

**VESP**

**VANUATU EDUCATION  
SUPPORT PROGRAM**

## **VAESP II 2023 Annual Report**

February 2024

Reviewed June 2024



Vanuatu Education Support Program is managed by Tetra Tech International Development,  
on behalf of the Australian Government

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## Acronyms

AAV	Australian Awards Vanuatu
ARTTLe	Assessment Resource Tool for Teaching and Learning
CDU	Curriculum Development Unit
CIP	Curriculum Improvement Plan
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease of 2019
DFAT	Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
EAU	Examination and Assessment Unit
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
EoPO	End of Program Outcome
ESD	Education Services Directorate
GEDSI	Gender, Equity, Disability and Social Inclusion
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IE	Inclusive Education
IO	Intermediate Outcome
IT	Information Technology
JSR	Joint Sector Review
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MIS	Model Inclusion School
MERL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, and Learning
MEO	Mobile ECCE Officers
MoET	Ministry of Education and Training
MQS	Minimum Quality Standards
NER	Net Enrolment Rate
NSDP	National Sustainable Development Plan
NTDP	National Teacher Development Plan
OV	Open Vanuatu Education Management Information System
PEO	Principal Education Officer
PILNA	Pacific Island Literacy and Numeracy Assessment
PSET	Post Secondary Education & Training
PSP	Parent Support Program
PPU	Policy and Planning Unit
SBM	School-Based Management
SMT	Senior Management Team
SO	Short-term Outcome

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SSP	School Strategic Plan
TC	Tropical Cyclone
TSC	Teaching Service Commission
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VANSTA	Vanuatu National Standardised Test of Achievement
VAESP	Vanuatu Australia Education Support Program
VETSS	Vanuatu Education and Training Sector Strategy
VNCS	Vanuatu National Curriculum Statement

# Executive summary

## VAESP overview

Vanuatu Australia Education Support Program (VAESP) is a long-term investment funded by the Australian Government and implemented in partnership with the Government of Vanuatu through the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET). The primary goal of VAESP is to help ensure MoET achieves its goal of improving education access, quality and management, as detailed in the Vanuatu Education and Training Sector Strategy (VETSS) and operationalised through MoET's Corporate Plan. In January 2019, VAESP entered its second phase after successfully implementing Phase I (2013–18). VAESP II will continue until 2026. VAESP II's overarching goals are to provide support to the Education and Training Sector in three key areas outlined below:

- Increase **equitable access** to education for all children;
- Improve the **quality of education** in Vanuatu; and
- Improve and **strengthen management** of the education system in Vanuatu.

In 2023, VAESP demonstrated the effectiveness of a **flexible and adaptable way of working** when Vanuatu was hit with three tropical cyclones – Category 5 Tropical Cyclones (TC) Kevin and Judy in February as well as Category 4 TC Lola in October. Since the Government of Vanuatu (GoV) declared two **states of emergencies**, MoET's planned priorities and activities were put on hold and pivoted to the emergency response. VAESP supported MoET's emergency response, including conducting rapid reviews of primary schools, analysing data, and producing communications and media for disaster response and management messaging. Post-disaster, VAESP worked with MoET to strengthen its resilience to such disasters in the future through review of plans for school infrastructure, improving communication capacity, and disaster recovery.

This situation meant that program expenditure was less than expected, at 5.3 million (within the budget ceiling of 6.5 million). Given the change in priorities, this meant that access and management expenditure was higher than planned, while activities requiring expenditure within the quality pillar was reduced. The emergency response, infrastructure planning and communication, all sit within the access pillar. Management expenditure was significant with the Joint Sector Review and the implementation of VSAT in Malampa, Penama and Torba.

In terms of total Program Activity expenditure in 2023, the budget allocations compared to the actual expenditure by the respective pillars can be seen in the table below. Quality activities shifted to supporting the development of the three-year curriculum improvement plan and the literacy strategy. The 'quality' activities were heavily labour intensive, however, did not require significant program expenditure. The NZ-funded Junior Secondary School activity progressed, which included the rollout of curriculum training of Year 7 teachers across the country at the start of the year, and at the end, Year 8, the program supported accordingly. This absorbed much of the resource capacity of the Curriculum Development Unit during the period of operations (in-between the states of emergencies).

Table 1: Planned allocation and actual expenditure by VAESP pillars

Pillars	Planned Allocation (%)	Actual Expenditure (%)	Variance (%)
Access	19	27	8
Quality	58	28	(30)
Management	23	45	22

Another key factor for the postponement on certain activities within the quality pillar included the changing policies and priorities within the GoV. In the first quarter of 2023, the Government

announced that Bislama would not be used in schools. This was a highly political issue, which the program needed to monitor closely. It affected a number of planned curriculum development activities including the translation of curriculum-related teaching and learning resources. Challenges involving the Teaching Service Commission, also meant that the further development of the Teacher Register system and the review of teachers management policies were put on hold.

For sub-activities that have been delayed, VAESP has worked with the respective MoET Directorates and Units to ensure activities are included and approved for MoET implementation in 2024.

Another key event that has had ongoing implications in the management pillar, is the Joint Education Sector Review (JSR) which was conducted mid-2023. VAESP is working with MoET to address the recommendations of the JSR, including updating its results framework and developing an M&E plan for MoET.

## **Progress report**

### **Pillar 1: Access**

VAESP continues to work alongside the MoET in improving school-aged children's access to schools. Analysis of recent data indicates that the retention of students in schools remains a key challenge and that government-run schools are more successful in retaining students than others. There is also a positive trend in the number of students progressing from one Year to the next across the grades. All years have observed improved progression rates.

VAESP is also working with the ECCE Unit on the basis that improved ECCE learning will improve students' school readiness. Analysis of the Open VEMIS (OV) data indicates a positive correlation between attending kindergarten and school retention in Vanuatu.

In 2023, VAESP sub-activities within Pillar 1 sought to strengthen inclusive education practices in schools, enhance support for education amongst community members and caregivers, strengthen MoET's response and resilience to disasters and ensure MoET has access to proactive school infrastructure plans. VAESP contributed to the drafting and review of the Inclusive Education (IE) Policy and the roll-out of IE resources for Model Inclusion Schools (MIS) and implemented training workshops through the Parent Support Program and Mama's Literacy Program. Surveys conducted with participants from these workshops indicate that these initiatives have been effective in leading to change. Parents' and caregivers' capabilities to support early childhood learning and care in the home has increased. Teachers are also finding the IE resources useful in identifying children with a disability as well as in creating a supportive environment for these students and their respective parents.

The Emergency Response Fund as activated three times in this reporting period in response to the three tropical cyclones. VAESP worked with MoET to assess and respond to the needs of the sector immediately after the disasters and into the recovery and rehabilitation phases. VAESP is also supporting MoET in strengthening its resilience against future disasters, especially through the review of disaster recovery plans and Infrastructure Guidelines for Primary Schools.

### **Pillar 2: Quality**

In 2023, VAESP Pillar 2 consisted of 16 sub-activities. However, two sub-activities were amalgamated into sub-activity 2.2.6 in the first quarter (see Footnote 1) and four sub-activities were postponed. Therefore, ten sub-activities were implemented in 2023.

VAESP's sub-activities for Pillar 2 in 2023 sought to improve the quality of education by providing teachers with the skills and knowledge they need to implement the curriculum and associated principles of teaching, learning, and assessment. Key achievements in this reporting period include supporting the development of the Curriculum Improvement Program (CIP) and its training packages

for teachers and school leaders across Years 1 to 8<sup>1</sup>. Based on findings from the Curriculum Improvement Monitoring Study (CIMS) co-developed by VAESP and MoET, 46% of 39 school leaders surveyed reported implementing the new curriculum. Similarly, 46% of school leaders responded that they are implementing the new curriculum for most subjects. ECCE teachers are also demonstrating greater awareness of the revised ECCE curriculum, according to post-training surveys and feedback. VAESP's work with MoET is also focusing on strengthening the monitoring and evaluation of curriculum implementation, and other areas of support. The VAESP team is strengthening the rigour of the M&E system to ensure evidence of impact is clear. This includes, where possible, adopting mechanisms to triangulate self-reported data with more objective data in our reporting.

Student performance fell between 2019 and 2021, indicating an ongoing need to strengthen quality education in Vanuatu. A VAESP-supported study identified and quantified some of the factors that have driven these results down, focusing on the impact of COVID-19 and the impacts of Tropical Cyclone Harold<sup>2</sup>. Data on quality also indicate that there is an inequality in quality and results in the type of school children attend. Church-led schools assisted by the government are doing well in that they have consistently lower shares of students not meeting Vanuatu Standardised Test of Achievement's (VANSTA) minimum standards than government schools, but lower levels of retention. While the reasons for this are not clear, it suggests potential systemic inequities. This difference is particularly pronounced in Francophone schools. On average, there is a 10-percentage point difference between Government and Government-assisted schools. Data also shows that boys perform significantly worse in achieving minimum standards compared to girls across the year levels, school types, and language of instruction. These differences indicate potential sources of inequity. Discussions are underway to undertake a more comprehensive analysis of the Ni-Vanuatu education landscape. This will provide more evidence on these potential sources of inequity and inform VAESP future support.

These insights have informed VAESP's 2024 Annual Plan and VAESP will continue to work in collaboration with the MoET to support the improvement of quality education in Vanuatu.

### **Pillar 3: Management**

The Management Pillar consisted of 15 sub-activities in 2023 with one sub-activity postponed.

The Management Pillar and its associated Activity Areas aim to support MoET to strengthen the education sector by improving engagement, planning and collaboration between provinces and the central government, with better communications networks and a stronger evidence base and systems for decision-making.

In 2023, VAESP strengthened the Open Vanuatu Education Management Information System (also called OV or Open VEMIS) system and its usage by working with school principals and provincial PEOs to build their capacity in data entry. VAESP also reviewed the first draft of the OV Policy. VAESP is achieving outcomes as the OV is currently used by all MoET Directorates and MoET staff refer to OV data on a daily basis. The use of the OV system across Vanuatu is likely to increase as Information Communications Technology (ICT) capabilities and capacity is increased at the school and provincial level. As it is now, it is unclear the extent of schools with ICT systems. VAESP and MoET are currently conducting an ICT in Schools Survey to understand the extent of ICT usage in schools. The survey is expected to be completed in 2024.

VAESP is seeing outcomes in the increase of schools using strategic plans. Based on data collected through MoET's provincial education offices in four provinces, more than 75% of schools now have developed school strategic plans (SSP). PEOs have created plans to track the development of SSPs

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<sup>1</sup> VAESP has provided considerable support to the MFAT-funded Vanuatu Junior Secondary Curriculum Project.

<sup>2</sup> MoET, "Assessing the Impact of COVID-19 on Education in Vanuatu", May 2023.

through checklists and OV data as SSPs are uploaded into OV. They are monitoring SSP development by providing feedback and supporting school leaders in finalising their plans.

## **Gender, Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion**

VAESP continues to work with MoET to strengthen attention to gender equality, disability equity and social inclusion, to ensure all children have access to education, to strengthen education quality and contribute to greater equality and inclusion overall. In 2023, VAESP conducted both mainstreamed and targeted activities. VAESP also updated the program's GEDSI Strategy.

VAESP continued to make strong progress to improve inclusive education for children with disabilities in Vanuatu through the development and piloting of six Inclusive Education resources within 45 Model Inclusion Schools. As reported under the Access Pillar, training was conducted, and the resources were positively received. They are already leading to change. These resources are now with CDU.

VAESP is ensuring men are engaged in parenting and GEDSI programs. While it has proven difficult for schools to engage high numbers of male parents in training, promoting positive parenting through the ECCE Parent Support Program provided positive parenting messages that reached 645 female and 419 male parents and carers. This is a strong result overall, but activity coordinators reported the challenge of engaging men, and VAESP and MoET recognised the need to address this directly. VAESP is also supporting the Shefa Provincial Women in Education Leadership Network members, together with 9 male principals and church leaders, to learn the key messages from Parent Support Program resources. They now can promote these messages to other male parents.

Finally, the Disability Inclusive Education Policy was drafted with VAESP support. VAESP provided feedback on the draft policy to MoET and the external advisor coordinating the review. This policy will facilitate stronger resourcing and implementation of inclusive education approaches across Vanuatu schools.

## **Sustainability**

As an education program that is embedded within MoET, VAESP contributes to the sustainability of outcomes by ensuring alignment with GoV priorities, staffing, timelines and activities.

VAESP promotes sustainability through its strategy of matching experienced national coordinators and specialists with international technical advisers. This creates a powerful blend of global technical expertise and local knowledge. This combination offers MoET's activity managers and decision makers the confidence to implement and direct their activities.

Secondly, VAESP always considers the fiscal impact of activities and supports MoET with mentoring and analysis of the fiscal landscape. VAESP's work with MoET's Directorate of Finance and Administration and regular Context Analysis enable sector stakeholders to gauge Ministry's management capabilities and fiscal capacity, to inform planning for sustainability.

With contributions from VAESP, MoET has developed capacity within the ministry and education provincial offices and among teachers in inclusive education, ECCE, school leadership, women's leadership in education, ICT and financial management, statistical data collection and analysis. VAESP will continue to support MoET to develop key capabilities through resources, technical support, training, and financial support.

All VAESP plans and activities aim to feed into, support and enhance local systems and MoET leadership, including supporting professional development of government staff. Pillar 3 Management explicitly targets strengthening MoET capacity to manage an efficient and evidence-based education system, so that improvements made through the Access and Quality Pillar Activity Areas are recognised and can be scaled nationally.

## **Lessons learned**

**Prepare contingencies to ensure alternative modes of training delivery can happen if flights do not occur as expected.** The unreliability of Vanuatu's aviation services, whether domestic or international flights, is a commonly known challenge. To manage these challenges, VAESP has begun and will continue to plan for contingency arrangements, working closely with MoET and provincial education offices, to ensure training workshops can continue. This may mean considering online alternatives and how this might impact the development of training content. The investments VAESP is making in enhancing ICT capacity within the schools and at the provincial level will support these efforts as well.

**Continue building MoET resilience and post-disaster response to natural disasters.** Natural disasters are a frequent occurrence. Learning from the tropical cyclones that occurred in 2023 and its impact on the education sector in Vanuatu, VAESP is working closely with MoET to strengthen the Ministry's response capacity.

**There is a need for an education sector-wide results and M&E framework.** The Joint Education Sector Review (JSR) was held in June 2023 and marked a planning milestone for the Vanuatu education sector. Findings from the JSR revealed a gap in sector monitoring because of the lack of a common sector results framework. VAESP supported MoET in developing the results framework in 2023. In 2024, VAESP will work with the PPU to conclude the results framework and develop the M&E Plan in alignment with the MoET Corporate Plan.

**Further strengthen VAESP monitoring and reflection processes.** Through consultations with MoET counterparts and VAESP colleagues, we have identified opportunities for improvement where joint M&E processes can be further strengthened. In 2024, VAESP will initiate a mapping of all data collection tools, including for related activities in MoET, to assess and reduce duplication, enhance efficiency, and improve the quality of reporting. VAESP will also strengthen its planning and consultation processes by holding two Pause and Reflect (PAR) session this year. This is particularly important as VAESP Phase II enters its 6th year of implementation, and it is only three years away from its completion, on December 2026.

**Continue to strengthen cyber security awareness and systems in VAESP.** Since the last cyber-attacks on VAESP and the Government of Vanuatu, VAESP has consistently strengthened its security systems, including training staff on cyber security awareness. In 2024, VAESP will continue to deliver cyber security training and strengthen its online systems. Considering the expected expansion of online services for teaching and learning and school-based management, VAESP will also focus its support on ensuring MoET's systems are safe from cyber-attacks.

**Continue to expand access to teacher training opportunities for teachers.** Following feedback from teachers and principals, VAESP and MoET encourage schools to nominate more than one teacher from each school selected to undergo training and for Principals to also attend these trainings. This addresses three issues. Firstly, it ensures the likelihood that new practices remains in the school, if the trained teacher is redeployed. Secondly, it also encourages the adoption of the new practice, as teachers within the school can support each other throughout this process and can also count on the support of their managers.

