

# **PROMOTING SOCIAL TOLERANCE AND COHESION THROUGH EDUCATION**

## **REPORT 3: AN EDUCATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE PROMOTION OF SOCIAL COHESION AND DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOLS**

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This report and the recommendations within it represent the advice and opinions of the consultants. They do not necessarily represent the views of government officials in the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu or of officers of the World Bank.

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## SECTION 1: THE PLACE OF REPORT 3 IN THE SOCIAL TOLERANCE PROJECT

The focus of this third report is outlined in the project's Terms of Reference. It is

*a framework for the development of a school-based education for mutual understanding agenda, specifically tailored to Pacific Island conditions, that promotes national cohesion and democratic participation, while respecting cultural diversity and social tolerance. This framework should strive to provide a foundation for policymakers to review and address the role of schooling in promoting social cohesion, as well as some basic instruments for teachers to include values education in their daily practices.*

Being the third report, this report might be considered to represent the accumulated wisdom generated by the data collected in the Solomon Islands and in Vanuatu for the two previous reports. The major activities of the project in both countries, again as outlined in the Terms of Reference, included:

- A Stakeholder Assessment Report on stakeholders' perceptions of the role schools currently do and might play in promoting social tolerance and cohesion (July 2001)
- An Operational Assessment Report on school-based practices regarding cultural understandings, democratic participation and social cohesion (August 2001)
- A Reflective Workshop organised in both countries to promote discussion among local stakeholders about education for mutual understanding and to share findings of the first two reports (May/June 2001)
- A Presentation Meeting in both countries in which all three reports will be discussed by the researchers and key policy stakeholders (August/September 2001)

This report, therefore, marks both the conclusion of the project and sets the scene for future consideration of the data and evidence collected in the course of this project by local stakeholders and educational policy makers.

## **SECTION 2: CONCEPTUALISING A POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR A PUBLIC EDUCATION SYSTEM**

The researchers strongly believe that we are not in a position to formulate specific policy for countries. It has been argued throughout the first two reports that educational policy and its application in the form of school curriculum are social constructions based on community cultural values. In both countries in this study, the stakeholders made it very clear that while they can see benefits from working with outside education agencies, the prime responsibility for policy formation rests squarely with local authorities. What is proposed in this final report is, therefore, an educational framework, or a set of generic principles and guidelines, which, we believe, might be useful for local educational policy makers to consider in the context of the Pacific Islands. Our experience in this project also tells us that there are problems generalising between nations or even with generalising within a nation, such is the cultural diversity within the region. Hence the concept of a 'framework' or a guiding set of principles, is an effective strategy for both developing a coherent policy while at the same time allowing for, and recognising, diversity within the region. This policy strategy, of central guidelines which include recognition of local diversity, received very strong support from stakeholders across all sectors during the course of the project.

The experiences gained in working on the early phases of the project, as outlined in Report 1, set the parameters and the scope of the task. In the report the researchers argued that while the direction of the project appeared to be quite specific, that is, an examination of how social tolerance and harmony can be promoted through education, it very quickly became obvious that the issues highlighted in discussions with stakeholders were broader than the brief implied. The promotion of social tolerance was seen by stakeholders in both countries to be but one dimension of what schools could aim for in the promotion of good citizenship as defined by the project research team.

Referencing both the cultural diversity, and synergies in the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, the data collected during the field work in three locations in each country, demonstrated a congruence of view existed between stakeholders both within and between the two countries, on many issues related to the enhancement of social tolerance and harmony,

The following ideas about the role of a public education system represent a summary of the most commonly expressed views by community and practitioner stakeholders in both countries. Analysis of the views indicated a series of values and assumptions about the role of public education which need to be considered in the development of an educational framework.

- Stakeholders in the broad community believed, even in the context of severe financial obstacles, that the purpose of public education includes providing quality education for all students. They believed that its purpose extended beyond this, because public education was seen to not only cater for the public, but it also helped to shape and create the public body. Education for the public good should include the learning necessary to enhance the well being of communities (for the common wealth) and also to produce civil government (for citizens and families). A major purpose of developing a public education policy framework is therefore both individual (private benefits) and social (the public good).
- In order to create and maintain a public domain of a school system, an educational policy framework and its agent, schools, need to have a particular emphasis on values and procedures which, in broad terms, can be described as democratic. Practitioner stakeholders believed that students should be expected to learn in school how to live and make decisions together. They believed public schools should provide their students with democratic learning outcomes: a belief in the importance of tolerance, empathy, a regard for 'due

process', for natural and social justice, and a commitment to active participation in social and public life.

- Equity in enrolment and attendance policies was a matter of major concern to stakeholders. Their view was that the criteria for an enrolment and attendance policy framework for a public education system must be consistent with its public mission. Enrolment and attendance policy must cater for the public and the criteria must be public and equitable, and not based on the ability to pay, or on nepotism. Likewise student exclusion policies from public schools must be transparent and equitable and not based solely on the use of examination results and inability to pay fees.
- Adult stakeholders in both countries were educated within a colonial education tradition which placed much emphasis on a centralised model of decision making. This centralist tradition is reinforced by a number of factors including the churches and colonial powers. These stakeholders believe that the development of an educational policy framework for public schools in a post colonial context needs to recognise the public's rights and responsibilities in participating in policy development and the governance of schools in the system. Public consultation in the formulation of policy, managing change, and reviewing performance is a critical element in the management style of public education systems.
- The most common form of expression of this belief in public participation came in the desire by local communities for teaching and learning in the local vernacular. Two systemic expressions of support for this belief from educational policy makers have been the policies of community high schools, and in vernacular teaching in early grades of primary school.
- Another consideration in the development of an educational policy framework for a public school system is to the need to develop strategies which ensure some kind of equity between sites by more equitable public funding and support in the provision of education. Practitioner stakeholders frequently commented on what they saw as a reverse ripple effect. The further the location away from the capital, the greater the likelihood of not receiving equitable funding. This sense of inequity in education funding was often framed within a more general criticism of inequities across the provision of welfare and other public services.
- Stakeholders commonly supported some form of decentralisation of decision making to create a more equitable distribution of resources to public education (and other services). For practitioner stakeholders this generally meant an increased role firstly at the Provincial Education Office level and then secondly at the school level. For community stakeholders the focus was a more decentralised structure, allowing local communities to feel they were more than just a mechanism upon which an increased share of funding was being placed. This was often seen as being unfair in principle and divisive across the country particularly in those communities far distant from the decision makers in the capital.

Educational policy makers have a number of options in administering policy within a public education system. At one end of the spectrum is an approach which centralises policy decision making inside a national and/or state bureaucracy. At the other end of the spectrum is a school-based model which gives individual schools the power to develop their own individual curriculum. In the middle sits the notion of a curriculum framework. In this model, a national or state central education authority develops a set of policy frameworks or guidelines, which centrally establishes the goals or outcomes for the curriculum. Usually this model also determines the related assessment mechanism to measure student learning. The flexibility in this framework policy strategy arises from a school's ability to devise its own teaching and learning strategies to implement and achieve the centralised outcomes.

An educational policy framework is neither a syllabus, nor is it a curriculum. By suggesting that a framework be established as the concluding component of this project, the Terms of Reference recognise the role of the whole school community in the decision making processes of their local school. In countries which proclaim to be guided by democratic principles the development of an

educational policy framework for public schools needs to recognise the public's rights and responsibilities in participating in the designing of governance of the system. This is clearly not just a simple matter of rights. Some democratic countries have a tradition of centralised education systems and the instigation of public consultation in the formulation of policy requires a culture shift by both the traditional policy makers towards power sharing and by the public which may have long expected the bureaucracy alone to deliver the services. In the Pacific region, views about the provision of formal schooling are based on past traditions about colonial powers and the churches, and, more recently, the central national governments as the key providers of education. The sharing of decision-making in a policy framework strategy will therefore need a great deal of sensitive and persistent negotiations with all stakeholders.

Finally, there are concerns in developing an educational framework in schools in the area of social learning outside of the broader school/systemic educational policy framework. Curriculum is the expression of the total coherent learning experience in schools, so to articulate one component of it outside the overall goals of education denies the holistic nature of learning. On an even broader canvas, to develop a social learning agenda outside the aspirations of a nation is to also compartmentalise learning and is to isolate the values and assumptions that underpin all educational policies.

What follows in this report is an attempt to develop a kind of road map in which a series of signposts are used to signal significant steps in the development of a policy framework. In this instance, the signposts are pointing towards the destination of the role education can play in promoting social harmony.

### **SECTION 3: CONCEPTUALISING SOCIAL TOLERANCE WITHIN THIS EDUCATIONAL POLICY FRAMEWORK**

In coming to terms with the nature and scope of what an educational framework, suited to the promotion of social learning, should contain, we have grappled with a range of conceptual issues involved in the teaching and learning of values. A couple of questions loom large. Firstly, does the intense social conditioning we all go through, result in people being wary of difference? Secondly, the framing of this project around the concept of 'social tolerance' can be seen to have a somewhat negative reactive connotation attached to it. Tolerance can be taken to imply an almost grudging acceptance, a reluctant acknowledgment that those who are different have rights.

In the context of this study we have come to the conclusion that to focus on social tolerance, per se, does not capture the broader more positive components of social cohesion and social harmony. Taken further, tolerance implies an acceptance of the authority of others who say we must tolerate those in the community who are different from us. So tolerance is the positive form of the intolerance, but it is not the opposite of intolerance (Scott, 2001). As an example, people from one island might tolerate people from another island, but they do not accept them. They do not invite them into their homes. They tolerate them sometimes because the law says they must.

