



Partnership Progress Report

January – June 2025



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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACOMVETS	Anglican Church of Melanesia Vocational Education Training and Technical School
AHC	Australian High Commission
APTC	Australia Pacific Training Coalition
BB	Better Balance
BoP	Balance of Power
DARD	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DoF	Department of Forestry
DI	Disability Inclusion
DoBT	Diocese of Banks and Torres
DoI	Department of Industry
DoT	Department of Tourism
DoWR	Department of Water Resources
DWA	Department of Women’s Affairs
F2S	Farm to School
GoA	Government of Australia
GoV	Government of Vanuatu
LTO	Long Term Outcome
MoET	Ministry of Education and Training
MoJYCS	Ministry of Justice, Youth and Community Services
NSDP	National Sustainable Development Plan
NUV	National University of Vanuatu
ORCBDS	Office of the Registrar of Co-operatives and Business Development Services
PAS	Pacific Australia Skills
PEO	Provincial Education Office
PIF	Partnership Implementation Framework
PSET	Post School Education and Training

PVTC	Pacific Vocational Training Centre
SCICC	Sanma Creative Industry Community Company
SfA	Skills for Agribusiness
SfI	Skills for Infrastructure
SfCI	Skills for Creative Industries
SfT	Skills for Tourism
The Partnership	Vanuatu Skills Partnership
TED	Tertiary Education Directorate
TPS	Training Provider Support
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
VAC	Vanuatu Agriculture College
VARTC	Vanuatu Agricultural Research and Technical Centre
VCNE	Vanuatu College of Nursing Education
VDPA	Vanuatu Disability Promotion and Advocacy Association
VEMIS	Vanuatu Education Management Information System
VIPAM	Vanuatu Institute of Public Administration and Management
VIT	Vanuatu Institute of Technology
VMC	Vanuatu Maritime College
VQA	Vanuatu Qualifications Authority
VSPD	Vanuatu Society for People with Disability
VTC	Vocational Training Centre
VTIC	Vanuatu Travel Information Centre
VTO	Vanuatu Tourism Office
VUV	Vatu
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

1. INTRODUCTION

With one year remaining in the Phase IV Extension of the Vanuatu Skills Partnership (“the Partnership”), this Progress Report marks a key point for reflection, learning, and direction-setting. It captures the Partnership’s contributions from January to June 2025 and identifies opportunities to deepen impact in the lead-up to the conclusion of the current phase in January 2026.

The report presents progress against the expected results and strategic priority areas outlined in the Partnership’s Annual Plan 2025. It considers key provincial Skills Centre priorities and relevant sector-level plans developed in close collaboration with the Government of Vanuatu (GoV). Results are structured under the Partnership’s three Long Term Outcomes (LTOs) for Phase IV:

- LTO 1: A more inclusive, quality-assured and increasingly decentralised skills system
- LTO 2: Developmental leadership drives collective action for improved service delivery
- LTO 3: Sustainable benefits (economic, environmental and cultural) for Partnership clients and their communities

Progress on cross-cutting priorities—inclusion and climate resilience¹—is also addressed as well as insight into the Partnership’s broader influence on the wider Australia-Vanuatu relationship. Together, these achievements contribute towards the Partnership’s overarching goal: an effective, decentralised and inclusive skills system that supports a stable, sustainable and prosperous Vanuatu, aligned with the National Sustainable Development Plan (NSDP) 2030.

The report draws on data from the Partnership’s Management Information System and is informed by staff and partner reflections held with provincial Skills Centres and national technical teams.

“I’m very impressed with what the Vanuatu Skills Partnership is contributing. It complements our development priorities by bringing a practical element to our decentralisation agenda and furthers it so that we are not just talking about bringing services to the people but also skills development within our communities.”

Leith Veremaito, Director General, Ministry of Internal Affairs

Detailed reporting on each workstream is included in the Annexes to this report. Each workstream summary outlines key achievements, co-investment, challenges, lessons learned, and priorities for the second half of 2025. Current workstreams include²:

- Skills for Agribusiness
- Skills for Creative Industries
- Skills for Tourism
- Skills for Infrastructure
- Training Provider Support
- Disability Inclusion
- Better Balance (Gender Equality)

This Progress Report is also complemented by the Partnership’s newly released video, *“Decentralisation in Action: Creating Entrepreneurs through Flexible Skills Training across Vanuatu.”* The video showcases the tangible outcomes of decentralised trades sector training and the development of a thriving provincial trades workforce, further reinforcing the Partnership’s ongoing contributions to systems transformation and inclusive economic growth.

¹ While climate resilience is seen as an essential cross cutting issue for the Partnership, it is not implemented via a stand-alone workstream. Instead, it is mainstreamed throughout the existing seven workstreams with the responsibility for its implementation and consideration shared by all team members.

² Initiated in response to demand during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the dedicated “Skills for Health” workstream no longer holds the same strategic relevance. As such, the Partnership made the decision to conclude the specific health-focused workstream at the end of 2024. Ongoing “Farm 2” initiatives have now been embedded in the Skills for Agribusiness workstream.

2. OPERATING CONTEXT

In late 2024, the Partnership held its annual planning meeting in collaboration with GoV stakeholders. This process involved in-depth discussions to confirm shared priorities for 2025 and secure both financial and in-kind commitments from GoV counterparts at national and provincial levels to support implementation. However, since that time, a range of contextual and operational factors have influenced the direction and delivery of agreed priorities during the January–June 2025 period.

Port Vila Earthquake

The significant earthquake that struck Port Vila on 17 December 2024 led to the cancellation of end-of-year activities and had a profound personal impact on national-level staff across workstreams, operations and management, as well as government counterparts based in the capital. While initial emergency response efforts have concluded, the earthquake continues to have a widespread economic and logistical impact. Some parts of the central business district remain closed, and major traffic routes are heavily congested, disrupting normal operations.

In early 2025, GoV partners have, necessarily, redirected resources toward ongoing recovery efforts, resulting in a reduced capacity to progress several shared priorities that were agreed with the Partnership in late 2024. Consequently, implementation delays have occurred across multiple areas of the Partnership’s work which are detailed in the respective workstream reports. These disruptions are expected to continue influencing delivery timelines and engagement for the remainder of the year.