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 VAESP overview

The Vanuatu Education Support Program (VAESP) is a long-term investment funded by the Australian Government and implemented in partnership with the Government of Vanuatu through the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET). VAESP's primary aim is to help MoET improve education access, quality, and management as detailed in the Vanuatu Education and Training Sector Strategy (VETSS) and made operational through MoET's Corporate Plan. In January 2019, VAESP entered its second phase after successfully implementing phase I (2013 – 2018) and will continue until December 2026. VAESP II's overarching goals are to provide support to the education and training sector in three key areas, referred to as pillars, as outlined below:

- Increasing **equitable access** to education for all children
- Improving the **quality of education** in Vanuatu
- Enhancing and **strengthening the management** of Vanuatu's education system

VAESP helps improve education outcomes by focusing on forging and strengthening partnerships between schools and communities (access), supporting the improvement of teaching and learning, including school leadership (quality) and overall management (institutional and provincial) support.

Figure 1 provides detailed information about MoET's three pillars.

## Access



## Quality



## Management



### Pillar 1: Access

#### End of Program Outcomes

EoPO1 More children (girls and boys, including those with disabilities) are enrolled and attend the right year of primary school at the right age.

- Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) of girls and boys enrolled in primary school at the right age
- NER Enrolment rate of girls and boys enrolled in primary school at the right age
- Primary repetition rate

### Pillar 2: Quality

#### End of Program Outcomes

EoPO2 Students achieve improved literacy and numeracy outcomes (measured at Years 4, 6 and 8).

- % Yr 4 literacy achieving the minimum standards (French)
- % Yr 4 literacy achieving the minimum standards (English)
- % Yr 6 literacy achieving the minimum standards (French)
- % Yr 6 literacy achieving the minimum standards (English)
- % Yr 4 numeracy achieving the minimum standards
- % Yr 6 numeracy achieving the minimum standards

### Pillar 3: Management

#### End of Program Outcomes

EoPO3 MoET has implemented devolution at provincial and school levels, strengthening reporting and data systems to inform planning, implementation and decision making to improve student learning outcomes.

- % of policies that are implemented
- % of schools using ITC systems
- % of MoET Directorates that use OV

Figure 1: VAESP overarching goals to provide support to the education and training sector in three key areas

## 1.2 VAESP's alignment with the Government of Vanuatu priorities

VAESP's support for MoET's three pillars contributes to the Vanuatu National Sustainable Development Plan's (NSDP) goal of achieving 'An inclusive, equitable and quality education system with life-long learning for all.' The alignment of VAESP's work with the strategic pillars in MoET's Education and Training Sector Strategy (VETSS) is further detailed below in the VAESP Program Logic in **Figure 3**. The table maps VAESP's activity areas against each of the three pillars. The 11 activity areas are supported by a set of sub-activities, as reported during the quarterly reporting cycle. **Figure 2** outlines how VAESP's End of Program Outcomes (EoPOs) contribute to the VETSS's strategic pillars of access, quality, and management.

VAESP identifies and plans its sub-activities jointly with MoET throughout the program's implementation. Through a collaborative partnership process, MoET and VAESP plan together all sub-activities. MoET manages the implementation of all VAESP sub-activities, while VAESP staff focus on providing financial, advisory, and technical support. VAESP sub-activities are planned annually and respond to priorities and key activities in MoET's Corporate Plan. As such, they are transient, with some lasting only a year. Any adjustments to VAESP's scope are agreed upon with MoET and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and endorsed by the VAESP Steering Committee.

In 2022, VAESP reviewed its Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting, and Learning (MERL) Framework. MoET worked closely with VAESP activity coordinators to develop monitoring tools and identify indicators and targets to enhance the monitoring and reporting of all activities. This review followed the extension of VAESP's contract until 2026 and MoET's Corporate Plan 2022-2026. The VAESP team, MoET and DFAT can now jointly review progress, discuss issues, address challenges, and identify successful approaches. A further review of the VAESP MERL Framework is scheduled for 2024. This review will take into consideration MoET's revised Results Framework, following the recommendation of the JSR.

VAESP's alignment in 2023 with the VETSS' strategic pillars was due to MoET and VAESP's shared commitment to open dialogue and building a strong partnership. The principles of open communication and collaboration were expressed in the 2018 Investment Design Document and remain valid today. That is why it is important to highlight that all VAESP-supported activities are MoET activities. In 2022 VAESP and MoET staff established logical linkages between VAESP's investments and the 2022-2026 Corporate Plan's Strategies, Programs and Key Activities. This approach enhances the sustainability of VAESP's contributions beyond the program's lifespan.

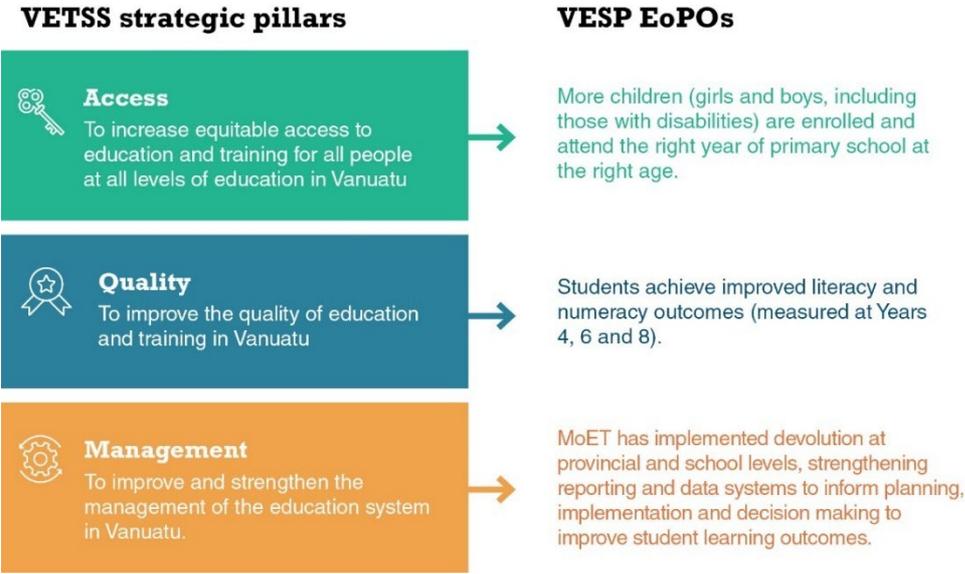


Figure 2: VAESP alignment with the VETSS strategic pillars

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Pillars	Activity areas	Short term outcomes (SOs) (1-2 yrs)	Intermediate outcomes (2-3 yrs)	EoPO (3-6 yrs)
 <p><b>ACCESS</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen inclusive education</li> <li>• Increase involvement of school communities</li> <li>• Improve school infrastructure</li> <li>• Strengthen response to disaster</li> </ul>	<p><b>SO 1.1</b> Teachers in Model Inclusion Schools are aware of inclusive education practices</p> <p><b>SO 1.2</b> Parents and communities are aware of positive approaches to support their children’s education</p> <p><b>SO 1.3</b> Schools are informed to respond adequately to emergencies</p>	<p><b>IO 1.1</b> Schools and communities provide safe and inclusive learning environments for all students</p> <p><b>IO 1.2</b> MoET has strengthened capacity to provide services in circumstances of emergency or disaster</p>	<p><b>EoPO1 ACCESS</b></p> <p>More children (girls and boys, including those with disabilities) are enrolled and attend the right year of primary school at the right age.</p>
 <p><b>QUALITY</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen teachers’ management</li> <li>• Strengthen teaching and learning</li> <li>• Strengthen assessment, monitoring and reporting</li> <li>• Strengthen curriculum materials</li> </ul>	<p><b>SO 2.1</b> Teachers and principals are demonstrating increased confidence to implement the national curriculum</p> <p><b>SO 2.2</b> Teacher and principals have access to curriculum resources, training, and support</p>	<p><b>IO 2.1</b> Teachers are applying the curriculum and associated principles of teaching, learning and assessment</p>	<p><b>EoPO2 QUALITY</b></p> <p>Improved student literacy and numeracy outcomes (measured at Years 4, 6 and 8).</p>
 <p><b>MANAGEMENT</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen data, information and knowledge generation</li> <li>• Strengthen policy direction, planning, management and accountability systems</li> <li>• Strengthen school management and leadership</li> </ul>	<p><b>SO 3.1</b> MoET, including Provincial Education Offices, have improved capacity to manage system performance data for evidence-based decision making and planning and supporting schools</p> <p><b>SO 3.2</b> School principals have increased their awareness and knowledge of school-based management and leadership practices</p>	<p><b>IO 3.1</b> MoET is monitoring systems and school performance and using data to inform strategic planning and school improvement</p> <p><b>IO 3.2</b> PEOs can guide principals in developing effective School Strategic Plans</p>	<p><b>EoPO3 MANAGEMENT</b></p> <p>MoET achieves devolution at provincial and school levels, strengthening reporting and data systems to inform planning, implementation and decision making to improve student learning outcomes</p>

Figure 3: VAESP program logic

## **1.3 VAESP cross-cutting priorities**

VAESP addresses GEDSI and Locally led development as cross-cutting issues that are fundamental to achieving progress across the three pillars. In particular, VAESP focuses on strengthening gender equality, disability equity, and social inclusion, and facilitating sustainable development across the education sector. VAESP uses a twin-track approach of (i) promoting awareness and professional capacity among staff and MoET to ensure cross-cutting efforts are mainstreamed and (ii) identifying and investing in activities that improve inclusion and the education sector's long-term capacity. These approaches align with DFAT's policies on locally led development and inclusion.

### **Gender equality, disability equity, and social inclusion**

A key priority for VAESP is promoting gender equality, disability equity, and social inclusion by leveraging Pillar 1 Access and its emphasis on promoting access to education for all children and investing significantly in strengthening skills and resources for inclusive education (IE). VAESP also recognises that gender equality among students and within the education sector supports education quality and results, ensuring that activities within Pillar 2 Quality and Pillar 3 Management also contribute to and benefit from positive changes in inclusion.

VAESP focused on maintaining its Gender Equality Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) mainstreaming approaches in 2023 to ensure GEDSI is at the forefront of VAESP's work. This included providing technical and funding support for the Inclusive Education (IE) resources and tools. These tools and resources have been trialled, evaluated, and handed over to CDU for consideration for a national roll out. A final report is due in 2024. The national roll-out will be contingent on the approval of the tools by the National Curriculum and Assessment Board. Once approved, the roll-out will start in Penama province. A train the trainer model will be utilised to support the implementation of the IE resources. Principals and three teachers each, Area Administrators and Provincial IE Coordinators will participate in the training on how to use the IE resources. A short instructional video will be produced on the IE resources to guide teachers on how to use them. Also, VAESP are currently working with MoET to align further inclusive education support to MoET's new Disability Inclusive Education and Training Policy. The policy and implementation plan are due to be finalised in the coming months. VAESP has provided support to various reviews of this policy and are aware that nomenclature for model inclusion schools may change. In response, VAESP are maintaining a broad commitment to supporting MoET with disability inclusion in schools. Complementary to this activity, is the benchmarking of Disability Inclusion practices. In 2024 VAESP will assist MoET in setting up a baseline and performance framework for adopting the Disability Inclusion practices recommended by MoET's draft policy. VAESP also enhanced its GEDSI mainstreaming in 2023, partnering with MoET to integrate GEDSI by:

- Ensuring all MoET policies identify GEDSI mainstreaming approaches in policy design and develop implementation plans
- Enhancing capacity and developing skills among GEDSI focal points and specialists to promote awareness and understanding of GEDSI
- Developing systems and processes that promote strong leadership, monitoring and evaluation and oversight of GEDSI mainstreaming.

The VAESP team includes a dedicated senior Gender, Equity, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) officer who works alongside a MoET counterpart to deliver and monitor both targeted and mainstreamed GEDSI activities. Further details on VAESP's GEDSI activities and mainstreaming approaches are outlined in Section 4 below.

### **Locally led and sustainable development**

Proven, effective professional development is crucial for sustaining VAESP-supported initiatives beyond the program's lifetime. VAESP facilitates MoET capacity development in various ways, including one-to-one mentoring, organising training and workshops, and supporting essential resources.

Initiatives aimed at strengthening MoET capacity to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate policies are embedded across the Management, Access and Quality pillars.

VAESP's team is comprised of technical advisers and locally engaged as well as experienced officers. They provide a powerful blend of global technical expertise and local knowledge to deliver contextualised approaches that are adaptive and flexible. This combination offers MoET activity managers and decision makers the confidence to implement and drive locally led solutions. A specific example is illustrated by VAESP's support to MoET's first Joint Education Sector Review (JSR), held in June, 2023. One of the the JSR's recommendations is the importance to review MoET's Results Framework. VAESP is assisting MoET to review its Results Framework, in time to the next JSR, planned to be held in 2025. This will enable MoET to progress its reporting from the current input-based approach to an outcomes-based approach.

VAESP's contribution to promote sustainable development is further detailed in Section 5 Sustainability.

## **1.4 VAESP context: Education sector in Vanuatu**

VAESP is proud to partner with the MoET and recognises that while significant challenges remain, the Vanuatu education system has made considerable progress. This section highlights several key aspects of the Vanuatu education sector according to the three pillars. These analyses all used existing Open Vanuatu Education Management Information System (OV) data or referenced existing studies, such as the Assessing the Impact of COVID-19 on Education in Vanuatu study or the Vanuatu Pacific Island Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (PILNA) report.

### **Access**

Despite modest improvements, retention of students in schools remains a key challenge, meaning that children are not going to school long enough to complete their education. The data indicates that government-run schools are more successful in retaining students than others, reflecting positively on the government education sector. The progression rates of government-assisted schools have increased at a much slower pace compared to government schools.

Analysing the 2015 cohort, the earliest possible cohort with quality data, we observe that only 25% of girls and 17% of boys have reached Year 9. Breaking the figures down by school type (government or government-assisted) indicates a difference of close to 10 percentage points between the sizes of the remaining 2015 cohort in Year 9 in 2023.

ECCE is widely recognised for its impacts in improving school retention and learning outcomes. An analysis of the OV data indicates a positive and significant correlation between attending kindergarten and school retention in Vanuatu. That means children attending kindergarten stay in school longer and experience a more predictable progression through their primary school years. The results also indicate that girls tend to benefit more from attending kindergarten than boys. This "kindergarten effect" is linked to larger cohorts of girls staying in school than boys. Further research is needed to confirm this correlation is not conflating other factors, such as parental motivation or family income. Still, the trend is positive and supports MoET's ongoing efforts to promote ECCE.

### **Quality**

Student performance fell between 2019 and 2021, indicating an ongoing need to strengthen quality education in Vanuatu. Factors driving these results may include the impact of COVID-19 and the natural disasters that frequently disrupt Vanuatu's education sector.

Data also indicates that the type of school children attend influences quality and results. The Government of Vanuatu funds its schools through a school grant program. Schools participating in this program are managed directly by the government or registered education authorities. The MoET study on the impact of COVID 19 estimates that inequalities and differences among schools in achieving minimum standards may be attributable to differences in school management approaches. While education authorities-managed schools assisted by the government have consistently higher rates of students meeting the Vanuatu National Standardised Test of Achievement's (VANSTA) minimum standards, they also have lower retention rates. This is particularly pronounced in Francophone

schools across years, school types, and language of instruction, boys perform significantly worse in achieving minimum standards compared to girls.

These observations provide important insights for MoET and VAESP in targeting investments and support within Pillar 2 Quality.

### Management

There are no widely agreed metrics to evaluate the management of an education system. However, some principles and frameworks are commonly used when evaluating the effectiveness of an education system. A commonly used metric refers to resource management. VAESP has supported extensive analyses of MoET's resource utilization.

In 2023, MoET and VAESP analysed the utilization of school grants by schools. The findings offer an opportunity to better understand how schools use their resources.

From 2018 to 2020 there were 13 'donor partners operating grant' payments recorded in the system, each with an average of VUV 88,700. This jumped to 229 payments in 2021 for 124 schools, each with an average income of VUV 402,800. The large increase in recorded payments is due to the impact of the Vanuatu-Australia School Community Grant (VASCG). However, there were 333 primary schools who inputted data in 2021, and all 333 schools should have received the VASCG, meaning that just over 200 schools did not input their data correctly into the system.

