



TORBA SKILLS CENTRE

Quarterly Report
Q2, 2025



Image 1: First Secretary Development, Joanna Pinkas, the first ever DFAT representative to travel to the remote islands of Torba. Joanna was welcomed by Merelava chiefs and the Honorable President of Torba Province, escorted by Commander North.

SKILLS FOR INFRASTRUCTURE

Priority area: Launching of Torba infrastructure projects

Achievement/Outcome:

- In April, the Torba Skills Centre facilitated the official launch of several infrastructure projects it has supported in Torba in recent years. This infrastructure was built with a view to supporting improved livelihoods and better access to services for people living in remote communities, as well as providing skills development opportunities for local builders.
- The projects that were officially launched included Divers Bay Fish Market (Ureparapara), Merelava Fish Market, Losalava TVET in Schools building (Gaua) and the East Gaua Petroleum Cooperative Retail Store.
- The official delegation for the launches included the First Secretary Development from the Australian High Commission in Vanuatu, the Honorable President of Torba province, the Vanuatu Skills Partnership Director and senior representatives from Department of Fisheries and ORCBDS. In Gaua, the Honorable Minister of Education and Training, Mr Simil Johnson, and the Deputy High Commissioner, Ms Emily Fisher, joined the team to participate in the official launching of those projects. Representatives from the local community were also present, many of whom had made important contributions to the infrastructure projects.
- All buildings are now operational, and the market houses are being used by local communities to generate income, supporting local economic development.

"Today is a great day and a milestone for the people of Ureparapara. Our fishermen will no longer have to travel long distances and pay high costs 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 2: Official launch of the accessible Merelava fish market.



Image 3: Members of the local community on Merelava with improved access to fresh water.



Image 4 and 5: Official launch of the Divers Bay Fish Market & Cooperatives, on Ureparapara.



Image 6 and 7: Official launch of the Merelava Fish Market & Cooperatives.





Image 8, 9 & 10 : Loslava TVET in Schools accessible classroom is officially launched by Australian Deputy High Commissioner to Vanuatu, Ms Emily Fisher, and Minister of Education and Training, Mr Simil Johnson.



Image 11 & 12: Official opening of the East Gaua Petroleum Cooperative retail store.



TRAINING PROVIDER SUPPORT

Priority area: PSET Service Delivery – Vetimboso Vocational Training Centre

Achievement/Outcome

- In 2024, Vetimboso Vocational Training Centre (VTC) started delivering Certificate I in Building Construction for the first time with the support of the Torba Skills Centre. This was a significant milestone for the skills system in Torba as Vetimboso is the first Torba-based provider with the ability to deliver a trades qualification. Torba Skills Centre provided extensive support to Vetimboso VTC to be able to deliver this accredited course including covering the VQA costs for course units and supporting the development of trainers and learning guides.
- In May 2025, the Torba Skills Centre supported Vetimboso VTC to hold a graduation ceremony for the first cohort of 19 graduates (all male) of the Certificate I in Building and Construction course.
- As further evidence of its development, Vetimboso VTC received approval in April from the VQA Board to deliver Certificate I in Automotive Engineering (Small Engine Servicing). This builds on its offering of accredited courses, strengthening Vetimboso's profile as a training provider and positioning it for future funding, partnerships, and program expansion.
- In May, Vetimboso VTC launched its new Small Engine Servicing classroom. Students participating in the Certificate I in Building and Construction course contributed to the construction of the classroom as part of the practical component of their study.
- Vetimboso VTC's continued growth is an important development for the people of Torba. By offering accredited training in remote communities, it helps ensure that men, women, and people with disabilities can access quality education without needing to relocate.



Image 13: Certificate I in Building and Construction graduates from Vetimboso VTC with their certificates awarded by the Vanuatu Qualifications Authority.



Image 14: VQA Assistant CEO handing over the Approval to Deliver for Certificate I in Automotive Engineering (Small Engine Servicing) to the Vetimboso VTC Chairman.



Image 15: Chairman of Vetimboso and graduate of Certificate I in Building and Construction, Mr Anthony Liesnot, standing with his son (trainer) and his wife Mrs Prim Anthony.



Image 16: Opening of the Small Engine Servicing classroom at Vetimboso VTC by Senior officer at Tertiary Education Directorate with Assistant CEO VQA.

SKILLS FOR AGRIBUSINESS

Priority area: Sustainable and resilient farming development

Achievement/Outcome:

- The Torba Skills Centre has been supporting farmers in East Vanua Iava to develop their farming enterprises for several years.
- In April, with support from the Torba Skills Centre, ORCBDS and DARD delivered two workshops on how to establish a cooperative. There were 21 participants (9 men, 12 women) across the two workshops in the Tivitwot and Ambek communities.
- Following the workshops, two new cooperatives were established, one in Tivitwot and one in Ambek. Each cooperative also formed a committee to provide governance and oversight.
- The establishment of these new cooperatives is crucial for ensuring the sustainability of local farming businesses, particularly in addressing challenges such as the transportation of farm produce to market. It also provides a formal structure for members to share their knowledge and skills with each other.
- During the workshop, ORCBDS and DARD also emphasised the importance of inclusive governance and encouraged the participation of women and people with disabilities in the cooperative committees. Two women are part of the Tivitwot committee, and two women are part of the committee from Ambek.