Political instability, government budget constraints and new priorities

In November 2024, the dissolution of Vanuatu’s Parliament—triggered by a motion of no confidence against then Prime Minister Charlot Salwai—led to a snap election in mid-January 2025. The caretaker government in place during this period (November 2024 to January 2025) was slow to respond following the December earthquake, contributing to heightened public frustration with the political process.

Although elections were held on 14 January 2025, a new Prime Minister was not elected until 11 February, and the first national budget under the new government was not passed until March. The delay in forming government and approving the budget, combined with the post-earthquake reprioritisation of national resources, has meant the Partnership was unable to finalise annual Partnership Implementation Frameworks (PIFs) with national sector partners in 2025.

Since assuming office in February, the new GoV has maintained a relatively stable political environment, with a stated emphasis on transparency and public accountability. However, national attention has largely focused on major issues such as post-earthquake recovery and the national teachers’ strike. This has diverted attention and support away from several productive sectors including tourism and creative industries, in addition to changing priorities for inclusion partners such as the Ministry of Justice, Youth and Community Services (MoJYCS), leading to delays in implementation and coordination with government partners.

Leadership transition within the Partnership

In March 2025, Mr Fremden Yanhambath, the longstanding Director of the Vanuatu Skills Partnership, announced his departure after more than a decade of leadership. While Mr Yanhambath continues to be a leader and ally in the Skills and Education Sector, his departure during this period of broader national uncertainty had an impact on staff morale and operations, particularly as recruitment for his successor commenced. This transition was further compounded by the unexpected resignation of the Deputy Director Operations. In April, the former Deputy Director Programs, Mr Ellis Silas, was appointed as Director, with the former Manager of the Skills for Tourism workstream, Mrs Erinah Malres, assuming the Deputy Director Programs role in May. While staff have responded positively to the leadership changes, the transition has required significant time and

resources from Senior Management and the Support Hub to maintain continuity of operations and provide support to teams. For further detail on staffing and resourcing implications, please refer to the Corporate Support Report.

Changes within the Skills/PSET sector

Ongoing uncertainty regarding the future role of the National University of Vanuatu (NUV) as a multi-sector institution continues to raise concerns among national training providers, many of whom currently operate under separate acts or statutory authorities. Delays in finalising the new Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) Act and the pending release of the Vanuatu Qualifications Authority (VQA) Review are impacting the Partnership's progress in some areas. The lack of clarity regarding the ownership of the Provincial Government Training Boards, between the MoET Tertiary Education Directorate (TED) and the VQA are not yet clear. This ambiguity, combined with public remarks made by the Prime Minister in May 2025 regarding the future of the VQA, has contributed to a sense of instability within the national skills and education sector.

Further compounding these challenges is the slow implementation of the Asian Development Bank-funded *Strengthening Skills Development Project*, which is affecting the capacity of the MoET and the Tertiary Education Directorate (TED) to progress key reforms. This includes priority initiatives such as the expansion of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Schools and institutional strengthening efforts at the Vanuatu Agriculture College (VAC) and Vanuatu Maritime College (VMC). Additionally, the transition of DFAT's Australia Pacific Training Coalition (APTC) to the new Pacific Australia Skills (PAS) initiative, coupled with delays in the operationalisation of the new investment, disrupted momentum in national skills system development and shared coordination efforts.

3. SUMMARY OF PROGRESS: JANUARY-JUNE 2025

Overview

In the first half of 2025, the Partnership has achieved strong results and made important contributions to positive change and systemic reform across multiple sectors and provinces in Vanuatu, with a focus on skills development and strengthening of the national skills system. Given the challenges in the operating environment, such as post-earthquake recovery and the changes to the Partnership's Senior Management Team, the progress the Partnership has been able to make is significant.

With support and guidance from the Senior Management Team, the Partnership has prioritised building on the skills activities it has previously delivered and 'going deeper' to maximise impact at the community level. Notable outcomes such as the establishment of new construction and plumbing businesses by graduates of accredited training in Santo, Malekula, Tanna and Pentecost, supported by additional training in governance, business, and financial management, are clear examples where 'going deeper' is paying considerable dividends. Similar results have been seen among vanilla farmers in Tafea and pepper farmers in Sanma, with clear improvements in product quality as well as the establishment of new producer associations.

Similarly, good progress has also been evident in the infrastructure space, with the official launch of new market houses in Ureparara, Merelava and Gaua, some of the most remote islands of Vanuatu. **In addition, the Partnership continues to play a leading role in promoting the inclusion of women and people with disabilities,** both in terms of participation in skills training and in positions of leadership across the skills system. This report shows that for the first half of 2025, 58% of all participants in skills activities supported by the Partnership were women, while 8% were people with disabilities.

The Partnership is mindful that the end of the current phase is approaching, and there is uncertainty about what the next phase will look like. The theme of the mid-year reflection and planning workshop, held in late June and early July, was *'Honouring our Journey, Shaping What's Next,'* with a particular focus on identifying opportunities to go deeper for greater long-term impact. The workplan that has been developed by the team for the second half of the year balances the need to complete existing activities with positioning for next year and beyond, including with partners. Navigating this complexity will become increasingly challenging as the end of the year approaches.

Highlights of all the results achieved by the Partnership in the first half of 2025 are outlined below. Results are structured according to the Partnership's three LTOs in addition to the cross-cutting issues of inclusion and climate resilience. For further details, please refer to the workstream reports provided as Annexes to this summary report.

Broader influence and recognition of the Partnership

The Partnership's status as an influencer and driver of change in Vanuatu continues to be recognised by the GoV and the Australian High Commission (AHC). This recognition enables the Partnership to extend its effectiveness by shaping national policy and practice across the skills system by supporting reform-minded leaders. For example:

- The Partnership Director was invited by the VQA to sit on the interview panel for the new National Human Resource Development Plan Coordinator, highlighting the Partnership's credibility and influence within the skills system.
- The Director continues to serve on the Board of the Vanuatu Institute of Public Administration and Management (VIPAM) under the Office of the Public Service

Commission supporting this critical government partner to streamline professional development pathways within the Vanuatu Government.

