



TORBA SKILLS CENTRE

Quarterly Report
Q3 2025 (July-October)



Image 1: Vetimbo Vocation Training Centre trainees explaining the setting out of a building to interested secondary school students during Public Service Day celebrations in Gaua.



SKILLS FOR AGRIBUSINESS

Priority area: Sustainable and Resilient Farming Development

Achievement/Outcome:

- The Torba Skills Centre, in partnership with the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD), has been supporting 22 vegetable farmers (9 men and 13 women) in East Vanua Lava through phased skills coaching to increase and diversify crop production. The initiative, in line with DARD's sustainable and resilient farming objectives, aims to boost food security by shifting farmers from small-scale subsistence production to more commercial, income-driven agriculture.
- A key focus is increasing production volumes so farmers can reduce unit prices, remain competitive, and supply markets more consistently. High transport costs and low production levels previously resulted in higher prices, limiting affordability and interest from buyers.
- Coaches observed tangible progress during recent coaching visits. In Ambek village, farmers have now planted over 17,000 crops, while Tivitwot farmers have planted 7,000 crops (averaging more than 500 per farmer). In Queso village, a farming couple has expanded their small-scale poultry enterprise. Farmers from all three villages are now consistently supplying produce to the Sola market.
- Coaching promotes a family farming methodology, with workloads are shared equitably, promoting strong participation of both women and men, including couples and families working together



Image 2: Agribusiness coach, Charley Aswel, and farmers from Vanualava marking out land for cultivation.

SKILLS FOR AGRIBUSINESS

Priority area: Sustainable and Resilient Farming Development

Achievement/Outcome:

- A value addition workshop was facilitated by the Department of Industry (DOI), Office of the Registrar of Cooperative and Business Development Services (ORCBDS) and the World Health Organization to support existing farming clients in East Vanualava to diversify income sources and reduce post-harvest losses from unsold produce.
- The workshop was conducted in the Ambek and Tivitwot communities and attended by 20 farmers (11 women and 9 men). Participants gained an understanding of the concept and benefits of value addition and developed new product ideas by identifying two to three ways to process or package their raw produce to better meet local market standards. As part of the practical sessions, 30 bottles of jam were produced and sold to community members at VUV 500 each.
- The workshop also strengthened collaboration among farmers and improved awareness of quality standards, branding, and product certification. It further created opportunities for DOI to expand its role in supporting sustainable livelihoods through ongoing technical assistance.
- Overall, the initiative enhanced partnerships between communities, government, and markets, contributing to more inclusive and sustainable economic growth. DOI is currently advocating with the Torba Provincial Government and Sola market house management to secure a designated location for selling these value-added products.



Image 3: Farmers from East Vanualava learning how to make chips from banana.

SKILLS FOR CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

Priority area: Promoting the Vanuatu Made brand and supporting local producers with market access

Achievement/Outcome:

- In August, the DOI organised a Mini Vanuatu Made trade show in Motalava. The event was an opportunity for producers from different islands in Torba to showcase their products to government representatives, non government representatives, other producers and the local community in Motalava. The event:
 - Improved visibility and recognition of locally-made products, allowing farmers, producers and artisans to reach a wider audience through public display and direct customer engagement.
 - Created networking and market linkage opportunities, connecting producers with buyers, shop owners and potential business partners.
 - Strengthened producers' confidence and business exposure, as participants marketed their products face-to-face, received feedback, and gained a better understanding of consumer preferences.
- The Torba Skills Centre supported handicraft clients from Motalava, Vetimboso, and Merelava to showcase their products at the trade show, including arranging their transport.
- During the event, these clients generated income through product sales, with earnings of VUV 8,450 for clients from Motalava, VUV 130,000 from Merelava, and VUV 70,100 for clients from Vetimboso.



Image 4: Christina Sirig, representing producers from Torba Handicraft Cooperative at the recent Torba Mini Vanuatu Made trade show in Motalava.

SKILLS FOR CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

Priority area: Support for Torba Handicraft Cooperative

Achievement/Outcome:

- The Torba Handicraft Cooperative (THC) is critical to the livelihoods of handicraft producers from communities across Torba, providing them with access to market.
- However, the facility used by the THC required upgrading to ensure it was attractive to buyers and that products were adequately protected from bad weather.
- With support from the Torba Skills Centre, the THC facility was renovated in the second half of 2025. As a result, it is now more secure and weather-resistant, enabling improved storage and display of handicraft products.
- The renovations also included the installation of new lighting, improving working conditions and allowing the business to operate beyond standard business market hours when required.



Before

After

Image 5&6: The THC before being renovated (left) and after renovation (right)

INCLUSION

Priority area: Backyard gardening for people with disabilities

Achievement/Outcome:

- The Torba Skills Centre and the Ministry of Justice, Youth and Community Services (MoJYCS) Disability Desk officer for Torba conducted a follow-up visit to Mota in July to check the status of nurseries and backyard gardens established by 19 farmers including seven people with disabilities earlier in the year.
- The monitoring visit found that farmers with disabilities (2 men and 5 women) have demonstrated a strong commitment to their nurseries and backyard gardens, All clients had established a backyard garden where cabbage and other vegetables were being grown, providing convenient access to fresh, healthy food.
- During the visit, clients were given refreshers on techniques for soil preparation, pest control, mulching and harvesting,
- With the positive results from the established nurseries, farmers with disabilities are now being encouraged to grow vegetables to earn income.