The development of an educational policy framework in the area of social learning, and specifically dealing with social tolerance clearly need to recognise the many broader societal factors with which a community may not have come to terms. Intolerance begins when the patience and good will, the openness, and the generosity of spirit which is required in multicultural societies to keep them functional, runs out. It is when those who are different from us cross some imaginary boundary of our minds, or when some demagogue or hegemonic group arises and gives us a reason to bury our tolerance and legitimises the means to oppose those who we fear, and gives an imprimatur to take action, like a riot, or a shooting or forced emigration. Embodied in this scenario is a rationale for why governments need to develop active policies to support tolerance, or more particularly, to create an environment in which the broader goal of social harmony undermines any predisposition towards intolerance.

So can an imposed educational policy framework for schools impact upon the way a person thinks, feels and behaves? Can an educational policy and curriculum bring about a change in social learning? And can legislation marginalise racists, bigots and extremist political parties? It has been argued in the first two reports that, in our view, the primary role of schools is to assist young people to be positive, active and contributing citizens. To believe this is to believe that schools can make a difference in social learning. Our reading of the current climate in formal education indicates that there is a far greater emphasis being given in schools, in western and emerging democracies, to the achievement of basic skills and vocational skills. Social learning has consequently suffered in its place in school curriculum. We will argue in this report that social learning needs to be central to the framing of educational policy.

The educational framework proposed in this report is predicated on the belief that change must be framed and welcomed by the community(s) and not forced on them by an often-distant centralised authority. Nor can harmony be achieved in the broader context of anger and aggression.

#### **SECTION 4: CONTEXTUALISING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS EDUCATIONAL POLICY FRAMEWORK**

Reports 1 and 2 in this study have sections in them documenting the broad national contexts of Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands in which this project was placed, therefore there is no need to repeat contextual factors here in any detail. However a summary of key contextual factors is worthwhile here, in order to physically place them closer to the following discussions about educational frameworks. The researchers contend that the factors below come from the data collected during the case study interviews, and not from interpretation of those data. The two countries are not being compared and some factors are more significant in one place than others. Likewise other countries in the Pacific region are not being placed in this particular context and readers will need to exercise caution in extrapolating from the data from just two countries.

- Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands are newly created nations, having forged nationhood from previously-unconnected islands.
- Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands formed nationhood from many islands, of differing geographic and population sizes, some physically isolated from other islands, some islands situated a long distance from the capital.
- The impact of colonisation can still be observed on a number of levels.
- The populations on the many islands of Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands have very diverse cultural and linguistic traditions.
- There are some tensions between cultural groups.
- The establishment of a nation with a centralised national government has created some tensions among islanders, some of which are seeking a federation structure in the distribution of power.
- The vast majority of people in both countries live on the land, as subsistence farmers, contributing to a localised rural economy.
- A growing minority live in the few urban areas and their lifestyle and aspirations differ considerably from those of rural farmers.
- An individual's sense of location centres more around the family and the village or island than with the nation.
- Religion is a significant provider of information about ethics and morality.
- As nations with small populations, contacts with the global economy and globalisation in general, have been relatively recent but are increasing.
- Governments are unable to fund educational services to the level they wish; that is at a level required to achieve their goals, or to satisfy local demand.
- External funding aid supplements national funding and is sometimes not in the control of the nation's decision-makers.
- Disparity in funding is inequitable and creates tensions, so that the political system that should be supporting social and cultural cohesion becomes an instrument which weakens it.



- The decision by the relatively -new national governments to assume responsibility for a wide range of services, spread over a vast geographical distance, has created stresses in the total well-being of the nations. The inability to generate sufficient national income to support these services, coupled with the community's growing expectation that the services should be provided from national rather than local budgets, has resulted in a trend to fund these services with overseas borrowings. This has left small national economies vulnerable. The downturn in rural commodity prices has created huge foreign debts.

Signs of stress and symptoms of a deficit in well-being, are not hard to find in both countries, but it is particularly noticeable in the Solomon Islands. Signs such as poverty (particularly in rural and urban fringe areas), unemployment, the widening gap between rich and poor, relationship breakdown are intertwined with other indicators of social stress and distress; substance abuse, gambling, truancy, loss of self-esteem and a disenchantment with, and alienation from, mainstream socio-political traditions.

Since concepts such as equal or fair distribution of the resources of a community and access to decision-making processes lie at the heart of what living in a democracy means, it is not surprising that feelings of frustration, alienation and exclusion are strong.

The options for action available to communities in both case study countries are varied. In the Solomon Islands and in Vanuatu, some communities have searched for ways - often at great risk to themselves and others - to intervene in the prevailing course of events. One example is the rioting in Port Vila, in 1998, as a result of peoples' dissatisfaction with government actions over the loss of savings in a credit union collapse.

Governments have responded in different ways to the recent waves of community unrest. The researchers formed the impression that Solomon Islands' government actions on the distribution of reparations funds, to date, for example, have only resulted in consolidating people's sense of inevitability, with associated feelings of impotence, alienation and despair.

Educational institutions are doubly involved. As socially relevant institutions, schools are themselves social environments in which people experience a broad range of interactions. Education and training are processes of preparation, for work, but also, more generally, for taking one's place in society. It is worth considering how such preparation could possibly be effective in the absence of any systematic deliberation of the above social issues.

In summary, both local and global forces appear to be polarising community aspirations in both countries. The strength of the forces are not the same in both countries, nor are the same forces operating in the same ways in both countries. It is our view that the current stresses and tensions can best be expressed as a cluster of bipolar concepts, such as appear in the listing which follows. Once named by the countries, these bi-polar concepts represent some of the tensions which require resolution. Resolution lies somewhere along the spectrum between the two end-points

### **Bi-Polar Concepts and Forces at Work in Emerging Democracies**

- individual autonomy vs collective interdependence
- private vs public
- freedom of choice vs mutual constraint
- small government vs big government
- individual autonomy vs collective interdependence
- private vs public
- quality vs equality
- individual responsibility vs mutual responsibility
- competition vs cohesion
- self-interest vs mutual interest
- individual authority vs external authority

## **SECTION 5: A SCHEMA FOR DEVELOPING A FRAMEWORK FOR POLICYMAKERS TO ADDRESS THE ROLE OF SCHOOLING IN PROMOTING SOCIAL COHESION AND CITIZENSHIP**

This section of the report identifies a number of key elements in an educational policy framework to promote social harmony. Each of these key elements will be closely described and analysed. Although the framework is generic in nature, particular attention has been given to the Pacific islands context. As stated earlier, the framework proposed in this report is a kind of roadmap. It consists of a series of sequential signposts, which lead towards the destination of social harmony and an enunciation of the role education can play in its achievement. The signposts, or sequential steps, indicate a number of suggested routes by which a country can arrive at the final destination. Some of these steps involve taking short term decisions, while others involve more long term considerations. The choice of vehicle to be taken on the journey is not the prerogative of the researchers of this project. The researchers are unable to make this decision. This decision is one for local communities. As authors of this report we have tried to assist the journey makers by indicating potential difficulties and issues that might need to be confronted along the way. However it is up to the journey makers to identify their particular set of difficulties and also to take advantage of their knowledge of local routes. It may be possible for them to ask for roadside assistance along the route from other providers and also to seek further assistance at the end of the journey for future travels.

The diagram which follows on page 9 is a schema indicating a series of sequential stages which need to be undertaken in developing an education policy framework to enhance social harmony. In order to assist the traveller, at each stage we have described the scenery and analysed the potential of each stage to contribute to the goal of reaching the final destination of the journey. The authors believe that, in order to reach the final destination, it is not possible to take short cuts or to avoid some of the stages. All stages in the journey must be visited.

### **The Schema for an Education Policy Framework**

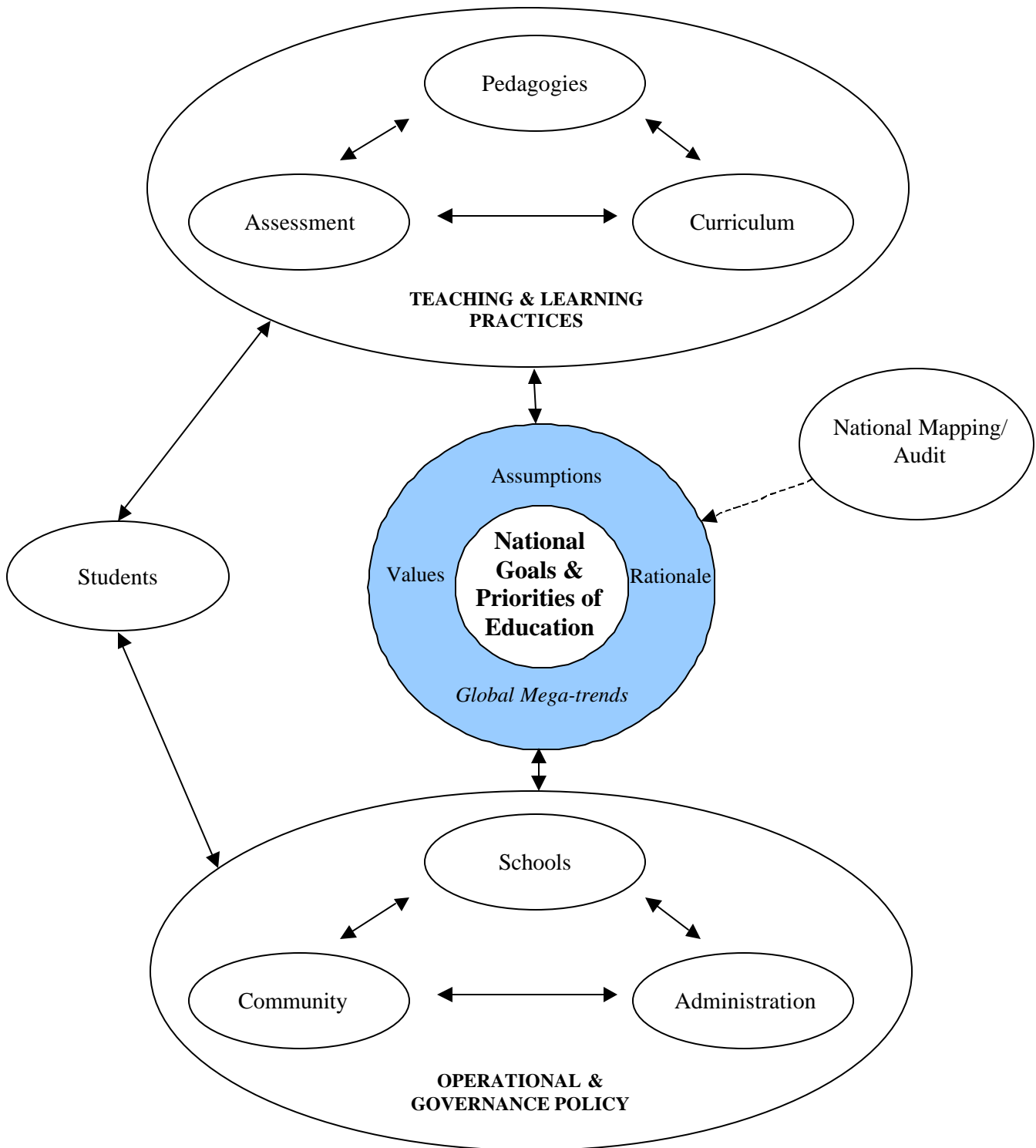
The Schema for a Policy Framework is a conceptual map. Each component of the Schema will be examined in terms of its focus, its underlying principles and values, its relationship to the national goals of education and its contribution to the achievement of a policy framework to enhance social harmony and effective citizenship. Taken together these component parts constitute the Schema.

