VANUATU MINIMUM QUALITY STANDARDS FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS
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Acronyms

AWP  Annual Work Plan
CDU  Curriculum Development Unit
IE  Inclusive Education
MoE  Ministry of Education
SAFs  Student Academic Files
SC  School Committee
SIP  School Improvement Plan
VESS  Vanuatu Education Sector Strategy
VERM  Vanuatu Education Road Map
VMQS  Vanuatu Minimum Quality Standards
SCA  School Community Association
SG  School Grant
SIO  School Improvement Officer
SMF  Student Medical File
UNICEF  United Nations Children's Fund
VITE  Vanuatu Institute of Teacher Education
ZCA  Zonal Curriculum Adviser
Foreword

The Vanuatu Government has outlined comprehensive education reforms in their long term development plan, the Vanuatu Education Sector Strategy (VESS). To guide this reform, the Ministry of Education (MoE) has designed the Vanuatu Education Road Map (VERM) to support the Vanuatu Education system by focusing on three key strategic goals: (i) Access, (ii) Quality and (iii) Management.

To reduce or eliminate the financial burden placed on parents by school fees, the Government has started the provision of school grants to all primary schools in 2010. To give direction to the use of school grants by local stakeholders in education, 54 National Quality Standards for Primary Schools have been developed in September 2010 under the leadership of the MoE. These 54 standards have been reviewed and revised by Provincial Education Officers and Board Members, Zonal Curriculum Advisers (ZCAs), School Heads, Teachers, School Committee Members, Parents and Student Representatives from primary schools across all 6 provinces. They have also identified the 15 most relevant standards and these have been finalised in October 2011 by the relevant MoE Departments, Ministry of Financial and Economic Management (MFEM), Prime Minister’s Office (PMO) and Development Partners working in the Education Sector. The standards prioritized by the MoE, MFEM, PMO and Development Partners will be costed and included in the Corporate Plan (2011-2015) and Business Plans from 2013 onwards.

Preparation of this document would not have been possible without the involvement of Student Representatives, School Committee Members, Parents, Teachers, Head Teachers, Provincial Education Officers and Board members, ZCAs, Inspectors and other Officials of the Ministry of Education. I would like to express my gratitude to everyone who has participated in the consultation meetings.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank UNICEF for providing the technical assistance and the Pool Partners for providing financial support for the development of the Vanuatu Quality Standards for Primary Schools.

May I also express my personal thanks to the Officers in the Ministry of Education who have worked so hard to finalise this document and I wish all School Heads and Teachers at primary level in Vanuatu success in strengthening the development of their schools.

Honourable Marcelino Pipite
Minister of Education
October 2011

Introduction

Since 2006, the Vanuatu Government has undergone a comprehensive education reform based on the choices and expectations of the country stipulated through its strategic long term development plan, the Vanuatu Education Sector Strategy (VESS).

To guide this reform, the Ministry of Education (MoE) has designed the Vanuatu Education Road Map (VERM) to support the Vanuatu Education system through a focus on three key strategic goals: (i) Improved access, (ii) enhanced quality and (iii) strengthened management at national, provincial and school levels. With the VERM, the Vanuatu Government aims to remove barriers to access education. Therefore, the MoE has adopted a fee free policy to encourage all Vanuatu primary school-age children to enroll. To reduce or eliminate the financial burden placed on parents by school fees, the Government has started the provision of school grants to all primary schools in 2010 which are based on individual School Improvement Plans. The MoE plans to expand the School Grants Scheme to junior secondary schools depending upon successful implementation at primary level and the availability of funds.

To give direction to School Improvement Planning and the use of School Grants by local stakeholders in education, National Quality Standards for Primary Schools have been developed in September 2010 under the leadership of the MoE. Educators from national, provincial and local levels came up with a total of 54 standards during a meeting which was held at the In-service Training Unit at the Vanuatu Institute of Teacher Education. The Vanuatu Quality Standards for Primary Schools focus on the 15 VERM strategic goals and cover a total of 6 inter-related dimensions which address the holistic development of a school. The dimensions include: (i) Access to Schooling, (ii) Effective Teaching and Learning, (iii) Healthy, Safety and Protective Environment, (iv) Gender Sensitivity, (v) Community Support and Partnership and (vi) School Management and Leadership.

