

VANUATU CHURCH PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

ANNUAL REPORT

2009 - 2010

I. Background and Purpose of the Report

This is the first annual report for the Vanuatu Church Partnership Program. This program funded for three years began in August 2009 after an eighteen month period of baseline research and consultation with VCPP churches, ANGOs and the government of Vanuatu. The goal of the program is: to contribute to a healthy, educated and wealthy Vanuatu, recognizing traditional Melanesian values, faith in God and Christian principles and the objective is for: The Vanuatu Christian Council and six churches in Vanuatu, individually and collectively, to play an increasingly recognised and effective role in improving governance and service delivery at national and local levels.

The program is a partnership between AusAID, the Government of Vanuatu and the churches in Vanuatu with their Australian NGO counterparts. It has been built on the highly successful support provided to Vanuatu's Council of Chiefs and AusAID's experience in the PNG Church Partnership Program. A total budget of \$3.65 million has been currently set aside for the first phase (until June 2012). Each of the Vanuatu churches is partnered by an Australian NGO. Strategic direction and leadership is provided by a Governing Council, comprising representatives from all parties (including AusAID, the GoV, the churches, ANGOs and the VCC). A Secretariat based within the VCC has been established to strengthen existing institutional structures, with a full time Program Coordinator appointed. A Monitoring and Evaluation Officer will soon also be recruited.

The VCC and each of the six churches submitted an annual activity plan and budget at the start of the financial year and have reported through a six month and an annual report. This document reports on the early progress against the programs overall objectives. It should be noted that because the funding was allocated late into the financial year churches and the VCC have not been able to complete all the activities they had included in their annual plans. These activities will be moved over to the 2010-11 annual plan.

2. Outputs

The program has four major areas of assistance:

1. Strengthening governance, management and operations of the Vanuatu Christian Council.
2. Institutional strengthening of individual churches in Vanuatu.
3. Resourcing and support for Churches in Vanuatu to expand and improve development initiatives.
4. Common activities implemented by churches collaboratively.

Progress towards these outputs is explained in the following tables 1-5. Because it is in its first year the VCPP does not have an over arching common program strategy so key themes coming from each area will be identified. In this first year the fourth output area has not been activated. The late arrival of funds meant that each church was unable to carry out the activities they had included in their annual plans let alone begin collaborative projects. However the meeting of the Governing Council in September 2010 will discuss how to progress area four.

3. Bench marking

To get a picture of strengths and weaknesses baseline research was undertaken by all churches in April 2008 before finalising the program design. The research was participatory with churches responsible for their own research under agreed guidelines. The aim was to provide a starting point for the new CPP. It also served as a record of the current state of each of the churches in order to assess change during the program. Finally it provided information for the churches to help them find ways to improve and further develop their institutions and services. The following table summarises key themes across the churches that came from that research. The baseline study also identifies strategies for each denomination.

Themes	Comment
Structure	<p>Each churches structure is different so each needs a plan of internal development that best suits them. Common problems are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breakdown in communication and information flow from top to bottom levels of the structure • An inability to have the right people with the right skills in the right positions within the structure • Particular weaknesses such as lack of skills in finance and management. • Transport and communication difficulties across multiple locations in Vanuatu.
Church capacity	<p>Several strengths that were commonly found were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good management at many levels of the churches' systems • Good human resources overall. People are committed, dedicated, willing to work for their church and the wider community. • The churches have assets, including natural assets: land, tress and the sea, and other material assets such as buildings. • The churches have a sense of unity within and between them based on their shared Christian values. <p>Common weaknesses were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient training for people in their roles and insufficient resources to enable them to do their job. • It is hard to keep people within positions. There are regular movement of people in church related positions. • There is little review of church work and limited strategic planning • There is not enough reporting from the grassroots in churches upwards to the national level. • There is not enough utilisation or trust of youth leaders and school leaders. • There is political interference in various locations, congregations being aligned to political/other divisions within a community. <p>Implications for the new CPP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Churches should seek to provide training in key areas (finance, planning, management and review) to build skills within the churches and ensure that the people with the right skills are retained in the right positions. • People will need small equipment (office equipment, program resources) so they can do their job

