



ACCREDITED SKILLS TRAINING QUALIFICATIONS

Creating Pathways To Prosperity



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INTRODUCTION

LTO-2

The skills system provides inclusive access to relevant and quality assured qualifications

The Vanuatu Skills Partnership (the Partnership) seeks to improve inclusive access through the national skills system to in-demand skills and accredited training for people who live in rural and remote locations. Provincial Skills Centres have been established under the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) to link communities and entrepreneurs with training and business development support by registered training providers and industry coaches. The expectation is that those who access relevant quality assured skills will be better able to contribute to economic, social and cultural prosperity of Vanuatu that is line with the priorities and ambitions of the Government of Vanuatu (GoV) set out in the National Sustainable Development Plan (2015-2030).

IO-3

Flexible delivery

Increased flexible delivery of accredited skills development



IO-6

Skills system compliance

Training providers are implementing in line with Vanuatu Quality Assurance Framework and the National Disability Inclusion Policy for the TVET Sector



LTO-3

Clients follow pathways to further education and training

The Partnership, in coordination with the Tertiary Education Directorate (TED) of the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) and the Vanuatu Qualifications Authority (VQA), is providing technical and financial support to assist Rural Training Centres (RTCs) comply with the Vanuatu Quality Assurance Framework (VQAF) 2015 Standards that all registered training providers must meet in order to deliver accredited, certified training.

The Partnership is also assisting RTCs in the design and delivery of flexible training options through the Skills Centres, with a focus on phased training that makes it easier for people to gain qualifications in locations closer to their homes and over time.

The attainment of nationally recognised qualifications, and a greater availability of skills development options in rural areas, will create opportunities that are rarely available outside the capital Port Vila for successful participants to progress in the national training system and gain further qualifications.

IO-8

Clients improve sustainable growth of their businesses



LTO-5

Clients have increased income

The increase in participants' skills and knowledge in areas where there is demand will enhance livelihood opportunities, including opening up new employment and labour mobility pathways, and benefit businesses that employ them. For those participants who manage their own businesses it will contribute to growth of their own enterprises. This will contribute to the Partnership's long-term outcome of improved income for Skills Centres clients and broader economic benefits.

BACKGROUND

IO-6

Skills system compliance

Training providers are implementing in line with Vanuatu Quality Assurance Framework and the National Disability Inclusion Policy for the TVET Sector



Training Provider Quality and Compliance

In order to deliver a certified course, a training provider must:

- » **Register** as a training provider with the VQA
- » **Be approved by the VQA** to deliver the accredited course in the specific industry sector
- » **Comply with quality standards** set out in the 2015 VQAF and in line with the National Post School Education and Training (PSET) Policy 2016-2020

The process of acquiring and maintaining registration with VQA and completing the design, preparation and delivery of an accredited course is very resource intensive for the training provider. It requires a high level of financial resources and commitment of time as well as knowledgeable staff and management leading the process. Small RTCs often face challenges in accessing this level of investment, and often lack staff with the expertise and knowledge required to successfully navigate the process and fulfill the required standards. An additional challenge is that the course participants are unlikely to have adequate financial means to pay course fees.

The Partnership has established Training Provider Improvement Agreements with five RTCs. The agreement provides the basis for cooperation and co-investment arrangements to help meet the costs associated with registration of the RTC and for the design and delivery of accredited training (including support for the associated costs for participants). Without this level of support from the Partnership it is unlikely that locally based accredited training would be available for people living in rural areas.

OVERVIEW

This case study report provides an analysis of the results achieved from the investment and support provided by the Partnership in cooperation with the TED, VQA and local business and community members in the design and delivery of two accredited training programs by two provincial RTCs. The training programs consisted of a number of units from national qualifications: Certificate I in Tourism (Tour Guiding) delivered by ACOM VET (Torgil RTC) in November 2016 in Tafea, and a Certificate II in Building Construction (General Construction) delivered by Pektel RTC (October – November 2018) in Malampa.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT (SEA)

The analysis presented in this report is the first of a series of **Social and Economic Assessments (SEA)** that the Partnership will complete over the 3 year period to 2021. The SEAs will assess social and economic outcomes and the longer-term impact of different skills development activities at the individual, household and community levels.

This SEA of two accredited training programs that was completed in September – November 2018:

- » **Assessed the social and economic changes for participants and their households / families** since completing their accredited training units
- » **Measured the level of investment made by RTCs** and by the Partnership, VQA and TED, to provide equitable and inclusive access to accredited courses in remote areas
- » **Assessed the economic return of investment (RoI)** through the assessment of the increase in income earned in the short-term by the course participants still employed in the relevant sectors in relation to the total investment made in the design and delivery of the accredited units
- » **Provides analysis of the resource implications and the factors contributing to the viability and likely longer term sustainability** for making quality-assured inclusive accredited skills training accessible for people living in remote and rural areas

METHODOLOGY – DATA COLLECTION

The Partnership’s Monitoring Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Coordinator with a national consultant designed the assessment process and the data collection tools that were used in this assessment. Many of the tools are already used in the routine MEL system of the Partnership, and were modified, and additional new tools were developed specifically for this assessment as was needed. The MEL Coordinator and the consultant, with provincial Skills Centre staff and provincial partners, collected the data from the participants and employers and business owners. This was through individual semi-structured interviews and use of pictures and images. The Partnership’s Training Provider Support Coordinator provided data on inputs and expenditure related to the training programs made by the Partnership, the RTCs, the VQA and the TED.

Leadership by ni-Vanuatu staff in the design and collection of the data has helped ensure that the process was contextually localised and culturally appropriate. The data analysis was completed collaboratively with the MEL Coordinator and the national consultant with additional inputs from the international MEL Adviser.

All participants in the assessment gave their written consent to participate and agreed to have their information used, with anonymity of responses maintained at all times. The RTCs, the TED and the VQA gave consent for the information they provided to be included in this report.

TOUR GUIDING



Certificate I in Tourism (Tour Guiding)



Units delivered

GSBC0112

Apply basic communication

GSHS0112

Follow workplace, health safety and security procedures

THTI0111

Develop and update tourism industry knowledge

THIA0411

Source and provide Vanuatu destination information and advice

THGK0111

Develop and maintain the general knowledge required by guides

DEMAND FOR ACCREDITED TRAINING QUALIFICATIONS

In 2015 the Entani Company Limited located in Whitesands, Tafea approached the provincial Skills Centre in Tafea for skills training to improve the quality of the tour guides the company employs.

Whitesands, a small, quite isolated community located in the south east of Tanna Island on Sulphur Bay, is the access point to the active volcano Yasur that is a very popular tourist attraction. Tourism is a growing industry and the main contributor to the local economy of Whitesands. The Entani Company is the major ni-Vanuatu employer in the tourism sector for community members who have very few other employment options locally, and who otherwise rely heavily on subsistence farming for their livelihoods.



During 2015, the Entani Company started to establish a new tour concept known as 'Tanna Volcano Safari Tours' that offers the visitor a more complete tour of the volcano, including adding a night tour option. As part of enhancing the value, the volcano tour was also sold as a 'wholesale package' with accommodation, transport and other cultural events. In this way the company aimed to support other local tourism enterprises in the location including bungalow owners and transport businesses, and create more employment opportunities in related service areas of security, cleaning and catering. Improving the experience and service for tourists meant that the company could also charge higher prices for the tour.

This new tour concept was part of wider investment and reorganisation that the company undertook at this time as it established a community enterprise business model. The model aims to help the community to collaborate and work together to promote the Yasur volcano, and help community members to benefit from the growing popularity of Tanna as a tourist destination, particularly for international tourists.