Average primary school expenditure rose by 33% from 2020 to 2021, rising to VUV 3.2 million, due to the (VASCG). There were particularly notable increases in development expenditure<sup>3</sup> (rising by 138% from an average of VUV 206,244 to VUV 489,871) and operations and maintenance (rising by 54% from an average of VUV 312,206 to VUV 480,041). Average expenditure on administration (24%) and education supplies (25%) also grew noticeably.

The study found also that urban schools have an income roughly five times higher than rural schools.

### Events that affected the education sector in 2023

During 2023, VAESP responded to unexpected events, including natural disasters and disruptions to air travel. There was also a level of political instability, including three changes of government, shifts in government policy related to language in schools, institutional instability regarding the management of teachers and changes in provincial staffing structures and resourcing. As a result, a number of VAESP activities were re-planned or postponed to 2024. Section 3 Progress provides details about these changes.

VAESP's Annual Plan was significantly affected by the twin cyclones (Judy and Kevin) in March, followed by Tropical Cyclone (TC) Lola in October 2023. VAESP reallocated resources to provide communications and technical support to MoET so contingency plans could be developed and implemented and schooling in affected areas could resume as quickly and safely as possible.

Borders reopened following COVID-19 in July 2022, but Air Vanuatu could not meet demand. This limited the number of flights available between provinces, and last-minute cancellations were not uncommon. Due to the flight limitations, training and data collection processes had to be adjusted. The program worked closely with MoET to identify solutions, including delivering some activities remotely. Some reports and surveys have been unavoidably delayed. However, VAESP will work with MoET to finalise the data collection in 2024. VAESP will assist MoET in developing additional data collection processes and guidelines to support staff in monitoring and reporting promptly to the Policy and Planning Unit (PPU) to strengthen MoET's reporting process.

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<sup>3</sup> According to the School Grants Code, Development means expenditures on "specific development project for the school(...)".

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During the first quarter, the government announced a ban on using Bislama in schools. This unanticipated decision affected a range of curriculum development activities, including teacher training initiatives and the development of curriculum resources.

Disputes regarding the respective responsibilities of the Teaching Service Commission (TSC) and the Ministry of Education and Training resulted in the suspension of activities aiming at strengthening the management of teachers.

Finally, it is also important to note that the political instability has impacted on many aspects of the program. The frequent change of ministers has delayed critical decisions.

### Anticipated effects on the next reporting period

In June 2023, Vanuatu held its first JSR for the education sector. The review assessed MoET's progress against its Corporate Plan, resulting in informed recommendations to update the plan. The Ministry will adjust its priorities and focus accordingly. VAESP is working with MoET to review its Results Framework. This activity was interrupted by TC Lola, in October, and it will resume in 2024.

Significant changes within Vanuatu's parliament in 2023 and the appointment of a new MoET minister may impact the government's 2024 budget. This could affect MoET's access to funds for implementing activities in quarter one and have consequences for planned targets. VAESP will continue to work with MoET to mitigate any impact on activity implementation and provide financial assistance where appropriate.

The issues between TSC and the Ministry are expected to be solved, as the court case is adjudicated and a new Education Act is concluded.

Another noteworthy event that presents an ongoing risk is the El Niño that was declared by the Vanuatu Meteorology and Geological Hazards Department (VMGD) in September 2023. Communities in Vanuatu are advised to prepare for potential drier conditions over the coming months, which could slow project activities.

Domestic flight accessibility is an ongoing issue affecting program activity implementation. A limited number of internal flights are available for travel to other provinces and flights are sometimes cancelled at the very last minute. This is limiting staff access to other provinces to deliver training including monitoring visits.

## 2 VAESP progress report

The following section examines VAESP's progress in 2023 towards achieving outcomes and implementing activity areas. The section highlights three key achievements in 2023 and reviews VAESP's support for MoET's three pillars: Access, Quality and Management. The section also discusses the program's progress in fulfilling its EoPOs, intermediate outcomes (IOs), and short-term outcomes (SOs).

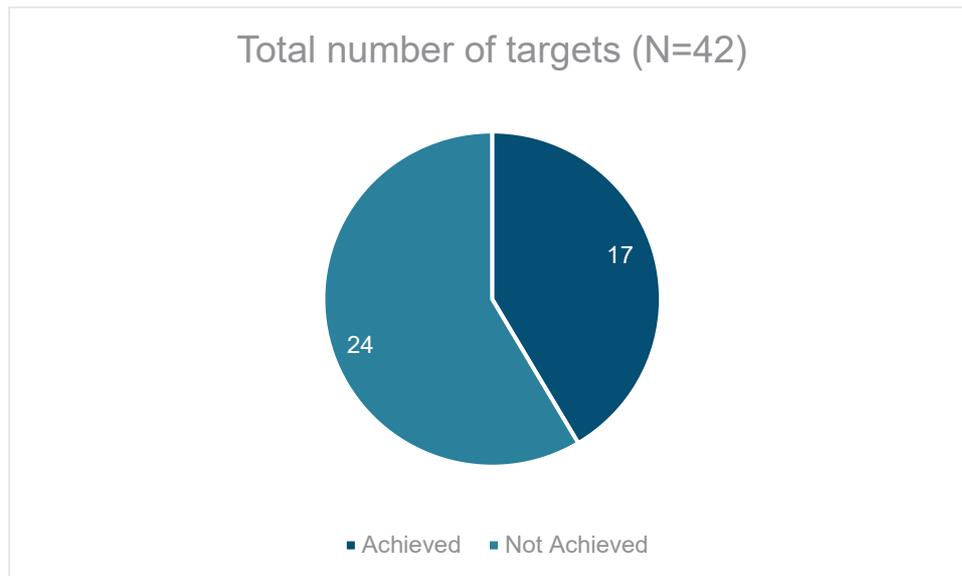
### 2.1 Progress against workplan

In 2023, VAESP planned to implement 38 sub-activities. One sub-activity did not have a planned target as it was an emergency contingency fund. Two sub-activities (sub-activities 2.2.2 and 2.2.5) were amalgamated into sub-activity 2.2.6 due to extenuating factors detailed in the pillar's progress sections below. The remaining 35 sub-activities consist of 42 planned targets.

Overall, VAESP was able to achieve 40% ( $n=17$ ) of planned targets. Figure 4, Figure 5, Figure 6 and Figure 7 present how well VAESP has done against *each* of these targets and the pillars.

VAESP's support for Pillar 1 Access achieved the highest proportion of implementation targets, with 71% of targets achieved. Support for Pillar 3 Management achieved 38% of its planned targets while Pillar 2 Quality faced the most difficulties achieving targets as planned, with 32% of targets achieved. As mentioned above, Pillar 2 Quality postponed four sub-activities to be implemented in 2024 and amalgamated two sub-activities. This is evident also in the number of sub-activity budgets that have been underspent<sup>4</sup>, as illustrated in Figure 8.

Figure 4: Performance against total targets<sup>5</sup>



<sup>4</sup> Sub-activities categorized as 'underspent' are defined as any sub-activity that has expended 50 to 74% of its budget allocation. Sub-activities categorised as 'significantly underspent' are defined as any sub-activity that has expended less than 50% of its budget allocation.

<sup>5</sup> This total number of targets do not include targets of activities that were amalgamated nor activities with no planned targets.

Figure 5: Performance against Access Pillar targets

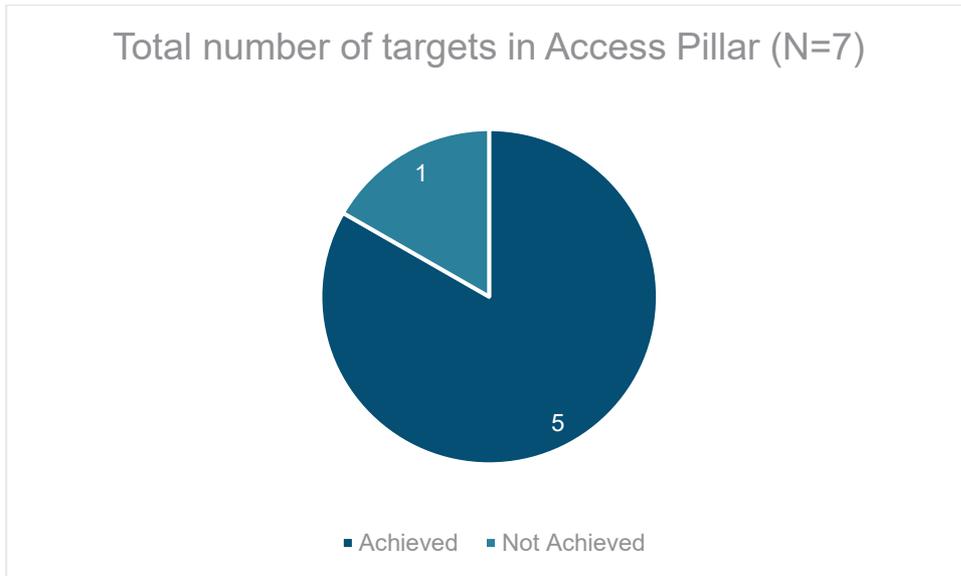


Figure 6: Performance against Quality Pillar targets

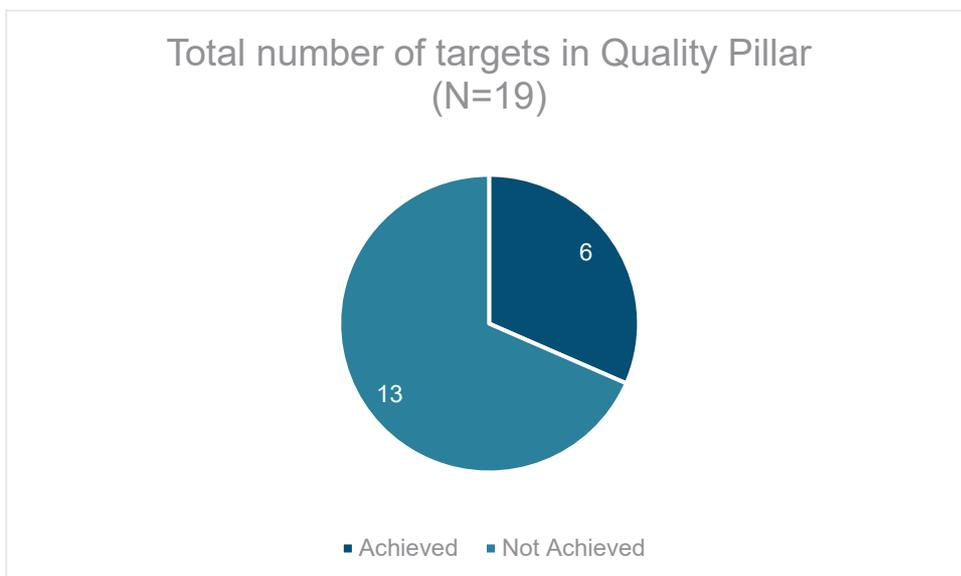
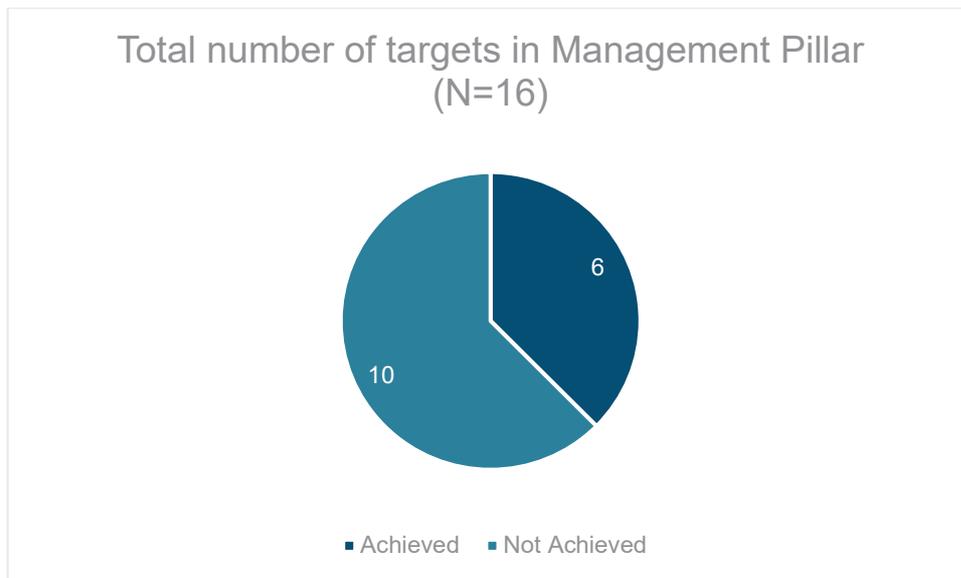


Figure 7: Performance against Management Pillar targets



## 2.2 Implementation highlights

Despite the challenging context, VAESP made a number of key achievements over the year, which will be further developed in 2024. This section summarises three high level achievements from 2023, selected according to how effectively they contributed to each pillar and VAESP’s overall objectives.

### Pillar 1: Access

#### Enhanced community support for children’s learning through Parents Support Program and Mama’s Literacy Program

There is ample global evidence about the impact of parental support in predicting children’s academic and life outcomes. In 2023, VAESP and MoET’s ECCE Unit delivered 77 Parent Support Program (PSP) training workshops on seven islands in Torba Province, benefitting 419 males and 645 females. Also, 13 mothers are about to graduate from the Mamas Literacy Program. These training workshops will enhance community support for children’s literacy and well-being at home.



*The sessions are very interesting. We did not realise as parents the importance of early learning for our children’s future. There are a lot of various ways we can encourage children’s learning and use available resources like coconuts, leaves and stones to teach counting for instance.*

**Parent Support Program Participant**

With greater awareness of literacy and numeracy and a higher chance of success at the higher school levels, it is assumed the Net Enrolment Rate (NER) will increase. VAESP is currently working with MoET To develop a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) strategy that will assess behaviour change and capture early impacts on children.

## **Pillar 2: Quality**

### **Improving the implementation of the curriculum**

The 2022 Curriculum Implementation Monitoring Study (CIMS) provided a set of valuable insights into how teachers and principals relate to the curriculum. In general, there is positive feedback as well as opportunities to further support teachers and principals to understand and implement the principles of the new national curriculum. VAESP worked closely with MoET's Curriculum Development Unit (CDU) in developing the Curriculum Improvement Plan (CIP). The plan brings together the resources of the Ministry to work together in a collaborative way, sharing the same goal of improving curriculum implementation. The CIP is a milestone achievement for MoET. VAESP and MoET developed training workshops for teachers and principals to enhance their capacity to implement the national curriculum. These sessions looked at best practices for teaching and learning, literacy and class-based assessments and targeted teachers from Years 1 to 8<sup>6</sup>. Surveys are administered every alternate year to collect insights and experiences from teachers on the teaching tools and to identify challenges, gaps, and areas for improvement. Ensuring a regular flow of data will enable MoET decision-makers to take evidence-informed decisions. While the absence of School Improvement Officers continued to hamper efforts to reach schools, MoET appointed and trained interim Provincial Curriculum Learning Facilitators, with VAESP's assistance. In 2024 VAESP will ensure critical CIP activities are implemented, such as the strengthening of the provincial capacity to mentor and orient teachers and school leaders, to improve the quality of their teaching and learning and overall schooling outcomes.

## **Pillar 3: Management**

### **MoET's attention to the importance of data and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) is increasing**

The 2018 World Bank World Development Report focused on the importance of ensuring education systems have a robust system to manage education information to enable evidence-guided policies. In 2023, VAESP worked with MoET to strengthen MoET's capacity to generate and use relevant and timely data and use it for improving its management. A focus of this strategy has been to ensure that MoET's OV is updated and used by staff. VAESP supported provincial training in data entry and analysis through the OV system. VAESP has reviewed the first draft of the OV policy. The policy defines how the OV will be used and reinforces its use across the Ministry. Finally, VAESP has also identified a fundamental weakness in the OV architecture and the urgency in updating its software system. VAESP supported MoET to explore alternatives for addressing this weakness, updating its education management information system (EMIS) and engaging other Development Partners. This resulted in Global Partnership for Education (GPE) granting MoET resources to modernize its EMIS.