In addition, the Partnership continues to actively collaborate with other DFAT-funded investments, further amplifying its influence through:

- Ongoing collaboration with PAS (previously APTC), supporting shared partners, MoET TED and the VQA, to facilitate PSET sector committee meetings, in addition to consultations for the new Skills Development Policy Implementation Framework.
- Emerging work with Governance for Growth to strengthen decentralised planning efforts through support to the provincial Secretaries General in Torba and Tafea, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and the Department of Local Authorities. Early progress has included support to the Australian Volunteers for International Development program, to ensure provincial-based volunteers have the necessary skills and assignment timeframes to further support the provincial governments in Malampa and Penama.
- Supporting Balance of Power (BoP) implement their advocacy for women’s leadership at the provincial level and supporting the brokering of key relationships including with provincial governments and the Anglican Diocese of Banks and Torres (DoBT).

The Partnership has continued to open pathways for the AHC to enhance its relationships with strategic partners and local communities. To date in 2025, the Partnership has facilitated:

- The representation of the AHC at four critical infrastructure launches in Torba province, the launch of the new Vanuatu Travel Information Centre- Malekula Branch and the renovated Disability Desk Office in Malampa province, in addition to representation at a graduation ceremony at Melsisi, on Pentecost.
- The reconstruction and reopening of the deeply culturally significant Malvatumauri Chiefs’ Nakamal, which allowed the Australian Government to progress critical bilateral discussions, including the forthcoming Nakamal Agreement.
- The safe and successful transportation of materials in Santo and Tanna, provided by the AHC to community beneficiaries as part of the 2025 Community Grants scheme.
- In addition, the provincial MoET Skills Centres continue to act as a critical provincial liaison point for AHC activity. This includes facilitating resource intensive provincial visits including the upcoming visit to Tanna by the Australian high Commissioner to attend the openings of two classrooms at Yanumakel Primary School and the Isangel loop road.



Image 1: Representatives from the Australian High Commission stand with community leaders on remote Merelava, Torba province, as part of the launch of the new accessible fish market.

LTO-1: A more inclusive, quality assured and increasingly decentralised skills system

Highlights of results achieved to date in 2025

The Partnership continues to work with key partners such as TED, the VQA and national training providers to influence and support systemic changes to skills training delivery across Vanuatu. Key results achieved in the first half of 2025 include:

- **The Partnership supported the Director TED in the first round of consultations for the new National Skills Development Policy implementation framework.** This included the engagement of a technical specialist to co-develop the consultation agenda, key presentations and a summary report post consultation. The Partnership will support further consultations in the provinces in the second half of 2025.
- **In June, the Partnership supported a delegation from Vanuatu to attend the 2025 WorldSkills Australia competition and National Vocational Skills Spotlight.** The delegation included the Partnership Director, Acting CEO of VQA and the CEO of the Anglican Church of Melanesia Vocational Education Training and Technical School (ACOMVETS), as well as the Provincial Skills Centre Managers from Torba and Sanma. The National Vocational Spotlight provided valuable insights into contemporary developments and issues in TVET such as green skills, the implications of Artificial Intelligence for training and assessment, designing demand-driven skills products, and validating training and assessment courseware. Following the visit, stakeholders agreed to deliver Vanuatu’s first national skills competition in late 2025.

“I return not just with memories, but with a renewed sense of purpose and many valuable insights that I believe will contribute meaningfully to the growth and improvement of our own training programs.” Fr Wille Ben, Director ACOMVETS.



Image 2: Vanuatu delegation at the National Vocational Skills Spotlight and WorldSkills Australia competition in Brisbane, June 9-13, 2025.

The Partnership continued to support local training providers to meet the requirements for accreditation with VQA, and position them to deliver high-quality, flexible, and inclusive training. For example:

- In Torba, following extensive support from the Partnership, Vetimboso Vocational Training Centre (VTC) successfully delivered Certificate I in Building and Construction, marking the first time a Torba-based provider has delivered a trades qualification. In May, Vetimboso VTC held a graduation ceremony for the first cohort of 19 trainees. In further evidence of its development, Vetimboso VTC received approval from the VQA Board in April to deliver a second accredited course, Certificate I in Automotive Engineering (Small Engine Servicing). A new Small Engine Servicing classroom, launched in May, will support course delivery and expand access to formal skills training for local community members.



Image 3: Certificate I in Building and Construction graduates from Vetimboso VTC with their certificates awarded by the Vanuatu Qualifications Authority

- **At the instigation of the Director TED, the Partnership supported the completion of two major institutional reviews including for the VMC and the VAC.** The work with the VMC focused on reviewing current operations against international standards such as seafarer certification, training facilities, safety and quality compliance. The review found major non-compliance issues across different areas of the college's operations which can now be addressed. For VAC, the Partnership facilitated the development of a new strategic plan, which VAC senior management will present to the College Board for endorsement, while the Partnership also supported the development of a policy and procedure manual to strengthen performance in corporate and academic areas.
- **The Partnership has continued its support for the Vanuatu College of Nursing Education (VCNE),** following the reinstatement of its registration with VQA, through the support of the Partnership, in 2024. The Partnership is now facilitating the development of course content for VCNE's entry-level qualification, with an Expression of Interest prepared to engage a consultant to support this work.
- **The Partnership has continued to support the Pacific Vocational Training Centre (PVTC) to increase its skills training footprint and capacity to deliver flexible plumbing training in rural and remote areas.** With the support of the Partnership, PVTC delivered a Certificate II in Plumbing qualification to 47 WASH technicians on Tanna, including 7 women and 2 men with disabilities. This is the second time PVTC has delivered training in rural Vanuatu.

