

TRAINING PROVIDER SUPPORT AND SKILLS FOR CONSTRUCTION

Narrative Report: January - June 2022



Figure 1: Signing ceremony between Anglican Church of Melanesia Vocational Education and Training Schools and Torba Skills Centre (Seated front left: Reverend Bishop James Tama; front right: Jimmy Kelvin, Torba Skills Centre Manager)

INTRODUCTION

This report is an update on Training Provider Support (TPS) and Skills for Construction (SfC) activities implemented through the Vanuatu Skills Partnership ('the Partnership') January - June 2022. The Partnership's activity in TPS is sector-wide and works simultaneously at the national and provincial level. SfC activities focus on the construction and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) sectors principally at the provincial level.

The priorities for the last six months have been:

- **Facilitating partnerships with government departments and training providers** to support decentralised service delivery in rural locations
- **Supporting the delivery of accredited training** in Sanma, Torba and Tafea
- **Increasing diversity of skills supply** with new and emerging training providers (Ituani VTC and Youth Challenge Vanuatu)
- **Participating in Government of Vanuatu's COVID-19 response** in partnership with the Ministry of Health and Vanuatu Health Program
- **Identifying additional skills pathways** in the WASH sector through mapping of formal and informal plumbing qualifications.

The TPS and SfC workstreams collaborate with a number of Government of Vanuatu agencies and departments:

- Tertiary Education Directorate (TED)
- Ministry of Education and Training (MoET)
- Vanuatu Qualifications Authority (VQA)
- Department of Water Resources (DoWR)
- Public Works Department (PWD)
- Department of Local Authorities (DLA)
- Ministry of Health (MoH)

The goal of the combined workstreams, consistent with the Partnership's theory of change, is quality improvements in Post-School Education and Training (PSET) and infrastructure sectors. The performance of each workstream is guided by the National Sustainable Development Plan 2030 (SOC 2; ENV 3; ECO 2-4), Yumi Evriwan Tugeta – National Recovery Strategy, National Human Resource Development Plan and relevant productive sector policies.

This report was developed in collaboration with Skills Centre Managers, Provincial Training Coordinators, Productive Sector Managers and Coordinators, TED and VQA officers and other sectoral Government officers. The report provides a summary of partner engagement, results, achievements, challenges and forward planning for July - December 2022.

CONTEXT

Activity in the national PSET sector in the first half of 2022 has been affected by several disruptions. In particular, there was considerable disruption to learning continuity and delivery of training and assessment as a result of COVID-19 restrictions imposed by the government up until June 2022. Many training providers were not equipped to 'flip' their training and assessment delivery to digital and online learning platforms to allow training to continue. Access to Moodle was limited for rural students in many locations, and trainers had limited capacity to work effectively in the disrupted environment.

The ongoing issues with external quality audits of training providers and potential deregistration has impacted the capacity of these providers to continue delivering accredited training. The situation is complicated by a number of external factors that training providers have limited capacity to influence. For example, the Vanuatu College of Nursing Education external audit recommended removal of board staff and establishing a new nursing and health training centre. The issue of provider deregistration was raised in social and print media resulting in misinformation being shared which has impacted relations between the training providers and the Vanuatu Qualifications Authority.

The Partnership Director met with the acting Director Tertiary Education Directorate and Director General of Prime Minister's Office and it was agreed to review the national PSET Policy 2016-2020 under a new title – National Skills Development Policy. It was also agreed to undertake a TVET Expenditure Review. MoET continued to develop its thinking and approach to TVET in Schools during the first half of the year with consultations in Malampa and Torba provinces. A draft enrolment form for the national PSET Management Information System (MIS) with the Washington Group questions related to disability inclusion is in development and is expected to be endorsed by TED by end of 2022 for integration with the PSET MIS in time for new academic year in 2023. Work with MoET on the rollout of the school renovation initiative on Ambae Island and in Sanma Province slowed during the first half of the year due to internal issues at MoET.

Addressing the impact of COVID-19 has been a major activity across the infrastructure sector in Vanuatu this year. For example, WASH-related training and resourcing were delivered throughout the country as part of health prevention measures. DoWR and MoH were lead agencies in securing provision of safe and secure hand washing stations particularly at quarantine sites in Port Vila and in provincial locations outside Shefa. With support from UNICEF, the Government of Japan and provincial Skills Centres, new water sanitation and hygiene facilities have been installed at Ex-FOL Sporting Complex, Vanuatu Central Hospital, VCNE, NPH Medical Ward, Litzlitz Wharf, Tafea Coop Market House and kindergartens in Tanna.