At the core of the Schema are the National Goals and the Priorities selected and agreed upon by the nation. Immediately surrounding those National Goals, and directly impinging upon them, are the Values, Assumptions and Rationale for the National Goals. Also directly impinging on the National Goals are the Global Mega-trends. Beyond those two circles of core activities are a range of agents which both act upon and are impacted by the National Goals. They are additional areas of policy formation, and these policies are the ways in which the National Goals can be implemented.

The text which follows will both articulate the Schema, and it will also introduce the processes which any participants who are developing a national policy framework, need to engage. The initial policy work must always be the articulation of Goals (and Priorities thereafter). Section 6 of this report deals with this aspect of the Schema and its processes. In constructing the text about the implementation of the framework, the writers, of necessity, can only deal with one aspect of the Schema at a time. However, in the real world of action, the policy-formation needs to involve all parts of the Schema at once. All the components of the Schema are inter-related and cannot be considered in isolation from the articulation of a set of national goals of education.

# THE SCHEMA FOR AN EDUCATION POLICY FRAMEWORK

A conceptual map for an education policy framework to enhance social harmony and citizenship.



## SECTION 6: ARTICULATION OF THE SCHEMA: STAGE ONE

### (i) National Goals of Education and Training

This Social Tolerance Project was in search of a framework for educational action. Any discussion of what such a framework might consist of should start with a call for a clearly stated, relevant, locally developed, comprehensive and powerful set of national goals of education. Without such a set of goals, pedagogical action, curriculum and assessment are more likely to be piecemeal rather than integrated. Pedagogy is more likely to be unresponsive to, or unknowing of, whole fields of possibility for improvement of student learning and personal and social development.

Thus, National Goals are the core of the proposed Schema. They are at the heart of any policy framework and achieving those goals is the desired destination of those using this road map. The National Goals could incorporate national goals of education and training. If the framework is to have national impact on all young people, then it should include goals for all young people those who are currently in school and those who might wish in to be undertaking vocational training.

These National Goals can be described as a set of attributes citizens will attain or develop whilst at school. When we conceptualise and define the attributes of the sort of citizen who should, ideally, join the wider society after his or her experience of education and training, we are in effect talking about everybody – the citizenry at large. The attributes desired of the citizen may be categorised, grouped and listed in various ways, and will be descriptive of an ideal citizen.

National Goals of education and training are not the whole of the ‘framework’ we propose. At the next stage, the framework for implementing a program specifically aimed at enhancing social tolerance and cohesion within the overall process of student social development, would focus on a sub-set of those specifics of behaviour, values, attitudes, dispositions and learnings which the National Goals describe, promulgate and promote.

The importance of the National Goals will need to be established and accepted, their wider relevance will then be understood, and the links between the framework and other aspects of educational provision (administration; infrastructure; implementation, provision of resources) will be understood to be clear at all times. Without this interdependent relationship, any attempt at a framework is going to seem arbitrary at best, vague or partial at worst. It should preclude the tendency to focus on aspects of the educational system in isolation from other aspects, thus having an underdeveloped view of the whole system and its purposes.

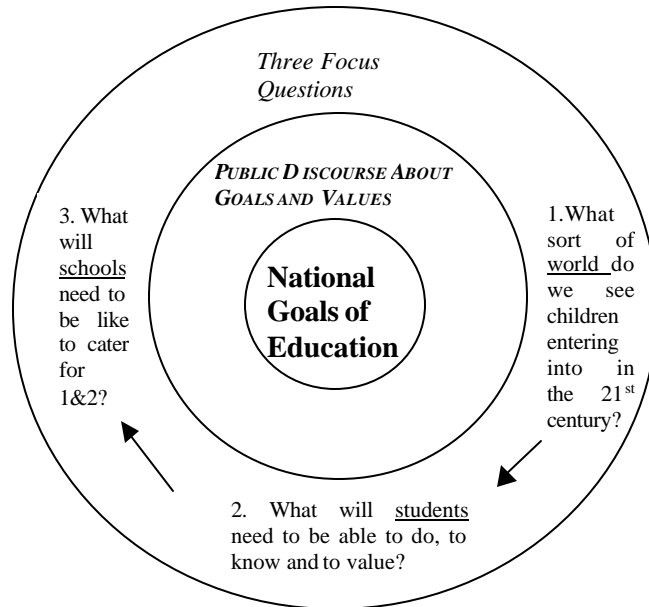
The process of developing the goals themselves would provide an opportunity for the country to explore, define and eventually implement the various aspects of the framework. For example, if the National Goals were to be unanimously formulated in student-centred terms (‘every student will be X, or be able to do X ...’) then a clear message is given to teachers about the nature of their work in implementing the goals – focus on the child first, and the process by which to achieve the goals (curriculum details, pedagogy, assessment), second.

The process of developing national goals of education can be represented by the following diagram. In this process, we believe that the three questions posed in the outer circle should form the basis of, and give direction to, the essential community discussion about national goals. A society/community needs to frame answers to each of these three questions, for from them will derive the key national goals.

Leadership in creating opportunities for broad community discussion and public debate of the three sequential questions needs to come from those authorities which currently hold decision making power in education. It is unlikely that communities themselves will have appropriate knowledge of the processes needed to steer such a complex strategy through community participation to policy formation. The authorities, alone, cannot underwrite and ensure such processes reach fruition. The community must be involved. The experience of other countries

which have engaged in a similar exercise, indicates that the process is indeed a very complex and time consuming one. In part this is a result of the nature of the three questions which embody much broader issues than education, touching also on national goals and aspirations.

### Questions within a Discourse to Develop National Goals of Education



Strategy models for involving the community in the discussion of national issues already exist in the region. The following four examples were observed by researchers during the case study work, conducted in Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands, as part of this project.

- In Vanuatu, in 2001, public meetings in schools and villages were conducted as part of the Comprehensive Reform Program by the national government. This illustrates one such strategy for large scale community consultation.
- In the Solomon Islands, also in 2001, the national newspaper adopted a variation of the model for community consultation when it sponsored a student essay writing competition, seeking a discussion of ways of restoring social harmony amongst young people.
- Another example of a strategy for discussing the development of national goals of education was the reflective workshop held in Vanuatu in June 2001, as part of this project and the participants represented a wide cross section of stakeholders in the education sector. Appendix 1 is a listing of a set of national goals of education for Vanuatu, developed by groups of workshop participants. Appendix 2 is a re-shaping or clustering of the goal statements, into one document, by one of the authors of this report. The document now has a generic quality which enables it to be useful in other Pacific Countries.
- A further example of the kind of processes to be employed in the development of goals of education is from the Solomon Islands (Appendix 3). Here a group of educator from two provinces met to plan for the development of a joint set of goals for their provinces. This consultative and local process could be extrapolated to discussions occurring in all provinces in a country, with the final development of national goals of education being derived from the sets of provincial goals.

## SECTION 6: ARTICULATION OF THE SCHEMA: STAGE ONE

### (ii) Developing Priorities in National Education Goals

In the context of limited funds for the provision of educational services, and the complexities of the 'realpolitik', some form of priority listing of national goals will always be necessary. Attempting some goals might rely on the achievement of other goals. Some goals might need to be seen in the context of other goals. Some goals might be of the stand alone kind. Some goals might be more achievable in some locations than others. Some goals might require considerable more funding than others, and thus must wait for implementation.

It is our impression that in the two case study countries, the lack of a set of national goals of education and therefore the lack of a sense of priorities, has resulted in what one very senior education ministry administrator called a 'putting out of bushfires' approach to education planning and policy implementation. This approach particularly applies to the Solomon Islands where the daily survival of the education system is precariously balanced due mostly to a lack of funding. In Vanuatu, the approach is more one of attempting to accommodate a number of post-colonial legacies in the form of pressure groups within the education sector. These impressions do not deny the all too obvious and multi-faceted problems facing both countries in the provision of education services. But the lack of a publicly supported set of national priorities for education is a serious hindrance to the development and implementation of a framework for education. One explanation for this lack of priorities, and the prior lack of national goals is the precarious political situation in both countries whereby long term planning is difficult due to the instability of national government policy.

One result of this kind of situation, where neither goals nor priorities have been publicly discussed and agreed upon, is the almost random selection of 'a problem to be fixed' approach. In this model, a problem is identified as an 'urgent priority', data on the problem is collected and an implementation plan is developed, frequently by a consultant and without community consultation. Because the 'problem' is considered in isolation from its causes, its place in relation to a holistic picture of the goals of an educational system is not properly grasped. Thus the effect of the 'solution' can only be partial. Such 'piecemeal' policy development is not unusual in the two case-study countries, supported by well-meaning international aid agencies.