Well used ICT systems can significantly improve the collection and analyses of data. VAESP is also conducting the ICT in Schools Survey to understand the extent of ICT usage. The resulting data will inform MoET's policies on building schools' ICT capacity. One school received internet connectivity during the reporting period, and it is being monitored to assess its impact. VAESP has also supported the installation of three VSAT<sup>7</sup> systems in selected provincial education offices. MoET has purchased and installed similar system in the remaining provinces. VAESP has also supported MoET's application to gain system-wide free access to Google for Education. This is a major achievement, giving MoET the capacity to create thousands of emails at no cost and more. VAESP has started leveraging that new capability by creating a website for CDU, with easy access to all curriculum resources. The education sector's ICT capacity and capabilities are increasing.

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<sup>6</sup> Activities in the Junior Secondary Space are mostly supported through MFAT's Junior Secondary Schools Curriculum project, but VAESP has provided considerable support.

<sup>7</sup> The Very Small Aperture Terminals (VSAT) purchased by VAESP come with solar panels and two VoIP mobile phones. This will significantly increase these provinces' capacity to maintain communication stability, even after destructive natural disasters.



*Curriculum development benefits students by providing a clear course structure and aligning educational goals with standards. It fosters engagement and enhances teaching effectiveness.*

CDU Principal Education Officer, MoET

## 2.3 Pillar 1: Access Progress Report

VAESP's support for MoET in achieving its goal of strengthening access, quality and management is expected to help improve the rate of children accessing education and progressing through each year of schooling on time. VAESP assesses this by monitoring the primary school GER, NER, and repetition rate.

### End of Program Outcome 1

*More children (girls and boys, including those with disability) are enrolled and attend the right year of primary school at the right age.*

Current NER data from the OV shows that the rate of children attending school at the right age remained almost steady between 2021 and 2022, at 92% for girls in both years, and 89% and 90% for boys respectively. However, there was a 5% decrease between enrolments between 2020 and 2021. Repetition rates have also shifted slightly in recent years, reducing slightly for boys and increasing for girls. The repetition rate for boys in primary school was 8.7% in 2019 and 8.6% in 2022. For girl students, the repetition rate was 6.1% in 2019 and 6.8% in 2022.

These indicators also show that girls are progressing through primary school at a slightly higher rate than boys, but there has been a slight improvement for boys. The NER for girls did not change in 2022, while the rate for boys increased by 1%. VAESP also tracks NER across provinces. In 2022, the lowest NER was reported in Torba (82% female; 78% male), followed by Penama (89% female; 89% male) and Shefa (89% female; 88% male).

The steady decline in GER rates alongside a relatively steady NER suggest a more age-appropriate enrolment pattern. As indicated in other reports<sup>8</sup>, there has been improvements in repetition rates and in getting families to enrol their children at the right age.

The statistics do not offer any information regarding the inclusion of children with disability, who remain invisible in the official data. VAESP is committed to strengthening IE, including through embedding appropriate data collection processes in MoET systems. In 2024 VAESP will support MoET to trial disability data collection strategies, for eventual inclusion in OV.

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<sup>8</sup> See 2024 VAESP Annual Plan, page 10.

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Figure 8: Primary School Net Enrolment Rate trends 2020-2022

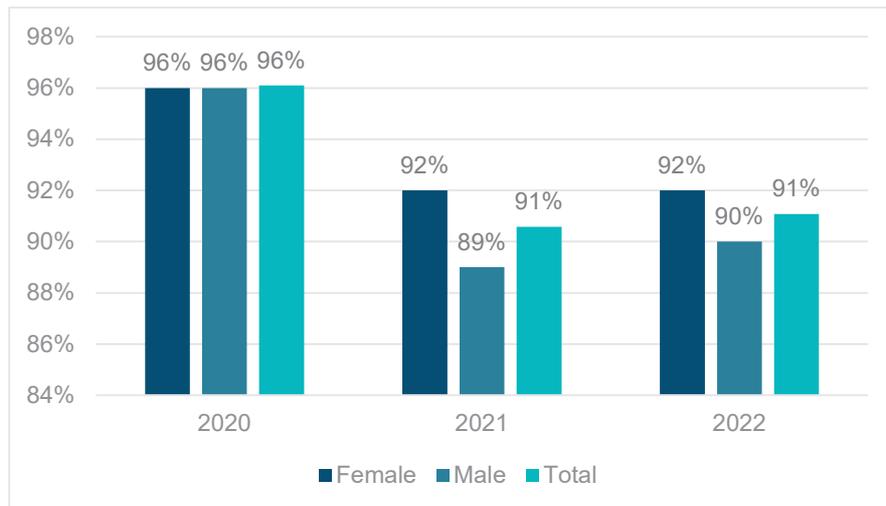
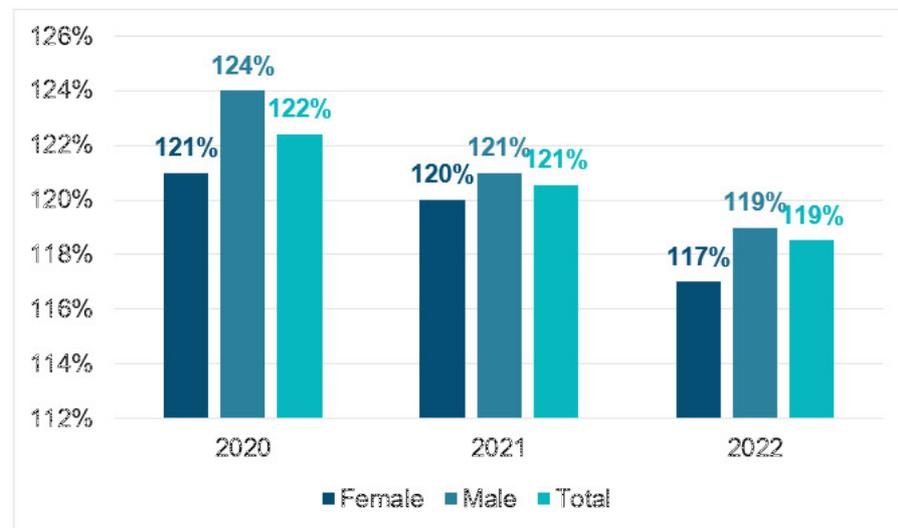


Figure 9: Primary School Gross Enrolment Rate trends 2020-2022



### Progress towards intermediate outcomes and short-term outcomes

VAESP is improving access to education by working with MoET to support schools in providing a safe and inclusive learning environment for all students. It is also strengthening MoET's capacity to provide education during or following natural disasters.

In 2023, VAESP and MoET's joint efforts through workshops, trainings, and school visitations, increased the number of schools using IE practices to a total of 45 schools. They also tracked evidence of parents demonstrating positive parenting behaviour, including support for schooling through the school monitoring visits. The PSP Mama's Literacy Program delivered to 12 women in Torba Province is leading to change, as indicated in a survey of the program's impact on participating parents. Participants are women who are interested to learn and improve their understanding and English-speaking skills. All participants felt the training was useful and increased their understanding, suggesting this was due to the facilitators taking the time to explain carefully and clearly. Participants reported helping their children and grandchildren with reading, spelling, and overall homework, including understanding sounds and blending words.

VAESP's support for MoET's response to cyclones in March and October saw contingency planning successfully undertaken and implemented to maintain schooling in affected communities. In response to TCs Kevin, Judy, and Lola, MoET developed and implemented two contingency plans. VAESP supported these plans and worked with the Education Emergency Cluster by supporting data collection and analyses, including through the creation of an accessible dashboard. This strengthened the responsiveness of stakeholders addressing the affected communities. VAESP also supported MoET by setting up a toll-free phone number and regular communication through social media, promoting school community awareness. VAESP also undertook a rapid infrastructure review of 10 schools in Efate, in the wake of the twin Tropical Cyclones. The goal of that review was to model the impact of the cyclones on schools and adjust the Asset Master Plan modelling. Finally, VAESP's support for a more natural disaster-resilient communications system using provincial VSATs will ensure continuous communications.

### Sub-activity contribution to outcomes

In 2023, VAESP-supported sub-activities sought to strengthen IE practices in schools, enhance support for education among community members and caregivers, and assist MoET's response to disasters. Seven sub-activities included a planned target. Only sub-activity 1.4.1 *Emergency Response Fund* does not have a set target. Of the seven sub-activities with targets, VAESP achieved or over-achieved in five.

### Activity area: Strengthening inclusive education

This activity area involves initiatives intended to increase teachers' awareness of IE practices. The indicator of progress is *teachers in MIS have increased awareness of strategies to support diverse learning needs in the classroom*.

As of December 2023, these sub-activities had contributed to raising awareness among 45 teachers in 45 MIS in the provinces of Shefa and Penama. In 2023, VAESP and MoET focused on raising awareness of teachers in the 45 MIS. Pre- and post-training surveys indicate that 100% of teachers who participated in trialling the IE resources increased their understanding of strategies to support diverse learning needs in the classroom.



*It is the first time for teachers to see and use an inclusive education resource book like this and to be able to use it to identify students with a disability.*

School principal

In addition to MIS, VAESP supported IE by working with MoET in reviewing its IE policies, comprising (i) Gender Equality Policy, (ii) Child Safeguarding Policy, and (iii) Disability Education Policy. VAESP funded Disability Education policy review workshops for 30 teachers, principals, education partners and the MoET policy drafting team to get feedback on the draft policy and support progress towards the policy completion.

VAESP supported the first Provincial Women in Education Leadership Network activity for Shefa Province with 30 participants to build their leadership skills and networks and support the PSP. The participants included female and male principals, male church leaders and a female community representative. Similar initiatives in other provinces had to be cancelled, due to flight disruptions and the cyclones.

### Activity Area: Increase involvement of school communities

This activity area involves initiatives aimed at **increasing community awareness of positive approaches to support children's education and awareness of development and progress in the the education sector**. Changing community attitudes and behaviours requires sustained, long-term efforts. In 2023, VAESP continued raising public awareness of the value of supporting education through positive parenting and strengthening community understanding of the importance of kindergarten and supporting an extensive agenda of Ministry's corporate communications, so school

communities are aware of School Grant payments, launch of new education programs and other relevant news.

In 2023, VAESP supported the MoET in two sub-activities under 1.2 *Increase involvement of school communities*, namely, 1.2.1 *Support to corporate education communication* and 1.2.2 *ECCE Parent support program*. VAESP continues to work with school communities, families, principals and teachers to promote positive parenting skills. VAESP will continue working with MoET to strengthen its communication capacity with schools and communities.



*We spend time together, questions and clarifications are made. We make sure that how we are responding to our children is helping them learn.*

**Parent Support Program Participant**



*I now discuss safety and security with my children before they go off to play with their friends.*

**Parent Support Program Participant**

VAESP supported MoET's communications in 2023 producing 29 press releases, over 80 social media (Facebook) postings, 20 SMS broadcasts, 2,190 radio advertisements, seven school photoshoots, four communications training, document formatting and other media, including distributing posters to all the provinces. These communication materials are supporting the wider audience to increase their understanding on key education messaging, keeping teachers, parents and school communities at large aware about on-going plans and events and how these may affect them. These are critical initiatives to sustain community engagement.

In 2023, VAESP collaborated with Save the Children and the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) in supporting MoET promote positive parenting skills through community-based workshops and communication products. In quarter 3, a refresher workshop was delivered to key teachers in Torba. The workshop included surveying parents and communities to measure the program's impact. According to the survey, 100% of parents reported better communications with their children at home.

Figure 10: Parental Support Program reflection workshop with key teachers in Sola, Torba Province



### **Activity area: Improve school infrastructure**

During the 2023 reporting period, VAESP supported the drafting and approval of the Vanuatu Primary School Infrastructure Guidelines and the conclusion of the Asset Master Plan Primary Schools infrastructure assessment report. This report quantified the needed investment to upgrade all primary schools to comply with the infrastructure guidelines and to 5 years demographic projections. Additionally, VAESP supported the translation of the Vanuatu Primary School Infrastructure Guidelines from English into French and launched it at the second Provincial Primary School Infrastructure Workshop in November 2023. The Vanuatu Primary School Infrastructure Guidelines are a testament to MoET's clear focus on achieving the visions and goals of the VETSS 2020-2030 and the need to align school infrastructure with the key principles of the 'Child Friendly Schools Approach' developed by UNICEF.

### **Activity area: Strengthening response to disaster**

This activity area aims to strengthen preparation and response to disaster, ensure safety and support continuity of education services for students and staff.

In 2023, VAESP supported the MoET's Communications Unit by contributing to the Education Emergency Cluster, attending education cluster meetings following TC Judy, Kevin and Lola and working closely with MoET by providing input into MoET's Response Plan, including implementing the toll-free line and ensuring the availability of free access to the MoET website. VAESP also assisted in developing and implementing a communications campaign to ensure school preparation for natural disasters before the end-of-the-year break. The campaign included SMS, radio messages, social media posts, and press releases. By December 2023, VAESP had supported MoET with five press releases, more than 900 radio ads, seven SMS and 59 social media posts on Facebook.

Developing contingency plans following disasters helps strengthen MoET's capacity to provide services and respond adequately during emergencies and disasters. VAESP supported the Ministry in developing two contingency plans, one following twin TCs Judy and Kevin and the other following TC Lola. This support helps strengthen MoET's capacity to provide services and respond adequately in emergencies and disasters. VAESP's contribution helped schools in the affected areas reopen sooner.

VAESP also supported MoET to improve its data collection and analysis, strengthening responsiveness and facilitating access to emergency resources. VAESP also procured three VSAT systems and installed them in selected provinces, ensuring ongoing communications, even in situations of disaster.

## **2.4 Pillar 2: Quality Progress Report**

Pillar 2 Quality and its associated activity areas contribute to improving student literacy and numeracy outcomes, as measured by VANSTA in Years 4, 6, and 8. Activity areas enhance the curriculum and its implementation by focusing on strengthening teaching quality and the teacher's ability to implement the curriculum and associated principles of teaching, learning and assessment. Activities support teachers and school leaders through professional development opportunities, management support and resources.

### **End of Program Outcome 2**

*Students achieve improved literacy and numeracy outcomes (measured at Years 4, 6, and 8).*

All nine VANSTA tests showed a decline in the proportion of students meeting or exceeding the minimum standards between 2019 and 2021. The average decline was 12%, with the largest decline in literacy. Figure 12 shows the proportion of Years 4, 6, and 8 students meeting VANSTA's minimum literacy and numeracy standards between 2017 and 2021. MoET's 2023 study on the impact of COVID-19 estimated that an additional 4% of children failed to meet VANSTA minimum standards than normally expected. The same study also found that TC Harold caused a further 1% of children to fail VANSTA minimum standards.

These figures indicate the importance of continuing long-term support to strengthen the quality of education in Vanuatu and improve data collection and analysis.

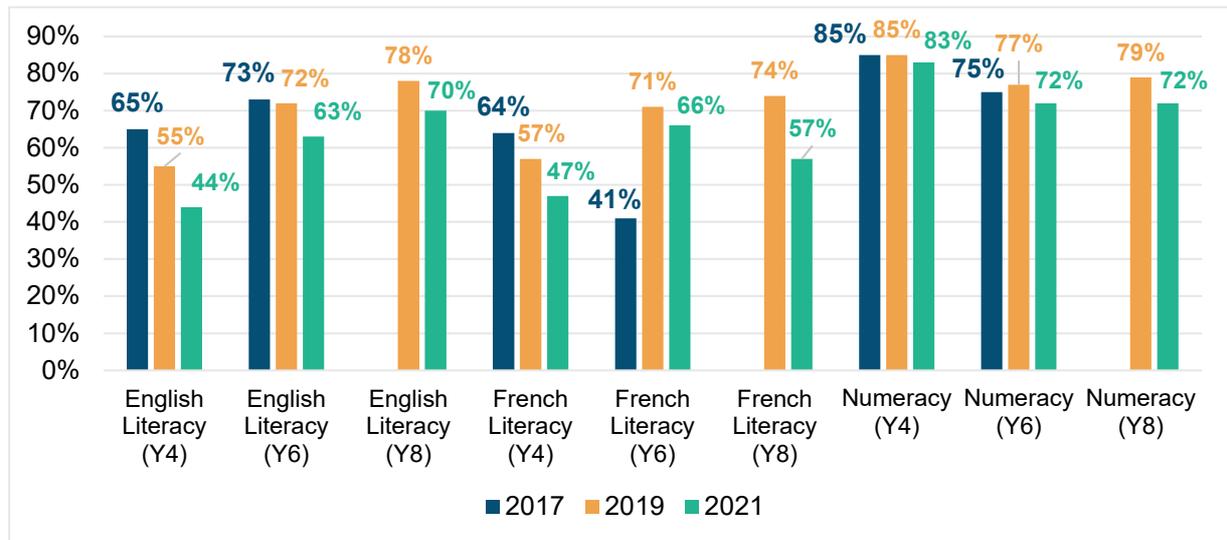


Figure 11: VANSTA data comparing English literacy, French literacy, and numeracy across 2017, 2019, and 2021.

