

Case Study:

Collaboration between the Vanuatu Skills Partnership and Pektel Rural Training Centre brings Accredited Demand-Driven Training to Malekula



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**SKILLS
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INTRODUCTION

A long-term outcome of the Vanuatu Skills Partnership is that '**The skills system provides inclusive access to relevant and quality assured qualifications**'. Progress towards achievement of this outcome is being made through the coordination by the Partnership in planning and implementation of activities with the Tertiary Education Directorate (TED), within the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET), which is responsible for improving the practice standards for training providers that are set and monitored by the Vanuatu Qualifications Authority (VQA).

Central to the Vanuatu Skills Partnership's support to local training provider reform are the Training Provider Improvement Partnerships (TPIP). The TPIP agreements are negotiated with the input of the Provincial Skills Centre Managers and Provincial Training Coordinators to ensure consistency of implementation. The inputs in these agreements may include funding for trainer and management professional development, support to comply with the Vanuatu Quality Assurance Framework (VQAF) 2015 Standards, training equipment and consumable support, resource development and small scale facility upgrades.

Five TPIPs have been set up with provincial training providers. The agreements are guiding the support received by the training providers from the Vanuatu Skills Partnership with TED to improve the quality of their practice and be able to fulfill the provider standards required by the VQA.

TPIP agreements, based on co-contribution and demonstrated commitment to reform, have been made with selected training providers located in three provinces Malampa (2), Sanma (2) and Torba (1). Through working with these providers to increase the range and number of accredited skills development opportunities that are available in provincial areas, the Vanuatu Skills Partnership is making it easier for people to gain accredited skills development qualifications close to where they live and in modular and phased formats.

The skills development qualifications being offered are in sector areas where there are skills gaps in areas of clear economic demand. This helps to ensure that the qualified graduates are more likely to gain employment, or succeed in setting up or expanding their own business enterprise.

OUTCOMES

The Pektel Rural Training Centre (RTC) in the remote provincial location of Malekula was supported to deliver units of competence from the accredited Certificate 2 in Building Construction. The course was offered in response to demand for construction skills identified by the Malampa Provincial Government Training Board¹ (PGTB) during the annual planning process for the Provincial Skills Centre Plan. A major driver for setting up the accredited course was the demand for construction skills to fulfill the needs for the new building to house the Malampa Handicraft Centre in Lakatoro.

Sixteen participants completed the course and gained statements of attainment for the units completed. This included two women, 14 men – one of whom is person with disabilities.

¹ The PGTB consists of representatives from different provincial Government Departments and locally based civil society organisations and the private sector.

The results relate to, and demonstrate progress that is being made towards, the following Vanuatu Skills Partnership intermediate outcomes:



I0-1

PGTBs, Skills Centres and TED jointly plan and manage skills development



I0-3

Increased flexible delivery of accredited skills development



I0-4

Increased diversity of training providers operating within the system



Construction commencing at the Malampa Handicraft Centre by participants of the Certificate 2 in Building Construction

STRATEGIES SUPPORTING THE ACHIEVEMENT OF OUTCOMES

Training Provider Improvement Partnerships (TPIP) Agreement

The Pektel RTC signed a TPIP Agreement with the Vanuatu Skills Partnership in April 2018. Part of the commitment of this agreement is that TED, with assistance from the Vanuatu Skills Partnership, will support Pektel RTC to deliver accredited demand driven skills development training in Building Construction.

Site visits to Pektel RTC

The Malampa Provincial Skills Centre Manager (Ellis Silas) and the Provincial Training Coordinator (Dorah Willie) developed a schedule of regular site visits to the Pektel RTC. During the six months following the signing of the TPIP agreement there were two visits by TED staff (Jimmy Lava) with the Vanuatu Skills Partnership Training Provider Support Coordinator (Moulin Tabouti) and the Disability Inclusion Coordinator (Sherol George). Activities completed during the site visits include:

- TED providing information to Pektel RTC Board and staff about the Post School Education and Training (PSET) Policy 2016-2020.
- Scoping activities including workshop and meetings to discuss and plan the delivery of the certified training, that involve the Pektel RTC Board members, management and trainers and members from the local community.
- Information about disability inclusion and the Vanuatu Skills Partnership's Training Provider Disability Inclusion Improvement Fund, which provides the RTC with an opportunity to access support to make improvements in disability awareness and inclusion in its practice and management.
- Technical assistance provided by the Vanuatu Skills Partnership Training Provider Support Coordinator to help the Pektel RTC management to complete the application for VQA approval to deliver the accredited course.



Members of TED and the Vanuatu Skills Partnership conducting meetings with Pektel RTC staff in 2018.