The research team does not see as its role the development of a set of priorities of national goals of education for other countries. However, goals of education from the following list were often affirmed by stakeholders in both case study countries, and they could be selected as Priorities.

#### National Goals which Relate to Social Tolerance Objectives

- Maintenance and strengthening of cultural traditions
- Enhancement of what it means to be a citizen
- Development of vocational and rural work skills
- Development of a national languages policy
- Increase in literacy skills
- Equitable distribution of funding to education across the nation
- Rewriting of curriculum to suit local priorities

It would not be surprising if the society/community developed many National Goals of Education. Developing nations generally feel they have much 'catching up' to do, and therefore a great deal to achieve in the field of formal education.

To reiterate: a country cannot establish its National Priorities until it has discussed and agreed upon its National Goals. The former is a sub-set of the latter category.

## SECTION 6: ARTICULATION OF THE SCHEMA: STAGE ONE

### (iii) Values / Assumptions / Rationale Underpinning National Goals

The second level of articulation of the Schema unpacks those Values, Assumptions as well as the Rationale which underpin the National Goals and Priorities. They inform the National Goals and Priorities. Additionally, in deciding on the National Goals and Priorities, further clarification of the values, assumptions and the rationale is achieved. The process is one that looks like this.

**The central question here is: “What are schools for?”**

Some examples might include :

- Supporting cultural traditions
- Enhancing ethical and spiritual behaviours
- Enhancing bodies of knowledge as currently outlined in school curriculum
- Developing skills and competencies related to employment
- Assisting young people to be good citizens
- Promoting social cohesion

**Some values that might underpin the role of schools in enhancing social harmony:**

- **Social justice** (Education as a means of sharing the ‘commonwealth’)
- **Access** (Education for ALL students, regardless of location and financial capacity)
- **Equity** (For all students in all age groups and between genders)
- **Participation** (Inclusion in decision-making, for all stakeholders: students, teachers, the community, Ministry officials)
- **Human rights** (All policy to be supportive of the UN Declaration of Rights of the Child)

**Rationales given for the above views might include:**

- A recognition of cultural diversity in the community
- A recognition of particular demographics of the country
- A belief in the conservation of cultural traditions
- A recognition of impact of globalisation
- A belief in democratic participation

Reports 1 and 2 of this project indicated both the commonalities and the diversity of views and practices about the role schools might play in enhancing social harmony.

In *Report 1: Stakeholders Assessment*, stakeholders’ views invariably reflected a particular value position and certain assumptions about schooling. Sometimes these views were a personal perspective, at other times they represented an organisation’s view. In *Report 2: Operational Assessment*, observations of the operations of schools indicated that schools also carry with them beliefs and assumptions about the role of education for young people. Participants in the process of developing national goals of education and a policy framework to enhance social harmony and to promote citizenship, need to clearly articulate *why* they hold their views, *why* their views are important and *what* assumptions about life values are embedded in their views about education policies and school operations. Values clarification must be paramount to the process.

Though rarely understood or acknowledged by stakeholders, the following school operations are affected by values and assumptions, and articulation of them is essential to the process.

School organisation  
Assessment and reporting practices  
Use of resources  
Pedagogic practices  
Program Evaluations

## SECTION 6: ARTICULATION OF THE SCHEMA: STAGE ONE

### (iv) Mega-trends

An additional factor which impacts on the formation of National Goals, though somewhat differently to Values and Assumptions, is the Mega-trends. The Schema has this factor in the circle immediately beyond the National Goals because its impact is great.

The majority of stakeholders in the two case study countries rarely commented on the impact of global mega-trends on their views or on their lives. Most of them did not see any connection between their views about current tensions (social, economic or political) or their views about future national aspirations and directions, and global mega-trends. Some stakeholders, particularly those in urban areas and/or with overseas experiences, were alert to the impact of globalisation on the well being of their community. For the latter group it was a paramount factor in their interpretation of national goals of education, as they saw its impact as considerable and as negative.

In our view the issue has moved beyond the point of whether countries in the Pacific region should embrace or reject globalisation. The reality is that they have not and are unable to avoid its impact. The issue is to what extent, and in what ways, nations are prepared to accommodate its impact. For some stakeholders who had as one national goal of education the return to more traditional values, what to do with global influences is an almost-insuperable problem.

Globalisation has the potential to both create further social divisions in communities and also has the potential to enhance social harmony. The first question posed in the *Questions within a Discourse to Develop National Goals of Education*, asked about the nature of the world people see for children who are about to begin schooling. Its significance becomes more evident in the face of the issue of mega-trends. We found, in the national reflective workshops in both case study countries, that the participants, while thinking the question was an important one, found it difficult to imagine and envisage the features of a future world. Yet they could easily comment on the visible evidence of globalisation which daily impacted on their lives. It is our experience that, with guided discussion, communities in the most remote locations also can engage in this discussion, for they too have been touched by these mega-trends. The use of solar energy to generate power for villages, for example, invites huge shifts in the ability to rapidly communicate with other locations. Relationships are unutterably altered as a result.

The following list of mega-trends is not meant to be exhaustive, but could form the beginnings of community discussions.

- Globalisation and its impact on local economies and social values.
- The ability of global media conglomerates to infiltrate traditional local forms of communication.
- The use of information technologies.
- Attacks on traditional values/customs/religions by global trends.
- Youth unemployment resulting from, for example, the demographic trend of urban living.
- The global impact and spread of AIDS
- Social alienation and social injustices resulting, for example, from urban living
- The rapidity of change and the need for flexibility and change managers
- Confusion about identities, for example, resulting from changes in national boundaries and immigration.
- Environmental pressures and challenges, sometimes resulting from the impact of multi-national companies on local communities.
- Severe reduction of the saleability of rural and marine production



## SECTION 6: ARTICULATION OF THE SCHEMA: STAGE TWO

### (v) National Mapping and Audit

Alongside the identification and articulation of a set of national goals of schooling, the systematic and reliable identification of the current resources available to an education system is a key step in the development of national goals of education and, specifically, for the development of a policy framework for social learning in schools. National Goals cannot operate in some form of resource vacuum. Any implementation strategy will need to rely on the identification of what resources are available to assist in the implementation. A policy framework which has as its focus the promotion of social harmony will need to ensure that the collected data will be made available to all interested members of the community and will be used as a foundation stone to develop educational policy.

A particular challenge facing countries in the Pacific region is the geographic spread of many of its resources and lack of appropriate technologies to systematically collect and collate the required data. It is our experience that education administrations vary in their ability to collate this data. In Vanuatu, for example, the annual reports of the Ministry of Education and Sport give reasonable background data upon which to engage in public discussion about what is possible, both in the short and long term. The following table suggests some basic areas of data necessary for a national audit. It suggests that the collection of such data is important. It does not imply that much of this information is not already in existence in one form or another. We would, however, suggest that much of this information is not currently publicly available. Thus it is not in a form which could contribute to public discussion of the relationship between national goals and available resources to achieve these goals.

We urge both the collection and a ready public access to such data.

#### DATA COLLECTION FOR PUBLIC DISCUSSION

Students	Teachers	School facilities and resources	Administration	Funding
Numbers	Numbers	Audit of school buildings	Ministry Structure	Sources
Location	Sectors	Library holdings	Job description	Distribution
Ages	Qualifications	Class materials	Performance	Amount
Gender	Age & Gender	Maintenance	Accountability	NGOs
Disabilities	Professional development	Shortages	Prov.Ed.Office.	
Retention rates	Specialism	Funding	Curriculum Develop't Centre	
Sectors Grades	School Position	School Council	Teachers College	
	Place of Birth			

#### KEY FRAMING QUESTIONS

##### (TO BE ASKED OF DATA COLLECTED IN THE NATIONAL AUDIT)

<b>To what extent are the current levels of access &amp; equity participation contributing to Social Tolerance?</b>	<b>What is the extent of teachers' understandings of skills about social harmony</b>	<b>What is the extent of the physical resources and facilities which contribute to social justice?</b>	<b>To what extent does the current system promote a) national cohesion? b) democratic modelling? c) cultural diversity?</b>	<b>What is the extent of available funds to support the achievement of national goals and priorities?</b>
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## SECTION 6: ARTICULATION OF THE SCHEMA: STAGE THREE

### Teaching and Learning Practices Cluster

The main focus of this study, into the role schools can play in promoting positive social learning, required the research team to investigate teaching and learning practices in the two case study countries. This was one of the two major areas of fieldwork investigation, and research team's findings were outlined in Report 2. In addition to interviewing stakeholders, curriculum documents and policies were analysed in terms of their contribution to enhancing social harmony. Assessment procedures were reviewed in terms of their relationship to the social components of the curriculum and to the enhancement of social justice. Fieldwork visits to schools and to teachers colleges enabled some observations to be made about the appropriateness of current classroom pedagogies to the promotion of social cohesion and democratic participation.

The achievement of an effective educational framework to enhance social harmony requires that the three components of teaching and learning – curriculum, pedagogy and assessment – are all closely connected to each other, and, in turn, are, as a group, closely connected to the national goals of education. The sections below examine the three components of teaching and learning in terms of their individual contribution to the enhancement of social harmony

It is our impression that in both case study countries there is a high degree of disjuncture between the three central components of education. In part the explanation for this disjuncture lies with the current administrative structures within the ministries of education, whereby the three sub sectors of the administration are physically separated from each other in different locations in the capital. The administrative personnel within each sector appear to rarely co-ordinate their activities in the achievement of common goals. And the reason for this is the central issue in this report; that is, there is no common set of goals.

In the sections which follow, the Teaching and Learning Practice aspect of the Schema is analysed. It will be argued that the development of national goals of education is the central starting point for an educational framework. From these goals flows a logical sequence of issues requiring both pedagogic and operational responses.

