



**Government of Vanuatu**

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**

**VANUATU EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE & EDUCATION POLICY**



**August, 2010**

## FOREWARD FROM THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION

As the Minister for Education, it is my privilege and pleasure to introduce the National Policy for Early Childhood Education (ECCE).

This Policy can be seen as the first guide to regulate and to give the right attention to the importance of ECCE. The purpose of this policy is to promote and ensure the youngest children in Vanuatu have the equitable access to quality, well managed and sustainable programmes in the pre school centres which are developed in partnership between the communities, the NGOs and the Vanuatu Government.


High quality ECCE programs can benefit countries by promoting cognitive performance of young children, increasing the efficiency of primary and secondary education, contributing to future productivity and income, reducing costs of health and other public services, reducing gender inequities and increasing female participation in the labor force. Although the research base is still relatively thin, particularly in the Pacific context, existing relevant studies do indicate a high social return on investment in ECCE. Studies have shown that attendance at some form of preschool is a key determinant of the likelihood of completion of primary schooling. The further development of ECCE is a key priority of the Pacific Education Development Framework (PEDF).

Policies give us the tools to be able to protect and extend children in this important period, especially as they move further out into the community.

In their homes and within their families, children experience many things which help them to learn and develop in a safe, secure environment and it is important to make sure that they continue to be provided with the best possible learning environment when their education is continued out in the community. Early Childhood Care & Education strives to assist children to continue to grow and develop skills, knowledge, attitudes and dispositions which will enable them to build a strong foundation base for future learning and to encourage them to continue on their path of learning throughout life.

In the past, ECCE has been delivered to the children of our nation thanks to the goodwill and hard work of families and communities throughout the islands of Vanuatu. The Government acknowledges and respects the invaluable contributions that communities have invested in our children and are continuing to play in the establishment and maintenance of ECCE in Vanuatu. The government also acknowledges the contribution of the Non Government Organisations (NGOs) in this important area of education and wishes to retain this support. At the same time, the government of Vanuatu recognises that the provision of Early Childhood Care & Education is a public investment that can improve the quality of life for the country's next generation. The Government of Vanuatu therefore plans to have an increased role in the provision of education at this level. According to Vanuatu Education Sector Strategy (VESS) Goals for 2007 - 2016, Goal one is to Achieve universal primary education completion, strengthen literacy, languages, and numeracy, and develop a National Early Childhood curriculum and pre-school teacher training program. This strategy also encourages the use of vernacular as a language of instruction in ECCE centres to develop literacy and conceptual skills and cultural identity in mother tongue.

Our Mission is to provide child-centred education that is **accessible**, relevant, **sustainable**, responsive and of **good quality**.



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Vanuatu Education Road Map (VERM) three priorities areas is **quality, access** and **management**, and where would be the best place to start than at the foundation where early learning is crucial. If learning is to make an impact on the children and the nation in the future, the parents, the communities, the leaders and the teachers need to know the importance of Early Childhood Care & Education. As adults we need to provide an environment where quality learning can take place and current research indicates that teaching and learning is characterised by the active engagement of children in hands on learning, (that is learning through play based activities). This policy would reinforce the importance of quality ECCE by having qualified teachers teaching in the pre schools, and have all children attend a pre school before entering into Year one in a primary school.

With funds made available for Vanuatu Education Road Map (VERM) activities, we hope to bring the education, management and facilities of early childhood centres up to sustainable minimum standard and be able to provide a safe and caring learning environment for the children.

This document sets out the overall policy guidelines and the basic procedures for the establishment and administration of ECCE Centres. The document also details teaching requirements and the principles by which children are to be taught. Guidelines are given for appropriate teacher/child ratios, appropriately trained and qualified teachers; and enriching and safe learning environments. Quality ECCE actively engages parents and school communities and that the children's education is strengthened by the provision of a smooth transition into junior classes at primary school.

I am confident that this policy will provide us with the necessary basis for quality Early Childhood Care & Education, the cornerstone of a sound education system, and leading on to a strong future for the people of Vanuatu.

Honourable Salwai Charlot Tabimasmās,

Minister of Education  
August, 2010

## Abbreviations

DG	Director General
ECCE	Early Childhood Care Education
ECE	Early Childhood Education
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
ECCD	Early Childhood Care and Development
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNESCO	United Nations Economic, Social & Cultural Organisation
PEO	Provincial Education Officer
PPSCs	Provincial Pre School Coordinators
PTA	Parent Teachers Association
PSABV	Pri Skul Asosiesen Blong Vanuatu
NGOs	Non Government Organisations
ZCAs	Zone Curriculum Advisors
VEJA	Vanuatu Eli Jaelhud Asosiesen
NPSC	National Pre School Coordinator
APTC	Australia . Pacific Technical College
FBTP	Field Based Training Programme
FBT	Field Based Training
VEMIS	Vanuatu Education Management and Information System
VNTC	Vanuatu National Training Council
VESS	Vanuatu Education Sector Strategy
VESAP	Vanuatu Education Support Action Plan
USP	University of the South Pacific

## Definition of Terms

**Early Childhood Care Education** - Early Childhood Care Education (ECCE) Centres in this Policy will be referred to as pre-school or Kindergarten. At present in Vanuatu Early Childhood Care & Education [ECCE] is synonymous with Pre-School [4 - 6 year olds]. However, internationally the term ECCE is used to describe the education and the care of the child from birth to 8 years of age.

**Home Based Program** . This is run by parents in communities where the number of children is less than 10 and serves as a playgroup. The parents decide how often this group runs its program, which will run it, whether it is a half day or full day program. The parents are trained by the Provincial Pre School Coordinators and are given a starter kit.

**Kindergarten and Pre School** . These terms are often used to describe a school that children attend before they go into formal education. They provide a half-day program 5 days per week for children 3 . 6 years.

**Pre-Schools** are established by communities, churches or are privately owned. Some pre schools are attached to primary schools and located on their premises. These are managed by the school PTA committee or a separate committee is formed.

**Pre-School Education** - means all Early Childhood Education Programs including parents led Home Based programs and Teacher led Pre Schools or Kindergarten session or full day programs for children aged 0 . 6.

**Childcare Centre** – This is a full day program offered to children 0 -6 years under qualified ECCD teachers, Health workers and Care givers.

**Certified Teachers** . ECE teachers who have completed a recognised ECE Certificate . Pacific Pre School Cert, Diploma or Degree in ECE from a recognised institution.

**Qualified teachers** . those who have some qualifications but not to teach in ECE or teacher training.

**Unqualified teachers** . Those teachers who have yet started or completed any recognised ECE education or training.

**Field Based or trained teachers** . Those teachers who have participated in a Field Based Training Programme (FBTP) and has a certificate, or are currently enrolled in an ECE education or training programme (e.g. APTC Children's Cert 111) The FBTP caters for unqualified and untrained teachers who are working in ECE centres. Teachers in training have to complete 10 modules that consist of 120hr theory work and 160 hours practical.