Coordination with Provincial and National Government

A broad range of key stakeholders from the RTC, representatives from the community, and staff from Provincial Government took part in the scoping activities and in the workshop facilitated by TED with the Vanuatu Skills Partnership for the planning and design of the accredited course.

A representative from the Provincial Public Works Department and from the Provincial Government Office in Malampa joined the Pektel RTC Construction Advisory Committee. The committee was established to provide support on the course development. Both representatives contribute to this forum through providing valuable information and insights about current skill gaps and demand in the Malampa building construction industry, and about the standards, permits and regulations required in the trades sector.

Community participation

Community representatives were invited to the planning workshop. This was in recognition of the importance of community interest and ownership of the new skills development initiative. Greater buy-in by the community will help generate commitment to the course and improve the likelihood of its ongoing sustainability. It will also help progress achievement of the expected benefits of improved employment and business opportunities for the course graduates. Actively involving community members and keeping them informed helps to mitigate the risk of miscommunication and misunderstanding about this important initiative.

During the workshop a simple Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis process was facilitated. The community representatives made valuable contributions to this analysis that included insights about the needs and opportunities to improve skills development services available to young people in their communities.

Co-contribution

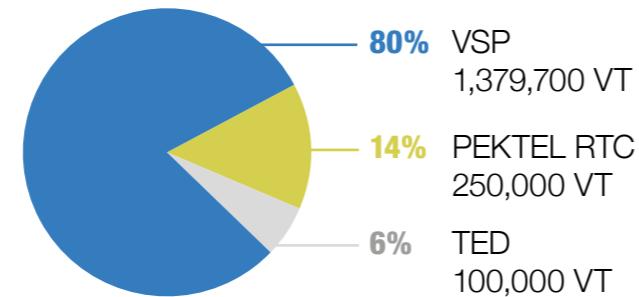
The Vanuatu Skills Partnership through the TPIP provided an estimated 1,379,700 VT or 80% of the financial costs to support the development, accreditation and delivery of the qualification in Building Construction by Pektel RTC. The types of inputs funded include transport costs for Vanuatu Skills Partnership staff and accommodation (30,000 VT) and equipment and resources to deliver the accredited course (800,000VT) and part of the daily allowances for the trainers (1,500Vt per trainer per day).

In addition to this major financial contribution, TED contributed an estimated 100,000 VT (6%) that covered the travel costs and daily allowances for their staff in Malampa during the site visits, workshop and meetings.

Pektel RTC provided further inputs, of which the estimated value was 250,000 VT (14%). This included costs to cover the use of the facilities for the workshop (12,000 VT), top-up of living allowances to trainers (500vt/day per trainer), and all catering provided to participants in the workshops and during visits.

The community representatives and the volunteer members of the Pektel RTC Board committed their time in participating in the workshop and meetings. This important in-kind contribution has been valued at an estimated 12,000 VT. This is based on 12 representatives providing two days of inputs at a cost of 500 VT / day per person.

Additional time inputs provided by staff from the Vanuatu Skills Partnership, the Malampa Provincial Skills Centre, TED, Provincial Government and the staff and trainers of the Pektel RTC is recognised but has not been calculated for this analysis. In future, as part of activity planning, budgeting and monitoring, the actual time that staff contribute to activities will be measured so that an estimated cost in terms of time and salary can be made.



International Skills Training

The Vanuatu Skills Partnership funded two training staff from Pektel RTC to participate in the International Skills Training (IST) course delivered by Australia Pacific Training Coalition (APTC) in August 2018. IST is a set of internationally relevant courses developed to accredit skills trainers and assessors.

The RTC training staff who completed the IST qualification now hold this international qualifications that allows them to deliver accredited skills development courses. They have greater confidence and capacity to assess learners' skills and knowledge for the workplace or in their own businesses, and based on this make reasoned judgments about training content and process, including adapting teaching materials and learning techniques to best meet industry and learner needs.

The VQA is yet formally to recognise and accredit the IST qualification. This means that although the IST graduates are applying the skills and knowledge gained, the qualification does not meet the training package requirements for assessment and training. The Vanuatu Skills Partnership will be discussing with the VQA the next steps required to recognise the qualification formally and ensure the additional skills and knowledge gained can contribute to strengthening the skills system.

SIGNIFICANCE AND IMPLICATIONS OF OUTCOMES

Accessible accredited skills development opportunities for people living in remote areas

People who live in more remote and rural provincial areas of Vanuatu have difficulty in accessing skills development training opportunities, particularly accredited training leading to a qualification. Although progress has been made in strengthening RTCs and other training providers in rural locations, most registered training providers that offer accredited training and qualifications are located in Shefa Province and in Port Vila.

