

A key achievement in 2008 was the establishment of an Education Programme team and the planning of the five-year (2008 – 2012) Education Programme. The purpose of the programme is to increase the percentage of children benefiting from the equitable provision and completion of quality basic education through a rights-based approach to education programming and policy development.

UNICEF works in partnership with regional Ministries of Education and other regional organisations to promote children's rights to, in and through education.

Looking back

Early Childhood Education (ECE)

The ECE policy in Kiribati was finalised and submitted to Cabinet for approval. UNICEF provided financial and technical support and the outcome is an inclusive and child-centred policy.

A national workshop on Early Learning Development Standards was held in Vanuatu, with the result that the Vanuatu Ministry of Education made a commitment to develop these standards, which will serve as a basis for a national ECE curriculum in 2009.

UNICEF provided technical and financial assistance for the drafting of language in education policies in Vanuatu and Solomon Islands. The policies appreciate the multiplicity of mother tongues in these countries and the rights to and benefits of a multilingual focus in education.

Child Friendly Schools

Isabel Province led the introduction of Child Friendly Schools in Solomon Islands, and the concept has been shared through visits and workshops for provincial education staff across the country.

A School Self Assessment module, which enables a school to measure the progress it makes towards Child Friendly status, was developed by UNICEF and schools in Tafea Province, Vanuatu and Isabel Province, Solomon Islands. Over 100 primary schools in all, undertook the self-assessment.

Emergency and post-disaster education support

In 2008, UNICEF set up a Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Project (RARP) for schools affected by the 2007 tsunami in Western and Choiseul Provinces of Solomon Islands.

Reconstruction of eight schools begun in 2008, with community ownership of the renovated schools a key approach and child-friendly features being incorporated in the school design.

Emergency Early Childhood Education materials have been put into a Pacific ECE kit for Fiji, Vanuatu and Solomon Islands for use in post-disaster settings.

Moving forward

In 2009, the UNICEF Education programme will continue to support the development of national basic education policies with the main focus on the three countries: Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and Kiribati.

UNICEF will continue to support Child Friendly Schools in selected areas of Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. Activities will include strengthening community-based school committees; drafting school development plans; providing literacy and numeracy materials to schools; and improving water, sanitation and hygiene. The child friendly approach will be further supported by introducing Child Friendly Schools principles into teacher training curricula and resources.

In the area of Early Childhood Education, UNICEF will continue working with Ministries of Education in Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu to draft life skills benchmarks and Early Learning Development Standards.

In selected parts of Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, Education Information Management Systems (EMIS) for improved student attendance and learning will be piloted. The EMIS will also be useful at the provincial level for data analysis.

In Kiribati, UNICEF will provide technical assistance to the Curriculum Development Unit to undertake a gender audit of curriculum materials, using the opportunity of the curriculum reform that began in 2008.

At the request of Ministries of Education in all three focus countries, UNICEF will support the development of a regional support mechanism, national frameworks and improved practice in the area of special needs education. In both Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, studies will be carried out to assess the education situation of children with disabilities, and in Solomon Islands there will also be a national study on barriers to education and support for the development of a national language in education policy.

In order to see what progress has been made in the Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Project, a mid-term review will be undertaken in the areas affected by the 2007 tsunami in Solomon Islands.