### Progress towards intermediate and short-term outcomes

VAESP’s sub-activities for Pillar 2 Quality seek to provide teachers with the skills and knowledge to implement the curriculum and associated teaching, learning and assessment principles. In 2023, VAESP supported MoET’s Education Services Directorate (ESD) to develop a **three-year Curriculum Improvement Program** with a **Literacy Strategy for ECCE and Primary Schools**, training teachers to implement the curriculum and assess the training results using a curriculum implementation monitoring tool.

In 2023, 46% of 39 school leaders surveyed reported implementing the new curriculum. Similarly, 46% of school leaders responded that they are implementing the new curriculum for most subjects. As the CIP continues its work, the expectation is that there will be an increase in the number of teachers and

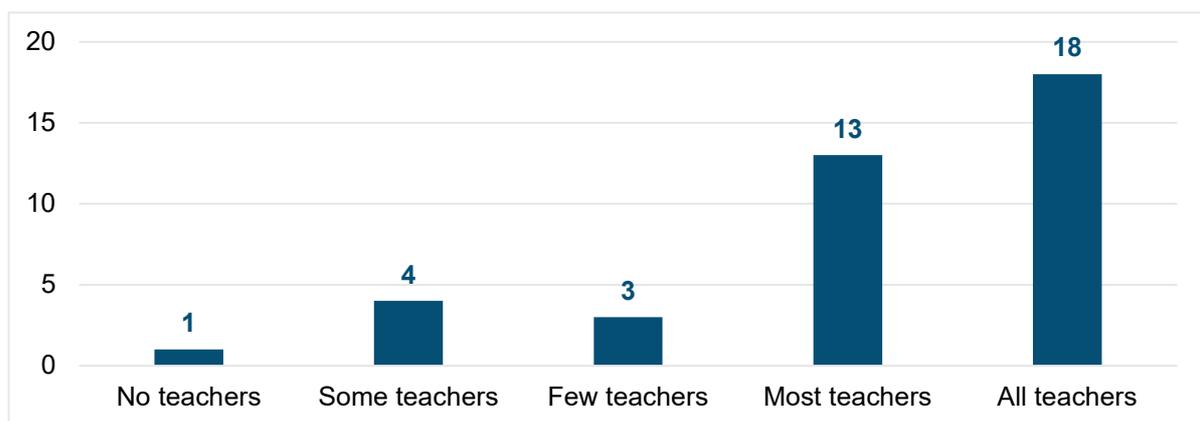


Figure 12: Number of teachers implementing the new curriculum.

schools adopting and applying the new curriculum with increased confidence. In 2024, VAESP will work closely with CDU and other relevant units in the Ministry to ensure that more data is collected to assess teachers effectiveness and curriculum implementation.

According to post-training surveys and feedback, ECCE teachers and Mobile ECCE Officers (MEOs) who attended the ECCE curriculum training are also demonstrating greater awareness of the ECCE curriculum and are confident to use this improved understanding in the classrooms

### Sub-activity contribution to outcomes

In 2023, VAESP supported four Activity Areas contributing to Pillar 2 Quality. These included Strengthening Teacher Management, Strengthening Teaching and Learning, Strengthen Curriculum Materials and Strengthen Assessment, Monitoring, and Reporting. There are 19 sub-activities within these activity areas. Two sub-activities (2.2.2 and 2.2.5) were amalgamated with another sub-activity (2.2.6) and four sub-activities were postponed. The remaining 10 sub-activities consisted of 15 planned targets, of which six were achieved. Implementation was significantly affected by TCs Kevin, Judy, and Lola, causing VAESP to quickly pivot towards supporting MoET's priorities during the national emergencies. CDU staff were responsible for overseeing the emergency response, which affected their capacity to implement ongoing activities, although plans and preparation for implementation were well-advanced. Another factor affecting the implementation of these sub-activities were the uncertainties generated by the Government's Bislama ban in schools. VAESP and MoET suspended many activities while seeking clarifications regarding the application of the said ban.

### Activity area: Strengthening teachers' management

This activity area involves initiatives **strengthening teacher management and qualifications in Vanuatu**. In 2023, VAESP supported MoET to undertake foundational planning and research work for two of three activities, while the third was not started.

VAESP supported MoET and the Teaching Service Commission (TSC) in the **design of the Teachers' Register System**. The register upgrade was achieved in Q1 with page upgrades for registration, qualification, professional development, placements, and staff lists completed. Further progress was delayed while TSC and MoET clarified which unit was responsible for this activity. VAESP will support the activity once a mutual understanding is agreed.

In Q4, VAESP worked with MoET to support the review of the Diploma of Education program under the School of Education at the National University of Vanuatu. The contract to review the program was awarded to the University of Newcastle. Data collection took place in October through interviews with stakeholders and a survey of teachers enrolled in the Diploma of Education program since its inception. As of May 2024, the report has been received and circulated to DFAT.

Plans for developing the National Teacher Development Plan (NTDP) did not proceed due to uncertainties regarding the respective areas of responsibility, between the Directorate of Tertiary Education and the Teaching Services Commission. These uncertainties are affecting also the review of a number of critical policies to strengthen teachers' management (Teachers Hiring Policy, Teachers' Deployment Policy and Teachers' Appraisal Policy). These issues are being dealt by MoET through a review of the Education Act, expected to be concluded in 2024 and through a court case.

### Activity area: Strengthening teaching and learning

This activity reflects teachers' critical role in improving student learning outcomes. It aims to strengthen teaching and learning by building teacher capacity in implementing the curriculum and ensuring access to resources and materials. Eight targets (including those under sub-activity 2.2.2 and 2.2.5, which were amalgamated into 2.2.6) were set across the five sub-activities under this activity area. Four targets were achieved during the reporting period. Sub-activities 2.2.2 and 2.2.5 were amalgamated into sub-activity 2.2.6 (see Annex 1). As of December 2023, the VAESP-supported activities in this activity area through workshops and trainings, have contributed **to building the capacity of 62 MEOs, 75% of ECCE teachers, 60 principals, 22 provincial facilitators, and 174 Year 7 teachers**

VAESP supported the design and delivery of various targeted training interventions, with the targeted purpose of improving teaching and learning. This is to differentiate training events which may be linked to improving the financial management at school level or reporting of OVEMIS data. These training initiatives, supported by VAESP and delivered by MoET, focused on improving curriculum

implementation and combined pedagogical practices and subject content knowledge. VAESP worked closely with the CDU to **develop the CIP**, to ensure teachers and principals have the skills to implement the national curriculum. As of December 2023, VAESP and the CDU developed the **facilitator’s guide and delivered two weeks of training** for provincial curriculum facilitators. These provincial facilitators trained teachers from Years 1 to 7 in teaching and learning, literacy, and class-based assessment practices based on the training program developed with support from VAESP. Facilitators were also introduced to the Assessment Resource Tool for Teaching and Learning (ARTTLe)<sup>9</sup> and the professional learning model, which identified principals or key teachers from selected area councils to be trained as main facilitators in their respective schools.

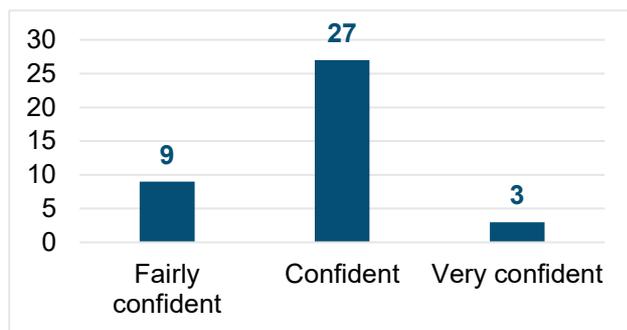


Figure 13: Number of teachers confident in using the new curriculum.

Two surveys were conducted with Year 1 to 3 teachers and principals. The findings from both surveys complemented each other, indicating that teachers view the guides positively. The findings of the survey will be used to inform the review of the guides, scheduled to commence in 2024. Feedback from science teachers raised the question of the appropriateness of aspects of the science curriculum, which will be considered going forward.

MEOs trained ECCE teachers in the **ECCE curriculum**. Teachers came from all provinces except for Shefa. Year 7 teachers in Epi and Malampa provinces received training in the

junior secondary curriculum. Monitoring visits will be conducted with Shefa and Malampa once implementation in the remaining four provinces have been completed.

VAESP also supported the CDU in developing a draft of the **National Literacy Strategy** under the guidance of the PEO of the CDU to enhance teacher skills and approaches and thereby strengthen literacy in kindergarten and through to Year 6. VAESP drafted a progress map for learning an additional language and developed a corresponding training program in collaboration with the CDU as part of this process.

The Prime Minister’s announcement banning Bislama in classrooms affected many of the VAESP planned activities. VAESP supported MoET to review the appropriate guidance and resources for schools, as well as research to understand the issue better. VAESP partnered with the CDU to develop a survey exploring the use of language in classrooms in primary schools. However, the TCs disrupted the survey’s administration. Instead, MoET held a **learning forum for language** to prepare a message informing schools about the policy change. During the forum, MoET drafted a statement saying Bislama can still be used to assist classroom teaching and learning. Additionally, two short video clips were developed illustrating the use of vernacular by selected teachers, to be used as guidance for other teachers to model their approaches. Six video clips were planned for 2023, but only two were developed. Only two video clips were developed due to the declaration of a State of Emergency, following TC Lola, ensuing suspension of regular activities.

While the Junior Secondary Curriculum Project (JSS Project) is funded by the New Zealand government, VAESP provides significant support to its implementation. During 2023 the VAESP Curriculum Adviser supported CDU and the JSS Project-supported team of curriculum writers to produce Year 8 resources. During the reporting period, the team developed the Year 8 Anglophone and Francophone syllabus, and the Anglophone teacher guides to print-ready stage in five subjects (mathematics, science, social science, English as a Foreign Language, and English as a Second Language). The final versions of the Francophone teacher guide, and resource sheets are 70% complete and will be finalised in 2024. While the Anglophone team of writers is located overseas, the

<sup>9</sup> This activity was initially planned as a standalone activity.

Francophone team of writers working on the MFAT-funded JSS Project is mostly located in Vanuatu. Due to the cyclones, the Year 9 Francophone syllabus was delayed. An extension to complete these guides has been granted. Twenty schools from each province were earmarked to receive provincial support to improve classroom teaching practices. However, this did not eventuate due to end-of-the-year school examinations that had been delayed due to the Vanuatu National Secondary School Sports, diverting schools' administration personnel and teachers' focus, as well as the overall impact of TC Lola.

### Activity area: Strengthening assessment, monitoring and reporting

This activity area aims to strengthen school and classroom assessments, monitoring, and reporting **by building the capacity of principals and MoET staff through establishing data clubs, increasing awareness in ARTTLe, and supporting the implementation of VANSTA**. Challenges with staff shortages at the Examinations and Assessment Unit (EAU) in MoET resulted in delays. Progress was made in developing programs and training content, but two of the three sub-activities have not achieved their targets.

VAESP developed **data club training for principals**. The aim of this sub-activity is to train principals and school leaders read VANSTA data trends, target setting, and planning for improvement. VAESP worked closely with the EAU to develop the training module and with the Technical Adviser to develop a tool for analysing VANSTA trends. The module and analysis tool has been submitted to EAU for review and approval. This sub-activity could not achieve its target of delivering the training to principals because of the cyclones.

VAESP worked closely with EAU to plan and deliver the **VANSTA assessment and pilot** between September and November. This pilot aims to design the VANSTA papers and is to be delivered in 2024. The initiative was jointly supported by the Educational Quality and Assessment Program (EQAP), which is assisting with the analysis including testing results and reporting.

### Activity area: Strengthening curriculum materials

This activity area works to strengthen curriculum materials and ensure teachers receive high quality teaching resources. VAESP has made initial progress towards this outcome, but most activities have been rescheduled to 2024.

MoET and VAESP identified a consultant to lead the review of the VNCS. However, recruitment was delayed pending the arrival of MoET's new CDU CIP Officer, who will assist in taking the review forward in 2024. This will strengthen MoET ownership of the review and ultimately improve the potential for uptake and sustainability.

This activity area did not achieve any of its three targets. The remaining two were not achieved due to the ban on Bislama in classrooms and the three tropical cyclones.

Figure 14: Class-Based Assessment and Reporting Workbook Training, Shefa Province.



### **Teacher Guides for Years 1-3**

In this reporting period, VAESP worked with the CDU to develop a budget and a plan for redeveloping teacher guides for Years 1 to 3 to better support teachers in aligning teaching with the syllabus. The team developed a survey for teachers and principals in the relevant school years regarding their experience working with the Years 1-3 teacher guides for Mathematics, Science, Life in the Community, Language and Communication, and Languge et Communication.

VAESP worked closely with the ECCE Unit and the CDU to improve the range and quality of literacy resources available for students and teachers from kindergarten through to Year 3. A number of materials have been designed and delivered, with others still under development. Complementary materials and a teacher training program were also planned, but staff were not available to design and deliver these, and the activity was rescheduled for 2024. Production and publication of 30 planned K-3 Radio Reading Programs and 27 “words of the week” content was also rescheduled due to a lack of staff time.

VAESP contributed to the Global Partnership for Education’s K-3 literacy materials in school initiative, contracting packers and funding the follow-up exercise monitoring the arrival of materials in schools. Materials are currently under development, including 1,050 draft oral language picture/word cards for ECCE and primary school students. VAESP and MoET also plan to complement these with teacher guidance booklets.

The VAESP team also contributed to the ECCE curriculum by developing a phonics program for kindergarten in English and French.

Additionally, the CDU is working with VAESP on seven stimulation posters for ECCE to improve oral language development. The stimulation posters are still under development and will be based on different familiar themes identified by the CDU. VAESP also supported the plan to produce five sets of sequential image stories for Year 1. These sequential image stories will improve oral language development in early primary years and include familiar themes and scenes identified by the CDU.

## **2.5 Pillar 3: Management Progress Report**

VAESP’s activity areas for Pillar 3 Management aim to support MoET in strengthening the education sector by improving engagement, planning and collaboration between provinces and the central government through improved communications networks and stronger evidence and systems for decision-making. To do this, VAESP builds MoET’s capacity in monitoring systems and school performance, uses data to inform strategic planning and school improvement (IO 3.1), and enhances provincial education officers’ capabilities to guide principals to develop effective School Strategic Plans (IO 3.2).

### **End of Program Outcome 3**

MoET has implemented devolution at provincial and school levels, strengthening reporting and data systems to inform planning, implementation and decision-making to improve student learning outcomes.

In 2023, VAESP strengthened the OV system and its usage training school principals and provincial PEOs in data entry and reviewed the first draft of the OV policy, drafting an ICT Disaster Recovery Plan and purchasing a server, to store the OV data. VAESP also created an OV feature to store VANSTA data. VAESP also supported MoET to deliver planning workshops in the provinces, highlighting the critical importance of OV. Another important initiative to strengthen the utilization of OV that was successfully carried out in 2023 are the PEOs Workshops. These workshops provided the opportunity for PEOs to acquire and practice their skills, reviewing School Improvement Plans. All MoET directorates currently use the OV, as they hold all MoET data. MoET staff refer to OV data daily. The use of the OV system across Vanuatu is likely to increase as ICT capacity at the school and provincial levels continues to improve. Information regarding the presence of ICT in schools is unclear. VAESP and MoET are addressing this through an ICT in Schools Survey due for completion in 2024.

### Progress towards intermediate outcomes and short-term outcomes

In 2023, VAESP supported MoET in delivering two quarterly reports. Unfortunately, with MoET priorities diverted towards the three TCs, the Ministry has not delivered reports for quarters 3 and 4 nor its annual report. PPU is currently collecting the necessary data to complete the reports.