"The Entani Company encourages people to capitalise on the opportunities and encourages everyone to find something to do to earn money. We want to develop the Tanna Volcano Safari Tours to the stage where it becomes the number one tourism tour product in the South Pacific. That's our goal!"¹

At this time, in 2015, the company was urged to address certain concerns raised by the Department of Tourism (DoT) about the standards of tour guides, particularly in relation to management of visitors' health and safety while visiting the volcano. The DoT established formal tour guide training as a requirement for companies to meet the Vanuatu Tourism Operators Minimum Standard (VTOMs) that were established 2017. The company also realised that to better meet the expectations of visitors, particularly international visitors, and to justify the increased price charged for the tour, guides needed more knowledge of the volcano and the island's culture and natural environment, and increased confidence and ability to interact and communicate with the visitors on the tour.

DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF THE COURSE

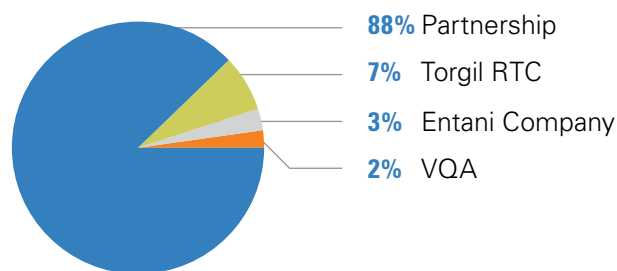
During 2014 and 2015, the Partnership's Training Provider Support Adviser worked with the VQA and a tourism industry specialist to design the curriculum, teaching and learning materials for the Certificate I in Tour Guiding. The VQA approved the new course curriculum and materials in 2015.

The Torgil Rural Training Centre (RTC) was the first training provider to offer the new certificate qualification in tour guiding. The Partnership, through field visits and provision of technical assistance through the Tafea Skills Centre, helped the Torgil RTC staff prepare for the delivery of the course that took place over two weeks during October / November 2016 in Whitesands village.

¹ https://dailypost.vu/news/a-social-enterprise-with-entani-company-ltd-leading-the-way/article_4f835a48-57e1-55c1-9026-420d96f72a30.html

INVESTMENT AND CO-CONTRIBUTION

The cost to design and deliver the course is estimated to be VUV 920,880 (equivalent to AUD 11,383). The Partnership contributed 88% of the total investment (VUV 810,800). Torgil RTC, the Entani Company and VQA contributed the remaining much smaller amounts.



The Partnership's contribution included costs for technical advice and payment of a compulsory course management fee, certificates, logistics and catering for the participants during the training activity. The VQA and Torgil RTC contributed staff time associated with approval, delivery and moderation of the course.

The Entani Company also supported the training. It provided facilities and equipment, and continued to employ the participating staff on one shift per day, ensuring participants continued to earn a wage during the two-week period of the training.

Breakdown of the key inputs and investments made for the development and delivery of the course

Inputs	Partnership	Torgil RTC	VQA	Entani Company	Total
Staff	352400	62000	18000	0	432400
Operational / Administrative	186400	0	0	0	186400
Field support visits	132000	0	0	0	132000
Delivery	140000	0	0	30000	170000
VUV total	810,800	62,000	18,000	30,000	920,800
AUD total	10,023	766	223	371	11,383



PARTICIPANTS

Sixteen people (8 women and 8 men), all employed as tour guides with the Entani Company, completed the program. All of the participants who started the program successfully completed the training, and received statements of attainment for the units successfully completed of the Certificate I in Tour Guiding. The average age of the participants was 33 years. Most of the participants had completed secondary education and 4 already had some post school education qualifications. Two years after completing the course, 13 (7 women and 6 men) of the 16 people trained continue to work for the company, which is a staff retention rate of 81%.

Fourteen people (8 women and 6 men) consisting of all of the current employees and one ex-employee were interviewed for this assessment. The other two staff who have left the company since completing the training have moved away from Tanna and were unable to be interviewed for this assessment. One, a woman, now lives in Port Vila and the second, a man, lives in Santo where he now works as a policeman.

One of the women interviewed currently does not work as a tour guide. The reason for this is she had a baby after completing the training and was not able to make child care arrangements to enable her to continue to work with the company. Her main source of income now comes from farming.

PARTICIPANTS' EXPECTATIONS AND OUTCOMES

When asked about their expectations prior to completing the training, 13 of the 14 tour guides acknowledged that their knowledge to fulfill the responsibilities of a tour guide was very low. They had hoped the training would improve their level of knowledge and help them to be more confident in the work place, and overall do their job as tour guides better. Seven of the participants interviewed hoped that gaining a qualification might help them to gain promotion or even employment in another industry. Before undertaking the training, none of the participants had the expectation that they would earn more money on completion.

Now, following completion of the training the participants expressed they had greater job satisfaction, were confident in the work place and are enjoying their work more. Five interviewees reported they are earning more money overall, however for most employees this increase is a result of working more hours due to the introduction of night tours and the increase in tourist numbers, rather than an increase in the rate of their daily wage. Most supplement the wage earned from the company with additional income earned from other livelihood activities.

Two interviewees reported an increased income directly related to changes in their employment with the company. One woman's increased income is due to a promotion and taking on a new role in the company, and another is now also taking on additional administrative responsibilities.

"Since completing the training I am more confident in the work place and I now have better problem solving skills and better customer service skills. The training motivated me to provide better service to the tourists and they seem to be very happy with the service that I provide. My working relationships with other staff has also improved." (Female tour guide)

One tour guide, who is an older employee, is now experiencing the value of tour guiding and is using the wages he earns to build up his farming enterprise.

"Now I am earning more from tourism. I still earn from my farming, but working as a tour guide is easier and the work is more reliable and it takes less time to earn more money than it does from farming. I now have a bank account where I can save the money earned and then put it towards improving my farm." (Male tour guide)

Eight of the participants who completed the units said they are now motivated and more confident to pursue further studies and hoped to gain more qualifications in the future. Some hoped that they might get a scholarship so they could complete further study in tourism and also study other topics including administration and management that would help them in their current job and also improve their employment and own livelihood and business prospects in the future.

"I want to have the opportunity to study administration and management training and learning computer and Internet skills so I can do my job on the front desk reception and manage booking tours better." (Female tour guide)

One young man who was previously working as a farmer before the training and had little formal education has benefited greatly from participating in the training, and now is working full time as a tour guide with the company.

"I have had new opportunities through my work including travelling to Vila for the first time as part of the TokTok tourism event, and I am now very motivated to gain more qualifications so I can improve my skills for my own catering business."

QUALITY OF LIFE CHANGES

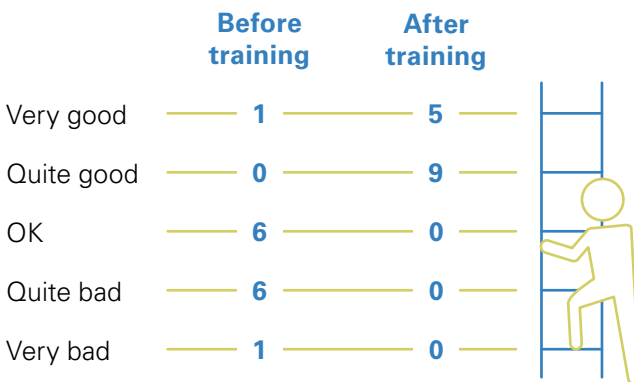
During the interview for this assessment, the participants were shown a picture of a “ladder of life” with five rungs each of which showed ratings (very bad, quite bad, OK, quite good, very good)

The participants were asked to locate where they placed themselves on the quality of life ladder **before the training**, and then to locate themselves **now three years after completing training**. **All of the participants interviewed (N=14)** rated **improvement** in their quality of life since completing the training.

