



## **The Centre for Democratic Institutions**

### **VANUATU DEMOCRACY LEARNING CIRCLES PROJECT PORT VILA WORKSHOP 24-26 OCTOBER, 2001**

The Vanuatu Democracy Learning Circle Training Workshop was held at the Blue Water Resort near Port Vila, Vanuatu on 24-26 October, 2001. The Workshop was organized by CDI in conjunction with John Liu, Director, Vanuatu Rural Development & Training Centres Association (VRDCTA) and Bernie Lovegrove, Program Officer, Asia South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education (ASPBAE) with much appreciated support from the Commonwealth Foundation.

The project, broadly aimed to contribute to the development of an effective and active civil society in Vanuatu. The Workshop, which follows the drafting of the Vanuatu Learning Circles materials, is an early and integral part of the project (see *Project Process* and *Timeline* below).

The Learning Circles methodology was chosen because of its emphasis on co-operative 'ground-up' learning and the general transformative strengths of adult education principles. The Learning Circles methodology can basically be summed up as participatory (all should be involved and contribute), and egalitarian (all contributions are valuable).

#### **The Project Process**

The project can be broken down into seven major phases. This report covers all the preparatory work (up to and including Phase 3) in anticipation of the Workshop participants taking the project to its next stage - further learning circles at the community and village level:

1. Consultation and planning
2. Produce draft Learning Circles materials
3. Workshop of key facilitators to test materials and learn about facilitation
4. Employ project coordinator in Vanuatu
5. Each organization to conduct facilitated Learning Circles in their constituencies, starting with training of key village facilitators
6. Follow-up strategic planning meeting to support groups taking action, to influence government policy.
7. Final evaluation and documentation

The objectives of the Vanuatu Learning Circles project are:

1. To increase NGO and community discussion and understanding of important issues relating to democracy, decision-making and people's participation in governance in Vanuatu.
2. To encourage participants to take follow-up action to increase the average citizen's voice in decision making

The Workshop was held at Blue Water Resort, near Port Vila, with 18 participants in attendance. The representatives were from eight NGOs, three Churches, the National Council of Chiefs and the Department of Women's Affairs. They were:

John Liu (m)	- Vanuatu Rural Devt. & Training Centres Assoc.(VRDCTA)
Carol Aru (f)	- VRDCTA
Adelyne Nelson (f)	- VRDCTA
Lai Sakita (f)	- Nasonal Komuniti Development Trust (NKDT)
Knox Morris (m)	- Vanuatu Society for Disabled People
Alfred Yakam (m)	- Foundation of the Peoples of the Sth Pacific Vanuatu (FSPV)
Elizabeth Mermer (f)	- FSPV
Simon Boe (m)	- World Vision Vanuatu (WVV)
Annette Charlie (f)	- Won Smal Bag Theatre
Titus Joseph (m)	- Won Smal Bag Theatre
Bene Rousseau (f)	- Young Person's Project, Cultural Center
Roslyn Netvurak (f)	- Young Person's Project, Cultural Center
Marian Kaun (f)	- Rural Skills Training Program (RSTP)
Hilda Taleo (f)	- Department of Women's Affairs
Peter Taurakoto (m)	- Presbyterian Church
Abel Olul (m)	- Churches of Christ
Fr George Vari (m)	- Anglican Church
Tom Numaki (m)	- National Council of Chiefs

The three facilitators were Bernie Lovegrove, John Liu and Elizabeth Mermer.

The Workshop also had a number of specific objectives. Within the broader civil society promotion process the Workshop also aimed:

1. To acquaint the participants, who were largely leaders in their respective organizations, with the Learning Circle process
2. To evaluate and refine the content of the draft Learning Circles Materials
3. To plan adaptations of the Materials for the various communities in which they will be used. For example city communities, French speaking communities, Bislama speaking communities and village level communities.
4. To learn, *through participation in* the Learning Circles methodology, *about* facilitating with the Learning Circles methodology ('training the trainers' in Learning Circles)
5. To develop strategies for using the Learning Circles in non-government/Church/government networks represented by the participants at the Workshop.

The Workshop was designed to model good facilitation and adult learning processes; to give all participants an opportunity to practice facilitation; to document, evaluate and go through a concentrated Learning Circle process and discussion.