“We are proud to be contributing to this progress by supporting the upskilling of local human resources, with the goal to support our partners in improving the water systems and sanitation infrastructure in Blackman town.” Kalparam Gershom, Pacific Vocational Training Centre Trainer

The Partnership continued to facilitate the delivery of quality assured, flexible skills training to meet local demand for skills in rural and remote areas of Vanuatu. A total of 31 skills development activities were delivered on 12 islands across the 6 provinces in the first half of 2025, including:

- **One accrediting plumbing training** delivered by PVTC to a total of 47 trainees (15% women and 4% trainees with disabilities)
- **A second accredited training commenced in June in Santo.** The Certificate II in Building and Construction is being delivered by the Vanuatu Institute of Technology (VIT) and includes the construction of the South-East Area Council building.
- **30 targeted workshops and coaching sessions**, led by 32 skills providers (including 16 women). This includes delivery in challenging and remote locations such as Mota and Merelava in Torba, as well as Futuna and Aneityum in Tafea.
- **There were several examples of financial contributions from our partners, including local communities, towards activities and projects delivered by the Partnership over the reporting period, indicating that the work of the Partnership is valued.** For example, the Department of Water Resources (DoWR) made a co-contribution of VUV 3,000,000 towards catering and the procurement of basic tools for students completing the Certificate II in Plumbing in Tanna.

LTO-2: Developmental leadership drives collective action for improved service delivery

Highlights of results achieved to date in 2025

The Partnership continued to support coordination and collaboration between national and provincial stakeholders to improve service delivery at the local level, in line with the GoV's decentralisation agenda. For example:

- **In Torba, the Partnership facilitated the official launch of several infrastructure projects it has developed with key partners in recent years.** These projects were designed to improve livelihoods and strengthen access to services for people living in remote communities, while also providing skills development opportunities for local builders. The projects that were launched included Divers Bay Fish Market (Ureparapara), Merelava Fish Market, Losalava TVET in Schools building (Gaua) and the East Gaua Petroleum Cooperative Retail Store. These launches reflect the power of strong collaboration between national and provincial government stakeholders, local communities, and training providers. As a result of the new market opening on Ureparapara, the Office of the Registrar of Co-operatives & Business Development Services (ORCBDS) has supported local fishermen to establish a cooperative. ORCBDS has also purchased an outboard fishing vessel for the new cooperative to further support local economic empowerment of members.



Image 4: Official launch of the Merelava fish market

- **The Malvatumauri National Council of Chiefs' Nakamal in Port Vila was officially opened in March 2025, with key GoV stakeholders including the President of Vanuatu, His Excellency, Nikenike Vurobaravu and the Prime Minister, Hon. Jotham Napat in attendance.** The Partnership led the coordination of the rebuild, with the new structure symbolising national unity and the resilience of Vanuatu customary governance systems. The design and construction of the Chief's Nakamal (the original burnt down in January 2023) is an excellent example of a 'joined up' approach to skills development and integration. To successfully deliver the project there was close collaboration between the Partnership (Australia's bilateral skills investment), the Australia Pacific Training Coalition (Australia's regional skills investment) and the VIT (national training provider), along with the Malvatumauri Council of Chiefs.

"The Chief's Nakamal project was more than just construction; it was a powerful training initiative. It brought together our Certificate II Building Construction and Diploma in Electrical students from all six provinces, ensuring that the skills honed during this practical experience will be spread across Vanuatu and directly benefit rural communities." Wade Evans, Principal of VIT.

- **The Partnership was instrumental in supporting the upgrade of the Melsisi water system on Pentecost, in partnership with ACOMVETS, DoWR, Penama Provincial Government and Area Councils.** The system is now providing more than 5,000 people in the local community with access to clean and reliable water. In April 2025, a graduation ceremony was held for 28 graduates (26 men and two women) of the Certificate II in Plumbing training, which was centred around the upgrade to the water system. As a result, four new plumbing businesses have been established at the Area Council level to further support the development of the workforce in Penama.

“Before the [Melsisi water] project the community and engineers were saying that it was impossible to run a water project from this water source due to the location. Three months after completion of the course, water is now accessible to 78 household with 400 people in Londar community.” Mr Kelly Tabi, Assistant Secretary General, Penama Province.



Image 5: Graduates of the Certificate II in Plumbing Course delivered at Melsisi, Pentecost

- **In Tanna, the Partnership worked with DoWR, PVTC and Area Administrators to deliver a Certificate II in Plumbing at Loukatai.** Five area-based businesses have since been established under the leadership of Area Councils in partnership with DoWR in Southeast Tanna, Southwest Tanna, Central Tanna, West Tanna and Tafea Outer Islands. These businesses will register under the Area Councils and become part of a network of community service providers.

The Partnership continued to support developmental leaders in Vanuatu, particularly by strengthening the voice, participation and leadership of women, people with disabilities and people from remote communities in the delivery of skills activities. For example:

- **In Tanna, the Partnership supported local builder, Mary Lauwilu,** in her participation in the Certificate II in Building and Construction in 2022 through to the establishment of her own registered company, Tafea Youngster Bargain Construction, the first construction company in Tanna to be led by a woman. In June, the Partnership celebrated the news that Tafea Youngster Bargain Construction was awarded the contract to build the new Central Tanna Area Council Office (see below for more of Mary’s story).
- **In Torba and Tanna, the Partnership supported MoJYCS Disability Desk Officers to deliver inclusive backyard gardening workshops for people with disabilities.** The training has equipped people with disabilities with practical skills they can use in daily life to support themselves and their families and potentially generate income. It also demonstrated to the wider community that people with disabilities are capable of meaningfully contributing to their households.
- **In March, 10 Partnership staff (2 women and 8 men) graduated with a Certificate IV in Leadership and Management from APTC,** including staff from three provincial Skills Centres

and seven senior staff members based in Port Vila. This marks an important achievement in strengthening the Partnership's leadership capacity, positioning it to make a stronger contribution to the development of the skills system in Vanuatu in the future.

Mary Lauwilu: A powerful example of female leadership in Tafea

The Tafea Skills Centre has been actively promoting the inclusion of women in accredited training courses in recent years. In 2023, Mary Lauwilu graduated with a Certificate II in Building and Construction, which was delivered by VIT at Lenakel.