## TABLE OF CONTENT

TOPIC	PAGE
1. Methodology	7
2. Background	7
3. National, regional and international commitments	8
4. Situation Analysis	9
4.1 Context analysis	9
4.2 Access	10
4.3 Internal efficiency	10
4.4 Quality	11
4.5 Equity	11
4.6 Finance	11
4.7 Management	12
4.8 Rationale	12
5.1 Policy Vision, Mission & Goals	13
5.2 Policy Mission Statement	13
5.3 Policy Goals & Objectives	13
6. Policy Priorities	14
6.1 Quality teachers	14
6.1.2 Quality learning	14
6.2.1 Improved Access	14
6.3.1 Improved Management	14
7. Guiding Principles	14
8. Procedures	18
8.1.1 Pre School Facilities	18
8.1.2 Furniture, Educational play Equipment	19
8.1.3 Staffing	19
8.1.4 Curriculum	21
8.1.5 Enrolment	21
8.1.6 Language of Instruction	21
8.1.7 Preparation for Primary School	21
8.1.8 Licensing Procedures	21
8.2. Guidelines	22
8.2.1 Management	22
8.2.2 Management Responsibilities	22
8.2.3 Visits & Licensing & Procedure	23
9.1. Monitoring and Evaluations	23
9.2. Effective date	24
9.3. Review date	24
10. Annex 1: Map of Vanuatu	25
11. Annex 2: ECE Data	26

### Methodology

Based on research and VEMIS data available on ECE in Vanuatu, ECCE has not been a priority area for the Government of Vanuatu until as recently as 1999 when the MOE decided to employ a National Pre School Coordinator and in 2004 employed six Provincial Pre School Coordinators to oversee ECCE teacher training in all the Provinces. Indicators showed that after 10 years of teacher trainings and community awareness there is yet a lot of work to be done to ensure **access** for all children in a **quality** preschool.

Without a Policy, pre schools have been established everywhere and by anyone. In some cases the children would have been better off staying at home with their parents rather than being forced to read and write by a so called teacher who had little knowledge on what activities to provide for the children. An ECCE Policy was needed to ensure Vanuatu achieves its MDG and CRC. With support from Policy Planners from the Ministry of Education and help from stakeholders (VEJA, VSA volunteers, SCA, UNICEF) and overseas colleagues from PNG, Solomon Islands and Fiji we have finally come up with our Policy.

At a most recent Policy Workshop training coordinated and funded by UNESCO and UNICEF the MOE staff came up with a MOE Policy Process and Format thus we have developed this ECCE Policy.

It is our desire and belief that after this Policy is in place we will come up with licensing of teachers and pre schools.

## 2. Background

The Early Childhood Care & Education Policy is a National Policy of the Government of Vanuatu developed by the Ministry of Education in consultation with relevant sector agencies. The purpose of this policy is to provide an overall guiding framework and clear direction to any organisation or party involved in Early Childhood Care and Education (Kindergarten, Pre School, Home Base and Childcare) in Vanuatu in relation to access and quality Early Childhood Care & Education Programs.

Vanuatu Eli Jaelhud Asosiesen (VEJA) (formally Pri Skul Asosiesen Blong Vanuatu . (PSABV) was established in the early 1980s and is a registered NGO and charity.

Towards the end of the 90s, UNICEF funded some of its work, and also the running of a National Conference. In 1999 the Ministry of Education gave a grant of VUV 21,000,000 to VEJA and arranged to work with them to improve the quality of education in the kindergartens of rural Vanuatu.

While there are always challenges when a government department and a NGO are both involved in services delivery, there is evidence that the Ministry of Education and VEJA are working well together in Early Childhood Care & Education in all six Provinces of Vanuatu.

Along with the National Pre School coordinator, there are 6 Provincial Pre-School coordinators based in the 6 Provincial Education Offices. The Provincial coordinators reports to the PEO and the National Pre School coordinator. These six coordinators are responsible for the training of preschool teachers and transferring new knowledge and skills to the Key Teachers in their Provinces.

VEJA has an executive body that works with the Pre-School Section of the MoE to support teacher training in both urban and rural areas.

The teacher trainings, awareness to parents and the communities, upgrading of facilities and making teaching resources would not have been possible without the support of AusAid, NZAid, UNICEF, UNESCO and VSA . we appreciate their financial contributions. In 2008/2009 under the VESAP funded activities ECCE received a grant of 13,000,000vt to upgrade 210 pre schools and conduct awareness in the communities on how they can support literacy and math skills in the home with their children.

VEJA has 52 branches throughout Vanuatu's 6 Provinces and they rely on the substantial voluntary effort of parents and their local communities to maintain their programme. Each branch/zone has been assigned a Key-Teacher. There is about 10 to 12 Key Teachers in each of Vanuatu's six Provinces and each Key Teacher has the responsibility to look transfer skills and knowledge to about 6-8 pre schools within their branch/zone.

### 3.1 International Context

This Policy takes into account the universal commitments and obligations made on the rights and best interests of children through the International Human Rights Declarations and Conventions. Relevant articles and sections have been specified under the specific International Conventions.

#### Convention on the Rights of the Child

There are 54 Articles under the CRC out of which only those relevant to this policy and best accommodate the best interest of children in Vanuatu.

***EFA 2000-2015) and World Education in Dakar*** (2000), which adopted the Dakar Framework for Action Education for All.

### 3.2 Regional Context

The Minister of Education together with other Ministers of Education in the Pacific Region has recently endorsed several important recommendations emerging from the ECCE Regional Workshop held in Honiara on March 26<sup>th</sup> . 30<sup>th</sup> 2007.

- ECCE must begin at birth and would include per-school, kindergarten and transition to classes 1 and 2
- All agencies dealing with health, care, development and education of young children from birth to 8 years old must work collaboratively to ensure that children are well prepared to enter the formal school system.
- ECCE must be grounded in the children's own languages and cultures.
- Data base management system for ECCE must be developed.
- A policy for ECCE must be developed.
- Adequate budgeting for the development and expansion of ECCE is necessary.

These recommendations were approved and reinforced by the Regional Forum Education Ministers' Meeting (FEMM) in Auckland, 26<sup>th</sup> . 28<sup>th</sup> November 2007.



### **3.3 National Context**

The Government of Vanuatu fully recognizes the importance of the early years in children's later development and learning, as well as the vital role of families in promoting such learning. It believes that children should be offered choice and the opportunity to explore, experiment, discover and problem solve in play situations, and that children have the right to be educated in their first language in these early years. At the same time, it also acknowledges the valuable contribution and commitment made by various organizations in the community in the promotion of early childhood services in the country. Whilst Government intends to retain this community support, at the same time, it plans to be more involved in this area of education, which is a potential public investment that can improve the quality of life for the next generation of children in our country.

It is widely recognized that the early childhood development and the pre-school years are crucial in a child's later development and learning. Pre-school education is an integral part of basic education as this is where the foundation is laid for the development of skills, knowledge and attitudes, which will enable children to succeed in later years. Therefore, from the early years, children need to be supported in the development of their physical, intellectual, social and emotional abilities if they are to make sense of their world. Similarly, as learning begins at birth and sets the stage for later development and learning, the care and education of children is a primary responsibility of everyone. Accordingly, the role of parents, caregivers and families as primary caregivers and first educators must be recognized.