(Section 6: Stage 4 of this report deals with the Teaching and Pedagogy Cluster of the Schema. Section 6: Stage 5 of this report deals with the Operational and Governance Cluster of the Schema.)

#### **The Teaching and Pedagogy questions to be asked, and answered, are:**

- what is worth knowing? (curriculum),
- how can this be achieved? (pedagogy) and then
- how will it be known if the goals have been achieved? (assessment).

An effective educational framework does not start with assessment procedures. It is our view, as outlined in detail in Report 2, that in several countries in the Pacific region the external examinations drives the curriculum and therefore the pedagogy. The tendency to compartmentalise and separate the three components of teaching and learning and the lack of an educational administrator to cohere the components can only exacerbate issues of social injustice and social fragmentation.

## Teaching and Learning Practices Cluster

### (i) Pedagogic Practices

The first component of the Teaching and Learning Practices aspect of the Schema for the development of a policy framework for teaching and learning social harmony is 'Pedagogic Practices'.

The enhancement of social harmony and cultural tolerance in schools and classrooms requires a policy framework which encourages teachers to adapt centrally-developed materials to local contexts. The research team has been very impressed with the creative yet purposeful teaching and learning pedagogies employed by some teachers, even in the most remote locations. The common feature of these teachers was that they were able to clearly articulate their goals, had a vision about what pedagogies would suit their students and at the same time connected these strategies to the formal requirements of the examinations.

The enhancement of national cohesion and social harmony in schools requires a range and combination of pedagogic practices which promote understandings, skills, values and social action. An active learner, like an active citizen, is one who engages with the curriculum. A policy framework can enshrine these approaches in curriculum statements and in syllabuses. The role of the examination is then to offer opportunities to students to 'practise' these skills, understandings and values. The role of the teacher in an environment which encourages flexibility in planning, is to link teaching and learning goals with creative and engaging pedagogy. If students are to be informed participants in a democratic society they will need the following skills:

#### Basic Democratic Skills

- Research skills
- Thinking skills
- Social participation skills
- Communication skills
- Values Clarification skills

In the area of values and dispositions, teachers need to develop a classroom environment in which agreed values are identified, internalised and practiced. Substantive values, for example respect, tolerance, cooperation and social justice, were often mentioned by stakeholders as being central community values. Systematic or explicit teaching and learning of these values is rare.

Pedagogic practices which enhance positive social learning are supported by this policy framework. Some of the teachers interviewed were skilled in the appropriate classroom practices and practices. It is our view that such skilled practitioners should be identified and these teachers be given a professional development role within local clusters of schools, with a view to enhancing pedagogic practices sympathetic to positive social learning.

An effective social cohesion policy recognises that social action is an essential dimension of social education pedagogy because it enables students to be active learners by practising appropriate and relevant social learning, both in the classroom, and outside in the community. Reports 1 & 2 argued that a young person's willingness to consider contributing to the community and to learning values like social harmony, rested heavily on the teaching and learning opportunities created at school. Engagement in community service, meaningful leadership roles for students in school life and students working together with other members of the school community are examples of activities resulting from of this pedagogic approach.

An effective social cohesion policy recognises that the positive disposition towards national cohesion and social tolerance cannot be learned in a knowledge vacuum. Reports 1 and 2 argued that a sensitive and empathetic understanding of local traditions and a sense of belonging are critical pre-conditions to effective social learning. Such learning requires a pedagogy which is culturally sensitive and is knowledgeable and accepting of diverse cultural practices. In turn schools need community involvement, and resources with appropriate teaching and learning materials to support learning of local community (and national) knowledge.

The enhancement of positive social learning can best be achieved in classrooms which have the following characteristics.

### **Characteristics of Classrooms where Social Learning can Flourish**

#### **From the Teachers' Perspective:**

- Teachers model desired behaviours
- There are high levels of student interest and motivation
- Teaching and learning practices connected to enhancement of national cohesion, democratic participation within cultural diversity and social tolerance
- Principal and teachers model best practice in social learning
- Students are actively involved in learning
- Physical environment of classroom is organised to support social learning
- Learning theory is linked to practice: for example, difference in students' learning styles are accommodated
- Assessment is linked to pedagogic practices

A classroom which has the above pedagogic characteristics, will result in a classroom which has the following learning characteristics.

#### **From the Students' Perspective:**

- Students feel secure, listen to each other, cooperation is valued, and opinions are freely given and received
- Openness of ideas is encouraged through questioning, critical thinking and respect for diversity of views
- Students can develop their decision-making skills
- Diversity of ideas and practice is encouraged.
- New knowledge, skills and values are built on students' experiences and interests.
- Learning activities are challenging, cooperative, problem-solving and inclusive

These two lists of classroom characteristics indicate the radical changes in classroom practices many teachers need to undertake if they are to be conducting classes in which social learning can occur. The changes required represent a major cultural shift for most teachers. Such changes to pedagogy cannot be undertaken in a piecemeal manner. Teachers will urgently need training in these pedagogic practices. Professional development, both pre-service and in-service training, will need to be provided. Selection of key teachers for dissemination of training can be utilised, but all teachers will need familiarisation training. Without this full resourcing, the results will not be achieved.

Some implications of this cultural shift are explored subsequently in this report, in the policy section about administration. (See Section 6: Stage 4, page 24, also Priority 3, p28.)

## (ii) Curriculum

The second component of the Teaching and Learning Practices aspect of the Schema for the development of a policy framework for teaching and learning social harmony is 'Curriculum'.

Report 2 examined the national curriculum in both case study countries in terms of its relationship to the enhancement of positive social learning. The syllabus review indicated that much of the current curriculum was obsolete, especially in the context of new nationhood. Much of the curricula had the potential to encourage social learning but they lacked explicit content about local traditional cultural practices. Because of this the curricula also lacked local cultural knowledge outcomes. In fact we argued that the curricula were socially divisive with their emphasis on a narrow content, and on a valuing of cognitive learning related to the examinations. As such, most of what could be called 'life skills learning' was ignored by schools.

Report 2 also indicated the extent of dissatisfaction with the current curriculum by many community stakeholders. The conclusion reached by the research team was that there is an urgent need to review the current curriculum in both countries. In particular, in this report, we argue that with the articulation of national goals of education, educators and the community have an opportunity to both broaden the curriculum while setting its parameters. The following is a checklist of the characteristics of curriculum delivery for enhancing the learning and modelling of social tolerance and cohesion.

### **Characteristics of socially cohesive curriculum delivery**

- National goals and priorities are reflected directly in curriculum
  - The curriculum is inclusive in terms of gender, disabilities, ethnicity
  - The curriculum is child centred – aesthetic, intellectual, physical, social, moral (When this is the case, so-called 'youth issues', such as unemployment, birth control, AIDS, conflict resolution, social relationships are explicitly incorporated in the formal curriculum.)
  - Schools are given flexibility, within a national framework, to localise curriculum: for example, the use of vernacular languages, local cultural traditions are incorporated
  - Mechanisms are in place to effectively monitor delivery of curriculum and its effectiveness
  - Information Technologies is integrated into the curriculum
  - The curriculum is delivered in a number of different modes, including Distance Education
- A comprehensive curriculum should include; academic, vocational and rural strands

The research team believes that the newly emerged nations of the Pacific region have a great opportunity to re-conceptualise the curriculum of schools outside of the western body of knowledge tradition. This is very exciting opportunity to develop curriculum patterns to specifically suit local national aspirations, even recognising the impact of globalisation. We consider the following areas of knowledge might form a useful curriculum.

### **Curriculum Areas**

- Environmental education
- Citizenship education
- Religion and Society
- Expressive and Creative Arts
- Physical and Health Education
- Vocational and Rural training
- Culture and Language
- Science and Technology
- Maths and Society

## Teaching and Learning Practices Cluster

### (iii) Assessment

The third and final component of the Teaching and Learning Practices aspect of the Schema for the development of a policy framework for teaching and learning social harmony is 'Assessment'.

Drawing on the fieldwork in the two case study countries, it was reported in Reports 1 & 2 that the current practices of assessment are socially divisive. In brief, the argument was often made by policymaker stakeholders that the role of the national examinations is to allocate scarce places in secondary schools in accordance to the extent of available funding. It purported to achieve this goal by assessing the learning of the students. However practitioner stakeholder views on the dominant role of the exams indicated negative personal and educative outcomes resulted from such a culling process.

Assessment can come in many forms: Exams, diagnostic and summative teacher assessment, peer, group and self-assessment. What one wishes to assess will determine the kind of assessment applied to a given student cohort at any time. There are a number of essential principles which apply to the use of assessment. The effect of the form of an assessment on the learning, undertaken in preparation for the assessment, should not be overlooked. The researchers believe that the type of question asked (or anticipated) in any assessment will determine the nature of the learning that takes place. The principles of assessment listed below should be considered in the development of an assessment policy framework. They are especially important in the development of a curriculum for social tolerance and cohesion, because assessment of such learning can never be achieved solely by the use of exams, not even if they were reasonably connected to the whole of a curriculum.

#### Principles of Assessment

- Assessment practices define what is valued in the school curriculum and influence a student's motivation to learn
- Competitive forms of assessment give limited information to students, teachers and parents
- Competitive assessment limits meaningful long term learning
- Assessment practices must reflect the full range of goals and approaches to teaching and learning – knowledge, skills and values
- The use of criterion-based assessment processes linked to student learning outcomes is an effective strategy to enhance learning in all areas of the curriculum
- Students should be involved in setting goals and means of assessment
- Continuing (formative) assessment as well as summative assessment strategies should be used in order to achieve goals of social justice.
- Reporting to parents should connect to national goals, articulate assessment strategies and focus on student learning, including social learning.

That teachers who monitor and evaluate student learning in a formative manner, cannot assess their students' learning in context of the classroom, is a serious weakness in current education policy. The sorts of goals associated with the enhancement of social harmony and other values can best be developed in the classroom, for it is here that a more varied range of assessment processes can be used. This is not to suggest that only internal assessment processes be used. Examinations can be useful for the measurement of certain types of goals.

