




Executive Summary

Civil Society Spotlight Report on the SDG 4 Implementation Status in Vanuatu

COUNTRY FACTS AND FIGURES	
	
TOTAL POPULATION:	276,244 (UNESCO, 2017)
POPULATION AGED 14 YEARS AND YOUNGER:	100,000 (36%) (UNESCO, 2017)
GNI PER CAPITA:	US\$ 2,920 (World Bank, 2017)
INCOME GROUP:	Lower Middle Income Status (World Bank, 2018)
HDI VALUE AND RANK:	0.603, 138 out of 189 (UNDP, 2017)
OUT OF SCHOOL:	5,103 CHILDREN 2,203 FEMALE AND 2,900 MALE (UNESCO, 2015) 180 ADOLESCENTS 69 FEMALE AND 111 MALE (UNESCO, 2015)
Literacy Rate (15-24 years):	95.3% Female 95.6%; Male 95.09% (UNESCO, 2014)
Literacy Rate (15 years and older):	84.7% Female 83.2%; Male 86.18% (UNESCO, 2014)
EDUCATION EXPENDITURE:	4.7% of the GDP and 11.78% of the total expenditure (UNESCO, 2017) 7.9% of the GDP (Ministry of Education and Training, 2017) 22.3% of the total budget (2018)

Policy and Planning and Sustainable Development Goal 4

Vanuatu's commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is reflected in the government's National Sustainable Development Plan (NSDP), 'Vanuatu 2030 The People's Plan,' that was launched in 2016.

SDG 4 is directly aligned to the NSDP under the Society Pillar 2 (SOC 2): "An inclusive, equitable and quality education system with life-long learning for all." It is the only national development goal that is aligned with SDG 4 in the NSDP's Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. However, indicators for SOC 2 are limited in scope, with education priorities only becoming clearer when viewing planning and policies across the whole education sector.

Civil Society Engagement in SDG Implementation and Monitoring

In general, Vanuatu lacks any mechanism for the government and civil society to share information and monitor development progress. There is currently no civil society organisation (CSO) platform on the SDGs nationally, and links to Pacific-wide SDG networks are limited. This report represents a first for the civil society advocacy on the SDG 4 rollout and implementation.

Civil society has been consulted by the government at various times during the development of the NSDP, including during the consultations undertaken to design the plan, review the draft, and design its monitoring and evaluation framework.

Recently, CSOs were invited to participate in an initial workshop to provide input into the content and format of the Voluntary National Review (VNR) 2019.

The next step entails designing mechanisms that will enable civil society to further contribute and review the report draft have not yet materialised. On a positive note, Kolisen Blong Leftemap Edukesen (KoBLE) has been invited as a permanent member of the Local Education Group (LEG).

Vanuatu's Progress on SDG 4 Planning and Implementation

The national budget statements consistently highlight access to quality education as one of the top three priorities of the government. Indeed, education is afforded the highest portion of the National Budget. However, most of the education budget is spent on payroll and administrative support.

The government has adopted a small number of indicators at the national level that presents a monitoring framework that is different from the SDG 4 indicator framework and also the selected regional indicators of the Pacific SDG Taskforce.¹ Indicators were primarily developed at the national level. The indicators listed provide a good starting point, but they are far too few and do not effectively measure issues of equity, gender, and ethnicity. Furthermore, the targets lack ambition, with some simply restating the current poor levels. These targets are in urgent need of review by the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET). See below:

NSDP SOC 2 Policy Objectives	NSDP SOC 2 Indicators	NSDP SOC 2 Targets (2030)
2.1 Ensure every child, regardless of gender, location, educational needs or circumstances has access to the education system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of age 6 in Yr. 1 who attended kindergarten Survival rates Yrs. 1 - 6 Survival rates Yrs.1 - 13 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 60% of age 6 in Yr. 1 attended kindergarten 85% survival rate Yrs.1-6 30% survival rate Yrs.1-13
2.2 Build trust in the education system through improved performance management systems, teacher training, and the reliable delivery of quality services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of schools demonstrating effective implementation and management of school grants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% eligible schools received their grants
2.3 Formalise early childhood education and lifelong learning opportunities within the education system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of students meeting literacy and numeracy standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anglo Yr. 4: Literacy 30%, Numeracy 40%; Yr. 6: Literacy 35%, Numeracy 50% Franco Yr.4: Literacy 15%, Numeracy 45%; Yr. 6: Literacy 25%, Numeracy 50%
2.4 Increase higher education opportunities, including technical and vocational training and skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of technical and vocational schools that are certified and registered under the Vanuatu Qualifications Authority to operate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 80% (60) technical, vocational and post-schools to be certified and registered

The boxes below highlight the gaps in policy and implementation priorities:

Key priorities of Vanuatu's Education Sector:
Providing access to basic education including early childhood, primary and secondary education through fee subsidies (SDG4 Target 4.1 and 4.2)
Improving the quality of education primarily through curriculum reform and teacher training and development (SDG4 Targets 4.1 and 4.c)
Increasing opportunities for life-long learning through literacy and post-school education (SDG4 Targets 4.3, 4.6 (partially) and 4.b)

SDG4 target areas not prioritized, or demonstrating limited progress:
4.4: Decent Skills for Work
4.5: Gender and Inclusion
4.6: Youth and Adult Literacy
4.7: Education for Sustainable Development
4.a: Learning Environments

The greatest progress to date has been the improved commitment to the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) through the expansion of centres, recruitment of teachers, and increased financial support. These developments led to an unprecedented increase in the enrolment rates for children entering ECCE, from 8,800 in 2016 to 14,921 in 2017. At the same time, increased teacher recruitment and certification has resulted in a favourable drop in the student-teacher ratio, from 28:1 in 2016 to 12:1 in 2018.

Primary and secondary education sub-sectors up to year 10 have also benefited from government and donor support to finance tuition fees via school grants as part of its free schooling commitment. Schools receive a fixed amount per student based on the total number of students enrolled. Unfortunately, despite significant financial commitments and good policy intentions, financial barriers to access education remain as schools continue to request a "parents' contribution fee" to be paid.

MoET joined with stakeholders to recently launch the Post School Education and Training Policy. This supports institutions and training providers to become accredited and provide continuing education opportunities for school graduates, youth, and adults in Vanuatu. The Australian Government continues to support the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) sector. The Vanuatu Skills Partnership program provides skills-building opportunities and services to Vanuatu citizens, with a strong focus on the inclusion of women, disadvantaged communities, and persons with disabilities.

¹ The Pacific SDG Taskforce is an inclusive regional mechanism established to coordinate regional efforts in implementing the directives of leaders on sustainable development. It was set up to develop the Pacific Roadmap for Sustainable Development and has the overall coordinating responsibility for its implementation.



■ Participants of the Youth-led Action Research (YAR) held in Port Vila in May 2019

Conclusion and Recommendations

The Government of Vanuatu aligns the direction set for the education and training sectors with the central tenets of SDG 4, namely equity, inclusivity, and quality. Although there are a number of other areas that require attention, whether through improved policies, increased resources, or rationalisation of existing sources, the most critical issues that Vanuatu must address to ensure that no one is left behind are as follows:

1. Access to Education (Financial)

One of the chief barriers to access education in Vanuatu is the lack of financial resources. A majority (75%) of the population lives in rural and remote areas of the archipelago and lead largely subsistence-based lifestyles. The ability of families to meet the demands of school fees and other schooling costs in order for their children to attend school is limited. While there is a high enrolment rate at the primary level (91.7% net enrolment ratio), the low enrolment rate at the secondary level is alarming (42.4% net enrolment rate ratio). This clearly indicates the high dropout rates between levels. Government grants to schools for students up to Year 10 alleviate some pressure. However, school councils set additional parents' contribution fees and non-payers are often excluded. This is directly in conflict with the government's duty to provide education for all children.

