



*Image 1: Front view of the newly opened Penama Skills Centre*

# PENAMA SKILLS CENTRE

Quarterly Report  
Q4, 2024



# PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

**Priority Area: Strengthening service delivery, leadership and governance, and promoting climate resilience**

## **Achievement/Outcome:**

- On 31 October 2024, the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) in partnership with the Penama Provincial Government, officially opened the new Penama Skills Centre in Saratamata, Ambae.
- The Penama Skills Centre is the fifth MoET Provincial Skills Centre in Vanuatu, a journey that started back in 2009 with the establishment of the first-ever Skills Centre in Sanma. The Skills Centres are supported by the Governments of Vanuatu and Australia through the Vanuatu Skills Partnership, and are the primary coordination mechanisms between demand and supply for skills development in each province.
- Since 2018, the Vanuatu Skills Partnership has been supporting recovery efforts on Ambae following the eruption of the Manaro volcano and, in recent years, supported skills training on Maewo and Pentecost.
- This new renovated office is now also accommodating the MOET Provincial Training Coordinator as part of Penama Skills Centre team which now totals four staff (two men and two women).
- The Penama Skills Centre was renovated by Mr Erick Taribiti, with construction beginning in June 2024. It is accessible to people with disabilities. The Centre is also 'off-grid', being fully powered by solar energy generated from solar panels installed on the roof.



*Image 2: Key Dignitaries at the opening of the Penama Skills Centre*



*Image 3: Solar panels installed on the roof of the Penama Skills Centre*

# PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT SUPPORT



*Image 4: Cutting the ribbon at the opening of the new Penama Skills Centre by Honorable President, Mr Hilson Boe; Honorable Minister of Health, John Still Tari Oetu; His Excellency, Australia's High Commissioner to Vanuatu, Mr. Max Willis, and TED Director, Mr. John Kaltau*



*Image 5: Fr. Henry Butu dedicating the new Penama Skills Centre*

# PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

**Priority Area: Strengthening provincial service delivery, leadership and governance**

**Achievement/Outcome:**

- On October 31 2024, as part of the official launching of the Penama Skills Centre, the Vanuatu Skills Partnership (the Partnership) and Penama Provincial Government Council (PPGC) signed a Partnering Agreement.
- The Partnering Agreement formally recognises the mutual commitment of the Partnership and the PPGC to work together towards the shared goal of supporting the coordination and implementation of the decentralisation plan in Penama Province. The focus of the partnership will be on creating inclusive and accessible social and economic growth for the people of Penama Province through skills development and market access activities.
- The Partnering Agreement outlines a range of possible areas of collaboration between the Partnership, PPGC and the 10 Area Councils of Penama Province, which will be further developed in early 2025. The Partnership and PPGC will also co-create a 'ways of working' agreement which will outline how the two parties will work together to deliver the agreed priorities.
- The signing of the Partnering Agreement is an important milestone because it strengthens the working relationship between the PPGC and the Partnership and formalises important commitments such as the provision of resources and technical support.



*Image 6: Signing of the partnering agreement between PPGC and the Partnership.*

*Left – Right: Penama SG, Mr Moses Tirio Bani; Penama President, Mr Hilson Boe; Vanuatu Skills Partnership Director, Mr Fremden Yanhambath; and His Excellency, Australian High Commissioner to Vanuatu, Mr Max Willis*

# SKILLS FOR CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

## Priority Area: Creative Industries Product Development and Market Access

### Achievement/Outcome:

- In late October, the Penama Skills Centre supported the Department of Industry (Dol) and the Penama Provincial Government to deliver an Island Basket Festival over two days, coinciding with the opening of the Penama Skills Centre on Ambae.
- During the festival, producers from Ambae, Pentecost and Maewo were able to showcase a selection of their products, demonstrating their unique skills and handicraft designs. Dol also conducted an awareness session on intellectual property and copyright, with a view to supporting producers to safeguard their unique designs.
- The festival provided an opportunity for producers to share their stories and learn from each other about their production techniques, from harvesting pandanus leaves to creating the final product. Dol officers also worked with producers to raise awareness around product quality and the need for a sustainable supply of pandanus to meet market demand. Producers from across the three islands sold several of their products during the festival, which will now be an annual event.
- Prior to the festival, 38 producers (37 women and one man) from 18 handicraft producer associations across Penama participated in a two-day good governance workshop organized by the Department of Cooperatives, Dol and the Penama Skills Centre. The purpose of the workshop was to strengthen governance of the handicraft associations across Penama, with topics covered during the workshop including the roles and responsibilities of a committee, co-operative principles, how to create reports, pricing, and financial management.