Image 17: Ambek Cooperative members.



Image 18: Tivitwot Cooperative members.

INCLUSION

Priority area: Inclusive backyard gardening and nursery development

Achievement/Outcome:

- In collaboration with DARD, DARD's seedbank officers, a local agribusiness coach, and the disability desk officer, the Torba Skills Centre supported the delivery of an inclusive backyard gardening workshop on the remote island of Mota.
- There were 19 official participants in the workshop (9 male, 10 female), including 7 people with disabilities, although many more community members observed. Along with the training, partners built a greenhouse to raise seedlings, and they also built several garden beds.
- The training aimed to equip people with disabilities with practical skills they can use in daily life to support themselves and their families, and potentially generate income. It also aimed to demonstrate to the wider community that people with disabilities are capable of meaningfully contributing to their households.
- DARD was strongly supportive of the activity and contributed by giving out seedlings to participants and providing wire for the demonstration plot. They have indicated they will continue to provide support to the community for this initiative.
- Torba Skills Centre and DARD are planning a follow-up visit to the community in July 2025.



Image 19: Participants of the backyard gardening workshop delivered on Mota learn how to thin vegetable seedlings.



Image 20 & 21: Outcomes from the inclusive backyard workshop in Mota island. Participants preparing raised seed beds for transplanting seedlings.

SKILLS FOR CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

Priority area: Sustainable Hub Business Development

Achievement/Outcome:

- The Torba Skills Centre has been providing support to the Torba Handicraft Cooperative (THC) and local handicraft producers for several years. The THC Coordinator, with support from the Torba Skills Centre, the THC Board, and the Department of Industry (DoI), has been working hard to increase sales and generate increased revenue to support the long-term viability of the THC.
- In recent times, the Torba Skills Centre supported the THC Coordinator to apply for a grant from the Industry Development Fund (IDF) to purchase a new boat for the THC. The IDF is managed by the Vanuatu Chamber of Commerce and Industries (VCCI), with funding provided by DoI.
- In January 2024, THC was advised its grant application was successful, and in June 2025, a fully equipped, brand new boat was handed over to the THC during an official ceremony. This was an important event to demonstrate to partners how THC has grown after the establishment of the business. The Torba Skills Centre supported with the logistics to transport the boat to Sola.
- The boat is expected to improve market access for local producers by making it easier for the THC to collect handicrafts from producers in remote locations. It will also be available for hire, providing an additional income stream for the THC and supporting its prospects for long-term sustainability.



Image 22: The official speech from the Torba president.



Image 23: The dedication prayer by the Torba Secretary General.

LESSON LEARNED AND ACTIONS

LESSON 1: There were challenges with our inclusive backyard gardening activity on Mota; our coaches could have been better prepared in terms of understanding the context and developing suitable training materials.

NEXT STEPS:

- Ensure consultations with local stakeholders have been completed before delivery of the activity.
- Conduct a pre-activity briefing for coaches and other contributing partners before the delivery of similar activities.
- Prepare training materials in advance.

LESSON 2: We need to ensure that we engage early with local communities around any future infrastructure launches (some communities were only given two days notice, which meant they didn't have much time to prepare).

NEXT STEPS:

- Ensure responsibility within the Torba Skills Centre for communicating with local communities ahead of future launches is clear.
- Ensure local communities are given sufficient time to provide input into the design of future infrastructure launches.

WHAT ARE THE PRIORITIES FOR QUARTER 3?

Skills for Creative Industries

- Organise AGM for Torba Handicraft Cooperative (THC)
- Support repairs to the roof of the THC building
- Facilitate the participation of craft producers from Torba in the upcoming 'Vanuatu Made' event in Port Vila

Skills for Tourism

- Professional development for local coaches (Certificate I in Computing)

Skills for Agribusiness

- Governance and management workshop/ coaching for Divers Bay and Merelava fishing cooperatives

Skills for Infrastructure

- Support West Gaua gravity fed system (water supply) materials shipment from Santo to West Gaua.

Training Provider Support

- Develop training resources for Certificate I in Automotive Engineering (Small Engine Servicing) and its delivery.

Inclusion

- Profile clients with disabilities on Merelava, East Vanualava and Ureparapara to guide the support we provide.

Leadership and Governance

- Provide logistics and coordination support for the Torba Secretary General and Governance for Growth in the development of a Strategic Plan for the province.

PARTICIPATION IN SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

SECTOR	WOMEN	MEN	TOTAL	PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES
Skills for Agribusiness	22	18	40	5 women, 2 men
Skills for Infrastructure	4	18	22	0
Other Project	16	6	22	9 women, 1 man
TOTAL	42	42	84	17 people, 14 women and 3 men