Image 7&8: Above picture - the result of the established nursery. Picture below – Coach Gordon gave away planting calendar to a client with disability in Mota island.

BETTER BALANCE

Priority area: Women's Economic Empowerment

Achievement/Outcome:

- The Torba Skills Centre supported the Department of Women's Affairs (DWA) to conduct a monitoring visit following the financial literacy and skills training (sewing, painting, screen printing) delivered in Motalava in 2024.
- During the activity, 23 participants (all women including one woman with disabilities) had the opportunity to demonstrate their skills by sewing pillowcases and tablecloths, and printing lavalavas.
- Participants were also given a refresher in financial literacy, strengthening their knowledge and skills in managing the finances associated with their small enterprises and developing strategies for saving.

"The follow-up visit boosted the women's confidence and made them feel valued. They showed strong commitment to improving their sewing skills and managing resources more effectively, especially finances. Beyond sewing and painting, they also learned how to save their income, empowering them to plan better for the future."

Mrs Rocklyn Eldads, Torba DWA Officer



Image 9: President of the Magde Women's Club using a sewing machine for the first time.

TRAINING PROVIDER SUPPORT

Priority area: Delivery of new accredited training courses in Torba province

Achievement/Outcome:

- The Torba Skills Centre supported the Vetimboso Vocational Training Centre to deliver a new course, Certificate I in Automotive (Small Engine Servicing), focused on servicing small outboard motor engines.
- The initial block of the course was delivered for the first time between September and October by experienced affiliated trainers. 19 male participants attended the training, all of whom operate small outboard vessels. The remaining units are due for completion in 2026.
- The training was delivered in partnership with Torba Vanuatu Maritime Safety Authority and the Torba Provincial Government. Following completion of the course, participants are expected to have improved knowledge and skills in operating and servicing outboard engines, as well as in communicating with suppliers to source replacement parts. The training is also intended to reduce the costs incurred by small boat owners in managing and maintaining their engines.
- Ultimately, the training is expected to reduce risks associated with long-distance sea travel by increasing confidence among small boat owners and travelers that boat travel is safe.



Image 10: Trainees from the first Certificate I in Automotive (Small Engine Servicing) delivered at Vetimboso VTC.

TRAINING PROVIDER SUPPORT

Priority area: TPS Flexible and inclusive delivery of accredited training

Achievement/Outcome:

- In October, the Torba Provincial Technical Advisory Committee led the delivery of joint Torba Public Service Commission (PSC) Day and Torba Day celebrations in the East Gaua Area Council. This marked the first time the event was held in this remote location and achieved strong participation from all line government departments and sector officers.
- Torba Skills Centre supported the logistics and coordination of the event, contributing to its successful delivery.
- The three-day celebration increased community awareness of government services and sector activities, while functioning as a careers-style information event for schools and students. Torba training providers including Ituani VSC, Vetimboso VTC, Losalava TVET in Schools, and Fisheryoung RTC attended the celebrations.
- These training providers distributed information materials and delivered practical demonstrations of training units to engage students and the wider public to encourage young people to pursue vocational and skills-based education pathways
- Several national Tertiary Education Directorate officers also presented at Torba PSC Day, providing information on scholarships and other post-school education and training (PSET) opportunities available nationally.
- Interactive quizzes were conducted, with winners receiving trade-related prizes, further reinforcing awareness of vocational pathways. The Tertiary and Education sector was awarded second prize for best display, reflecting the quality and impact of their engagement.



Image 11: Trainees from Vetimboso VTC Certificate I in Building Construction demonstrated building marking and setting-out techniques to students of Losalava Junior Secondary schools during PSC Day celebrations.

LESSONS LEARNED AND ACTIONS

LESSON 1: End of phase arrangements impacted on the implementation timeframe and resourcing available for Torba Skills Centre in 2025. This impacted on the ability to complete planned activities and emerging opportunities.

NEXT STEPS:

- Ensure planning and activity scheduling are aligned with available timeframes and approved budgets.
- Strengthen and formalise co-investment arrangements with partners to support implementation

LESSON 2: Torba Skills Centre continues to face challenges in recruiting and deploying appropriately skilled human resources, particularly local coaches and trainers.

NEXT STEPS:

- Continue to strengthen a provincial pool of coaches across priority trades to strengthen delivery capacity and reduce reliance on external personnel.
- Work with TED and partners to organise accredited qualification training for potential candidates within the provinces to build a pool of locally qualified coaches and trainers
- Develop internship programs for school leavers across relevant sector departments to support skills development and workforce readiness.

LESSON 3: Air Vanuatu flight cancellations and the lack of regular flight schedules continue to pose a significant challenge to activity delivery and client access to markets in Torba Province.

NEXT STEPS:

- Continue to advocate with the Provincial Government for more regular and reliable flight scheduling to Torba Province.
- Where appropriate and safe, ships and boats will be utilised as alternative transport options to support activity delivery and coach mobility within Torba Province.
- Continue to identify and utilise provincially based coaches to reduce reliance on air travel.
- Work with partners, both government and donor, to share the cost of chartering flights or ships, such as Helper-1, for coaches and staff during critical activity implementation periods.

PARTICIPATION IN SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

SECTOR	WOMEN	MEN	TOTAL	PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES
Skills for Agribusiness	45	33	20	7 (5 women and 2 men)
Provincial Leadership & Governance	14	4	18	0
Better Balance	23	0	23	1 women
TOTAL	82	37	119	8 (6 women and 2 men)

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