awareness activities for parents including promotion of home learning; identifying children with special needs; and leveraging increased community support.
16. Intermediate outcomes and outputs for improving cost-effectiveness involve: assessment of alternative approaches to ECCE delivery; assessment of the potential for Public Private Partnership initiatives (PPP); and the overall evaluation of the pilot.
17. Intermediate outcomes and outputs for the national program involve support for travel, learning materials and trainer-training.
18. The project is of three years duration, starting in 2013, with a possible two-year extension. The pilot will operate in the following provinces: Torba, Malampa and Shefa (in particular Efate island).
19. The overall budget for three years is AUD\$865,000, with budgets corresponding to the four outcomes being \$506,000, \$226,000, \$45,000 and \$88,000 respectively.

III. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

20. The Implementing Partner (IP) will manage the project on behalf of MoE, reporting to the MoE Director Education Services and working in close collaboration with other MoE staff for this subsector, in particular the National ECCE Co-ordinator. The IP will work in close collaboration with, and be advised by, the ECCE Adviser. In the case of Output 3, the IP will work closely with the VESP Managing Contractor who will provide additional support to evaluate the pilots' results and conduct further research. The IP will also be advised on strategic issues by the VESP Education Specialist.
21. The IP, through consultation with MoE, will identify, design and cost the activities to achieve the intended objectives 1 to 3, and design and cost those for objective 4 in response to MoE requirements. The IP will develop annual workplans under the direction of the ECCE Unit for approval by the Director Education Services, The IP will provide monthly updates to the ECCE Unit and full 6-monthly reports to the VERM Steering Committee.
22. The IP will employ effective management arrangements within the host communities. In particular, under the guidance of the ECCE Unit the IP will contract and provide initial training for 7 Key Teachers (KTs) and 5 Community Coordinators (CCs), each covering 12 kindergartens/communities. The KT and CCs will take the lead in managing and supporting the activities corresponding to Project Outcomes 1 (quality improvement) and 2 (community participation) respectively. The CCs will also work closely with and support the field-based staff of the Ministry of Health and other stakeholders.
23. The KT activities will focus on the implementation of the new curriculum and complementary resource tools. They will build on existing MoE training, and seek to improve teacher morale as well as competence. The CCs will emphasise parental involvement including the development and use of ECCE home kits, and will include health and nutrition workshops.

24. The VESP Managing Contractor will engage a consultant to undertake the evaluation of the pilot, and will at the outset, ensure the pilot design is amenable to rigorous evaluation together with its separate innovative features. The IP will take advice on this from the VESP Research Group and will take account of the Pacific ECD Scales initiative.
25. The IP will develop a monitoring and evaluation system and results framework for the project with guidance from the VESP Monitoring and Evaluation Adviser. The IP will arrange the early collection of baseline data, and will support overall VESP program monitoring.
26. The IP will also pay due attention to the issues of sustainability, gender equity and empowerment, and to financial transparency, security, environmental, child protection and other potential risks.

SECTION 1: CONTEXT AND ANALYSIS

I. COUNTRY AND SECTORAL CONTEXT

1. **Vanuatu has high levels of poverty and vulnerability.** Vanuatu is ranked 125th out of 187 countries on the UN Human Development Index. 80% of the population of 250,000 people remain dependent on subsistence agriculture for their livelihoods, yet the rural sector contributes only 8% of Gross Domestic Product. The adult literacy rate is only 33%¹. Around 13% of people live below the national basic needs poverty line, and a further 22% are close to the poverty threshold.²
2. **There are many challenges to Vanuatu's overall development and to developments within the education sector.** Vanuatu's population is spread over 60 inhabited islands extending more than 1,000km from North to South. The vast expanse of seas between the islands together with the difficult terrain of the islands has resulted in a very diverse grouping of Melanesian people with 105 local languages in addition to the official languages Bislama, French and English local languages, and a wide diversity of customs. Apart from other constraints, this raises severe access and support problems for education and health services, and makes it difficult to teach using the mother-tongue. There is political instability arising from local allegiances and divisions inherited from its British and French colonial past, placing constraints on the continuity and efficiency of national level services. Additional challenges are rapid population growth of 1.3% annually, high urban migration (over 4% per annum), and natural disasters such as earthquakes, cyclones and flooding. Economic growth has dropped from 5% to 3% due to the Global Financial Crisis; and it remains vulnerable to both further economic impacts and natural disasters.³
3. **Because of these and other factors, Vanuatu is not achieving its education goals.** The Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of universal primary education completion is amongst those unlikely to be met by Vanuatu in 2015. Progress has stalled on improvements to primary education. Enrolment rates are low and static: the net enrolment for primary education fell from 88.1% in 2010 to 87.9% in 2011. Only 37%⁴ of children are enrolling in year 1 at the correct age, and there are high repetition and dropout rates (8% and 12% respectively). According to the latest census⁵, 13% of girls over 5 years of age and women and 10% of boys/men have never been to school. (For those at current primary school age, there are currently more male than female out of school children.) There are high regional variations in enrolment, and major problems of access for children with disabilities.
4. **The quality of education is a major problem.** Well over half of all children in primary school are failing to adequately achieve the basic skills of reading, writing and numeracy. The 2010, the Vanuatu Early Grades Reading Assessment (VANEGRA) in a sample of schools across the country showed the majority of children (more boys than girls) are failing to learn the basic skills of reading. The most recently available results from the Vanuatu

¹ Early, R & Tamtam, H. (2007) *Report on Literacy Survey*, University of the South Pacific.

² RMIT (Feeny et al) 2012, *Vulnerability and Resilience to Shocks in Melanesia: Policy Brief*

³ UNCTAD (2012). *Vulnerability profile of Vanuatu*.

⁴ 2011 net intake rates taken from the Vanuatu Education Management Information System (VEMIS)

⁵ 2009 National Population and Housing Census: Gender Monograph – Men and Women in Vanuatu

Standardised Test of Achievement (VANSTA) showed that in both English-medium and French-medium schools only 17% of boys were able to read and write satisfactorily in Year 4. Boys in English-medium schools were equally poor in numeracy in Year 4, with only 17% showing proficiency compared to 31% of French language schools. The rates for Year 4 girls were generally higher than boys, but still only about 33% of girls demonstrated satisfactory numeracy and literacy⁶.

5. **There are particular problems in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE).** Whilst enrolment in ECCE in Vanuatu has significantly increased in recent years, it remains low - around 60%, and well below this in poorer areas. And around 70% of those children who do enrol are older than the target age of 3 to 5, which implies that they are also overage when they enrol in primary school. And despite an inclusive MoE policy, children with special needs (including physical and cognitive disabilities) are not presently served by Vanuatu's kindergartens.
6. **Poor access to education and low quality of education are hindering national development.** 'Education is a key driver of economic development and poverty reduction: enhancing people's ability to make informed decisions, be better parents, sustain a livelihood, adopt new technologies, cope with shocks, and be responsible citizens and effective stewards of the natural environment'.⁷ Conversely, high levels of illiteracy and a poorly educated population provide a severe constraint to economic and social development and to health and national integration. The consequences of poor results in the early grades of education and high drop-out rates are evident in the adult population. Only 55 per cent of those who completed secondary school in 2011 were literate. A 2011 NGO survey⁸ in the most populated province of Vanuatu reports literacy at 27% for 15 to 60 year olds.

II. GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO EDUCATION PROBLEMS

7. **Education is recognised as a priority sector.** Government of Vanuatu (GoV) expenditure on the education sector is 21% of total public expenditure, which is almost twice the OECD average and one of the highest in the Pacific region. Vanuatu's national development plan⁹ envisions "an educated, healthy and wealthy Vanuatu" and has primary education as one of its three overarching goals. Four policy objectives are directly focused on education:
 - I. To improve access to education and ensure gender and rural/urban balance;
 - II. To raise the quality and relevance of education;
 - III. To improve planning, fiscal and financial management in the sector;
 - IV. To develop a distinctively Vanuatu education system.
8. **Government has a strategy for education reform.** The *Vanuatu Education Sector Strategy* (VESS) is the umbrella document that sets out the policy framework for the Vanuatu education system over the period 2007-16. Its vision is: *'for a caring education system which provides every young person with the lifelong skills, values, and confidence*

⁶ Source VEMIS data 2011

⁷ The World Bank. *The World Bank Education Strategy 2020: Learning for All Investing in People's Knowledge and Skills*. 2011.

⁸ ASPBAE Australia and VEPAC, Education Experience Survey and Literacy Assessment, Shefa Province Vanuatu, 2011

⁹ *Priorities and Action Agenda for Vanuatu 2006-2015*

to be self-reliant and to contribute to the development of Vanuatu, and which works in partnership with all stakeholders to provide well-managed schools.'

