Evaluation Report:

STRENGTHENING EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION (SECCE)

SEPTEMBER 2016

Jenny James, Team Leader

Ufemia Camaitoga, Independent ECCE Specialist

Barbara Thornton, Lead Consultant

Jeffrey Tari, MoET M&E Specialist

Alan Swan, M&E Specialist

Minnie Takaro, MFAT

Belynda McNaughton, DFAT

Serah Vurobaravu, MoET

Christelle Thieffry, DFAT

Contents

Annexes

List of tables

List of figures

Aid Activity Summary

Aid Activity Name:	Strengthening Early Childhood Care and Education (SECCE)		
Aid Works initiative number:			
Commencement Date:	January 2014	**Proposed Completion Date:**	January 2017
Purpose of Report:	Final report		
Total Australian and New Zealand Commitment:	VUV 127,973,996 (Approximately AUD1.4m) from VESP funds		
Delivery Organisation:	World Vision Vanuatu		
Country:	Vanuatu		
Primary Sector:	Education		

Acknowledgments

Acronyms

CC	Community Coordinator
DFA	Direct Funding Agreement
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia)
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
FBT	Field-Based Training
GER	Gross Enrolment Ratio
GoV	Government of Vanuatu
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MFAT	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (New Zealand)
MoET	Ministry of Education and Training (Vanuatu)
NER	Net Enrolment Ratio
PC	Provincial Coordinator
PEO	Provincial Education Officer
SECCE	Strengthening Early Childhood Care and Education
ToR	Terms of Reference
VESP	Vanuatu Education Support Program
WV	World Vision
WVV	World Vision Vanuatu

Executive Summary

The Government of Vanuatu recognises education as a priority sector, and within this, the importance of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE). The government established a national ECCE policy and new curriculum, with support from its development partners – UNICEF, the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs (DFAT) and the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT). It put in place National and Provincial ECCE Coordinators and published a National ECCE Framework to set out standards and guide development. However, in 2012, only 60% of children were attending Kindergarten ('Kindy' in Bislama). Of these children, 70% were over-age when they enrolled and, therefore, over-age when enrolling at Primary level. The quality of instruction in many Kindergartens was poor, and contrary to Government of Vanuatu policy, there was little provision for children with disabilities.

Realising the need for a greater emphasis on early years learning, the Government of Vanuatu (GoV) and its development partners agreed in 2012 to a five-year program: the Vanuatu Education Support Program (VESP). This program was tendered out to a managing contractor (Coffey). While ECCE was one of five components of VESP, its funding was not channelled through the managing contractor. Rather, DFAT and MFAT provided the funds to the Vanuatu Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) through a Direct Financing Agreement (DFA). MoET contracted an implementing partner (World Vision) to implement a pilot program, entitled Strengthening Early Childhood Care and Education (SECCE). This did not happen until January 2014.

In addition to the pilot, MoET is providing training nationally in the roll-out of the new ECCE curriculum and is providing basic supplies of materials. It is also undertaking research and strengthening public/community awareness of the importance of ECCE. SECCE, as part of the design, was to also provide minor support to some of these national activities, particularly in relation to teacher training for the new curriculum, as well as procurement and distribution of materials.

SECCE Program Outcomes

The original SECCE design had four Program Outcomes. The first three relate to the pilot: (1) improved quality of ECCE in pilot communities; (2) increased support for ECCE in pilot communities; and (3) innovations to improve cost-effectiveness piloted and evaluated. The fourth outcome, reflecting SECCE's minor support to the national MoET program, was: (4) strengthened MoET support to the national delivery of ECCE. This fourth outcome is MoET's responsibility.

The pilot has been operating in the following provinces: Torba, Malampa and Shefa (in particular, Efate Island). The overall budget for three years is VUV 127,973,996 (approximately AUD 1.4 million[1]). The contract with World Vision finishes on 30 January 2017. SECCE is a three-year program running from January 2014 to January 2017. A possibility for a two-year extension is mentioned in the scope of services..

Under Outcome 1, World Vision Vanuatu (WVV) worked closely with teachers to improve quality. As well as traditional training, WVV employed SECCE Coordinators – experienced early childhood teachers who provided follow-up and mentoring to teachers in their schools. WVV also supported activities related to

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[1] This does not include the cost of Component 4 which is VUV 22,006,004 (approximately AUD 287,000)

school readiness. These activities included: meetings between Kindy teachers and Class 1 teachers; joint activities between children in Kindy and Class 1; and developing a Class 1 readiness test.

Under Outcome 2, WVV employed Community Coordinators (CCs) to raise awareness of the importance of early childhood education in the target communities and assist parents in their own parenting skills. This was done in a number of ways including using "Family Conversations" (Family Toktok): a package of targeted discussions about issues related to good early childhood care and education in the home. WVV also supported the establishment of Kindy Committees and trained them in their key roles. WVV also put in place a system of "Champions": members of the community who acted in a voluntary role to assist with the smooth functioning of ECCE in the community.

Under Outcome 3, WVV explored alternative provision of ECCE, as well as partnerships to further ECCE access and quality.

Program Evaluation

As required under the original design and contract, an evaluation of the program was to take place towards the end of the program period. The key objective of the evaluation according to the scope of services was to "identify lessons from the pilot that can inform and improve the cost-effectiveness of subsequent government support to kindergartens on a national scale." (p.39) This evaluation took place in August and September 2016, with questions organised under four key categories.

1. Relevance: To what extent is the program relevant to the Vanuatu education context?
2. Effectiveness: To what extent has the program contributed to the improvement of early childhood education delivery in the targeted communities?
3. Efficiency: Has implementation of the program made effective use of time and resources to achieve the outcomes?
4. Sustainability: Are identified program benefits sustainable beyond the period of the program?

Data collection consisted of document analysis, structured interviews, focus group discussions and observations. Interviews were held with 33 Kindy teachers, 19 Class 1 teachers and 7 champions. A total of 36[2] focus groups were held with communities. Key Ministry and World Vision officials were also interviewed both centrally and in the field. The preliminary findings were presented to WVV and MoET.

The relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the program were evaluated against the DFAT Aid Quality Check Descriptors which rank the various aspects of a program, as shown in the table below. This was done during a meeting of the entire evaluation team which took place shortly after return from the field visit. A draft of this report was circulated to the entire team and their comments incorporated.

	Satisfactory		Less than satisfactory
6	Very good; achieved or exceeded objectives and outcomes	3	Less than adequate; outputs delivered but less than satisfactory progress towards outcomes
5	Good; major objectives achieved and substantial progress towards achieving outcomes	2	Poor; although there is some evidence of progress, the investment did not achieve its objectives or outcomes
4	Adequate; some objectives achieved and measurable progress towards outcomes	1	Very poor; objectives and outcomes not achieved

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[2] The number is more than the number of communities as separate meetings were held with Ministry officials on a number of occasions.

Findings of the Evaluation

Relevance of the program was less than adequate with a lack of a shared vision of the key objectives of the program. There was also a lack of clarity related to the overall vision of MoET in terms of policy direction. However, a review of policy is now taking place with a five-year costed action plan, which will provide clarification in this area, so that both the Ministry and stakeholders are clear on future plans, strategies and actions. Two key lessons are the importance of government sharing its broader strategic goals with implementing partners and service providers and the importance of implementing partners making efforts to ensure that the program is constantly aligned with the government's strategic goals and sub-sector objectives.

Effectiveness of the program was good to adequate. There was a marked improvement of the quality of ECCE in the pilot communities (Outcome 1), which could be seen by the improvement in school readiness of children transiting to Grade 1 as well as in the resourcing of the Kindergartens.

There was also increased support for ECCE in pilot communities (Outcome 2), with community involvement a key success of the program. Parents understood the importance of Kindy and were able to articulate the practical ways in which they could help their children at home. The Family Conversations that were used as prompts by Community Coordinators to talk to communities about key aspects of parenting and supporting children worked extremely well. These represent some successes of the program which could be usefully taken over by MoET. The training of kindy committees was also a positive feature of the programme.

However, the aspect related to alternative provision in Outcome 3 was rated as poor. The scope of services mentioned support for home-based learning but the IP was expected to "seek to identify other possible innovations…with the potential to make ECCE cost-effective. Three "alternative Kindys" were implemented. However, these were so similar in approach to the regular Kindys that they could not really be viewed as alternative. A higher level of technical input from an ECDE specialist advisor could have generated more and more innovative options.

A lesson for both World Vision and MoET is to ensure that any future implementing partner is strong in the technical area of early childhood education, as well as having capacity in community mobilisation and strong administrative skills.

Efficiency of the program was inadequate largely due to the very slow start, the changeover of staff and the initial lack of a functioning Monitoring and Evaluation Officer.[3] The lack of expertise in ECCE was also a drawback to this aspect of the program. A lesson learned for MoET is the importance of ensuring that the program is seen as a MoET program, rather than a World Vision project. Criteria stipulating branding should have been agreed at the initial stages so that key documentation did not go out to schools and communities bearing only the World Vision logo. The team recognises that if a mid-term evaluation had been conducted, some of these issues may have been noted and addressed earlier.

Sustainability of the program was mixed. Community involvement was particularly good and school readiness had improved. However, although teamwork was viewed as essential to the SECCE programme, some of the World Vision field staff were working in isolation from the Provincial Education Officers and

Provincial Coordinators[4]. Given this,, the lack of any exit plan is worrying. Likewise in terms of sustainability, MoET senior management needs to take action to make sure that the good work done by WV is sustained.

A common thread in the responses from participants was "MoET leaders seem to value ECCE with their words but not with their actions". As a priority, MoET will need to ensure that the ECCE Unit is fully staffed and that Provincial Coordinators are given the means to travel to carry out their roles.

Key recommendations based on these findings are provided below. Minor detailed recommendations are contained in the main body of this report.

Key Recommendations

1. Urgent decision needed on contract extension –The Senior MoET management needs to take an urgent decision on whether to extend the contract of World Vision Vanuatu and, if so, for how long, giving careful thought to ensure any gains made under the program are not lost. It is recommended that this period is viewed as a transition period allowing WVV to gradually reduce its activities and hand over key aspects of the program to MoET.. If MoET decides not to extend the contract, the transition period should begin immediately.

2. Urgent Commitment from MoET to the ECCE sub-sector – Key considerations are that it will not be possible to smoothly transition between WVV's exit and a new program funded through MoET. For this to happen, MoET would need to have a well-crafted five-year costed implementation plan and be able to make a case to development partners for parts of this plan to be funded. Development partners would need time to ensure that any new funding is in the pipeline in time for the program to begin. Development partners have indicated that it would be a year from now before money for a new program for SECCE could be channelled directly through MoET. To ensure the money flows in a timely manner, MoET would need to ensure that there is a visible commitment to the sub-sector in the form of funding of key positions and ensuring that ECCE staff in the provinces are adequately resourced to carry out visits to continue the good work done by WVV during the program.

Further Recommendations to mid-2017

1. It is recommended that if a decision is taken to extend the World Vision contract, any contract extension, MoET clearly specifies governance arrangements and ensures the responsibilities of all parties are clearly spelled out for the remainder of the program.

2. It is recommended that an exit / transition strategy is developed by MoET in consultation with World Vision as soon as possible in order to ensure that kindys from the pilot programme feel secure and that the very positive aspects mentioned under the Effectiveness Section of this report are sustained. Such a strategy should include:

- plans for capacity building and transfer of skills to Provincial Coordinators
- plans for handover of training in the use of the tools developed and/or implemented during the SECCE pilot (Family Toktok, Kindy Committee Training and the Class 1 Readiness Assessment tool)

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[4] In their comments on this report, World Vision have stated that they were not required to build capacity at provincial level within the Ministry. The scope of work only requires close working relationships

- plans for the final visits to Kindys and communities and the messages to be given – these messages should include emphasising to schools and communities the continued importance of the role they have to play to ensure that Kindys will continue to function.

3. It is recommended that the formal weekly meetings between MoET and World Vision are discontinued and replaced with monthly meetings, supplemented by more frequent meetings as and when required.

4. It is recommended that MoET completes its review of the ECCE policy and drafts a five-year costed implementation plan as soon as feasible. It is recommended that the plan includes an investigation of alternative low-cost ECCE provision as intended in the original design.

5. It is strongly recommended that, to ensure that gains made under the program are sustained and that MoET is in a position to manage its own ECCE program, MoET:

- secures funds to ensure that Provincial Coordinators can take over the role previously carried out by SECCE Coordinators
- fills the two vacant positions in the ECCE Unit.

Medium-Term Recommendations (2017- 2018)

It is recommended that in any follow-up program, alternative low-cost ECCE provision is investigated and piloted as intended by the original design. Such alternative provision could include community mobilisation through women's church groups, home-based playgroups and alternative Kindys. This was an aspect of the programme which was contained in the original contract but was not implemented as envisioned by the MoET.

It is also recommended that VESP provide an ECCE Specialist to work with MoET's ECCE Unit, to give short-term support when needed.

Further medium term and longer term recommendations need to be drafted in the context of the 5-year costed action plan which is due for completion in early 2017.

