



## **COUNTRY PRESENTATION – NEW ZEALAND**

By New Zealand Agency for International Development (NZAID)

### **NZAID: BACKGROUND PAPER FOR COL FOCAL POINTS MEETING (ASIA/PACIFIC)**

NZAID would like to offer a few of Dr Linda Sissons' observations on ODL practice in New Zealand, NZAID's support for education and ODL in the Pacific, and our partnership with the Commonwealth of Learning.

#### **ODL practice in New Zealand**

Open Polytechnic, Massey University, Correspondence School. However, blended delivery is encouraged by Government and used in a widespread way.

#### **NZAID's support for education and ODL in the Pacific region**

Education has been a major part of New Zealand's development assistance in the Pacific for many years. Education is a prominent part of NZAID's work, across most programmes. In the 2006/07 financial year, NZAID allocated \$67 million to education activities around the world, representing 20 per cent of NZAID's total programme budget. Basic education accounted for 29 per cent, and scholarships and training 52 per cent.

The Pacific is the main focus for NZAID's programmes in education. Over the next ten years NZAID is planning to spend over \$300 million to improve basic education in the Pacific.

For the most part, the government's education linkages with the Pacific are broadly encompassed by New Zealand's commitments to the Millennium Development Goals and Education for All initiative, and delivered through NZAID's regional and bilateral programmes.

NZAID supports the work of regional organisations such as the University of the South Pacific (USP) and also provides scholarships for Pacific students to study within the region. In 2006, for example, there were 363 NZAID-funded scholarships studying at institutions in the Pacific region.

The NZ Ministry of Education (MOE) and other government education agencies have become increasingly involved in work in the Pacific, for example through the Strengthened Cooperation programme with Niue, and the Treaty of Friendship with

Samoa. Specific activities include New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) assisting the South Pacific Board for Educational Assessment to establish a regional qualifications register, and the Ministry developing a joint teaching resources project with Samoa. The Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) contestable fund, administered by NZAID for NZ government agencies initiatives, provide further opportunities for increased involvement in the education sector.

In the Pacific, primary school enrolment rates are relatively good compared to many developing countries. But these vary from country to country and many children, particularly in Melanesia, do not go to school.

#### Focus Country Partners for New Zealand

New Zealand prioritises assistance to those Pacific countries most at risk of not meeting the Millennium Development Goals, (Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu), has partnerships and programmes with five other Pacific countries, (Kiribati, Fiji, Samoa, Tonga and Tuvalu), and supports regional co-operation.

#### Key themes

*(a) Improved access to, and completion of, a good quality basic education for all Pacific children.*

NZAID support will cover the full range of primary education activities, including planning, local curriculum development, improved service delivery by trained professionals, and strengthened monitoring and evaluation systems.

There has already been a step change in New Zealand's approach in this area, through the increased support we are delivering for national education systems as part of a broader move away from stand alone projects to sector wide support programmes (SWAps).

For example, in the Solomon Islands NZAID has entered into a multi-year partnership with the Solomon Islands Government and is committing around NZ\$10 million annually to improving the quality of primary education outcomes. Already the number of children receiving an education is increasing and more girls are attending school than previously.

*(b) Increased opportunities and choices through skills development*

This includes activities that improve access to skills and training for young people, and through scholarships and formal training opportunities that target support to priority human resource needs in the region.

NZAID has developed a framework for scholarships and training, which is expected to help focus our support on specific human resource development needs in partner countries, including training linked to economic development and livelihoods outcomes where these have been identified as national priorities.

### NZAID Support to Education in Bilateral Programmes in the Pacific - Summary

**Niue** - Through the Halavaka Framework, NZAID and the MoE are exploring ways to create closer links with the Niue Ministry of Education.

**Samoa** - NZAID is supporting a US\$30m six-year programme of primary curriculum reform, teacher training, and infrastructure improvements, in partnership with Australia and the Asian Development Bank.

**Tokelau** – NZAID provides budget support for local education needs. Through PRIDE, Tokelau is receiving support for EMIS and Curriculum Development.

**Cook Islands** – NZAID is supporting the Education Sector SWAp with a whole of government framework. Teacher quality, monitoring and evaluation, and MOE capacity building are priority areas for assistance.