9. **ECCE is recognised as an important subsector.** In 1990, GoV included a position for a National Pre-school Coordinator in its national budget. It has subsequently, through this Coordinator and with DP support: established an ECCE policy¹⁰ (to be reviewed in 2014); developed a curriculum; developed ECCE materials and resources; written learning standards; and hired Provincial Coordinators. In March 2013, the Ministry of Education (MoE) published its *National Framework on Early Childhood Care and Education in Vanuatu*. The Framework outlines key expectations for planning, instruction and assessment. It also includes expectations for future curriculum development and the development of outreach strategies with various stakeholders.
10. **Government has a Road Map for implementing the VESS strategy with Development Partner (DP) support.** The *Vanuatu Education Road Map* (VERM) 2009 is the key medium-term working document for implementing VESS through a partnership between the Government of Vanuatu¹¹ and Development Partners. The 'Pool Partners' - GoV, Australia (AusAID), New Zealand (NZMFAT) and UNICEF – make a financial contribution through a tripartite Grant Financing Arrangement. 'Non-Pool Partners'¹² contribute through separate mechanisms, including General Budget Support. Throughout the rest of this document, the term "Development Partners" (DPs) refers only to AusAID, NZMFAT and UNICEF. VERM has supported a number of promising initiatives, including: school grants to provide fee-relief and increase access; the development of minimum service standards for primary schools; the introduction of school based management reforms to enhance the school grants scheme; a revised curriculum syllabus for Years 1 to 3 of primary education; and a new ECCE policy.
11. **Government has launched a program to support early years' education.** At the end of 2012, GoV and DPs agreed a 5 year Vanuatu Education Sector Program (VESP) to strengthen VERM implementation. This was in response to findings that less than half of the intended 2011 and 2012 VERM activities had been implemented and that a greater focus was needed on early years' education and the strengthening of government systems.

¹⁰ 'Early Childhood Care and Education' (2010)

¹¹ GoV is represented by: Ministry of Education, Ministry of Finance and Economic Management, and the Prime Minister's Office.

¹² Non-Pool Partners are represented by: Government of France; Government of Japan; Agence Française de Développement; European Union; The Peace Corps; Secretariat of the Pacific Community; UNECSO; and The World Bank.

III. VANUATU EDUCATION SECTOR PROGRAM (VESP)

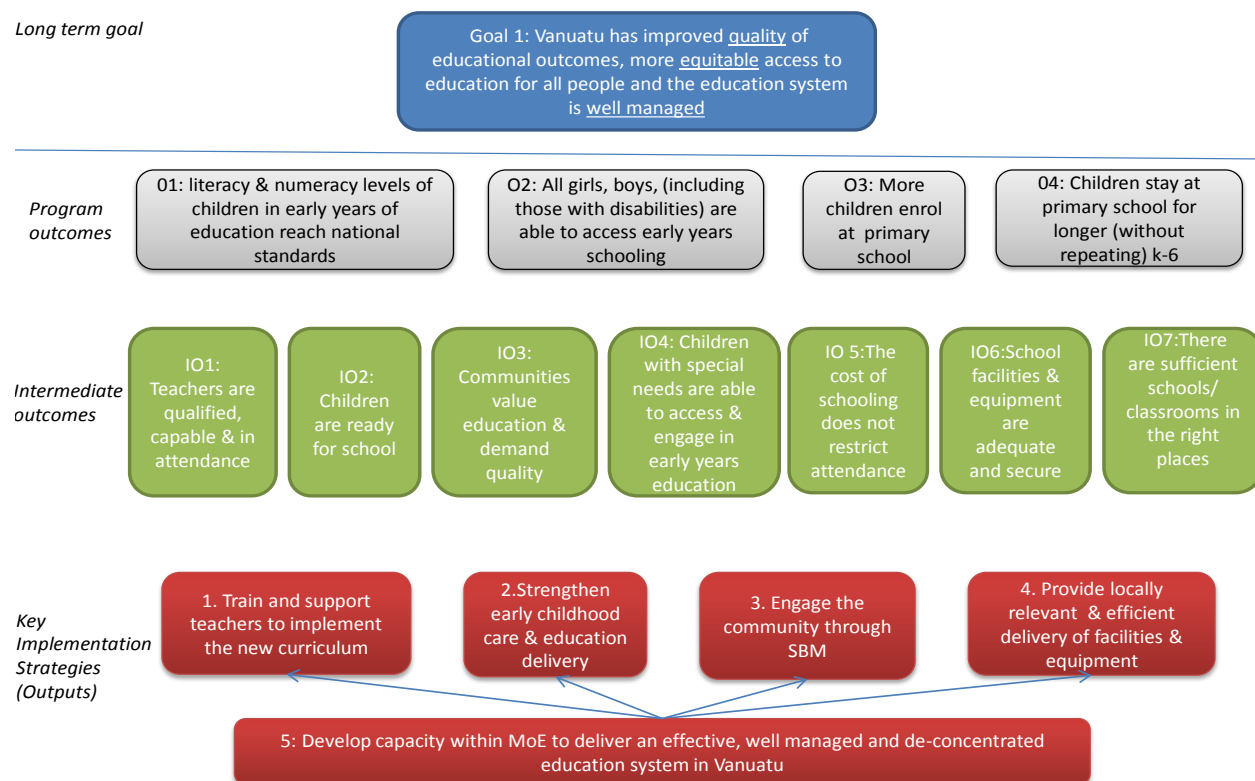


Figure 1: VESP Theory of Change

12. **VESP targets Early Years' education in line with the VERM.** Figure 1 shows the VESP Theory of Change. VESP shares the VERM goal: to increase access, to improve quality and strengthen management of the education system. To achieve this goal, VESP focuses on four key end-of-program outcomes (with respective targets shown in parentheses):

- Literacy and numeracy of children in early years of education reach national standards (proportion of children meeting literacy standards at the end of grade 3 increases from 29% to 45%);
- More children enrol at primary school (proportion of children who enrol at the correct age in grade 1 increases from 37% to 50%),
- All boys and girls, including those with disabilities, are able to access primary school (net intake rate gender parity is maintained);
- Children stay at primary school for longer without repeating grades (survival rate to grade 4 increases from 77% to 85%, and to grade 6 increases from 58% to 65%).

13. **VESP has five key implementing strategies to achieve its intended outcomes:**
 - i. Train and support teachers to implement the new curriculum;
 - ii. Strengthen early childhood care and education delivery;
 - iii. Engage the community through school-based management;
 - iv. Provide locally relevant and efficient delivery of facilities and equipment;
 - v. Develop capacity within MoE to deliver an effective, well-managed and de-concentrated education system in Vanuatu.

14. **ECCE is seen within VESP as important for school readiness and the development of literacy and numeracy.** VANEGRA demonstrated that children who had attended pre-school could read better than those who had not. This is in line with international research, which demonstrates that interventions in early childhood are strongly correlated with a range of benefits including increased levels of literacy. ECCE helps level the playing field for disadvantaged children as they enter primary school, empowering them to be confident and successful in later education and employment. (See Annex for Rationale for supporting the strengthening of ECCE.)

IV. ANALYSIS OF PROBLEMS IN CURRENT ECCE PROVISION

15. **Low ECCE enrolment in many communities in Vanuatu is a combination of constraints on provision and low demand.** There are around 450 kindergartens in Vanuatu, which is insufficient to have a kindergarten in easy reach of every child. Young children find it too far to walk to the nearest kindergarten so they do not attend. Communities are responsible for creating and funding kindergartens ('*kindys*' in Bislama). Most kindergartens are run by locally elected committees. Parents pay fees, barely covering the small salaries paid to the teacher. The construction of the kindergarten and the provision of furnishing, equipment and materials are the responsibility of the community. Government regulates the sector, establishes standards including the curriculum, and has the role of monitoring and ensure adherence to the standards, and providing initial training for new teachers. All kindergartens are registered with Government and are in principle overseen by ECCE Provincial Coordinators though these need funds to make regular monitoring visits. Community-led provision relies on high parental and community demand. And some parents do not see ECCE as a high priority for their children as set against the fees and other costs.

16. **Community responsibility for the provision of ECCE has many benefits.** Kindergartens are a resource for the community and not just for pupils. For example, a learning environment that supports and cares for all children promotes respect for diversity and the sharing of history, tradition, vernacular language and customs. And strong parental and community involvement in and support for ECCE are key to its effectiveness. Thus Government intends to retain the pattern of community responsibility, and at the same time intends to become more involved in capacity building.

17. **Low quality of ECCE in many communities in Vanuatu is a result of poor teaching, poor provision of learning materials and inadequate parental support.** Whilst government now provides initial training for teachers, there is no provision for ongoing in-

service training and many teachers remain untrained. As a result, few teachers use effective, child-centred pedagogy, and only 18% use mother-tongue instruction despite this being crucial for learning to read and write. Many teachers are poorly motivated due to poor working conditions, low, late or missing salary payments and limited support from parents and the community, also limited professional support from outside the community. The scarcity of books, materials and toys also constrains the effectiveness of many kindergartens.