Other Points to Note

1. The financial, human and cost implications highlighted by this report have been provided in two separate papers directly to the Ministry who will forward to donor partners.
2. Individuals have not always been allocated responsibility for action because of recent and potentially imminent changes in staffing

1.   Introduction and Context

The Government of Vanuatu (GoV) recognises education as a priority sector, and within this, the importance of ECCE. The GoV established a national ECCE policy and new curriculum, with support from its development partners – UNICEF, the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs (DFAT) and the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT). It put in place National and Provincial ECCE Coordinators and published a National ECCE Framework to set out standards and guide development. However, in 2012, only 60% of children were attending Kindergarten ('Kindy' in Bislama) and, of these, 70% were over-age when they enrolled and, therefore, over-age when enrolling at Primary level. The quality of instruction in many Kindergartens was poor, and contrary to GoV policy, there was little provision for children with disabilities.

Realising the need for a greater emphasis on early years learning, the GoV and its development partners agreed in 2012 to a five-year program focusing on the early years of education: the Vanuatu Education Support Program (VESP). This program was tendered out to a managing contractor (Coffey). While ECCE was one of five components of VESP, its funding was not channelled through the managing contractor. Instead, funding was provided by MFAT and DFAT to the MoET through a Direct Financing Agreement (DFA). To deliver on the ECCE component, MoET contracted an implementing partner (World Vision) to implement a pilot program, entitled Strengthening Early Childhood Care and Education (SECCE). The program started in January 2014.

In addition to the pilot, MoET is providing training nationally in the roll-out of the new curriculum and basic supplies of materials. It is also undertaking research and strengthening public/community awareness. As part of the overall program design, SECCE was to provide minor support to some of the national activities, particularly in relation to teacher training for the new curriculum, as well as procurement and distribution of materials.

1.1.   SECCE Program Design

The goal of the SECCE program is to increase the number of pre-school children that are ready for Primary school as a result of accessing quality ECCE learning. This feeds into the VESP Program Outcomes listed in the VESP design document. The original SECCE design had four Program Outcomes. The first three relate to the pilot: (1) improved quality of ECCE in pilot communities; (2) increased support for ECCE in pilot communities; and (3) innovations to improve cost-effectiveness piloted and evaluated. The fourth outcome, reflecting SECCE's minor support to the national MoET program, is: (4) strengthened MoET support to national delivery of ECCE. The fourth program outcome was MoET's responsibility, and responsibility for reporting was removed in the second iteration of the SECCE contract in April 2015.

The program was for three years duration, starting in 2014, with a possible two-year extension. The pilot has been operating in the following provinces: Torba, Malampa and Shefa (in particular, Efate Island).

The overall budget for three years is VUV 127,973,996 (or approximately AUD 1.4 million[5]). The current contract with World Vision finishes on 30 January 2017.

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[5] This does not include the cost of Component 4 which is VUV 22,006,004 (approximately AUD 287,000)

1.2.   Current Situation

Substantial gains have been made within the ECCE sub-sector with a 6% increase in attendance since 2012, and an increase of 2.3% between 2014 and 2015 (VEMIS 2015). The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for 3–5 year olds is now at 64.5% and the Net Enrolment Ratio (NER) is 42.7%. However, problems in ECCE still remain. These figures mean that only 64.5% of children are in Kindy.

As shown in Figure 1, a substantial number of children in Kindy are over age. Indeed, there are more 6 year olds in Kindy (3,217) in Vanuatu than in Grade 1 (2,315).

Figure 1: Number of children in Kindy by age
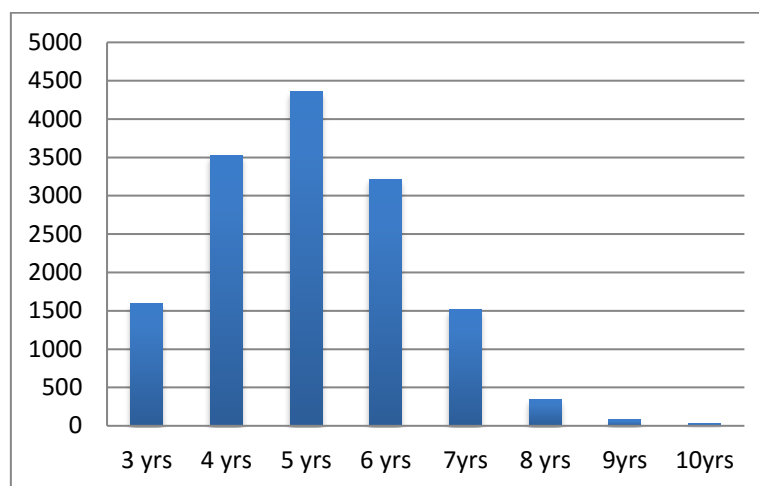
1.2.1.   Purpose and Role of Evaluation

As per the original design, a final evaluation of SECCE was to be conducted towards the end of the program. A mid-term review of the overall VESP program was also scheduled to take place in November 2016. Since SECCE is an integral part of VESP, the evaluation of Component 2 will be spread across this evaluation and the mid-term review in November. The purpose of this evaluation is threefold.

1) Program justification and progress:

- Assess progress to date of SECCE in achieving the program outcomes (Components 1 – 3) and the contribution of SECCE to the national ECCE program including MoET operational support, equipment and training workshops (Component 4)
- Assess MoET's progress towards the objectives of the national ECCE program.[6]

2) Program improvement:

- Review the program's current design and relevance to MoET needs and priorities
- Recommend strategies to improve the program's continued relevance, effectiveness and efficiency

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[6] Note: This aspect will be spread across this evaluation and the VESP mid-term review.

- Review current implementation arrangements and propose options for ways forward. This may include advice on whether the program should be re-tendered or not, its relationship with the other components of VESP and current use of GoV systems to administer the program.

3) Generation of knowledge:

- Identify aspects of the pilot program that have worked well and can be scaled up in the Vanuatu context, either by MoET or outsourced to implementing partners.

The focus of the evaluation has been deliberately kept to a manageable limit.

1.3.   Key Evaluation Questions

Key evaluation questions from the ToRs are given below, with the four higher-level questions in bold.

1.3.1.   Relevance

1. To what extent is the program relevant to the Vanuatu education context?

1.1.   Do they support achievement of the objectives of the VESP, Government of Vanuatu and development partners?

1.2.   Where revisions to the design have happened, are the new objectives, targets and achievements still in line with the initial vision and principles behind them?

1.3.   Are program activities consistent with attainment of (original/revised) objectives?

1.3.2.   Effectiveness

2.   a. To what extent has the program contributed to improved early childhood service delivery in identified communities?

b. What factors are responsible for program effectiveness?

2.1.   Are the end-of-program outcomes on track for being achieved? If not, why not?

2.2.   Are program implementation personnel and technical advisers sufficiently qualified and experienced, as well as resourced and equipped to assist the program and respond efficiently and effectively to any changes?

2.3.   (For Component 4) How has the program improved ECCE delivery through MoET?

1.3.3.   Efficiency

3. Has the program made effective use of time and resources to achieve the outcomes?

3.1.   Have the delivery mechanisms (including DFA Component 4, as well as the outsourcing of the program to World Vision) been efficient? Have management and supervision arrangements been adequate?

3.2.   Has management of the program been responsive to changing needs? If not, why not?

3.3.   What are the risks to achievement of program outcomes? Have the risks been managed appropriately?

1.3.4.   Sustainability

4. Are identified program benefits sustainable beyond the period of the program?

4.1.   Are beneficiaries (Kindergarten teachers) and/or other stakeholders likely to have sufficient ownership, capacity and resources to maintain activity outcomes after funding ceases?

The original ToRs also contained a section relating to Cross-Cutting Issues and Monitoring and Evaluation.

2.   Approach and Methodology

The key approach chosen for the evaluation was qualitative since such data is capable of providing greater in-depth insight into the topics to be examined. An Evaluation Plan was drawn up and circulated to the development partners and MoET two weeks prior to the evaluation. (See Annex A for Evaluation Plan).

Data consisted of four principal sources:
- a review of relevant documentation (Attachment B provides a list of documents)
- structured interviews with selected stakeholders
- focus groups discussions
- trained observer ratings from site visits.

World Vision provided all key documents within one template. The team was instructed to read the six monthly reports, the scope of services and the Results Management Framework in particular. One external team member was required to read all the documentation as was the internal team. Triangulating data from the reports in particular allowed the team to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges involved and on at least one occasion identify a major omission which had been overlooked (the analysis of the second round of readiness testing).

Questions to inform the field-based data collection related to the key questions identified in the ToRs are provided below in Table 1.

Table 1: Questions to inform the data collection

Relevance: 1. Are the original and revised program outcomes still realistic and relevant to the Vanuatu context?			
Focus Question		**Audience**	**Methodology**
1.1. What is MoET's vision for ECCE? Has it changed since the start of the program?		Director General, Director Education Services, Provincial Coordinators (PCs) and PEOs in 3 communities, World Vision Port Vila	Document Analysis Interview
1.2. In what ways does the pilot program support MoET's current vision for ECCE? Does it still meet government priorities?		Director General, Director, Education Services, Shefa Coordinator, PEOs in 3 pilot communities, TA VITE, World Vision Port Vila, World Vision field officers	Document Analysis Interview
Effectiveness 2. To what extent will the program succeed in achieving its outcomes?			
2.1a. To what extent do you feel that by attending ECE, children's readiness for Year 1, especially in literacy and numeracy, has been improved?		Grade 1 teacher, Parents	Interviews, Focus group
2.2. To what extent have teachers benefitted from the support of the program to provide quality care and education to young children?		Kindy teachers	Interview, Observation
2.3. Do pilot kindergarten teachers demonstrate sound instructional practice?		Committee, Parents	Observation, Focus group
2.4. To what extent have parents and communities benefitted from the program?		Committee, Champions	Interview, Focus Group

2.5. How are parents supporting their children at home?	Committee, Champions, Parents and Community	Interviews, Focus Group
2.6. What effect are the 'Champions' having on school access, quality and management?	Community, Parents, Kindy teacher, World Vision field officers, World Vision Vila	Interview, Focus group
2.7. What role do school committees play in improving quality of the Kindy?	Community, Parents, Champions, Kindy teachers, World Vision Vila, World Vision Field Staff	Interview, Focus Group
2.8. What are the results of the alternative approaches which were piloted?	Observation, World Vision Vila, World Vision Field Staff	Site visit, Interview
2.9 To what extent are Kindys following SECCE policy re standards?	Observation	Observation
2.10. What effects has the program had on access including access for vulnerable children?	Parents, Kindy teachers, Grade 1 teachers	Focus Group, Interview
Efficiency **3. Has implementation of the program made effective use of time and resources to achieve the outcomes?**		
3.1. To what extent have delivery mechanisms (including the outsourcing of the program to World Vision and the DFA) been efficient? Have management and supervision arrangements been adequate?	Director Education Services, PEOs, World Vision Vila, World Vision Field Staff	Interview
3.2. To what extent do project personnel (including TA) have the necessary skills and knowledge to support implementation?	World Vision field staff, Director Education Services, ECCE Adviser	Interview
3.3. To what extent were project activities implemented in a timely manner?	Director Education, Services	Interview
3.4. What have been the successes of program implementation?	Director Education Services, PEOs	Interview
3.5 What have been the challenges?	Director Education Services, PEOs	Interview
Sustainability **4. Will the gains made by the program be sustainable?**		
4.1. To what extent is MoET convinced of the value of ECCE in terms of improve student readiness for school and ultimately learning outcomes?	Director General, Director Education Services, PEOs	
4.2. What funding and resources has MoET secured to sustain ECE delivery in the three pilot provinces? Is it likely that long-term donor assistance will be needed?	Director General, Director Education Services, PEOs	
4.3. What is needed to ensure that gains made under the program are sustainable?	Director General, Director Education Services, PEOs	

The following tools and instruments were designed based on the questions above (see Annex C):

- ○ Checklist for Site Visit to Kindy
- ○ Interview Protocol A for Central and Provincial Ministry Staff
- ○ Interview Protocol B for Champions
- ○ Interview Protocol C for Grade 1 Teachers
- ○ Interview Protocol D for Kindy Teachers
- ○ Interview Protocol E for World Vision
- ○ Focus Group Protocol for Parents and Communities.

Interviews and focus group were designed to be semi-structured. The tools contained suggested questions to be asked at the discretion of the interviewer who was free to substitute or ask additional questions.

The interview tools were piloted using role play (rather than real participants) to ensure that the questions were in a logical order and the interview did not take too long. Modifications were made to the tools as a result.

Where possible, observation was supplemented by photographic evidence and collection of artefacts e.g. lesson plans, documents etc.

2.1.   Sampling

A total of 60 Kindys were in the pilot. Table 2 indicates the number of pilot and non-pilot Kindys in each province.

Table 2: Number of pilot Kindys by province

Province and total no. of Kindys	Pilot	Non-pilot
Efate (10)	5	4
Malampa (14)	6	4
Torba (36)	11	2
TOTAL (60)	**22**	**10**

A sample of pilot and non-pilot Kindys were visited in each province based on convenience sampling. In Malampa, Kindys on both Malekula and Ambrym were visited. In Torba, the team visited Kindys on Gaua, Vanua Lava and Motalava, and Loh in the Torres Islands. All three alternative Kindys, which had been set up under Component 3 of the pilot, were also visited. However, in particular in Torba, the more remote kindys were not visited. Nevertheless, the sample size of over a third of all pilot kindys allows for a high degree of confidence in the results.

Site visits on Efate took place during the week of 1 August 2016. The main field trip to Malampa and Torba took place between 8 – 12 August.