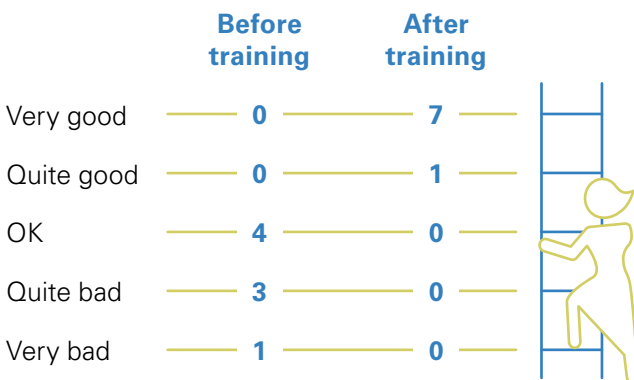
Before the training 6 rated their quality of life as quite bad and 6 as OK, 1 rated as very bad and 1 very good

Now after the training 9 rated their quality of life as quite good and 5 as very good

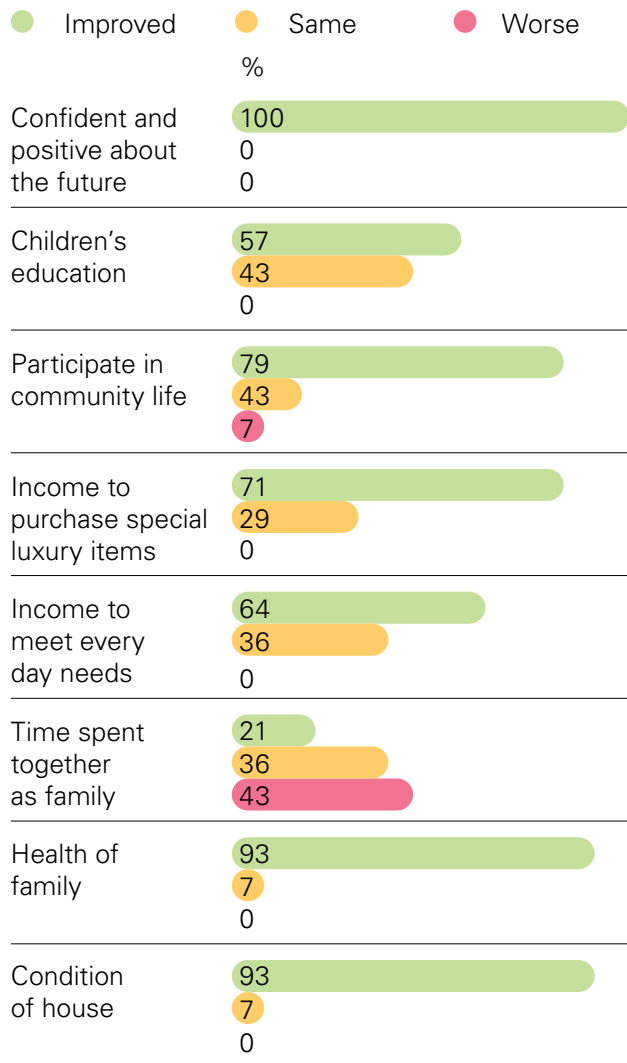
The average improvement was an increase of 2 rungs and the maximum reported improvement was 4 rungs (from very bad to very good).



Women showed very positive improvement in their reported quality of life. Seven of the 8 women interviewed reported their quality of life after the training as very good and one quite good. This compares to one very bad rating, 3 quite bad and 4 OK before the training. Women overall reported a slightly higher average improvement in the quality of life (climbing up 2.25 rungs) while men on average climbed 2 rungs.



The **areas of quality of life improvements** that the 14 participants identified



Overall participants consistently identified **improvements** in the quality of different areas of their life following completion of the training. All of the 14 participants interviewed are more confident about their future, and 13 identified that the quality of their house and the health of their family was now better. Nine now have more income to meet their basic every day needs and ten reported that they can more often afford to purchase special or luxury items.

The consistent improved confidence in the outlook for the future is related to having a more reliable, higher wage, which helps to pay for their children and other family members’ education, and take out and manage loans for improving the condition of their home and to invest in their other businesses and sources of livelihood.

“I now can afford a loan (from the company) that I am able to repay. With this finance I am building a permanent home and hope in the future to get solar lights and electricity in my house. I am also helping pay for my sibling’s education. My brother is at marine school and another graduated from school and then got a scholarship for further study.” (Male tour guide)

An aspect of life that has deteriorated for seven of the participants since completing the training is the time spent together as a family. The reason for this is that many of the tour guides are now working more hours, including double shifts. This has the benefit of increasing their earnings but because of work commitments, and the need for some to live away from home near the work place, they are less engaged and spend less time with their immediate family.

Women consistently rated improvement in the quality of their life since completing the training. Seven women now rate their quality of life as very good and one as good. This compares to before the training when four rated it as OK, three quite bad and one bad. Improvement was consistently better in all areas with the exception of time spent with family, where four of the eight women rated it as worse. Only two rated it better.

One female tour guide noted that;

“The work is good and there is often overtime, however because of this I only get time at home with my family on Saturday.”

Another women commented that

“Overall the quality of life at home has improved, however there is less time for family due to the demands and hours spent working which means I only get home for holidays or family member birthdays.”

ECONOMIC CHANGES

Income earned

Eight of the people interviewed earned income in addition to their salary paid by the company. The income came from a range of different sources including small retail enterprises, working with family operated accommodation and transport businesses, and from farming and fishing.

Six reported an increase in their income and eight reported that overall they are earning about the same from their employment and other enterprises now when compared to completing the training program. Based on the figures shared, it is estimated that the income earned from salaried employment paid by the company has increased, on average, by 21%. As noted before, the increase in income for some is due to change of jobs and promotion, but for tour guides the increase in income is due to having more reliable work and often working double shifts, rather than an increase in their daily rate of pay.

Contribution to household income

Twelve of the course participants now contribute to at least half of their household's total income. This is an increased level of contribution to the household for three since completing the course and for nine the level contributed is the same as it was prior to completing the training. Only two, one woman and one man, reported contributing less now than they had been before the training. The woman has left the company and relies on her farming for income and the man, although he reported that his personal income has increased, the amount he is earning is contributing less to his household than before. This indicates that overall the level of his household's income may have increased.

Loans

Many of the participants shared examples of loans they had taken out with the company. The loans were helping improve different aspects of their life including home improvement, purchase of assets for their home and other businesses and covering the costs of education for children and other family members. None reported challenges in repaying their loans.

Personal Changes

The participants were asked to rate their level of confidence to participate and contribute in discussions and decision making within their family, the community and the work place before completing the training and to compare that to the confidence that they now currently have in these situations.

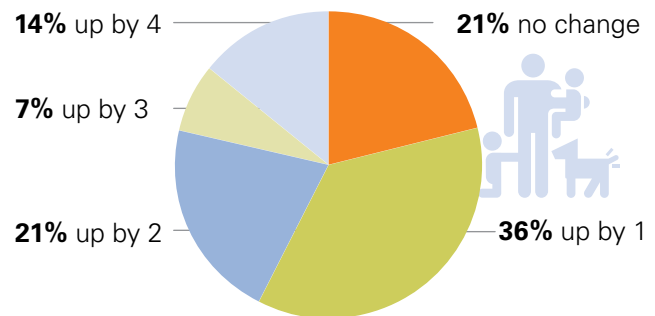
Confidence and decision making	Very high	Quite high	Medium	Low	Very low					
In the family	2	6	1	5	3	3	7	0	1	0
In the community	2	2	1	5	3	7	7	0	1	0
In the workplace	1	8	2	4	4	2	6	0	1	0

*Black text denotes participant responses before completing the training

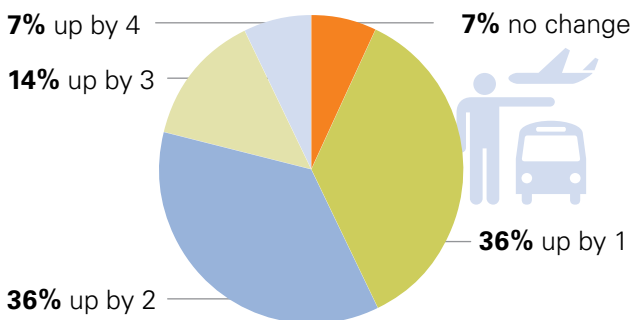
Blue text denotes participant responses **after** completing the training

Overall there is strong evidence that participation in the course has contributed to increased levels of confidence for participants in each of the three areas of within the family, community and in the workplace. Prior to the training the majority (8) rated their confidence in the family and community as low or very low and half (7) gave the same ratings in the work place. Now, none rated their confidence as less than medium in any of these areas of life. The level of increase was comparatively less for confidence in the family compared to positive changes in the work place and in the community.