*Image 7: A producer from Pentecost inside her display booth at the Island Basket Festival held on Ambae*

# SKILLS FOR CREATIVE INDUSTRIES



*Image 8: Participants of the good governance workshop conducted by the Department of Cooperatives, including handicraft producers from Maewo, Pentecost and Ambae*

# SKILLS FOR HEALTH

## Priority Area: Professional development of provincial health officers

### Achievement/Outcome:

- Through 2023 and the first half of 2024, the Penama Skills Centre supported Ituani Vocational Skills Centre to deliver Certificate I in Computing to provincial health officers in Penama.
- The training is aligned with the Ministry of Health's objectives to build a strong health workforce. Specifically targeting the Health Information System, the training provided provincial health staff from Penama with practical Information Communication and Technology (ICT) skills to improve their reporting and day-to-day digital communications with national colleagues.
- A total of six provincial health officers (one man and five women) participated in a formal graduation ceremony in Ambae in late October 2024, where they received their nationally recognised certificates.
- After the graduation ceremony, the Partnership completed a tracer survey to understand how the graduates had been able to apply the knowledge and skills they learnt during the course, and to identify opportunities for providing additional support.
- In their responses to the survey, several graduates stated they had improved confidence to operate a computer following the training, and almost all stated they would be interested in studying a Certificate II in Computing. Limited access to computers was identified as a key challenge.



*Image 9: Penama Health Staff at their graduation ceremony for Certificate I in Computing, which was delivered by Ituani Vocational Skills Centre*

# TRAINING PROVIDER SUPPORT

**Priority Area: Completion of Certificate II in Plumbing training at Melsisi, Pentecost and opening of the Melsisi water system**

## **Achievement/Outcome:**

- In 2023, the Penama Skills Centre supported the delivery of Certificate II in Plumbing at Melsisi on Pentecost. 30 trainees (28 men and two women) participated in the training which was delivered by the Anglican Church of Melanesia Vocational Education Technical School (ACOMVETS) in collaboration with the Department of Water Resources, Penama Education Office, Penama Provincial Government, and Area Councils in Pentecost. Trainees were selected from CP1, CP2, and South Pentecost Area Councils.
- The training was delivered around the construction of the Melsisi water system, which was completed by a private company. However, challenges with procuring and transporting materials to site meant that the practical component of the training wasn't completed until mid-2024. It is expected that a graduation ceremony will be held for graduates in early 2025.
- In October 2024, the new system was officially opened by the Prime Minister Hon Charlot Salwai Tabimasmamas alongside Minister for Land and Natural Resources, Hon Rick Tchamako Mahe, Australia's Head of the Office of the Pacific, Elizabeth Peak, and Australia's High Commissioner to Vanuatu, Max Willis. The system is now providing more than 5,000 people in the local community with access to clean and reliable water.
- These skilled technicians are now able to undertake repairs and maintenance to the system as required. They are also able to support future disaster response and recovery efforts in local Area Councils, such as the rapid assessments and 'quick fixes' completed in South Pentecost in October 2023 in the aftermath of TC Lola.



*Image 10: Melsisi plumbing trainees with their trainer on site during the practical*



# INCLUSION



*Image 11: Penama Disability Day celebration, 10 December 2024*

## Priority Area: Penama International Disability Day celebrations

### Achievement/Outcome:

- On 10 December 2024, the Penama Skills Centre joined staff from the Penama Provincial Government (PPG) and other key stakeholders to celebrate International Disability Day. The celebrations were held at the PPG headquarters at Saratamata, East Ambae, with approximately 300 people in attendance including 50 people with disabilities (20 women and 30 men) from three Area Councils on Ambae.
- The event was organised by the Provincial Disability Desk Officer. The Penama Skills Centre supported clients with disabilities from South, East and North Ambae to attend, including by organizing logistics like transport for guests and catering in addition to ground preparations. The event started with a parade from Black Stone to the Provincial Government headquarters with banners displaying the slogan 'no livim wan behind'.
- International Disability Day is an important event for Penama because it shines a spotlight on the rights, needs, and contributions of people with disabilities. It also provides a platform to challenge misconceptions and reduce stigma around their abilities and their potential to make positive contributions to their local communities.

## PARTICIPATION IN SKILLS DEVELOPMENT TRAININGS\*

SECTOR	WOMEN	MEN	TOTAL	PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES
Skills for Creative Industries	37	1	38	0
Skills for Infrastructure	2	28	30	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>0</b>

*\*Participants in skills training activities only- this data excludes market access activities, consultations and events*