2.2.   Ethical Considerations

The evaluation was based on the principle of ensuring fairness to all parties involved. Great care was taken to preserve the anonymity of responses and to ensure that results were free of bias. This was achieved by:

- assuring respondents that their responses would be anonymous and that care would be taken during reporting to ensure that they could not be identified
- ensuring a balance of members of the team who had no previous links at all with the program with those who understood the challenges of partnerships between NGOs and government, as well as the challenges of working in remote locations; the larger team was divided into three groups with one external person on each group
- basing the approach on semi-structured interviews and documenting the results in writing; results will be kept for a period of a year following the evaluation
- ensuring that as far as possible, all interviews and focus groups were carried out by two people
- where possible, interviewing male and female community members separately.

Where there are disagreements between different respondents, this is acknowledged in this report.

2.3.   Data Analysis

Although field work consisted of largely qualitative data, some of this data could be turned into numbers. This was particularly the case with the checklist for Kindy observation where characteristics of the Kindys could be quantified and comparisons made between pilot and non-pilot Kindys. It was further possible with some of the qualitative data from responses to standardised questionnaire surveys. This data was entered into a pre-designed template with categories mirroring the categories of the key evaluations. In some instances, it was possible to calculate simple frequencies manually as a result of this.

With such a large team, care was taken to ensure that all viewpoints were taken into account and information checked through triangulation. The World Vision reports and other documentation proved a rich source of data when doing this. A preliminary team meeting took place on 4 August 2016 by which time all team members had received the majority of the key World Vision documents and had had an opportunity to try out some of the forms. As a result, minor changes were made to the forms and a new template for collating information was designed.

During the week of the field trip, in the evenings, smaller groups held discussions focusing on key strengths and weaknesses and themes emerging. Where there were discrepancies and disagreements, these were noted, with notes kept of the evening meeting. A meeting of the whole team was held on the evening of 7 August during which discussions were held to reach consensus on some of the key findings. On 9 August, the entire team met again, using a structured approach where members worked with members from other teams and returned to the key evaluation questions. Answers to these key evaluation questions were scored using the DFAT Aid Quality Check Descriptors which ranked the various aspects of the program according to the following table.

Table 3: DFAT Aid Quality Check Descriptors

	Satisfactory			**Less than satisfactory**	
6	Very good; achieved or exceeded objectives and outcomes		3	Less than adequate; outputs delivered but less than satisfactory progress towards outcomes	
5	Good; major objectives achieved and substantial progress towards achieving outcomes		2	Poor; although there is some evidence of progress, the investment did not achieve its objectives or outcomes	
4	Adequate; some objectives achieved and measurable progress towards outcomes		1	Very poor; objectives and outcomes not achieved	

Consultative meetings took place with senior MoET officials in Santo on Tuesday 16 August where the preliminary findings related mainly to the first three components of the programme were presented. On the following day, a meeting was held with World Vision to present the preliminary findings. Further discussions aimed at interpretation of the findings continued throughout August and into early September, with a meeting of the entire team on 9 September and a presentation to the Minister of Education, the Director General and all MoET directors on 13 September 2016.

In total, interviews were conducted with 33 Kindy teachers, 19 Grade 1 teachers and 7 champions. A total of 36[7] interviews with communities was also held. Key Ministry and World Vision officials were also interviewed both centrally and in the field.

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[7] The number is more than the number of communities as separate meetings were held with Ministry officials on a number of occasions.

2.4.   Limitations

As with most evaluations, the current evaluation had its limitations. Teachers and some communities appeared to feel that responses given would affect the continuation of the program and their responses might therefore have been skewed. Furthermore, when outsiders observe classrooms, teachers may have been less willing to engage in free play activities which are more difficult to control and may have preferred to show us more teacher-centred activities where they could be more clearly in charge.

In terms of the tools used, it was found that in particular with communities, not all questions were suitable for all communities. This is completely normal with semi-structured as opposed to structured interviews and allows for the collection of more sensitive data so is both a limitation (in that it is not possible to quantify data) but also an advantage in that it allows for more sensitive collection of data.

With the Kindy observation checklist in particular, there was a great deal of missing data with some forms not having all the boxes completed which did not allow us to make judgements about the presence or absence of given characteristics. The observation checklist was also not completed for all Kindys (18 pilot and 7 non-pilot only). However, this still represents over a quarter of all kindys. Because of the missing data, results relating to the checklists are reported for both pilot and non-pilot kindys.

Sample size is appropriate for the size of the World Vision pilot but is very limited for non-pilot communities. Geographical and time constraints also made the selection of the Torba kindys not entirely randomised.

Although one of the team members had been tasked with conducting a cost-benefit analysis of intermediate outcome 3.1. this proved impossible as the approaches taken were too similar to regular kindys.

A further consideration which should be kept in mind when making comparisons between pilot and non-pilot kindys is the well-resourced context of World Vision (14 SECCE field staff) whereas there are far fewer MoET staff to which aspects of the programme could eventually be transferred.

2.5. Audience for the report

The audience for the report is mixed. There are a number of strategic issues which are of more relevance to MoET. A separate short report was previously written just for the Ministry and a number of separate annexes related to teacher funding and training costs of the FBT were also supplied to the Ministry. Operational issues may be of more interest to World Vision. The report is also written to be read by donor partners. Inevitably since the evaluation served a number of purposes and audiences, the balance between operational and strategic issues will reflect the varying interests of the different stakeholders. Findings against Key Evaluation Questions

The report found that effectiveness of the program where changes could be seen at classroom level was good to adequate. Although similar positive changes were seen in non-pilot kindys, pilot kindys outperformed non-pilot especially in the area of resources.

The lack of adequate allowances for teachers was a recurring theme in all the Kindys visited including. Non-pilot kindys. Although this was not the focus of our evaluation, this theme came up repeatedly and the lack of pay was a major cause of teachers leaving the profession (See Annex E). Teachers from both pilot and non-pilot Kindys have low morale because, after good-quality and motivating training, they are sent back to their communities. In non-pilot kindys, they receive few or no visits, little support from MoET and PEO's office. They are more or less left to fend for themselves. This is due to the fact that, despite MoET paying the salaries of Provincial

2.5.1. Relevance of the Program

To what extent is the program relevant to the Vanuatu education context?

A key aspect of ensuring that the program is relevant to the Vanuatu context is that all stakeholders should share a common vision of the objectives of the program, and ensure that the implementation of the objectives is in line with the Ministry's vision for ECCE.

Our findings showed some major mismatches in both of these areas.

MoET central staff could clearly articulate their overall vision for ECCE and senior provincial officers were all familiar with both the vision and ECCE policy, but this was not always the case with teachers. A member of the World Vision senior management team commented that they were not sure if the Ministry had a vision or if they did, felt that it was often changing. Currently MoET is in the process of making some modifications to its Early Childhood Policy and it may be that communication of these caused some of the confusion. With the finalisation of the policy and a five-year costed action plan, it is likely that future activities will be more closely aligned to the policy.

It should be noted that a recurring theme amongst field staff and teachers was a feeling that MoET did not really care very much about ECCE. "*They talk about it but they do not do anything.*" A senior provincial official said that: "*MoET leaders seem to value ECCE with their words but not with their actions*". A World Vision coordinator said "*There is no partnership with MoET and Zone Curriculum Advisers (ZCAs) do not help either.*"

In addition, there were differing views expressed by Ministry and WVV staff about the objectives of the program and within WVV there were also widely differing views, ranging from vague statement about educating children to more specific statements about working with the new curriculum on lesson plans. The lack of common understanding and commitment has impacted negatively on the extent to which the program has focussed on and achieved the outcomes under Component 3.

2.6. Summary of the Relevance of the Program

In general, the relevance of the program was felt to be less than adequate with some mismatches of intent related to the objectives. There was also a lack of clarity related to the overall policy direction of MoET. However, the quantitative outcomes as described in the Results Management Framework are largely on track for being met.

1.1. It is recommended that MoET management moves ahead with the finalisation of the review of its ECCE policy and with an implementation plan that is feasible and affordable. This should be clearly communicated to all those working in the field of ECE. Any further work whether by MoET or an implementing partner should be in close alignment with this plan.

3. Effectiveness of the Program

The effectiveness of the program was subdivided into the following sub-sections, which are discussed below.

1. Effect on Children's Readiness including Literacy and Numeracy
2. Effect on Teachers and Teacher Practice
3. Parents, Communities and Support at Home
4. Champions
5. Kindy Committees
6. Alternative Kindys
7. Access (including Access for Vulnerable Children)
8. Partnerships
9. Resources

3.1. Effect on Children's Readiness including Literacy and Numeracy

In transitioning from pre-school to Primary school, it is well known that children can face problems in adapting to a very different educational and social setting. One of the key objectives of the SECCE program was to ensure that children were better equipped to be ready for school and learning. Successful transitions occur when children are emotionally and intellectually prepared, and when schools are also ready for the child. A good Kindy education provides a level of continuity while easing children into the new setting of a school.

A Class 1 Assessment was conducted at the start of the school year 2015 to serve as a baseline for determining the readiness of pilot Kindergarten children for school (Class/Grade 1). The report on Class 1 Assessment 2015 does not state exactly when the testing took place but World Vision acknowledges in its report that: "The decision to test children once they had started Primary school (Class 1) has some impact on the validity of the assessment results due to the learning that would have taken place during the first term at school". A number of other considerations were not taken into account during the administration of this test, e.g. the age of children being tested was up to eight years of age. The report on this test rightly identifies these and other limitations to the testing process, including the potential bias of the coordinators carrying out the

assessment. However, the report on the first assessment was sound[8] and the results were reported in a comprehensive and easily understandable way. Although World Vision expressed some doubts about the robustness of this tool, and felt there are some items which could be viewed as subjective, the review team found that the assessment was valuable in that it raised some interesting questions related to how well children were performing in different areas related to school readiness..

According to the results of the World Vision six-monthly report from the last part of 2015, a further administration of this test (now renamed the Class 1 Readiness Test) took place in October 2015. This iteration of the test was not fully analysed. For example, in contrast to the previous report, data was not disaggregated, e.g. results from Malampa and Shefa were reported together.

In addition, the fact that the two tests were administered at different times of the school year means that it would not be valid to compare results. A further version of the test is due to be administered in October 2016. The test itself is potentially useful since a great deal of the monitoring and evaluation carried out by World Vision consists of self-reports. The test has the possibility to provide objective data related to the successes of the program.

Although results from the Class 1 Readiness Test have not yet yielded objective results which can measure improvements in readiness, the results from interviews with Class 1 teachers, parents and community leaders, as well as the World Vision field staff, indicated that such an improvement exists. All 19 of the Class 1 teachers interviewed stated that children who attended Kindy had improved cognitive skills, especially pre-literacy and pre-numeracy. "*Children know their letters and numbers*" *They know how to hold a pen*." Sixteen of the 19 Class 1 teachers also mentioned other benefits, e.g. "*They aren't shy and they don't cry*"; "*They know how to talk to other children*"; and perhaps most tellingly, "*They know how to sit still*".

In one school, a teacher was able to identify children who had come from one particular pilot Kindy (Kindy X) who were performing exceptionally well – "*I know which children have come from Kindy X*". These students outperformed children from both non-pilot Kindys and another pilot Kindy in the area. However, in general, Grade 1 teachers appeared to say that it was the fact that children had been to a Kindy, whether pilot or non-pilot, which made the most difference. The positive effects were also apparent when talking to Class 1 teachers during the larger VESP review.

However, transition activities were happening to a much greater extent in pilot Kindys than non-pilot ones, and they were reportedly proving very beneficial. Examples of activities were: 1) teachers of Class 1 and Kindy meeting together – "*I never knew what they did in Kindy before*"; "*I had never been inside the Year 1 class before*"; 2) engaging in joint activities between Class 1 and Kindy especially when the Kindy was attached to a school. Class visits by Kindy children to a Grade 1 class were also mentioned on three occasions.

3.2.   Effect on Teachers and Teacher Practice

Teachers in pilot Kindys reported that they very much appreciated the visits by SECCE Coordinators for the purposes of monitoring and follow-up of new techniques of training. There was also evidence of some very positive changes in teacher practice. All teachers in pilot Kindys were trained in the curriculum but not all had been through the field-based training (FBT) – the minimum to be required to be a qualified teacher in

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[8] Not all team members read all reports. The opinion that this tool was sound is based on the views of the Team Leader, Lead Consultant, M&E Specialist and one other member.

Vanuatu. Those who had not been through the FBT were generally replacements where the original teachers had left due to salary issues. They had received no training in areas such as the use of learning centres. Therefore, having SECCE Coordinators to visit these teachers to offer help was invaluable.

3.2.1. Positive Behaviour Management

Teachers said that they knew they were not allowed to hit children and all, expect for one teacher, said they did not. The teacher who was the exception was from a non-pilot Kindy (who was not fully trained, having not been through the FBT) said that they did try as a first option to reason with the child but if that did not work, they would whip them. Other physical disciplinary practices, such as having a child standing on one leg and holding both their ears, were substituted for hitting in two Kindys visited, but in general, teachers understood the importance of rule setting in managing children's behaviour rather than resorting to violence. In more than 60% of the classrooms visited, rules were displayed on the wall. While children can clearly not read at this level, on two occasions, graphics were placed alongside the rules to remind children of standards of behaviour within the Kindy.