The % level of change in self rating of confidence in the family

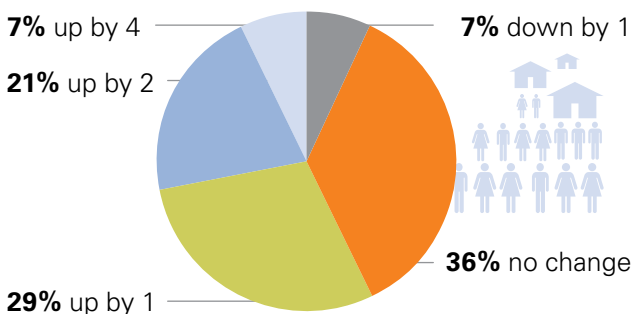


The % level of change in self rating of confidence in the workplace



Women consistently reported greater changes in their level of confidence. Prior to the training, five of the eight women reported low confidence in making contributions and taking part in decision-making in the family and community and four rated it as low in the work place. Now five women rated their confidence as very high in the work place, and four rated it very high in the family. Five now gave a rating of quite high or very high confidence within their community.

The % level of change in self rating of confidence in the community



A story of change from one of the female tour guides captures the range of positive social and economic changes that have taken place in her life since completing the training.

Audrey² from Port Resolution is married and has four children. She has been working with Entani as a tour guide for 3 years now. As well as working for Entani, she owns a small restaurant in her village that she has operated for many years which provides an important income source for her family. She learned her cooking skills informally from a French couple who used to live on the island.

She was really happy when she heard that there was an opportunity to attend the training on tour guiding. She knew it would help her to improve her knowledge and skills and also gain a qualification.

Before the training, she needed a lot of help and supervision to do her job as she lacked confidence and was also afraid to speak to the tourists in English as she is Francophone.

Audrey has very little formal education and she was the oldest in the training group. This initially made her feel shy and uncertain. However, she found that during the training she was well supported by the trainer and her colleagues and did not feel left out at all. The mix of participants, men and women and people with different education levels and language skills, all helped to strengthen the cooperation within the group. They supported each other in different ways and the trainer was very respectful and shared information and skills very well with all of the participants. Audrey learned a lot from the training about communication style, which is very important particularly in the tourism industry.

Audrey is now much more confident at work and does not rely on her supervisor to tell her what to do. She is trying different ways of communicating with the visitors, particularly when trying to share information with Chinese tourists.

Since completing the training, Audrey says that she has also noticed changes within her home especially how they communicate with each other and in the family business. When asked if the changes happened because of the training? She responds with a smile and says, "I actually came back from the training and shared what I had learned with my family. We have a small restaurant and in that business too everyone needs to have a basic understanding in communication and customer services."

She also notes that how she participates and communicates with her family has changed. She feels her family now show her more respect whenever she provides ideas or feedback in family meetings or gatherings. She is also more confident now to participate in her community especially with the women's group helping them with what they need to know and how to act when they meet new people or visitors.

Looking towards the future she is keen to learn more about basic Chinese and Japanese language that could help her with her current role as a tour guide and to help improve her own small restaurant business.

² Name has been changed to maintain anonymity

BENEFITS FOR THE COMPANY

The Entani Company has benefited from the qualified staff who now provide better quality services to the tour customers. This has helped to raise the positive recognition of the company and the services and products it provides, and has helped to attract more customers and improve the level of income earned by the company.

The supervisor interviewed for this assessment rated the contribution of the trained tour guides as very high. She particularly noted a high level in the improvement of skills, knowledge, confidence and behaviour following completion of the training. Additionally she noted that the trained staff were more motivated and had introduced new ideas in the work place. They were helping and motivating other untrained staff to also improve their performance in the work place.

Examples of improvements include:

- » Greater confidence to speak with customers individually and when sharing information with large groups of tourists
- » Showing initiative and taking on additional responsibilities even in the absence of supervisors
- » Contributing to logistics and administration including managing the taxis that transport visitors to and from the tour site
- » Willingness and ability to care for families and people with disabilities on the tour

The supervisor feels that in the future it would be beneficial to provide more training to these staff and also help other staff gain certification. This will help the company to provide a consistent high quality and safe service to the customer, and to ensure the standards set by the Department of Tourism continue to be met. The company, where possible, will also try in the future to give preference to employing staff that already hold certificates.

The company intentionally selected eight women and eight men for the training in 2016, and is working hard to try and ensure that staff, particularly women, with qualifications are promoted and encouraged to remain working with the company.

INVESTMENT AND RETURN – INCREASED INCOME

An estimated Return on Investment (ROI) in relation to improvement in income of the participants who completed the units of the Certificate I Tourism in Tour Guiding, and are currently still employed by the Entani Company, has been calculated based on the following estimated investment, costs and returns of:

Investment

VUV 920,800³ for design and delivery of the certificate course

Cost

VUV 57,700 – per course participant based on 16 completing the course

Income

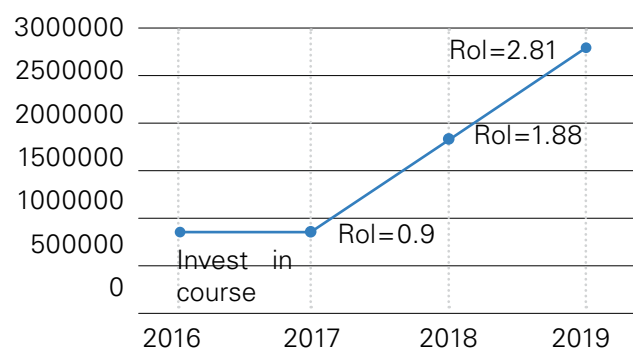
VUV 25,500 – average estimated monthly salary earned per person by the participants still employed in November 2019, 2 years after the completion of the course

VUV 54,000 – increase of **annual income** per person based on average increase in wages after the training of 21%⁴

VUV 108,000 – additional income earned per person still employed by the company over **two years** since completing the course

Return – increase in income earned for investment made in the accredited training activity

Based on these figures and considering **only the increase in income** of the 13 participants still employed the return on the investment in the design and delivery of the training

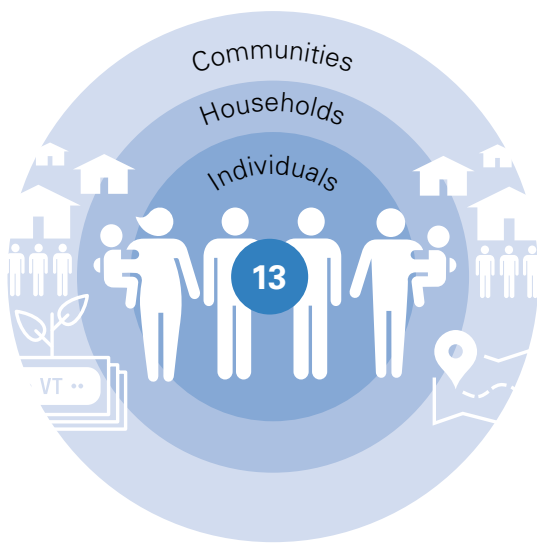


This preliminary assessment on ROI is based only on the increase of income reported by the participants and company over the three years since completing the training, and the high staff retention rate of 81% (13) of the tour guides who completed the course in 2016. Additional factors that have positively impacted on the ROI but were not fully costed as part of this initial assessment include for the:

Company – growth of customer numbers and increased income and profit

Households – improved quality of housing, better health, increase spending power

Local Community – increase demand from tourists for services and products, increase in employment in service industries, increase in purchases by households with higher spending power



In a follow up SEA assessment that will be completed in 2020 with this cohort, costing and analysis of these additional factors, and the wider social impact will be completed which will allow a comprehensive analysis of the ROI to be made.