There are relevant policies that supports the development of such an ECCE policy, such as:

- Establishment of Educational Institutions
- Staffing
- Excursions
- Safety

Relevant Legislations or Authority

- Vanuatu Education Act no. 21 of 2001
- The Public Service Act
- Public service Code of Conduct
- Ministry of Education Digest of Education Statistics 2008, 2009
- Vanuatu Education Sector Strategy (VESS) 2007-2016
- The Vanuatu Education Road Map (VERM) 2010

## **4.Situation Analysis**

### **4.1 Context Analysis**

The Government of Vanuatu fully recognizes the importance of the early years in children's later development and learning, as well as the vital role of families in promoting such learning. It believes that children should be offered choice and the opportunity to explore, experiment, discover and problem solve in **play situations**, and that children have the right to be educated in their first language in these early years. At

the same time, it also acknowledges the valuable contribution and commitment made by various organizations in the community in the promotion of early childhood services in the country. Whilst Government intends to retain this community support, at the same time, it plans to be more involved in this area of training, which is a potential public investment that can improve the quality of life for the next generation of children in our country.

Early Childhood Education in Vanuatu is viewed as a community rather than a Government responsibility. Most programmes are supported by parents, churches and the community.

Early Childhood Education was the first major sector of education in Vanuatu to reflect an indigenous approach to education. It may be too early to measure the long-term impact on the wider education system of this generation of Ni-Vanuatu children whose first educational experience was in an indigenous preschool based in their local community. However, early indications, based on a research reported a positive and the need for a long-term study to monitor progress.

#### **4.2 Access**

ECE is currently not accessible to all the children in Vanuatu. According to 2008 VEMIS survey there are approximately 627 pre schools in Vanuatu. The Digest has reported a considerable increase on Net Enrolment Rate (NER) for Early Childhood Education (ECE) which is 39.5% in 2008 compared to 2007 (36.9%). It is important to note that 61% of the children aged 4 and 5 are not attending pre school in 2008.

(See data in Annex 2)

There are various reasons that could determine the low NER in the Early Childhood Education:

- Lack of Community support in the running management of the ECE schools
- Lack of parental support to the children's learning
- Lack of available and sufficient learning resources
- Young children find it too far to walk to the nearest preschool so they do not attend.
- Some Children did attend school after being registered in the beginning of the school year and due to high fees, they drop out.

Despite all challenges that focused on ECE enrolment in 2008, 82.3% of children in Grade 1 of primary school have attended the Early Childhood programme. This indicator helps to assess the proportion of new entrants to grade 1 who presumably have received some preparation for primary schooling through ECCE programmes.

#### **4.3 Internal Efficiency**

In 2009, there is a slight drop on the Gross and Net Enrolment ratio for Early Childhood Care & Education as indicated in the 2008 VEMIS digest (see the table in annex 2, page 25). The high non attendance rate in ECCE could have an impact on the internal efficiency of Early Childhood Education development in the country. The average survival rate in ECCE in 2007 and 2008 is 60%. This indicator can be used as evidence base to any development initiatives to support ECCE in the Country. The repetition rate in ECCE in 2007 and 2008 is 12.5% and that stands for children that have enrolled at an early age, which is three years old.

#### 4.4 Quality

There is no impartial share of teachers in the teaching force of Early Childhood Care & Education in Vanuatu. The digest shows that 92% of ECCE teachers are female and 8% male teachers. The National average of Pupil to teacher ratio (PTR) in ECCE in 2008 is 15:1. In fact, the average PTR 15:1 reflects the requirement standard of National Early Childhood Care & Education Policy. Another aspect of indicator to assess the quality standard of teaching in ECCE is the Pupil/Certified ratio. As shown in the 2008 digest, the average Pupil/Certified Teacher Ratio in ECCE is 31:1. This already shows an impact on the national standard of PTR in ECCE development. Beside the Certified teachers in ECCE, the 2008 Digest also shows the Pupil/Qualified teacher ratio which is 30:1. In fact, it is about the group of teachers that are currently teaching but have not undergone the MoE/VEJA Field Based Training Programme (FBTP). Many preschool teachers quit their teaching career due to lack of community support, parents infidelity to pay school fees and no good support in terms of regular visits by the Key Teachers, the Preschool Coordinators and the Zone Curriculum Advisors.

The Proportion of Certified teachers in ECCE in 2008 is 47% . The Ministry needs to work closely with VITE to set up a long-term in-training strategy for ECE teachers that are currently teaching but were not certified to teach. A high percentage of qualified teachers 48.5% in the country could harm the quality learning of our young children before they enter grade 1 of primary in the following year.

*Qualified: A qualified teacher has undertaken some training and or higher studies but they have not undertaken any teacher training, so although they have a qualification, they have not been trained to teach in the infant classes.*

*Certified : A certified teacher has undertaken teacher training in the field of ECCE.*

For ECCE, the minimum required academic qualification to become a teacher is completion of Year 8-13. An ECCE teacher who has completed studies at this level or higher is considered *'qualified'* to teach in a pre school. In order to become a *'certified'* ECCE teacher, however, teachers need to have also completed ECCE teacher training, the FBTP leading on to further training with APTC to attain Certificate 111 in Children's Services and the Pacific Pre School Certificate or Diploma in ECCE or Degree in ECCE (through USP)

See Annex 2

#### 4.5 Equity

As shown in the 2008 Digest, females are showing more interest in teaching ECCE classes.

In terms of Equity in Access, 74.4% of children that attended school in 2008 were female and 25.6% male. See Annex 2 Page 26

#### 4.6 Financing

The Vanuatu Government has encouraged the local communities to take ownership of the pre schools in their communities. The communities build the pre schools and through fundraisings and school fees support their teachers and buy necessary materials that may be needed in the classroom. The Ministry of Education has been

giving financial support by paying staff salary to the six Provincial Pre School Coordinators and the National Pre School Coordinator.

The budget for ECCE is currently reflected in the recurrent budget of Education Services Division and with VERM approximately 13million is given to upgrade and train teachers (see annex 2 on page 27)

Also data collection by VEMIS determines the share of Education on ECCE Education for the last three years. The government share of expenditure towards the operational running of ECCE management has been a steady fix amount of two million vatu since 2007 and has increased to 3 million as of this year.

That budget cost has been used as an evidence base to calculate the estimated cost per student in ECCE since the last three year (2006, 2007 and 2008). An average of 12,000 VT could be the estimated cost to educate a child in ECCE. There is no specific assessment that took place to determine the detail cost of how much is really needed to educate a child in Vanuatu

#### **4.7 Management**

Each Pre School is to operate under a properly constituted body to be called the Pre School Management Committee and they organise fund raising to support the running costs of their centre. All pre schools (community/ church/ and private) all charge a fee for service in order to pay teacher allowance (in rural) and salary (in urban). Most communities find difficulties paying the fee so teachers work months without pay and some leave to look for greener pastures.

Discussions with Pre School committees indicated that they lack a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, though some training has been provided for committees during the establishment of the model pre schools in each Province, it appears that this has not been particularly effective. Another cause for the non effectiveness of committee/community support is that they have too many other commitments, low priority of the importance of ECCE and a cultural attitude.

Collection of data by VEMIS has been difficult in some areas because of the remoteness of the ECCE centres and most probably because the teachers do not know how to fill in the forms. The Ministry needs to have an efficient communication strategy in order to ease VEMIS data collection for ECCE schools in the future. A support budget for the ECCE coordinators is essential to support the management running of ECCE development at Provincial and National level.

#### **4.8 Rationale**

It has been acknowledged that early childhood years is an important and valuable period of a child's life, since this is the period when brain development happens at a rapid rate (80% of their learning takes place from 0 . 6years)It is where the foundation of future learning is established and it needs to be protected as such. ECCE strives to assist children to continue to grow and develop skills, knowledge, attitudes and dispositions which will enable them to build a strong foundation base for future learning. ECCE offers children a head start in their primary schooling. Children who have been exposed to a quality ECCE programme are more successful in their schooling than those who have not (UNESCO 1995).

