



Image 1: Vanuatu Skills Partnership supporting Vanuatu Society for People with Disability Santo team to undertake staff induction and 2025 planning

DISABILITY INCLUSION

6-MONTH PROGRESS REPORT

JANUARY – JUNE 2025



INTRODUCTION

Aligned with Vanuatu's National Disability Inclusive Development Policy 2018 - 2025 (NDID) and the National Sustainable Development Plan (NSDP), our disability inclusion achievements result from close collaboration with the Vanuatu Disability Promotion and Advocacy Association (VDPA), the Vanuatu Society for People with Disability (VSPD), the Ministry of Justice, Youth and Community Services (MoJYCS) and the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET).

Priorities in Jan – June 2025 focused on:

- 1. Strengthening national and provincial disability inclusion coordination systems**, through the provision of funding for three new Provincial Disability Policy Compliance Officers; support for the construction of office space for Malampa's Provincial Disability Officer and conducting the induction for its disability committee.
- 2. Strengthening national disability inclusive education and training systems**, through planning Inclusive Education and Training Policy awareness raising at the provincial level with MoET.
- 3. Strengthening planning and delivery of skills development that includes and benefits people with disabilities**, through refresher training and inclusive and accessible construction, agri-business, creative industries and tourism activities.
- 4. Provision of specific support to enable participation of people with disabilities in skills activities**, through support to VSPD and VDPA in addition to reasonable accommodations through the MoET Skills Centres.



Image 2: New accessible office space for the Disability Desk Officer in Malampa, launched in April

CONTEXT

Progress has been impacted by several factors between January and June 2025:

- 2025 is the last year of this phase of the Partnership; as such, there is a shorter implementation period (February - October 2025). All Skills Centres and sectors have increased expectations regarding joint implementation, which has increased workload and placed pressure on the inclusion team.
- Reduced budget availability at MoJYCS has resulted in reliance on the Vanuatu Skills Partnership to cover the full cost of most of our joint activities planned for the provinces. These include: the backyard gardening workshops in Torba and Tafea, Menstrual Health Management workshops in Torba, and support for awareness activities in Tafea, to name a few.
- Key MoJYCS and MoET counterparts are busy with multiple demands for engagement from other organisations and development partners, including overseas trips, impacting on the implementation of planned activities and reducing availability for planned and collaborative efforts. The December 17 earthquake has also contributed to a delayed 2025 start for most of our key partners as a result of office relocations and their involvement in recovery activities.



Image 3: People with disabilities participating in nursery cultivation training in Torba

PARTNERSHIP STATUS AND CO-CONTRIBUTIONS

- Partnership Agreements with VSPD and VDPA were signed in 2024. Support to VDPA and VSPD in Jan – June included funding for operational costs and human resources in Santo.
 - Funding to VDPA enabled the implementation of disability awareness raising and needs assessments with provincial governments in Ambae and Santo, and an accessibility audit at the Santo dental clinic.
 - Strategic support and funding to VSPD enabled VSPD’s Santo team to undertake induction for new staff and planning for 2025 activities, provide early intervention services for children with disabilities, and support people with disabilities after the December 2024 earthquake.
- A renewed partnership agreement with MoJYCS will be signed in August 2025 and end in December 2025.
 - After the first tranche payment to MoJYCS under the new agreement, MoJYCS will engage 3 remaining Provincial Disability Policy Compliance Officers. By the end of June, with support from VSP, MoJYCS had recruited 12 provincial officers to support disability inclusion and compliance with the National Disability Inclusive Development Policy across all provinces, with the salaries for 9 of these now paid for by the Government of Vanuatu.
 - In April 2025, MoJYCS launched a new office space for the Malampa Provincial Disability Officer, which was built and launched with support from VSP. As of June 2025, all Provincial Disability Officers, apart from the Officer in Torba, have their own office space which is linked to the Provincial Government and are no longer situated within the Skills Centre.

WORKSTREAM WORK PLAN STATUS

WORK PLAN PRIORITY AREAS &/OR GREEN SHOOTS	MID YEAR STATUS UPDATE (no progress, limited progress, adequate progress, good progress, excellent progress)	ADDITIONAL COMMENTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthening National and Provincial Disability Coordination 	<p>Good progress</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MoJYCS has not yet organised any National Disability Committee meetings. Agreement with MoJYCS to be signed in August and funding will be provided to enable MoJYCS to hire 3 provincial compliance officers. Supported MoJYCS to undertake induction for Malampa Disability Committee. Awaiting request from MoJYCS for Sanma and Penama. Office space for the Provincial Disability Officer in Malampa completed and launched. Office space negotiated between the provincial government and the Skills Centre in Penama, pending in Torba. Ongoing collaboration between Skills Centres and Provincial Disability Officers to link people with disabilities into skills development opportunities. This is working well in Tafea, Sanma and Torba. Provincial disability refresher training strengthened collaboration in Malampa and Torba.

