

# STRENGTHENING DISABILITY INCLUSION AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL THROUGH *Data collection*

Reliable disability data is crucial for disability inclusion in national development. The 2009 National Housing and Population Census reported that 12% of the total Vanuatu population comprised people with disabilities, however there is a dire need for the data to be updated to address *Policy Objective 4 of the National Disability Inclusive Development Policy 2018 -2025*.

The Ministry of Justice and Community Service (MJCS) saw the 2020 National Housing and Population Census as the opportunity to update the national disability data and worked with partners including the Vanuatu Skills Partnership, Vanuatu Society for People with Disabilities (VSPD), Vanuatu Disability Promotion and Advocacy Association (VDPA), World Vision Vanuatu (WVV), Stremem Rod blo Jastis program (SRBJ) and the Vanuatu National Statistics Office (VNSO) to incorporate the Washington Group Questions into the Census survey. Globally, the Washington Group Short Set questions are recommended for use in censuses to collect clear and reliable disability data. These questions do not use the word 'disability', but instead focus on 'functional ability'. In the past, censuses directly asked if people 'have a disability' which led to an under-reporting of disability incidence; many respondents refused to answer the question as a result of the stigma surrounding disability.

While the Washington Group Short Set questions are recognised as best practice in Vanuatu, there are a limited number of people who are experienced in their usage. When they have been used, it has not always been in accordance with the Washington Group guidelines, which has also resulted in under-reporting. Therefore, the VNSO called upon disability sector partners, through a request to MJCS' Disability Desk, to provide assistance for the 2020 National Housing and Population Census.

In response to this request, the Vanuatu Skills Partnership worked in collaboration with MJCS, VSPD, VDPA, and WVV, to enable contextualised disability data collection in line with the international standard.



This was undertaken firstly through a two-day workshop for Provincial Community Services/Disability Officers and other key stakeholders, which aimed to build participants' understanding of the Washington Group Short Set questions, and to develop a Guidance Note to assist enumerators out in the field. A standardised training package was also developed for the officers to use with enumerators, ensuring consistency of key messages regarding disability data collection across all provinces.

After the two-day training, the provincial officers and officers from VSPD, VDPA, Vanuatu Skills Partnership and World Vision were dispatched to the six provinces as requested by the National Census Team to support the training of census enumerators. This input, funded by the Disability Desk and the Vanuatu Skills Partnership and supported by the disability sector partners, saw over 800 enumerators from the six provinces trained in the Washington Group Short Set.



This is the first time the Washington Group Short Set have been used, in accordance with their guidelines, to collect disability data in a Housing and Population Census in Vanuatu and the data collected will benefit significantly both the government and donor partners.

Reliable disability data will enable the VNSO to disaggregate by disability access to important areas of life such as education, health services, justice and employment. This information will highlight gaps, and assist the government to prioritise resources to support disability inclusion in line with its *National Disability Inclusive Development Policy*, ensuring the mandate of *Vanuatu's National Sustainable Development Plan*, 'leave no one behind', is met.

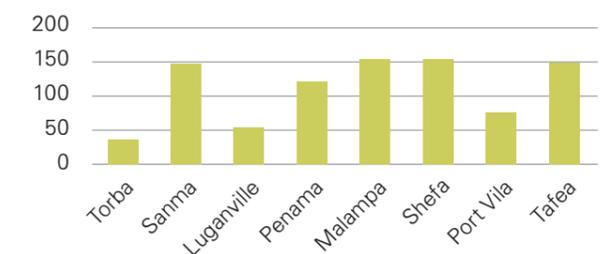


Workshop participants

"MJCS, through the Disability Desk, would like to thank the Vanuatu Skills Partnership for its continuous support. They stepped in on time to enable the enumerator training which will contribute to achieving Soc. 4.3 and 4.5 of the People's Plan 2030 - this focuses on empowering and supporting people with disabilities and ensuring that all people, including persons with disabilities, have access to government services and infrastructure".

Ginette Morris, National Coordinator, Disability Desk

Total enumerators trained per province



"A lot of times people with disabilities are excluded from surveys and censuses. The census is a nation-wide activity, and we want to make sure we capture everyone. Hence the support from Vanuatu Skills Partnership and the disability partners is greatly appreciated as it will ensure that no one is left out as per the Census theme. We look forward to further collaborations with the Vanuatu Skills Partnership and the disability partners in the future."

Jimmy Ezra, National Coordinator for the 2020 Housing and Population Census