## 5. POLICY VISION, MISSION, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

### 5.1 Policy Vision

It is the vision of the Early Childhood Care & Education Policy of Vanuatu that all children will have access to *quality* early childhood care & education and they will achieve their full developmental potential, will be healthy, well nourished and safe, and will be prepared for achieving success in school and life. All children including children with disabilities have the right to equity of resources, support and learning through play based National ECE curriculum and health programs.

### 5.2 Policy Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide student-centred education that is accessible, relevant, sustainable, responsive, and of good quality, to guarantee every young person the opportunity to attend pre-school and basic education to year 8, including literacy, numeracy, life skills, and livelihood skills, respect for our history and culture, and respect for human rights.

### 5.3 Policy Goals/ Objectives

In line with the Vanuatu Education Sector Strategy 2007 . 2016 (VESS) in 2006 the goals of this policy statement on Early Childhood Education is to ensure that:

1. Quality of ECCE services is improved and enhanced
2. Equitable access to quality ECCE for all young children, including children with disabilities.
3. Management of ECCE services is effective and efficient.

#### 5.3.1 Improved quality

- **Policy Objective 1:** To ensure that all ECCE-teachers (including Provincial Pre school Coordinators and Key Teachers (TOT) meet standards of the highest possible quality.
- **Policy Objective 2:** To encourage the development of quality providers of ECCE-teacher education to assist in meeting national ECCE-teacher education needs. (like MOE/VEJA, USP, APTC, VITE etc.)
- **Policy Objective 3:** To ensure that access to continuing quality relevant professional development is available to all ECCE-teachers, ECCE-teacher trainers and teachers supporting staff in response to identified needs.

#### 5.3.2 Improved access

- **Policy objective 4.** To ensure that there is sufficient trained teachers in each of the ECE centres so all children have access to a quality programme.
- **Policy objective 5:** To develop child friendly playing and learning environments for all children, including children with disabilities.



### 5.3.3 Improved management

- **Policy Objective 6:** To ensure that Management of ECCE centre (Kindy committee) is effective and efficient and is based on partnership with NGOs, Development Partners, communities, teachers, and Education Authorities.

## 6. Policy Priorities Improved Quality

### 6.1.1 Quality of teachers

- Support qualifications training of unqualified ECCE teachers
- Improve selection criteria for entry to ECCE Education training institutions
- Develop National ECCE curriculum that supports ECD.
- Collaborate with Teachers in Service training unit to upgrade ECCE teachers skills.

### 6.1.2. Quality of learning

- Develop a national curriculum that will promote a holistic approach to child development and their learning needs.

### 6.2.1 Improved Access

- Determine a standard and design for ECCE school facilities to ensure that children have access to a model pre school with sufficient space, ventilation, light and ensure that the structure is safe.
- To ensure that all children have access to and **must** attend a pre school before entering into year one (Home based program is an alternate where there is no ECCE centre close by).
- To encourage all Primary Schools to have a pre school attached to them.

### 6.3.1 Improved Management

- To develop a strong partnership with communities, teachers, Provincial Government, Stakeholders (NGOs) and the MOE to put resources together to support the community owned pre schools.
- To provide training to the Kindy Committees of the ECCE centres on their responsibilities.

## 7. Policy Guiding Principles

### 7.1 Guiding Principles

This policy document is based on several strong Guiding Principles as its foundation. Even the right policy can have unwanted effects if it is not implemented appropriately and effective policy implementation requires commitment and support from all stakeholders.

### 7.2 Holistic Approach

Early Childhood Care & Education aims to promote the total development of the child: the social, emotional, physical, spiritual and cognitive skills. Such a holistic approach is essential in ensuring the child's all-round development. At the same time, Pre-School

experiences equip young children with the skills for successful formal schooling, thus facilitating their smooth transition from Pre-School to Primary School.

### **7.3 Self Reliance**

The focus is on making Early Childhood Education (ECE) service providers and caregivers including the communities aware of their strengths, local resources and on finding ways to help themselves. ECCE Programs should seek ways in which self-reliance can be initiated and reinforced. Communities especially the family unit being the key institutions for early childhood care and development must have ownership of the Pre Schools.

### **7.4 Human Rights**

Recognition of children's rights in survival, protection, participation and development from conception to birth and in early years of their life is an important obligation of both the Government and all Caregivers. All aspects of children's human rights must be paramount in all programs and services developed and delivered in the country.

### **7.5 Cultural Foundations**

Children in Vanuatu have the right to be educated in their first language in early childhood. Pre-Schools in Vanuatu will provide developmentally appropriate, high quality Early Childhood Care & Educational programs to children. Pre Schools will provide access to children 3 - 6 years old.

ECCE must recognise and affirm the cultural knowledge, vernacular and values of all children in Vanuatu.

### **7.6 Awareness and Prevention**

The policy promotes greater awareness of the needs of the children in the age category of this policy including their parents and caregivers. This requires greater involvement of government through its main Ministries and agencies such as Education, Health, Women and Attorney General.

They must take the lead in the application of awareness and prevention as a key strategy in their respective functional responsibilities towards the parents and caregivers as well as the children in this age group with the notion that prevention is better than cure.

### **7.7 Spiritual Development**

As a country with citizens who have very strong beliefs and practice religious values and principles in their lives, this policy encourages and promotes spiritual enrichment programmes as one of the key strategies for early childhood growth and development. Churches already have existing programmes such as Children's Ministries, Sunday Schools, Women's Fellowship Groups and Family Life Programmes. These and others must be recognized and strengthened with appropriate resources to continue in the future.

### **7.8 Management Committees (pre school committee)**

Management committee administers and manages the pre school on behalf of the community and they are responsible for establishing pre schools and employing pre school teachers whilst Ministry of Education, Vanuatu Eli Jaelhud Asosiesen (VEJA) and other NGOs are responsible for the training of the teachers.

### **7.9 Create Protective Environment**

The ultimate aim of the policy is to realize Vanuatu as a society that will promote and provide secure and safe environments for children to grow up in during their early years. All programmes and activities geared towards ECCE must address and advocate for the safety needs of the children in all situations. Each pre school centre should have a fencing or hedge around its pre school.

The pre school committee must have an evacuation plan for activation in times of fire, earthquake or tsunami emergency.

### **7.10 Partnership and Networking**

This strategy encourages the spirit of partnership to be established and strengthened so that there is mutual collaboration and cooperation in the design and implementation of ECCE activities as well as in the sharing of information and resources to benefit the target group of this policy.

Such partnership and networking between and across sectors must also be extended to international agencies like UNICEF, Save The Children, WORLD VISION, AUSAID, NZAID and UNESCO and others who are involved in early childhood care and education.

Because the pre-school provides the foundation for children's formal education, it is in the best interests of all concerned for the PPSCs, ZCAs, primary school heads and teachers to collaborate in all matters relating to pre-school services.

### **7.11 Children and Parents with Special Needs**

Children and parents with special needs in this case refers to the disabled, the orphans, the homeless, the poor and others in that category who are affected either by natural or by man-made disasters. Children who are vulnerable must also be catered for.

Though HIV/AIDS may not be major health concern today in Vanuatu, however as a preventative measure, a special provision is considered in this section for the care and protection of mothers and their children who may be infected and/or affected by HIV and Aids.