Based on data collected through MoET’s provincial education offices in four provinces<sup>10</sup>, more than 75% of schools have developed SSPs. Figure 16 presents the proportion of schools in each of the provinces with SSPs. With VAESP support, Provincial education officers have created plans to track the development of SSPs through checklists and OV data as SSPs are uploaded into OV. They monitor SSP development by providing feedback and supporting school leaders in finalising their plans. Responses from provincial education officers indicate that provincial education offices are providing schools facing challenges in developing SSPs with individual support and training on planning and budgeting. Provincial education officers are also relaying feedback to the School-Based Management (SBM) unit, where further training may be needed to support school principals’ planning and budgeting capabilities.

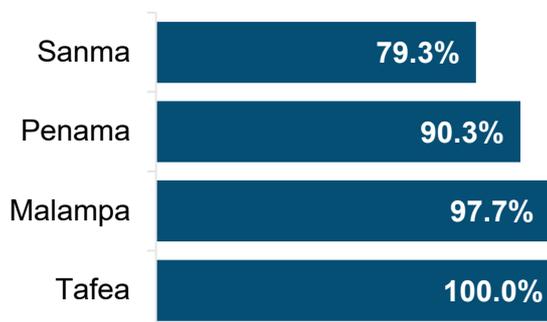


Figure 15: Proportion of primary schools with SSPs



*The capacity building sessions will assist leadership and management considerably at the provincial level.*

**SBM Principal Education Officer**

### Sub-activity contribution to outcomes

The sub-activities implemented in this reporting period contribute to better coordination and devolution of decision-making at the provincial and school levels by strengthening planning, communications, and central support to provinces to better integrate schools, provinces, and MoET. In 2023, the

<sup>10</sup> At the time of reporting, Shefa and Torba provincial education offices had not yet responded to the data request so do not appear in Figure 14

Management Pillar planned to implement 15 sub-activities. These sub-activities consisted of 16 planned targets. Six of the 16 planned targets have been achieved. Ten targets were not achieved, including a target of a sub-activity which has been postponed to 2024. For the sub-activities that have been delayed, VAESP has worked with the respective MoET directorates and units to ensure activities are included and approved for MoET implementation in 2024. Activities were again delayed due to the cyclones and political instability, with MoET staff allocated to unplanned tasks that take priority over VAESP activities. Finally, the SMT was delayed in endorsing the MoET Business Plan, which also delayed the commencement of several sub-activities. VAESP is working closely with MoET leadership to ensure clear communication and plans between both parties to address these barriers.

### Activity area: Strengthening data, information and knowledge generation

This activity area aims to strengthen the systems that collect, analyse, and generate data and knowledge to inform the MoET's decision-making. It consists of five sub-activities and six planned targets. Of these six targets, one target was achieved. The remaining five planned targets progressed but were not achieved.

Several VAESP sub-activities have been delayed, pending tasks to be completed by government agencies. VAESP has developed the 2022 Statistical Digest and is waiting for its approval from MoET and the Vanuatu National Statistics Office. Additionally, MoET is waiting to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the Civil Registry on integrating OV. The integration has been postponed to January 2024. For this reporting period, however, VAESP collaborated with MoET to carefully review the OV policy, identifying gaps and opportunities and discussing ways for each party to contribute to addressing these.

Despite the challenges, VAESP successfully supported assessments and contracting to connect schools to the internet and make school learning materials available online.

During the reporting period, one school was connected to the internet while three schools were assessed for connectivity by Wantok Network Ltd. Regarding other data collection activities for building ICT capabilities in schools, VAESP supported the development of a survey to collect data on ICT usage in schools. Pacific Consulting was awarded the survey contract and is expected to submit a final report in early 2024. VAESP is also working with MoET to make school **learning materials available online**, as requested by the CDU, in line with the sub-activity to embed access and use of ICT in schools. Feedback was provided, and the ICT Unit is revising accordingly. The online platform will be handed over to the CDU in early 2024. Finally, still in the ICT space, VAESP supported MoET to gain access to Google for Education's free suite of products. This achievement has significant potential benefits which are to be explored further in 2024. VAESP will explore with MoET strategies to leverage its capabilities to improve teaching and learning across the country. VAESP will also engage with the schools already using other Learning Management Systems, such as Malapoa and Lenakel, to ensure existing good practices are recognized and expanded.

### Activity area: Strengthening policy direction, planning, management and accountability systems

This activity area supports MoET in its planning, management, and accountability systems and strengthens its capacity in setting policy direction. In 2023, VAESP achieved three out of six planned targets. The remaining three targets were not achieved due to the state of emergency and the delay in approving MoET's Corporate Plan. This affected training workshops on procurement in Shefa, which were postponed to 2024, and the finalisation of the MoET Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan.

In 2023, VAESP and its Public Finance Management Adviser worked closely with the PEO of Procurement to **draft the procurement manual and an accompanying training package** for school principals, leaders, and related MoET stakeholders. This work included revised thresholds to increase schools' and related institutions' control over their procurement processes, marking a positive step towards devolution. The endorsement and use of the procurement manual are also expected to strengthen MoET's management systems and planning, contributing to clearer accountability processes at all levels of the Ministry. Due to the three TCs in 2023, training for the procurement manual has been postponed to 2024.

VAESP is working to build the capacity of MoET managers, provincial finance officers, and school principals. In 2023, VAESP co-developed and co-delivered **finance management training** for 506 school principals and provincial finance officers in Shefa, Sanma and Tafea. A **Financial Management Capacity Assessment report** has also been developed and submitted to MoET's Finance PEO for her review. These initiatives are expected to contribute towards devolving decision-making powers into the provinces, as school principals and provincial finance officers enhance their skills and capabilities to manage public finance and risk.

The program also contributes to better MoET planning processes at the provincial and central levels. Six provincial education offices received support to develop **business plans and SSPs**. VAESP worked closely with MoET to deliver a planning workshop with all provincial PEOs and MoET staff from ESD and PPU. Following the workshop, PEOs were tasked to finalise their SSP with their staff in the provinces. VAESP supported MoET in distributing a provincial level questionnaire to collect data on how many schools have developed SSPs and how provincial PEOs monitor and support schools in developing and implementing them. The questionnaire's findings demonstrate improved planning capabilities at the provincial and school levels.

Another way in which VAESP is strengthening MoET's capacity in this activity area is by enhancing the alignment between M&E plans and associated activities across MoET's Directorates with the Corporate Plan. Following the JSR's recommendations, VAESP worked with the PPU to **update MoET's results matrix** in the Corporate Plan. However, progress has been delayed as MoET's priorities changed due to TC Lola. MoET's M&E Plan will be developed after the results matrix for the Corporate Plan is approved in 2024. VAESP also delivered an **M&E training to ESD** during their planning retreat in Tafea. Based on an analysis of the M&E training workshop feedback form, participants felt the planning format and design helped them to understand the alignment of standards with education outcomes, the alignment between the Corporate Plan and business plans, and the links to schools and M&E plans. Ninety-four per cent of participants either 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that the training workshop improved their knowledge of M&E.

The JSR was a key activity in 2023 for MoET and VAESP. VAESP supported MoET in incorporating the recommendations from the JSR into the Corporate Plan and developing and distributing the **PPU Aide Memoire** to all MoET directorates.

Figure 16: Joint Sector Review Workshop, Shefa Province.



Finally, VAESP worked with MoET's ICT team to **review the Information Technology (IT) review policy**. The policy consultations are planned for 2024. VAESP and MoET also drafted the ICT Disaster Recovery Plan and fully upgraded the data centre and MoET's core network as planned. Finally, the team supported MoET to draft an OV Option Paper, focusing on the possible strategies for upgrading the Vanuatu OV. System.

### Activity area: Strengthening school management and leadership

This activity area aims to strengthen school management and leadership for principals and provincial level staff. Two of the four planned targets were achieved in 2023. The sub-activity did not achieve its target still implemented its activity. VAESP's work in this activity area has supported school leaders' certificate training, principals' handbook training, provincial coordination capacity building, and implementation of the Minimum Quality Standards (MQS) and baseline.

In 2023, VAESP and MoET worked with the APTC and the PTC to **provide teachers with training in leadership and management**. Forty-two school leaders, comprising 15 women and 27 men, graduated with a Certificate in Leadership and Management from Tanna in the Tafea province. Due to TC Lola's impact on MoET's priorities and training clashes, the training workshop in Penama was rescheduled to early 2024.



*The sessions were very useful. They helped (us) to be more confident in our provincial strategies, using collected data and study findings.*

Sanma Provincial Education Officer

Additionally, VAESP and MoET provided **induction training to five newly appointed principals** and continued supporting other principals in developing the SSPs. The PEOs found the training valuable, as indicated in their positive feedback.

At the provincial level, VAESP supported MoET in delivering **two capacity building training workshops** for all six provincial PEOs that attracted 30 participants. The workshop covered topics such as Vanuatu education outcomes, provincial education outcomes, strategies for improving SSPs, education data and global education studies' findings.

VAESP worked with MoET's SBM and CDU to complete the data collection stage of the **MQS baseline survey** and is drafting the report. The MQS baseline report is important for benchmarking school management and leadership quality and the impact of any capacity building initiatives undertaken during VAESP Phase II. The baseline survey was initially planned for Shefa, Malampa, and Tafea, but following the twin cyclones, MoET shifted its focus to schools in Torba.

## 2.6 Flexibility and Adaptability

VAESP is set up to be adaptable and flexible to changing contexts in the country, especially from year to year. While a results matrix and MERL framework guide activity planning for VAESP Phase II, **VAESP activity coordinators work closely with MoET's Activity Managers to plan for the following year based on MoET's emerging priorities, available resources, and other plans**. Throughout the year, VAESP and MoET counterparts hold regular meetings to ensure open and clear communication of priorities and to confirm any changes in plans. In some instances where sub-activities were delayed due to staff shortages in MoET or the hiring of new personnel, VAESP worked with MoET colleagues to ensure those sub-activities were approved for inclusion in the next quarter or year. For example, the review of the VNCS was delayed because recruitment for the review consultant was postponed pending the arrival of the CIP Officer.

VAESP recognises the importance of having a flexible approach to planning. Several activities are not in the VAESP's 2023 Annual Plan but they were undertaken in response to an emerging need. Some required technical and financial support, while others required only technical inputs. The table below presents an overview of these activities.

Adapting and being flexible to changing contexts is critical to providing effective support to MoET, especially in Vanuatu, one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world. As such, VAESP supported and participated in various activities in response to emerging needs and requests from MoET throughout the year, demonstrating VAESP's adaptability and flexibility with other education partners.

All additional VAESP-supported activities are listed in Annex I.

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## 3 Gender, Disability and Social Inclusion

VAESP continues to work with MoET to strengthen understanding and implementation of gender equality, disability equity and social inclusion to ensure all children have access to education, enhance education standards and contribute to greater equality and inclusion. In addition to delivering activities in the annual plan, VAESP was able to respond to emerging priorities to implement additional initiatives. These are reported below at Table 2 VAESP also updated the program's GEDSI Strategy.

### Mainstreaming GEDSI

VAESP's IE Officer worked alongside MoET's National Program Coordinator in supporting GEDSI mainstreaming across the activity areas. Table 2 summarises VAESP's approach to ensuring that all activities contribute to inclusion and equitable outcomes. This ensures that revisions to the curriculum, social media content, policy updates, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting reflect and model attitudes that promote equality and inclusion. It also ensures that GEDSI disaggregated data are collected and tracked for progress and inclusiveness.

### GEDSI-specific activities and outcomes

#### Improving teachers' capacity to support children with disability

In 2023, VAESP continued to make strong progress in improving IE for children with disability by developing and piloting six IE resources within 45 MIS. As reported above, under Pillar 1 Access, training was conducted, and the resources were positively received. They are already leading to change. The evaluation of the tools from the midpoint review report indicates that teachers are using **the quick reference disability identification tool** to communicate with parents and encourage referrals to medical services.

#### Supporting male and female parents to promote education at home

Schools have found it difficult to engage high numbers of male parents in training to promote positive parenting through mainstreamed PSPs. As reported above, the ECCE PSP provided positive parenting messages that reached 645 female and 419 male parents and carers. Overall, this is a strong result, but activity coordinators reported challenges in engaging men. VAESP and MoET recognised the need to address this directly.

As a result, the program decided to take positive parenting messages to forums already attended by male parents and carers, such as community events and School Community Association meetings. VAESP supported members of the Shefa Provincial Women in Education Leadership Network and nine male principals and church leaders to study and understand the key messages using PSP resources. They now have the capacity to promote these messages to male parents. The opportunity for Provincial Women in Education Leadership Network members to work with male leaders also enabled them to enhance their leadership skills and champion the leadership work women are coordinating in their communities through the Provincial Women in Education Leadership Network.

The ECCE PSP also offered a *mama literacy class* to 12 women in Torba, recognizing the high level of illiteracy in English among this group. The class improved the women's literacy, giving them greater confidence and skills in supporting their children in English.

This is one example of how gender mainstreaming and targeted gender-specific activities can work together to strengthen results.

#### Strengthening education policy for children with disability

The **Disability IE Policy** was drafted with VAESP support. VAESP provided feedback on the draft policy to MoET and the external adviser coordinating the review. This policy will facilitate stronger

resourcing and implementation of IE approaches across Vanuatu schools and Post Secondary Education and Training (PSET) Institutions.

Table 2: Formalising GEDSI mainstreaming.

<b>Link to key barrier</b>	<b>GEDSI Mainstreaming approach</b>	<b>Mainstream across Access, Quality and Management</b>
Policy development and implementation	Mainstream GEDSI into policy design and implementation	Ensure that all MoET policies identify GEDSI mainstreaming approaches in policy design and develop an action plan to outline how these should be implemented
	Investing resources	Allocating sufficient resources to support progress and achieve results at scale
	Equal access to the utilisation of services	Support all activities to promote the inclusive utilisation and access to all participants
	Strategic partnerships	Identify collaborative opportunities and gaps where partners can work together to achieve stronger results
Knowledge and Skills	Staff diversity	Increase diversity of staff through hiring mechanisms, ensuring more diverse representation at leadership levels
	GEDSI sensitive language	Incorporate inclusive language into resources, materials, teaching and program documents to ensure all have access to knowledge and information
	Enhancing capacity	Develop capacity of GEDSI focal points and specialists to promote knowledge of GEDSI concepts
M&E	Accountability	Develop systems and processes that promote strong leadership, monitoring and oversight of GEDSI mainstreaming
	Data and evidence	Utilise high quality data and evidence to analyse barriers and bottlenecks for GEDSI responsive programs

Table 3 - GEDSI supported activities not in the VAESP Annual Plan

<b>Activity</b>	<b>VAESP support</b>
Vanuatu Sign Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>VAESP supported discussions for the provincial sign language documentation from Penama province, helping the deaf community by providing signs for different categories such as</li> </ul>

Activity	VAESP support
National Child Protection Working Group	<p>letter words, body parts, emotions and feelings, nature and weather.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• VAESP participated in the National Children's Day activity design discussions with the National Child Protection Working Group.</li><li>• The 2023 national event targeted all schools with one week of activities developed around the theme "Children are our future: valuing and protecting our children at home, within our communities, our provinces and at the national level".</li><li>• VAESP also supported the discussions on the drafting of the Child Protection Bill.</li></ul>
National Gender Protection Cluster Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• VAESP joined the National Gender Protection Cluster Network during the COVID-19 lockdown to discuss specific support and response to challenges faced by women, men, girls and boys during COVID-19 situations.</li></ul>
Balance of Power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• VAESP contributed to discussions with the Balance of Power on a school debate activity targeting secondary schools on topics public relevance.</li></ul>

## 4 Communications

Communication plays an important role in ensuring all education stakeholders are aware of relevant information. Vanuatu’s challenging geography presents obstacles to ensure timely physical access to all schools. That why VAESP’s communication support to MoET uses a wide range of communication channels to reach everyone. VAESP works closely with MoET officers and DFAT to ensure its communication products are accurate and compliant with its partners style guidelines. This includes formatting reports to follow partners’ guidelines and also to increase their readability.

The support also extends to supporting activity managers and coordinators to develop and implement their specific communication plans.

Communication channels used by VAESP include printing resources (school calendar, informative posters, brochures, etc.), radio programs including scripted radio spots and thematic radio shows, SMS broadcasts and social media messages, including short clips reinforcing positive messages aligned to MoET’s policies.