Days were generally very structured with set activities timetabled throughout the day and such predictability of routines can be a positive aspect of classroom life. As children become familiar with the routines and understand what they can expect to happen and what they are supposed to do, they feel less stressed and more emotionally prepared to handle the day, a useful skill to prepare them for Class 1.

3.2.2. Knowledge and Involvement of Individual Children

The six-monthly reports show that training related to portfolio assessment fully met contractual obligations. The portfolio assessment tool was completed in the majority of Kindys visited, usually in impressive detail. In three non-pilot Kindys where the tool was not used, we heard that one of the teachers had not received any training in it and found it difficult to see how it was possible to rank an individual child against all the criteria, so she filled it in for the group as a whole. In another Kindy, the teacher said she had received the tool but had not used it.

The tool itself is designed to be non-judgmental in assessing a child's developmental stage. A useful analogy is that of a child going on a journey with a teacher. On the way the child asks: "*Are we there yet?*" The teacher does not reply by saying: "*No, we've failed.*" But rather says: "*No, we're not there yet!*" Typically assessments use similar language, e.g. achieved / not yet achieved / needs support etc. However, teacher entries often included comments such as "weak", "nogud" or "slo". Such issues may be symptomatic of the fact that it may be unnatural to use words such as "Nidim Sapot" in Bislama.

Teachers reported that the portfolio assessments accompanied children when they left Kindy to go to school, although some Class 1 teachers said they had not seen them. Parents also did not appear to routinely be shown these tools.[9] Nevertheless, teachers were able to talk about the individual children in their classes, including being able to discuss issues of family, personality and temperament, as well as more standard developmental characteristics, such as knowing letters and numbers.

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[9] The question of whether parents were shown the assessment tools did not appear on the standard questionnaire and was only asked in three communities. Of these, one said they had seen the tool and the other two they reported that they hadn't.

One excellent idea, apparently suggested to a teacher by the SECCE Coordinator, was the creation of journals where the children drew pictures of what they had done the previous day / week. The pictures were accompanied by text written by the teacher.

3.2.3.   Creation of a sense of community

Many of the Kindys visited had a strong sense of community and the place of the child within it. For children, a sense of community plays an important role in their sense of security and belongingness in a context where they are valued, which in turn helps them to become motivated and successful learners. Personalising the classroom with children's work and their names can help to create such a sense of belongingness and being valued in the classroom, connecting children with their environment. Pegs with children's names were seen in over half of the pilot Kindys visited and in just under half of non-pilot Kindys. Birthday charts were also seen in the pilot kindys.

3.2.4.   Teacher practices in the classroom

Teachers very much valued the curriculum and the lesson plans, which they felt gave structure to their days. *"Lesson plans have dramatically improved the content of the Kindy class"* (World Vision field staff member). As previously mentioned, such structure can also give the children a sense of security, and children observed in both pilot and non-pilot Kindys appeared comfortable and happy in their surroundings.

We saw one excellent example where a class had been divided into two, with one part engaging in teacher-led pre-literacy activities. The other children were in the sand areas engaging in individual learning-based play with excellent supervision by the teacher in charge who was able to direct the activities of the individual children.

We saw many examples of children being encouraged to write and to hold pens and pencils correctly, and two examples of growing plants from seed or bean. These very positive practices should be seen in the context of what some teachers have to deal with when the child enters the Kindy.

> When kids come to Kindy they have to be toilet trained, speak, share and play with other kids, have no fear of school, be able to tell a story and show respect. (pilot Kindy teacher)

It is not surprising that in many instances, the approach used by teachers in the classroom was very traditional and teacher-centred, with literacy and numeracy receiving a lot of attention. Such attention is appropriate, although care should be taken to ensure the teaching of concepts is properly sequenced. Pre-literacy activities, including orientation to print, need to come before writing letters. In general, literacy and pre-literacy appeared to be given more attention than numeracy.

Of course, it is also much easier to control children in a teacher-fronted lesson and some of the teachers we saw were relatively inexperienced. The importance of play to young children's healthy development and learning has been documented beyond question by research. A play-based approach is reflected in the curriculum, yet we saw little evidence of free play in the pilot Kindys. It may be that free play was included in the program but that teachers may be reluctant to allow children to engage in free play, which is much more difficult to control, when visitors were in the Kindy.

In general, however, teachers in both pilot and non-pilot kindys tended to focus on compliance rather than learning outcomes. A tick box structure may be appropriate for the many relatively inexperienced teachers in Vanuatu but some teachers might be ready to adopt a more child-centred approach in the classroom. The

concept of learning centres is integral to the approach to ECCE in Vanuatu, yet they did not seem to be well understood; we saw them being used only on two occasions in the ways intended.

There was a great deal of choral chanting and repetition of songs. The story reading observed in two pilot kindys did not include much involvement of children in predicting and commenting on the story but teachers were kind and, in general, practice was adequate if teacher-centred. One community also reported that children in the pilot Kindys were taking on leadership roles, something which they said would never have happened before.

However, some worrying practices were observed, such as teachers teaching children to write in capital letters, focusing on learning algorithms in early arithmetic rather than understanding concept of numbers, and one class where children were engaged in listening to the teacher for over an hour with little opportunity to contribute. When such practices were brought to the attention of World Vision, they took immediate steps to rectify them, but this is one area where World Vision would very much have benefited from the advice of an early years specialist.

3.3.   Parents, Communities and Support at Home

The six-monthly reports give full information about the extent and reach of parental training. Parents and communities generally understood the importance of early childhood as a key step in preparing children for school. This was generally true of both males and females. Some responses were very sophisticated, e.g. a group of fathers who said that:

> *Kindergarten is the foundation to children gaining knowledge at school and thus they send children to Kindy to learn (they learn)… numbers and counting; alphabets and sounding letters; learn through play/sports; songs; reading.*

More groups of mothers than fathers said they had attended "training" or Family Toktok sessions. However, one group of fathers said they had attended an awareness raising on the right age to enrol a child in Kindy; they said this was very helpful because they had not known they could send children from as young as four. Another group of fathers said that awareness raising had helped them to see that they were not spending enough time with their children.

For the most part, both mothers and fathers were able to talk very convincingly about specific activities they did to help their children's development involving them in daily tasks, e.g. *Bring me two plates…talking about colours*. Parents also reported asking children what they did at school and, more importantly, listening and responding to them. One parent from a pilot kindy said that, whereas before their child had not spoken very much about what happened at school, now when they came home, they would not stop talking about their day. Parents also understood the importance of talking kindly to young children.

> *From pregnancy onwards, it is important to talk to the baby even when still in the womb. Everyone should also be nice to the Mum, there should be no fights between the parents. You must show love and care from day 1.*

On one island in particular, nutrition seems to have improved as a result of family involvement in pilot kindys with children bringing local food into school instead of starchy snacks.

One of the most successful aspects of the parental and community involvement was the Family Conversations. Although these were not implemented consistently, where they were implemented, they were very effective. In the focus groups in the pilot kindys, there was a large number of positive comments related to their use (N=17).

Parents and communities and, in particular, fathers were rightly quite demanding in stating what the Kindys needed. One of the best-rated kindergartens from the checklist[10] (and according to the WV coordinators, the Class 1 teacher and the Evaluation Team observations) was still found to be wanting by the group of fathers, who felt there should be more swings, seesaws and materials. *There should be a right for children in the rural areas to have access to better learning materials*. Such comments from this and other Kindys demonstrate the power that the community can have in demanding high standards of the ECCE facilities in their communities.

One group of parents from a pilot kindy talked about having a Kindy development plan which could help identify alternative methods of generating income for the Kindys. Growing vegetables and keeping poultry were given as specific examples.

Parents did sometimes come into Kindys and on at least one occasion this was to help the teacher:

> *One parent comes every day to help and I am really happy she does. She helps me and also controls her own child.*

On another occasion, a teacher said she routinely invited parents for lunch on a Friday. Teachers also held parent meetings, although the rate of attendance at these meetings varied.

It should be noted, that when parents and communities benefited, this was not solely through the SECCE program, but also through MoET training. Teachers were often also interacting with the communities to raise awareness in the absence or non-visitation of champions.

3.4.   Champions

The role of 'Champions' was intended to mobilise the community around the importance of ECE. These are voluntary positions and more than half of the champions we interviewed were male although as a whole the ratio of male to female is 29 males to 33 females.. It should be noted that we attempted to speak to champions in all of the communities visited but they were either unavailable or could not be found. The situation we saw was very mixed. In some communities, champions were not really operational while in others they were working well. In some instances, their role was quite far reaching, involving chasing up parents for school fees and going around the larger community, as well as administering the Family Toktok (Family Conversations).

In one Kindy we were told that:

> *The role of the Champion is to ensure there is a playground for the children within the Kindy compound and that it is safe.*

In this particular instance, the champion had built the monkey bar, swing and fencing of the Kindy compound. Another particularly impressive champion was a young man who had embraced the role and gained in self-confidence as a result of becoming the champion.

Sometimes, champions were chosen by the Community Coordinators because of their perceived status in the community. This did not always work out well.

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[10] Note the limitations previously mentioned to the checklist

The champion knows his job but he is not doing it well. The reason is because the Champion holds another position as an Elder in the church.

There were a number of comments complaining that their role was unclear (N = 5) and that it overlapped with Community Coordinators (N = 3), despite the fact that World Vision had developed very clear terms of reference. A number of champions requested further training.

3.5. Kindy Committees

There were more kindy committees in pilot than in non-pilot kindys (18 out of 22 as opposed to 6 out of 10). Many of the Kindy Committees were relatively recently established (N = 10 for pilot kinyds). Their smooth functioning depended very much on the individual school. Where they functioned well, they were instrumental in ensuring teachers were paid even though the allowances were generally small. This may at least in part be due to the training received through the financial management module of the World Vision materials. As well as teacher salaries, they were mostly concerned with fundraising and maintenance and improvement of buildings and grounds, rather than improvement of the quality of the Kindy. In other instances, Kindy Committee meetings were badly attended with community members reporting that they were too busy.

It's OK but sometimes parents are afraid of the responsibility.

In some Committees, there was gender parity with equal numbers of men and women. We came across two women treasurers, although no Kindy Committee Chairperson in our interviews was a woman.

In some communities, the parents interviewed were unable to tell us whether or not a Kindy Committee existed although teachers were generally able to vouch for the existence of the committee.

3.6. Alternative Kindys

All three alternative Kindys in the pilot were visited. However, they were, for the most part, very formal and traditional, they did not involve parents and could not really be described as "alternative", in the sense usually used within ECCE. (Spoldek and Saracho, 2014; Dahlberg and Moss, 2004)[11]. Nevertheless,, one of the alternative Kindys had turned into an excellent traditional Kindy and was taken over by the community, illustrating the demand-driven power that the World Vision had been able to harness. In the other two, the teaching was quite formal and structured, and there was little parental involvement. In one Kindy, mothers brought their children to the school and stayed in the vicinitybut they did not participate in what was happening in the kindy nor interact with each other.

The team also visited two alternative church-run Kindys: one in Gaua and one in Efate. The Efate Kindy was home-based and ran 10 sessions of two hours a week in 10 different locations at a total cost of $1000 a year. Children were encouraged to engage in meaningful play and parents who accompanied their children were active in helping the teacher. This may have been a useful model for SECCE.

In general, Component 3 of the program was a missed opportunity for MoET and World Vision to explore alternative provision. These alternatives might have included: accelerated Kindys in the form of "summer camps" for children who had not attended Kindy; home-based playgroups; or the types of mobile Kindys

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[11] Spoldek, B and Saracho, O eds. (2014), Handbook of Research on the Education of Young children (Lawrence Eribaum Associates) Dahlberg, G and Moss P (2004), Ethics and Politics in Early Childhood Education (Routledge Falmer)

found in other countries in the region. An ECE specialist could have given guidance on possibilities in this area and MoET could have given more direction.

Since it was not possible to see results related to this area, it was not possible to answer the evaluation question related to improving cost effectiveness of subsequent government support to Kindys on a national scale nor was it possible to conduct the envisaged cost-benefit analysis.

3.7.   Access (including Access for Vulnerable Children)

The vast majority of pilot Kindy communities (18 out of 22) reported that all, or nearly all, children in the community were attending Kindy. Similar responses were received from teachers, although interestingly enough, not from champions who felt there were children who were not attending because the parents were lazy or because they were not convinced of the value of Kindy. (*They do not see the value but they will sooner or later.*)

In some places visited, Kindys seemed to be fairly close together, while in others, the distances for children to travel to Kindy were quite long. In non-pilot Kindy areas, attendance was reported as being much less, e.g. only 50% of children attending in one part of Ambrym.

However, VEMIS data shows a surprising trend in Kindy enrolment, as shown in Figure ??. While the NER for Malampa and Shefa has increased over recent years, that for Torba has gone down.