### **7.12 Community Support and Empowerment**

Communities in Vanuatu have been and are able to take care of the early childhood care and development needs of their children.

Schools and communities play an important role. The MOE requests the schools/communities to be responsible for securing land for building ECCE facilities.

They are to provide logistic support, maintenance of the ECCE facilities and to provide financial assistance to the ECCE teacher.

The policy recognises the good traditional childcare practices and promotes integrated approach in all aspects of early childhood care and education at the community level.

### **7.13 Parents**

Parents and caregivers as the first teachers and carers must be provided with capacity building on general awareness and education on good parenting and childcare in the country.

They must be encouraged to utilise available local resources and not to depend so much on outside interventions. The parents are to give support to the teachers by reinforcing and spending quality time with their children to develop their literacy and numeracy skills especially when the rate of brain development is rapid at this period.

Many communities have good parenting practices as well as nutritious food. It requires specially trained personnel to identify and reinforce these practices so that parents are able to retain confidence and pride in themselves to care for their own children. The Church or Family Support Groups can provide training in these areas.

The implementation of this Policy is a whole of Government Approach in strong partnership with relevant agencies and groups at all levels. There are many partners with ECCE programs and activities and have specific roles to play in the implementation of this Policy.

However, those listed below are considered key partners in ECCE in the country.

### **7.14 Government**

This is a government policy; therefore the Government through its relevant departments and agencies has a key role to play in terms of consistent annual budgetary and most required resources for the successful implementation of all ECCE programs and activities in the country. The Government will support the training, licensing and monitoring activities through the Provincial Offices.

The Private Sector, Churches and Non-Government Agencies have invested their own resources to provide learning and other activities for this category of children in the past and currently. This policy will support other government agencies various programmes and activities targeted at Women and children and their health and nutrition.

### **7.15 Churches**

Churches already have established programmes, facilities and services in place which are targeted towards women and children. These must be identified, resourced and strengthened to continue with much attention and focus on the age group covered by this policy.

### **7.16 Non-Government Organizations (NGOs)**

Non-Government Organisations like VEJA, Save the Children, World Vision have been contributing significantly to childcare, development and education over the years in this country.

This policy recognises their good work in ECCE and will continue to strengthen and sustain their commitment in the years ahead.

## **8. Policy Procedures and Guidelines**

This policy takes into consideration the importance of procedures and priority action areas in ECCE. Therefore in this chapter, the procedures and priority action areas are detailed to guide all partners in ECCE services and programs.

### **8.1 Procedures:**

#### **8.1.1 Pre – School Facilities**

- Location of Pre . Schools. A place should be chosen close to the village that is large enough for the Pre School and its yard. Where appropriate, the pre-school can be situated in the grounds of the local primary school.
- Pre School buildings can be, permanent, semi-permanent or traditional thatched house but it should be structurally sound, well ventilated with adequate windows and two doors for easy evacuation or access in case of emergency.
- There must be plenty of space both indoors and outdoors. Allow at least 2 square metres per child indoors and 5 square metres per child outdoors. The minimum size for the building should be 10m x 7m, 18m x 7m or 7m x 7m depending on the environment.
- Each pre school must have a lockable storage room with shelves for indoors and outdoor play equipment.
- The flooring must be covered throughout with mats. We encourage concrete floor where possible.
- Pre schools may be attached to primary schools but preferably with a separate playground (preferably fenced). Pre Schools attached to primary schools must have a separate toilet from the other classes. It must be safe and child size and not too far away from the Pre School.
- It is vital that children must have access to a safe water supply, which they need for drinking and washing. If there is no tank, drum or tap water, water should be brought to the Pre School in large containers, which are clearly marked for DRINKING and for WASHING.
- The building(s), toilet(s) and water supply must be inspected and certified by the relevant PPSC and or the ZCA, before the centre can be registered or



licensed. There must be a toilet for every 15 children or separate toilets for girls and boys.

- All ECCE Service Providers must take into careful consideration and accommodate the needs of children with disabilities or special needs in the facilities and services provided e.g a ramp for a child who uses a wheelchair.
- Outdoor play is an integral component of the pre-school curriculum, and adequate space of at least 5 square metres per child must be provided for children outdoors. The minimum size of the yard should be 22m x 22m and it should have a boundary (hedge or fence) and a gate.  
 For the safety of the children, there should be no holes or rubbish heaps in the yard, and no animals should be allowed in the yard to drop its droppings in the yard and the sandpit(cover the sandpit after school).
- If there is no veranda on the Pre . School building there should be a shelter for sand and water play. It should measure 5m x 4m. Appropriate outdoor structures may be constructed out of locally available materials to allow for climbing, crawling, digging, jumping, balancing, sliding, pushing, pulling and for other adventure play activities (see annex 4)
- The outdoor learning and play areas should provide sufficient shade for the children. If there are no shade trees these should be provided by planting good shady trees and / or erecting shelters.

Equipment and materials provided should offer opportunity for all children, including all girls and children with disabilities to explore and experiment, manipulate, discover and problem solve . so the materials, games, and equipment should be stimulating, challenging and interesting to play with.

### **8.1.2 Furniture, Educational Play Equipment & Materials**

- All furniture and facilities must be child and aged sized for children between 3-6 years old.
- A wide range of play materials should be provided, which are challenging and stimulating, as well as interesting. It is important that educational play equipment and materials are regularly changed so children's interest is maintained. The children should be offered choice and given the opportunity to explore, experiment, discover and problem solve in play situations, and they should have the right to be educated in their first language in these early years.

### **8.1.3 Staffing**

- The ECCE centres shall have a minimum teacher/child ratio of 1:15 and maximum teacher child ratio and classroom ratio for children 3-6 is 1:30. This means that to

start an ECCE centre, there must be a minimum of 15 children between the ages of 3-6 years.

- Where there are less than 10 children and there is no Pre School that is close to a community, parents are encouraged to start up a Home Based program where parents run a playgroup to prepare children with skills that they will required before going to Year 1.
- At least one teacher in an ECCE centre will hold a recognised ECE teacher qualification (or must be in training if no certified teacher is available).
- If an ECCE centre has more than 25 children, the management must appoint an assistant preferably with a certificate from the FBTP. When an assistant is not available then an unqualified teacher can be recruited but must enrol in the FBTP after 1 year of practice. If there is not enough money to pay a second teacher, a parent helpers roster must be organised, so that one adult helps the teacher each day. Such parent helpers must attend a workshop session with the teacher before assisting in the Pre-School.
- The hours of instruction for the ECCE centres shall be 4 hours from 7.30 . 11.30am. If there are 2 classes because of a large number of children, the older ones ( 5/6yrs) attend in the mornings and the younger ones (3/4yrs) come in the afternoon session from 1.30-3.30pm.
- It is important that adults or teachers who work with young children must be trained teachers, if possible in Early Childhood Education. Minimum professional qualifications for a Pre-School teacher will be at least 7 weeks basic training, spread over a period of two years, organized either by the Ministry of Education or VEJA. During this time they are mentored and assessed by the PPSCs and/ or the Key Teachers. This will equip them with the basic knowledge to facilitate the child's ability to learn through play. **No untrained person** should be in charge of a Pre-School. Teachers are also encouraged to undertake further training with registered Training Providers. No teacher should be under 18 years of age.
- The teacher is responsible for implementing appropriate behaviour management strategies. On no occasion must physical punishment, such as hitting, hair-pulling etc, or verbal threats and abuse, be used.
- Salaries of Pre-School teachers shall be the responsibility of the community in conjunction with the support of the Provincial government. The teacher, in consultation with the committee, is responsible for the daily operation of the pre school, and for planning and implementing both a developmentally and culturally appropriate programme for the children under their care, based on the Vanuatu Ministry of Education approved Early Childhood Curriculum.