During the first 6 months of 2011, the MoE organized consultation meetings in all 6 provinces to review and revise the 54 standards that were developed in Port Vila. These meetings were attended by Provincial Education Officers, Zonal Curriculum Advisers, School Heads, Teachers, School Committee Members, Parents and Student Representatives from primary schools. During these consultation meetings, the participants were also asked to identify the most relevant standards and as a result 15 standards have been identified by them. These 15 standards have been reviewed and finalised by the relevant MoE Departments, Ministry of Financial and Economic Management, Prime Minister’s Office and Development Partners working in the Education Sector.

The Vanuatu Minimum Quality Standards (VMQS) for Primary Schools that have been prioritized by the MoE and Development Partners will be costed and included in the Corporate Plan (2011-2015) and Business Plans from 2013 onwards. The VMQS will be subject to revision once primary schools have achieved the highest progress indicators on specific minimum standards.

Besides informing School Improvement Planning and the School Grants Scheme, the VMQS for Primary Schools will also be used as a basis for in-service training. Zonal Curriculum Advisers and School Improvement Officers (SIOs) from the Inspectorate will use the standards to help schools implement the standards and support schools in moving towards higher levels of progress indicators. The Ministry of Education has assigned the ZCAs to monitor and provide feedback to classroom teachers on their performance. The SIOs (Inspectors) are tasked to monitor, evaluate and provide feedback to local stakeholders on the progress schools are making towards achieving these standards. For sustainability reasons, the standards have to be incorporated in the monitoring and evaluation tools of the Inspectorate. ZCAs and SIOs will also provide feedback to the Department of Education Management to inform them about the issues arising from their respective monitoring such as identifying specific capacity building needs of local stakeholders in education. Standards related to infrastructure development will be addressed by the MoE at national level, but the local School Committee will be responsible for the maintenance of these structures.
The VMQS for Primary Schools allows for measuring the progress the MoE is making in achieving the VERM strategic goals as well as the implementation of the Corporate Plan (2011-2015). It is expected that student learning outcomes and school performance indicators such as enrollment rate, repetition rate, drop-out rate and survival rate will improve with the implementation of the Vanuatu Minimum Quality Standards for Primary Schools. EGRA and VANSTA test results as well as VEMIS information should be used to verify whether this assumption is correct. In addition, the VMQS progress indicators enable the MoE to set up an accreditation system for primary schools. By averaging the scores of all standards, schools can be awarded stars for example to show the level of quality schools have achieved. An accreditation system can serve as a significant motivator for local stakeholders in education to improve access, quality and the management of their school. Accreditation of schools will also allow the MoE to reward primary schools for the progress they have made and this will further contribute to the sense of pride and achievement from all stakeholders in education.

**Vanuatu Minimum Quality Standards for Primary Schools**

There are a total of 15 National Minimum Quality Standards detailed in this document which are divided according to the three VERM strategic goals: Access, Quality and Management. The first section outlines the format for each standard and explains how to read the progress indicators. In the second section, each of the 15 standards are outlined and clarified in detail.

**Box 1: Example Standard Format**

**Standard 1 (Access): School Committees address the barriers to education that children face to ensure that every child between 6 and 12 years old to enroll in primary school regardless of gender, ability or background**

The Ministry of Education aims to enroll all children between 6 and 12 years old in primary education to ensure that these children will be able to reach their full potential in primary school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Progress Indicators</th>
<th>Means of Verification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The School Head has a list of all enrolled children from 6-12 year old and the School Head has a list with all 6-12 year old out-of-school children living in the school catchment area and the School Head identifies the reasons why these children do not go to school and the School Head as well as the School Committee positively encourage and support all school-age children to enroll.</td>
<td>Interviewing the School Head, School Committee Members and Students as well as analysing the list of enrolled students, list of out-of-school children and students’ attendance register</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The School Head has a list of all enrolled children from 6-12 year old and the School Head has a list with all 6-12 year old out-of-school children living in the school catchment area and the School Head identifies the reasons why these children do not go to school.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The School Head has a list of all enrolled children from 6-12 year old</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The School Head has a list of all enrolled children from 6-12 year old</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**VQM5 format**: Each standard has a similar format (see Box 1: Example Standard Format). The standard is outlined at the top of the page and the dimension is stated between brackets. The standard is followed by a short introduction to provide some background information about the relevance of this standard. Each standard has four different indicators, which provide a detailed description of the situation in school. The indicators described under each standard progress from level 1 (desired situation in school) to level 4 (minimum required situation in school). School Committees should ensure that their school reaches at least level 4 on each of the standards. At the same time, they should aspire to reach the level that has been identified by the Ministry of Education and Development Partners in line with the Corporate Plan (2011-2015). These levels are highlighted in yellow in each of the standards throughout this document.

