Welcome to edition number 3 of CeeZine, the quarterly newsletter for members of the Advisory Group to the BRIDGE Civic Education Development Project (CEDP). The purpose of the newsletter is to keep you all informed about current planning, developments, issues and ideas.

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1. Trial of the Pilot Module – Pacific

It was a world-first in Port Vila, Vanuatu when the CEDP pilot module, Democracy in Our Place (DiOP) came to town for its first ever trial. The CEDP team, the Vanuatu office of UNIFEM and a team of motivated local facilitators worked together to deliver what was a highly enjoyable and successful workshop to a lively and passionate group of participants of Vanuatu community leaders and activists.

The CEDP team had two main objectives for the workshop:

✔ That participants explored the concepts of democracy and good governance as well as develop their knowledge, skills and values about these concepts;

✔ That the CEDP team was able to assess the appropriateness of the CEDP materials and methodology.

Thanks to a thorough evaluation process, spearheaded by the Evaluation Expert, Nicolas Garrigue, the team was able to take some extremely valuable lessons from the workshop in terms of the suitability of the curriculum for the target audience, the appropriateness of the program components, the generic curriculum structure and the session plans.

Who was involved?

The five-day workshop had a huge team supporting it. The CEDP team of Yvonne and Melanie was supported by regular project contributors Noel Matthews (curriculum advisor), Therese Laanela (curriculum editor) and Nicolas Garrigue (evaluation expert). Support came in huge measure from the Vanuatu office of UNIFEM, which became involved with the CEDP because of its synergies with UNIFEM Pacific’s Gender Equality in Political Governance program. Thanks to Hanna Lindley-Jones, Ellenson Taurakoto and Grayleen Lapi.

The facilitation team consisted of four excellent local trainers – Seman Dalesa and Rothina Ilo from the Department of Women’s Affairs, John Salong (consultant) and Josephine Kalsuak from Vanuatu Renewable Energy/Power Association. They were joined by Noel Mathews and CEDP writer Beatrice Barnett (AEC) to face the challenge of facilitating a brand new module, and did so with great success.
The participants came from civil society and the government, including: the First Lady; media; national and local government; Elections Office; women’s groups and others.

In addition, a group of interested observers from organisations such as UNIFEM and the University of the South Pacific played an important role in watching and assessing the workshop, as well as occasionally getting involved in the activities. The CEDP team thanks them for their feedback.

What happened?

During the week participants explored the concepts, values and principles underlying democratic governance. The workshop was divided into five sections, each covering elements of democracy and good governance.

1. Democracy & Me/Introduction: We all have a personal stake in the democratic process and we all come to this training program with different understandings about concepts such as democracy based upon our own experience. So it’s important to ask: what do I want to learn on this journey?

2. Democracy is Good for All: Exploring definitions and theories of democracy; looking at democracy as a set of core theories, principles and values which are applied differently in many different contexts.

3. Making Democracy Real: Moving from universal values to local realities involves many hard choices about the kind of democracy which will work best and how to deal with local cultural contexts and political realities. Many lessons can be learned by looking at the choices made by others and how they affected all those involved.

4. Making Democracy Better: Democracy is not just about decision making and results. It’s also about processes which are inclusive as well as institutions and organisations that work for the common good.

5. Democracy In Action: Understanding private and public action in support of democracy, planning for participation and leadership for change at a local level.

The last stage of the workshop was to develop individual ‘Action Plans’ in response to challenges the participants had identified throughout the week. Examples of some of the actions participants plan to take include:

- Running workshops using materials and ideas from DiOP
- Organising awareness campaigns in local communities, through radio programs, community meetings
- Organising stakeholder consultation with key community members
- Improving internal strategies and structures of community organisations

Another great development was the establishment of a committee or working group of individuals interested in enhancing democracy in Vanuatu. Independently created by a group of participants after the workshop, the committee is called ‘FIST’ – a Forum In Support of Training for Democracy in Our Place – and plans to meet every first Thursday of the month at the lunch hour. The Chair of FIST will be with Transparency International Vanuatu, and we look forward to hearing how they go.