Given the diverse and special learning needs of a (as yet unknown) proportion of children, including children

with disabilities, and the lack of specific teaching materials and aids, it is worth pointing out that government grants are inadequate for meeting the level of support required to ensure that children with disabilities are well-supported and are learning effectively in mainstream classes.

The report recommends to:

- Ensure that basic education is free and of good quality for all children to be able to access and benefit from. This means that no parents' contributions should be imposed by schools. The level of financial support provided to schools thus needs to be reviewed.
- Provide additional school grants per student to schools and hire more special needs teachers and assistants to respond to the needs of children with disabilities.

2. Educational Pathways and Lifelong Learning

The government's increased investment in the Early Childhood sector promotes a strong foundation for children's lifelong learning. However, insufficient attention is paid to secondary, tertiary, and technical and vocational education, which contributes to high dropout and pushout rates and the lack of opportunity for continuing education and skills development to support productive livelihoods in youth and adulthood. The development of a Post-School Education and



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Training policy will hopefully improve this sector and strengthen the pathway between education and work, informed by the actual demands of the informal and formal job markets.

The report recommends to:

- Conduct a nation-wide literacy assessment of youth and adults to determine the need for literacy and educational programmes.
- Develop quality Language, Literacy and Numeracy (LLN) programmes for the youth and adults and bridge programmes to access PSET providers.
- Expand the TVET Program (Vanuatu Skills Partnership) in both scale and scope and provide additional skills development programmes.
- Strengthen the link between education and the workforce to address the skills mismatch, adjust learning modalities and curricula as necessary, and ensure that education supports sustainable livelihoods in urban and rural communities.

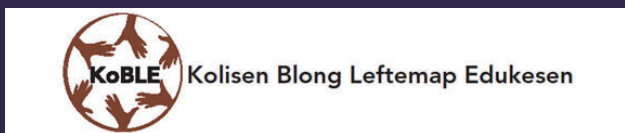
3. Inclusive Education

There is limited data on children with disabilities and a lack of understanding of their special learning needs. As a result, relevant and adequate teaching materials and aids have not been developed or distributed to schools. It is

therefore unknown how much children with disabilities who are currently enrolled and participating in schools are actually learning or achieving compared to their peers. Unfortunately, only a limited number of inclusive education initiatives have been established, and the government and its donors are not currently providing sufficient and well-allocated budgetary support to address and mainstream inclusivity. Like in many countries, civil society is particularly active in this space and partnerships with them will likely be critical in vastly improving outcomes for children with disabilities.

The report recommends to:

- Increase the budget and staffing of the Inclusive Education Unit to effectively implement the Inclusive Education Policy.
- Conduct research to determine the actual number of children and adults with disabilities and special needs, and to identify their needs. This will help ensure that those who are left behind have equal opportunities to access quality education.
- Provide teachers with practical in-service inclusive education courses to better equip them with the knowledge and techniques required to educate students from various backgrounds.
- Investigate pilot inclusive education initiatives for potential replication in Vanuatu contexts. •



KOLISEN BLONG LEFTEMAP EDUKESAN

Handicraft Market N2 Area, PO Box 6463, Port Vila, Vanuatu
Email: koble.vanuatu@gmail.com

The Kolisen Blong Leftemap Edukesen (KoBLE) is a national coalition of civil society organisations with the aim of engaging the Government of Vanuatu and other stakeholders on national education policy, to help ensure that all ni-Vanuatu have access to good quality and inclusive publicly provided education.



Asia South Pacific Association
for Basic and Adult Education
Learning Beyond Boundaries

ASIA SOUTH PACIFIC ASSOCIATION FOR BASIC AND ADULT EDUCATION (ASPBAE) is a regional association of more than 200 organisations and individuals working towards promoting quality education for all and transformative and liberating, lifelong adult education and learning.

Unit 106 Sterten Place Condominium
116 Maginhawa Street, Teachers Village East, Diliman
Quezon City 1101, Philippines

Tel/Fax: 63 2 441 4594
Email: aspbae@gmail.com | Website: www.aspbae.org