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More training and support is required to develop the leadership within churches, including young people and women • Communication (grassroots to national levels and back) is important to enable churches to develop their advocacy skills and promote internal debate on public policy issues.
Relationship with National Government and Chiefs	<p>For most churches the relationship between the denominations and chiefs was strong at community level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At National level the relationship was recognised by both parties but could be more formalised and strengthened. Both groups could learn how to act together for shared areas of concern and public policy debate. • The relationship with National Government was far weaker and more challenging. While churches identified strengths they could offer the Government, there was a number of existing problems (communication breakdown between churches and government, little opportunity for engagement in national policy development and the VCC is weak and unsupported by Government so therefore unable to play this role). • Need to strengthen the VCC role and to create opportunities for church and Government communication and engagement.
Church collaboration with each other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of collaboration is a key limitation in having the churches being able to work together in public policy development and in development of services and demand for standards in service delivery. • Promoting opportunities and incentive for church collaboration will be a key both at National and grassroots levels.
Participation of Women	<p>The research showed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women have broad participation being involved in local congregations. They have wide ranging skills which are essential for management of church life and are considered honest and reliable workers. • Women are still largely dominated by men in the church. They are overlooked in training, don't participate in decision making and have limited roles in church meetings. Partly this is because women have high illiteracy levels, are often over committed, often have no proper base from which to organise. Further, the national women's organisations do not always visit. • They are unsupported and unable to realise their full potential. Further, issues of concern, (e.g. domestic violence, sexual violence) are often not on church agendas because women have trouble raising these issues in congregations or national level. • Women need training in leadership and management and encouragement by the church to participate. They need a base and facilities from which to organise, both within the VCC, within denominations and local churches. A focus on women's capacity and resources for organising would enable them to play a stronger role.
Participation of young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people are not given enough recognition, support and encouragement in the church. They are not included in training and have limited facilities and equipment from which to build their own base. • There appears to be a breakdown in communication between church leaders and youth leaders. This contributed to young people drifting to urban areas and to churches inability to address issues of development versus traditional ways of living. • The research suggested not enough was known about the needs and interests of young people and that more research was required. The new CPP might consider an action research approach, seeking to understand their needs and issues further.
Values and Beliefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All churches could discuss their values and beliefs around the provision of services and relationship to national government. • It is less clear that the values and beliefs which would encourage churches to engage in service delivery and public policy debate are as well understood across the grassroots of each denomination.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This requires attention in order to promote widespread support for church engagement and also to ensure grassroots participation in church collaboration with other churches and with Government.
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4. Program Objectives and Activities

TABLE I:

Program Wide			
CPP Outputs	Themes: key objectives	Indicators	Results
Output I: Strengthening Governance, Management & Operation of VCC			
	VCC to develop a three year strategic plan (2009-12)	Participation list: including numbers of women. A written and approved strategic plan.	For the first time in recent years the VCC is an active forum for its member churches. To ensure common direction representatives from each church took part in a participatory planning process that developed a mission statement, goals and objectives for the VCC program. It has created a living document that directs the operational work of the VCC secretariat. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The planning process helped the program to be more clearly understood, owned and increasingly guided by the members through the Executive Board. There is a consensual position on the vision for the Council's potential. The VCC Board approved the three year plan and has begun implementation.
	Strengthen governance of the VCC	Attendance records - including numbers of women A detailed summary of discussion was kept.	It is recognised that the Council will only function well if its governance is strong <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A 1 week training in governance occurred with representatives from each church This training allowed discussion of structure, meaning and intent and gave greater clarity around the governance role and responsibilities of VCC representatives
	Management : Improved capacity of office staff and project managers	Training curriculum kept, Participation records, Asset records, Regular financial statements	For the first time the VCC has an office base and employed trained staff. There has been: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment of staff, including women's and youth project workers and finance officer, establishment of office Financial records bought up to date and officer trained in MYOB

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase of computers and printer equipment & furniture • Training of staff in computer use • Administrative procedures developed • Subcommittees to oversee finance and development of land and youth hostel have been or are in the process of being established • NCCA mentoring for finance officer • Training officer still to be appointed
	Increased public awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More obvious VCC signage • Confident to discuss financial sustainability with government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions ongoing regarding new logo • In principal agreement by Govt of budgetary support for VCC in national budget • National women's forum held with support from French embassy • Planning in process for awareness program with member churches on role of VCC • Developing strategic plan for youth across churches
	Increased participation in VCC by each church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minutes of meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Churches mentioned that they were now able to be more active members in the VCC. Not only was VCC stronger and more effective but those representatives living out of Port Vila were able to attend meetings because they had the resources to do so.

