



Technical Assistance Consultant's Report

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Marshall Islands: Pilot Collaborative Public Services Delivery (Financed by the Asian Development Bank Technical Assistance Special Fund)

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For the RMI Office of the Chief Secretary

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Asian Development Bank

Youth Social Service Specialist, Final Input
Pilot Collaborative Public Services Delivery, ADB TA 4794



National Training Council
Special Board Meeting: March 15, 2008

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Purpose and Duration of Assignment

In late 2006, an international consultant was engaged through Team Work International as Youth Social Service Specialist for ADB TA 4794 *Pilot Collaborative Public Services Delivery* in the Republic of the Marshall Islands. The purpose of the assignment was to

- Follow-up on recommendations of ADB TA 4219 (2005) *Preparing the Youth Social Services Project*
- Assist the National Training Council (NTC) develop a strategic plan and annual work program and enhance operational capacity
- Assist in the development of a National TVET Strategy

This component of the TA was conducted in 3 in-country inputs (Nov 2006, March 2007 and March 2008) and executed by the NTC. Other aspects of this TA are being administered through the Ministry of Education.

Development and Review of Strategic Plan

The NTC Strategic Plan 2007-2012 was developed through a comprehensive planning process involving extensive consultation with a wide range of public and private sector stakeholders. The Plan, endorsed by the NTC Council in early 2007 identifies a series of objectives, strategies and performance indicators in six areas of strategic focus over a five year period.

In March 2008, the consultant conducted a high level analysis of year one implementation to help guide the ongoing NTC and TVET sector reform process. This report highlights the findings and recommendations arising from this review. During this input, the consultant also assisted the Australian Pacific Technical College (APTC) conduct a scoping mission and provided organization development training for NTC staff in areas of work organization, planning, policy & procedures and M&E systems development.

1. Basic Education and Life Skills

Key Findings

- NTC contribution is significant despite scale and sustainability issues
- Worsening national literacy crisis
- Continued leadership vacuum

Recommendations

- 1.1 NTC undertake immediate review of current Basic Education and Life Skill initiatives including sustainability options as basis for future funding determination and building M&E capacity within NTC (short term external TA identified)
- 1.2 Pending results of the review, continue base funding of current initiatives on short term basis to avoid dropping students and underpinning program effectiveness and momentum
- 1.3 Define role of NTC in provision of on-going remedial literacy/numeracy and determine percentage of NTC annual budget for basic education (Board)
- 1.4 Ensure current NTC funded providers are linked with other funding sources (Director)
- 1.5 Support development of the Adult Education Stream as intrinsic part of the National Human Resource Development Strategy (Director)
- 1.6 High level political engagement to determine mandate, accountability and funding for Adult Education in RMI and required legislative and regulatory amendment (Chair/Cabinet)

2 Sustainable Livelihoods

Key Findings

- NTC contribution minor; logistic and communication issues reduce ability to mobilize and monitor training

Recommendations

- 2.1 Assist the Ministry of Resources and Development assume the lead role in development and oversight of the Outer Island and Non-Formal Training Plan in

partnership with key delivery agents, including NGOs and external funders (Director)

- 2.2 NTC to undertake compilation of outer island micro-enterprise training needs analyses to underpin the national Human Resource Development Plan - of which the Outer Island and Non-Formal Training Plan is a critical component (External Consultant, Ben Graham)
- 2.3 Provide low level financial support for innovative pilot training initiatives aimed at youth under 24 years where training outcomes are likely to succeed (Staff)
- 2.4 Maintain 'Trainer's Registry' of individual trainers and experts available locally with identified skills in non-formal training and make available to training organizations and funding agencies (Ben/Staff)

3 Technical and Vocational Skills

Findings

- The immense deficiency in provision of technical and vocational training in RMI is severely restricting economic development and undermining social cohesion.
- NTC financial contribution significant though highly focused sector and geographic disbursement
- Inadequate internal capacity for monitoring of delivery, expenditure and outcomes to determine overall effectiveness
- Significant increase in Job Corp numbers and improved organization
- Greater opportunities to benefit from regional TVET initiatives
- RMI Scholarship Board revising policies with increased emphasis on TVET studies
- Reduction in force through KRS creates additional demand and supply for skilled labor requiring strategic management
- Developing and maintaining a closer partnership between Government, NTC and the private sector is vital for effective and cost efficient human resource development in RMI.