BUILDING CONSTRUCTION



Certificate II in Building Construction (General Construction)



Units delivered

BCCP0211

Undertake a Basic Construction Project

BCCE0411

Carry out excavation

BCCF0111

Carry out concreting in simple forms

Demand for the accredited training

The Pektel Rural Training Centre (RTC) located in a remote location in Malekula was supported to deliver units of competence for the accredited Certificate II in Building Construction course. The training took place in Lakatoro over five weeks during October – November 2018, and consisted of two weeks theory and three weeks of practical skills based work.

The Malampa Provincial Government Training Board (PGTB) identified the demand for the construction training in the province during the 2018 provincial skills planning process. The planned construction of a new building to house the Malampa Handicraft Centre in Lakatoro also provided an opportunity for participants to gain practical “on the job skills” for three weeks of their training.

Course design and delivery

The building construction qualification was already designed and approved by VQA when Pektel applied to deliver it in 2018. This was the first time for Pektel to deliver accredited construction training.

Pektel RTC and the Partnership signed a Training Provider Improvement Agreement in April 2018. This agreement outlined the type of support and inputs that the Partnership, with the additional support of TED and VQA, would provide to Pektel’s staff and management to help them prepare for delivery of the course through the Malampa Skills Centre.

A Pektel RTC Construction Advisory Committee was established to coordinate the planning and delivery of the course. Membership of the committee included representatives from the RTC, the community and the Provincial Government Office in Malampa including officers from the Provincial Public Works Department.

Over the six-month period leading up to the course the Malampa Skills Centre coordinated two onsite technical support visits for the RTC staff and board members with officers from TED and the Partnership’s Training Provider Support Coordinator and Disability Inclusion Coordinator. During these visits meetings and workshops were convened with the Pektel RTC Construction Advisory Committee.



Investment and Co-contribution

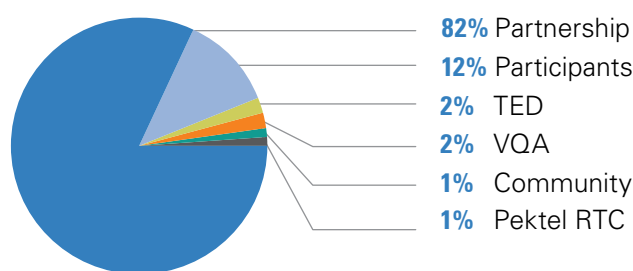
The Partnership contributed 82% of the total investment made to prepare and deliver the units in the Certificate II in Construction. The inputs provided by the Partnership that have been costed include the technical field visits, staff time supporting Pektel, operational and administration costs by the Skills Centre associated with the course and the development of teaching and learning materials, equipment and other participant support costs including fees.

“Without the support of the Partnership I would not have been able to attend the course as the fees would have been too high and I also may not have been accepted because I have low formal education qualifications.” (Female participant)

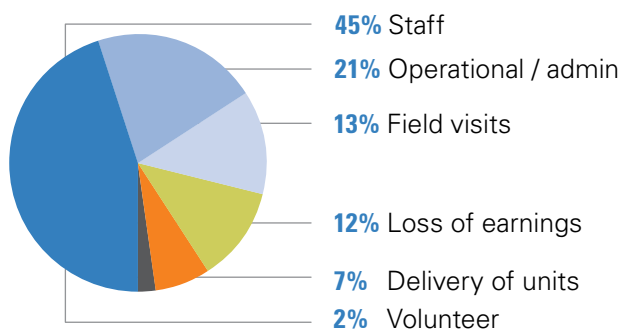
The TED and VQA contributed staff time and covered costs associated with the field visits made to Pektel from Port Vila. The Pektel RTC provided staff and volunteer (board member) time and operational inputs. Community members committed time to the Advisory Committee, which was also costed for the purpose of this analysis⁵.

An additional investment recognised in this analysis is that the course participants did not receive their regular wage for the five-week duration of the course. Based on the information the participants and employers shared for this assessment, the loss of earnings on average per person (16 participants) for the 5-week course is VUV 32,000⁶, which accounts for about 12% of the investment made in the training.

The breakdown of the key inputs and investments made for the development and delivery of the course



Inputs	Partnership	PEKTEL	TED	VQA	Community	Participants (n=16)	Total
Staff	1840200	14000	15000	30000	0	0	1899200
Operational / Admin costs	888100	6000	0	0	0	0	894100
Field visits	412000	0	49000	59000	0	0	520000
Delivery of units	298000	0	0	0	0	0	298000
Volunteer	0	36000	0	0	27000	0	63000
Loss of participants' earning	0	0	0	0	0	512000	512000
VUV Total	3438300	56000	64000	89000	27000	512000	4186300
AUD total	42635	694	794	1104	335	6349	51910



Participants

Of the sixteen participants who enrolled, 13 completed the course. Statements of attainment of units were awarded to two women and 11 men, and one man is a person with disability. Both of the female participants are married to men who completed the training with them. Although it is unusual for women to work in the construction industry, both women had previous experience in building and related industries. One had previously completed training (through another organisation) in solar wiring and was working with her husband in a family joinery business. The other female participant had experience working with her father who owns a construction business.

“When I grew up my father taught me about cement mixing, and with his help and guidance I was involved in some of the building of our family’s permanent house with the help of my father’s guidance and advice.”

Ten course participants, eight men and two women, were interviewed for this assessment. Of those interviewed, six are currently self-employed and four are employed as waged workers in the construction industry. One of the female participants has had a baby since completing the course and because of this has not been working very much during the last 12 months. Her current main source of income is from other small-scale enterprise rather than construction. The other six male participants who completed the course but did not take part in this assessment are no longer living locally and could not be located. Their current employment status is not known.

The average age of the participants interviewed is 32 (youngest 21 and the oldest 47 years). Two participants had only completed primary education, and all others, including the two women, had completed some secondary education. Until participating in this training program, none of the participants had completed any post-secondary education.

Expectations and Outcomes

The main expectation that every participant interviewed identified was to **‘gain a qualification’** as a way to help those who own their own companies to win tenders, and for others to open up new employment opportunities with larger companies.

“Having a certificate is proof that you are qualified.”
(Male participant)

The other **expectations** that most course participants identified were:

- » Gain new knowledge (9)
- » Gain new skills (7)
- » Be more confident in the work place (6)

The four participants working for a wage all rated as important the expectation that by attending the course they would gain more knowledge, skills and confidence in the work place.

Now, one year following completion of the training, overall the participants’ expectations to a large extent have been fulfilled. Of the ten people interviewed the changes most commonly identified are that with the knowledge and skills gained from the course they now:

- » Enjoy their work more (8)
- » Are more motivated to get more qualifications (7)
- » Work more regularly (6)
- » Earn more money from construction (6)

“The course helped me to gain a qualification, and I now want to go further and gain a Certificate III, and ultimately I hope to study to become an architect.”
(Male participant)

“Before completing this course I had very little formal education and no formal qualifications. Now after gaining the certificate I am working more. I am a foreman for a company and now earn more money. I want to study more in the future and am going to ask the people at TVET (provincial Skills Centre) for forms so I can get to APTC⁷ so maybe in the future I can start my own construction business.”
(Male participant)

⁷ Australia Pacific Training Coalition

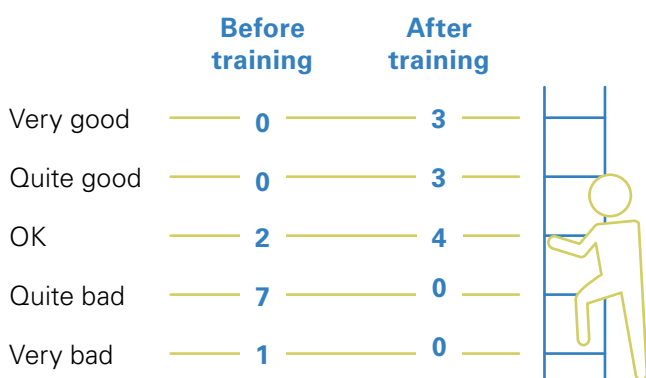
Quality of life changes

As part of the interview the participants were shown a “ladder of life” with rungs showing ratings related to their quality of life. They were asked to locate on the ladder the rung where they were **before the training** and **now** since completing the training and gaining a qualification.