18. **Churches and a number of non-governmental organisations are supporting ECCE, with some government help.** Some, for example *Vanuatu Eli Jaelhud Asociesen* (VEJA), an indigenous, non-governmental organisation established in the early 1980s, have received support from Government and the international community, including technical support in the form of international volunteers. Examples of the support they include: contributions to construction, matched against community resources and labour; equipment (e.g. toys) and materials; and teacher training

V. VESP SUPPORT TO ECCE

19. The **VESP ECCE Implementation Strategy to improve school readiness is being developed by MoE.** This strategy will take into account the need to create immediate improvements in ECCE while expanding the knowledge base for future investment. The main themes are as follows:
 - (i) Improve and enrich existing services to improve readiness for primary enrolment;
 - (ii) Engage communities and the general public on the importance of ECCE to children's development;
 - (iii) Undertake research on factors affecting current provision;
 - (iv) Test new approaches, generating data and perspective on the feasibility, efficiency and results of different programme models.
20. **Tasks to be carried out by MoE under VESP to improve and enrich existing ECCE services** are expected to include the following:
 - Roll-out the new national curriculum for ECCE, new tools and support materials;
 - Train all ECCE teachers and provide continuing development activities for pre-school coordinators; to enhance programme quality and instructional practice;
 - Mobilize communities to actively engage in kindergartens; and
 - Provide all existing and new ECCE centres with start-up or basic kit of supplies.
21. **MoE will seek to engage communities and the general public within VESP through a national awareness campaign on the importance of ECCE,** including through the traditional and social media. This will include promotion of ECCE by celebrities and other ECCE champions. An Education Communications Officer based at Prime Minister's Officer will assist with this campaign.

22. **Research on ECCE will be carried out by MoE under VESP** which is likely to include the following:
- Study to identify barriers to access and interventions that would increase access to ECCE for disadvantaged children;
 - Study and implement measures to recruit and retain quality ECCE teachers, especially for hard-to-staff areas.
23. **As part of VESP, MoE will test new approaches to ECCE through a pilot study.** MoE wish to undertake this pilot of alternative approaches to ECCE in 60 communities. The pilot study will have the following attributes:
- The primary objective is to increase readiness for entry to primary school and thereby improving the achievement of literacy and numeracy at primary level;
 - The pilot will allow for a rigorous evaluation which will inform potential school readiness initiatives which can be applied within traditional kindys
 - The pilot study will take into account, not just traditional *kindys*, but other forms of ECCE such as accelerated two-month pre-school preparation programs, playgroup-type ECCE, home-based ECCE, child-to-child school readiness programs;
 - The pilot study will take account of problems of physical access in some of the more isolated communities, and the levels of fees that are likely to be a disincentive for some parents;
 - The pilot will examine opportunities for public-private partnerships. This might involve modest additional resources from government, noting that only 0.1% of MoE's present budget is invested in ECCE. These resources would be used to leverage and strengthen community support, and where applicable, private sector support.
24. **MoE will contract an Implementation Partner to manage this pilot study in the form of a project for Strengthening ECCE (SECCE).** SECCE and its Implementing Partner – a private agency or non-governmental organisation (NGO) – will also provide limited support to MoE for some of the other VESP ECCE activities, notably the curriculum roll-out. This will be undertaken in partnership with the VESP ECCE Adviser and VESP Managing Contractor who will be the main source of support to MoE.

SECTION 2: PROJECT DESIGN

I. DESIGN PRINCIPLES

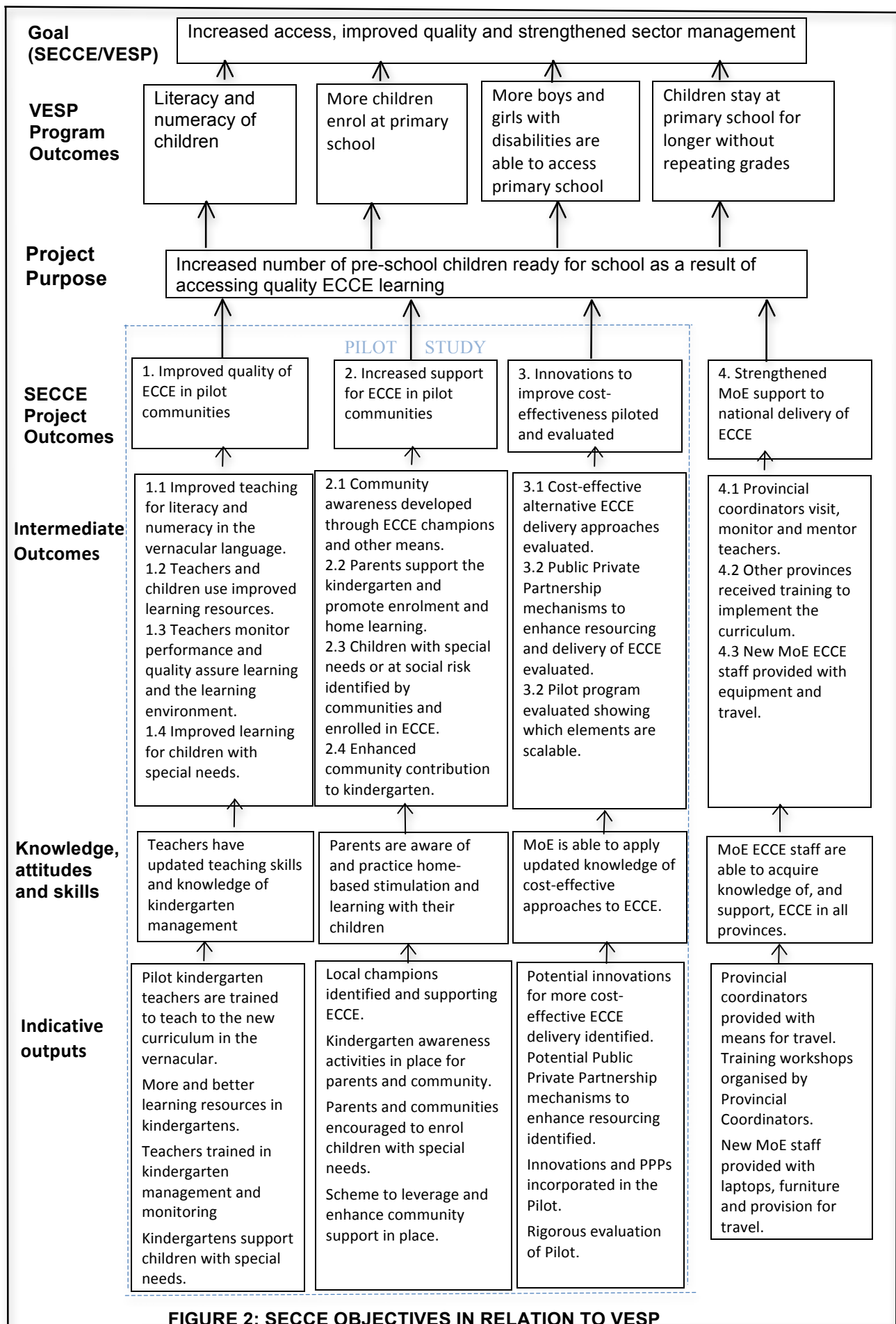
25. **All activities undertaken within SECCE will be in accordance with MoE Policy.** In particular they will be in line with the four fundamental principles articulated by the *Vanuatu Early Childhood Care & Education Framework* developed by the MoE, which states that:
- All children (including children with special needs) have the right to education, and it is everyone's responsibility to ensure that they succeed and achieve their full potential.
 - Parents and communities are a vital part of education and it is our shared responsibility to ensure that we involve everyone in the education of our children.
 - Everything we do in education is aligned to ensure continuous improvement in the lives of all children.
 - All curriculum documents and resources will promote a holistic approach to learning and development and recognize that the physical, spiritual, personal, cognitive, linguistic and creative aspects of learning are interwoven and form an essential part of each child's development.
26. **ECCE encompasses the cognitive, physical, linguistic and socio-emotional development of children from birth until they start school.** For the purpose of this design, ECCE includes formal centre-based programs (kindergarten, pre-school, day care) as well as informal home or village based programs designed to promote children's early development.
27. **Whilst SECCE focuses on readiness for school, it takes on board other benefits of ECCE.** 'ECCE services and programmes support children's survival, growth, development and learning – including health, nutrition and hygiene, and cognitive, social, emotional and physical development – from birth to entry into primary school in formal, informal and non-formal settings.'¹³ SECCE activities and events will incorporate local cultural elements such as music, dance and art popular in the Pilot community.
28. **SECCE is designed in a manner that allows a rigorous evaluation** of the impact of the changes to the traditional kindergarten on school readiness.
29. **At the same time, SECCE focuses on improving ECCE standards in the poorer or isolated communities in which it is based,** the children of which are its primary beneficiaries. The pilot takes into account the need to enrol low-income and special-needs children. In the absence of data on families' economic and social circumstances, one measure to address inequality is the selection of kindergartens in rural areas that may be isolated and have had little support for kindergartens in the past.