Since then, the Tafea Skills Centre has continued to support Ms Lauwilu, including through the establishment of her building company, Tafea Youngster Bargain Construction, which is now registered with the Vanuatu Financial Service Commission. She is the first woman to lead a building company in Tanna.

Earlier this year, the Tafea Skills Centre supported Ms Lauwilu to prepare a bid for the contract to build the new Central Tanna Area Council Office. In June, it was announced that Ms Lauwilu's company was the successful tenderer, winning the contract worth VUV 3.9 million. Ms Lauwilu has nominated Mr. Charlo Malikum, a man with disability, as her site supervisor, setting a powerful example of inclusive leadership.

Work on the Central Tanna Area Council office building commenced in mid-June and is expected to be completed by November. Eight people (including 1 woman) are employed through Ms Lauwilu's company and are working on the construction of the building.

Ms Lauwilu's leadership is a powerful local success story. It shows how inclusive, gender-balanced support can break barriers, create income opportunities, and strengthen the local construction industry's competitiveness and resilience.



Image 6: Tafea Provincial Secretary General, Mr. Joe lautim, hands over the Central Tanna Area Council Building contract award to Ms. Mary Lauwilu

The Partnership continued to promote new ways of working to improve service delivery at the local level. This has been particularly evident in a series of structured partnership 'health checks' the Partnership has facilitated across the Farm-to-School (F2S) initiatives it is supporting. The meetings provided an opportunity to 'check-in' on progress across the different projects, ensure roles and responsibilities were clear, and discuss challenges with implementation. Some clear actions were identified as a result of these meetings, such as:

- **For Ambaebulu Junior Secondary School (Penama)**, the Partnership agreed to work with the ORCBDS Manager, Jimmy Alick, to develop a simple monitoring tool for the Ambaebulu bursar to track expenditure and sales of fresh food.
- **For Whitesands Bilingual School (Tafea)**, the Partnership agreed to facilitate a meeting between local farmers, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) Officer and the school to agree on terms for the supply of fresh food to the school. Since that meeting, the school has been receiving a more consistent supply of fresh produce. The Partnership also organised a workshop for the chefs at Whitesands and other local schools on menu planning, portion control and food safety.
- **For Balwyn Lonsdale Memorial School (Torba)**, the Partnership brought together key stakeholders for the first time in several years to revisit the F2S concept and agree on the governance mechanism to provide oversight of the initiative.

LTO-3: Sustainable benefits (economic, environmental and cultural) for Partnership clients and their communities

Highlights of results achieved to date in 2025

The Partnership, through the provincial MoET Skills Centres, continues to support access to quality, demand-driven training for ni-Vanuatu entrepreneurs and provincial partners to strengthen workforce development and employment pathways. During the first half of 2025:

- **462 participants, including 267 women (58% of all participants) and 38 people with disabilities (8% of all participants), accessed skills training to support their entrepreneurial or work-related activities.** This is higher than mid-year in 2024 (318 participants) and at parity with 2023 (447 participants). The increase compared to last year is due to the delivery of a higher number of shorter business development skills trainings and coaching engagements, following a focus on longer-term trade qualifications in 2024.
- **30 demand-driven workshops and coaching sessions, facilitated by 32 industry coaches (including 16 women), were delivered for Skills Centre clients.** This covered a range of in-demand topics including quality handicraft production, financial literacy, packaging and labelling, cooperative and business governance, menu preparation and backyard nurse establishment.



Image 7: Industry expert, Knox Taleo, coaching participants during a hospitality workshop in Santo

Trade companies (in construction and plumbing) in Santo, Malekula, and Tanna, including those led by women and people with disabilities, continue to strengthen their business management and operations skills, and are increasing their income generation through support from the Partnership. To date, two good governance workshops have been delivered to new companies established in Shefa and Santo, in addition to a basic computing workshop to assist Santo-based trades companies in their business operations. There are good results emerging:

- **48 construction and plumbing trainees (5 women and 43 men including one man with disabilities) in Port Vila and Melsisi, Pentecost have graduated with nationally recognised trade qualifications.** After the completion of training in both locations, trainees were supported to establish local trades businesses. As a result, **four new plumbing businesses in**

Pentecost, together with the Satomafea Construction Company in Port Vila, are now established and working in the infrastructure sector.

- **On Santo and Malekula, companies formed by trade graduates from 2023–24 are now successfully winning high-value contracts.** Nojavan Construction was subcontracted by Tulaet Construction to build the Tasmate Health Facility and staff house in West Santo, valued at VUV 5 million. In Malekula, graduate Serel Julun joined her family's Yomal Construction Company, which is renovating the Malampa Ministry of Justice Disability Inclusion Office and constructing the new Malekula Consumer Hardware Shop under a VUV 4 million contract.



Image 8: Members of Nojavan Construction on site during the construction of the Tasmate Health Centre, West Santo

- **On Tanna, Tafea Youngster Bargain Construction Company, which was established following the delivery of Certificate II in Building and Construction on Tanna in 2022, successfully won a Tafea Provincial Government tender valued at VUV 3.9 million to construct the new Central Tanna Area Council building.** The company will continue to be supported by the Partnership's trades coach based on Tanna to ensure quality and effective project delivery.

The Partnership continues to explore and facilitate access to new domestic and international markets for clients in the agribusiness and creative industries sectors, with some good progress in the first half of 2025. For example:

- **As part of efforts to strengthen pepper market systems, a small research project was conducted into the perceptions of domestic pepper buyers.** The study included an analysis of consumption patterns and the market value of pepper within the local hospitality sector in Port Vila. Findings have outlined next steps to maximise farmer links to market including small improvements required on packaging, in addition to identifying several sites in Port Vila where farmers should target their sales.
- **The Tafea Creative Industry and Cultural Market Hub continues to strengthen its partnership with the New Zealand market.** In June, producers from the Hub were showcased and products were sold in an internationally renowned 'Diva' exhibition in Auckland, New Zealand, highlighting the new dying skills of Futuna weavers in stylish clutch purses, fans and salusalu.
- **The Sanma Creative Industry Community Company (SCICC) is currently exploring a partnership with a new international buyer for their headwear products, the Six Senses Resort Mololo Island, Fiji.** The resort has accepted samples and placed an order with SCICC,

and prices are currently being negotiated with the support of the Partnership's Headwear Coach.