All of the 10 participants interviewed rated improvement in their **quality of life** since completing the training in each aspect that was measured.

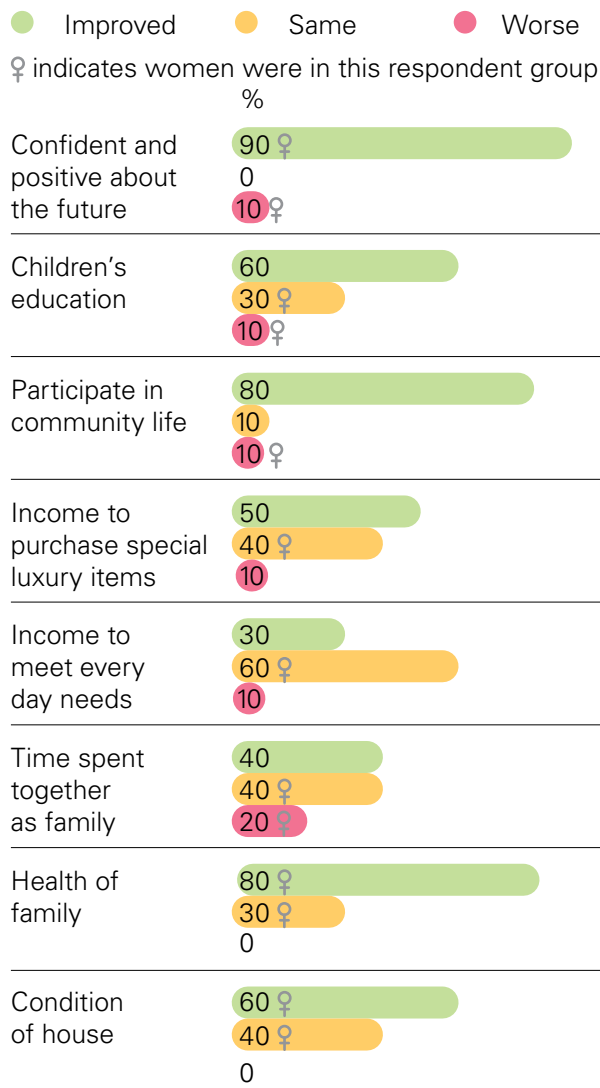
Before the training 7 rated their quality of life as quite bad, one as very bad, 2 as OK

Now after the training 4 rated their quality of life as Ok, 3 quite good and 3 as very good



The average improvement was an increase of 2 rungs and the maximum reported improvement was 3 rungs (from quite bad to very good). The quality of life improvements reported by participants who are self-employed and those who are employees is very similar.

The **areas of quality of life improvements** that the ten participants identified



The participants most often rated improvements in their quality of life in the areas of:

- » Confidence about a positive future (9)
- » Participate in community life (8)
- » Health of family (8)

The improved participation in community life seems linked to the connection that the participants made together as a group and with the community while constructing the new Malampa Handicraft Centre. One male participant who is originally from Ambae said

“Previously, I had felt like an outsider in Malekula, but now through completing the training I now have stronger links in the community and am overall more confident to engage with others. This is helping me in my work in construction and also with my other business enterprises.”

Overall participants reported that their incomes since the course were the same or higher, however only 3 reported that they had more income to meet every day needs. Only 4 of the participants were now spending more time with family.

ECONOMIC CHANGES

Income earned

Since completing the training program the participants consistently reported improvements in their economic situation. Seven of the participants reported that now they earned more from construction and also other enterprises, while two reported the same level of income. Eight participants earn income from additional sources that include rental from a house, fishing, furniture making, kava and copra production, and one from allowances paid for being chairperson of the Provincial Youth Council.

Participants report a wide range of monthly income earned of between VUV16,000 to VUV79,000 from construction and also other sources. Based on the information participants shared, the monthly income individuals on average now earn from working in the construction industry one year after completing the course is VUV32,000. This is estimated to be about 25% higher than the monthly income earned before the course which on average was VUV25,600.

Contribution to household income

Nine of the ten course participants now contribute half or more to the total of their household's income. Only the woman not currently working in construction was contributing less than half of her household's total income. The level of contribution has increased for six participants since completing the course a year ago including the female participant who continues to work in construction.

Personal Changes

The participants were asked to rate their level of confidence to participate and contribute to discussions and decision-making within their family, the community and the work place before completing the training and currently.

Confidence and decision making	Very high		Quite high		Medium		Low		Very low	
In the family	1	5	1	5 ♀	5 ♀	0	3	0	0	0
In the community	1	4	3 ♀	3 ♀	2	2	2	0	2 ♀	1 ♀
In the workplace	1	6 ♀	2 ♀	2 ♀	4 ♀	2	3	0	0	0

*Black text denotes participant responses before completing the training

Blue text denotes participant responses after completing the training

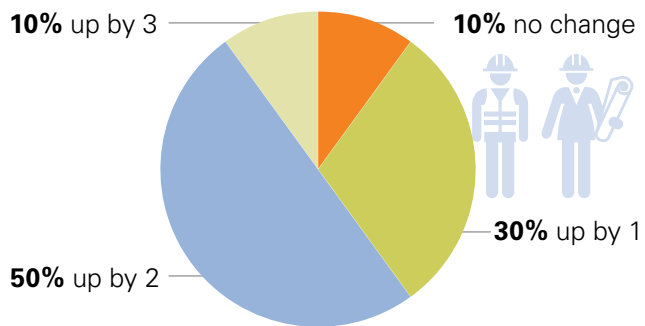
♀ includes woman respondent

Overall there is strong evidence that gaining a recognised qualification has contributed to increased levels of confidence for the participants in each of the three areas: within the family, community and in the workplace. Prior to the training three rated their confidence in the family as low, four in the community as low or very low and in the work place three stated they had low levels of confidence.

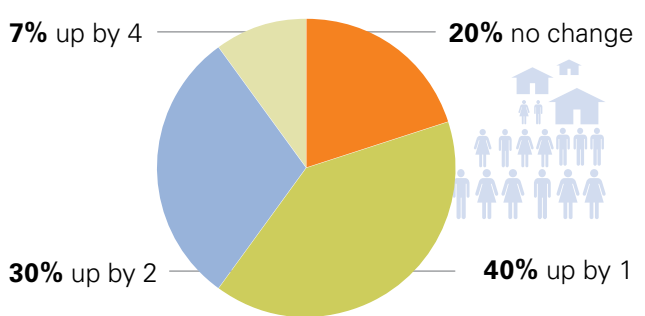
Most of the participants now rate their levels of confidence as quite high or very high, and the greatest improvement in ratings for both men and women is their sense of confidence in the work place. Six, including one woman rate their confidence at work now as very high. There is also a marked increase in confidence within the family. All now rate their confidence now as quite high or very high, while previously only one (male) gave these ratings.

Both women before the training rated their confidence as very low in the community setting. Now one woman feels her confidence is quite high in the community, while the second woman feels it is still very low.