¹³ UNESCO, 2006. Education for All global monitoring report 2007: Strong Foundations. Paris: UNESCO

30. **SECCE takes on board the MoE commitment to mother tongue and bilingual education.** Bislama, Vanuatu's national language, will be the language used. The primary language for writing the Pilot documents will be Bislama, except in areas where there is a need to translate materials into the vernacular language, whilst teachers and Community Coordinators will use their vernacular language in their teaching. The SECCE budget will include costs of translation.
31. **SECCE takes on board the potential benefits of public-private partnerships (PPPs).** The Implementing Partner is expected to explore PPPs as part of the innovative features to be included in the pilot.
32. **The SECCE design balances** the need for innovation, taking into account cost-effectiveness while maintaining equitable access for children in Vanuatu.

II. EXPECTED OUTCOMES AND OUTPUTS

33. **Figure 2 shows the SECCE Project Purpose, Outcomes and Outputs in relation to VESP.** The SECCE project goal is that of VESP and VERM. The Project Purpose of SECCE corresponds to one of the VESP Intermediate Outcomes: children are ready for school.
34. **SECCE has four Project Outcomes.** Three of these relate to the pilot, referring to its expected improvements in: (a) quality of learning; (b) support from the community; and (c) cost-effectiveness. The fourth Project Outcome refers, not to the pilot but to the contribution of SECCE to the national program in terms of MoE travel, equipment and training workshops.
 - The quality of education is critical to ECCE improvement, affecting demand as well as the ability of children to succeed in primary school.
 - Support from the community is needed to stimulate demand and therefore enrolment. Community support contributes to the quality of provision both through support to the kindergarten and through home learning supported by the children's parents and guardians. Community support is also needed for the inclusion of children at social risk or with special needs.
 - The third project outcome involves the development of innovative approaches that could be scaled up and the rigorous evaluation of the pilot as a whole.
35. **There are four intermediate outcomes for quality improvement** of ECCE provision in the pilot communities. These are concerned respectively with improving the quality of teaching, the availability and use of learning resources, quality assurance, and provision for children with special learning needs. Quality assurance involves a system for assessing and monitoring pupil learning, especially in terms of literacy and numeracy, and also monitoring teaching and the learning environment including learning materials and the state of infrastructure and furnishings. Quality assurance also involves measures to act on the findings.



36. **There are four intermediate outcomes for community support.** These cover: the identification and use of local ECCE champions; encouraging parents (or guardians) to enrol their children, support the kindergarten, for example by volunteering their services or providing resources, and to support learning within their homes; and to encourage the community to contribute physical or financial resources.
37. **There are three intermediate outcomes concerned with innovative approaches, cost effectiveness and pilot evaluation.** The first of these involves the identification and incorporation of alternative approaches to ECCE delivery to improve cost-effectiveness in relation to the local context. This may include home-based or workplace-linked provision or linkage with an adult literacy class. The project will also examine ways of improving the cost-effectiveness of the approaches used in the pilot to improve performance. The aim is to reduce the costs to government of subsequent mainstreaming of pilot processes and thereby enhance long-term sustainability. The second intermediate outcome involves identification and incorporation of cost-effective improvement through public private partnership. International best practice shows that effective ECCE should be driven and owned by the community. However, there may be opportunities for using government resources (or in this case, SECCE resources) to leverage and enhance community support. The third intermediate outcome involves the rigorous evaluation of the pilot to identify which aspects are appropriate for GoV to scale up in other communities. This begins with the detailed design of the pilot itself to ensure that all aspects of the pilot are, in principle, able to be mainstreamed and can be rigorously evaluated.
38. **The intermediate outcomes corresponding to project outcome 4 are for those areas outside the pilot for which MoE requires the services of the Implementation Partner.** These essentially involve procurement of key items for the national programme for which the timescale and location provide problems for direct government procurement.
39. **Indicative outputs are shown for each intermediate outcome,** together with 'knowledge, attitudes and practices'. These, together with the intended outcomes, are the basis for detailed planning by the Implementing Partner.

III. OPERATIONAL MODALITY, FINANCING AND TIMESCALE

40. **The Vanuatu Ministry of Education will commission an Implementing Partner (IP) to manage and implement SECCE through a contract between the Ministry of Education and the IP.** Core funding for SECCE will be made by Development Partners through 2 tranche payments per year. Contributions might also come from other sources e.g. public / private partnerships or other development partners.
41. **The project is of 3 years duration from 2013, with possible extension of 2 years.** A mid-term review will be conducted at the end of year 2, as part of the larger VESP mid-term review.
42. **The project will be based in Port Vila but the pilot will operate in the following three provinces:** Torba, Malampa and Shefa (in particular the island of Efate). Piloting in three provinces provides opportunities to compare and contrast various Programme elements in order to draw out lessons learned and recommended ECCE approaches. The provinces have appropriate sized populations for the 60 community pilots, and whilst all having low levels of ECCE provision have very different characteristics:

- With an estimated population of Torba is 9,500 Vanuatu's northernmost province. It currently has 52 teachers in 36 kindergartens, with 564 children enrolled.¹⁴ Torba is geographically isolated, and difficult to reach with the limited funds currently available to Provincial Coordinators and others who can train and support teachers. Travel by boat is necessary to reach Torba's more remote communities.
- The province of Malampa is still classified as under-served, but is more easily reached than Torba. Malampa is situated in central Vanuatu, with an estimated population of 36,000. In 2011, some 169 teachers worked in 108 kindergartens, with 1,914 children enrolled.¹¹ In 2012, MoE previously conducted successful teacher capacity-building sessions on the islands of Malekula and Ambrym. Pilot activities will be divided between these two islands, budget permitting.
- Programme activities in Efate (Shefa province) will benefit from proximity to MoE offices, enabling regular monitoring and evaluation visits to Pilot sites. Proximity to Port Vila will also facilitate the showcasing of Pilot advances at demonstration sites, and launching public education campaigns. However, the Programme's primary focus is on delivering high-quality ECCE services to all three provinces.

43. The indicative budget in AUD in terms of project outcomes for the initial 3 year phase is given in Table 2 below.

| PROJECT OUTCOME | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Totals |
|---|---------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| 1. Improved quality of ECCE provision | 95,000 | 213,000 | 168,000 | 506,000 |
| Contract 7 Key Teachers | 40,000 | 40,000 | 40,000 | 120,000 |
| Train Key Teachers ¹⁵ | 45,000 | 5,000 | 5,000 | 55,000 |
| 1.1 Teacher Training for delivering curriculum ¹⁶ | | 50,000 | 25,000 | 75,000 |
| 1.2 Translate and provide learning materials | 20,000 | 75,000 | 75,000 | 170,000 |
| 1.3 Training in kindergarten quality assurance ¹⁷ | | 33,000 | 33,000 | 66,000 |
| 1.4 Developing teaching for special needs | | 20,000 | | 20,000 |
| 2. Increased community support | 36,000 | 115,000 | 95,000 | 226,000 |
| Contract 5 Community Coordinators | 25,000 | 25,000 | 25,000 | 75,000 |
| Train Community Coordinators | 11,000 | 5,000 | 5,000 | 21,000 |
| 2.1 Development of community awareness | | 10,000 | 10,000 | 20,000 |
| 2.2 Develop parental support | | 35,000 | 35,000 | 70,000 |
| 2.3 Identify & enrol special needs children | | 20,000 | | 20,000 |
| 2.4 Leverage community resources | | 10,000 | 10,000 | 20,000 |
| 3. Piloting and evaluation of innovations¹⁸ | | 20,000 | 25,000 | 45,000 |
| 3.1 Study to assess cost effective alternatives | | 10,000 | | 10,000 |
| 3.2 Study to assess options for PPP | | 10,000 | | 10,000 |
| 3.3 Evaluation of Pilot | | | 25,000 | 25,000 |
| 4. Support to national program | 88,000 | | | 218,000 |
| 4.1 Travel for provincial coordinators | 33,000 | 25,000 | 25,000 | 83,000 |
| 4.2 Training in other provinces | 45,000 | 30,000 | 30,000 | 105,000 |
| 4.3 Travel and equipment for new MoE staff | 10,000 | 10,000 | 10,000 | 30,000 |

¹⁴ MoE, VEMIS statistics for 2010-11.