This means that people need to travel outside their home province to gain formal qualifications. The cost implications and the necessity to travel away makes it not feasible for most people, and creates additional barriers for people living in rural areas to learn new skills, and limits their opportunities for better employment or self-employment, which reduces their options for improving their income. It further limits their chance to progress along a pathway of further education and professional development.

Skills development in areas where there is demand

The need for the accredited course was based on thorough assessment and analysis of the potential local employment and business opportunities in the construction industry that will be available for successful graduates. The need for skilled personnel had been identified and the specific purpose of setting up the course was to fulfill this demand, and in so doing making the link between skills development and anticipated improved economic outcomes for those who obtain the qualification.

The Vanuatu Skills Partnership with the Malampa Skills Centre and the Pektel RTC will implement ongoing monitoring of the graduates over the next 12 months to assess the extent to which the skills and qualifications obtained have contributed to improved economic outcomes for the individuals and for the construction business in Malampa. This will also provide an indication of the economic return on the investment made in developing and delivering the accredited course.

Small provincial rural training provider helped to meet the objectives of the National PSET Policy 2016-2020

The development of an accredited course is costly and requires commitment and motivation of the staff and management. Small RTCs such as Pektel experience challenges in accessing the required level of financial, technical and human resources to make improvements in line with the requirements of the National PSET Policy 2016-2020 and to meet the standards under the VQAF 2015.

Additional financial support and the access to human resources and technical knowledge provided through the Vanuatu Skills Partnership's TPIP has made it easier and quicker for Pektel RTC to make improvements, and to design and deliver the units of competence. In the absence of these resources, the process would have taken longer and may not have been achieved.

Connections and coordination

Successful design of a demand-driven locally based accredited course by an RTC relies heavily on the coordinated action and cooperation between different stakeholders. At the local level the knowledge, advice and commitment of local provincial government and community representatives in identifying the local needs and demand for the skills helps ensure the relevance and likely effectiveness of the course design. Local commitment to the initiative helps strengthen ownership and likelihood of successful implementation and ongoing sustainability both of the course and the anticipated outcomes in relation to employment of the graduates.

Coordination and effective communication between the local RTC, provincial and the national level of government (TED and VQA) is required to ensure the training provider understands and adheres to the quality standards that are required.

The Vanuatu Skills Partnership, which operates at both national and provincial levels (through the network of provincial Skills Centres under the MoET), has provided the structure and the additional human and financial resources to help facilitate and support effective coordination and communication between the different actors in the different parts of the skills system.

Replicable model of practice

Relatively few rural training providers in Vanuatu have successfully designed and delivered accredited skills development courses. For example: in the last five years only three other courses have been accredited and delivered by rural providers. The experience and the success with Pektel RTC provides some useful evidence about effective processes, and the indicative level and type of investment - personnel financial and in-kind resources - that is required to support a successful outcome. The success with this RTC will serve as a valuable model and motivator for other rural training providers.

LESSONS LEARNED

By the Vanuatu Skills Partnership

- Plan and allocate time and budget for more regular visits by TED, the Vanuatu Skills Partnership and VQA representatives to the provinces to help strengthen the working relationship between national and provincial stakeholders through meetings with the PGTB, RTC, and other local government and community representatives.
- The important role that the Provincial Skills Centre plays as a convener and coordinator facilitating communication locally between the different government and community stakeholders.
- Establish early on in the process clear communication channels between the RTC, community and local leadership structures, to help make sure the information and messages are consistently and regularly shared.
- Invest time and resources in advance to prepare for site visits with the RTC, and local community and government stakeholders.
- Share and apply some of the processes used successfully with this RTC as a basis to plan and implement a similar approach and provide support with other rural training providers.



The new building provides a safe and welcoming space for handicraft artisans at the Malampa Handicraft Centre.

For the Partners

- More frequent visits by the Provincial Education Officer to the RTC helps to strengthen communication and shared understanding and facilitates better joint planning and action with the RTC.
- VQA sharing information and establishing clear communication channels with the RTC helps more efficient submission of assessment evidence to be uploaded for moderation via the Vanuatu Qualifications Registrar.

Data collection and analysis:

The Vanuatu Skills Partnership's Training Provider Support Coordinator completed the analysis presented in this case study using the Outcome Harvesting methodology. The Partnership Disability Inclusion Coordinator who had knowledge and had some involvement in this outcome validated the Outcome Harvest analysis.

The case study will be shared, discussed and further validated by representatives of the Government of Vanuatu, including VQA and TED, and the Productive Sector partners during the Vanuatu Skills Partnership Steering Committee December 5th, 2018.