WORKSTREAM WORK PLAN STATUS

WORK PLAN PRIORITY AREAS &/OR GREEN SHOOTS	MID YEAR STATUS UPDATE (no progress, limited progress, adequate progress, good progress, excellent progress)	ADDITIONAL COMMENTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen disability inclusive education and training systems 	<p>Limited progress</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MoET and the Partnership agreed to collaborate on awareness raising regarding the Inclusive Education and Training Policy. This has not occurred yet as MoET has not yet coordinated with partners who will be supporting this. Sanma Skills Centre brought partners together to discuss and identify contributions to the building of a new ramp at the Northern Provincial Hospital dental clinic. The inclusion team also supported Vanuatu Agriculture College to launch a disability inclusion resource room in March. Support to disability data collection within the PSET module to occur in the 2nd half of 2025.

WORKSTREAM WORK PLAN STATUS

WORK PLAN PRIORITY AREAS &/OR GREEN SHOOTS	MID YEAR STATUS UPDATE (no progress, limited progress, adequate progress, good progress, excellent progress)	ADDITIONAL COMMENTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen planning and delivery of skills development that includes and benefits people with disabilities 	<p>Good progress</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusion training held for industry coaches from all sectors during induction training. Construction: Advice and support provided to design the new washroom at the Chiefs' Nakamal in an accessible way, and enable accessibility in the Central Tanna Area Council, Aneityum Vanilla Production House, Sanma East Area Council buildings, and West Tanna Area Council. Creative Industries: One deaf woman participated in Futuna quality product inventory / Teri dye workshop and Paama pandanus replanting and product quality. WASH: Inclusive water source in Merelava under development. Agribusiness: Backyard gardening training held for people with disabilities in Mota and Santo and follow up with the group from Tafea. Two people with disabilities participated in bakery and nursery training in Ambae. A nursery shed and bakery were established for the two clients, with the baker with disability currently undergoing coaching. We also supported Vanuatu Agriculture College to establish and launch a disability inclusion resource room. Refresher training held for all MoET Skills Centre and national Partnership staff, as well as Provincial Disability Officers in Penama, Tafea and Torba.

WORKSTREAM WORK PLAN STATUS

WORK PLAN PRIORITY AREAS &/OR GREEN SHOOTS	MID YEAR STATUS UPDATE (no progress, limited progress, adequate progress, good progress, excellent progress)	ADDITIONAL COMMENTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of specific support to enable participation of people with disabilities 	<p>Good progress</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disability client profiling undertaken with three clients with disabilities in Penama to further understand the support required to strengthen their entrepreneurial activities. Funding support to VDPA enabled the implementation of disability awareness raising and needs assessments with provincial governments in Ambae and Santo, and an accessibility audit at the Santo dental clinic. Funding support to VSPD enabled 2025 planning for their Santo team, their collaboration in the delivery of disability inclusion training to coaches as part of their induction, early intervention services for children with disabilities, and support for people with disabilities after the December 2024 earthquake. Technical support provided to Sanma, Penama and Torba Skills Centres to support provision of reasonable accommodations to enable participation of people with disabilities in construction, nursery, bakery and backyard gardening training. Support provided to Tafea Provincial Disability Officer to establish fencing for six backyard gardening clients with disabilities. Ongoing support to Sanma stakeholders to coordinate and collaborate regarding disability inclusion efforts.

QUANTITATIVE DATA (JANUARY - JUNE 2025)

PARTICIPATION IN PARTNERSHIP SUPPORTED SKILLS TRAINING	BUSINESS CLIENTS WITH DISABILITIES SUPPORTED
<ul style="list-style-type: none">462 participants including 267 women, representing 58% of all participants38 people with disabilities (15 men, 23 women), representing 8% of all participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none">20 clients with disabilities provided with additional support to further their entrepreneurial activities:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- 6 farmers with disabilities on Tanna- 1 farmer on Ambae- 1 baker on Ambae- 12 farmers on Santo (profiling to be completed)

QUANTITATIVE DATA (JAN – JUN 2024) PROVINCIAL BREAKDOWN

PARTICIPATION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN PARTNERSHIP-SUPPORTED SKILLS TRAINING

Province	Male	Female	Total (number and proportion of total participants)
Torba	3	13	16 (14% of all participants)*
Sanma	7	7	14 (12% of all participants)*
Malampa	0	1	1 (3% of all participants)
Tafea	3	2	5 (3% of all participants)
Penama	1	0	1 (3% of all participants)
Shefa	1	0	1 (20% of all participants)**
Total	15	23	38 (8% of all participants)***

