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NEWS IN BRIEF

Work plan contributing to better education in Vanuatu signed

On 3 February the New Zealand, Australian and Vanuatu Governments, and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) signed the Vanuatu Ministry of Education's annual work plan for 2010, which will contribute to better education for school children in Vanuatu.

The 2010 annual work plan was prepared by the Ministry of Education based on priorities and strategies identified in the Vanuatu Education Road Map (VERM), a three year plan for education in Vanuatu developed in 2009. The annual work plan includes funding and support to reduce and phase out fees in primary schools from 2010 and funding for the development of 32 new primary school classrooms.

The NZAID programme has committed up to NZ\$12 million over three years to support the Ministry of Education's putting the VERM into practice. In the 2010 calendar year, the New Zealand Government will provide approximately NZ\$4.5 million directly to the Ministry to help implement the work plan and provide funding support for Technical Advisors.



Donors and Vanuatu Government representatives sign the VERM work plan for 2010.

New police housing in Solomon Islands a step closer

A significant step has been made in gaining new accommodation for Royal Solomon Islands Police Force officers with the announcement that tenders are being sought for the construction of 84 new police houses.

The new or refurbished houses will

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NewZAID updates you in brief on key issues and events on the NZAID programme agenda. Please click on the useful links included in this newsletter to explore issues in greater depth.

Cook Islands and Tonga battered by cyclones

The Cook Islands and Tonga were hit by Cyclone Pat and Cyclone Rene on 11 February and 14 February respectively, causing significant damage to Aitutaki (Cook Islands) and limited damage throughout Tonga. Penrhyn in the Northern Cook Islands was also affected by storms, with Tropical Depression 11F causing damage to homes and buildings.



A scene of the damage created by Cyclone Rene on Vava'u, Tonga.

A limited number of homes were destroyed by the cyclones while a number of others were damaged. Fortunately there have been no fatalities or major injuries. Crops have been significantly damaged in both Aitutaki and Tonga but there are no immediate food needs. The cyclones cut power, telecommunications and water supplies which have since been largely restored.

In order to manage the New Zealand response, the Emergency Task Force, the core group of government agencies and non-government organisations that have direct involvement in, and responsibility for, disaster relief and response in the Pacific, met regularly and crisis response mechanisms were put in place.

New Zealand is liaising closely with the Cook Islands and Tongan Governments to determine their needs and how best these can be met, including discussions on longer-term recovery and reconstruction requirements.

Cook Islands

The New Zealand Government has contributed NZ\$350,000 to the relief effort in the Cook Islands, including a NZ\$100,000 contribution to the Red Cross, along with relief supplies.

Following a request for assistance, a New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) C-130 Hercules was deployed to the Cook Islands with relief supplies and 12 NZDF personnel with a wide range of skills (including electricians, a builder, heavy plant operators, and a plumber). The C-130 Hercules ferried supplies from Rarotonga to Aitutaki for two days. NZDF personnel stayed in Aitutaki to complete relief tasks including erecting temporary shelters for those who lost homes, fixing and certifying electricity to homes, repairing damaged water mains, and repairing local schools to ensure children can return to classrooms.

A C-130 Hercules returned to the Cook Islands on 26 February to make a relief flight to the Penrhyn Islands, and replenish emergency stocks on Rarotonga used in the response to Cyclone Pat. The C-130 delivered New Zealand Government and Red Cross supplies to the island on 27 February local tradespeople from Rarotonga up to Penrhyn to help with reconstruction efforts, and Cook Island Government officials to advise on education and infrastructure.

The Hercules picked up the NZDF team and their equipment from Aitutaki on Monday 1 March to return to New Zealand.

Tonga

New Zealand is committed to helping Tonga recover from Cyclone Rene. Chainsaws were gifted to Tonga's Defence Service to assist with debris clearance. Further assistance will be determined once damage assessments from the outer islands have been fully completed and considered by the Tongan Government.

For more information about New Zealand's response to the cyclones email communications@nzaid.govt.nz.

Support for small scale Papua New Guinean farmers on the way

Small scale farmers in Papua New Guinea (PNG) are set to receive a helping hand through the Smallholder Support Services Expansion Project.

On 17 February 2010, the Government of PNG and the NZAID programme signed a NZ\$2.5 million dollar agreement that aims to improve the quality of life for smallholder farmers and their families by increasing their access to agriculture support services and technical assistance through the National Department of Agriculture and Livestock.

Over 80 percent of PNG's population live in rural areas and rely on agriculture for their

provide accommodation for Royal Solomon Islands Police officers and their families in Guadalcanal and Western Provinces. The RAMSI (the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands) project will see 34 houses funded through the NZAID programme; with an additional 50 houses funded by Australia.

Solomon Islands Minister for Police, James Tora, welcomed the request for tenders as a key stage in addressing the stability and security issues in Solomon Islands. "Providing safe, comfortable housing is an important part of recognising the hard work of the men and women of the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force. These new houses are critical to helping to establish policing as a leading, long-term career option in Solomon Islands," said Mr Tora.

The construction project is anticipated to be a major local employer, and will provide a significant boost to the Solomon Islands economy as materials, where possible, will be procured locally.

For more information about the project contact [Matthew Howell](#).

Now accepting applications for the International Development Research Fund!