PARTNERSHIP STATUS & CO-CONTRIBUTIONS

Department of Water and Natural Resources (DoWR)

The Partnership formalised an agreement with DoWR in May. Through this agreement, Skills Centres

“The partnership approach is in line with the implementation of the established National Human Resource Development Plan 2020 – 2030 to identify opportunities in terms of government support and funding to upskill our human resources.”

Henry Vira, Director General Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources

and provincial DoWR offices will support rebuilding and maintenance of essential WASH infrastructure across the provinces as well as targeted delivery of Certificate II in Plumbing qualification to two provincial locations.

Department of Industry (DoI)

The long-standing partnership with DoI is helping to bring ‘government closer to the people’ with positive changes in communities where Skills Centres and DoI are collaborating on social and community infrastructure projects. An example of this is the development of the Tafea Handicraft Centre. The project came into reality as a result of a strong partnership between the Tafea Provincial Government, Tafea Skills Centre, Lenakel Town Municipality, Tanna Nikoletan Council of Chiefs, DoI, and the Vanuatu Institute of Technology. DoI contributed funding for materials whereas the Skills Partnership contributed funding for all training related costs. The chiefs of West Tanna are making contributions such as free sand and coral. This is a good example of community-led collective action to support the growth of the province’s creative industries sector.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE TRAINING PROVIDER / INFRASTRUCTURE WORKSTREAM JANUARY - JUNE 2022

Activity Outputs

Skills training activities

2 Workshops
2 Accredited Training
1 LLN Assessment

Support activities

2 Professional Development Activities
2 Resource Development
16 Budget and Procurement
5 Construction Quality Checks
6 Construction Design
4 Construction/Plumbing Works

Participation in Partnership-supported skills training and other activities

Participation	Business Clients supported	Skill Providers (coaches) engaged	Skills Providers engaged/supported
7 women 68 men 4 people with disabilities (4 men)	2 Community Industry Associations (Sanma: Plumbing; Torba: Construction)	7 men (6 construction; 1 forestry)	2 National Provider (Vanuatu Agriculture College; Vanuatu Institute of Technology) 2 Provincial Providers (ACOMVETS Torgil; St Michel Technical College) 1 Private Provider (Ituani VSC)

SNAPSHOT OF KEY RESULTS ACHIEVED

IT Communications Upskilling for Health Workers and Provincial Administrators: skills training in real time as part of national pandemic response

TPS brokered a unique training partnership with MoH, Vanuatu Health Program (Australian Aid) and Ituani Vocational Skills Centre to deliver information technology upskilling for provincial and national health managers and health surveillance officers. This training was preparation for managing community transmission of COVID-19 in Vanuatu and took place during the outbreak of the virus in March.

The Sanma Secretary General, Mr Albert Ruddley, heard about the MoH IT upskilling program and made a request to the Sanma Skills Centre for a similar program to be delivered for Sanma Provincial Government Administration team, Area Administrators and Area Councilors. The communication skills workshop was delivered to advance decentralisation efforts and improve communication and service delivery. The workshop was customised to meet the specific needs of these frontline government staff and to contribute to improved coordination and management at the community level.

Indirect outcomes

- Sanma Provincial Government convened its first ever council sitting through online virtual conferencing across key Area Councils of Sanma, which saved costs on transport and accommodation.
- Sanma Provincial Government set up Area Council taskforces across Sanma province with support from Sanma Health team using virtual meetings. This enabled all 11 Area Councils to establish community isolation centres quickly and efficiently as part of the national response to COVID-19.



Figure 2: Sanma Provincial Government administration officers, Area Administrators and Area Councilors participating in IT communications upskilling program with Ituani Vocational Skills Centre in Luganville June 2022.

Tafea Handicraft House – example of innovation in skills delivery impacted by COVID-19.

Construction commenced in February on the first-ever handicraft centre for Tafea Province. The building is being constructed by 24 local builders who are completing the nationally accredited Certificate II in Building Construction delivered in partnership with VIT. The institute, through its strategic review, has a mandate to increase delivery of skills training to meet demand in provincial locations. The trainers responded flexibly to the impacts of the COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions on travel through innovative changes to the delivery schedule.

TPS Manager and Sfc Coordinator provided briefings to VIT trainers and coaches on successful approaches to on-site training delivery drawing on their previous experience in Tafea and Sanma Provinces. For example, they provided sample training schedules and assessment tools that were customised for this particular construction activity. This valuable hands-on training demonstrates bringing services closer to the people – taking the training to where it is in demand and meeting the needs of local businesses and communities. The training also creates pathways for trainees to higher level qualifications as well as giving them a recognised qualification leading them into entrepreneurship and/or employment. The Tafea Skills Centre will be assisting the trainees to establish a local contractors' association so they can bid for provincial government building contracts and improve quality of local commercial construction services.