TABLE 2:

Output 2: Institutional strengthening for churches			
	Establishment of development offices, recruitment & training of staff, purchase of technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New offices built or rented • Staff contracts • Orientation programs recorded • Assets records 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All churches established or refurbished existing offices for developmental work • Six of the seven purchased new technology for offices especially computers, printers, internet link and office furniture so significantly strengthening working capacity and communication links to members around the country • All recruited a co-ordinator and some recruited community development workers or project officers. Some churches recruited not only centrally and also aimed to strengthen community level work by appointing project/co-ordinators down into the provinces • All carried out orientation and training programs including two churches visiting PNG CPP and others preparing to do so. • A number found it difficult to recruit trained and experienced staff, especially finance workers but were eventually successful although in a number of cases they have had to build in ongoing in house training and mentoring.
	Integrating a planning framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ordinating committees' TOR / Policy • Records of national and strategic meetings • Written mission statements and strategic plans • Work plans being carried out 	<p>All churches created or strengthened existing committees/councils to oversee their development work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five of the seven engaged in a planning process begun from the most senior level to set direction for the three years. They used either existing structures such as national meetings or strategic planning events to build consensus around vision and direction for the life of the program • Strategies to strengthen co-ordination within their structures have been important. For example churches reported that developing CPP goals and projects encouraged other departments to become involved in discussing priorities while other churches indicated that they could now visit and support development projects in more remote communities because they had travel budgets • Some churches mentioned a flow on effect with the central strategic planning for CPP encouraging other church services, especially schools to also adopt a planning framework

	Strengthening governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good governance training participation lists • Participant evaluation of training • HR policies begun to be developed • Written employment contracts • Electronic pay systems in place 	<p>All churches began addressing how to strengthen governance using training and HR strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many ran good governance training for committees overseeing the program and others for national and regional bodies • Many have started to focus on how to also strengthen school boards, clinic committees and women and youth groups. • The program has brought new energy and increased morale for existing and new developmental staff. • A fresh review of work practices and the introduction of new skills have allowed HR needs to be prioritised, especially in larger organisations. New HR policies are being written for some offices • A key outcome is that in some churches staff have a much better understanding of their roles • Staff development strategies are being included so that staff are skilled enough to competently carry out these new roles • Electronic pay systems with access to pay history are new for some churches
	Strengthening financial management and administrative capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment contracts for finance officers • Annual activity plan and budget's completed • Regular financial statements • Improved income and cost recovery from a range of sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four churches and VCC appointed new finance officers (one being part funded through CPP) and others extended the role of existing skilled finance workers • All offered in house training to their finance staff although the funding for this did not always come from CPP • Many carried out training for key staff in computer word and Excel programs to extend their computer literacy • Staff were able to put these skills into practice by developing the annual activity plan and budget. • A number took training to a broader group than their own office staff. Two trained regional treasurers and secretaries and others included various women's and youth groups and participants. One church reported that Church accounts are being progressively audited in all provinces for the first time.
	Resourcing broader community development activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing development of community development projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new resources have begun to positively impact on broader developmental work. • In addition to Output 3 programs, CPP staff were able to support programs funded from different sources to CPP. For example COM supported mother's union literacy projects and climate change adaption and water projects. • A number of churches have sought to strengthen knowledge around specific social issues as part of planning ongoing strategies – for example at a 5 day conference PCV focused on areas such as HIV/AIDS, education, domestic violence and health and a CCCV staff member was involved in Pacific Conference of Churches training in human rights, good governance, leadership and climate change. • The PCV has begun training to carry out a national survey of its church members
	Capacity building around Resourcing and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M and E process begun to be integrated into each 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is growing recognition that there is limited understanding of how to monitor the efficiency and effectiveness of activities and that M & E training is a priority

	Monitoring and Evaluation	output area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some churches are building M and E processes but most are looking to the VCPP appointed M and E worker to offer assistance in this area.
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TABLE 3