#### 8.1.4 Curriculum

The Field Based Training has been using a training module that has the approval of VNTC. A team is currently working on the Vanuatu Early Learning & Development Standards which will be used as a guide to write the Vanuatu National Kindergarten curriculum, which will be the only recognised curriculum.

#### 8.1.5 Enrolment

- There must be a minimum of ten (15) children enrolled at a pre school with a maximum of 30 children attending at one time.
- No child under 3 years of age should be enrolled in a Pre-School, thus allowing only children who have already turned 3 years to attend. No child aged 7 or more may attend or be enrolled at a Pre-School.
- The ideal age of entry to pre school is 4 years and children should be 6 years by March to enter Year 1 in Primary School. After the launching of this ECCE Policy we will consider an awareness raising period as the transition phase to give the communities and parents sufficient time to adapt to this policy. Therefore it means that **all** children must be given access to ECCE . In 2012 the MOE will be strict on access and age regulations.

#### 8.1.6 Language of Instruction

According to the Draft Education Language Policy, the language of instruction to be used in the ECCE centre shall be the vernacular (mother tongue) spoken by the community where the centre is situated or bislama in the case of a multilingual community (mainly the urban and Provincial areas)

#### 8.1.7 Preparation for Primary School

Children should automatically be promoted from ECCE to Year 1. Children should **not** be put through a test to determine if they are allowed to enter Primary or repeat. All children with ages 3-6 must go through pre school programmes before entrance to Year 1.

- Children who shows slow learning or shows signs of a disability should be reported to the Head Teacher of the Primary School for help.

#### 8.1.8 Licensing Procedures for Kindergarten and Pre- School Teachers

Teachers are very important people trusted by the parents, government and the communities to be the best caregivers and services providers of the early learning and development of children in this age category in the schools.

They must have recognised qualifications and meet certain eligibility criteria to obtain a licence and these include the following:

- Must have gone through a field based training programme and continued with recognised ongoing training for each year since initial training.
- Must have gained a certificate from at least one of the Registered Training Providers . (as in 5.3.1 )
- Must be visited by the PPSC or the Key Teacher who will check the standard of his or her work and the pre school facilities.

- Must submit a report on their work filled in by the Chairperson/Secretary of the Pre School Committee or Head of the Primary School if the Pre School is attached to one. This report form will be given to the committee by the PPSC/ZCA.

Initially centres will be granted a one year Provisional Licence.

Full licensing will be granted after one year if the Kindergarten meets all the requirements in this policy document. Regular monitoring of the Pre Schools will be done by the PPSCs, ZCAs and the Key Teachers. Problems and concerns must be noted by the monitor and addressed by the committee management and the pre school teacher. Licenses will be cancelled for continued non compliance with this policy. A separate form will be required for Home Based Program.

## **8.2. Guidelines:**

### **8.2.1 Management**

This policy recognises and encourages the establishment of good management structures for effective and efficient operations of the ECCE Centre. The Pre . Schools should operate under a properly constituted body to be called the Management committee.

The Pre-Schools that operate in a Primary School ground will be required to establish Pre-School Sub Committees. The Chairperson of the Sub Committee will represent the Pre-School on the Primary School Management Committee (PTA)

The pre school management committee, which is to be selected or appointed by the respective communities will comprise of the following:

- A Chairman
- A Vice Chairman
- A Secretary
- A Treasurer
- A Pre-School Teacher who has voting rights may be considered as Assistant Secretary/Treasurer, if necessary.

Total number of the Sub Committee members should be five. The Sub Committee members must comprise of representatives of the parents, chiefs, pastors and 3 . 4 members should be women.

### **8.2.2 The Management responsibilities**

The Management Committee (pre school committee) will be responsible for the administration and management of the Pre-Schools on behalf of the community. All Chairpersons of the Pre-School Sub Committees in the Primary Schools must be registered with the Provincial Education Board or the relevant Education Authority. All private and community pre schools must register with relevant Education Authority (based on who your feeder school is registered under).

The Pre School Management Committee will liaise with the relevant Officer in the Ministry of Education/or the Provincial Pre School Coordinator in the PEOs office on

matters regarding the establishment, and operation of their Pre-Schools. Responsibilities of the Pre School Management Committee will include:

- Identification of a suitable site or location of Pre-School.
- Identification or construction of building(s) for the Pre-School.
- Liaising with the Ministry of Education, through the PPSC and ZCA regarding application for licensing, staff-training and resource materials.
- Appointment of pre school staff.
- Payment of pre school staff salaries. Part or all of the salary can be given in the form of labour, garden produce, mats, etc. when an agreement is made between staff and committee.
- Making or purchasing of suitable indoor and outdoor furniture, equipment and materials with assistance from the PPSC.
- Maintenance of buildings, grounds, furniture and equipment
- Conducting regular monthly meetings to evaluate the needs of the Pre-School, as well as make plans for the Pre-School.
- Helping pre school staff in planning for and organising community awareness workshops on the importance of pre school education and of parent involvement.
- Visiting the Pre-School regularly to monitor the needs, problems, achievements and quality of the Pre-School using an assessment form provided by the PPSCs and consulting with PPSCs to address concern when necessary.
- Organising fund-raising activities for the Pre-School.
- Address development needs and to liaise with the government, aid donors and any interested party to further develop the centre.

### **8.2.3 Visits and Licensing Procedures for the Pre-School.**

Ideally every Pre School should be visited once a year by the Provincial Coordinator. As part of the licensing process the Pre school should be visited by the Provincial Pre-School Coordinator and either the PEO or Zone Curriculum Adviser.

## **9.1 MONITORING, EVALUATION & REVIEW**

The successes, failures and the opportunities generated by the ECCE Policy can only be realized through a process of constant monitoring and evaluation during the course of its implementation. These include:

### **9.1 Monitoring and Evaluation**

- The assessment of ECCE teachers during and after the FBT will be conducted by the PPSC or ZCAs at least once a year.
- All ECCE teachers need to be assessed and confirmed within a year after their certification or having received their licence. Teachers who have been through a FBTP will need to be assessed within a year in order to see if they could continue their training to a higher level.



- All ECE training and other activities will under take on going monitoring based on the Audit Committee (who will be checking the training against benchmarks) that is being set up by VNTC who will report to the Compliance Audit.