- **Two new fish markets have been established in the remote islands of Ureparapara and Merelava in Torba Province to provide safe, central market access for fishermen and their communities.** The buildings were constructed, furnished, and equipped with solar power through a collaboration between the Partnership, local communities, and the Department of Fisheries. In both locations, community consultations were held with the Department of Cooperatives to establish appropriate cooperative governance of the markets, enabling the inclusion of voices from both local fishermen and wider community members.

“Today is a great day and a milestone for the people of Ureparapara. Our fishermen will no longer have to travel long distance and paying high cost to transport their catch on banana boats to Sola using Esky Coolers but can sell to the fish market here on the island.”

Chief Fred Leo.



Image 9: Community members look on during the launch of the Ureparapara Fish Market

Building on assistance to the Department of Tourism (DoT) and the Vanuatu Tourism Office (VTO) in 2024, this year there has been progress in supporting the recovery of the provincial tourism sector, in high potential locations, through product development and market access initiatives. This has included:

- Building on the industry demand identified during ‘Product Readiness’ assessments in 2024, **two hospitality workshops were delivered for 22 tourism accommodation operators in Sanma and Tanna** reinforcing essential customer service skills and encouraging participants to revalue and enhance the quality of their services.
- **The Partnership supported VTO to conduct baseline ‘Market Readiness’ surveys in Sanma, Malekula and Tanna with owners of 61 provincial tourism businesses.** The survey was conducted with advanced operators only, complementing the DoT Product Readiness Assessments conducted in 2024. With industry demand and key skills gaps now identified, the Partnership will work with VTO to deliver marketing workshops and coaching sessions for motivated operators in the second half of 2025.
- **The Vanuatu Travel Information Centre (VTIC) - Malekula branch was officially opened in May 2025 through a collaboration with the VTO, Malampa Provincial Government and local tourism operators.** The centre was established after previous successful collaborations in Santo and Tanna. As the fourth branch within the VTO’s travel centre network, the VTIC Malekula branch will provide a platform for the promotion of local tourism businesses to the domestic and international markets in addition to providing central online bookings functions.



Image 10: VTO staff at the launch of the Vanuatu Travel Information Centre - Malekula Branch in May

In partnership with DARD and the provincial MoJYCS Disability Desk Officers, the Partnership has continued to support farmers with disabilities to develop backyard gardening skills, as well as providing equipment and access to markets, enabling their businesses to grow and thrive. This includes:

- **On Tanna, five female farmers with disabilities were supported to develop their backyard gardens in partnership with Napil Agricultural Training Centre.** Through ongoing skills coaching, complemented with the provision of fencing materials and seedlings, these clients are now earning incomes from their harvests.
- **A seedling nursery established on Ambae during a recent training has been officially handed over to Danstan Boe, a client with disabilities** who is now growing and selling seedlings to local farmers who supply local markets on Ambae.
- **Additional backyard gardening workshops have been delivered for 17 farmers with disabilities (8 women and 9 men) in Santo and on the remote island of Mota in Torba province.** In addition to the procurement of set-up materials, ongoing follow up coaching is planned, to support these new clients to boost their productivity and enable regular sales for income generation in addition to more diverse diets at home.

Cross-cutting – Inclusion

Highlights of results achieved to date in 2025

The Partnership continues to mainstream efforts to increase the participation and representation of women, people with disabilities and people from remote location across all areas of its work.

Ensuring inclusive access to skills training remains a key focus for the Partnership and the MoET provincial Skills Centres. From January to June 2025, key achievements in inclusive access included:

- 267 female participants took part in Partnership-supported skills activities, accounting for 58% of all participants. This includes 19 women who completed skills training in non-traditional trades sector.

“The participation of women in our plumbing training programs is not just a milestone—it’s a movement. It challenges outdated perceptions, opens doors to economic independence, and strengthens communities. Vanuatu Skills Partnership has been instrumental in supporting this transformation.” Lisa Toa, Training Manager, PVTTC

- Of the 31 skills development activities delivered to date in 2025, several have taken place in remote outer island locations such as Mota, Merelava, Aneityum and Futuna ensuring the participation of remote communities in skills training.
- 38 people with disabilities participated in activities, including 23 women and 15 men, representing 8% of total participants. Reasonable accommodations such as transportation and career support have been provided to clients to enable their active participation in these skills activities.
- Three targeted skills activities were delivered in Torba and Sanma, specifically supporting participation of clients with disabilities including:
 - Two backyard gardening workshops for farmers with disabilities on Mota and Luganville.
 - A menstrual health management workshop was facilitated at the request of the MoJYCS Disability Inclusion Officer, in collaboration with World Vision, for people with disabilities in Vanualava.

There has been good progress supporting women’s economic empowerment by encouraging the participation of women and couples in existing workstream priorities.

From January-June 2025, women represented 58% of all skills training participants. This is substantially higher than the same time in 2024 (49%) and 2023 (48%). This increase is due in part to the recommencement of skills development for tourism hospitality business owners and employees, a sector traditionally dominated by women, in addition to efforts to continue to promote non-traditional trades to women. Examples of recent results for female entrepreneurs and their families include:

- In Vanualava in Torba, there are examples of farming couples working together to increase their family income. By working together, one family was able to purchase a new solar system for their home, while two additional couples have diversified their incomes through the establishment of a poultry farm and a bungalow.
- On Futuna, 40 female weavers (including one with a disability) were recently supported by their husbands and families to fully participate in a Teri Dye workshop. During the weeklong workshop, it was noted that male partners were happily taking on additional responsibilities at home to ensure the weavers had time to attend all sessions.