¹⁵ Includes training for 20 Key Teachers and 6 Provincial Coordinators to support outcome 4.2

¹⁶ Includes a second year workshop

¹⁷ Training will be carried out in visits to schools; this item also includes follow up mentoring for teacher training

¹⁸ These costs will be covered by the VESP managing contractor and are outside the scope of the IP.

| | | | | |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET (not including overall IP management) | 229,000 | 348,000 | 298,000 | 865,000 |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|

Table 2: Indicative Project Budget

SECTION 3: IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

I. PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

44. **The Implementing Partner (IP) will manage the SECCE project on behalf of MoE.** The IP will report to the MoE Director of Education Services and work in close collaboration with the National Coordinator of ECCE, the Provincial Coordinators of ECCE and other MoE staff with responsibilities covering ECCE in the pilot communities.
45. **The IP will work in close collaboration with, and be advised by, the ECCE Adviser to MoE.** The IP will also seek advice from the VESP Independent Education Specialist on strategic issues, including the annual workplan and monitoring framework, and on any areas of disagreement between the IP and the ECCE unit.
46. **The IP will, within one month of contract signature, identify project activities** to achieve the intended project outcomes and outputs, and provide outline descriptions and costings to the ECCE Unit. The activities will be agreed by the VESP Independent Education Adviser subject to the overall final approval by the MoE Director General.
47. **The IP will seek and take advice from the VESP Managing Contractor Research and Advisory Pool on all activities relating to research and evaluation (Outcome 3).** The IP shall also facilitate other research activities being undertaken by the Research and Advisory Pool in the pilot communities, especially those involving ECCE.
48. **Under the direction of the ECCE Unit, the IP will develop Annual Workplans .** These will set out the tasks to be undertaken each three months for each of the four outcomes. The IP will complete the first set of workplans within three months of signing the project contract. This first set of workplans will cover the full three years of the project in outline and the remainder of the first financial year in detail. Subsequent detailed workplans will be completed at least one month before the end of each financial year. All workplans will be peer reviewed by the VESP Independent Education Specialist and will be subject to the overall final approval by the VESP Steering Committee.
49. **The IP will develop and implement an effective system for project monitoring,** based on the Project Monitoring section of this document and consistent with AusAID's Evaluation Capacity Building Standards. The IP will complete the detailed Results Framework within two months of signing the project contract, in partnership with the National ECCE Coordinator, ECCE Adviser and VESP Monitoring and evaluation Specialist who will also assist the IP in monitoring the project against the Results Framework.
50. **The IP will provide regular monthly updates to the ECCE Unit as well as progress reports every six months to the VERM Steering Committee** through the MoE Director of Education Services and copied to the VESP Independent Education Specialist and ECCE Adviser. The Independent Education Specialist and ECCE Adviser will be fully

consulted on the reports prior to submission. The reports will provide concise information on:

- Activities undertaken over the last 6 months, summarised in relation to the annual workplan;
- Achievements of the project over this period against the project intended outcomes and outputs, making use of the results framework;
- Problems encountered and steps taken to deal with these problems;
- Expenditure against the project budget using a format to be agreed with the VESP Education Adviser;
- Other issues, including any unexpected project outcomes.

51. **Under the guidance of the ECCE Unit, the IP will employ effective management arrangements within the host communities.** These will include the contracting of Key Teachers (KTs) to manage activities relating to the Quality Improvement project outcome and Community Coordinators (CCs) to manage activities relating to the Community Participation project outcome. In addition to supporting teacher and community capacity building, this measure will support teamwork, succession planning, and collaboration with health workers and others. The Assessment of Potential Cost-Effective Alternatives – intermediate outcome 3.1 – will include an assessment of the appropriateness of this approach and the way it operates (e.g. the number of KT and CCs required) for subsequent mainstreaming or use in the later stages of the project. The KT will have an annual contract to retain flexibility in case the approach and numbers of KT are not cost-effective.
52. **Under the direction of the ECCE Unit, the IP will recruit and contract seven Key Teachers,** each one covering 8 to 10 kindergartens. 4 KT will operate in Torba, 2 in Malampa, and 1 in Efate. Key Teachers are experienced kindergarten teachers that will be released from daily teaching duties to assume a greater leadership role in the field. (This is in accordance with MoE's *Restructuring* document.) The IP, with the agreement of MoE, will recruit new or existing Key Teachers at the conclusion of, or release from, their existing duties. Any Kindergarten teachers required to back fill these KT roles will continue to be employed by the community.
53. **The IP will establish selection criteria for the KTs** in liaison with the ECCE Unit. Experience in training and/or adult education would be an asset as the role of the KT is to train and mentor other teachers in the Programme. The IP will arrange initial training for the KTs that is nationally accredited in preparation for their roles and responsibilities in the project. The training will focus on areas of child development, literacy and numeracy instructional practice, assessment of children's learning, play-based learning, mentoring, planning and team teaching, kindergarten management and monitoring, plus training on how to train others and on project management. It is expected that this training, to be undertaken by the KTs as a group, will extend on a part-time basis over 3 months and will require updating annually.
54. **The IP will recruit and contract five Community Coordinators (CCs), also on one year contract, to work alongside the KTs,** each CC covering 12 kindergartens. 3 CCs will operate in Torba, 1 in Malampa, and 1 in Efate. Each will be a member of a community covered by the project recruited on the basis of ability to engage and empower

parents and the wider community to contribute to improve ECCE programming. The IP will establish selection criteria in liaison with the ECCE Unit, and under the guidance of the ECCE Unit will provide initial training for those recruited, focusing on the areas of: community development; community mobilization; enriching the home learning environment for children aged 0 to 6; improving kindergarten access for disadvantaged children; and project management. It is expected that this will require a course of 30 days, to be updated annually. The first training will be given after the KT's have been trained so that the KT's can support the training of the CC's.

55. **The CCs will work closely with, and receive support from, officials in other Ministries and other stakeholders.** In addition to the above duties, and in partnership with other ministries, CCs will organize and deliver workshops for parents on health and education issues. They will also invite other experts and local service providers will be invited to give workshops on various aspects of child development, to be presented to members of playgroups, parent committees, and/or the community at large.

II. PRIORITIES FOR PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Project Outcome 1: Quality improvement in Pilot Kindergartens

56. **Key teachers will play the lead role in achieving the quality improvement Project Outcome 1**, with support from ECCE Provincial Coordinators and other MoE staff. Their tasks are expected to include the following:
- Building the capacity of kindergarten teachers to provide effective instruction;
 - Building the capacity of teachers and kindergarten managers to quality assure learning and the learning environment;
 - Mentoring and coaching kindergarten teachers;
 - Team teaching with kindergarten teachers;
 - Visiting schools regularly and supporting teachers on a daily basis;
 - Supporting MoE registration and regulations;
 - Ensuring ECCE policy implementation;
 - Reaching out to parents and communities in association with kindergarten staff, with a view to involving them in schools;
 - Responding quickly to local issues;
 - Maximizing use of the materials and resources provided to kindergartens;
 - Supporting early identification of children with special needs by teachers and parents;
 - Promoting other activities that will support literacy acquisition by children: e.g. adult literacy circles;
 - Facilitating stakeholders' understanding of ECCE curriculum goals and learning standards;

- Facilitating and promoting meetings to connect ECCE teachers with teachers of grades 1-3 so that better transition strategies can be discussed and created, if needed.
57. **The KT's will help kindergarten teachers to implement the new “Vanuatu National Curriculum for Kindergarten”.** This has been designed to prepare children for the primary year 1 syllabus. The Kindergarten curriculum includes syllabuses for the following subjects:
- Language and Communication
 - Mathematics
 - Science
 - Living in our Community.
58. **In line with this curriculum, the KT's will emphasise the following:**
- A learning environment that supports and cares for all children will promote respect for diversity and the sharing of history, tradition, vernacular language and customs.
 - Clear learning expectations and outcomes will help to prepare young children for kindergarten. Learning outcomes need to be documented and communicated to parents so they can track their children's progress and reinforce learning at home. A broad-based approach will be used to track children' progress in the early years.
 - Learning partnerships with families, other teachers and community stakeholders will form a vital part of life at an ECCE centre. Shared responsibility will be the hallmark of every successful school.
 - A holistic approach to learning will be implemented. Learning centres in the classroom will use both structured and unstructured play to support learning outcomes. Play will provide diverse opportunities for children to engage in teamwork, solve problems, use creativity and imagination, and enjoy learning.
 - Effective instructional practice based on ECCE research will form part of daily teaching. These practices promote children's active engagement in the learning process. All instruction will be focused, use critical reflection for self-evaluation, and sequence the introduction of content and skills to maximize positive results.
 - Instructional planning by teachers will align classroom activity to Vanuatu's curriculum. Effective planning requires teachers to consider the end results desired, and to design instruction and activities with those results in mind.
 - Monitoring and assessment of learning will inform the planning process. Teachers will assess and document individual learning progress. Sharing this with parents helps them to understand their child's progress, and to identify anything that might interfere with it at school or at home. All assessments will be culturally and linguistically respectful of the child and community, and will build on children's strengths.
 - Teamwork is essential for the success of ECCE in Vanuatu: within the MoE (including the National Coordinator, Provincial Coordinators, and Key Teachers) and among all stakeholders, including non-Ministry teachers, parents, school committees and communities.
 - Literacy and numeracy form central parts of the ECCE curriculum. Pre-literacy activities are also important.