## 9.2 Effective Date: January 1<sup>st</sup> 2012

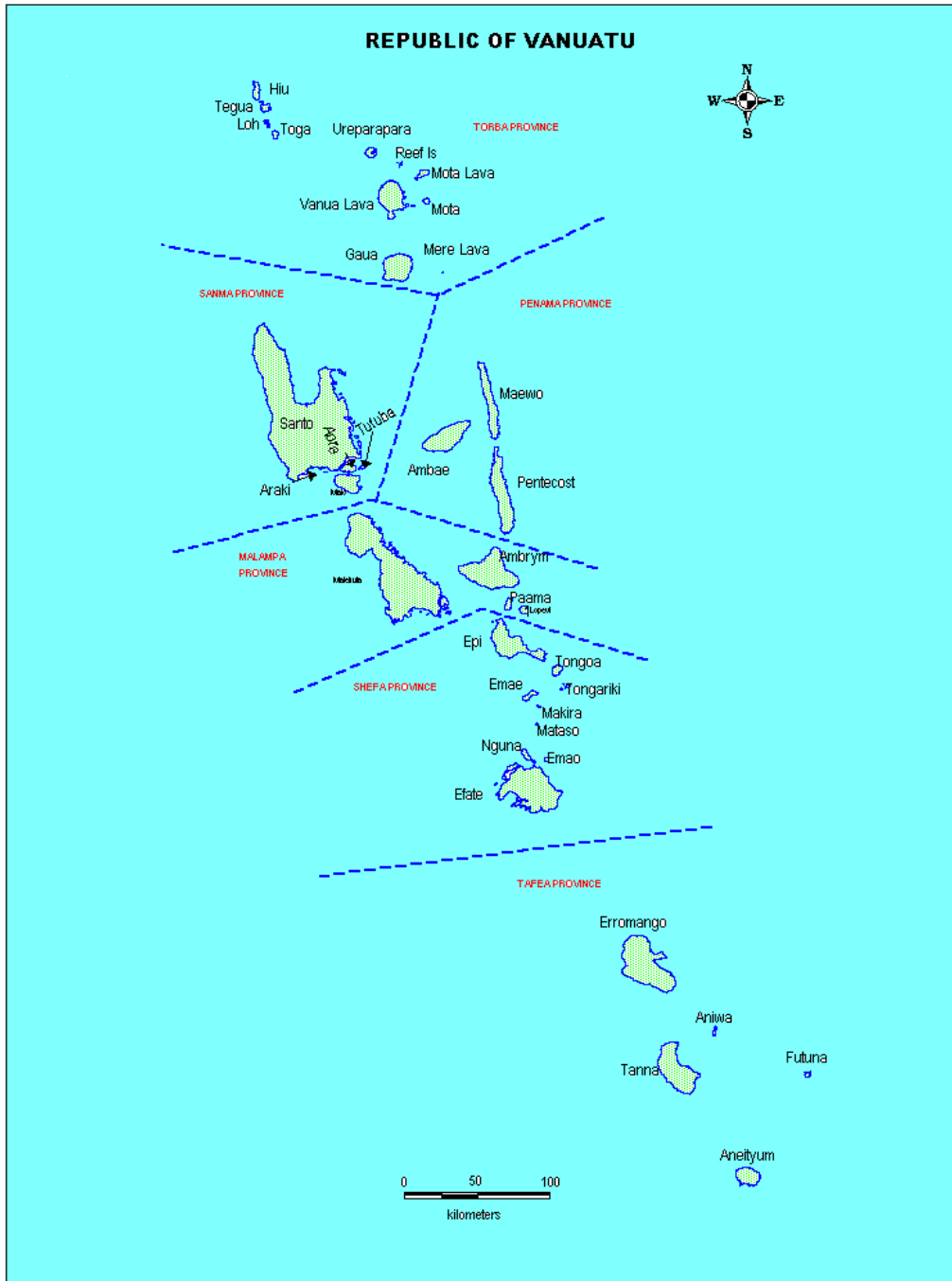
## 9.3 Policy Review Date: 2014

The policy like any another government policy documents has a two years life of implementation from 2012 to 2014. The review of this policy should take place in 2014. In addition, the smooth review process of this policy will depend on its effective implementation by all stakeholders in all sectors and at all levels. This policy should be the reference point or the basis from which future policies, plans and activities should be conducted to allow for both consistency as well as continuity in maintaining activities already started under this original ECCE Policy.



A model ECCE Centre.

**10. Annex 1: Map of Vanuatu.**

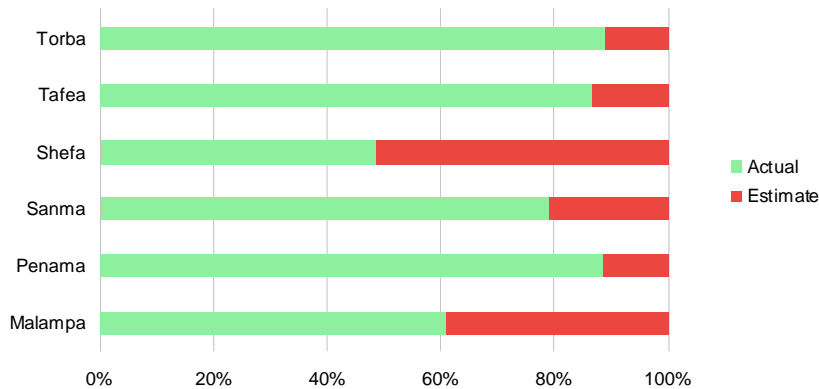


## Annex 2: ECE Data

Taken from VEMIS Digest 2008

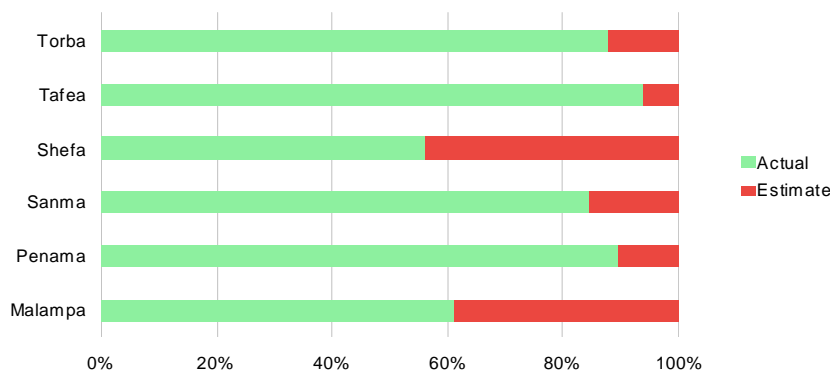
If a school does not return a survey form in a given report year, VEMIS uses an estimate of the enrolment and teachers at the school, based on their past survey returns. This ensures that there are no gaps in the data for analysis and reporting purposes. The following tables show the % of estimated data being used in the enrolment and teacher numbers for ECEs, Primary Schools and Secondary Schools.

### Extent of Estimated ECE Enrolment Data Used in Statistical Digest Production, 2008



The graph indicates the extent to which past years data is being used to calculate 2008 ECE enrolment in the absence of expected returns from schools. Over 50 percent of Shefa ECE data is based on estimates followed by Malampa (37%) and Sanma (22%) province.

### Extent of Estimated ECE Teacher Data Used in Statistical Digest Production, 2008



Low survey returns for ECEs in 2008 is also reflected in the percentage of estimated data used for teachers in this sector. The missing teacher data can also be due to teachers not providing their information on their school survey form.

### Number of schools by school type code, in 2006 - 2008

	ECE	PS	SS	Total
2006	861	456	81	1 398
2007	679	436	82	1 197
2008	627	425	82	1 134

The table above shows the number of ECEs, Primary Schools (PS) and Secondary Schools (SS) over the years 2006 . 2008. There has been a big decrease in the number of ECEs operating during this time. This is due to a number of factors, including the limited funding available to support the running of ECEs, and the Government's recent focus on establishing model kindies that teach an approved national curriculum and have trained teachers. The increase in the number of model kindies has led to the closure of many informal ECE centres in the rural areas.