For a school to achieve a particular standard, Level 3 is one step higher than level 4 which means that schools need to do something extra compared to level 4. In the example above, the minimum requirement for the School Head is to develop a list with the names of all children enrolled in school (level 4). For the school to attain Level 3, the School Head has to not only develop a list with the names of all children enrolled in school, but also develop a list with the names of all 6 to 12 year old out-of-school children living in the school catchment area. The word ‘and’ is written in bold and italics to show the difference level 1, level 2, level 3 and level 4. The ‘Means of Verification’ column indicates how the observer can obtain the information needed to determine the level of the progress indicator.
In the example above, there are technical terms such as: 'Out-of-school Children', 'School Catchment Area' and 'School Committee'. These terminologies will be defined and explained after the presentation of each standard.

Out-of-school Children: Children who are not enrolled in primary school or children who are enrolled, but absent more than one day per week.

School Catchment Area: The geographic area where the children live who are able to access school every day.

School Committee: Local stakeholders (both males and females) in education including: School Head, Teacher Representatives, Important Community Members (e.g. Chiefs, Area Counsellor, Area Secretary, Police, Health Workers, etc.), Parent Representatives and Student Representatives.

**Strategic Goal 1: Access**

1.1 Standard 1 (Equitable Access to Schooling): School Committees address the barriers to education that children face to ensure that every child between 6 and 12 years old is enrolled in primary school regardless of gender, ability or background.

The Ministry of Education aims to enroll all children between 6 and 12 years old in primary education to ensure that these children will be able to reach their full potential in primary school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Progress Indicator</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The School Head has a list of all enrolled children from 6-12 year old and the School Head has a list with all 6-12 year old out-of-school children living in the school catchment area and the School Head identifies the reasons why these children do not go to school.</td>
<td>Interviewing the School Head, School Committee Members and Students as well as analysing the list of enrolled students, list of out-of-school children and students' attendance register.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The School Head has a list of all enrolled children from 6-12 year old and the School Head has a list with all 6-12 year old out-of-school children living in the school catchment area and the School Head identifies the reasons why these children do not go to school.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The School Head has a list of all enrolled children from 6-12 year old and the School Head has a list with all 6-12 year old out-of-school children living in the school catchment area.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The School Head has a list of all enrolled children from 6-12 year old.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Out-of-school Children: Children who are not enrolled in primary school or children who are enrolled, but absent more than one day per week.

School Catchment Area: The geographic area where the children live who are able to access school every day.

School Committee: Local stakeholders (both males and females) in education including: School Head, Teacher Representatives, Important Community Members (e.g. Chiefs, Area Counsellor, Area Secretary, Police, Health Workers, etc.), Parent Representatives and Student Representatives.

1.2 Standard 2 (Equitable Access to Schooling): All teachers identify students with special needs and take appropriate action to ensure their presence and active participation in class.

The Ministry of Education has adopted an Inclusive Education (IE) Policy which aims to enroll all children with special needs and to provide individual support to these children during lesson time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>All teachers have identified students with special needs in close collaboration with health workers and all teachers liaise with parents/caregivers to ensure school attendance of these students and all teachers adapt their teaching and learning as well as their classroom environment to ensure full participation in class.</td>
<td>Analysing the Student Medical Files (SMFs), Student Academic Files (SAFs) and attendance records of all students with special needs as well as observing lessons and the classroom environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>All teachers have identified students with special needs in close collaboration with health workers and all teachers liaise with parents and caregivers to ensure school attendance of these students and all teachers adapt their teaching and learning as well as their classroom environment to ensure full participation in class.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>All teachers have identified students with special needs in close collaboration with health workers and teachers liaise with parents and caregivers to ensure the presence of these students.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>All teachers have identified all students with special needs in close collaboration with health workers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students with Special Needs: Students with disabilities such as visual and audio impairment, physically and mentally challenged, etc. This group of students also includes slow learners, intellectuals and gifted students as well as students that are victims of abuse, domestic violence and other problems that prevent them from attending classes.

Out-of-school Activities: Activities that are not part of the national curriculum such as sports, gardening, work party, etc.

Student Medical Files: The School Head maintains a file for each student with their health records including information on their height and weight, vaccinations, medical condition, etc.

Health Workers: Nurses working in an Aid Post, Dispensary, Health Centre or Hospital as well as Health Officers from the Provincial Rural or Health Departments.