- Learning communities can be established to support parents, teachers and children. A learning community is an informal group of people who meet regularly to learn together and to learn from one another. A learning community shares ideas, reflects on change, and solves problems collaboratively.
59. **KT training of teachers in the pilot communities will build on the training they have received from MoE.** New ECCE teachers currently receive seven weeks of field-based training from MoE. (There are no in-service training courses or refresher courses.) The MoE training covers theoretical and practical elements ranging from making toys and games to child development (sensory and motor skills). Teachers receive training in literacy and numeracy, setting up classrooms, indoor and outdoor play, lesson planning, health and hygiene, the role and composition of kindergarten committees, working with the community, and evaluating children’s learning.
60. **KTs will seek means of improving teacher morale and teacher retention.** Although there are a significant number of instances of good practice, many ECCE teachers are poorly motivated due low, late or missing payments, poor working conditions and inadequate support and supervision.

Project Outcome 2: Community Participation

61. **Community¹⁹ Coordinators will play the lead role in achieving the Community Participation Project Outcome 2,** working closely with parents who have children aged 0 to 3. Their tasks are expected to include the following:
- Preparing workshops to support parents in understanding the links between education and children’s future development and life prospects;
 - Encouraging parents to take part in school committees and volunteer at kindergartens (whether assisting the teacher with programmed activities or by sharing their skills and knowledge, e.g. in music, culture or art);
 - Engaging parents in designing and delivering – with support from community service providers – an ECCE Home Kit, with information and recommended activities for parents to use at home to stimulate children’s development;
 - Helping to establish multi-family playgroups in all Pilot kindergartens;
 - Engaging parents in opening up non-formal learning spaces for young children;
 - Organizing – with partners including health-care workers – and where needed conduct parenting workshops on prenatal care, nutrition, the value of ECCE, and related topics.
62. **CCs will focus on the following key aspects of parental and community engagement:**
- A supportive home learning environment;
 - Good parenting skills and knowledge base;
 - Parent participation in ECCE activities;

¹⁹ The IP will be expected to make use of already existing materials where appropriate

- Partnerships among parents, communities and kindergartens;
 - Program support for hard-to-reach families and villages.
63. **CCs will seek ways of tackling the following common challenges in engaging families and communities in ECCE:**
- Lack of awareness among parents²⁰;
 - Lack of motivation among parents and service providers;
 - Communication and outreach;
 - Time constraints (more common in urban than rural environments);
 - Increasing inequity among families and within communities;
 - Co-operation with other services and other levels of education.

Project Outcome 3: Piloting and Evaluation

64. **The IP will design the pilot in a manner in which the pilot and its innovative features can be effectively evaluated.** The IP will seek help with this from the VESP Research Group. It will include the identification of regionally correlated *control sites* matched to the location and demographic characteristics of Pilot sites. These kindergartens will not receive any resources from the project (other than via the SECCE contribution to the national program in relation to Outcome 4). No new approaches will be piloted. However, procedures and outcomes will be studied for comparative purposes, using the same research protocols employed in the pilot communities. Baseline data on kindergartens will be collected in pilot and control communities by KTs, with baseline data on parental engagement and children’s learning environments at home collected by CCs.
65. **The design of the pilot will take account of the indicators and tools being developed by the ‘Asia-Pacific ECD Scales Development’ program** of the Asia-Pacific Regional Network for Early Childhood (ARNEC).²¹ ARNEC are developing a set of indicators based on the Early Learning Development Standards (ELDS) from seven countries in East Asia and the Pacific. A total of 100 constructs and indicator descriptions have been selected under 7 categories: Cognitive, Language, Cultural knowledge and participation, Socio-emotional development, Health, hygiene and safety, Gross and fine motor, and Approaches to learning.
66. **The assessment of potential cost-effective innovations that enhance school readiness will include those already proposed in the document and other potential innovations.** Those proposed in this document include the use of key teachers and community coordinators, support for home learning and measures to enhance the enrolment of children with special needs. The IP will seek to identify other possible innovations with the potential to make ECCE delivery in Vanuatu more cost-effective, in consultation with the ECCE National Coordinator, ECCE Adviser, the KTs and CCs and others as appropriate. The VESP Managing Contractor will, in consultation with the IP, engage a consultant to evaluate the program including a cost-benefit analysis of these

²⁰ A School Readiness Guide has been developed and piloted by MoE to assist parents with children who do not access kindy

²¹ <http://www.arnec.net>

innovations. Where time allows, feedback from the consultant's report will be used to improve the cost-effectiveness of the remaining period of the project.

67. **The assessment of the potential for public private partnership (PPP) will involve examining ways in which public funds can leverage and enhance resourcing from private and community sources.** The 'public funds' will in this case include a fund of AUD\$10,000 in each of years 2 and 3 to be used for a PPP initiative or initiatives. An example could be a number of small, possibly competitive, grants to communities for ECCE development or operation that require a matching fund, contribution in kind or mixture of fund and contribution from the host community. Other possible examples include a bursary fund, with contributions from the community, to support parents who cannot afford the fees, or a similarly shared fund to support children with special needs. The IP will develop these initiatives, taking advice from the ECCE National Coordinator, ECCE TA, Education Specialist, the Research Group and others as appropriate.
68. **The PPP initiatives will be designed to provide sustainable improvements in ECCE cost effectiveness** by providing:
 - a clear positive impact on children's learning and development;
 - enduring benefits (e.g. improvements to resources or facilities);
 - new and creative thinking on how to provide effective programming for children.
69. **The PPP initiatives will be designed to strengthen partnership and empowerment benefits** such as the following:
 - Parents engage in making a difference in the lives of their children and others;
 - Parents experience the satisfaction of contributing to ECCE programs, and want to continue to be involved in future;
 - Parents provide a model of community involvement for children;
 - The developments that are funded are grounded in the needs of the local community and will benefit many members of the community (e.g. garden project or playground improvement);
 - Kindergartens are improved in terms of resources and services in a cost-effective and sustainable way using volunteer labour of parents, and local resources.
70. **The PPP initiative will also contribute to sound financial management within the kindergarten and community.** KTs will advise kindergarten teachers and communities on simple means of ensuring transparency, accountability and probity in the operation of kindergarten funds.
71. **In consultation with the Research Group, the IP will engage a consultant to undertake a cost-benefit analysis of these innovations.** Where time allows, feedback from the consultant's report will be used to improve the cost-effectiveness of the remaining period of the project.
72. **The IP will also liaise with the VESP Research Group and Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist to engage a consultant for the overall evaluation of the pilot.** The objective is to identify lessons from the pilot that can inform and improve the cost-effectiveness of subsequent government support to kindergartens on a national basis.

The lessons will take due account of regional, urban-rural, socio-economic and other differences between the host communities. In particular, the evaluation will show how the project and its components have contributed to the children's 'readiness for school', the latter assessed in terms of the VESP outcomes and their indicators amended to fit the timescale:

- Improved literacy and numeracy of those entering primary school (noting that there will not be sufficient time for children in the pilot kindergartens to have reached primary year 3);
 - More children enrolling in primary year 1 at the correct age in the target community;
 - More children with disabilities accessing primary education in the target community;
 - Lower dropout and repetition at the end of primary year 1 in the target community (assuming the timing allows for children who have experienced the kindergarten project to complete the first year of primary school).
73. **The evaluation will undertake a rigorous analysis of qualitative and quantitative data**, taking due account of monitoring data and reports from the project, and of the Asia Pacific ECD Scales development (see paragraph 65 above).

Project Outcome 4: Support to National Program

74. **The IP will arrange SECCE funding for training workshops organised by Provincial Coordinators.** Teachers in the provinces not participating in this Pilot Programme are to receive training for implementing the new Vanuatu National Curriculum for Kindergarten. The workshops will provide trainer-training for the 6 Provincial coordinators and for 25 KTs. The KTs will include the 7 working on the project as part of their training. The other 18 Key Teachers will return to their kindergartens in other provinces to function as trainers of other teachers in support of national improvements to ECCE.
75. **Other activities to be supported from, and in accordance with, the project budget will be determined and communicated by the National MoE ECCE Coordinator.** As with all other project activities, the IP will consult with the ECCE TA and, where significant issues arise, with the VESP Education Specialist, with the MoE Director General as the final arbiter in any cases of uncertainty.