## **Workshop Process**

Participants were divided evenly into three Learning Circle groups. People from the same organization were separated and each group had, as much as possible, a gender and age balance. Participants took turns facilitating two-hour sessions within their group and also a turn at documenting the discussion and reporting back to the plenary. Plenary sessions were held each day to clarify, compare, consolidate and record thoughts and recommendations on the particular chapters of materials analyzed that day. The six draft modules of the Learning Circles were examined one per session, and each session included a 30 minute evaluation of the process done using a pro-forma evaluation guide. This practice was intended to provide direct feedback within the group to the work the group had undertaken in the preceding session, providing continuing opportunities to improve on previous sessions.

Suggestions were collected on how to re-draft the materials for use at both the organizational leaders level and the village level. Accordingly the re-drafting can be grouped into two categories.

The first category's suggestions related generally to enhancing the information in the materials and included suggestions such as: explaining the more complex concepts; adding diagrams and illustrations to assist in making some of the more complex notions more accessible; using local examples as much as possible to add relevance to the text; and structurally, to highlight key points within the text facilitate easy reference to the text.

The second category of suggestions relates to making the materials more relevant for village level use, and included: simplification of the text of the materials; shortening of the text; making extensive use of diagrams and illustrations to introduce the people to the relevant concepts; translation into Bislama; a greater emphasis on explanation (with diagrams and illustrations) considering that there is a lower civic consciousness at the village level; and an emphasis on comparing examples/notions to village level structures/notions.

## **Participant evaluations**

Participant evaluations of the overall project, Learning Circles process and draft materials were very positive. All groups that participated in the process wanted to utilize the re-drafted materials and the Learning Circles processes in their work. Some participants were so impressed with the concepts and the draft they were happy to start drawing on it immediately in their work.

Its important to note that most of the participants were new to the Learning Circles process and many were unaccustomed to the more co-operative and self-driven adult education methods used in the workshop. All participants saw the value in such an approach and committed unanimously to utilize these principles and the output of this Workshop, the Learning Circle materials, as much as possible in their respective organizations.

Towards the end of the Workshop participants discussed plans for utilizing the Learning Circles materials in their organizations and about how to best to collaborate with other organizations to avoid duplication. Some notes on this are attached below.

A follow-up meeting of participants will be hosted by John Liu of VRDCTA in early 2002 after participants have reported back to their respective organizations. The final draft of materials should also be available in early 2002 to enable groups to take the materials and the process out to their constituencies. A mid-term project review and evaluation process is planned for late 2002.

## Notes from the Workshop, Blue Water Resort, 24-26 October 2001

The following are the abridged notes of the facilitators from the Workshop. At the outset of the 3 day workshop, the facilitator established the principles on which the Workshop would be run, and developed in conjunction with the participants the processes which were to be followed.

### *What Makes for a Good Facilitator?*

- encourages participation
- attention to process and people management
- aware of different approaches
- draws out quiet people
- initiates not dominates
- stops domination
- gives clear outline of discussion structure and objectives
- asks open questions
- when he/she knows what they're talking about
- shows flexibility
- recognizes there is no right or wrong answer
- allows expression of opinion, within limits
- ensures the objectives are achieved

### *Adult Learning*

Adults learn best when:

- they are free to ask questions
- it is safe to express opinions & disagree
- they are doing
- the timing is good
- they have control of the learning
- in group discussions with others
- drama is used
- they can see the benefit
- they are listened to; their contribution & experience is respected
- when the learning is linked to a need
- it is relaxing
- it is flexible
- it is free from distraction
- it is participatory
- location is considered
- participant energy levels are considered
- the objectives and ground rules are clear

### *Small Group Tasks*

- 6 Discussion Sessions - 1 per Module (2 hours each)
- Take a turn as facilitator and documenter

### *Small Group Process*

- Brief overview by facilitator; Brief reading time if necessary - 10 minutes
- Group discussion - 1 hour 20 mins
- Evaluation Sheet - 30 mins

### *Next Steps with the Learning Circle Materials*

- Re-drafting
- Diagrams & Illustrations
- Village level draft
- Finding missing information
- Translation
- Layout & Design
- Printing & Postage.