One observer at the Vanuatu workshop described the journey of the participants in this way:
“The curriculum of the ‘Democracy in Our Place’ module contains several interactive activities, concept-building exercises, critical and analytical tools and fun-filled, adult learning strategies that enhance one’s ability to consolidate key understandings and learning outcomes.

The systematic flow in curriculum design ensures that the participant is taken on a journey where one first explores the contextualised notions of ‘democracy’ before considering universally accepted norms and definitions. The participant is then shown how ideally, democratic values feed into the principles which, in turn, build up and sustain the elements of democracy; these then bear ‘fruits of democracy’ and the cycle continues. The curriculum also incorporates spatial provisions in its methodology where one can critically examine the commonalities and tensions surrounding attempts at bridging ‘democratic’ and ‘traditional’ values, principles and systems of governance. Conversations of what works and what does not are facilitated by various activities such as the cross-cutting themes, ‘What Democracy Means to Me’, ‘Democracy Portrayed’, ‘Democracy Gallery’, ‘Human Rights Race/Power Walk’ and the role plays.

The expected outputs and outcomes from such capacity building curriculum is that participants are empowered by the knowledge, networking, skills and dispositions acquired through this module to become more actively engaged in the community and address existent democratic and governance challenges.”

What did we learn from the Vanuatu trial?

The project team came away from the workshop having learned a great deal, and are grateful to the participants and many others involved in the workshop for their contributions. Some of the key lessons were:

- The proposed CEDP target audience (those working in democracy and governance seeking professional development) was appropriate
- The duration, structure and timing of the workshop were appropriate to the audience and the content and the workshop aims – with some minor refinements.

Next steps for this stage of the CEDP

- Fully develop the draft Meta Framework and draft Curriculum Framework
- Develop a model curriculum for the regional program
- Fully develop additional resources that were identified as crucial to the content and topics covered
- Fully develop Implementation and Customising Guidelines
- Communicate these developments to all stakeholders

Participants’ Quotes

“The course has given me a foundation of knowledge that allows me now to address issues of democracy & human rights in my community and country”.

“It’s the first course that has really challenged what I thought I already knew on democracy”.  
“I feel now that I understand the concept of democracy”.

“It really gave me knowledge of democracy and how traditional & modern democracies are related to each other”.

2. Curriculum Framework

The meta-framework is still evolving! Much work was done during and after the Vanuatu workshop to refine and articulate the curriculum content or ‘storyboard’ sequencing of themes and topics. It was also decided that to assist customisers and facilitators in managing the large number of activities, those activities should be categorised as either ‘core’ or ‘elective’.

Now the Democracy in our Place curriculum is structured around a meta-framework which consists of four progressive themes which are then cross-cut with four learning areas:

I. The Progressive Themes

- Democracy Is Good For All
- Making Democracy Real
- Making Democracy Better
- Democracy in Action

II. The Learning Areas:

- Global Knowledge
- Local Knowledge
- Communication & Process Skills
- Action Learning

You can read more about this new meta-framework, with detailed descriptions of each theme and learning area and the full structure on the BRIDGE website at http://bridge-project.org/index.php/CEDP-Documents.html.

3. Trial of the Pilot Module – Asia

Next month the Democracy in Our Place module travels to Bhutan for its second trial. With the assistance of the Electoral Commission of Bhutan (ECB), the workshop will again be targeting those who work in democracy and governance in the community, and will give the CEDP team a chance to address some of the lessons learned in Vanuatu, and to trial some new materials and create some others.

To prepare for this workshop, Yvonne and Noel travelled to Thimphu in June to work with the local ECB team to meet stakeholders, mentor facilitators and shape the workshop so that it is contextualised for the Bhutanese audience. In Thimphu they met with some of the facilitation team and other stakeholders – from the ECB Tshewang Jamtsho, Kinley, Ugyen Gonphel and from UNDP, Chencho Gyalmo Dorjee (National Programme Officer). Preparations are well underway for the 25-29 August workshop, and the participants for this workshop are, as was the case in Vanuatu, coming from a diverse background in government and civil society.
4. Evaluation of the CEDP

The CEDP Evaluation Expert, Nicolas Garrigue, has completed the first draft of the evaluation report on the first phase of the CEDP. Even after just one trial the project assessment is very positive “...largely meeting its output targets across its three outcomes...” and that it was “...timely and target levels were met, for the most, if not exceeded.”

