

# Preface

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An inescapable problem for small states is how to access specialist knowledge when the national pool of human resources is constrained by size. This is a difficulty for ministries of education and for educational institutions. The most usual response to this situation is to draw on technical assistance, often as part of a wider aid package, from industrialised countries or international agencies. These relationships based on technical assistance will continue. But there is scope for developing the capacity of universities within small states, national and regional, to provide specialist consultancy services. This offers a productive way for institutions of higher education to play a much stronger role in support of national education development.

This theme, and its practical skills development implications, formed the subject of a pan-Commonwealth training workshop held at the University of the South Pacific's Vanuatu complex in 1992. The workshop was funded by the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation and AIDAB, and designed by the Education Programme of the Commonwealth Secretariat, the University of the South Pacific and AIDAB's Centre for Pacific Development and Training. Representatives from universities of small states (Guyana, Malta, Papua New Guinea, South Pacific and West Indies) met ministry officials to explore how the universities could develop a stronger advisory function, the skills required of an individual consultant, and ways in which the universities could be better organised to provide consultancy services.

The workshop participants asked that the materials used in Vanuatu be brought together in a single volume in *The Challenge of Scale* series and be disseminated to universities, ministries and agencies. This work has been undertaken by Marie-Pierre Lloyd with Steve Packer, both of whom were members of the design team for the workshop.

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