The NZAID programme is now accepting applications for the International Development Research Fund (IDRF) to carry out and disseminate research that is likely to improve development policy and practice.

The fund is open to New Zealand based researchers to carry out research in partnership with researchers from developing countries. Research supported by the fund will focus on advancing development policy and practice in regions, countries and sectors aligned to New Zealand official development assistance priorities, and is likely to be of relevance and interest to both the New Zealand development community and the region, country or development sector that is the focus of the research.

This year the NZAID programme is particularly encouraging proposals detailing research that focuses on sustainable economic development. However, other proposals will also be considered.

The deadline for applications is 1.00pm (NZT), Friday 14 May 2010.

For more information and to download the application guidelines visit the NZAID programme's [website](#).

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The next issue of Currents, available now, has a tourism focus and includes articles on NZAID programme-supported tourism initiatives in the Pacific, Afghanistan and the Greater Mekong Sub-region, a story covering White Ribbon Day in the Pacific, and profiles the ongoing New Zealand response to the devastating September 2009 earthquake in West Sumatra, Indonesia.

livelihoods. A large number of these people are small farmers whose access to technical knowledge is limited. This makes it difficult for them to improve their agricultural practices and successfully engage in markets, which impacts on their overall income.

The assistance that the Smallholder Support Services Expansion Project provides to these farmers aims to address this issue. Groups of approximately 20 farmers identify priority needs and then come together to receive support from a local expert. A wide range of technical skills are covered, ranging from improvements to growing techniques, bookkeeping skills, food processing, and cooking and nutrition.

The Expansion Project builds on a pilot project in Eastern Highlands and Morobe Provinces. The original project benefited over 16,000 households, mostly through employment opportunities and generating higher household incomes.

New Zealand's funding will supplement that provided by the Government of PNG and help extend the programme to Central and Simbu provinces, institutionalise the project's processes and systems, and support involvement by women in the scheme.

"Strengthening and expanding the project will ensure that it continues in the years to come and reaches more people in PNG," New Zealand's High Commissioner to PNG Niels Holm said.

In addition to supporting the Smallholder Support Services Expansion Project, the NZAID programme supports a number of other economic development initiatives that focus on the rural population. For more information about the NZAID programme in PNG contact [Caroline Newson](#).

The global fight against disease

It is shockingly recent that AIDS treatment in most developing countries was non-existent. In 2001, international economic, political and social barriers left millions of people in poor countries excluded from the treatments that had been widely available in developed countries for years.

This situation was one of the catalysts for the formation in 2002 of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, a unique private-public funding agency based around inclusiveness. The Global Fund has become the primary funder for the treatment of these diseases in the developing world and to date has committed US\$19 billion in 144 low income countries and mid-income countries that have a high burden of disease.

On 23 February Dr Michel Kazatchkine, the director of the Global Fund, was in New Zealand as part of a visit to several countries to raise consciousness about the Global Fund and encourage ongoing donor support.

His arguments were compelling. It is calculated that since the Global Fund's inception, funding on AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria initiatives has allowed for 5 million lives to be saved, and about 3,600 lives per day.

One of the key points Dr Kazatchkine makes is that this success is not 'owned' by the Global Fund, but by the countries themselves. They apply to the Global Fund for funding for specific objectives, and ongoing funds are disbursed only when objectives are met. This performance-based transparency has been key to the fund's ongoing success, as it maintains accountability to both the affected communities and to donors, who can track where money is going.

For more information about the Global Fund, visit <http://www.theglobalfund.org>

Wellington rugby players receive thanks for helping to tackle domestic violence

Wellington rugby player Victor Vito accepted a certificate of appreciation from the Commissioner of Police, Howard Broad, in early February on behalf of players from the Wellington Rugby Football Union. The players have been praised for their participation in a NZAID programme-supported domestic violence campaign during a visit to Samoa last year.

While in Samoa in November, 10 members of the Wellington Hurricanes and Lions teams lent a hand to support the Pacific Prevention of Domestic Violence Programme (PPDVP), taking the message "Break the Silence, End the Violence" into villages and schools throughout the country.

The PPDVP is funded through the NZAID programme and run by New Zealand Police and the Pacific Island Chiefs of Police. Its aim is to contribute to a safer Pacific, free of domestic violence. This will be achieved through increased police capacity in the Pacific to prevent and deal with domestic violence, and strengthened legislative and policy environments to effectively respond to domestic violence at both national and regional levels.

Programme manager for the PPDVP, Cam Ronald said the collaboration with Wellington rugby was a first for the PPDVP and the players made a huge impact wherever they went.

"These young men are role-models both here and in the Pacific and it was a fantastic opportunity for us to have them supporting the domestic violence message while in Samoa," said Mr Ronald. "Most of the 10 players who went to Samoa have very close ties with the country, having either been born there or having family there. They are hugely respected by the people in Samoa, especially young men and boys, who are a key audience for the anti-domestic violence message."

The players also made a series of three anti-domestic violence advertisements while



Dr Michel Kazatchkine speaks at a press conference for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. Photo - UN Photo/Devra Berkowitz



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NewZAID

If you have any comments or suggestions to make regarding NewZAID please contact nadine.koszler@nzaid.govt.nz

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in-country that will run on Samoan television during the high profile Super 14 season rugby games.

For more information about the PPDVP contact communications@nzaid.govt.nz.

Past Issues