Figure 3: Construction trainees working on the roof of the new Tafea Handicraft Centre in Lenakel, Tanna.

Sanitation Facility in Lenakel, Tanna Island: Skills extension for construction trainees and improved hygiene environment for market vendors.

Trainees undertaking the Certificate II in Building Construction program to build the Tafea Handicraft Centre are also constructing a new 4m x 3m sanitation facility at the Lenakel Vegetable Market. The integration of this add-on skills component is an innovation for the national PSET sector as it is the first time trainees have developed skills and knowledge on two different training sites with two different types of buildings. Vanuatu Institute of Technology trainer, Mr Moses Nalau, worked closely with the Tafea PWD, Tafea DoWR, Tafea Provincial Government, Tafea Market Coop Committee and Tafea Skills Centre to integrate the two training activities. The sanitation facility skills training component will extend the scope of construction skills and knowledge for the trainees, making them more employable in the future.

In addition to the upskilling for the construction trainees, the facility will contribute towards the success, reputation and longevity of the market house for the Lenakel community. It will help to prevent spread of diseases and foodborne illnesses and have a direct economic benefit for households with safe and hygienic environment avoiding increased health care costs caused by food-related disease. The facility will also help avoid environmental degradation and assist vendors, mostly mothers, who use the market house daily to sell their vegetables. The women in particular will feel comfortable knowing there is a more accessible sanitation facility they can use while selling produce.

Gaua Market House: Constructing a multi-use facility and establishing a construction company to support local development

The Gaua Market House was constructed in 2021 funded by the Torba Provincial Government and Gaua Area Council. ACOMVETS Torgil and Torba Skills Centre collaborated on the delivery of the Certificate II in Building Construction qualification as part of the construction process. TPS/SfC workstreams led the initial discussions for the concept and planning of this construction. The initial scope of works was completed by SfC Coordinator in liaison with key counterparts. He also developed quantity surveying documentation to support efficient procurement and transport of building materials to the remote Gaua location.

Nineteen trainees (18 M, 1 F) successfully completed the course and are due to graduate soon. During the COVID-19 outbreak in Torba Province, the MoH Medical RAT Test team used the Gaua Market House to conduct the RAT testing with community members. The market house has been

used by NDMO team from the government to carry out volcanic ash fall preparedness and response awareness to Gaua community leaders and people.

Since completing the construction course, with the support of the Torba Skills Centre, the trainees have formally set up a construction company with the Vanuatu Financial Services Commission. The company is known as the GOU Construction Company and will be the development arm for the Gaua Area Council. This is an important development for the local construction sector in Torba Province.



Figure 4: COVID-19 RAT tests being administered in the Gaua Market House.



Figure 5: NDMO conducting ashfall awareness training using the Gaua Market House

ADDITIONAL RESULTS (CROSS CUTTING ISSUES):

Better Balance

Within the parameters of different industry sectors such as construction and WASH, the TPS/SfC workstreams have contributed towards progress of the Partnership's Better Balance Strategy. Female participation within the construction sector (a traditionally male dominated field) is quite low and very few women are currently working in this industry. However, there have been female participants in all of the key activities so far this year under this joint workstream. TPS/SfC, in close collaboration, with provincial Skills Centres and Provincial Government Area Councils, will continue to encourage female participation as much as possible during community consultations to ensure there is better balance of women in flexible delivery of accredited training and implementation of infrastructure projects. By the end of this year 2022, the aim of the TPS/SfC team is to increase the enrolment of women participating in construction/plumbing training compared to previous years.

Disability Inclusion

Similar to implementation of the Better Balance Strategy, the TPS/SfC workstream collaborates with the Partnership's disability team in close partnership with provincial Skills Centres and Provincial Government Area Councils to increase awareness of training opportunities for people with a disability. In particular, disability inclusion is emphasised during consultations to provide as much information and encouragement as possible for prospective trainees who have a disability. The participation of people with disabilities in accredited training is having a ripple effect in communities in terms of how people with a disability are perceived and treated. For example, the local building contractor for the Tafea Handicraft Centre employed a person with a disability as part of the construction team.

To support the Partnership's commitment to 'development for all', all infrastructure projects are designed to be accessible. All public infrastructure designs developed this year have disability accessible. This approach encourages all people in the community to feel comfortable when using the infrastructure. SfC, in particular, with the Partnership Disability team, will continue to promote the benefits of accessible infrastructure to encourage further participation of people with disability.