Strong Foundations: Family Backing Women in Leadership in Construction

After completing a Certificate II in Building and Construction at Rensarie College, Serel joined her family-owned construction business, the Yomal Construction Company, alongside her husband and son. Together, they renovated the Malampa Child and Children's Desk Office, which was opened in April this year. This family business has now won another contract. Serel's husband, Guytou, said he is a proud husband knowing that the business is in safe hands with his wife at the helm.

This is a powerful example of a woman taking the lead, with the support of her husband, in a sector which is not traditionally considered an area in which women participate, let alone lead. This shows that women can perform just as effectively as men in sectors in which women do not commonly participate, due to assumptions about their skills and roles. With support from families, including husbands, women can achieve and lead.



Image 11: The Yomal Construction Company co-owner, Serel Julun, standing with her husband and son.

"I take charge of the work here on the construction site whenever my husband is busy with other tasks. The good thing is whenever he returns, he knows that the work is done."

Serel Julun

Building on client profiling activities in 2024, the Partnership, in collaboration with key provincial and sector partners, as well as local communities, is providing additional support to entrepreneurs with disabilities to enable them to more actively participate in their sectors. This has included support for:

- 17 farmers with disabilities (10 women and 7 men) on Tanna, Ambae and Santo who have received skills training and coaching as well as material support such as fencing, basic farming tools and seedlings to enable them to fully establish their backyard gardening activities.
- One male baker on Ambae has been supported with coaching on recipe development and quality production in addition to material support for the construction of his bread oven.
- In addition, 5 accessible buildings have been launched in Malampa and Torba provinces promoting social inclusion and removing physical barriers to participation of people with physical disabilities.



Image 12: Serah Sam (middle), a farmer with disabilities on Tanna, receiving seedlings from Mr Charlie Kitchikitchi, Tafea Skills Centre Manager (right), and Madeline George from Napil Agriculture Training Centre.

The Partnership continues to work with reformist training providers to ensure a more inclusive education and training system. As a result of long-term collaboration between the Partnership and the VAC, an Inclusive Resource Room was officially handed over in March 2025. This dedicated space is equipped to support trainers in adapting lessons for trainees with disabilities and provides a rest and recuperation area. It represents a key step toward more inclusive education and training systems by offering greater access and second-chance learning opportunities for people with disabilities. VAC has committed to purposeful use of the space and invited other training providers and disability organisations in Sanma to access it.

The Partnership continues to support the decentralisation of disability inclusion efforts and increasing provincial coordination by strengthening the role of Provincial MoJYCS Disability Officers. These efforts demonstrate a shift from Partnership-led to government-led action, building sustainable local leadership in disability inclusion across provinces. Specific activities that have been supported to date include:

- In Tafea, the Partnership funded the Provincial Disability Officer and Child Desk Officer to participate in an outer island outreach initiative, supported by HELPR-1, to Aneityum, Futuna, Aniwa, and Erromango in April. These officers led awareness sessions, identified people with disabilities, provided assistive technologies and referrals, and trained local disability representatives.
- In Malampa, the Partnership supported the renovation of the MoJYCS provincial office, now housing key officers working on disability inclusion and child protection. The building itself is now accessible, further promoting the use of accessible infrastructure designs in provincial development.
- In Torba, support was provided to the Disability Officer to deliver menstrual hygiene education for 15 people with disabilities and their carers, and to prepare a Community and Household Disability Disaster Action Plan in partnership with World Vision. A key outcome of this activity was the establishment of the West Vanualava Area Council Disability Committee.

Cross-cutting – Climate Resilience

Highlights of results achieved to date in 2025

Given the significance risks that climate change presents for Vanuatu, the Partnership continues to prioritise climate resilience, in addition to environmental sustainability, as an essential cross-cutting issue, within all Partnership priorities. In 2025, there has been progress in the mainstreaming of climate considerations into Partnership skills training, processes and partnerships. This has included:

- An induction workshop run for 13 industry coaches from across the productive sectors in April provided targeted content on how coaches can more proactively integrate environmental sustainability and climate resilience into their coaching sessions and workshops. In a follow-up survey three months later, 83% of coaches who provided feedback noted that they had integrated the lessons from the session into their coaching.
- Certificate II in Plumbing training delivered on Tanna by PVTC is equipping trainees with the skills to build resilient water infrastructure. This involves understanding how to design and install systems that can withstand extreme weather events, such as increased rainfall or prolonged droughts, ensuring communities have reliable access to clean water despite a changing climate.

The Partnership continues to support entrepreneurs, across the productive sectors, to become more resilient to the impacts of climate change and disaster on their business and livelihood activities. Progress has included:

- Through ongoing coaching, 22 farmers (9 men and 13 women) in East Vanualava continue to increase their sustainable production and strengthen local food security. Results from a recent coaching trip indicate that these farmers continue to improve their incomes through resilient farming practices such as alley cropping, composting and water conservation. They are now the main suppliers to the Sola market, and several have successfully diversified their incomes to small livestock (poultry) in addition to tourism.
- Three inclusive backyard gardening workshops delivered in partnership with DARD and MoJYCS on Mota, Santo and Ambae have included climate resilience skills components such as water conservation as well as mulching and composting to ensure sustainable farming practices are integrated into the approach.
- On Tanna, tour guide event management coaching is currently being provided to the Yasur Run Event Local Organising Committee in preparations for this event. The coaching includes an emphasis on sustainability principles, including environmental protection and cultural preservation. The aim is to ensure that development of the trail aligns with long-term environmental needs and community interests. This approach will help safeguard the natural and cultural assets for the future generations while fostering responsible tourism practices.

Securing a sustainable supply of Pandanus for Vanuatu's future weavers

"The new solar dryer makes our work easier; we have good dried pandanus and we can do our weavings anytime no matter if it is raining as we still have enough dried pandanus to weave."
Noellyn Bwibwi, Limabulu Craft Association Member.

In a step towards long-term sustainability for Vanuatu's pandanus value chain, the Partnership is working alongside the Vanuatu Agricultural Research and Technical Centre (VARTC), Department of Forestry (DoF), DARD, local communities, and creative industries producer groups to ensure the future of this culturally and economically important resource.