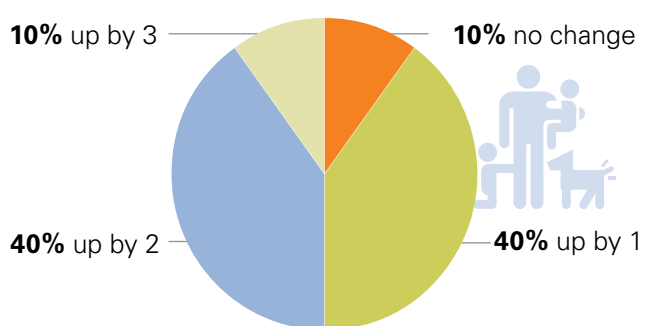
The % level of change in self rating of confidence in the workplace



The % level of change in self rating of confidence in the community



The % level of change in self rating of confidence in the family



The short personal stories the participants shared during the interview give some insights into the factors that have helped their feeling of self-confidence increase. Many report they now have more income to contribute to the household income and are now using their skills to contribute to improving or building new and better accommodation for their families. Others are also more active in the community, offering their skills for free or for a reduced price to help others in the community build better accommodation for their families.

“The training supported me in many different ways. Now I have the courage to make my own decisions in the family, community and business. I participate well with the community where especially I help others when they are building their houses. When they find it difficult they come to me for help. Now I am better recognised by others in the community, and as a result I have more confidence.” (Male participant)

Interaction between women and men participants

Both women and men noted the positive interaction between the men and two woman course participants. The husband of one of the women was very positive about her experience on the course;

“I was so happy for both of us to participate in this training together. We were able to support each other throughout. I encouraged her a lot and gave help when she needed my support with theory and practical work. The other trainees also helped her and they showed respect to her and the other female trainee.”

The other female participant shared her positive experience of studying and working with her male colleagues on the training.

“We were very happy to have attended the training with the men because the interactions between all of the participants were really good. One example of this is when there were outdoor activities that involved heavy work that the women could not do, the men would provide support, such as lifting up the post, mixing the cement and they helped us with other tasks women do not traditionally do that were required to be done as part of our training.”

Employers

Owners of three construction companies that had employees complete the training were interviewed for this assessment. The companies are relatively small; two employ less than ten people and the third employs up to 19 people.

All of the owners rated the standard of the employees who have completed the training as 'outstanding', which is the highest rating they could be given in the interview tool. They noted that the staff members now take on more responsibilities than they did before. The qualified staff are now earning about 25% more than staff who have not got any certification.

All construction business owners stated that having qualified staff has helped to improve their business. The areas that have improved are:

- » Recognition and reputation of the business (3)
- » Increased prices charged for work and increased income earned (3)
- » Improvement in the quality of work of other staff (3)
- » Attract more customers (2)
- » Win more tenders (2)

The company owners gave examples of the types of added value and benefits qualified workers provide:

- » When the boss is not on site, the workers who have been trained do not wait for him to arrive, but rather they start work and this is motivating other staff to also start their work on time.
- » The staff who are trained work more quickly, which helps to save time and money for the business.
- » The company now has two foremen, which helps us to meet contract requirements.

All the employers see benefit in employing qualified workers but still feel it is important to retain a balance of less skilled workers too as this keep a balance of experience in the workplace, and also maintains cost efficiencies and financial viability of the business.

INVESTMENT AND RETURN – INCREASED INCOME

An estimated Return on Investment (ROI) in relation to improvement in earnings of the participants who gained the Certificate II in Building Construction in (General Construction), and are currently still employed in the construction industry has been calculated based on the following estimated investment, costs and returns of:

Investment

VUV 4,186,300 for design and delivery of the certificate training

Cost

VUV 322,023 – per course participant based on 13 completing the training

Economic Return

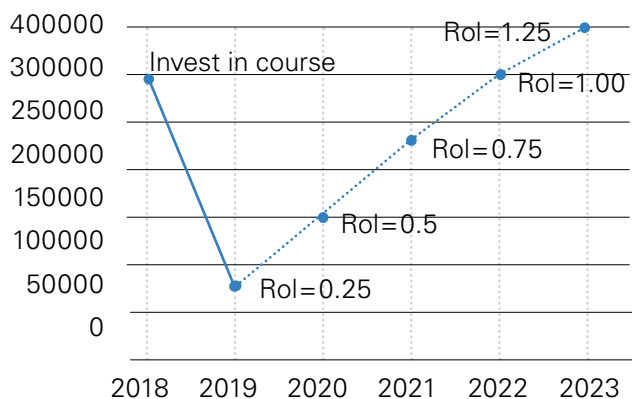
VUV 32,000 – average estimated monthly salary earned by the nine participants still employed in November 2019, one year after the completion of the training

VUV 76,800 – increase of annual income per person based on average increase in wages after the training of 25%⁸

VUV 153,600 – additional income earned per person still employed in the construction industry in the two years since completing the course

Return – increase in income earned for investment made in the accredited training activity

Based on these figures and considering only the increase in earnings of the 9 participants still employed in the construction industry, the ROI made in the design and delivery of the training



This preliminary assessment on ROI is based only on the increase of wages that was reported by the nine participants still working in construction and the three business owners during the 12 months since completing the course. It takes into account the relatively high loss of nine people from the training group (56%), which has reduced the ROI.

The calculation of the ROI for the next four years, when the investment made in the training is realised through the cumulative increase in income earned of the remaining nine participants, is based on the critical assumptions that those currently working will remain in the construction workforce and that average income from construction work will not drop below the current level used in this calculation.

This calculation does not take into account additional benefits that were not costed for this assessment, but will have contributed further to an improved return on the investment including from the:

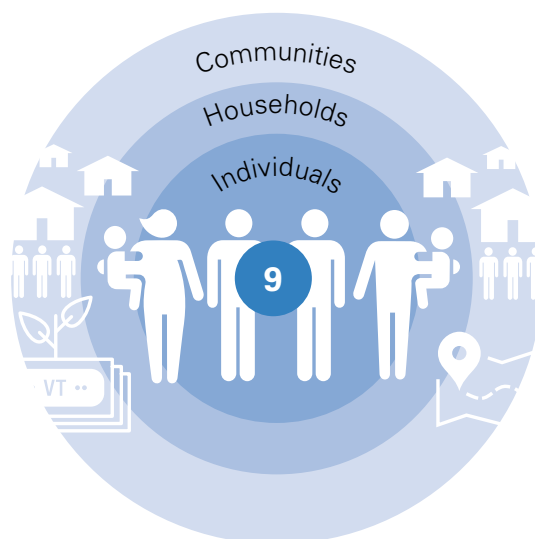
Individuals – promotion opportunities and access to more regular employment

Businesses – gaining more contracts, completion time quicker so potential to work more days per year increases

Households – improved quality of housing, better health, increase spending power and improvement in other sources of income from family businesses

Local Community – increased quality of housing for other community members

Malampa Handicraft Centre – improved facilities which should increase business productivity, customer, sales and profits



This preliminary ROI assessment shows the relatively high cost for this type of accredited training when compared to the Certificate I Tour Guide. This is mainly due to the length of the course (five weeks), and the higher delivery costs associated with materials and equipment. As a result, even though there have been positive outcomes reported for both individuals and for the companies employing the workers, due to the relatively high costs to prepare and deliver this course, it will take longer, until the fourth year, for a positive return from the initial investment made to be achieved through increase in participants’ earnings.

In the subsequent SEA assessment that will be completed in 2020 with this cohort of participants, a more comprehensive assessment and costing of these additional influencing factors will be undertaken to enable a more complete analysis of the ROI to be made.

KEY CONCLUSIONS

The **key conclusions** from the findings of the SEA enquiry undertaken into the two accredited training programs are:

Positive economic benefits for participants, their families and households

Income

There is strong evidence that gaining nationally recognised certificates in a relevant sector where there is demand for skills has economically benefitted the successful participants. The income of the participants still working in the relevant industries has increased since completing the training. In the case of the tour guides this is because they are now accessing more regular work and working more hours due to a growth of the tourist numbers visiting the volcano. For those employed in the construction industry, having a nationally recognised certificate, means that they are now employed on a higher daily wage and many are working more regular hours. In both sectors some of the participants with certificates have been promoted and earn higher salaries in their new jobs.