Figure 2: Trends in national enrolment ratio (NER) by province
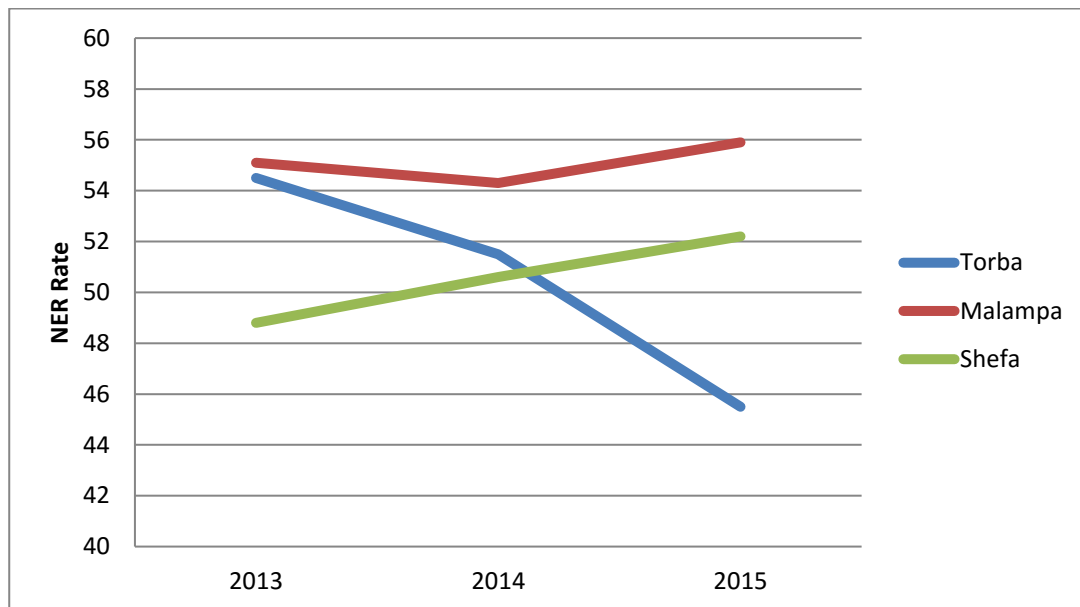
The number of children enrolled in Kindy in the different provinces is shown below in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Children enrolled in Kindy by province 2013–2015

	2013	2014	2015
Torba	619	524	563
Malampa	1838	1908	2148
Shefa	3410	3819	3926

This decline in numbers in Torba does not match the responses from our visits. Further investigation is needed to find out whether this was an anomaly in the VEMIS data. The decline in numbers may even be a positive thing as it could signal that more children are progressing through the system at the right age.

Many communities and some teachers still thought that children could not attend Class 1 if they did not have a Kindy completion (leaving) certificate. The worst instance we heard of was a child sent back to Kindy from a Grade 2 class in another part of the island because he was deemed not to have the necessary literacy and numeracy skills. This was not the only instance of a child being sent back to Kindy. On another occasion, a nine-year old child was enrolled in Primary school in time to receive the grant and then sent back to Kindy to acquire the necessary foundational skills.

We heard very positive messages related to the rights of children with disabilities, although very few children were enrolled (we heard of only six children in the entire sample of Kindys). One teacher described the specific work she had done/could do with a child who was unable to walk (having other children sit at his height and play learning games), and how she worked on the same thing repeatedly with a child who had learning difficulties. Work obviously still needs to be done with communities to ensure that more children have access to quality Kindy education.

3.8.   Partnerships

World Vision has engaged in a successful partnership with the Torba Anglican Church whereby messages are spread to the church-going community about the importance of ECCE. This appears to be a relatively recent initiative but one which shows promise for the future. The Bishop of Torba explained how he had told his clergy that they should spread the message on the importance of ECCE to their congregations. We learned from visits to communities in Torba that this message was getting out.

The partnership with Rainbow Theatre is also very promising in delivering messages about disability and social issues. The partnership reported by Digicel would seem to be more of a client relationship than a partnership since World Vision paid to have three messages delivered

Tools

A number of tools were piloted during the programme . These tools included awareness raising and training materials for parents and communities. These were successfully trialed and adjusted during the programme.

Resources

Some key differences between pilot and non-pilot Kindys are summarised in Figure 3 below. It demonstrates that the greatest difference is in the area of resources, with SECCE Kindys being better resourced than government Kindys.[12]

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[12] It should be noted that WV gave each Kindy a box of stationery and materials in 2014 and 2015. In 2016, they did not replenish the boxes hoping that by 2016, the Kindy Committees would be running effectively to be able to replenish their materials. However, this did not happen, leaving some Kindys without much needed stationery. This is an important message related to sustainability in terms of MoET's ability to provide further supplies.

Figure 3: Differences in outside features of pilot and non-pilot Kindys[13]
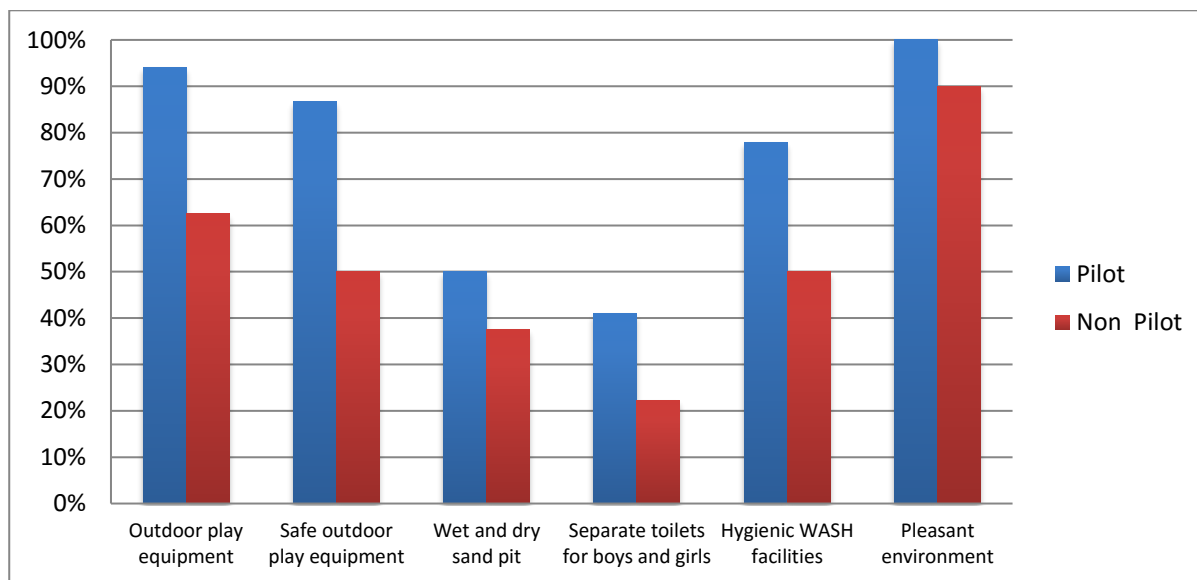
All pilot Kindys were large enough and well-lit. Two of the non-pilot Kindys were not adequate in this respect: one was in a poorly maintained tent and the other had a very dark environment.

The water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities varied widely. Some tippy taps were seen but even in three pilot Kindys, there was only a large basin of water with a shared towel, allowing for the easy spread of germs. In one non-pilot school, the teacher had to go to the village with a bucket to get water.

3.9. Summary of the Effectiveness of the Program

The effectiveness of the program is rated adequate to good, with community involvement particularly impressive. Parents understood the importance of Kindy and were able to articulate the practical ways in which they could help their children at home. The majority of the end of program outcomes which are largely quantitative in nature are on track for being achieved. The exception is the alternative provision (Component 3) which is evaluated as less than satisfactory.

Recommendation 3.1: It is recommended that during any transition period, World Vision and MoET staff work together to emphasis to communities the continued importance of the role that communities have to play.

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[13] The aspects of kindys for reporting have been chosen from those which were fully filled in. As noted in the limitations, there were some missing data. The aspects of kindys which included missing data have not been reported on.

Recommendation 3.2: It is extremely helpful that World Vision is using an appropriate tool to measure school readiness, in addition to anecdotal and self-report information. It is recommended that the VESP Steering Committee pay closer attention to issues of quality so that the next administration of the tool is properly reported on.

Recommendation 3.3: It is recommended that during the transition period, World Vision provide full training on the tools piloted by World Vision so that all communities can reap the benefit.

Recommendation 3.4: It is recommended that alternative low-cost ECCE provision is investigated and piloted by the MoET in 2017 as intended by the original design. Such alternative provision could include community mobilisation through women's church groups, home-based playgroups and alternative Kindys.

4. Efficiency of the Program

4.1. Timeliness of Implementation of Project Activities

All of those interviewed acknowledged that the program had initial challenges. It had an extremely slow start with no approved Monitoring and Evaluation Framework in place for over 18 months. Despite this, WVV believes that it was a period in which many lessons were learned. The effect of Cyclone Pam just over a year into the program also affected progress in Year 2 but this does not adequately explain the lack of progress towards program outcomes in Year 1. The submission proposal by World Vision appeared to indicate that it had the capacity to hit the ground running regarding working within communities. It also indicated that World Vision had ECCE specialists at its disposal.

4.2. Governance and Management Arrangements

The review team found very different views on the effectiveness of communication between World Vision and MoET. World Vision staff felt that relationships and communication between central Ministry staff and World Vision were good but this was not a view shared by MoET. Although this is not the first time that MoET has managed a contract of this nature, this is the largest contract and it may be that MoET required further assistance to manage the contract and be more forthright when things were not happening as expected. While VESP provided some support to the ECCE Unit in managing the relationship, and both donors and the ECCE Unit were quite forceful in expressing their disappointment with the initial lack of progress, it appears that later messages were either not given clearly or were not clearly heard.

According to the initial contract, the intention was for WVV to "work in close collaboration with the Provincial Coordinators of ECCE and other MoET staff". In the contract amendment of 23rd April 2015, this was expressed as "Teamwork is essential for the success of ECCE in Vanuatu;…(including the National Coordinator, Provincial Coordinators and Key teachers". In the view of the MoET staff concerned, as well as some World Vision staff, the intended team approach failed to be implemented. One PEO stated to the team that he had no idea what the program was doing; two Provincial Coordinators reported that they requested to see World Vision reports[14] and were refused. This is an area where dissatisfaction with the state of affairs could have been discussed earlier and it might then have been possible to put resolutions into place.

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[14] World Vision has confirmed that staff at field level do not routinely receive reports

4.3.   Reporting

The initial program reports were of poor quality and senior officers did not take responsibility for quality control as would be expected. Written reports over the last 18 months have improved, enabling MoET to more clearly track what is happening. The attachment of a NZ volunteer appears to have been helpful in raising the standard of written documentation through promulgation of internal guidelines and messages given to World Vision staff in the field.

World Vision staff expressed their view that the reporting requirements were quite onerous especially in relation to the weekly meetings.. The proposal for the remainder of the program is that meetings be held only once a month, preferably when the Program Manager is in Port Vila.

4.4.   Staffing of the Program

It is acknowledged that there has been major improvements in reporting and program management especially within the last year. The fact that there were three Program Managers during the first two and a half years of the program inevitably affected continuity. The central staff is now reporting in an efficient fashion which enables MoET to follow progress. Administrative capacity is strong, however, the lack of ongoing technical expertise in Early Childhood is a major disadvantage. This is a potential area where, the value-add of using World Vision should have been strong. The lack of technical expertise was seen by the evaluation team in a number of areas including the pedagogies being used by teachers, the apparent lack of awareness of the breadth of potential alternative provision, and some of the initial resources supplied by World Vision.

The work done by SECCE and Community Coordinators was much appreciated by teachers. Coordinators were provided with laptops although initially many reports were sent through in hard copy. It may be possible to investigate the use of tablets for reporting if future initiatives take a similar direction to the current program.

SECCE Coordinators generally had good ECCE backgrounds and were perceived as having such by the teachers they visited. Community Coordinators were generally appreciated by communities but the occasional community claimed not to know about them. Training by World Vision was evaluated highly, especially by the SECCE Coordinators. However, one recently appointed Community Coordinator reported having received no training. Another said that, while he was fairly confident in how to mobilise communities, he was less certain of the content of the areas in which he should be raising awareness. It should be noted that the work of the Coordinators which included travel was not always easy. When asked about challenges, Coordinators from different provinces mentioned that travel could be difficult. *There is a strong sea…it could be dangerous.* Some of the schools in Torba were indeed extremely difficult to access as evidenced by the fact that there had been no visits to these schools by the ECCE Unit.

While acknowledging that travel to some islands may be difficult, there appeared to be a mismatch between the numbers of visits reported by teachers and signed for in the visitor's book and the number reported by the Coordinators themselves despite the fact that World Vision provides   clear instructions about the necessity of signing the Visitor's Book. Although the monthly reports by SECCE Coordinators are useful, there is a need for more objective verification of the data they provide.

World Vision has stated that it has had difficulty employing quality staff because of the relatively low salary compared with other NGOs.

4.5.   Branding

Generally, communities and indeed some teachers did not know of the 'SECCE program'. Rather, it was known as the World Vision program, to the extent that one teacher felt that the head of the ECCE Unit was an employee of World Vision. When staff wear World Vision shirts and arrive in World Vision trucks, it is perhaps to be expected that the program will be associated in this way.

> *In one community we were told World Vision does everything now. N {name of Provincial Coordinator} does not do anything.*

All documents produced under the program should recognise the contribution of all parties. (Letters should not be sent out in the name of the SECCE program with only the World Vision logo.) It should be noted that World Vision was again extremely responsive in rectifying this issue when it was brought to their attention.

