



**Vanuatu Rural Development  
And Training Centres' Association**



**Peace Corps  
Vanuatu**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**VRDTCA and Peace Corps Start RTC Strengthening Initiative**

The Vanuatu Rural Development and Training Centers Association (VRDTCA) and Peace Corps marked the start of their partnership to strengthen Rural Training Centers (RTCs) by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Tuesday July 1, 2003 at a ceremony attended by representatives of government departments, non-governmental organizations and international organizations at Peace Corps' Volunteer Resource Center in Namba Two.

"The delivery of services to rural areas and the expansion of alternative community based educational opportunities are high priority needs of Vanuatu", stated Kathy Solomon, Manager of VRDTCA. "VRDTCA and Peace Corps share a belief that Rural Training Centres provide an excellent opportunity to meet these needs through cost-effective community based training programs in which young people develop skills that can be readily utilized in their rural communities."



Under the MOU, Peace Corps and VRDTCA agree to implement the goals of Vanuatu's Education for All (EFA) plan relating to vocational training and community based training in Rural Training Centers. The VRDTCA and Peace Corps partnership will focus on a strategic framework of ten key objectives that the organizations will seek to achieve over the next several years. The objectives include implementing a new applied "agriculture production and marketing" curriculum, establishing cost-effective localized training for managers and instructors, expanding opportunities for female students, developing a system for RTCs to market their products to enhance income generation, and facilitating effective community involvement in supporting the operation and growth of RTCs.

"VRDTCA and Peace Corps recognize that achievement of the objectives integrated into the MOU will certainly require the support of RTCs, communities, government, non-

governmental organizations and donors”, said Kevin George, Country Director for Peace Corps. He enthusiastically welcomed “other stakeholders to collaborate in the development of a shared strategy that highlights the unique and special role of the RTC in Vanuatu.”



Ms. Solomon concluded that “VRDTCA’s role as a national organization dedicated to supporting Rural training centres and *Peace Corps*’ role in supporting rural training centres directly at the community level provides the opportunity for the two organizations to strategically utilize their complimentary resources to strengthen the network of rural training centres in Vanuatu.”

VRDTCA is the association of Rural Training Centres in Vanuatu. The organization provides an array of services to Rural Training Centres to help these institutions support rural communities and their youth through skills training.

*Peace Corps* is an independent agency of the United States government that provides grassroots development assistance to Vanuatu through skilled Volunteers from the United States who work in the agriculture, education, youth development, environment and business sectors. The organization is committed to principles of development that promote community involvement and self-sufficiency.