Much of the data for the evaluation has been taken from the Vanuatu trial where the CEDP team was able to measure the success of the workshop by formal evaluation (including pre-workshop questionnaires and daily feedback sheets for all participants and facilitators), observation by the facilitation team and workshop observers, and by informal conversations with participants throughout the workshop.

The evaluation report will be available on the BRIDGE website soon at [http://bridge-project.org/index.php/CEDP-Documents.html](http://bridge-project.org/index.php/CEDP-Documents.html).

5. CEDP Advisory Group

You may be receiving this newsletter after you indicated your interest in being part of the CEDP Advisory Group. This Advisory Group was set up following the Strategic Meeting in Brisbane, Australia in October last year, and is made up of people who indicated their interest in being informed and involved in the CEDP.

As the CEDP team looks towards the next phase of the project (see the items on UNDEF and AusAID below), it plans to assess the Advisory Group and consider how better to harness the incredible expertise and knowledge amongst its members. It is likely that a more formalised, more active and smaller Advisory Group will be formed, but there will still be a place for those of you who wish to be on our mailing list and to contribute ideas and suggestions when you wish. Further information about this will be sent out to you as the next phases of the project are confirmed. Watch this space!

6. UNDEF and the civic educators’ Community of Practice

One of the outcomes of the Advisory Group meeting held in Brisbane, Australia in October last year was the identification of the need for greater communication and sharing amongst civic education practitioners in the Asia Pacific region. This was also confirmed by the audit conducted by the CEDP team at the beginning of the project.

As the CEDP was focused on another need of civic education practitioners – professional development – the project team has put in a submission to the third round of UNDEF funding to develop a Community of Practice for regional civic education practitioners and to continue to develop the curriculum and implementation structures put in place in the CEDP so far.

The CEDP team is pleased to report that it has been shortlisted for funding in this third round, and are in the process of submitting the paperwork to confirm the funds. This entails writing a detailed submission of what the project proposes to achieve.

The proposed outputs for the UNDEF funding are:

- **Output 1**: Completion of a mapping and scoping of civic education resources in the region (a more in depth mapping than that conducted in 2008)
- **Output 2**: Establishment of a Community of Practice (CoP) of civic education practitioners in the region, including setup of a ‘Knowledge Portal’ for the CoP, and other structures for communication and sharing (e.g. website)
- **Output 3**: Development of a Training of Trainers for delivery of CEDP modules, and further work on the existing *Democracy in Our Place* module – to be used as a resource for the CoP.
Output 4: A combined CoP meeting and training workshop, incorporating the new ToT, the DiOP workshop, and the opportunity for CoP members to network and share – to be held in an Asia Pacific location TBC.

Output 5: Development of a module in Democratic Governance or Civic Education Programs, and further development of information resources.

The funding is pending the submission of the relevant paperwork, but otherwise has the in principle support of the UNDEF Advisory Board and the UN Secretary-General. If received, the CEDP team will be in contact to let you know about the next steps, and how you can become involved.

7. AusAID and the next phase

As this phase of the CEDP comes to an end on 30 September, the CEDP team is working with AusAID to determine the next steps. At the moment AusAID has given in principle support to providing limited funding for the 2009-2010 financial year to complement the proposed outputs of the UNDEF-funded project. In essence, if the funding is approved, it would be seen as co-funding the UNDEF project and would give the CEDP team a chance to trial the new curriculum to be developed under that project, and further refine the mentoring and contextualisation process. It would also provide an opportunity to further establish the CoP.

If received, the AusAID funding would extend the outputs of the UNDEF project to:

- Output 6: Mentor civic education practitioners to deliver the training curriculum at their national level
- Output 7: Trial workshop of new curriculum delivered

While the AusAID funding is still to be confirmed, the CEDP team is hopeful that it will be approved, and understands that there is support within AusAID to continue funding in later years.

The CEDP team would like to thank AusAID for its continuing support for the project and for making this first phase possible.

Want more info on the CEDP?

CEDP website: http://bridge-project.org/index.php/CEDP

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