Overall the increase in income has helped participants (both women and men) to contribute more to their household's income and this has improved purchasing power for both essential and special/luxury household items. Many of the tour guides have taken out loans from the company, which they are repaying. The loans are helping them to cover household expenses and also make improvements to the home, pay for school fees and invest in other family enterprises from which they also earn an income.

Positive personal changes for women and men participants and their families

Confidence

The participants consistently report an increase in personal self-confidence since completing the training and gaining certification. This applies to the three areas of their life – family, community and in the workplace. All of the participants expressed feeling more confident and optimistic about the future for themselves and their family. This seems related to the improvement in employment and increase in earnings that makes it easier to meet their families needs and has helped to improve their overall quality of life.

The improved level of knowledge and skills following the training has contributed to improved confidence in the workplace for both the tour guides and the construction workers. The employers also note that the improved confidence and motivation of those staff with certificates has also positively influenced the attitude and approach of other employees who have not completed training. The overall improvement of standards and quality of services in the workplace is benefiting and helping support growth of the businesses.

Motivation to gain further qualifications

For most of the participants, the certificate is the first post-secondary school formal qualification they have obtained. Many of the participants are now motivated and have greater confidence to seek further opportunities to gain other qualifications with the aim to help them progress further in their current work and in other new areas of employment in the future. This clearly demonstrates the importance of continuing to create inclusive quality assured training opportunities for people who often miss out because they do not have high levels of formal education qualifications, and because training services are rarely available in rural and remote areas.

Women

The successful completion of the training has had a greater personal impact on women than for the men participants. The women who have continued to work in the sector following the training, report higher changes in self-confidence and overall rated more highly than the men the changes in their quality of life. The positive change in self-confidence for both women and men is particularly important in the Vanuatu context where factors related to traditional gender norms and the influence of post-colonial dependency are considered.

Family

The amount of time spent with family, was one aspect of quality of life that did not improve for most of the participants in the tour guide training and in fact was reduced for many. This is due to the additional hours the tour guides are working which limits the time spent with family. Although this finding is based on a small sample and only one training cohort, the depletion of family time particularly for women does raise concerns and potential risks in terms of traditional family values and in regard to the expectations of the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family unit and in upbringing and care of children.

It is important for the companies to understand the importance and benefits of 'family friendly' work places. The provincial Skills Centres in their engagement with companies have a role to play in increasing awareness of this aspect of the work environment as part of the inclusive approaches to skills training that is promoted through the Partnership. The area of family time and responsibilities being balanced with paid work is an area for further enquiry by the Partnership in the future.

Community

A strengthened sense of being part of community is evident for the participants who completed the building construction training. This appears to be strongly related to the 'on-the-job' component of the training, where the participants engaged with and worked with the community in the construction of the new Malampa Handicraft Centre. This aspect of the training has facilitated stronger connections and networks between the participants and with other community members. This approach appears to be a positive way of strengthening awareness of the community of the value of the provincial Skills Centres, and in fostering connections between the private sector and community.

BENEFITS AND ADDED VALUE FOR BUSINESS

Specific financial data from the businesses and employers of participants who have completed the accredited training was not collected in this assessment. However, all of the business owners and company representatives provided strong anecdotal evidence and examples of the added value that employing qualified staff had on their businesses.

Overall the trained workers are working more effectively and delivering services to a higher standard than those staff that do not have certificates. In addition the trained staff are often more motivated and proactive in the work force. The qualified staff are taking on additional responsibilities, showing initiative and leadership in the work place and motivating and supporting other less qualified staff to also improve the standard of their work. This is helping the growth of businesses including increase in customers and contracts; increased charges for services; and winning larger tenders and contracts of work.

Overall the business owners and managers recognise that trained staff enhance the positive recognition and reputation of their businesses. The business owners see value for their business in investing in the employment and retaining of certified and experienced staff. Future assessment of the financial and professional benefits that these staff bring to businesses will be more thoroughly explored in subsequent SEAs.

INVESTMENT: TO PROVIDE ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE ACCREDITED TRAINING QUALIFICATIONS IN RURAL AREAS

Investment and Co-contribution

The Partnership provided the majority (over 80%) of the financial investment made that enabled women and men, including a person with disability living in rural areas, to access quality training locally. Without this financial support and the essential technical advice, and the coordination between the different partners at the national and local level (TED, VQA, and the RTCs) that the Partnership staff in Port Vila with the provincial skills centre staff provided, it is extremely unlikely that the training programs would have taken place. The co-contribution made by partners, the community and the company although overall small was also essential support for the successful implementation of the training, and has helped foster commitment and ownership of the training process and the results.

Future Sustainability

Increased investment is required to further improve the access by rural community members to quality inclusive skills training in sectors where there is demand. The investment is required for different aspects including for design, technical and operational delivery of the accredited units. In the short term there will continue to be heavy reliance on the financial and technical resources the Partnership provides. In the medium to longer term, to ensure ongoing delivery and sustainability of this type of training, more investment of resources is needed from different stakeholders, including increased commitments of budget and technical support from the VQA and the MoET through TED; and potentially through the relevant productive sector departments of the GoV in the commitments made through the Partnership Implementation Frameworks and Memorandums of Understanding with the Partnership.

The initial ROI assessment of these two training programs provides encouraging evidence of the benefits that investment in accredited training offers to individual participants, their families, the wider community, and the businesses that they operate or are employed by. The initial economic and social returns that have been measured in this first assessment provide justification for the provincial government and private sector businesses and companies committing more support to this type of quality assured skills training in their locality in the future.

Implications and Future Action

Based on the findings presented in this first SEA report, certain follow up actions are planned and will be included in the Partnership's 2020 activity plan:

- » **The evidence of the benefits and ROI from this assessment will be presented as part of the Partnership's advocacy of GoV and private sector partners**, with the expectation that in the medium to longer term their investment to skills training, including financial and personnel resources for the MoET provincial Skills Centre's increases, to support increased implementation and sustainability of accessible quality assured training in rural locations. Key forums for presentation of these findings will be the a) Skills Partnership Steering Committee meeting; b) VQA Board meeting; c) National Trade Policy Framework Update meeting.
- » Linked to the above, **the findings will be used to advocate for increased accreditation** of in-demand courses by the VQA. The importance of obtaining a formal qualification, in addition to relevant skills, has been underscored by the experiences of the trainees in this case study; this is in relation not only to increased income generation potential and access to employment/entrepreneurial pathways, but also increased confidence and status.
- » **More detailed enquiry will be undertaken by the Partnership into the wider benefit and impact in the medium term (3 to 4 years after the training) will be completed with the two cohorts assessed in this SEA:** specifically enquiry into areas including the social and economic impact on participants' families and household members and the benefits for businesses operated by participants and those employing qualified staff.
- » **Data on costing and investments made for other types of accredited and non-accredited skills training activities will be collected by the Partnership as part of routine monitoring:** this information will help comparative analysis of costings and return on investment to be made across a number of different productive sectors and in different provinces and contexts.

Social and Economic Assessments

Over the three year period from 2019 to the end of 2021 Social and Economic Assessments (SEAs) will be completed for a selective range of skills development activities in different sectors and in each of the four provinces where there are MoET Provincial Skills Centres. In each of the four locations a minimum of two assessments on outcomes from the skills development activities will be made about one year apart. The repeat assessments will provide longer term tracking data on outcomes and help provide an assessment of impact over time of different aspects of results from the skills development activities.

Mixed methodology will be used in the assessments to collect and analyse quantitative and qualitative data. Wherever possible the SEA tools used will draw on the tools already designed and being applied in the Partnership's monitoring and learning system. As required additional tools will be designed to strengthen the scope and depth of the SEA, and to suit the local context where the assessment is undertaken.