SECCE also represents one component of VESP and, while there was some interaction with the previous M&E VESP Specialist, this relationship with other components of VESP could have been closer, especially in the area of school readiness.

4.6.   Summary of the Efficiency of the Program

The efficiency of the program over three years has been rated less than adequate. Although the Evaluation Team acknowledges improvements in this area, a frequent response to comments on the lack of progress was: *This was right at the beginning* or *That was before I came*.. Nevertheless the Evaluation Team very much appreciates World Vision's responsiveness in meeting our concerns very promptly. We also recognise that if a mid-term evaluation had been conducted, some of these issues may have been spotted earlier.

Recommendation 3.1: It is recommended that MoET carefully consider whether or not to renew the program for a further period to ensure gains are not lost. This would depend on MoET's willingness and capacity to put measures in place to ensure sustainability (see below).   This would include ensuring adequate financial and human resources are in place.

Recommendation 3.2: It is recommended that the weekly meetings between MoET and World Vision are discontinued and replaced with monthly meetings supplemented by more frequent meetings, as and when required.

Recommendation 3.3: It is recommended that governance arrangements and the responsibilities of all parties be clearly spelled out for the remainder of the program.

Recommendation 3.4: It is recommended that World Vision engage an ECCE Specialist to provide technical advice and ensure that the pedagogic aspects of the program are built on sound educational practice.

5.   Sustainability

Respondents, apart from World Vision staff, generally felt that the community aspects would be sustainable as communities and parents were fully convinced of the value of ECCE. However, one World Vision staff member said that he felt *"the program was only just getting under way"* and that gains made under the program would inevitably be lost if it were not extended. One SECCE Coordinator noted that if she left, teachers would also leave. The following was generally typical of the views of the Coordinators:

If the program stops, everything will collapse as there is no support from MoET. The communities can help but they cannot provide the resources and material. The teachers will be demoralised.

If MoET provide the material to the schools, then it can continue but then who will work with the communities? There should be now more work done with church and chiefs so they will support if the program stops. The structure of CCs and SECCEs should be maintained within MoET, and budget given to MoET.

On the other hand, the champions were generally optimistic about the sustainability of the program, stating that it would continue. Over half of the champions said that they would continue with their work when the program ended, as did communities.

The turnover of teachers linked to low pay represents a much broader issue, which MoET needs to address. The support provided by SECCE Coordinators has gone some way towards motivating teachers and making them feel appreciated, but in general teachers feel demotivated by an apparent lack of attention from the Ministry and the poor conditions of pay. A rough poll suggests that MoET is losing around 60 teachers a year due to poor pay. A rough estimate of the wastage in terms of training costs is contained in a separate paper to the Ministry.

MoET and World Vision do not currently have an exit or transition plan to ensure that the program gains are sustainable. With less than six months of the program to run, this should be in place. A particular area of concern is that, for the program to be truly sustainable, Provincial Coordinators need to have the funds to travel as they will take over roles that were previously the responsibility of World Vision. If such funds are not available, it may not be possible to sustain gains at the classroom level.

The ECCE Unit is staffed at 50% capacity *"because there is no money to pay for the remaining two staff"*. The current two staff members would be unable to manage funds for a new program. In order for the positive aspects of effectiveness found in this report to be transferable to other kindys, sufficient resources need to be made available.

However, there were some promising messages during our interviews. A Provincial Officer said that, with just a small budget, a lot could be done at the provincial level to improve ECCEs. This and a number of other funding options to assure sustainability could be explored.

5.1. Summary of the Sustainability of the Program

The sustainability of the program in terms of the involvement of the community is good. Other aspects are adequate, although issues related to low teacher salaries are outside the control of World Vision.

Recommendation 5.1: It is recommended that MoET secure funds to ensure that Provincial Coordinators can take over the role previously carried out by SECCE Coordinators. The Minister has indicated that he views ECCE as a priority and that conditions will need to be attached to this.

Recommendation 5.2: It is recommended that MoET fill the two vacant positions in the ECCE Unit as soon as possible

Recommendation 5.3: It is recommended that an exit/transition strategy is developed by MoET in conjunction with World Vision as soon as possible. Such a strategy should include:

- plans for the final visits to Kindys and communities, and the messages to be given
- plans for capacity building and the transfer of skills to Provincial Coordinators

○ plans for training in the use of the tools developed during the SECCE period.

Recommendation 5.4: It is recommended that MoET take a decision on the extent of World Vision's involvement over the coming period so that uncertainties can be minimised.

STRENGTHENING EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION

EVALUATION PLAN

Abbreviations

DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia
DG	Director General
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MFAT	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, New Zealand
MoET	Ministry of Education and Training, Vanuatu
PEO	Provincial Education Officer
SECCE	Strengthening Early Childhood Care and Education program
ToR	Terms of Reference
VESP	Vanuatu Education Support Program
PCs	Provincial ECCE Coordinators
CCs	Community Coordinators (SECCE workers)

1. SECCE Evaluation Summary

The Strengthening Early Childhood Care and Education (SECCE) program is a three-year program managed by World Vision Vanuatu. The principal objective of the program is to ensure that more children are ready for the formal years of schooling as a result of accessing quality Early Childhood Care and Education. There is a possibility that the program may be extended for a further two years.

The SECCE design stipulates that an evaluation is to be conducted towards the end of the three-year period. This evaluation will provide an assessment of the extent to which the program has achieved the desired outcomes and describe what worked well and lessons learned, so the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) and development partners can make informed decisions about how to proceed with the future of early childhood education in Vanuatu for children before the start of Year 1.

The purpose of this document is to describe the approach and methodology to complete the SECCE evaluation. The plan has been prepared by the Team Leader and Lead Consultant after discussions with DFAT. The document is in response to the SECCE Terms of Reference (ToR) of June 2016 and other background reading documents.

The Evaluation Plan below outlines the proposed scope and methodology of the evaluation. The evaluation will complete an initial document review followed by site visits and consultation with a broad range of stakeholders through semi-structured interviews, focus groups and semi-structured observations during a 10-day in-country mission.

2. Background

The Government of Vanuatu recognises education as a priority sector, and within this, the importance of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE). With development partner support, it has established a national ECCE policy and new curriculum. National and Provincial ECCE Coordinators have been appointed and a National ECCE Framework published that sets out ECCE standards and guides development of the sub-sector.

However, challenges persist. Only 60% of children attend Kindergarten ('Kindy' in Bislama, the official language of Vanuatu alongside English and French). Of those children who attend Kindergarten, 70% are over-age when they enrol and are therefore over-age when they enrol in Year 1. The quality of instruction in many kindergartens is below the ECCE Standards described in the National ECCE Framework. There is also limited access for children with physical disabilities and specific learning difficulties.

3. SECCE Program Design

SECCE is part of a broader program, the Vanuatu Education Support Program (VESP), and SECCE constitutes Component 2 of five components of VESP. The ultimate goal of the SECCE program is to increase the number of pre-school children that are ready for the first year of primary school. The original design of the program sought to achieve four outcomes.

  (1) Improved quality of ECCE in pilot communities
  (2) Increased support for ECCE in pilot communities
  (3) Innovation to improve cost-effectiveness of early childhood programs in communities
  (4) Strengthened MoET support to national delivery of ECCE

The first three outcomes relate directly to the pilot while the fourth outcome reflects SECCE's support to strengthen MoET support to national delivery of ECCE.

The pilot has been operating in the following provinces: Torba, Malampa and Shefa (Efate Island). The overall budget for the three years is VUV 127,973,996 (or approximately AUD 1.4 million). The contract with World Vision expires on 30 January 2017.

4. Purpose of the Evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation is threefold.

1. To describe the extent to which the program outcomes have been achieved.
This involves:
1. Assessing progress of SECCE in achieving the program outcomes (Components 1–3) and the contribution of SECCE to the national ECCE program including MoET operational support, equipment and training workshops (Component 4).
2. Assessing the extent to which the program has contributed to the MoET's achieving the objectives of the national ECCE program.

2. To propose future directions for early childhood education in Vanuatu.
This includes:
1. Reviewing the Program's current design and relevance to MoET needs and priorities.
2. Reviewing current implementation arrangements and providing evidence to enable the Ministry to make decisions related to ways forward.

3. Identify and share successful practice to generate knowledge about early childhood education practice.
This includes:
1. Identifying aspects of the pilot program that have worked well and can be scaled up in the Vanuatu context, either by MoET or outsourced to implementing partners.
2. Synthesising lessons learned from the program focusing on what can improve MoET service delivery (ECCE and more broadly) and also highlight those that could be cited as good practice for the Pacific.

2. Key Evaluation Questions

Key evaluation questions from the ToRs are given below. The four higher-level questions are bolded:

RELEVANCE
1. To what extent is the program relevant to the Vanuatu education context?
In other words:
1.1. Do they support the achievement of the objectives of the VESP, Government of Vanuatu and development partners?
1.2. Where revisions to the design have happened, are the new objectives, targets and achievements still in line with the initial vision and principles behind them?
1.3. Are program activities consistent with attainment of (original/revised) objectives?

EFFECTIVENESS
2a. To what extent has the program contributed to improved early childhood service delivery in identified communities?
b. What factors are responsible for program effectiveness?
In other words:
2.1. Are end of program outcomes on-track for being achieved? If not, why not?
2.2. Are program implementation personnel and technical advisers sufficiently qualified and experienced, as well as resourced and equipped, to assist the program and respond efficiently and effectively to any changes?
2.3. (For Component 4) How has the program improved ECCE delivery through MoET?

EFFICIENCY

3. Has the program made effective use of time and resources to achieve the outcomes?

In other words:

3.1.   Have the delivery mechanisms (including DFA Component 4, as well as the outsourcing of the program to World Vision) been efficient? Have management and supervision arrangements been adequate?

3.2. Has management of the program been responsive to changing needs? If not, why not?

3.3. What are the risks to achievement of program outcomes? Have the risks been managed appropriately?

SUSTAINABILITY

4.   Are identified program benefits sustainable beyond the period of the program?

In other words:

4.1. Are beneficiaries (Kindergarten teachers) and/or other stakeholders likely to have sufficient ownership, capacity and resources to maintain activity outcomes after funding ceases?

Other questions are:

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

To what extent have cross-cutting and related issues – particularly gender, inclusion, health, and child protection – been adequately addressed in guiding documents and implementation both by World Vision and under Component 4?

The original ToRs also contained a section relating to Monitoring and Evaluation.

3. End users

The end users of the evaluation will be:

- MoET – in particular the ECCE Unit, Director Basic Education Services and Director, Policy and Planning
- World Vision Vanuatu and World Vision New Zealand
- Development Partners
- MFAT Port Vila and Education Team, Wellington
- DFAT Port Vila and Education Team, Canberra.

The Evaluation Report will provide analysis to inform management decisions surrounding future directions, including modalities and focus.

4. Methodology

Data will be collated from four sources:

- a review of relevant documentation (Attachment A provides a list of documents)
- structured interviews with selected stakeholders
- focus groups discussions
- trained observer ratings from site visits.

Questions to inform the data collection related to the key questions identified in the ToRs are given below:

Relevance : 1. Are the original and revised program outcomes still realistic and relevant to the Vanuatu context?		
Focus Question	**Audience**	**Methodology**
1. 1. What is MoET's vision for ECCE? Has it changed since the start of the program**?**	Director General Director Education Services Shefa Coordinator PEOs in 3 pilot communities TA VITE	Document Analysis Interview
1.2. In what ways does the pilot program support MoET's current vision for ECCE? Does it still meet government priorities?	Director General Director Education Services Shefa Coordinator PEOs in 3 pilot communities TA VITE World Vision Port Vila World Vision field officers	Document Analysis Interview
Effectiveness **2. To what extent will the program succeed in achieving its outcomes?**		
2.1a. To what extent do you feel that by attending ECE children's readiness for Year 1, especially in literacy and numeracy, has been improved?	Grade 1 teacher Parents	Interviews Focus group
2.2. To what extent have teachers benefited from the support of the program to provide quality care and education to young children?	Kindy teachers	Interview Observation
2.3. Do pilot Kindergarten teachers demonstrate sound instructional practice?	Committee Parents	Observation Focus group
2.4. To what extent have parents and communities benefited from the program?	Committee Champions	Interview Focus Group
2.5. How are parents supporting their children at home?	Committee Champions Parents and Community	Interviews Focus Group
2.6. What effect are champions having on school access, quality and management?	Community Parents Kindy teacher World Vision field officers World Vision Vila	Interview Focus group
2.7. What role do School Committees play in improving quality of the Kindy?	Community Parents Champions Kindy teachers World Vision Vila World Vision Field Staff	Interview Focus Group
2.8. What are the results of the alternative approaches which were piloted?	Observation World Vision Vila World Vision Field Staff	Site visit Interview
2.9 To what extent are Kindys following SECCE policy re standards?	Observation	Observation
2.10. What effects has the program had on access including access for vulnerable children?	Parents Kindy teachers Grade 1 teachers	Focus Group Interview
2.11. To what extent has the partnerships element worked well?		
2.12. To what extent has the grants element worked well?		
Efficiency **3. Has implementation of the program made effective use of time and resources to achieve the outcomes?**		
3.1. To what extent have delivery mechanisms (including the outsourcing of the program to World Vision and the DFA) been efficient? Have management and supervision arrangements been adequate?	Director Education Services PEOs World Vision Vila World Vision Field Staff	Interview

3.2. To what extent does project personnel (including TA) have the necessary skills and knowledge to support implementation?	World Vision field staff Director Education Services ECCE Adviser	Interview
3.3. To what extent were project activities implemented in a timely manner?	Director Education Services	**Interview**
3.4. What have been the successes of program implementation?	Director Education Services PEOs	
3.5 What have been the challenges?	Director Education Services PEOs	
Sustainability **4. Will the gains made by the program be sustainable?**		
4.1. To what extent is MoET convinced of the value of ECCE in terms of improve student readiness for school and ultimately learning outcomes?	Director General Director Education Services PEOs	
4.2. What funding and resources has the Ministry of Education secured to sustain ECE delivery in the three pilot provinces? Is it likely that long-term donor assistance will be needed?	Director General Director Education Services PEOs	
4.3. What is needed to ensure that gains made under the program are sustainable**?**	Director General Director Education Services PEOs	

The following tools and instruments were designed based on the questions above (see Annex B to D):

- Checklist for Site Visit to Kindy
- Interview Protocol A for Central and Provincial Ministry Staff
- Interview Protocol B for Champions
- Interview Protocol C for Grade 1 Teachers
- Interview Protocol D for Kindy Teachers
- Interview Protocol E for World Vision
- Focus Group Protocol for Parents
- Interview Protocol for non-Pilot Kindy Teachers.