In 2023 VAESP Communication support to MoET also included specific training of MoET staff. The following trainings were delivered to MoET staff, in 2023:

- Speech writing
- Photography skills
- Report writing

VAESP also delivers critical Communication support during the States of Emergency, following Natural Disasters. This includes activating the toll free landline and attending education coordination cluster meetings.

Finally, VAESP also supports strengthening the bilateral communication needs from the governments of Australia and Vanuatu.

Table 4: VAESP Communications support to MoET.

<b>VAESP Sub-activity</b>	<b>Communications support</b>
<b>1.1.3</b> Women leadership in education provincial network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of infographics on the Gender Study Findings.</li> </ul>
<b>1.2.1</b> Support to Corporate education communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designed, approved, and printed 2023 calendars – 1,500 copies in English and 500 copies in French.</li> <li>• Implemented the 'Back to School' Campaign, including 168 radio advertisements, one radio interview with the Education Services Director, and six advertisements in the newspaper. A digital banner for the MoET website, 10 posts on the MoET Facebook, three SMS to all mobile users, internal emails, email signatures, and three press releases were developed and disseminated.</li> <li>• Facilitated the promotion of the new school in Beverly Hills by assisting with developing and disseminating two press releases, two social media posts and one radio interview.</li> <li>• Supported the MoET’s Communications Unit in developing press releases and social media posts to highlight MoET achievements and observance days.</li> <li>• Supported formatting different reports (VAESP quarterly and annual reports), JSR presentations and report, and the Vanuatu Australia School Community report. In addition, formatted the Primary school in Vanuatu Gendered expectations, roles and</li> </ul>

**VAESP Sub-activity**

**Communications support**

	<p>results, Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion Strategy and the Vanuatu Primary School Infrastructure Guidelines.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supported the formatting of MoET’s Q3 and Q4 reports.</li> <li>• Organised photoshoots in Erakor School, Beverly Hills Primary School, D-Ocean ECCE, Natawa Primary School, Santo East ECCE, Santo East Primary School and Seaside Community School, including a child with disability.</li> <li>• Delivered four training sessions: two on report writing with VAESP and MoET, one training session on speech writing and one basic photography skills training.</li> <li>• Designed, approved, printed and disseminated the school grant program posters, implemented the school grant program communication through radio messages, three SMS, four Facebook posts, a radio interview, and three videos.</li> <li>• Supported the MoET for Children’s Day and the launch of the Early Childhood Development Policy.</li> <li>• Designed, received approval, printed, and distributed the national and provincial factsheets in English and French, including posters and pull-up banners.</li> <li>• VAESP developed and finalised the 2024 calendar in English and French. The artworks will need to be updated in quarter one of 2024 due to the change of Minister.</li> <li>• Supported MoET in selecting promotional materials, pictures and videos summarising 2023 activities for the Prime Minister’s Office.</li> <li>• Regular updates of the MoET website.</li> </ul>
<p><b>1.2.2</b> Parent support program</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development and implementation of PSP communications strategy – 600 posters and seven pull-up banners have been printed and sent to the provinces, Facebook posts, press releases, radio messages, radio interviews, and one SMS sent to mobile users.</li> </ul>
<p><b>1.4.1</b> Emergency Response Fund</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MoET developed two contingency plans – one following TC Judy and Kevin and one following TC Lola.</li> <li>• Attendance and contribution to the Education Emergency Cluster.</li> <li>• Inputs in the MoET Emergency Response Plan.</li> <li>• Support for the MoET in developing five press releases, more than 900 radio ads, seven SMS and 59 social media posts during the emergency response phase.</li> <li>• Testing of the free access to the MoET website with Digicel and Vodafone communication providers.</li> <li>• Reactivation and testing of the MoET toll-free line on 160.</li> <li>• Partnerships with the Water Cluster and the MoET water, sanitation and hygiene team to prepare and disseminate water preservation and sanitation messages targeting schools.</li> <li>• Partnerships with Save the Children and the MoET National Program Manager to prepare the psycho-socio messages targeting schools.</li> <li>• Support for communicating with the partners on the actions to be taken – extraction of the data from Kobo for the National Disaster Management Office, Department of Water and the Food Cluster.</li> <li>• Support Partners Communication (Department of Water &amp; Food Cluster) on key actions to be taken after results from the National Disaster Management Office and Kobo assessment data.</li> </ul>

<b>VAESP Sub-activity</b>	<b>Communications support</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Handing over 19 classrooms fixed by the Australian Defence Force in Etas after the twin cyclones. Ensuring support for logistics, program, media, photo documentation and others.</li> <li>• Facilitated video and photo shooting in affected schools.</li> <li>• VAESP organised the Vanuatu Australia School Community Grant study presentation in front of the SMT and development partners.</li> </ul>
<b>3.1.1</b> Strengthening ICT systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular communication updates of the MoET website.</li> </ul>
<b>3.1.2</b> Supporting statistical digest and key education factsheets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design, approve, print, and distribute the national and provincial factsheets in English and French.</li> </ul>
<b>3.2.2</b> Strengthening management systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support to the MoET School Grant Program: design, approval, printing, and distribution of the school grant program posters, implementation of the communications on the school grant program – radio messages, three SMS, four Facebook posts, a radio interview, and three videos.</li> <li>• Support the VAESP Steering Committee.</li> </ul>

## Vanuatu Education Support Program Phase 2

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Oi prinsipol oli mas kolem 160  
blong ripotem ol damej mo  
situesen blong skul folem TC  
Judy mo Kevin.



Oi skul oli  
mas open  
bakegen  
long Mandei  
13 Maj 2023.



*Provaedem mentol  
sapot long ol studen*

Figure 17: Examples of artworks created following the tropical cyclones Judy and Kevin

## 5 Sustainability

As an education program embedded within MoET, VAESP contributes to sustainable outcomes by ensuring alignment with the Government of Vanuatu's priorities, staffing, timelines and activities. All VAESP plans and activities aim to feed into, support and enhance local systems and leadership by MoET, including supporting the professional development of government staff. Pillar 3 Management explicitly targets strengthening MoET's capacity to manage an efficient and evidence-based education system so that improvements made through the Access and Quality Pillar activity areas are recognised and can be scaled nationally. Aligning with the Government of Vanuatu's systems and capacities is critical to the sustainability of VAESP investments and results.

In partnership with VAESP, MoET has contributed to develop capacity within the ministry and education provincial offices and among teachers in inclusive education, ECCE, school leadership, women's leadership in education, ICT and financial management, statistical data collection and analysis. VAESP will continue to support MoET to develop key capabilities through resources, technical support, training, and financial support.

VAESP always considers the fiscal impact of activities and supports MoET with analysis of the fiscal landscape and finance and administration advice. VAESP's work with MoET's Directorate of Finance and Administration and regular Context Analysis enable sector stakeholders to gauge Ministry's management capabilities and fiscal capacity, to inform planning for sustainability.

Some ways VAESP works to support local leadership and sustainability include:

- Developing annual work plans in close collaboration with MoET staff and aligning them with MoET's business plans.
- Ensuring VAESP's M&E plan reflects MoET business planning and priority areas while supporting the development of MoET's M&E.
- Designing VAESP staffing structures to mirror MoET, with VAESP Activity Coordinators supporting MoET Activity Managers.
- Using official statistics from the OV as much as possible and investing in developing the capacity of MoET systems to deliver quality collection and analysis of data.
- Requiring VAESP staff and advisers to demonstrate a strong understanding of Vanuatu and the education sector; with an emphasis on experience with MoET, Vanuatu or the Pacific.
- Ensuring all VAESP-supported activities share MoET branding and follow MoET style guidance.
- Considering fiscal implications of VAESP-supported activities to ensure MoET will be able to institutionalize them beyond the program's lifetime.

## 6 Devolution to provinces

In line with national priorities, devolution is embedded in MoET management strategies to achieve strong literacy and numeracy outcomes for students. MoET's commitment to devolution is reflected in the EoPO for VAESP's Pillar 3 Management (see section 2.5). The year's highlights are included in this section.

### Context

In 2023, the national review of the NSDP recommended greater autonomy and resourcing for provincial and area council levels of government. This included a recommendation to restructure provincial administrations to include main government services, including education. In response, the Government of Vanuatu strengthened area councils' capacity to assist provincial governments in implementing devolution policies by recruiting area council secretaries and area administrators and restructuring the budget through the six provincial government structures under the Department of Local Authorities, Ministry of Internal Affairs. These initiatives should facilitate leadership and decision-making at provincial and area council levels.

In support of devolution, VAESP works with MoET to strengthen connectivity and access to data at provincial levels, improve provincial systems and enhance the capability of province based educators. Provincial education officers play a key role in supporting school principals and teachers. However, they face challenges, including the geography and lack of essential services on the islands. Unstable communications services and limited access to timely finances hamper support reaching schools. 2023 saw a number of challenges, including the impact of the three TCs and the on-going lack of staff at the provincial level, designated to support schools, since School Improvement Officers and Inspectors were disbanded. Achievements

### Strengthening provincial management systems – Engaging provinces in MoET annual business planning

The ESD brought all provincial education officers together on Tanna for a joint workshop on corporate and business planning and monitoring in Q3. The 2024 Business Plan was developed through a consultative process during this workshop. This wider engagement of Provincial staff marked a shift to greater participation in planning. Previously, only the provincial PEOs were called to Vila to be presented with the MoET Business Plan developed at the central level. VAESP provided technical support to MoET officers facilitating the summit.

### Province Financial Management Systems – Capacity Assessment

VAESP supported a study in July 2023 to determine each province's capacity to manage increased responsibilities. The report is currently being reviewed. The Financial Management Adviser undertook this study with support from the School Finance Officer.

### Supporting Provincial education officers

VAESP supported MoET in delivering a Leadership and Management workshop in Port Vila to develop the capacity of 14 provincial education officers, comprising 11 men and three women. The objective of the workshop was for the PEO's to gain several skills, ranging from using OV and understanding about standard education indicators to learning how to draft policies. This training aims at equipping provincial education officers with the skills to support schools draft, implement and evaluate their School Strategic Plans, as well as effectively engage in decentralization and devolution initiatives. Participants who could not travel to the capital due to flight cancellations joined remotely from Torba and Malampa. In 2024 this training program will continue, and Education Authorities officers will also be invited to attend them.

### Implementing the new curriculum

CDU worked with VAESP support to continue strengthening the capacity of provinces to implement the new curriculum effectively. In 2023, VAESP and CDU strengthened Provincial Education Offices capacity as follows:

1. Supporting the development of the Curriculum Improvement Program (CIP) and its Provincial Literacy Strategy with its strong focus on strengthening the capacity of Provincial Education Offices to implement the curriculum.
2. Recruiting a VAESP Curriculum Improvement Coordinator and CDU Literacy specialists to support the CDU's vision and team in coordinating and providing training, coaching, and mentoring to PEOs, provincial education officers and principals.
3. Providing a provincial grant to support the CDU's devolution strategy.

4. Funding CDU activities to strengthen curriculum implementation at the provincial and school levels.
5. Providing training for Provincial Education Officers so they can train principals and teachers to improve teaching and learning in the classroom.

### **Province-led emergency assessments**

Provincial PEOs demonstrated increased capacity and confidence in conducting emergency assessments following TC Lola in October 2023. Following TCs Judy and Kevin earlier in the year, school assessments were undertaken by MoET and development partner staff with support from the provincial education offices. Following TC Lola, in October 2023, the assessment was done directly by schools and provincial education officers without staff travelling from MoET's central office. Although the assessments took additional time, provincial PEOs were able to complete the assessments independently.

# 7 Program management

## 7.1 Governance

### Accountability to sector stakeholders

The VAESP Steering Committee met three times in 2023. On 13 December 2023, the VAESP Team Leader shared the draft of the 2023 Annual Plan with DFAT and MoET for their review and feedback. Save the Children and UNICEF participated as observers in VAESP Steering Committee Meetings with a standing agenda item included to provide time to hear program updates to ensure coordination across key education sector partners.

VAESP coordinates with DFAT at weekly meetings between DFAT's program manager and senior program manager and VAESP's Deputy Team Leader and Team Leader. These meetings are a key element in enabling accountability and transparency with DFAT, given the program's flexibility to respond to the Ministry's emerging needs.

The Team Leader also regularly meets with MoET's Director General and Directors. Meetings with the Director General are held weekly, and meetings with other directors are convened as needed. The Team Leader also maintains monthly meetings with other key development partners, such as Save the Children and UNICEF.

### Team meetings and oversight

Internally, Executive Management Team meetings occur fortnightly. Participants include the contractor representative, program management staff and VAESP's human resource business partner to ensure the program has the required support and guidance. Lessons from other programs are shared strategically when opportunities or challenges arise.

VAESP also holds weekly stand-up meetings and monthly team meetings to ensure communication and coordination between VAESP staff and management. These meetings build cohesion, keep team members updated with sub-activity progress, provide a safe space to share questions and concerns around implementation issues, and strengthen the team's shared purpose.

Additionally, the team holds quarterly budget review meetings. These meetings focus on updating the budget, considering circumstances and emerging priorities.

## 7.2 VAESP reporting and deliverables

Table 7 below provides information on the milestones and deliverables during 2023.

Table 5: VAESP reporting and deliverables.

Deliverable	Due Date 2023	Status
Milestone 7 COVID-19 Impact Study	January	Approved
Milestone 21 VAESP II Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework	January	Approved
Milestone 22 VAESP II Quarter 1 & 2 Reports and Context Analysis	January	Approved
Milestone 8 2022 Statistical Digest published on the MoET website	March	Approved
Milestone 23 VAESP II 2023 Annual Plan	April	Approved
Milestone 24 VAESP II 2022 Annual Report and Context	May	Approved
Milestone 25 VAESP II MoET Public Financial Management Update	June	Approved
Milestone 26 VAESP II Q1 and Q2 and Context Analysis	August	Approved
<b>Program Deliverable 9</b> OV Options Paper	November	Approved
Milestone 27 VAESP II 2024 VAESP Annual Plan	December	Pending

## 7.3 Financial management and budget

VAESP's financial management is sound and supported by Tetra Tech's strong internal systems and processes. Throughout the reporting period, the project accountant regularly reviewed financial systems and monitored integrity in the face of existing and emerging risks (remotely).

Risk and fraud mitigation remains a high priority and is the responsibility of all program staff. Fraud and financial management training is provided to VAESP staff annually. This has expanded to include MoET counterparts in May 2024. The financial team also provided information sessions to the Ministry to strengthen financial knowledge and encourage process compliance.

An independent audit for 2021 was undertaken by I-count, alongside an internal Tetra Tech audit. The independent audit concluded that the financial system and management controls are effective. Several process improvements were identified in the internal audit and are currently underway.

## 7.4 Program resourcing and expenditure

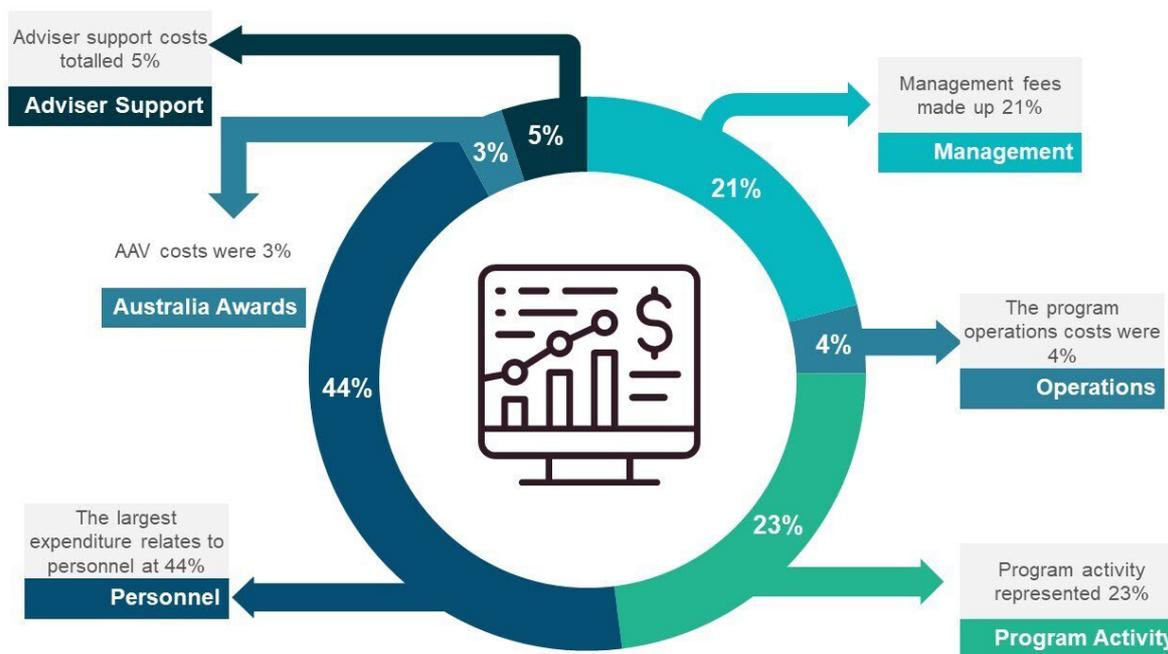
Figure 20 outlines the proportion of program expenditure lines for 2023. AUD 5,330,593 was expended during the reporting period. This was almost 1.2 million below the budgeted figure in the Annual Plan due to the impact of the cyclones and states of emergency on planned activities. This

reduced program activity expenditure to 23% of all spending (Australia Awards Vanuatu comprising 3%).