### *Steering Committee Role*

- should not be controlling
- should be broad and inclusive
- should share information and plans
- should do project mapping
- should ensure there is no duplication
- should decide on timing of strategic review

## **Particular Organization's Plans**

Participants broke into groups to discuss further facilitation and implementation of the Learning Circles program. The groups were formed on the basis of commonality of goals and methods, with an emphasis on minimizing overlap of efforts.

- A. VRDCTA & Womens Affairs
- B. FSP, Won Smal Bag, Disabled
- C. Churches & WVV
- D. NKDT, Cultural Centre, RSTP

## **A.**

### **1. VRDCTA**

1. Legal Rights Officer (LRO - undergoing training overseas)
  - need to review & incorporate learning circles into the legal rights training materials already available
2. Identify trainers in RTC's and communities
3. Conduct 'trainer' workshops to equip them to go out to communities
4. LRO to monitor and evaluate delivery of workshops by trainers

### **2. Department of Women's Affairs**

- Running a Workshop - Political Literacy

- Focus on two islands before the elections:
  - focus on 2 places: Vila, Santo (Loganville)
  - focus on trainers from Churches, Vanwods,
- facilitators drawn from: Dept WA, WSB, Electoral Office, VRDCTA
- Issues:
  - What is the role of government ?
  - Why & How do you vote ?
  - The importance of your vote as a woman; Party platforms (Voter Education)

Hoped for Outcomes:

- they would conduct workshops in their own organizations
- evaluate post elections (2002)
- incorporate Learning Circles into the 2002-2006 period after the elections
- collaboration of NGOs for the delivery of Education

## **B. FSPV - VSDP - WSB**

Collaborate on workshops in Communities:

- Draw on Resource People from this workshop
- Insert Dem Learning Circles into daily activities

## **C. Church & WVV**

1. Each rep to go back to Church bodies and report through them.

WVV to talk to project staff - in 2002 Churches of Christ have their big meeting in May  
Implementation:

- a) TOT - through Church networks - support from NGOs
- b) Trainers run LC's at village level
- c) WVV use LC's existing target communities
- d) Monitoring

## **D. NKDT, Cultural Centre and RSTP**

- Cultural Centre needs the agreement from bosses
- First hold a meeting of field workers - both urban and rural. See who is interested. Also Young People's Program (YPP) Field Workers
- Facilitator's Training with NKDT & RSTP - 1 week
- Before Jan using draft material to do before election
- Use available training material:
  - Meltrust Packets designed for village level;
  - WSB has human rights materials & then expand LC's

## **Notes In Bislama:**

*Plan Blong YPP Wetem Collaboration Blong NKDT mo RSTP*

- Kasem agrimen blong bos fastaem
- Holem miting blong ol yangfala filwoka
- eni blong olggeta we oli interest long material oli go long wan facilitator trening wetem olgeta filwoka blong NKDT long Vila
- Mekem wan wik trening ia bifo January usum draft material. Taem we final material I kam tru oli save go hed wetem Learning Circle
- Base ol NKDT/RSTP trainers mo YPP filwoka oli mekem training wan taem long Vila
- Available Trening Material: NKDT Risos Buk: Politics, bribery, corruption long town / vilej; kastom; debt crisis, law courts, NGOs, Church, Gavmen, law and order, women & men
- Material ia hemi gud blong usum olsem fes level trening / awareness long vilej or komuniti long trening blong ol facilitator. Bae yumi putum ol relevant section blong buk ia long wan ples olsem wan booklet.
- Material blong Won Smol Bag: - vot long party ia; toksave long loa

## **Other comments**

- There was a request from Hilda Taleo about whether the Department of Women's Affairs could get funding support from the project.
- It was agreed that there is a need for coordination in each area so there is no cross-over and doubling up each organization need to share plans so need to divide up.

## **Project Timeline**

### **Nov - Early 2002**

- re-draft materials
- participants to report back to their organizations
- survey village interest in all regions participants are involved in
- use current draft training of trainers
- steering committee meeting to map which NGOs will use Learning Circles where

### **By March**

- re-drafted materials available
- appoint Project Officer

### **Feb - July**

- Village facilitators' training
- June - Steering committee meeting
- Carrying out learning circle's

### **August**

- Strategic Review and Planning meeting
- Final project assessment and report