This proposed policy framework has as its focus the appropriate assessment of social learnings, and skills associated with social learning with a social tolerance, cohesion and harmony agenda.

## SECTION 6: ARTICULATION OF THE SCHEMA: STAGE FOUR

### Introductory Comments to a Governance Policy to Promote Social Learning

The third aspect of the Schema addresses 'Operational and Governance Policy'. The opportunities for schools to promote social harmony depends on a sensitive and cohesive rapport between the three major decision-making agencies – schools themselves, the local community and the education administration. These three agencies are responsible for the implementation of national government policy.

It is the view of the research team that all three agencies, in their own ways, currently offer few opportunities for broad representation of their constituents in decision-making processes. Reports 1 & 2 examined the culture of decision making processes in the three locations, and noted:

- The centralist policy of the national ministries of education in the two case study countries.
- The minimalist role given to provincial education centres to develop policies and activities for their local communities.
- The lack of opportunities or encouragement for principals and teachers to engage in decision making at the local school level.
- The lack of opportunities for local communities to participate in policy-making decisions.
- The lack of opportunities for students to engage in meaningful decision making about their interests and needs at school.

This policy framework for the promotion of democratic participation and community well being involves the three decision-making agencies in the Schema: Community, Schools and Administration. Those three areas of involvement are put forward for discussion. The following text deals with those areas of involvement, based on a commitment to the concept of **engagement** as the key, framing element.

## Operational and Governance Policy Cluster

### (i) Community

The first component of the 'Operational and Governance Policy' aspect of the Schema in the development of a policy framework for teaching and learning about social harmony is 'Community'.

*Report 2: Operational Assessment*, of this Social Tolerance Project, referenced research into, and provided an analysis of, factors contributing to students' positive dispositions towards participating in their communities. It was asserted that the most important factor contributing to positive and efficacious attitudes towards community participation was the extent to which schooling offered them opportunities to practice citizenship. Examples of such activities are: community or social service, contributing directly to discussion, spearheading (designing and leading) social initiatives in their community. The creation of these social learning opportunities rests with the goodwill of the other participants and the extent of the interaction between school and the community.

In a public education system which reflects the aspirations of the community (be it local or regional), the following characteristics will be evident:

- The community and community groups will participate in setting goals and policy frameworks for their local school.
- The community will be equitably represented on policy-making committees at all levels: local provincial and national.
- Schools will recognise the value of community participation by inviting appropriate individuals and groups to share their knowledge and experience with their school community.
- The community will initiate opportunities for students to gain experience in the life of the community - including the gaining of work experience.
- Schools will be physically located within the community they serve, and be easily accessible to it.

Some examples of how communities can be involved in the operation and governance of schools include:

- Membership of School Councils, with responsibility to develop local School Charters or mission statements.
- Representation on Provincial Education Office policy-making committees
- Involvement in school and classroom activities as teacher aides.
- Initiating and promoting community knowledge in school curricula.
- Community representation on funding allocation decision-making bodies.

Schools are social institutions. The values of a school reflect major points of agreement within the school community. These become the key core goals around which the school, community and students can unite and act in concert. *Report 2: Operational Assessment*, of this Social Tolerance Project, argued the case for all members of the school community coming together to articulate values and goals in a school charter or mission statement. This public document would spell out what is expected of the different members of the school community, based on the agreed common values and goals. These community activities would focus on the promotion of social cohesion, democratic decision-making and the social well being of communities.



## Operational and Governance Cluster

### (ii) Schools

The second component of the 'Operational and Governance Policy' aspect of the Schema in the development of a policy framework for teaching and learning about social harmony is 'Schools'.

The way schools organise themselves reflects the values and beliefs the stakeholders consider important. The type of school organisation has a strong influence on students' perception of school and their learning. Schools will have diverse needs and different points of entry in this review process. Some schools may only want to review and fine-tune policy and practices that they believe have been operating effectively for some years. Other schools may wish to undertake a fuller review of what they are currently doing and develop new policy which better suits their present population and needs. Alternatively there may be a pressing problem that the school needs to address. All require a process of review of social learning in the school.

Whatever the motivation for considering social learning as an area of the school program requiring a review, the following list of steps provides guidelines for a school-based process:

- Identification of social learning as a high priority focus for the school.
- Data is then to be collected from the three populations at the local level:
  - (i) Students: (e.g.: on their feelings about social connectedness)
  - (ii) Teachers: (e.g.: on their perceptions of how they are valued at the school)
  - (iii) Parents: (e.g.: their perceptions of emotional and physical safety in the school)
- An analysis of current school policies and existing practices, resulting in the identification of special social understandings, skills and values that the school has to focus on.
- Action to implement the required plan is then taken by the whole school community.

When a social learning review process and an action plan have been effectively implemented a school has the following characteristics:

#### **Characteristics of Schools which Inculcate Social Learning**

- Schools are models of democratic practices
- Parents, teachers and students are actively engaged in decision making
- Schools utilise a community governance model of organisation
- The principal provides leadership in developing a democratic model of governance.
- Schools have a whole school plan to enhance social harmony
- Schools develop a charter, or mission statement, which reflects goals of social harmony
- Schools themselves develop a policy/curriculum framework which reflect community and national aspirations.
- Schools have policies which promote a safe, caring, pleasant environment
- The effectiveness of teaching and learning of social learning is regularly monitored
- School curriculum is comprehensive and/or specialist in connecting to the local community
- Schools promote social harmony by the use of community/national symbols, e.g. flags

## Operational and Governance Policy Cluster

### (iii) Administration

The third component of the 'Operational and Governance Policy' aspect of the Schema in the development of a policy framework for teaching and learning about social harmony is 'Administration'.

It could be argued that the effectiveness of an education system is only as good as its administrative structures. In Report 1, stakeholders in both case study countries were very critical of both the management style of the educational administration and the politicisation of the whole area of education. Frequent comments were made about the inability of practitioner stakeholders to communicate with appropriate administrative personnel in the central offices, so that even the most basic teaching and learning requirements like paper and, in some cases, teacher payment, were not received. Other comments from community stakeholders reflected a growing concern about the impact of the volatile political climate and therefore changing key policy makers.

Regardless of the size of the education system, educational administrators are engaged in a very complex organisation. The organisational orientation of an educational administration is a critical factor both in creating a management environment conducive to enhancing social harmony and participatory democratic practices among stakeholders and in providing leadership in developing policies within the boundaries of national goals of education. Some of the ways in which administrative policy can impact on broader social issues include:

- Setting aims and goals for the system and devising ways of monitoring performance
- Establishing relationships between schools and the central office.
- Facilitating co-operation between educational institutions.
- Utilising the main agent in schools, the principal, as a conduit for administration policy.
- Facilitating the provision of resources to schools
- Establishing policies and procedures for assessment of students and credentialing of teachers.
- Providing for professional development of teachers
- Certifying curriculum

It is the view of the research team that the current administrations in the two case study countries do not have a coordinated administrative structure which facilitates the implementation of policy within a clearly articulated philosophical framework. There is a need for a whole system approach to youth issues and not just schooling. Given the limited funding available to the administration, there is a need to devolve some of the policy responsibilities to local provincial education offices and to individual school communities. A series of recommendations will be discussed in a later section dealing with national priorities.

### Conclusion to the Articulation of the Schema for this Educational Framework

This completes the analysis and articulation of the Schema.

Three Priorities were identified by the researchers as those, if taken together, are most likely to result in the education systems in Pacific countries positively contributing to social cohesion in their societies. An articulation and analysis of the Three Priorities follows in Section 7.

## **SECTION 7: PROPOSED NATIONAL PRIORITIES FOR SOCIAL COHESION**

### **Priority One: A NATIONAL YOUTH STRATEGY PLAN**

It is our view that the key to establishing a set of national priorities for education is the development of a national youth strategy plan. We believe that the many comments from stakeholders and the observations made during the field-work indicate that there is a lack of a co-ordinated approach to youth. Formal education is but one component of a youth policy. In both countries many non-government agencies were making a significant contribution to some aspects of education for young people. Likewise in both countries there does not appear to be a co-ordinated policy to address the issues facing those many young people who do not continue schooling beyond the primary school level.

The demographic figures focusing on the high proportion of youth as a percentage of the total population in the two case study countries can be reflected in similar figures from other countries in the Pacific region. We have not uncovered any evidence to suggest that this trend might change in the near future. It is our belief that the development of a school based education policy framework needs to take into account the total youth population. The low retention rates of young people through secondary schools clearly indicate a higher proportion of youth outside of the education system. Schooling for young people beyond Grade 6 is not a reality, so any policy process with a focus on social justice needs to consider educational opportunities in non-formal settings. Schools are obviously not the only agency for learning, yet there appears to be few systemic opportunities in the two case study countries for youth education. In general, most opportunities have been developed by non-government organisations, such as the churches.

The enhancement of social harmony in a community relies on a commitment to the wellbeing of all sections of the community. An educational policy framework needs to be encompassed within a broader national youth policy framework. Our discussions with many young people indicate that they have a wide range of interests outside of formal classroom learning. These interests include physical, aesthetic, spiritual, social and cognitive experiences. At present formal schooling only offers some of these experiences.

Some examples of components, currently mostly missing, and which would enhance social harmony and national youth well-being within a broad national youth policy framework include:

#### **Possible Components of a Youth Policy Framework**

- Opportunities for student decision-making experiences in all learning contexts, for example, Student Representative Councils, membership on education committees.
- Development of a National Youth Parliament system
- Inclusion of youth issues, however controversial, within all educational experiences.
- Community Service as a component of all educational experiences
- A national sport and physical education policy
- Rural education training centres linked to Provincial Educational Offices and driven by local demand and including work experience.
- The provision of vocational training both within existing schools and outside in specialist institutions. Development of an articulated vocational education system based on generic vocational competencies, and firmly focussed on realistic choices of vocation.