- **Higher rates of participants with disabilities found in Sanma and Torba due to the delivery of 3 skills activities across these locations which specifically targeted clients with disabilities only.*
- *** small number of participants in Shefa during this time period.*
- ****When data from the 3 activities specifically targeting clients with disabilities is removed, the overall participation rate of people with disabilities is reduced to 2%, which is lower than the 3% from the same time in 2024.*

KEY RESULTS ACHIEVED

STRENGTHENING PROVINCIAL LEADERSHIP IN DISABILITY INCLUSION

- The Partnership co-funded the Tafea Provincial Disability Officer and Child Desk Officer to join the HELPR 1 visit to Aneityum, Futuna, Aniwa and Erromango in April. These officers led disability inclusion awareness raising, identified people with disabilities and provided assistive technology, solar lights (funded by Friends Vanuatu), made referrals to other services, and provided orientation training to disability representatives within area councils.
- The Partnership supported the renovation of the MoJYCS office in Malampa, which now houses the Provincial Disability Officer, Child Desk Officer, and Compliance Officers for disability and children.
- These efforts support sustainable decentralised leadership in disability inclusion at the provincial government level. They build on past support provided to MoJYCS to establish Provincial Disability Officers in each province. Where previously Partnership and Skills Centre staff led disability awareness raising and referrals, provincial government officers who were originally funded through the Partnership are now taking the lead.

“The HELPR 1 Trip has assisted a lot with the Disability Desk and Child Desk to inform the community on their roles, as well assisting the Desk to address some of the issues in the community.” – Sonia, Tafea Child Desk Officer



Image 4: Tafea Provincial Disability Officer handing over solar lights to a client with disability in April

KEY RESULTS ACHIEVED

EMPOWERING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES THROUGH AGRIBUSINESS

- In response to requests from the Torba Provincial Disability Officer and VSPD in Santo, the Partnership supported backyard gardening training for 6 people with disabilities in Motalava (4 women and 2 men) and 11 in Santo (7 women and 5 men). Follow up with five backyard gardening participants with disabilities in West Tanna was also completed. In Ambae, the Partnership supported a client with disabilities to establish a nursery business including construction of a small shed and included him in a mainstream commercial nursery training.
- Most agribusiness clients with disabilities have had limited access to education and training. For many participants, backyard gardening skills training was the first opportunity they have had to learn skills which they can use in their daily life to support themselves and their families, and potentially earn an income, as well as demonstrate to their communities that people with disabilities are capable of contributing to their households – changing attitudes towards people with disabilities. Danstan, a client with disabilities in Ambae made sales of seedlings three weeks after the training.
- Partners in this work include VSPD (Sanma), MoJYCS (Tafea and Torba), DARD (Tafea and Ambae) and Provincial Governments.



Image 5: A client with disability participating in nursery cultivation training in Torba

KEY RESULTS ACHIEVED

ENABLING ACCESS TO ACCREDITED TRAININGS

- A handover ceremony was held at the Vanuatu Agriculture College (VAC) premises to mark the handing over of an Inclusive Resource Room on the 20th of March, 2025. The ceremony was attended by representatives from the Vanuatu Skills Partnership (VSP) and VAC and signifies a milestone achieved as part of our ongoing partnership for the past 7 – 8 years. The room is equipped with resources that will enable the trainers to adapt their lessons and resources to suit the learning of individuals with disability and can also be used as a rest and recuperation space for any trainee/ trainer with disability.
- In his speech, VAC's Acting CEO stated that they will ensure the resources in the resource room are utilised purposefully and he has extended an invitation to all other training institutions and disability organisations around Sanma to make use of the resource room.
- This is an important achievement in the space of Vocational Education and Training (VET) as it promotes the idea of inclusive VET and a second chance or pathway for people with disabilities who are interested in Agriculture and who are often pushed out of formal education due to lack of support.
- Partners in this work include VAC, VSPD and VDPA.



Image 6: VAC and VSP Staff in VAC's Inclusive Resource Room

KEY RESULTS ACHIEVED

SUPPORTING INCLUSIVE AND ACCESSIBLE CONSTRUCTION

- The Partnership has supported the construction of buildings which are accessible to all, including people with disabilities. By advising on the development of plans for new buildings and ensuring they comply with the accessibility standards in Vanuatu's Building Code, new buildings constructed or renovated through Partnership-supported construction skills development activities are accessible.
- In Torba, three accessible buildings were launched, including the Merelava fish market, Ureparapara fish market and Losalava Market House. In addition, people with disabilities participated in construction skills development activities, for example the Certificate II in Building Construction conducted by VIT, which built the new Chiefs' Nakamal in Port Vila.
- This work demonstrates to government and other development partners how disability inclusion and accessibility considerations and policy commitments can be implemented. It also demonstrates how working in partnership can lead to inclusive results. Accessible markets mean people with disabilities can access them to sell goods, as well as purchase them.
- This work was achieved in partnership with the Torba provincial government and MoJYCS.