Interviews and focus group are designed to be semi-structured. The tools above contain suggested questions to be asked at the discretion of the interviewer. The interview tools were piloted using role play (rather than real participants) to ensure that the questions were in a logical order and the interview did not take too long. Modifications were made to the tools as a result. Further modifications will also be made after the tools are piloted in the field during the Efate visits on Days 2 and 3 of the evaluation.

Where possible, observation should be supplemented by photographic evidence and collection of artefacts e.g. lesson plans, documents etc.

Sampling

There are a total of 60 Kindys in the pilot and they are broken down as follows.

Province	No. of sites	No to be visited (Non-pilot Kindys in brackets)
Efate	10	6 (4)
Malampa	14	6 (3)
Torba	36	11

Purposive sampling has been used to identify both pilot and non-pilot schools. Where possible, a representative sample was selected of remote versus non-remote; and attached to primary school/not attached to primary school.

Data Collection and Analysis

A narrative inquiry approach will be used to complete a first analysis of the data. Responses to the questions above will then be input into an EXCEL spreadsheet, collated (instruments are also cross-referenced by numbers above) and common trends identified. Where there are different views held by different stakeholders, this will be noted.

Limitations and Constraints of the Evaluation

As with all evaluations, there are limitations. The original composition of the Evaluation Team attempted to achieve a balance between those who have some background knowledge of Vanuatu and the program, together with external experts who can bring a fresh eye to the process. In the event, the team may be balanced towards those with some existing knowledge of the program.

While it is not the mandate of the team to offer advice on the extension or otherwise of the World Vision program, sensitivity will be needed when in the field as the continued employment of some of the team members is dependent on the program continuing.

In an attempt to mitigate these limitations and constraints, all stakeholders including World Vision will have the opportunity to comment on the findings, conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned of this evaluation. The final report will reflect these comments and will acknowledge any substantive disagreements. Members of the team without prior knowledge of the program will conduct interviews with respondents from the implementing partner. The Team Leader is aware of the need to distance herself from interviews with individuals who know her from her role as a leader of ECE in the Ministry.

Ethical Considerations

The team will adhere to normal ethical standards during the course of the evaluation e.g. (AES) Guidelines for the Ethical Conduct of Evaluations. The team will fully inform interview and focus group participants of the purpose of the evaluation and how the information will be used. Participants will be assured that their responses will be anonymous. If a person being interviewed does not appear to be comfortable answering any question, the team will not pursue the line of questioning. Response data will be kept securely. Written permission will be sought from parents or guardians before taking photographs in which children may appear.

5. Team allocation of tasks

Team Leader	Jenny James
Lead Consultant	Barbara Thornton
M&E Specialists	Jeffrey Tari (MoET)
	Alan Swan
Pacific ECE Specialist	Ufemia Camaitoga
DFAT Post	Christelle Theiffry
DFAT Canberra	Belynda McNaughton
MFAT Representative	Minnie Takaro

The Team Leader will be responsible for all aspects of the evaluation including finalisation of ToRs, approval of the Evaluation Plan, finalisation of tools and instruments, oversight of data collection and analysis, and presentation of results to MoET and development partners.

The Lead Consultant will be responsible for contribution to ToRs, drafting of the Evaluation Plan and associated tools and instruments, providing advice to the Team Leader on data collection and analysis. The Pacific ECE expert will provide a

regional and international perspective. The overall write-up and submission of the report will be the joint responsibility of the Team Leader and Lead Consultant. Other members of the team may be asked to contribute sections of the report.

Annex B: Key Documents Consulted

- VESS
- VERM
- SECCE design (supplied as extracts from the contract Scope of Services)
- VESP design
- SECCE Results Framework including Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (Final draft September 2015)
- SECCE Class 1 – Assessment Report 2015
- SECCE Annual Work Plan 2014
- SECCE Annual Work Plan 2015
- SECCE Annual Work Plan 2016
- SECCE Progress Reports (1 January 2015 to 30 June 2015, 1 July 2015 to 31 December 2015, 1 January 2016 to 30 June 2016) including annexes
- VESP Progress Reports
- VESP M&E Framework
- DFAT Education Strategy
- NZMFAT Education Strategy
- Kindy Committee Resource Guide (Kindakaten Komiti Risos Gaed)
- Class 1 Assessment Report (August 2015)
- Famili Toktok
- Pikinini Blong Yu Redi blong ko long Kindi
- Teacher Observation and Mentoring Booklets

Performance Monitoring Visit Tools

All tools and instruments produced by SECCE including:

- Children's Portfolio
- Kindy visit Checklist
- Reports of training and materials used
- Kindy Administrator Book.

Annex C: Site Visit Checklist and Other Tools

KINDY OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

Note: This checklist can be used with or without children in place.

#	SECTION	SPECIFIC TOPIC
	Background information	**Date:**
		Time:
		Location:
		Name :
		Name of school:
		No. of children in Kindy

OUTSIDE

	✓, X OR ?	COMMENTS
Is the size of the building appropriate for the number of children?		
Is the outdoor area safe and free of hazards, e.g. tree trunks, holes, rubbish?		
Is there outdoor play equipment for children?		
Is it safe? (Look for nails etc.)		
Is there sufficient shade for children?		
Is there a wet and dry sand pit? — is there a cover?		
Are the sand pits clean?		
Is there a cover for the sand pits?		
Are there separate toilets for boys and girls		
Are there hygienic WASH facilities? (Please state whether tippy tap, tank and hose etc. in last column)		
Is the school fenced (hedge or wire?)		
Are there hooks with names for the children to hang their bags?		
Is the environment attractive flowers, notice board etc.		

Other comments		

INSIDE

	✓, X OR ?	COMMENTS
Does the building have sufficient windows to let in light and air?		
Is the flooring suitable (even if concrete should still be a mat)?		
Is there a lockable storage corner?		
Are things arranged neatly in the storage corner?		
Are there enough books for the number of children?		
Is there a plastic box with stationery?		.
Is there a table and chair for the teacher?		
Is there a work table where children can do pre-writing and other activities?		
Are there named learning centres, e.g. pretend play corner, nature table, fine motor skills, reading etc.?		
Is there an up-to-date weather chart?		
Is there a reading centre?		
Are children's names with pegs displayed?		
Are there suitable wall displays including children's work?		
Does the teacher have an up-to-date lesson plan?		

Semi-Structured Interview Protocols for all Interviews

INSTRUCTIONS FOR INTERVIEWER

- Please start the interview by thanking the person for their time.

- Introduce yourself and explain the purpose of the interview (need to agree standard words on this) and your role.

- Tell them the interview will take approximately half an hour

- Ask permission for the interview. Tell the interviewee that if they do not wish to answer any question that is fine. Tell the interviewee that if they do not know the answer to a particular question, they should say so as some questions may not be relevant. Tell the interviewee they can stop the interview at any time.

- Assure them that their answers will be confidential and they will not be identified by name.

- Ask them if they mind unattributed quotes being used in the final report.

- Ask the interviewee each question only if relevant. You do not need to ask all questions. It is fine to use probing follow-up questions but do not lead them. Please note these on the form.

- Some questions may be irrelevant to an interviewee as they may have given the responses in earlier questions. You do not need to fill out each box.

Wherever possible, interview with two people present. One should take notes while the other asks the questions.

As soon as possible after the interview, please use the electronic version of this form to note down the answers you received as well as expand on anything that you did not have time to note down during the interview.

PERMISSION GIVEN FOR INTERVIEW ☐

A. Central and Local Ministry Officials: Interview Questions

#	SECTION	SPECIFIC TOPIC
	BACKGROUND INFORMATION	**Date:**
		Time:
		Location:
		Gender:
		What is your current position in the Ministry?
1.1.	**RELEVANCE**	What is MoET"s vision for ECCE? Where is ECCE heading according to the MoET vision? Where would you like to see ECCE in Vanuatu in five years' time?
		QUESTION FOR PEOs only Do you think Kindys are following ECCE policy in terms of a) structure b) teacher standards c) child age group? How could Kindys be helped to follow policy more closely?
1.2.		How well do you think the pilot program has helped MoET to achieve its vision? In what ways?
3.1	**EFFICIENCY**	Do you think if the pilot program continued it would help the Ministry to achieve its vision? Would it be better to put the money into another area of ECCE? If so what? Do you think the method of getting an NGO to implement the program has worked well? What were the advantages? What were the disadvantages? Would you recommend using an implementing partner in the future? If not, what other implementation arrangements would you recommend?
		The current ECE policy only covers formal child ECE provision. What are your thoughts on whether the new policy should cover other childcare provision, e.g. day care centres, home-based play groups, alternative Kindys, mobile Kindys etc.
		SDG Target 4.2 proposes: "by 2030 all boys and girls have access to quality early childhood care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education". How well do you think the Ministry is progressing towards meeting this target? What do you think the Ministry can do to ensure this goal is met?
3.2.		(QUESTION FOR DIRECTOR EDUCATION SERVICES) How would you rate World Vision staff in a number of areas related to the program? 　1) Technical skills in ECE 　2) Ability to work in the community 　3) Timeliness in completing key tasks?
3.3.		(All except DG) What have been the successes of program implementation? What have been the challenges?
4.	**SUSTAINABILITY**	

4.1.		What do you think the top leaders in the Ministry think about the value of ECCE? Are they convinced?
4.2.		Does the Ministry have the funding or has it managed to get other resources to keep on with ECE delivery in the pilot provinces or do you think that the donors will need to keep on with their support?
4.3.		How can we make sure that the good work started by World Vision continues after the program has finished? Who needs to take action to make sure that things carry on smoothly?
5.	**THE FUTURE**	
		(QUESTION FOR ALL EXCEPT DG) Do you think all children have access to pre-school? If not, why not? What are the barriers? What can the Ministry do to help to improve access?
	WRAP UP	Is there anything else we haven't covered that you would like to say? ***Do not forget to thank the interviewee at the end.***

B. Champions: Interview Questions

#	SECTION	SPECIFIC TOPIC
	BACKGROUND INFORMATION	**Date:**
		Time:
		Location:
		Gender:
		Do you have a family? How many children do you have?
		Do you work apart from being a champion?
		Why did you agree to be a champion?
2.7.	**SCHOOL COMMITTEE**	Are you on the school committee? If no, who is on the school committee? If yes, who else is on the school committee? How many men? How many women?
		What does the school committee do?
		What are the strengths of the school committee?
		How could the school committee function better?
2.6.	**ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**	What are your roles and responsibilities?
		What has been one success of the work you have done?
		What would help you to carry out your role better?
2.4.	**ROLE OF PARENTS**	In your community when children come home from Kindy, what do they typically do?
		How much time do parents spend playing with their children? Talking to their children?
		How much do parents help children to learn new things at home?
		How do parents react when you conduct your awareness raising?
		Can you give me some concrete ways in which parents have benefited from this program?
2.6	**ACCESS**	Do you think all children should go to Kindy and at what age? Are there some parents who don't send their children in this community? If so, why? What should be done about children who don't go to Kindy? What are some practical things which can be done? Are there children in the community with disabilities who didn't go to Kindy but now they do? How did it happen that they went to Kindy?
		How often do you go to the Kindy? What do you do when you go to the Kindy?

	TEACHER QUALITY	How do you support the teacher? What other support does the teacher receive? Is there any support that the teacher needs that the teacher isn't receiving?
		What do you think makes a good Kindy teacher? How would you rate the Kindy teacher on a scale of 1 to 5? (If not a 5) What would the teacher need to do in order to improve?
		Do you notice any differences now and when the program started? What are these differences?
3.4. 3.5.	TRAINING AND WORLD VISION	Did you attend World Vision training? What were the strengths of the training? What were the most useful things that teachers learned? What could be improved in the training?
3.4. 3.5.	EFFECTS OF WORLD VISION PROGRAM	Since World Vision started this program, what has improved? What have been the challenges?
4. SUSTAINABILITY		
4.1.		What do you think will happen when the World Vision program stops?
4.2.		What will be your role when the World Vision program stops?
	WRAP UP	
		Is there anything else we haven't covered that you would like to say? ***Do not forget to thank the interviewee at the end.***

C. Grade 1 Teachers: Interview Questions

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

#	SECTION	SPECIFIC TOPIC
	Background information	**Date:**
		Time:
		Location:
		Gender:
		How many children do you have in your class?
2.6.		**Do you think all children eligible for Class 1 are in Class 1? If not, why not?**
2.4.		**In your class do you have children who have attended the pilot Kindy?**
		Do you have children who have attended the non-pilot Kindy?
		Do you have children who have not attended Kindy?
		Do you notice any differences?
		Are there any disadvantages of children who do not attend kindy?
		(If not response to the above)Do you need to give any special help to children who have not attended kindy? What help do you need to give?
		Do you have a child with a disability in your class?
		Did that child go to kindy?
		If not, why not?