Following a market systems analysis completed in 2024, pandanus resource management activities were launched in Malo and Paama, including the establishment of community nurseries and the cultivation of two high-value species — *Dibius* (no nails) and *Tectorial* (with nails). On Malo, over 500 pandanus seedlings have now been planted, with distribution planned to households to strengthen local supply for weavers.



Image 13: Vanuatu Skills Partnership staff, Industry coaches and members of the weaving association proudly displaying the newly installed Pandanus solar dryer on Malo.

Complementing this replanting work, a one-year pilot initiative was rolled out in Malo and Luganville in Sanma to test new solar dryer technology for pandanus fibre used by craft weavers. Led by solar expert John Bennett (based in Fiji), two dryers were installed — one at the Sanma Skills Centre in Luganville for the Limabulu craft association, and another larger unit for the Bosahe craft association on Malo. These dryers are helping craft producers avoid sun bleaching, enabling year-round fibre processing and improving quality, particularly whiteness and yield.

Early results from producers indicate that the solar dryer has multiple benefits including reducing drying time and a more consistent drying process which is leading to a higher quality end product. This integrated systems approach, from seedling to solar drying, is empowering weavers and their communities with tools, knowledge and resilient systems to grow their livelihoods and preserve tradition, all while adapting to a changing climate.

4. FORWARD PLANNING: PRIORITIES FOR THE REMAINDER OF 2025

Key priorities for the second half of 2025 are structured as per the Partnership's three LTOs and include:

LTO-1: A more inclusive, quality assured and increasingly decentralised skills system

- Support TED to:
 - Develop an Implementation Plan for the National Skills Development Policy 2024-2030, including the facilitation of consultations
 - Continue to convene regular meetings of the PSET Sector Support Committee (in collaboration with PAS)
 - Support TED to strengthen its capacity for planning, coordination and implementation through professional development opportunities and coaching for staff
 - Implement the National Skills Competition (in collaboration with VIT)
- Support provincial Skills Centres to reconvene Provincial Government Training Boards.
- Work with key training providers to ensure they meet the requirements for registration with VQA, such as the Vanuatu Maritime College, and support VCNE with the development of the lower-level health qualification.
- Continue to support the VIT attachment program to build its network of provincial trainers.
- Support provincial training providers to deliver flexible accredited qualifications in rural areas. This includes Napil Agriculture Training Centre and Vetimboso VTC.
- Collaborate with Vanuatu Australia Education Support Program on the review of Open VEMIS and integrate the Washington Group questions into the PSET Management Information System.

LTO-2: Developmental leadership drives collective action for improved service delivery

- Work with provincial Secretary Generals and other Government of Australia (GoA) partners such as Governance for Growth to develop provincial strategic plans in Torba, Tafea and Penama.
- Continue to provide targeted leadership and project management support to key personnel within partner departments, including ongoing project management coaching to TED personnel, as well as with key leaders working with the Partnership in areas such as creative industries, tourism, infrastructure and agriculture.
- Continue efforts to reform and consolidate changes to the Partnership's planning, monitoring and reporting processes to maximise GoV buy-in to and ownership of Partnership-supported activities.
- Continue efforts to strengthen the Partnership's approach to coordination and collaboration with key GoV partners, and for 'collective action' initiatives across its workstreams, including infrastructure development in the provinces, accredited training in rural and remote areas and F2S initiatives.

LTO-3: Sustainable benefits (economic, environmental and cultural) for Partnership clients and their communities

- Facilitate skills training, coaching and on-the-job training for target clients across the tourism, agribusiness, creative industries and infrastructure sectors through the provincial Skills Centres.
- Continue to support client pathways to further education and employment/business opportunities with a focus on market access opportunities for construction and plumbing graduates.
- Facilitate the delivery of governance and leadership workshops, trainings and coaching to strengthen the governance of key coordination and market aggregation hubs and associations. This includes the Boards and management of:
 - the respective creative industries hubs in Sanma, Malampa, Torba and Tafea
 - new construction and plumbing companies established in the provinces following the delivery of accredited training
 - vanilla and pepper farmer associations in Tafea, Malampa and Sanma
- Coordinate tracer surveys and additional monitoring activities to better understand the impact of skills training on client behaviours, skills and livelihoods.

Cross-cutting: Inclusion

Priority areas of action for 2025, beyond mainstreaming efforts articulated above, include:

- Working with the DWA to finalise a video focused on female entrepreneurs.
- Participate in DWA/MoJYCS women's leadership thematic working group.
- Partner with BoP/DoBT on their work promoting women in leadership in Torba province through inclusive skills development.
- Continue support to the Wilkins Family Foundation to support young women in Malampa province.
- Continue to progress development of the Partnership's PSEAH Policy, including undertaking risk assessments on a small number of activities to identify issues and needs and inform the development of the policy.
- Support MoJYCS to hold a National Disability Council meeting and to strengthen their 2026 planning coordination.
- Support MoET with Inclusive Education and Training Policy awareness raising in Torba.
- Provide coaching and check-in support to the wider team to ensure engagement with disability inclusion processes and the toolkit.
- Make final payments under the existing contracts with VSPD and VDPA to support advocacy and services for people with disabilities and support the two organisations to prepare their reports.
- Support provincial Skills Centres and sector workstreams to provide reasonable accommodations to clients with disabilities and trainers, to enable inclusion.

Cross-cutting: Climate resilience

The Partnership has formally identified climate resilience as a cross-cutting issue that is being mainstreamed across all workstreams. Priorities for the remainder of 2025 include:

- Continue to support DoF and provincial partners in pandanus nursery and replanting programs on Malo, Paama and Malekula that maximise crop quality and supply to ensure the sustainability and profitability of the local craft industry.
- Work with key GoV personnel to ensure systemisation of Environmental Impact Assessments into all infrastructure projects managed by the provincial Skills Centres as part of ongoing safeguarding efforts.
- Continue the ongoing partnership with DARD to support farmers to plant climate resilient crops and contribute to further development of the seed-bank model.
- Provide support to integrate environmental sustainability and climate resilience into accredited trainings, workshops and coaching, including WASH projects in Ambae.