Climate Resilience

The joint TPS/SfC workstream is progressing climate resilience in a number of ways. Building designs must meet the principles of Build Back Better and be able to withstand extreme weather events before being approved. The workstream engaged industry to undertake building design assessments and conduct construction quality checks. Secondly, training providers are being supported to integrate climate resilience in their training and assessment delivery to ensure this subject area is delivered alongside technical training and trainee capacity is enhanced in building climate resilient infrastructure, whether that is a community building, WASH infrastructure, public housing and so on. Secondly, trainees are experiencing best-practice practical training such as integration of build back better principles, selection and use of resilient materials and occupational health and safety. The workstream needs to work further with contractors, communities, Provincial Governments and relevant agencies already working in this climate resilience space to further integrate adaptation measures for floods, landslide, ashfall and drought, changing weather patterns and sea level rise into future designs.

CHALLENGES AND / OR LESSONS LEARNED

- The workstream experienced challenges from the COVID-19 disruptions with internal border restrictions and shortage of material in stock from suppliers. This caused delays with certain inputs to provincial activities.
- National training providers have been challenged with a lack of sufficient resources to meet the recommendations of external quality audits. Notwithstanding the resource-constrained environment they still have the desire and will to improve.
- COVID-19 restrictions put a lot of stress on Ituani VSC while it was delivering the IT communications upskilling program for national and provincial health workers. The collaborative efforts of the Partnership, in particular the Skills for Health Coordinator, with the MoH and Vanuatu Health Program were critical to the successful outcome of the training and improvement in health data management and COVID-19 response.
- Certificate IV in VET (Teacher Education) delivery was impacted by COVID-19 restrictions. Training being delivered remotely by VITE through Zoom.
- Delays in MOET with approval of plans for new school buildings is a challenge for SfC. Implementation has been very slow this past six months.

There is no need to alter the current approach for the workstream for the remainder of 2022.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS TO DATE IN 2022

Progress less than expected and significant change is required	Progress less than expected but challenges are being overcome	Progress as expected (our plans are on track)	Progress is exceeding expectations
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In terms of an overall assessment to date, progress of TPS/SfC workstream has been less than expected noting the challenges that TED, training providers, and local communities have been facing. But important results have still been achieved and challenges are being overcome. Most of the activities for SfC listed in the 2022 Annual Plan are either completed or are being implemented. The activity centered on working with MoET on the rollout of the school renovation initiative on Ambae and in Sanma is slow due to internal issues at MoET and lack of leadership. For the TPS workstream activities listed in the 2022 Annual Plan, most activities have commenced in some form. There are a number of external factors beyond the workstream's control that have impacted in the last six months on progress such as COVID-19 restrictions, lack of ministry leadership on the TVET in Schools initiative and capacity of small-scale training providers to meet national standards for registration.

FORWARD PLANNING: JULY- DECEMBER 2022

The following activities planned for July-December are linked to the priorities listed in the 2022 Annual Plan. Overall the priorities for the TPS/SfC workstream have not changed. The TPS workstream will focus attention on some of the broader, national level priorities in second half of the year (*italics*).

- Public Works Department Agreement
- Support to MoET with the National PSET Policy (National Skills Development Policy) review and National TVET Expenditure Review
- *TVET in Schools Initiative*
- Youth Challenge Vanuatu registration and governance strengthening
- National Training Provider (VCNE, VAC, etc.) and provincial training provider reregistration
- Delivery of ICT skills for provincial government council officers
- National Skills Committee Meeting
- Delivery of accredited training:
 - Certificate II in Plumbing Training in Melsisi on Pentecost and Canal Fanafo on Santo
 - Certificate II in Building Construction (SE Tanna Area Council office building)
 - Certificate I in Joinery, furniture and cabinet making training (Teruja School, Aneityum)
 - Certificate II in Electrical Engineering for Malampa Province
 - Certificate I in Small Engine Maintenance for Torba Province.
- Construction activities:
 - Losalava TVET in School classroom
 - Hokai community house Stage 3 building construction
 - Sanma Skills office extension
 - Kamewa semi-permanent school kitchen under the Skills for Agribusiness workstream.
 - Design of Penama Handicraft Centre
 - VSPD Ex-Female prison house renovation.

It is expected that TPS/SfC engagement with partners and stakeholders will be less disrupted in the second half of 2022. Partners and stakeholders have clear and executable plans for the challenges brought on by the pandemic, however, it is evident that the pandemic is not over, and the health and economic losses continue to grow. The TPS/SfC workstream will continue to facilitate activities that directly and indirectly contribute to community resilience against the pandemic, for instance, to provide support to VCNE for its reregistration to assist with the demand for local health workers in the provinces.