



**Pacific-German Regional Programme on  
Adaptation to Climate Change in the Pacific Island Region**

# Climate Change Curriculum in the Formal Education Sector

29 October 2010

Ministry of Education

**Problem Statement:** The existing Vanuatu Education Curriculum was developed in the 1960's, is often irrelevant to ni-Vanuatu contexts and does not include references or mention of climate change. The Ministry of Education has recently begun a major programme of work to review and replace the existing curriculum, but specific plans to include climate change are not concrete or well developed. There is a critical time window at the moment to ensure that CC is integrated within the new curriculum that will likely last many years into the future.

Today a small working team CC Curriculum team met at the Ministry of Education to discuss support to the Vanuatu Government's current curriculum reform programme. This meeting was convened in order to meet the curriculum component of the ACCPIR plan of operations. The objective of this meeting was to develop a concrete action plan for moving ahead with climate change mainstreaming within the national curriculum at all levels.

## **Meeting Summary**

Charley Robert (Senior Curriculum Officer, MoE) briefed the team on the current programme of curriculum review 2010-2013:

1. The current review began in 2010 the development of a National Curriculum Statement. The objective of this statement (to be released in Nov 2010) is to provide the principles, concepts, and values to be included in the new curriculum. The statement also highlights the need for relevance to Vanuatu, and the objective to meet children's specific needs. The statement is an attempt to ensure that the new curriculum is well structured and well organized.
2. The second stage of the review is the convening of age-specific curriculum panels. The first to begin the review was the year 11-13 review panel in mid 2010 (followed by kindy-class 3 November 2010, and yr 4-8 & 9-10 in 2011). The 11-13 panel is currently in the conceptual and training phase, learning as much as possible about relevant education/sectoral areas in Vanuatu (forestry, agriculture, economics, climate change, etc). Their objective, before the end of December 2010, is to produce a framework for the yr 11-13 syllabus to include the key subject areas. After that the panel will split into writing teams of four teachers (2 each French/English) to actually write the curriculum and teacher's guides.



3. Charley Robert highlighted a meeting next week of the National Education Commission to officially decide on the subjects that will be included in the new National Curriculum. This meeting will produce an official curriculum policy which will guide the review. He suggest that NACCC must send an urgent letter to the Commission requesting that as a concern of national importance, CC issues should be formally included as a cross cutting subject area for all age levels in the new curriculum. He suggested that the letter should highlight some of Vanuatu's international obligations regarding CC education for the Commission's consideration.
4. Charley described how the new curriculum and various subjects are to be organized and set with the context of around six priority learning areas: personal development; cross curricular perspectives; language and communication; science, agriculture and mathematics; community and culture; and spiritual and character development
5. Charley described two possible option for integrating CC into the new national curriculum:
  - a. CC becomes a new subject (or a series of subjects) on its own, likely to be taught at a single or a few senior levels in school
  - b. CC is mainstreamed into existing subjects, so that its issues and concerns are brought up throughout the formal education process in all thematic areas.
6. Regardless of how CC is included in the new curriculum, Charley described the need for clearly articulating "learning outcomes" defined as "what the student is able to do at the end of each lesson". Critical CC-related learning outcomes should be set by the NACCC or its technical team members and then packaged into curriculum that is appropriate to each age group in school. The current yr 11-13 review panel will have a draft of the learning outcomes by December 2010. Thus the time for including CC learning outcomes is nearing an end.
7. The process for writing was discussed in detail; namely that practicing teachers are given the extra task (by the VRM) to write the new curriculum in their spare time. This is a difficult task for many already overburdened teachers. Thus Charley suggested three alternatives to support lead teachers to write CC into their curriculum sections:
  - a. to provide a financial incentive or salary top up for the extra writing work on top of teaching duties
  - b. hold a two week workshop bringing teachers together for the sole purpose of writing
  - c. relieve writing teachers from teaching duties while they focus exclusively on the new curriculum
8. Charley emphasized the need for any technical assistance to pass through and receive approval from the pool partners group to the Mo Education, as there are already several curriculum projects supported by donors and overseas TAs.

Annette Theophile briefed the team on her work with the Teachers College to develop a CC training programme for Vanuatu's future teachers:

1. She has created a 3 year programme for educating future teachers on CC
  - a. Year one: for all trainee teachers to obtain a broad understanding of climate change, causes, impacts, mitigation and adaptation



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- b. Year 2 & 3: Trainee teachers learn how to teach climate change to their students at various levels. Year two is dedicated to earth science, year three dedicated to biology and biodiversity
- c. The module is a 4 credit course, include 2 hours of lectures per week + 2 hours of non contact study or assignment.

Charley Pierce of the Vanuatu Teacher's College described his work teaching CC over the last 15 years.

1. Currently climate change is included in the curriculum under Geography, Social Sciences, and Earth Sciences (senior level) and General Sciences (primary level).
2. Within social sciences, CC is already being taught in a subject called "human needs and environment" (yr 2&8) and "our changing society" (yr10).
3. Climate Change (and global warming) is described in the currently used Social Science textbook. This is good coverage, but could be expanded with more recent knowledge.
4. There are some difference in the French and English education systems in regard to climate change. In the English curriculum, CC is taught within in Geography. In French, CC is taught in Science of life and Earth. There is a need to standardize this.

### **Action Plan**

The discussion then moved towards an action plan for ensuring that CC makes it into the new national curriculum.

The following points were suggested:

1. There must be a small core group that works on developing CC-focused "learning outcomes" to feed into the various curriculum development panels
2. We should examine the current syllabus to take stock of the climate related components in the existing lessons plans rather than completely start from scratch
3. We should undertake a short survey in some target schools to understand how climate is currently being taught and discussed in schools. The survey at various school levels should find out: what teachers know about CC, what are they teaching in the classrooms on CC, what are the learning outcomes related to CC they feel should be achieved at their level, what knowledge and resources are lacking on CC in the classroom
4. Once current curriculum is assessed & needs survey conducted, it was proposed that the MoE convene a 2 day workshop to bring together teachers + Vanuatu CC experts (NACCC core team). During the workshop, the NACCC experts will identify the learning outcomes for each grade level in school, and the teachers will be able to tailor the outcome according to the capacity of students at that age. The results of this workshop will be fed to the Curriculum Review Panel to be included in their December draft.
5. It was suggested that CC be included as a separate subject, taught to various levels at various times. For example, earth science could take the physical aspects of CC, social science could include CC adaptation etc.



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6. It was agreed that the survey and stocktaking should take place during November and the joint 2 day workshop be in early December.
7. It was recommended that some consultancy fees be made available for those conducting the current curriculum CC stocktaking, and conducting the survey

### **Next Steps:**

1. Circulate this draft concept note/action plan for comments
2. NACCC writes letter to National Education Commission requesting a stand along CC subject in the new Curriculum
3. L&L and WSB undertake a survey of CC in schools around Vila
4. Annette and Charely Pierce conduct a stocktaking of CC in current curriculum
5. Convene a CC Education 2 day summit in December
6. Results of Cc Education Summit are fed into yr 11-13 curriculum development panel and curriculum draft

### **Core Team Meeting Participants:**

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