Recommendations

- 3.1 NTC undertake immediate review of current Technical and Vocational initiatives as basis for future funding determination and building M&E capacity (short term external TA identified)

- 3.2 Pending results of the review, continue base funding of current initiatives on short term basis to avoid dropping students and underpinning program effectiveness (Board)
- 3.3 Enter into Service Agreement with the Australian Pacific Technical College to provide recruitment and post-learning support and assign appropriate qualified staff (Director/Board)
- 3.4 In collaboration with the private sector and TVET providers, set enrolment target of suitably qualified, strategically positioned individuals for immediate up-skilling in labor deficient areas through APTC programs (Director/TVET Committee)
- 3.5 Actively explore opportunities for increased RMI participation in sub-regional training efforts being driven by the Guam build-up. (Director)
- 3.6 Advocate for continued expansion of the Job Corp Program to optimize benefits for RMI economy through fast tracking, increased number of participants and provision of incentives upon return. Further collaboration and sharing of data with Ebeye Job Corp recruitment agent is required for analysis and advocacy purposes (Staff)
- 3.7 Develop Job Corp Information Management System (Ben Graham)
- 3.8 In collaboration with industry, prioritize 3-4 vocational focus areas with significant current/projected demand for skilled labor and dependence on foreign workers and identify most effective least cost strategy to train RMI citizens and retain skills. These initiatives, conjointly developed and monitored by the private sector will be funded through the NTC Training Fund. Suggested focus areas for the next 3 years include i) Construction and related trades (ii) Tourism and Hospitality and iii) Office Administration, including bookkeeping (Director/COC/Board/TVET Committee)
- 3.9 In collaboration with industry and other service providers, NTC assume responsibility for development the TVET component of the National Human Resource Development Plan (Director)
- 3.10 Develop detailed methodology for implementation of new Annual RMI Employer Survey System using the 2006 survey as the baseline (Ben Graham)

4. Employment and Ethics

Recommendations

- 4.1 Ensure life/employment skills are integrated in all NTC funded programs (Staff)

- 4.2 Organize bi-monthly radio broadcasts on training options and issues (Staff).
- 4.3 Develop "One-Stop" Employment Center Concept (Ben Graham)
- 4.4 Develop NTC Website and train staff in maintenance (Ben Graham)

5. Policy and Partnership

Recommendations

- 5.1 Maintain leadership of the multi-agency TVET Steering Committee to oversee development of a National Human Resource Development Strategy. (Director)
- 5.2 Ensure Cabinet is well informed about the rationale for developing a National HRD Strategy and is prepared to revise institutional mandates and budget allocations for adult education (Chair)
- 5.3 In view of ADB's previous and current investment in NTC, TVET (STAVE Project), education sector reform and private sector growth, seek additional TA to finalize the National Human Resource Development Plan including legislative issues and funding arrangements from national and foreign sources (Draft TA paper presented by Director).

6. Organizational Development

Findings

- NTC lacks operational capacity to carry out its mandate or successfully implement the Strategic Plan.
- Fundamental to the reform process, in March 2007 the NTC Council adopted a new organization structure and agreed to redefine job descriptions and appoint all staff through merit based open competition. The Deputy Director position has not been filled and all staff have been extended and placed in new positions without adequate training or supervision.

Recommendations

- 6.1 Based on the outcomes of this Board consultation, new job descriptions will be drafted to reflect strategic and operational priorities (Director/Board).
- 6.2 It is highly recommended that the NTC Board prioritize selection of all staff through merit based competition as a matter of urgency. (Board/TVET Committee)
- 6.3 Ensure full time, in-house TA is in place over at least the next year to develop staff competencies and organizational processes required for accountability and efficiency. Possibilities for organizational development TA are being explored

through the Pacific Technical Assistance Mechanism (PACTAM). The RMI Government is required to make an official request for capacity building support for PACTAM or other identified partners (Board)

Overall Recommendations

1. Concentrate resources on provision of TVET services in 3-4 areas of national demand/deficiency by facilitating specialized in-country training and increasing entry of RMI students in regional institutions
2. Drive decision on institutional responsibility for Literacy and Adult Education.
3. Become more opportunistic, proactive and focused. – “less talk, more training”
4. Improve operational performance through in-house TA for medium term
5. Engage, train and support qualified and highly motivated staff
6. Increase private sector involvement on the NTC Board
7. Increase systematic engagement with industry
8. Legitimate National TVET Committee and maintain NTC leadership role
9. Strengthen internal monitoring and evaluation to ensure accountability initiatives
10. Strengthen the Board's role in TVET advocacy, NTC representation, governance and accountability