Output 3: Development Initiatives of the six churches			
			The funding for the program was late in arriving and so churches did not have time to carry out all that was included in their activity plans. Never the less, given that this was the first time for them to manage quite complex programs they did an excellent job of carrying out most of their work.
	Establishing good development processes for ongoing activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Written project designs Clearly written application process Transparency of assessment for funding Integration of M and E strategies 	<p>Because this is a new program, a number of churches have used this output funding to start setting in place good development practice.</p> <p>In particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring that church CPP committees have a strong orientation to their roles and responsibilities, participate in designing how projects will be rolled out, including design of applications in Bislama and English and broadly informing communities of their right to apply COM, CCCV Support and training to church bodies and communities to research, write and design projects and develop grant writing skills COM, ADRA. Exposure to the PNG program through an exchange ADRA & PCV
	Strengthening existing health work and planning to create new services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Village level programs being rolled out, Training manuals and participation lists available Building completed 	<p>All churches are strengthening existing health services or are in the process of planning health initiatives. These range from</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthening the skills of health workers (PCV have updated their curriculum in HIV AID's, Breast Cancer and cervical Cancer for the Health Worker Training program) Training of health workers; (ADRA has trained 13 lay health presenters, PCV has trained 13 bush health workers and ACV ran training for 33 community health workers), ADRA have engaged communities to do their own health assessments, awareness raising and planning and developed of health brochures in Bislama PCV has also employed a HIV AIDs worker who has begun presentations , COM has assisted existing workers in HIV training in a community, ADRA has begun planning mainstreaming HIV AID's planning in the church through a joint activity proposal with other VCPP partners Improving clinics (AOG is refurbishing a health outpost to a full clinic) and CCCV are negotiating with a consultant to review their current medical programs

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PCV have researched the feasibility of a dentistry program with the introduction of a new dental methodology being trained to two health graduates, • COM has assisted communities with the development of two existing water projects and a climate change impact assessment
	Strengthening education services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outlines of training and participation lists • Written curriculum • Participant evaluation of training 	<p>Education is a high priority area for the churches and a number have begun projects or have started planning projects in this area. In particular they have focused on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ADRA and SDA invited COM to join them for a management and leadership training especially for school principals, • Strengthening community health awareness teaching in schools (ACV) • AOG are completing a school building, 3 rooms funded by VCPP and 2 by the community • Support of two women's managed literacy programs (COM) • Assistance with the completion of a kindergarten project COM
	Management and Leadership Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outlines of training and participation lists • Participant evaluation of training 	<p>Management and leadership training was held by a number of churches and frequently integrated into other issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two trainings: one for the national management team and the other for participants from island conventions in management, governance and leadership (CCCV) • Development of policy, constitution and use of MOU's with partners (CCCV) • Leadership and small enterprise training for women leaders (PCV) • Leadership training for principals and heads of department (mentioned above ADRA) • Land registration training and awareness raising started (PCV) • Support of a youth convention and of a training in leadership (COM) • Training of parish secretaries and treasurers in their roles (COM)

TABLE 4

Cross Cutting Issues			
Gender and Youth	Employment of female staff in program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff lists looked at by gender 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five churches and VCC appointed female staff to central VCPP program roles as co-ordinators, project officers and finance officers
	Projects specifically for women and youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports on projects • Participant feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least half the churches ran gender specific programs with other churches planning to do so in the next 12 months
	Targeted participation of women and youth in activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant attendance lists by gender • Participant feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This area is always difficult in Melanesian culture. Frequently project planners over estimate their capacity to get equal numbers of men, women and youth. • Where senior decision makers are meeting it is impossible to get equal numbers of women as they frequently do not carry these roles. However intentional planning

	Encouraging women's voices in all projects		<p>and preparation can have impact. This year the PCV national conference had 20 women and 6 youth attending.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As one church commented even though opportunities are provided for women to participate they may not feel comfortable in doing so because they lack confidence. So strategies both to look at how women can be represented on church structures and to encourage women to have a voice and feel strong enough to take part are needed. Such strategies to encourage more equal attendance need to be discussed and shared with in the program.
HIV AID's			
	Appointment of HIV staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff position 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One church (PCV) has appointed a HIV AID's worker
	Integration of HIV AID's material into work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outlines of training and participation lists Written curriculum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of Bislama education materials including HIV AID's content HIV AID's included in the curriculum to train health workers, bush health workers and health presenters Beginning training in communities around HIV AID's information
Sustainability			
	Long term sustainability of programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building of management and leadership skills to ensure effective planning ahead Examples of alternative income strategies to sustain programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training of workers in finance management will assist in long term stable management Contracts will secure workers who are appointed and trained Grant writing, partnership and donor relationship skills are being developed by participation in the program VCC negotiating with Vanuatu Government for finances from national budget This topic is on the agenda for a number of national church conferences