**Tonga** – NZAID is providing up to \$14 million over three years (2006-2008) to the education sector, with the World Bank. Guided by Tonga's fifteen-year Education Strategy, TESP takes a sector-wide approach, supporting programmes to improve the quality of schooling, public expenditure management, policy-making, and monitoring and evaluation within the Ministry of Education. Expenditure on education comprises approximately 44% of New Zealand's \$10 million annual bilateral aid programme with Tonga.

**Solomon Islands** – NZAID provided \$30 million in direct budget support to the education sector over 2004/06, in partnership with the EU. A second phase will provide \$30 million over 2007/09. NZAID support has enabled the government to deliver teaching materials to all primary schools, improve teacher training, commence a nation-wide infrastructure development programme, and provide school grant funding. Policy development has become a key focus for the government in the second phase.

**Vanuatu** – NZAID, France, Australia, the EU and other development partners are supporting the development and implementation of the Education Sector Strategy. This will involve co-funding agreements with other development partners and the government on an education sector reform programme. As an interim measure, New Zealand and Australia have co-funded a 12 month programme implementing some priorities of the Vanuatu Education Sector Strategy (VESS).

**Papua New Guinea** - NZAID is working with other donor partners to establish a sector wide approach in education.

**Kiribati** – NZAID support includes the institutional strengthening of the Kiribati Teachers College and the Marine Training Centre.

**Tuvalu** – NZAID is supporting the development and implementation of the Early Childhood Education policy framework.

### Open and Distance Learning

ODL is a familiar concept and practice within the Pacific region and has been for several years. The University of the South Pacific (USP), established in 1967, is the main provider of DFL to Pacific countries - most have a USP centre with satellite links to the main campus in Suva, Fiji. Many graduates in the Pacific have received their university level education through DFL study in their home countries and/or at USP.

NZAID funding to USP is around \$5m per year – inclusive of projects and core funding, but not scholarships.

USP plays an additional and key educational role: for teacher upgrading and certification. For example, the Ministry of Education in the Cook Islands supports teacher up-skilling (Teaching Diploma or Degree) through USP. Teachers study at their own pace/settings and also attend an annual two-week course run by a USP lecturer (which takes place in the Cook Islands). Scholarships are awarded for final year study at USP Suva.

Other countries in the region make use of ODL approaches in teacher training, notably Papua New Guinea. In the Solomon Islands, a programme to improve pre-service teacher training, and certification of unqualified teachers (“Teachers in Training”) has started to look at the options of using Distance and Flexible Learning (DFL) to reach several thousand teachers who would otherwise have little chance of achieving the expected and necessary qualification as a teacher. NZIAD has supported a review of the potential for DFL as part of its programme of sectoral support for teacher education in the Solomon Islands.

It is apparent that there are further opportunities for ODL/DFL to be incorporated in education programmes in the Pacific region, and COL could play a key role in provision of policy advice, and access to relevant resources and skills. This will need to be focussed carefully at individual country level, based on need and partnership. In addition, VUSSC would seem to be a useful addition to the tertiary opportunities available in this region of many small countries.

### **NZAID support to the Commonwealth of Learning**

The Commonwealth of Learning is one of four Commonwealth funds or programmes supported by NZAID. New Zealand has doubled its contribution over the past few years, with an annual contribution of NZ\$800,000.

COL has sought “extra-budgetary” funding from key regional donors, including NZAID, to support its Pacific activities. NZAID funding was provided in 2005 (NZ\$35,000) and 2003 (NZ\$45,000) to assist with Pacific participation at PATVET workshops and NZAID provided NZ\$105,640 in 2001 for the COL symposium on the “Barriers to the Access of Information and Communications Technology Encountered by Women for Open/Distance Learning in the Pacific”.

As a key donor New Zealand is represented on COL’s Board of Governors and we select a specialist external adviser to fulfil this role. Currently this is Dr Linda Sissons (who we are pleased will be attending the Focal Points meeting).

As COL is a relatively small partner within NZAID's broader multilateral programme, our primary interests are in the governance of COL, monitoring development effectiveness and, to the extent possible, engaging around key policy and strategy development. Our current priority is COL's next Three Year Plan.

October 2008