Image 7: Opening of the Ureparapara Fish Market, with accessible ramp, in Divers Bay, Torba, in April

KEY RESULTS ACHIEVED

STRENGTHENING ORGANISATIONS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND SERVICE PROVIDERS

- The Partnership has continued to support VDPA and VSPD with organisational costs, including salaries, office costs and support for activities.
- In a resource constrained environment where there has been limited funding for civil society organisations which promote and meet the rights of people with disabilities, the Partnership has played an important role in enabling VDPA and VSPD to advocate for the rights of people with disabilities and deliver much-needed services.
- Our funding has enabled VSPD and VDPA to continue keep their doors open and to employ workers, who were able to carry out activities supported by us and other donor partners, that more or less contributed to their goals and purpose.
- As a result of this, VDPA and VSPD have delivered critical services to people with disabilities, and as a result of being able to demonstrate its value and organisational capacity. With ongoing advocacy and support from the Partnership, VSPD has successfully received a multi-year grant directly from DFAT.
- *Thank you, Vanuatu Skills Partnership for the continued financial assistance for the past years and working partnership our organisations have shared” – John Sese, Advocacy Officer, VDPA*



Image 8: VDPA visit to the Partnership's Port Vila office in May.



Image 9: Vanuatu Daily Post reports on DFAT's multi-year support to VSPD in June.

LESSONS LEARNED IN 2025

Lesson 1: Some Provincial Disability Officers focus on targeted activities for people with disabilities and are implementing fewer mainstreaming approaches.

Actions:

- Together with Skills Centres, work with Provincial Disability Officers to raise awareness of the twin-track approach and the importance and value of mainstreaming.

Lesson 2: Limited budget and personnel to support disability at MoJYCS, which limits collaboration, priority-setting and implementation at the national and provincial levels.

Actions:

- Engage in high level dialogue between the Partnership and MoJYCS to identify joint priorities, challenges and enablers, and ways forward.
- Support induction and planning for new Acting Disability Desk Officer, when recruited.

Lesson 3: Refresher training demonstrated that Skills Centre staff need greater awareness of disability inclusion tools to enable them to use them in their day-to-day work. Additionally, the discussions during the refreshers found that there was still some confusion on the Washington Group question terminology and that an internal review was needed.

Actions:

- Share disability inclusion tools with Skills Centre colleagues in addition to ongoing coaching to ensure operationalisation.
- Lead a review of the Washington Group questions terminology and develop refinements to the registration process as needed.

PRIORITIES FOR THE SECOND HALF OF 2025

1. Strengthening national and provincial disability inclusion coordination systems

- Support MoJCS to hold a National Disability Council meeting.
- Sign new agreement with MoJCS and make tranche payments to support new Disability Compliance Officers.
- Support MoJCS to strengthen their 2026 planning coordination.

2. Strengthening national disability inclusive education and training systems

- Support MoET with Inclusive Education and Training Policy awareness raising in Torba.

3. Strengthening planning and delivery of skills development that includes and benefits people with disabilities

- Compile DI and BB tools, including review of Washington Group questions, and develop induction package.
- Provide coaching and check in support to the wider team to ensure engagement with DI processes and toolkit.

4. Provision of specific support to enable participation of people with disabilities in skills activities

- Make final payments to VSPD and VDPA to support advocacy and services for people with disabilities.
- Support VDPA with reporting.
- Support Skills Centres and sector workstreams to provide reasonable accommodations to clients with disabilities and trainers, to enable inclusion.
- Review DI and BB approaches and identify strengths and lessons for next phase.

KEY RISKS AND MITIGATION STRATEGIES

RISKS	MITIGATION STRATEGIES
MoJYCS is unable to implement joint activities, including payment of salaries to Compliance Officers, due to changeover in Disability Desk Officer role.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Maintain regular discussions with MoJYCS to monitor and adapt programming / budget as needed.
MoET is not ready to progress with planned awareness raising efforts in Torba in this reporting period.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Maintain regular discussion with MoET to monitor and adapt programming / budget as needed.
Disability inclusion approaches in the next phase are limited, or do not utilise effective ways of working identified by Vanuatu Skills Partnership.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Undertake a review of inclusion approaches, identifying achievements, lessons, and recommendations to be utilised in the next phase.