TABLE 5

Successes of the Program	Effect on Project	Actions Taken
Successfully kick starting program after difficulties in finding trained staff and slow arrival of funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slowness of recruitment and funding dampened initial momentum and undermined trust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial slow start has been replaced by enthusiasm to start developing the program
National & regional conferences were held to establish support for program and strategic planning was put in place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and ownership from the church Providing direction for the first three years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broad use of this strategy to get agreement to a strategic plan for the program. Challenge is to make this a living document that will be constantly reviewed and up graded
Majority of planned activities completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slow start was a risk factor Completion raised morale 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is the first time churches have taken on such a comprehensively funded program so there was much learning to be done. Churches used wisdom not to hurry but put the footings in for a long

		term successful program. They have completed significant work and will move unfinished projects to 2010-11
Training in finance and good governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opened peoples' eyes to what is needed • Building skill base 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All churches have given financial training to key staff and in some cases treasurers in provincial church structures and good governance training to a broad range of stakeholders. • HR practices starting to be implemented • Early signs of improved financial control in some settings
Creative partnerships to achieve new programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gives knowledge, resources and energy not normally accessible to local churches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health School curriculum, Eye Care project, PCV • Ongoing, Santo based Technical advice from volunteer COM • Building of relationship with PNG program to share learning ADRA, PCV • Informal relationships established between churches. E.g. COM education personnel being invited to join in the ADRA/SDA run leadership & governance training for school principals • Partnership with Government: ACV arranged for Government department to run health training
Provision of community resources and services through beginning the development of new programs and existing ones better supported	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A lot of learning about how you start a new project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every church has resources available to start new programs • Different strategies are being used including training and awareness raising, service delivery, community development and advocacy
VCC being taken more seriously by government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building confidence and profile 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VCC able to negotiate more forcefully with Government about support for future role

TABLE 6

Lessons learnt	
The churches are not always familiar with community development approaches	VCCPP needs to explore strategies within churches and across churches so that they can more fully understand what is meant by community development and how it might be used
Even when encouraged women are reluctant to step out of traditional roles in deference to men	Gender strategy needed where male leaders affirm women's voice and women leaders' model and mentor other women.
Outer island communication difficulties, low level of literacy, unpredictable weather & transport difficulties effect programs	A range of strategies need to be used including: planning ahead, using more than one form of communication, having back up strategies, spending plenty of time in explaining what's happening, and being flexible.
Importance of developing strong partnership relationships	A concerted effort is needed on all sides of the partnership to respect and learn from each other.
Program Monitoring and Evaluation	These are new ideas for many churches. However increasingly they recognise that churches have to be able to answer the question: Is this good work? Are we making an improvement in our people's lives? The CPP Monitoring and Evaluation worker is needed to assist all churches to build an understanding of how they can answer these questions.
Establishing clear leadership and purpose	Where churches are inexperienced in managing a large donor funded program there is the potential for confusion and much early learning around the level of commitment, transparency of actions and broad participation.
Preparation of work plans	Writing work plans takes skill: inexperienced teams need hands-on support in the preparation phase to define clear and achievable activity plans. More inclusive and participatory planning processes must be developed.

TABLE 7**Secretarial Function**

Key Themes	Indicators	Results
Establishment of Office	Functioning office acting as a base for the program asset records	An office has been established within VCC building. This has involved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refurbishment, connection of internet, phone, purchase of furniture and air conditioner • Set up financial system including opening accounts. Establishing funds transfer • Building relationship with VCC and staff
Orientation to Role of Secretariat	Contracts, position descriptions, work plans completed and tabled at PG and GC meetings Records of Six monthly meeting cycle	Completion of core tasks to establish role of secretariat, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalisation of secretarial job description and contract • Writing of work plan • Establishing and servicing cycle of meetings: e.g. co-ordinators meeting, six monthly meetings
Awareness Raising of Program	Launch event, minutes of meetings, financial records	Telling church people, government, leaders, community about VCPP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch of program held • Secretarial visit to three churches in Santo • Visit to PCV Assembly in Malekula
Building Relationships	Representation on GC, attendance at Partnership Group, Minutes of meetings with AusAID Sharing of emails, documents between VCPP and ANGO	Building relationships with broad ranging groups so they are aware of the program using strategy of meetings, email contact, attending gatherings and decision making forums. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner churches and VCC • Program personnel, especially co-ordinators • Government, Chiefs and Women • ANGO and AusAID
Getting VCPP Programs underway	Contracts and TOR drafted	Groundwork for Area 4 and M and E started with recognition that there is some urgency to complete these areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint Activities: Collating 21 proposals, identifying difficulties and recommending way ahead • Drafting of policy around running of events for PG and GC consideration • Overseeing writing contract , job description and orientation for M and E Capacity Building Support Coordinator • TOR for M and E specialist drafted • Strong support to VCC especially around financial and staff management