IV. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

76. **The IP will develop a monitoring system and results framework for the project** to be finalised and approved by the MoE Director Education Services within the first three months of the project. Both will be developed with guidance from the VESP Monitoring and Evaluation Adviser to ensure that the monitoring arrangements and framework are well-designed, and build appropriately on and feed into those of the overall VESP program. The system should make use of data captured by the Vanuatu Education Management Information System (VEMIS) and help feed data into VEMIS. The IP will consult with the ECCE Adviser and VESP Independent Education Specialist in developing the project

specific indicators and targets ²²that are not already part of the VESP framework.

77. **Care will be taken to ensure that the system and indicators are of high quality.** They will be:
- Clear on what will be measured, by whom, when and how;
 - Focused on priority information needs and not overly complex;
 - Adequately resourced as, for example, an important part of KT duties for which they are given adequate time and resources;
 - Clearly building on and helping to strengthen government and kindergarten/community monitoring;
 - Disaggregating data on the basis of gender, and on other factors as appropriate.
78. **The IP will arrange baseline data to be collected as soon as possible** and no later than one month after the finalisation of the results framework.
79. **The IP will ensure that project staff give full assistance to the overall VESP program monitoring and evaluation.**

V. OTHER ISSUES

80. **The IP will ensure full attention is given to sustainability** in terms of, for example: ensuring government and community ownership;
- strengthening systems, in particular
 - making the operation of any kindergarten committee more effective by fully involving them, especially in planning for and evaluating activities;
 - keeping full records in a form in which MoE and others can easily understand and duplicate the project activities after the project has ceased; and
 - keeping to a minimum those costs that will apply in any mainstreaming after the project.
81. **The IP will ensure attention to gender equity** throughout the project. This may mean ensuring women are well represented in decision-making, including as community coordinators, but may also mean encouraging more male teachers given the preponderance of female teachers at this level. The project already includes a focus on disadvantaged communities and individuals including children with disabilities.
82. **The IP will ensure that adequate attention is given to financial, security, environmental, child protection and other project risks.** The IP will establish a system for identifying and monitoring these risks and taking action to reduce their likelihood or severity, including ensuring that all those contracted by the IP are appropriately briefed and protected.

²² The National ECCE Framework recently developed by MoE provides some guidance on relevant indicators and targets

Appendix A: Rationale for Strengthening ECCE in Vanuatu

Introduction

Formal definitions of ECCE interventions vary; but a useful point of departure is the holistic and inclusive approach taken in the Concept Paper for the World Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education (Moscow, 2010) ²³:

ECCE services and programmes support children's survival, growth, development and learning – including health, nutrition and hygiene, and cognitive, social, emotional and physical development – from birth to entry into primary school in formal, informal and non-formal settings. They take diverse forms, ranging from parenting programmes to community-based and home-based childcare, centre-based provision and pre-primary education, often in schools (UNESCO, 2006). ECCE includes comprehensive measures to support families, such as maternal and child health, micronutrient supplementation, psychosocial support to families, programmes to promote household food security, parental leave and childcare allowance.

The same document introduces the long-term importance of ECCE as follows:

Early childhood is a sensitive period marked by rapid transformations in physical, cognitive, language, social and emotional development. Significant and critical brain development occurs before age 7, especially the first three years of life, when important neuronal connections take place (or do not take place). What happens in the early years sets trajectories in health, learning and behaviour that can last throughout life (Martin et al 2000; Malenka et al., 1999; Hensch, 2005; Mustard, 2002). Development in early childhood is very robust. With positive experience, an empowering basis for successful development and learning is laid in the child. However, young children are highly vulnerable: exposure to poor care, deprivation, under-nutrition, neglect and violence impact negatively on and damage the child, often irreparably (Shonkoff and Philips, 2000; Mustard, 2002; Centre on the Developing Child at Harvard University, 2007).

Development Benefits of ECCE Interventions

Countries differ in their rationale for developing ECCE services and their associated policy objectives. In general, decisions about investments in ECCE are determined by some combination of economic, social and educational objectives. The following review of documented benefits is excerpted from the Concept Paper for the World Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education (Moscow, 2010):

Early childhood and maternal health and nutrition reinforces educational prospects

The growing body of evidence on the negative impact of hunger, stunting, wasting and anemia –

²³ *Concept Paper* (March 2010) The World Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE): Building the Wealth of Nations (September 2010, Moscow, the Russian Federation)

resulting from malnutrition and ill health – on educational prospects and performance is striking. It shows that early childhood care needs to be considered as a serious education and human capital development issue. Children with experience of early malnutrition were likely to have lower scores in tests assessing cognitive function, psychomotor development, fine motor skills, activity levels and attention span (Alderman et al., 2006; Behrman, 1996; Maluccio et al., 2009, cited in UNESCO, 2010). Also, best results are obtained from programmes that combine nutrition and stimulation components, as shown in the 1991 Jamaica study that investigates the effects of intervention integrating nutritional supplementation with stimulation for stunted children from a poor population group (Young, 2002; 2007).

ECCE improves attendance and performance at primary and beyond

The positive impact of ECCE on participation and achievement in primary school and beyond is well documented (Arnold, 2004; Mustard, 2005; Young, 2002, 2007). Attendance in an ECCE programme can enhance social and emotional development and well-being, language and basic cognitive skills development, and physical and motor development. ECCE can improve school readiness, and nurture positive self-image and learning dispositions (e.g. motivation to learn and discover). It makes enrolment in the first grade of primary education more likely, and increases retention, completion and achievement.

Strong evidence of the above is found in both developed and developing countries. Experience of preschool participation in the United Kingdom was shown to be responsible for improved intellectual development, independence, concentration and sociability in the initial three years of primary school (Sylva et al, 2004, cited in UNESCO, 2006). The gains were higher when children participated longer in preschool education. The pioneering Andersson study in Sweden (1992) investigating long-term effects on education concluded that “early entrance into day care tends to predict a creative, socially confident, popular, open and independent adolescent” (pp. 32-33, cited in OECD 2006, p. 253). The 33-African-country-research showed that the absence of preschool experience correlated with a repetition rate of 25% and a completion rate of 50% or less in primary school (Mignat and Jamarillo, 2003). Children participated in the Turkish Early Enrichment Project, which combined parental skills improvement and pre-schooling, in low-income and low-education areas of Istanbul demonstrated better school achievement, higher university attendance and more elevated occupational status compared to non-participating children (Kagiticbasi et al 2001).

Early intervention can reduce social inequalities

Research firmly supports that ECCE can compensate for disadvantage and vulnerability, regardless of underlying factors such as poverty, gender, race/ethnicity, caste or religion (UNESCO, 2006, p. 113). ECCE helps level the playing field for disadvantaged children as they enter primary school, empowering them to be confident and successful in later education and employment. The North Carolina Abecedarian study in the United States (2003) showed that at-risk children having poor parents with low IQ levels were able to do as well as their more affluent peers after having participated in an intensive ECCE programme. The same research generated a projection that participants would earn about USD 143,000 more over their lifetimes than those who did not take part in the programme (OECD, 2006).

Participation in an intensive early learning programme enabled poor children to obtain equal test scores as middle-class children attending a traditional preschool programme (Short, 1985, cited in Arnold, 2004). ECCE has also been shown to enhance gender equality among young children as well as between women and men. The proportion of Nepalese girls and boys with preschool experience enrolling in the first grade of primary education was equal, compared to 39% of girls and 61% boys among the non-participants group (Arnold and Panday, 2003). The Zurich study

(Müller and Kucera-Bauer, 2001) found that publicly funded childcare resulted in higher productivity and earnings and less dependence on social assistance during the productive and retirement ages (cited in OECD, 2006).

