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Using MEL to support systemic reform: the case of Vanuatu Skills Partnership

“weaving evaluation into the whole”



What we do

- The Vanuatu Skills Partnership supports the Government of Vanuatu to improve **decentralised service delivery** through reform of the **national skills system**, resulting in **economic, social and environmental** benefits.
- The Partnership works to **better link** 'skills demand' with quality 'skills supply' to **upskill our people** in priority areas while at the same time facilitating **access to markets**.
- The Partnership prioritises **leadership development**, **Melanesian values** and **inclusion** in all its work, with a focus on the participation of people disadvantaged by geography, gender, and disability.

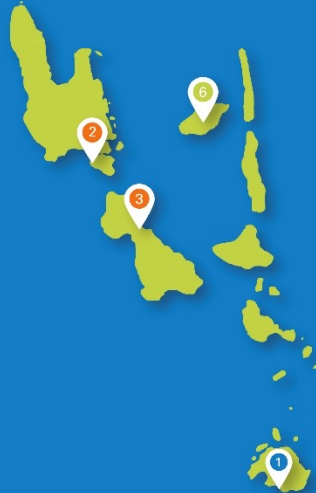


A DECENTRALISED SKILLS DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

LOCATIONS

- 1 NATIONAL COORDINATION OFFICE
- 2 SANMA SKILLS CENTRE
- 3 MALAMPA SKILLS CENTRE
- 4 TORBA SKILLS CENTRE
- 5 TAFEA SKILLS CENTRE
- 6 AMBAE RECOVERY PROJECT OFFICE

● = Ministry of Education and Training Skills Centres



WORKSTREAMS

-  SKILLS FOR AGRIBUSINESS
-  SKILLS FOR CREATIVE INDUSTRIES
-  SKILLS FOR CONSTRUCTION
-  SKILLS FOR HEALTH
-  SKILLS FOR TOURISM
-  TRAINING PROVIDER SUPPORT

Operating Context

- While there are technical/skills gaps in Vanuatu, **political and bureaucratic structures and behaviours are the main blockers** to reform in Vanuatu – lack of effective leadership, governance, and coordination.
- Informal **power dynamics and relationships** are at the heart of what significant, sustainable changes can take place and how.
- However, many aid donor programs operate separately **outside of the complexity of this local political economy**.
- These conventional programs have MEL systems which are highly projectised; MEL processes and products **service primarily the project and the donor**, rather than supporting local drivers of reform.

What have we achieved?

- Complete **restructure** of the education system:
 - Ministry of Education became the **Ministry of Education and Training**.
 - The provincial 'Skills Centres' established by the Partnership were **integrated into the GoV system** (first-time ever decentralised skill delivery outside of the capitals).
 - Staff in these Centres employed under the national **Public Service Commission**.
 - Training providers delivering **accredited training in flexible ways** across the country.
- Partnership's funding mechanism expanded into National Skills Development Fund with **annual contributions made by government** departments.

What have we achieved?

- **Transformation of provincial economies** – provincial tourism and handicraft sectors are now established, including market access hubs (handicraft hubs, tourism booking centres); new models of integrated agriculture and food security (F2S/F2H, Seed Bank).
- Nationally recognised as the **key service delivery reform mechanism** for the government at the provincial level (PMO, DLA) – and increasingly, emergency coordination centres
- Nationally and regionally recognised as best practice in **changing norms in disability inclusion and gender equality**.

Features of the way we work

Four 'stamba' principles:

1. **Our Work as Mission – more than a 'job'**
 - aligned with our values, beliefs and intrinsic motivation for change
2. **Local Leadership**
 - builds on strong coalition of locally-led reformists
3. **Adaptive Management**
 - being flexible and adaptive to the evolving context
4. **Thinking and Working Politically**
 - savvily navigate relationships and 'under the iceberg' blockers/enablers to build momentum for change

‘Stamba’ principles applied to MEL and the opportunities this has created

1. Shift to ‘Quality Systems’ – embedded and valued within the Partnership’s and its government partners’ practice



‘Stamba’ principles applied to MEL and the opportunities this has created

2. Local leadership of the Quality Systems team, supported by internationals

- relationships with other Partnership staff, and with GOV partners, are led and owned by the local team
- local leadership builds trust and legitimacy



‘Stamba’ principles applied to MEL and the opportunities this has created

3. MEL supports, rather than drives decision-making, providing greater freedom for adapting to changes in the context

- Flexibility to change plans based on evolving context
- Emphasis on learning and continuous improvement



‘Stamba’ principles applied to MEL and the opportunities this has created

4. MEL now a **contributor** in its own right to the Partnership’s objectives

- MEL being used to influence reform within GOV partners and their systems



The 'support' provided by internationals and the managing contractor

- Support contractor model – embraced by the local team and by DFAT
 - Non-traditional approach to program delivery and risk management, including MEL
- Working relationships premised on equality; technical capacity vs local knowledge and relationships working hand-in-hand
 - The unique skills and abilities of each member of the Partnership are recognised and valued
- Finding the sweet spot between the technical and the practical, how much is enough?



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VANUATU
**SKILLS
PARTNERSHIP** 

'Partnerships for Recovery Yumi Evriwan Tugeta'

<https://youtu.be/jgnF1ulff10>



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Tank yu tumas!
Thank you!