#### Number of School by school type code and by Province, 2008

2008	ECE	PS	SS	Total
Malampa	129	85	16	230
Penama	56	66	12	134
Sanma	194	91	16	301
Shefa	112	80	24	216
Tafea	99	80	13	192
Torba	37	23	1	61
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>627</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>1134</b>

The Province with the most schools is Sanma, followed by Shefa and then Malampa. The decline in the number of ECEs is most evident in the figure for Penama Province. In 2008 there were only 49 centres still operated. The following table shows the number of schools being operated by each Education Authority group.

#### Number of Schools by Education Authority Type and level of Education, 2008

2008	ECE	PS	SS	Total
Government of Vanuatu	0	295	41	336
Church (Government Assisted)	57	100	31	188
Church (Not Government Assisted)	3	9	3	15
Community	288	8	1	297
Private	279	13	6	298
Not recorded	0	0		0
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>627</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>1134</b>

The Government of Vanuatu is the largest education provider in the Primary and Secondary Sectors. Most ECEs are community based. A number of Churches operate schools with the assistance of the Government in the form of teacher salaries and school grants. Other Churches and Private operators also contribute to the development of education in Vanuatu.

#### Enrolment Details

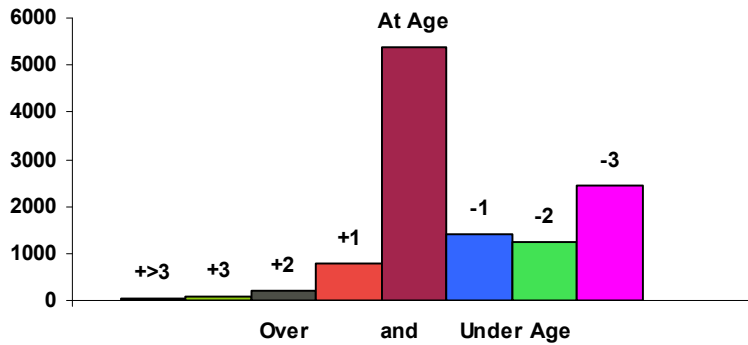
The following tables show the trend in enrolment over the past few years.

#### Enrolment by survey year and school type, 2005 - 2008

	Early Childhood Education	Primary School	Secondary School	Total
2005	13172	39738	12201	65111
2006	14056	38238	13506	65800
2007	11934	37624	15153	64711
2008	11536	38057	16435	66028

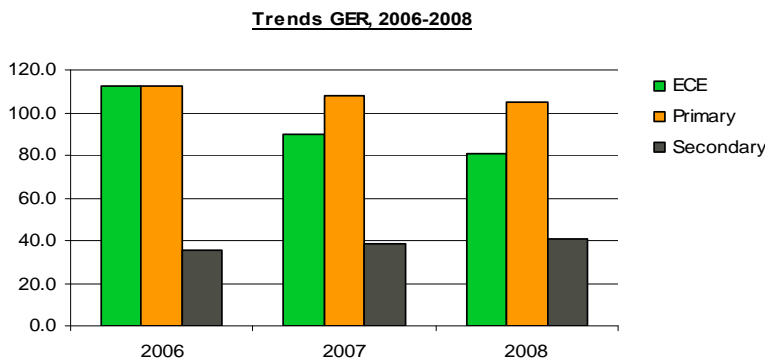
The distribution number of students in the above table is made by school type. The total number of pupils in pre-school only includes pupils that enrolled in 2008 in the registered kindergarten schools regardless of age.

#### Proportion of Overage and Underage Enrolments in ECE, 2008



The chart above shows the number of children enrolled in ECE who are at the right age (4 . 5 years old) for that schooling sector, and the proportion that are over or underage by 1, 2, 3 or more years. Although the majority of children enrolled in ECE are at the right age, there are still large numbers of children not starting ECE until they are 6, 7, 8 or more years old.

### Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) Trend, 2006 - 2008, by School Type



The GER for ECE Education kept on decreasing each year due to various reasons. In 2008 about 21 ECEs were closed due to low intake and the lack of support from the communities in the running management of the ECE schools.

### Early Childhood Education Gross and Net Enrolment Ratios by Gender, and Gender Parity Index, 2006-2008

	GER				NER			
	M	F	T	GPI	M	F	T	GPI
2006	113.4	109.5	111.5	0.97	10.9	10.8	10.8	0.99
2007	91.5	88.8	90.2	0.97	37.0	36.8	36.9	0.99
2008	82.5	78.4	80.5	0.95	40.1	38.9	39.5	0.97

### National Pre-School Curriculum and Training Program

The table below gives a proxy indication of the extent of coverage by ECE programmes measured by the number of new intakes in year 1 primary schools who have attended preschool. Percentage of new intake to Year 1 who have attended ECE, by Province 2008



Province	Enrol	Rep	Intake	% Preschool Attenders
Malampa	1292	196	1096	84.8
Penama	1146	194	952	83.1
Sanma	1645	297	1348	81.9
Shefa	1984	232	1752	88.3
Tafea	1723	409	1314	76.3
Torba	361	118	243	67.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>8151</b>	<b>1446</b>	<b>6705</b>	<b>82.3</b>

This indicator helps to assess the proportion of new entrants to grade 1 of primary who presumably have received some preparation for primary schooling through ECD programmes. The above table shows that the proportion of pupils entering year 1 of primary is lower in Torba followed by Tafea Province. That requires more assistance in terms of support towards the improvement of ECE educational programmes in these two provinces.

#### Certified and Qualified Teachers by school type and by Province

Total number of ECE Teachers, numbers certified, percentage certified, numbers qualified, and percentage qualified by Province, 2008

2008	Num Teachers	Num Certified	CR	Num Qualified	QR
Malampa	157	85	54%	89	57%
Penama	86	48	56%	49	57%
Sanma	227	104	46%	107	47%
Shefa	118	43	36%	45	38%
Tafea	114	35	31%	36	32%
Torba	57	40	70%	42	74%
<b>Total</b>	<b>759</b>	<b>355</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>368</b>	<b>48%</b>

The proportion of Certified and Qualified ECE teachers shows an equitable distribution of teachers that are currently teaching in the Pre-Schools. The pre-service and in-service training program for ECE teachers should be considered in the long-term teaching development plan of the Vanuatu Institute of Teacher Education. Training for quality teaching needs to address all levels of teaching, pre-school, primary and secondary teaching.

In order to become a certified ECE teacher, however, teachers need to have also completed ECE teacher training, such as an Field Based Training, and APTC Children Services certificate 111, USP Pacific ECE Teaching Certificate, USP Diploma in ECE and USP Degree in ECE.

#### Expenditure on ECE, Primary and Secondary Sectors, as a Percentage of Total Education Sector Expenditure, 2006 - 2008.

	2006	2007	2008
<b>Sector Expenditure</b>			
ECE	1,800,000	1,800,000	2,000,000
PRI	1,164,897,829	1,587,071,271	1,663,676,422
SEC (Includes VIT & VITE)	952,367,640	1,182,393,076	1,146,420,806
Admin	280,538,157	368,011,925	416,781,479
<b>MOE Total</b>	<b>2,399,603,626</b>	<b>3,139,276,272</b>	<b>3,228,878,707</b>