

Independent Evaluation of the Vanuatu Technical and Vocational Education and Training Sector Strengthening Program

Final Report
22 July 2015

Key Lessons - Summary Statement (Full report forthcoming)

Success Factors

Many factors drive the success of this Program, but some stand-out. Based on an analysis of the six success factors specified in the Evaluation Plan, the evaluation concluded that all of them have contributed to the widely-acknowledged success of the Program: the value chain approach; decentralised service delivery; the M&E System (notwithstanding some limitations); communications and relationships; the Program's sustainability framework; and the Program's links with other aid programs. Arguably the most important of these was the decision to move to decentralised service delivery in the Provinces, although other factors were in play that facilitated this successful change. The M&E system and the value chain approach to sectoral development have also been important drivers. The evaluation also identified two further success factors, not specified in the Evaluation Plan - local leadership and ethical, values-based leadership – that are likely to be contributing to the emergence of developmental leadership and coalitions for change in the Vanuatu TVET system.

Key lessons

The evaluation identified eight key lessons.

1. In decentralised contexts with relatively large rural populations, a simultaneous bottom-up and top-down implementation strategy is more likely to support the development of a 'joined-up' TVET system in which the three TVET dimensions of strategy, oversight and service delivery are carefully aligned and mutually reinforcing.
2. Cross-sector cooperation amongst a diverse range of public and private stakeholders is essential to the development of an effective TVET system; where this cooperation does not yet exist, it can be facilitated by programs that are sufficiently nimble to work at national, provincial and sectoral levels simultaneously to create critical breakthroughs.
3. A value-chain approach which links the formal and informal economies but which is grounded in the existing customary order of informality can be a powerful means of transforming sectoral skills development while also facilitating changed behaviour in both economies and fostering private-sector engagement in skills agendas.
4. Programs that focus on long-term transformations but persistently work day-to-day with the grain of local custom and culture rather than from an externally devised blue-print are more likely to achieve their outcomes and be sustainable.

5. An incremental, iterative, participatory and adaptive approach to both system and organisational change in Vanuatu is more likely to ensure those changes are locally sustainable.
6. Consistent, regular, relevant and respectful two-way communication between development programs and country partners helps build consensus and facilitates the emergence of resilient local coalitions and leadership genuinely committed to better development outcomes.
7. Long-term continuity of both program personnel and DFAT personnel in program design, management, implementation and review allows for the growth of deep local knowledge and skills and the development of mutual trust between the Program and its implementation partners.
8. The wider relationship between Australia and partner governments can be strengthened through actions that demonstrate a very long-term commitment to supporting a mutually agreed priority development agenda and in doing so opens up new opportunities to work cross-sectorally both in the country and regionally and enhances Australia's reputation as a trusted, committed, and knowledgeable development partner.