

VANUATU

COL activities in 2003-2006

BACKGROUND

Vanuatu comprises a chain of 83 islands in the South Pacific. With a population of just over 200,000 people, it is one of the small states of the Commonwealth. It last contributed to COL in 1991 and 1992 but has been a strong moral supporter of COL's activities and has worked in partnership to develop the use of open and distance learning (ODL) and information and communications technologies (ICT) in the country. With high literacy and universal primary education, the focus of educational needs in Vanuatu are in secondary and tertiary education and particularly in vocational skills related to agriculture, tourism and small business.

SUMMARY

In 2003-2006, COL's partnership with Vanuatu included the development of skills-training learning materials and participation in the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC). COL has also supported professional development by making it possible for senior people from the education sector to attend training events in other countries. This has led to valuable exchanges of expertise and best practice.

POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

Improving Technical and Vocational Education

COL worked with the Vanuatu Institute of Technology (VIT) that is based in Port Vila to improve employment opportunities through better technical and vocational education. VIT is rebuilding the institution in a move to promote technical and vocational courses throughout the islands. COL is aiding VIT in its delivery of technical and vocational information via video, television and radio to the island groups of Vanuatu.

Achieving development and environmental goals through open and distance learning

COL contracted a consultant to outline a plan for establishing an ODL Policy for Literacy and Livelihoods (L&L) and natural resource management (NRM) including an implementation strategy/plan for Vanuatu and three other Pacific Island countries.

Preparation and use of learning materials

COL worked with the chief executives of technical institutes and senior Ministry officials in vocational education in the Pacific island states to develop new skills-training learning modules. The modules were piloted in four Pacific countries and Vanuatu was one of them. More modules are in development.

COL has provided the Vanuatu Polytechnic with video equipment and intensive training, allowing it to produce a range of teaching and learning materials.

Virtual University for the Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)

Vanuatu is participating in the VUSSC and providing expert input for the development of open educational resources. Representatives attended a three week “boot camp” in Mauritius during which four teams created learning materials, using existing open educational resources as inputs. Approximately 30 notional learning hours in each of the subject areas of tourism and entrepreneurship were produced in Mauritius and the work is now being continued online. Once completed, all materials will be made available online as open educational resources.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

COL sponsored one delegate from Vanuatu to attend the biennial Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning held in New Zealand in 2004.

LOOKING FORWARD

Vanuatu’s fruitful partnership with COL in 2003-2006 is set to continue in the next triennium in a number of important areas. Vanuatu will continue to work with COL and Commonwealth partners to set up the VUSSC, in particular offering expertise to create, customise and reuse open educational resources, encouraging the cross accreditation of learning programmes and mutual support for expanding learning opportunities. Vanuatu will also be an important partner in COL’s programme to build better technical and vocational education and training for the South Pacific region.