On the choice between means-tested and universal ECCE programming, the *Early Childhood Care and Education* report by the National Economic and Social Forum of Ireland (NESF Report 31, July 2005) comments:

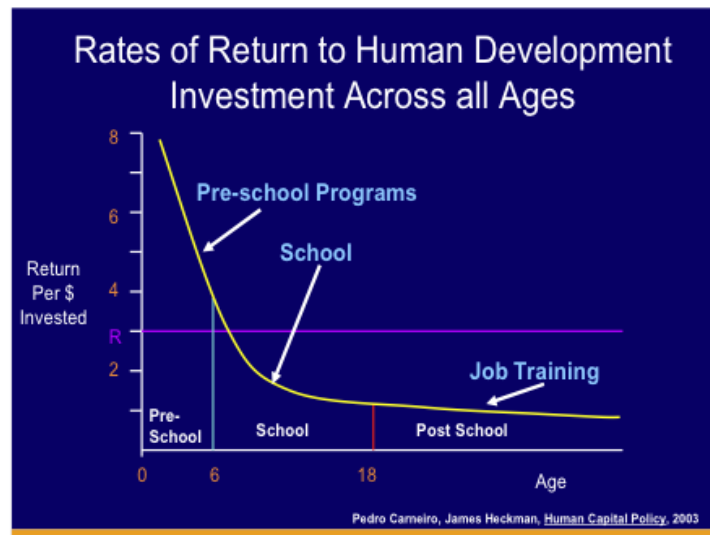
Evidence supporting the effectiveness of quality early childhood education programmes for disadvantaged children is particularly convincing and, because the impact is higher for higher risk children, returns from a targeted pre-school programme are expected to be greater than that for a universal programme. Despite this, the advantages associated with universal provision are cited as good grounds for universal as opposed to targeted provision. As advantaged children are more numerous, even small gains can accumulate to substantial gains across the whole population. Administrative costs determining eligibility are avoided, as is the potential for stigma associated with participation in a targeted programme. No child who might benefit is excluded either because he/she does not quite meet the criteria or because there is confusion regarding eligibility. Indeed political and the support of public opinion is often stronger for programmes available to all children, and this may also be instrumental in guaranteeing the required level of funding for a high quality programme.

The Concept Paper for the World Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education (Moscow, 2010) resumes:

Investment in ECCE programmes has high rates of return. Rigorous evaluations of early childhood programmes are found mainly in North America and Western Europe, particularly in the United States, but comparable research is being done in a growing number of developing countries. Cost-benefit research has shown that savings are made by reducing dropout, repetition and special education placements for both governments and families. It has also demonstrated that children with quality ECCE experience tend to advance to higher education, obtain employment, have higher earnings as well as savings, provide higher contributions to social security, and are less likely to be on public assistance and commit crimes. Participation in the Chicago Child-Parent Centres – which offers early education and family support for low-income population – was associated with better school achievement and completion, and significantly lower rates of remedial education, juvenile delinquency and child maltreatment (Reynolds et al., 2002). The Perry Preschool study analysing a sample of Afro-American children, estimated the cost/benefit ratio of 1:7 at age 27 (OECD, 2006) or 1:16 through age 40 (Schweinhart 2005). In Bolivia, the Proyecto Integral de Desarrollo Infantil, a home-based early development and nutrition programme, showed cost/benefit ratios between 1:2.4 and 1:3.1 (Van der Gaag and Tan, 1998); and, in an Egyptian study, the ratio was estimated to be as high as 1:5.8 for the most at-risk children (Arnold, 2004).

The Nobel prize-winning economist James Heckman demonstrated that investment returns in ECCE are greater than those of other areas of education [see figure below]. At a meeting of the Inter-American Bank in Costa Rica in 2007, attended by 30 prominent economists, there was a

consensus that early childhood development is the most effective programme out of 29 options to improve public spending and policies.



James Heckman and Dimitry Masterov, (2004). *Early Childhood Education for All – A Wise Investment*, recommendations from the Conference “The Economic Impacts of Child Care and Early Education: Financing Solutions for the Future” conference, Dec. Massachusetts, USA.

Cost-Benefit Estimates for Public Investment in ECCE in Vanuatu

A recent World Bank study on school readiness in Samoa, Tonga, and Vanuatu provides some basic estimates regarding the economic viability of public expenditure on pre-school, which is a central ECCE service for children aged 4-6. [*Getting Dad’s (and the Government’s) Attention: New Perspectives on Improving School Readiness in Samoa, Tonga, and Vanuatu*”, DRAFT, December, 2012, World Bank]. This work indicates that relatively small investments are required to produce major economic gains, and that the present levels of investment are well below optimum levels. The study states:

...expenditure on preschool students is likely too low. Data on private preschool expenditure does not exist, but anecdotal evidence on the typical tuition fees and school uniform fees are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. An estimate of annual per capita expenditure on preschool (USD)

| | Samoa | Tonga | Vanuatu |
|--|-------|-------|--------------|
| Public expenditure per student | 22 | 0 | 0 |
| Private expenditure per student | | | |
| Typical tuition based anecdotal evidence | 40 | 12 | 24 |
| School uniform based on anecdotal evidence | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Total | 45 | 17 | 29 |
| Total expenditure per student | 67 | 17 | 29 |
| GDP per capita | 3,133 | 3,347 | 2,916 |
| Impact of preschool on future GDP per capita needed to justify its expense (5% discount rate) | 0.79% | 0.19% | 0.37% |

Estimates of private expenditure are not available. Private expenditure presented here is a rough estimate based on the typical tuition fee and typical cost based on anecdotal evidence. Only Samoa subsidizes preschools; last year the preschool grant was 50 tala per child.

Only Samoa currently provides public funds to all its preschools; last year this amounted to 50 Tala per enrolled child, or about 22 USD. As presented in Table 1, total expenditure per child in preschool based on anecdotal evidence of preschool fees and uniform costs ranges from 67 USD in Samoa per year to 17 USD in Tonga²⁴. The last row of Table 1 calculates the impact needed on future productivity to justify this expenditure. If preschool attendance has a large impact on an individual's future productivity, then a larger amount of expenditure on preschool can be justified. For example, if the net present value of an individual's additional future earnings is greater than the total cost of an individual to attend preschool for three years, then more expenditure on preschool is justified. In Samoa, the cost of attending preschool is 67 USD per year, or 201 USD for all three years; if the net present value of additional future earnings exceeds 201 USD, then more expenditure on preschools is justified. The last row of Table 1 presents the impact on annual earnings needed to justify the preschool expenditure. For Samoa, if annual earnings were increased by 0.79 percent, then the net present value of these earnings for an individual earning the per capita GDP of 3,133 USD would be 201 USD, or the cost of attending preschool for three years. For Tonga and Vanuatu these are 0.19 and 0.37 percent respectively.

The evidence base on the impact of preschool on earnings suggests preschool might have a much bigger impact. While only a few studies have enough data to track the impact of preschool on future earnings, the impact on earnings typically ranges from 16.3 percent found for the Brazil preschool program to 36 percent for the Perry Preschool program in the United States. This does not include other financial benefits from reduced repetition rates, reduction in crime, etc.

Table 2 presents the impacts on earnings estimated by these studies. Table 2 also presents how much per preschool student will be spent if preschool had the same impact on GDP per capita. For example, the average impact on earnings found in these studies is 19 percent. The net present value of 19 percent higher GDP per capita for a 3 year-old child now from when he or she is 18 years old to 55 years old discounted at 5 percent per year is 4,509 USD in Vanuatu. In other words, if preschool in Vanuatu had an impact of 19 percent on GDP per capita and

lasted three years, expenditure of up to one third of this, 1,503, would be justified. This is 52 times more than what was presented in Table 1. Even if preschool had an extremely low impact on future GDP per capita, for example of 3.6 percent as was found with British Preschool programs, an annual preschool expenditure of 284 USD in Vanuatu would be justified.

Table 2. How much will be spent on preschool?

| Percent impact on earnings | | | |
|--|--------------|--------------|-------------------|
| Perry Preschool (Schweinhart et al. 2005) | | | 20 – 36% |
| Head Start (Garces et al. 2002) | | | 19.4% |
| British ECD Programs (Goodman and Sianesi 2005) | | | 3.6% |
| Brazil Preschool Program (Curi and Menezes-Filho 2006) | | | 16.3% |
| Average impact on earnings is 19% | | | |
| Per capita expenditure justified for: | Samoa | Tonga | Vanuatu |
| <u>modest impact of 3.6% on GDP p.c.</u> | US\$ 305 | US\$ 326 | US\$ 284 |
| <u>International-average impact of 19% on GDP per capita</u> | US\$ 1,614 | US\$ 1,725 | US\$ 1,503 |

Justified amount of expenditure is one third of the net present value of the future stream of the specified increase in GDP per capita from 16 years in the future (age 18 approximately) to 52 years in the future (55 years old), discounted at 5 percent. This is based on preschool being a 3-year program (hence 1/3 of the net present value).

A lack of public expenditure is endemic across the Pacific; no Pacific island country spends more than 1 percent of government expenditure to early childhood despite spending more than 15 percent on education (World Bank 2007; Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat 2010). In Tonga and Vanuatu, almost all preschools are financed through tuition fees and donations... Early childhood interventions have been shown to be effective and cost-effective; the evidence base is large and, consequently, is a more informed and less risky investment than other sectors with less evidence. However, governments of Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu still spend very few resources and do not have a strong governance framework for early childhood programs: School readiness may require changing the values of parents and especially fathers, but also changing the values of government.