

PD Program Phase II workshop

‘Knowledgeable’, ‘excited’, ‘confident’... these were words used by participants after Professional Development (PD) training in Honiara, in March this year. The training was organised by the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (MEHRD) and senior personnel from Cognition Education and Provincial Authorities leader. An additional workshop was held at the same time, to support Education Authorities’ (EAs) personnel to develop facilitation skills in accordance with the new (draft) Education Bill.

30 education professionals from Malaita, Honiara and Guadalcanal participated in the main workshop. The purpose of the training was to build facilitation skills and knowledge of the Phase 2 PD program for an initial twenty schools from the three provinces. The program begins in April 2023 with workshops for school leaders and lead teachers from the first 14 schools.

The Phase 2 program builds on the topics that formed the Phase I training, delivered to more than 200 schools in 2022 and in the first quarter of the year 2023. Phase 2 topics include:

building on Phase I instructional leadership skills (leadership, lesson observation and feedback, lesson plan checking)

- professional learning groups (PLGs)
- positive discipline, and
- methods for improving student writing.

Phase 1 workshop topics

Teacher skills program

- MEHRD guiding principles
- curriculum familiarisation
- MEHRD Effective Teaching model
- collaborative groupwork approaches
- formative assessment techniques
- lesson plan writing.

School leader program

- leadership
- classroom observation and feedback
- lesson plan checks.

Workshop sessions

Day 1 of the Phase 2 capacity-building workshop was opened by the Deputy Secretary of Teaching and Learning, Ms Linda Wate, and Cognition Country Director, Mr Pieter Potter. The day’s focus was on the draft Solomon Islands Education Bill, with the Education Provider (EP) role in the future being:

“to provide or facilitate training for staff of the education provider, and, for a school, the members of the school board, to enable them to perform their functions properly...”

The EP role will encompass coaching, mentoring and performance appraisals of school leaders, as well as workshop and training facilitation. Special guests from various provincial authorities gave presentations on the importance of the role the EPs will hold, working closely with school leaders to develop their instructional leadership skills. These school leaders will in turn be able to conduct training for their teachers, to grow and develop classroom skills across the whole sector.



Solomon Islands Education Sector Support Program



Participants checking and discussing the different replies to provoking questions about positive discipline. Facilitator Susanne Owen (red dress) standing on the right.

The initial day was followed by a three-day workshop to train EAs, PD facilitators and key MEHRD staff in the Phase 2 topics. Led by Capacity Development Consultant, Dr. Susanne Owen, the facilitation approach was engaging and interactive, with considerable group discussion, songs and dance, and tok stori approaches. Reflecting the MEHRD building principles, the workshop participants engaged in groupwork, reflection, displays of different ideas and other participatory approaches. These approaches included ‘think-pair-share’ activities, ‘bus stops’ to cover various workshop content material, and ‘jigsaw’ activities to learn new ideas to share with other group members.

In accordance with MEHRD’s focus on formative assessment, workshop attendees tried out a number of formative assessment techniques including:

- Hand Signals (thumbs up, thumbs sideways, thumbs down) - to indicate various responses to questions
- Exit Cards - to show about learning done during the day or questions still unanswered
- Brain Dumps - for quick written responses to facilitator questions.

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Attendees engaged with and found valuable the topics of positive discipline and tips for classroom management. They also learned about consequences, reviewing videos and the MEHRD Child Protection materials, and examined whole-school approaches.

Presenters emphasised the importance of conducting follow-up training with staff to change classroom discipline approaches, for school leaders who attend Phase 2 workshops. The follow-up activities should aim to support teachers to make changes, through carrying out observations, giving feedback, and through coaching and mentoring.

Positive discipline:

- focuses on students
- encourages self-discipline
- teaches ‘doing the right thing’ for themselves and others
- has clear expectations, with consequences known in advance
- **never** involves shouting, hitting, or scaring.



The whole-school approach involves students and parents, as aspect considered especially important by participants.

The role of school leaders in driving improvement in students' writing skills was an important part of the workshop learnings. Participants worked through existing Solomon Islands LEAP materials and did practical tasks. In Phase 2 workshops, they will coach school leaders through these same activities. By taking this learning back to their schools, school leaders will be able to provide the training and support classroom teachers need to implement these with their students. Workshop participants also wrote an action plan to improve writing in their schools. On the fifth day of the workshop, participants demonstrated a section of the materials, with critique provided by other participants to support improvement.

There was 100% positive feedback about the overall learning from the training sessions. Almost 100% of participants, including EA staff, indicated improved confidence in facilitating future sessions with school leaders and lead teachers on classroom observation and feedback, lesson planning, and the establishment of Professional Learning Groups.

Attendees expressed confidence in providing training on positive discipline, and ongoing support for school leaders with action planning and whole-school approaches to discipline. And, lastly, workshop participants said that they were confident in approaching the goal of improving students' writing using the LEAP materials and other activities covered.