

Appendix 2

The Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu Institutional Strengthening Strategy

Section 1:

Strengths of the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu:

The size and network of the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu is one of its great strengths. It reaches across the whole of Vanuatu. Its size and network means that when the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu speaks on national issues the government listens. The Presbyterian Church is the largest church in Vanuatu with 31% of the population. Another strength is that it is indigenously led.

The Presbyterian Church recognises that the organisation has weaknesses – in other words there is an attitude within the Presbyterian Church of acknowledging and confronting issues that need to be addressed.

The structure of the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu is based on grass roots participation. Authority ultimately comes from the grass roots, through its various elected bodies.

Within the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu there is a culture of openness and transparency which flows out of an organisational structure based on accountability. There is an internal system of review.

The Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu has a strong involvement in ecumenical activities.

The Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu has a strong prophetic voice on issues of injustice and corruption.

The Youth Ministry of the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu is very strong.

The Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu is trying to build its overseas network as a way of opening up more opportunities for service.

The Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu seeks to employ professionally trained and experienced people.

The Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu continues to plant new churches, especially on Tanna and Malakula, with an emphasis on health and education – with a focus on literacy programs.

Weaknesses facing the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu:

There is a lack of women involved in the national leadership of the church.

There is not enough finance from its own resources to fund its own programs and this results in a loss of members who move to more wealthy churches.

Not all sections of the Presbyterian Church support and encourage young people.

The relatively low salary offered to staff can be a barrier to the employment of professionally trained and experienced people.

The lack of current statistical data on many of the activities of the church is acknowledged as a weakness in the decision making process. It is difficult to make good decisions when you do not know what has happened as a result of previous decisions.

Opportunities facing the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu

There are increased opportunities for theological education of one kind or another for everyone within the church.

While financial resources are below what is needed there is growth in financial support.

An opportunity exists for the Presbyterian Church to be involved in the increase in food production for export. The church has a lot of land which could be used for food production.

Challenges facing the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu

How to address the population shift (including church members) from rural areas to the city and all the associated problems.

The impact of the dramatic increase in the cost of living – the cost of rice has increased 4 or 5 times over the past 12 months.

The rise of religious 'sects'

The impact of globalisation.

The failure of leaders to exercise personal discipline

A society that increasingly sees cultural values as being equal to Christian values. For example a society where custom marriage is as good as Christian marriage.

Challenges facing the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu (Continued)

The rise of HIV/AIDS

The increasing number of young people dropping out of the education system.

The incidence of domestic violence

Unemployment especially in the rural areas

Rural poverty

Increasing use of drugs

Decline in the quality of the health service

The inability of the government to provide basic services away from the major cities and towns.

Section 2

A set of key priorities for institutional strengthening will be identified in general terms

Education/awareness

The first priority is the need for a comprehensive and ongoing education/awareness program addressing the weaknesses, opportunities and challenges facing the organisation and the nation.

The 5 day conference planned for later in 2009 has as its aim to increase the awareness of the Presbyterian Church in Vanuatu to the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges the organization faces with specific reference to national social issues including HIV/AIDS, education, domestic violence, unemployment, rural poverty, drugs, health and interaction with the government.

The appointment of a full time staff person to undertake HIV/AIDS awareness also fits into this first priority.

Training

Flowing on from education/awareness there needs to be training at all levels of the organisation and especially at its grass roots.

Examples of training would be training of counsellors for social issues with women specifically targeted.

Training in community participation and consultation. Needs assessment training. Training in financial management and governance.

For awareness to lead to action and change people need to be trained. Institutional strengthening will not take place by continuing to do the same things in the same way.

An identified strength of the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu is its size and network across the whole nation. Its strength is its grass roots. A key priority is to train existing staff and leadership and to train the grass roots of the church to be part of the movement for change.

Expansion in the quantity and quality of service delivery.

The institution will be strengthened as it expands the quantity and quality of its service delivery.

It is anticipated that former church schools will be handed back to the church if this happens there will be the need to expand the capacity of the church to manage and develop an increased quality education system.

Basic health care is not reaching the remote village community and the PCV sees this as a challenge they need to address

Meeting the development needs of the community will strengthen the organisation – the more the organisation becomes involved in the life of a community the stronger it will become.

Section 3

A method for reviewing how change is occurring in the organisation using internal participatory methods.

While the Presbyterian Church already has a structure to allow for the reviewing of how change is occurring there needs to be training and mentoring to ensure that the existing review structure provides for broad community consultation and that the voice of marginalised groups are heard.

.