## **SECTION 7: PROPOSED NATIONAL PRIORITIES FOR SOCIAL COHESION**

### **Priority Two: A REVIEW OF CURRICULUM**

We have argued in all three reports that schools provide the single common experience for the citizens of a country. We have also argued that curriculum is socially constructed and therefore has embodied in it values and assumptions about teaching and learning as well as broader issues like national aspirations. The construction of curriculum should clearly represent the current goals and future hopes of communities. Communities own the curriculum, therefore community consultation about what makes up a curriculum is a critical strategy to enhance social harmony.

The review of curriculum is a time consuming process. It can also be a costly process if stakeholders in the community call for amendments. The overall impression we have received during this project is that there is considerable dissatisfaction with the current curriculum in both of the case study countries. It is interesting that stakeholders in both countries have highlighted aspects of social learning as the component of curriculum they most urgently want to amend. It is our conclusion that the focus of this project – the promotion of social harmony and citizenship – is the very focus desired by communities in both countries.

The strategies to review curriculum are complex and it is our view that there is not sufficient personnel or resources currently allocated in both countries to carry out the task. We therefore are arguing that this needs to become a national priority with appropriate funding. This may mean taking some funding from other areas of the budget. It might mean seeking foreign funding support for this specific task, provided the ownership of the activity rests with local curriculum developers.

A review of the curriculum in social learning could use the audit of curriculum as outlined in Report 2 of this project. It is not being suggested that only this area of curriculum be reviewed, but rather that social learning should be both an area of study in itself and an over-arching perspective across the whole school curriculum. This is clearly the desire of stakeholders in both countries. We are not suggesting, however, that the nature of the social learning curriculum will be the same for both countries.

The boxed list which follows indicates a range of teaching and learning issues associated with social education. It suggests areas of curriculum knowledge, appropriate pedagogies and connections to core values or national goals of education. It suggests that the enhancement of social harmony and citizenship can be effectively and systematically incorporated into the school curriculum. It also recognises, as pointed in Report 2, the need to give students opportunities to practice citizenship activities.

The element not explicitly referenced in the list is the relationship between curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. We are of the belief that appropriate assessment activities can be developed to assess social learning. External examinations are generally not the most appropriate strategy, so we are promoting the idea of more school-based assessment.

The interconnectedness of pedagogy, curriculum and assessment is demonstrated in the Schema and underpins the whole of the policy framework we have devised in this report. It also underpins the Three Priorities we have identified as essential to the achievement of a curriculum which espouses Social Tolerance, Cohesion and Harmony.

## **Curriculum Outcomes:**

**(When Social Tolerance, Cohesion and Harmony are a Curriculum's Learning Outcomes)**

### **Broad Understandings About Society**

Through the social education program, especially one which seeks to enhance Social Tolerance, Cohesion and Harmony, students should progressively achieve an understanding of the following:

The way societies are grouped and structured

The ways different societies have of fulfilling basic needs

The ways decisions are made and enacted; and the influences on decision-making

The ways widely-held beliefs and values influence societies and groups within societies

The ways in which people interact and the purposes for which they interact

The ways in which there are elements of change and continuity in human affairs

The ways in which there is interaction between natural and social settings

The ways in which different societies maintain and pass on their culture

It is the view of the authors that these understandings about society should form the basis of social learning in schools. They embody understandings, skills and values, all of which are directed towards cultural sensitivities and social harmony. Some are found in existing curriculum documents, but their impact seems weak and fragmented.

## **SECTION 7: PROPOSED NATIONAL PRIORITIES FOR SOCIAL COHESION**

### **Priority Three: A DEVOLUTION OF POLICY MAKING PROCESSES**

We have argued in this report that one of the key elements in the development of an educational policy framework for a public education system which is directed at enhancing social harmony is community ownership of the policy and the decision making processes. We have identified that the decision-making traditions of some cultures do not actively support this approach to policy formation. Thus the promotion of social harmony and citizenship as a focus of education policy can only originate from those stakeholders who already have the policy-making authority. In this instance, this is the central ministry of education. Countries that aspire to democratic models of governance are willing to use the ballot box to gain and use community support for policy for a range of issues. The difference in the education area we believe rests with the absence of a national set of goals of education. As a result, communities are unable to translate broad national policy into local practices.

Arguments have already been made in this report for the need for changes in administrative structure and procedures to promote a more public acceptance of, and modelling of, desired social learning outcomes. What follows is a summary of the principles which we see embedded in the process of moving from a centralised policy making process to a school community based framework. Indicative initial strategies have been identified as follows:

- Widening the scope of the Ministry of Education to issues such as employment, training, & youth affairs, so enhancing a unified national system of education and approach to youth affairs
- Enhance transparency and accountability in education via triennial school reviews
- Establish performance reviews of administrative staff
- School principals be charged with establishing local school policy in conjunction with local school communities.
- Key principals given responsibility to oversee a cluster of principals in the processes of school policy formulation.
- Provincial Education Offices (PEO) be charged with much greater responsibility in cluster professional development of teachers and in initiating community participation in education.
- The Curriculum Development Centres (CDC) be restructured to include a representative board of management – NGOs, Teacher’s College, PEO, teachers, administration, so that the production of curriculum materials reflect the aspirations and values of the community.
- Creation of a Distance Education section within the CDC to facilitate more equitable access to educational resources.
- Leading teachers be given time release to develop curriculum materials which reflect assessment processes and pedagogies embedded in national goals of education..
- Teachers’ College management be linked to the CDC, Ministry of Education administration, NGOs and be developed as centres of excellence in pedagogies to enhance social learning.
- Examination papers examinations be developed by teachers with time release, with a leading teacher to ensure each paper accurately reflects national goals of education.

The over-riding objective in this process is to bring the key education agencies together and to broaden the management representation in each institution. The management concept underpinning the devolutionary process is based on modelling active democratic engagement in decision-making.

The effectiveness of an administration can be measured by the existence of the following characteristics:

#### **Characteristics of an Effective Education Administration**

- Articulated purposes and goals which are clear
- Leadership which had high standards of academic and administrative skill
- Locates and holds a dedicated and qualified staff
- The articulation to staff and on paper that the system will deliver and fulfil expectations
- Early identification of teaching and learning issues within the system
- Pays attention to the synergy between administration, school and the community
- Accountability with regard to all processes and outcomes which fall within the ambit of its responsibilities.

In conclusion, an effective educational administration is one which, having acknowledged the importance of local involvement in the construction of national goals, then establishes processes which will ensure local communities have the power to implement the framework within the context of that local situation.

## CONCLUSION

### Concluding Comments

*A strong, interactive classroom community encompasses democratic practices, honours individual differences, and helps children understand that within any group there are many ways of looking at the world. (Bryant, 1999)*

The core purpose of schooling is to provide a quality education which ensures that students are well prepared for life after school. All school processes should ultimately be supportive of improving student learning for their future and that of their society.

Stakeholders interviewed for this study considered the acquisition by young people in school of the following social attributes to be an important social goal; for themselves and their society.

- Self-confidence
- Self-esteem
- Self-efficacy
- Intrinsic motivation to learn and contribute
- Optimism about the future
- Social competence
- Social responsibility
- Equity

Many factors influence the likelihood that students will achieve desirable social goals such as these. Some factors have to do with the individual, the family and the wider community, and these factors may be completely outside the school's sphere of influence. There is a positive association between students' social learning and skills and their school experiences.

The authors of this policy framework assert, and have sought to demonstrate throughout this report, that a variety of ways exists for schools to enhance students' social learning. Research has found that students' abilities to make new friends, form positive peer relationships and behave appropriately in school are important to school success.

So it is essential that schools be a *positive* factor in a student's social learning. Schools can play a significant and positive role by providing students with opportunities and encouragement to achieve these social attributes and also to achieve the broader social goals. Social learning has significance during and long after a student's time at school.

A positive and supportive school environment is the main way schools have of enhancing the social development of students. But this supportive environment can only come about when all stakeholders – policy makers, administrators, principals, teachers, students and parents – work together towards common goals. The three reports in this project have indicated that the enhancement of social cohesion is recognised by all stakeholders as a high priority area for schools. What is now needed is a systematic action plan in order to secure the future of democratic participation in schools.

This Policy Framework, with its three policy priorities, is the authors' proposed plan of action.



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## **ATTACHMENT 1**

### **Promoting Social Tolerance and Cohesion through Education Workshop Goals National Goals of Education for Vanuatu for the C21st**

At the reflective workshop on Friday 22 June, three groups of participants developed the following sets of national goals. The goals were prioritised by the three groups. The data which follows has been taken from the groups' report sheets.

#### **Workshop Group 1**

1. Each school should have policy and guidelines to address the goals.
2. Review and rewrite the curriculum to include civic knowledge outcomes.
3. To train the teachers to be innovative in implementing the revised curriculum, through pre-service and in-service training courses.
4. To formally include the community in curriculum development and evaluation.
5. To equip all students with competencies to enable them to contribute to their societies after formal education.
6. To encourage school administration to use extra-curricular activities to achieve legitimate learning outcomes.
7. To conduct a dual evaluation of teachers and students' learning outcomes.

#### **Workshop Group 2**

1. Equality of Access -
  - buildings and facilities
  - opportunities right across society
2. Education Equity –
  - formal / informal
  - gender
  - skill
  - resources / buildings
3. Quality Education -
  - relevance to our society
  - trained teachers
  - relevant to present / future changes
4. Community Participation –
  - literate society
5. Environmentally / Culturally sensitive –
  - natural resources
  - cultural activities
  - aesthetic values
  - sustainability

- 6 A Holistic Ni-Vanuatu –
- Spiritually
  - Culturally
  - Physically
  - Mentally / knowledge
  - Participative

### **Workshop Group 3**

1. To provide Universal Basic Education to all Ni-Vanuatu children regardless of
  - Gender
  - Religion
  - Language
  - Location
  - Ability
2. Provide and improve relevant curriculum which enhances
  - Cultural
  - Spiritual
  - Economic
  - Social development needs of Vanuatu
3. Delivery of quality education across the whole system.
4. To maintain, protect and preserve different languages and cultures as part of our national heritage and to promote bi-lingualism / multi-lingualism.
5. To provide and encourage an equitable system of education.
6. To encourage partnership in education so as to maintain sustainability for the expansion of the education system.

