

## Case Study: One stone, two pigeons: Collaborating to strengthen Disabled People's Organisations and disability inclusive skills development in Vanuatu



After successfully working together to deliver awareness raising activities regarding disability inclusive skills development opportunities in communities across Vanuatu, the Vanuatu Skills Partnership and Vanuatu Disability Promotion and Advocacy Association (VDPA) established a formal relationship. Through this agreement, the Vanuatu Skills Partnership and Disabled People's Organisation (DPO) support each other towards shared goals. Recognising the limited funding opportunities available to Pacific DPOs, Vanuatu Skills Partnership also funds an appropriate proportion of VDPA's institutional costs. This joint work has resulted in increasing demand amongst people with disability for inclusive skills development, an improving supply of disability inclusive post-school education and training (PSET), and a stronger national DPO. These efforts have been recognised by the Government of Australia and internationally.

### 2014 - 2016

- ✓ Staff from VDPA, Vanuatu Skills Partnership and Skills Centres work together to lead 'road-show' style awareness-raising activities regarding disability inclusive skills development opportunities in communities across Vanuatu.
- ✓ Acting as a referral agency, VDPA connects interested people with disability with training opportunities through Skills Centres.
- ✓ On request from Skills Centres, VDPA members and staff speak with families of potential clients with disability, to help them understand the opportunities on offer, and provide reassurance regarding their concerns
- ✓ VDPA provides advice to Skills Centres regarding particular reasonable accommodations for individual clients with disability, modifications required to ensure Skills Centres are accessible, and adjustments required to ensure Training Provider venues are accessible and inclusive.
- ✓ VDPA members are invited to lead sessions at professional development workshops held for trainers from the skills development sector, sharing their stories and advocating for change
- ✓ VDPA provides input to the *National Disability Inclusion Policy for the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Sector 2016 – 2020*.

### 2017

- ✓ VDPA's Coordinator becomes a standing member of two key skills development sector coordination committees – the Vanuatu Skills Partnership Steering Committee, and the Training Provider Inclusion Improvement Fund Steering Committee.  
The Partnership and VDPA sign a new Partnership Agreement, formalising areas of mutual interest, and also commits both organisations to a deeper alliance.

### 2018

- ✓ Recognising the limits on VDPA capacity to continue meeting requests for advice and support to strengthen demand for, and supply of, disability inclusive skills development opportunities, the Vanuatu Skills Partnership funds a VDPA Program Officer, as well as an appropriate proportion of VDPA's institutional costs. This latter commitment is made in direct response to the challenges Pacific DPOs often face in securing funds for rent, electricity and similar costs; without which they cannot operate.
- ✓ Vanuatu Skills Partnership provides technical and financial support to VDPA to develop its 2018 work plan.
- ✓ VDPA facilitates training for staff and members on the *Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, with financial support from Vanuatu Skills Partnership.
- ✓ Based on recommendations arising from a Sign Language Situation Analysis conducted through the Vanuatu Skills Partnership, VDPA establishes a regular morning tea which brings deaf people together and enables them to initiate communication. This is also an important referral opportunity for deaf people who are interested in skills development.
- ✓ VDPA works with Vanuatu Skills Partnership to explore and conduct financial literacy training to support people with disability who run or are interested in engaging in small business.
- ✓ VDPA and Vanuatu Skills Partnership establish a market stall in Luganville, at which people with disability can sell products on cruise ship days.
- ✓ Vanuatu Skills Partnership supports VDPA with advice regarding other donors who could be approached for support for institutional costs.
- ✓ Collaboration efforts by Vanuatu Skills Partnership and VDPA are presented at the high-level inter-governmental Global Action on Disability meeting in Helsinki, and acknowledged in a letter to VDPA from the Australian Minister for International Development and the Pacific.

### Short term outcomes

- Through this partnership, VDPA has built relationships with mainstream training providers, and now has direct access to referral mechanisms which link prospective trainees with disability to skills development opportunities.
- Many people with disability, including VDPA members, have participated in skills development opportunities, which have enabled several to engage in paid work, and access markets with support from Vanuatu Skills Partnership.
- VDPA has access to funding support for administrative costs and annual work planning activities, which have proved difficult to source elsewhere.
- Vanuatu Skills Partnership works nationally with a range of stakeholders at the community, provincial and national levels. Engagement has built VDPA's profile

### Expected long term outcomes

- Enhanced sustainability of VDPA as Vanuatu's DPO, cementing its reputation as a provider of advocacy and awareness raising regarding the rights of people with disability.
- Training providers confidently promoting skills development opportunities to people with disability, and implementing their disability inclusion policies.
- Improved economic situation, social status and quality of life of people with disability in Vanuatu.

### Lessons Learned

- ✓ Partnering with Vanuatu's DPO to raise awareness about disability inclusive skills development opportunities developed a solid relationship between Vanuatu Skills Partnership and VDPA, on which additional joint activities could be built
- ✓ Awareness raising activities led by VDPA are much more effective than efforts led by people who do not have disability. VDPA staff and members can share the lived experience of disability, which motivates and shifts negative attitudes
- ✓ The provision of funding for a dedicated Program Officer within VDPA, as well as other institutional costs and activities ensures that the DPO has the resources to provide advisory services without distracting from other organisational priorities
- ✓ Engagement of VDPA in key sector coordination mechanisms promotes disability inclusion amongst decision makers, and can influence broad-based change
- ✓ The relationship between the Vanuatu Skills Partnership and VDPA is bi-directional with mutual benefits: enhanced demand for skills development opportunities amongst people with disability, improved supply of disability inclusive post-school education and training, and a stronger national DPO.

### Stakeholders

- Vanuatu Disability Promotion and Advocacy Association: advocacy, awareness raising and advice regarding the lived experience of people with disability.
- Ministry of Education (MoET) Skills Centres: accept referrals and enrolment from potential clients with disability who are interested in skills development, and seek advice from VDPA regarding particular inclusion supports required by clients with disability.
- Vanuatu Skills Partnership, through the Disability Inclusion team: advocacy and technical assistance.

Policy Links	
<b>PSET Policy Principle</b>	Inclusion
<b>Vanuatu Skills Partnership LTOs</b>	Long Term Outcome 4. The status of women and people with disability is enhanced
<b>National Sustainable Development Policy</b>	3 Pillars: <b>Society</b> Environment <b>Economy</b>
<b>National Disability Inclusive Development Policy</b>	<b>Strategic Priority Area 1: Mainstreaming the Rights of Persons with Disabilities</b>
<b>National Disability Inclusion Policy for the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Sector 2016 – 2020</b>	<b>Policy priority area 3:</b> Facilitate equal access to TVET opportunities by undertaking awareness-raising and support activities which encourage the enrolment of people with disabilities from urban, rural and remote areas within Vanuatu in training activities, the completion of training and engagement in subsequent work.