		If yes, to what extent did going to kindy help the child?
2.1.		How can you tell whether a child is ready for school? What do you expect a child to know when they begin school? Do you think they should know the letters? (JENNY, IVE LOOKED AT THE PACIFIC SCALES BUT NOT SURE WHAT EXACTLY TO INCLUDE – CAN WE SKYPE? - THERE IS SO MUCH IN THERE?)
OTHER	TEACHER PRACTICE IN CLASS	What language are you using to teach the children in your class? (If vernacular) How long have you been using vernacular? What is your opinion about the language policy?
2.6	TRANSITION	Does the kindy teacher coordinate with you? How? Did you and the kindy teacher do any activities together? If so, what? Did the kindy teacher visit your class? Did they bring the children? Have you ever been invited to visit the kindy? Have you visited? What contact, if any, do parents have with the school before their children come to school?
2.3.		What do you think makes a good kindy teacher? How would you rate the kindy teacher on a scale of 1 to 5. (If not a 5) What would the teacher need to do in order to improve?
3.4.		Since World Vision started this program, what differences, if any have you noticed?

3.5.		
4.	Sustainability	
4.1.		**What do you think will happen when the World Vision programme stops?**
4.2.		**How can we motivate the community to carry on with the good work that has been done?**
	Wrap Up	
		Is there anything else we haven't covered that you would like to say? **Do not forget to thank the interviewee at the end.**

D. Kindy Teachers: Interview Questions

#	SECTION	SPECIFIC TOPIC
	Background information	Date:
		Time:
		Location:
		Gender:
		How many children do you have in your class? (Boys / Girls / Children with
2.		Are all the children in your community attending kindy? If not, why not?
		Do they come at the right age? If not, why not?
		Think about three years ago? Are there more children coming to kindy, less children coming to kindy or about the same number as three years ago. (If there is a change) Why is that?
2.1.		How can you tell whether a child is ready for school?
		What do you expect a child to know when they begin school?

2.1.		**How has the program helped you prepare a child for class 1?**
2.9.		**Do you have a child with a disability in your class?** **Are there any challenges associated with the child?** **How do you help the child?**
2.6.		**What do champions do in your community?**
3.2. 2.4.		**What do community coordinators do? How have they helped parents? How have they helped the community to see the importance of early childhood?** **After using the family conversations with parents, to what extent has it helped them?**

2.3.	TEACHER PRACTICE IN CLASS	**What techniques do you use to discipline children?**
2.6.	COMMITTEE	**How many people are on the kindy committee? How many men? Women?** **Are you on the kindy committee? What is your role?** **How often does the committee meet?** **How supportive are the committee and in what ways? Have they always been supportive?**
2.2.	TRAINING	**What were the most useful things you learned? Was there anything new you learned or were you doing something you knew already?** **What was good about the training?** **To what extent were you able to actually use everything you learned in your work?** **If World Vision were doing more training what could they improve?**
3.4. **3.5.**	ASSESSMENT TOOL	**How useful is the new curriculum?** **How relevant is it to children? Is there anything which could make it more relevant?**

		How easy is it to use? Is there anything which would make it easier to use?
		Does it help you to make your lesson plans in any way? In what way?
		How useful do you think the assessment tool was (1 to 5)…. Why was it useful?
		How useful do you think the posters were?
		How useful do you think the stationery was?
2.4.	PARENTS	How often do you see children's parents? For what purposes? (e.g. parents education meeting, workshop etc)
		If parents come into the kindy what do they do? (probe for support, storytelling)
2.6	TRANSITION	Does the Primary 1 teacher coordinate with you? How?
		Did you and the Primary 1 teacher do any activities together? If so, what?
		Did the Primary teacher ever visit your class? Did the kindy children ever visit the Grade 1 class?

		What contact, if any, do parents have with the school and / or the Grade 1 teacher before their children come to school?
3.2.		How often does the coordinator visit you? How long do they stay? What do they do with you? Think about the last time they came. What time did they come? What did they do?
3.4. 3.5.		Since World Vision started this program, what differences, if any have you noticed? What have been the main successes? What have been the challenges?

4.	SUSTAINABILITY	
4.1.		**What do you think will happen when the World Vision programme stops?**
4.2.		**How can we motivate the community to carry on with the good work that has been done?**
	WRAP UP	

			Is there anything else we haven't covered that you would like to say? **Do not forget to thank the interviewee at the end.**

E. World Vision Staff: Interview Questions

#	SECTION	SPECIFIC TOPIC
	BACKGROUND INFORMATION	**Date:**
		Time:
		Location:
		Gender:
		What is your current position in World Vision?
		How long have you been with World Vision?
		Who was in the position before you? How long were they in that position? Why did they leave?
1.1.	**RELEVANCE**	The program has been supporting the Ministry in Vanuatu for the last three years. What is MoET's vision for ECCE? Where is ECCE heading according to the MoET vision? Where do you think they would like to see ECCE in Vanuatu in five years' time?
1.2.		How well do you think the pilot program has helped MoET to achieve its vision? In what ways?
2	**EFFECTIVENESS**	
(3.2.)		What have been the successes of the program?
(3.3)		What challenges has it faced?
2.1. / 2.10	(if not previously covered)	What benefits has the program brought to children?
2.2.	(if not previously covered)	What benefits has it brought to teachers?
2.6.		What have been the benefits and drawbacks of using champions?
2.7.		How well are school committees functioning?
3.1	**EFFICIENCY**	Do you think if the pilot program continued it would help the Ministry to achieve its vision? Would it be better to put the money into another area of ECCE? If so what? Do you think the method of getting an NGO to implement the program has worked well? What were the advantages? What were the disadvantages? Would you recommend using an implementing partner in the future? If not, what other implementation arrangements would you recommend?
3.2.		To what extent have World Vision been able to support the Ministry in implementation? In what ways have they been able to help?
4.	**SUSTAINABILITY**	

4.1.		What do you think the top leaders in the Ministry think about the value of ECCE? Are they convinced?
4.3.		How can we make sure that the good work started by World Vision continues after the program has finished? Who needs to take action to make sure that things carry on smoothly?
5.	**THE FUTURE**	
		If the program were extended for 2 years what do you think it could achieve? If the program were extended for 6 months what do you think it could achieve?
	WRAP UP	Is there anything else we haven't covered that you would like to say? ***Do not forget to thank the interviewee at the end.***

FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL – For parents and community

Notes to facilitator:

The following focus group protocol provides a guide in framing questions for the focus group.

Please initiate the focus with a brief explanation (approximately as follows):

We are conducting an evaluation of Kindys and the provision for Early Childhood Care and Education. This will help to guide improvements in the future. Your views are really important to guide this analysis. This conversation is confidential. You will not be identified. Please be as honest as you can. If there are any questions you prefer not to answer, that is OK as well.

- You will be given a paper and an electronic version of this protocol. Please use a paper version of the protocol sheets to record your hand-written notes during the focus group. Please record these notes in English if possible. If you are able to, please provide an electronic write-up of the focus group that should a) clarify and expand the notes recorded on the sheets so that they are clear to those who will analyse the data, and b) provide any additional reflections that you did not have time to record during the discussion and that you feel reflect what was provided to you by the members of the focus groups.

- There should be a brief discussion of the key findings with the other person sitting in on the focus group immediately after the focus group (where more than one person was involved).

- This focus group protocol just gives the different areas we would like you to look at. Please frame the actual questions as appropriate and include any follow-up questions you feel may be necessary. Make a note of these follow-up questions on this form.

- Some of the questions are only relevant to those who have children in the school rather than community members in general.

- The focus group should take about 30 minutes.

- Finish by thanking the respondents.

FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL – For parents and community members

#	SECTION	SPECIFIC TOPIC
	BACKGROUND INFORMATION	**Your name**
		Date:
		Time:
		Location:
		No. of participants:
		No. of males **No. of females**
		Type of school
		No of pupils in school

#		SPECIFIC TOPIC
2.10		Did you send your children to Kindy? Why / Why not?
		If yes, how old were they when you sent them to Kindy?
		Are there some parents in this area who do not send their children to Kindy? Why?
		Why do you think parents in general (i.e. in other parts of the country) do not send their children to Kindy?
		Are there any children with disabilities in the community? Do they attend Kindy? Why / why not?
		Why do you think children can't go straight to Primary 1?
2.1		What do you want your children to learn in Kindy?
		Did your children / do your children face any difficulties when they start Year 1?
2.7.		Does the Kindy have a school committee? How many of you are on the school committee? How many men and how many women are on the school committee?
		What do you know about what the school committee does?
2.4.		Have you attended any meetings related to the Kindy or early childhood? What happened at the meeting? What was it about? What was the most useful thing you learned? If there were more meetings, what do you think they should be about? How could these meetings be made more useful?

2.5.		Did you learn anything about how you can support your child at home? What did you learn? Were you able to apply what you learned? (Make sure you get specific answers here…if no specific answers are forthcoming, then please note this) How do you currently help your child at home? What exactly do you do?
2.6.	**Champions**	Is there a champion for your Kindy? Who is that person? (male or female)? What does that person do? How do you think the champion has helped the Kindy? What could the champion do better?
2.1.	**TEACHING AND LEARNING**	How much do you know about what happens in the Kindy? What do children learn? What do they do?
		If you could give the teacher a mark out of 10, how much would you give? What could the teacher improve?
		What could be improved in your Kindy?
	WRAP UP	Is there anything else you would like to say that we haven't covered?

Annex D: Strengthening ECCE in Vanuatu

Lessons learnt for the Pacific Islands

By Ufemia Camaitonga

Based on data collected throughout the evaluation of the SECCE program and data obtained from the Pacific Regional Council for ECCE 2015 Report using its five systems components, Vanuatu's strengths continue to be in the following areas.

Family and Community Partnerships:
Strengthened its awareness and advocacy with parents, families and communities, reaching out to some remote and rural maritime areas.

Through the SECCE partnerships, WASH is in practice in most of the communities with VIP toilets and use of tippy taps where water is an issue. The provision of local food for children's snacks throughout the different communities is encouraging and is evident of healthy living for the young children of Vanuatu and its future generation.

Strong affirmation from the communities that upon completion of this program, they would continue with an ECCE program as they have witnessed their children's readiness in terms of growth and development for primary schooling.

The Readiness Kits given to parents for 3–4 year olds to prepare them before entering Kindergarten could be better utilised if proper scaffolding in administering of the kits were done, perhaps in phases using the play-based pedagogy and with simple instructions, e.g. the stages children go through in drawing, i.e., scribbling, symbolical, recognisable needs to be understood by teachers and therefore inform parents and families rather than rushing them.

Curriculum, Child Assessment and Environment
Teaching and learning practices in the indoor environment displayed children's portfolios with an emphasis on literacy, numeracy, social sciences, communication and some drawings or paintings.

Documenting of children's progress and development was evident in all centres visited, which demonstrated accountability of the children's learning. Added to that, was the inclusion of an Observational Checklist. However, some teachers required training in administering these checklists as some were either not filled in or not up to date. Perhaps, the Observation – Planning cycle needed to be strengthened so efficient use of the checklist and other tools normally used for validating children's progress could be used with training provided to the teachers. This allows for accountability and raising the bar for teaching and learning by professionals.

Notably, children's work was on display along the walls with lots of charts in Bislama, although instructions were in the vernacular or home language mainly targeting parents. Perhaps, a clear demarcation of children's work along the walls at children's eye-level and charts for parents' information could be encouraged.

There seems to be a heavy focus on literacy and numeracy for the five-year olds with the slow disappearance of a play-based environment which impinges on the teacher's knowledge and level of child development. While literacy and numeracy is important for survival in the bigger national and regional agenda, it must be understood that play is a child's way of learning and development for his or her holistic development. This adds to encouraging a pushed-down curriculum for the young children of the Pacific if specialist ECCE staffing is not addressed aptly at senior management level nor teacher education programs.

Outdoor Practices

Generally, the use of local and natural materials to make multiple climbing frames, wooden slides, wet and dry sand pits with canoes for water play is something to marvel about and adopt within the region.

Policy, Legislation and Governance

ECCE will remain on national agendas. However, the *Education Act* needs to aptly address an ECCE establishment, with full staffing and budgetary allocations.

Human Resources

The current variation in training can be built into a progressive program mode to help accelerate teacher education, leading to a higher level teacher training program meeting the needs of a 21st century teacher.

Performance, Monitoring and Assessment

SECCE and Community Coordinators are a good model for Pacific Island countries, and they can be adapted to ensure quality performance, monitoring and assessment at all levels.