### **Workshop Leaders:**

Warren Prior  
Suzanne Mellor

Port Vila  
22 June 2001

## ATTACHMENT 2

*(Warren Prior, Project Director of Promoting Social Tolerance and Cohesion Through Education Project, developed these national goals for discussion by Vanuatu Ministry officials, at their request. The goals derive from the national goals developed during the Vanuatu workshop, but they have a generic appropriateness and application.)*

### **Possible National Goals of Education for the Twenty-first Century**

#### **Rationale for Goal 1:**

*The purpose of schooling is to assist young people to develop knowledge, skills and values which will enable them to contribute to the community as informed, active, participatory and socially responsible citizens.*

**Goal 1:** Education is a community responsibility and policy and practices need to be determined by the community. Schools need to be places where relevant, flexible, socially just and effective programs are developed and delivered in order to assist young people to move along the pathway to becoming contributing members of their communities.

#### **Rationale for Goals 2-4**

*Vanuatu is a newly created democratic nation in which the forces of old, namely, the impact of colonialism and the traditions and customs of its peoples, are now being confronted to determine the shape of its future.*

**Goal 2:** Education policies and practices will need to clearly enhance young peoples' understandings of their cultural heritage, the impact of colonialism and their role in shaping the future of Vanuatu in a global setting.

**Goal 3:** Young people will need to develop knowledge, skills and values about their understandings of these forces and will need to be critically active in participating as future citizens of Vanuatu. In particular, schools will need to encourage skills in analysis and problem solving.

**Goal 4:** In the support of a democratic community, schools will need to encourage students to be active citizens both within and outside the immediate school community. In particular, schools will need to be democratic institutions, and students will need to have opportunities for developing decision making skills, developing skills and values of self-confidence, self esteem, and commitment to personal and collective excellence.

#### **Rationale for Goals 5-6**

*One feature of globalisation is that successful nations of the future will be those nations who accept, but shape, the opportunities that globalisations brings to both schooling and nations as a whole. However Vanuatu is not able to confront these forces without considering an even newer force, that of globalisation.*

**Goal 5:** Education systems will need to invest in the enhancement of technological understandings, skills and values of both the bureaucracy and school practices. The ability to critically analyse the social impact of technologies and to preserve its balance within the maintainance of traditional customs will be essential.

**Goal 6:** Schooling should develop students' abilities to critically analyse the media of globalisation. In particular, schools will need to develop courses in media analysis.

## **Rationale for Goals 7-11**

*Vanuatu, as a nation of many islands, has a unique and diverse cultural heritage which will continue to face pressures from within and without the country.*

**Goal 7:** The school system will need to provide opportunities for young people to enhance their intellectual, physical, social, spiritual, moral and aesthetic development in supporting the preservation of Vanuatu's traditional customs. In particular, schools will need to develop courses in the creative arts, physical well-being and civic traditions.

**Goal 8:** In recognising and valuing cultural diversity, a national language policy for schools will need to be developed. This will need to be done with wide community consultation. In particular, outcomes of this policy will include the production of appropriate teaching and learning resources, the appropriate training of teachers and the valuing of bi-lingual/multi-lingual practices.

**Goal 9:** Diversity of cultures brings with it opportunities to create diverse schooling structures. Building on the traditional values of respect and social justice, schooling must provide equal access and equal opportunities for success for all young people, regardless of gender, location, ability, age, religion and language. In particular, education must provide safe, supportive learning environments for all young people from age 5 to age 14, within a number of school structures, including vocational schools, community schools, non-boarding secondary schools.

**Goal 10:** Education systems, while celebrating cultural diversity and the possibility of a number of cultural identities, will recognise and promote a socially cohesive framework of shared values.

**Goal 11:** The impact of the nation of islands will be recognised in the equitable distribution of resources and facilities across the nation. It may be necessary at times to adopt a positive discrimination policy to redress past inequities. Schools will also need to have some discretion and flexibility in developing their individual school goals to suit their local communities, but within the broad national framework.

## **Rationale for Goals 12-14**

*Vanuatu, in the foreseeable future, will continue to rely on some forms of aid from external sources. Accountability and demonstrated effectiveness will continue to be key criteria for future donor support.*

**Goal 12:** All stakeholders in the education community need to be held responsible and accountable for their policies and practices. For students, this means that they will need to be encouraged to value learning and to be supportive of life long learning. For schools teachers and principals, they will need to be both fairly paid as public servants in recognition of their critical role and to be also regularly assessed for the effectiveness of their performance. Administrators at all levels will likewise need to be accountable for, and transparent in, their policies and practices. Mechanisms will need to be established to formalise these processes.

**Goal 13:** The current examination system is socially divisive, ineffective as a measure of the goals of schooling and the future learning performance of students, and is open to inappropriate influences. The Grade 6 examination will be abolished within 3 years, allowing all students to continue schooling in some appropriate form until at least Year 8. Testing for literacy will be introduced at the completion of Grade 6 but only as a mechanism for measuring the effectiveness of teaching and learning **of literacy and for providing data for future remedial action if necessary.** A new examination will be developed for Year 8 to directly assess the national goals of education.

**Goal 14:** In order to assist the majority of young people who will, in the foreseeable future, return to their village communities after completing Year 8, a set of generic key competencies will be developed for use in schools, particularly in Years 7 and 8. These competencies will assist students in the transition back to their communities and will also be important for those students who will continue in formal education. These competencies underpin the new Year 8 examination.

## **ATTACHMENT 3:**

### **Solomon Islands' Provincial Community Educational Consultations**

#### **Executive Summary:**

This paper describes how a broad cross-section of parents; teachers, education administrators and community leaders of Choiseul and Western Solomons believe their children and all learners should be looked after in a holistic approach to education and human resource development. It proposes significant changes to traditional perceptions of education and describes ways and means Choiseul and Western States can adopt to improve access and standards.

It describes a concept of 'basis education' that can ensure access for all to secondary education and it proposes a framework within which all stakeholders in education – the whole community of Parents, Teachers, Churches, National & State government, Commerce and Industry and Civic Service Organisations (formerly known as NGO's) – can help create continuous learning opportunities for all ages.

It recommends a major shift in the locus of control of education from the National Government to the State Government but takes this further by insisting that all stakeholders including international agencies and friendly countries take special initiatives to support Education and HRD.

It makes the case for a special focus on science and technology, on teacher education, on language and culture in schools and for careful attention to be devoted to good citizenship and Christian education. It describes how the private sector, which contributes to and benefits from all education endeavours, can be encouraged and enabled to contribute and directly to ensure the States can accomplish their educational policy goals and objectives.

Parents will always expect the best possible for their children and communities must always work towards a better future. The challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century will be met by aiming high and by raising standards in this one sector that is at once the platform and foundation from which society constructs and maintains all its endeavours.

This paper draws on the understanding the Choiseul and Western Provinces will soon become autonomous states within a united Solomon Islands that is also restructuring its government systems and institutions to recognise new and diverse realities that all Solomon Islanders now live with.

Choiseul and Western Solomons have a proud history of being at the forefront in educational endeavour and performance thanks to the early involvement of Churches and the initiative of community leaders in years past. However because of our commitment to national unity, our advantageous position has been eroded over the years.

Today, the Choiseul and Western community is in agreement that we now must use more of our own resources to look after our children and ensure they obtain a quality basic education that will sustain their livelihood in the years to come.

Our communities are prepared to make their contribution, our Churches are as committed as they always have been and our leaders have spoken up forcefully to give our human resources the quality education and training that they deserve.

## General Aims of State Education

In order to reap the advantages of an education system that we adopt, our region should set specific aims of education. Goal setting is a fundamental strategy in education because it can drive community and individuals to work towards achieving their desired goals during their lifetime. – Education as a process must equip all citizens with appropriate knowledge and skills so that they can develop to their full potential and participate actively in the social, political, educational and economical development. All opportunities must be provided to students so that they can develop their physical, social, emotional, intellectual and spiritual being, irrespective of political, religious affiliations, genders or ethnicity.

It should be the aim of our Education system to provide students with knowledge and skills that are useful and applicable to our region. Education as a process should aim to present the knowledge and skills within the context of Solomon Islands activities, technologies and materials. In achieving this aim, Education must fulfil two major functions. One is to provide “basic education” for all citizens of Choiseul and Western Solomons. The other is to provide opportunities, which will allow individuals to develop their knowledge base and skills to their full potential so that they can become responsible members of society and have a full range of opportunities in later life.

- Recognising that Education has specific contributions to make to the life of individuals, the aims of Education in our region are:
- To provide opportunities which will recognise the learning needs of the child
- To provide life-long learning needs of adults of all ages
- To provide learning opportunities to individuals of all ages so that they can develop to their full potential
- To help children grow up and live happily and successfully in their social, geographic and cultural environment
- To enable individuals to express concern and responsibility for their environment
- To provide opportunities to individuals so that they expand their ability to think critically and creatively, to reason logically and to apply their skills and knowledge to new situations
- To enable learners to interact successfully with the community, regional and world markets
- To enable individuals to acquire knowledge and skills which will enable them to participate actively in the social and economic development of their community, state and country and thus improve their standard of living
- To provide an opportunity for those who wish to further their studies to higher levels of education.

For learning to be considered ‘educational’, it has to have value for the community and has to be considered by the community to be ‘worthwhile’.

Education becomes meaningful to individuals and society when good and valuable results are gained. If learning results in bad results, it may not be regarded as ‘education’. It is imperative that members of society understand the end product of education and its essence to society. Education as a process should provide young people with the basic foundation from which they can continue their learning and interact successfully in an adult world.