Given the reduction in program activity expenditure, the proportion of expenditure on personnel appears higher than usual, at 44%. Adviser Support and Operations costs were 9% as usual, and the management fees (milestones included) made up 21%, with a significant number of reports and deliverables in the reporting period.

The program activity shortfall occurred mainly due to low expenditure on activities under Pillar 2 Quality. Most of these activities have been postponed until 2024, as detailed in Section 2 VAESP Progress Report. The budget expended is assessed as appropriate and in line with Ministry priorities.

Figure 18: Annual program expenditure



In terms of total Program Activity expenditure, the following proportions are the planned allocations and actual expenditure by respective pillars:

Table 6: Proportion of planned budget allocations against actual expenditure by pillar

Pillars	Planned Allocation (%)	Actual Expenditure (%)
Access	19	26.8
Quality	58	28.2
Management	23	45

The variances observed above are the result of multiple factors. The Quality pillar was underspent because four sub-activities were postponed and two sub-activities were amalgamated into another sub-activity. Overspending under the Access and Management pillars was a result of sub-activity budgets being more than expected. Access implemented many communications activities while the Management pillar implemented many leadership and management training activities.

## 7.5 Staffing

Technical assistance during the reporting period involved long-term personnel and a pool of short-term technical personnel supporting MoET in specific activities and developments. The annual cycle of short-term technical assistance input on the program increases after the Annual Plan is approved and activities ramp up. Short-term technical assistance inputs were approximately 691.2 days, compared to the 640 days estimated in the Annual Plan – excluding Australian Awards Vanuatu (AAV) and sub-contractors such as data analysts.

Several changes in 2023 involved the following:

- The ICT Adviser was expected to move to a full-time position, but this was adjusted and he remained a short-term adviser (a key factor in the STA variance from the forecast).
- The Anglophone and Francophone Teaching Additional Language specialists commenced.
- A new position, Curriculum Improvement Coordinator, was created and recruited.
- The Curriculum Development Adviser’s contract concluded, and a new Curriculum Adviser was recruited and is expected to be mobilised in 2024.
- One Financial Management Adviser’s contract concluded.
- The AAV Manager resigned, and an AAV Officer and two Consultants, one permanent and one casual, were recruited.
- The M&E Adviser resigned at the end of the year and was replaced by two in-house specialists drawn from Tetra Tech’s dedicated Research, Monitoring and Evaluation practice.
- A range of casual short-term contracts supplemented the team, supporting specific project activities, such as curriculum writing, translation, research enumerators, data analysis and communication reviewers.

Technical assistance days and staff listings can be viewed in **Annexes V**.

## 7.6 Annual Expenditure Analysis

Annual expenditure was around 82% of the 2023 Annual Plan forecast. Table 6 provides a breakdown across each category and the percentage expenditure compared to the Annual Plan budget.

Table 7: 2023 Annual expenditure

<b>Cost Items</b>	<b>Annual Plan (A\$)</b>	<b>Actuals (A\$)</b>	<b>% of the budget (per approved Annual Plan)</b>
Long-term Personnel	769,936	692,418	90%
Short-Term Adviser Costs + Pool (Adviser Remuneration Framework)	498,610	706,237	142%
Long-term Personnel (non- Adviser Remuneration Framework)	690,298	809,183	117%
Short-Term Personnel (non- Adviser Remuneration Framework)	142,864	118,620	83%
Adviser Support Costs	286,919	282,106	98%
In-Country Operational Recurring Costs	183,109	195,007	106%
Program Activities – VAESP II	2,367,071	1,232,142	52%
Program Activities – Australia Awards Vanuatu	160,920	152,791	95%
Management Fee + Milestone	1,377,823	1,142,089	83%
<b>Total Invoiced</b>	<b>6,477,550</b>	<b>5,330,593</b>	<b>82%</b>

## **7.7 Tetra Tech Corporate Support**

### **IT and Business Systems Support**

Tetra Tech's IT and Business Systems Support is crucial to VAESP. This support includes technical expertise, assistance and maintenance to ensure the smooth operation of VAESP's IT infrastructure and business systems. In particular, the IT and Business Systems teams have developed the new MyCOZ SharePoint as VAESP's central Intranet hub, providing users with comprehensive information, key contacts, and relevant resource links.

### **Human Resource Support**

Due to its flexible nature, VAESP is human resource intensive. Tetra Tech provides corporate support to assist the program's human resource demands, ensuring it can deliver on its promise to be flexible and responsive to the needs of the Ministry. The Ministry values capacity building, and knowledge transfer is most effective through trusted counterparts. The programs' human resource partner meets regularly with personnel responsible for human resource matters and provides appropriate support and guidance to the management team, including localisation matters and opportunities for professional development.

### **Finance**

The team also receives monthly support from finance, particularly regarding invoicing. There is also a monthly community of practice on the financial system, QuickBooks, to discuss challenges and share best practices.

### **Legal Support**

Contractual systems and legal support are provided to the team, including drafting contracts, screening suppliers, and providing advice to encourage suppliers' compliance with appropriate policies, such as child protection and modern-day slavery.

### **Research, Monitoring and Evaluation Support**

Tetra Tech's in-house Research, Monitoring and Evaluation (RME) team works alongside the VAESP Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, to ensure informed and tailored support is continuously available. RME provides guidance on best practices, facilitates local capacity development, and delivers high quality outputs for DFAT.

The RME advisers and VAESP meet weekly to provide strategic and technical advice on monitoring, evaluation and reporting, and work together through the VAESP M&E workplan. VAESP can draw on other research, monitoring and evaluation team members with high level skills to meet VAESP needs. RME also provides additional support on GEDSI initiatives. This is an efficient approach to identifying additional technical skills that complement the VAESP's capacity.

## 8 Risk management

This section summarises the risks with the highest potential of occurring and impacting VAESP to the greatest degree. A mitigation strategy accompanies each risk in Table 7.

Table 8: Main issues and risks affecting VAESP II during the reporting period

Risk	Risk level	Mitigation strategy
Natural disasters	High	Ongoing monitoring through official channels, emergency preparedness plan up to date, emergency toll-free number tested and functioning, and general communication support in Port Vila and travelling team members.
Staff being stranded in remote locations due to airline cancellations	Moderate	Reduced travel to remote locations, particularly during the cyclone season.
Unaddressed MoET vacancies	High	Raising any issues and potential options to resolve with appropriate directors. Planning and implementation flexibility.
Changes to MoET Directors	High	Working with PEOs so that they understand the scope and support that VAESP provides and are not reliant on just the Director level.
Minister changes	Moderate	Work closely with MoET counterparts to understand policy and priority changes and its implications on activity plans.
Lack of institutional clarity	High	Ongoing support to key decision makers and specialist support to develop systems and process that bring greater clarity

## 9 Lessons learned

### Prepare contingencies to ensure alternative modes of training delivery can happen if flights do not occur as expected

The unreliability of Vanuatu's aviation services, whether domestic or international, is a commonly known challenge. VAESP team members have experienced multiple flight delays and cancellations and have been stranded on islands for several days. These logistical challenges have led to difficulties delivering training sessions in other provinces. To manage these challenges, VAESP has begun and will continue to plan for contingency arrangements, working closely with MoET and provincial education offices to ensure training workshops continue. This may mean considering online training and how this might impact the development of content. VAESP's investments in enhancing ICT capacity within schools and at the provincial level will support these efforts.

### Continue building MoET resilience and post-disaster response to natural disasters

Natural disasters are a frequent occurrence. In 2023, the two category five TCs, Judy and Kevin, in late February, and the off-season category four TC Lola significantly impacted VAESP-supported activities. VAESP's flexible management shifted resources to support the response, participating in the education cluster of the Emergency Operations Centre. Learning from these emergency responses and the impact of the TCs on the education sector in Vanuatu, VAESP is working closely with MoET to strengthen the Ministry's resiliency and its response capacity. VAESP contributes to the following initiatives:

- Reviewing the Infrastructure Guidelines for Primary Schools in Vanuatu, aligning them to regional construction standards. These guidelines will contribute to sturdier primary schools, enabling them to withstand TCs and earthquakes better. These guidelines may be reviewed in 2024 once the Vanuatu Building Code is revised.
- Continued support to the MoET Disaster Recovery Plan, emergency assessment reporting dashboards, toll-free line to MoET and small aperture terminal installation in three provinces.

### Develop an education sector-wide results and M&E framework

The JSR was held in June 2023 and marked a planning milestone for the Vanuatu education sector. MoET, civil society stakeholders and development partners came together to review achievements and gaps in the education sector. This demonstrated to all participants the importance of regular structured joint progress reviews. The JSR findings revealed a sector monitoring gap resulting from the lack of a common sector results framework. VAESP supported MoET in developing the results framework in 2023, which is currently under MoET's review. In 2024, VAESP will work with the PPU to develop the M&E Plan based on the results framework in alignment with the Corporate Plan.

### Further strengthen VAESP monitoring and reflection processes

Through consultations with MoET counterparts and VAESP colleagues, there are indications that M&E processes could be further strengthened. The current activity planning process, including a reflection of the year, is reported to be working well. However, VAESP's data collection and reflection could be enhanced through more rigorous impact measurement, improving reporting against outcomes. The experience with the three TCs in 2023 highlighted areas for improvement going forward, as the impact of MoET staff being directed to emergency response meant that many 'less urgent' activities did not proceed. This significantly impacted activities supported by VAESP, as detailed throughout this report. In 2024, VAESP's M&E team plans to map all data collection tools, including for related activities in MoET, to assess and reduce duplication, enhance efficiency, and improve reporting quality. VAESP will also strengthen its planning and consultation processes by holding two Pause and Reflect (PAR) sessions. These sessions will be held in March and August, allowing all VAESP stakeholders to learn and contribute to VAESP's progress reflection process. This is particularly important as VAESP Phase II enters its third year to its completion, in December 2026. It will also provide VAESP activity coordinators with evidence to assist MoET officers to make informed and transparent decisions.

### **Continue to strengthen cyber security awareness and systems in VAESP**

Since the last cyber-attacks on VAESP and the Government of Vanuatu, VAESP has consistently strengthened its security systems, including training staff on cyber security awareness. In 2024, VAESP will continue to deliver cybersecurity training and strengthen its online systems. Considering the expected expansion of online services for teaching and learning and SBM, VAESP will also focus its support on ensuring MoET's systems are safe from cyber-attacks.

## Annex I: Sub-activity achievement and completion

Table 9: 2023 Sub - activity achievement against targets

Sub-activity (2023)	Sub-activity (2023)	Annual budget spent (%)	Annual target	Actual achieved	Indicator	Data source	Target Rating
1.1.1	Supporting MIS		10 MIS participate in the evaluation of six IE resources.	15 MIS participated.	# of MIS that participate in IE resource evaluation	IE survey and data collection.	Achieved
			45 MIS are using six IE resources.	45 MIS are using six IE resources.	# of MIS using IE resources		Achieved
1.1.2	Support to IE policy review	0%	IE policies are drafted and submitted.	Revised IE policy planning meeting was postponed to 2024 to finalise the draft IE policy	Progress of IE policies	MoET progress reporting.	Not achieved
1.1.3	Women leadership in education provincial network	16%	Deliver PSP workshops in 12 communities by December 2022	Workshop delivered to 30 participants.	# of male principals or teachers who participate in professional development training at the provincial level.	Women leadership in education provincial network participant data collection.	Not achieved
1.2.1	Support to corporate education communication	49%	24 Communication products (press releases, posters, social media, radio, SMS) created.	37 communications products created.	# of MoET communications products created.	VAESP progress reporting.	Achieved
1.2.2	ECCE parent support program	98%	400 parents participate in community forums in Torba Province (incl. 12 parents in	1,065 parents participated in community forums in Torba.	# of parents engaged through PSP.	VAESP progress reporting.	Achieved

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			the Mamma's Literacy activity).				
1.3.1	Asset Master Plan	101%	The asset Master Plan is ready for submission to the SMT.	Asset Master Plan presented to SMT.	% of Asset Master Plan completed.	VAESP Progress report.	Achieved
1.4.1	Emergency response fund	52%	N/A	VESP supported MoET with technical advice and communications support.	N/A	VAESP progress reporting	N/A
2.1.1	Supporting the creation and maintenance of a teachers' register system	65%	Design the teachers' register system and register all teachers' information in a comprehensive database	Documents reviewed, including endorsement of policies.	% of teacher database completed.	Interviews with TSC Sample data analysed	Not achieved
2.1.2	Supporting the implementation of the teacher qualification upgrade policy and the development of the National Teacher Development Plan	0%	Draft NTDP finalised for consultation.	No draft of NTDP.	Progress on finalisation of the NTDP.	MoET Progress rating	Not achieved
2.1.3	Supporting teacher qualification upgrading	0%	Report on the review of the Diploma in Education completed	The review was completed and a report is forthcoming.	# of teachers that complete two modules of Diploma of Education.	National University, School of Education registration data.	Not achieved

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2.1.4	Beginning teachers' induction program	NA	60 new teachers are surveyed.	Zero teachers are surveyed.	# of beginning teachers surveyed.	Survey results.	Not achieved
2.2.1	Strengthening provincial curriculum implementation	13%	18 Provincial facilitators participate in six weeks of training.	22 facilitators trained.	# of Provincial facilitators participate in six weeks of training	Workshop registration and activity monitoring.	Achieved
			A total of 120 schools benefit from provincial support to improve their practices.	Zero schools benefited from support.	# of schools that benefit from provincial support to improve their practices		Not achieved
			60 principals receive training and support to implement the curriculum.	60 principals trained.	# of principals who receive training and support to implement the curriculum.		Achieved
2.2.2	Strengthening curriculum communication strategy	NA	Develop and implement two strategic communications tools.	Refer to 2.26	# of strategic communications tools developed and implemented.	Activity monitoring.	Amalgamated
2.2.3	Supporting Junior Secondary Curriculum Development	NA	Train 170 Year 7 teachers.	174 Year 7 teachers trained.	# of teachers trained in Malampa and Epi	Workshop registration.	Achieved
2.2.4	Strengthening ECCE curriculum	28%	Deliver training to 62 MEOs.	62 MEO trained.	# of lesson plans reviewed	CDU Monitoring	Achieved
			Conduct monitoring visits in all six provinces.	Conduct monitoring visits in all six provinces	Progress on the review of the ECCE curriculum		Not achieved

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2.2.5	Supporting vernacular instruction study	NA	Finalise the vernacular study design and begin monitoring six communities in the longitudinal study.	Refer to 2.26	Extent to which the report on the vernacular language of instruction study is complete.	CDU Monitoring.	Amalgamated
2.2.6	Supporting strategic approaches to strengthening literacy K-6	4%	Draft Literacy Strategy Developed.	Draft Literacy strategy developed.	Extent to which the report on the vernacular language of instruction study is complete.	Workshop registration.	Achieved
			Two strategic communication tools were developed and implemented. Six vodcasts were developed outlining language teaching and learning approaches.	Two tools were developed: a mind map and a Parents & community video.  Two vodcasts were developed.			Achieved  Not achieved
2.3.1	Supporting zone data clubs	0%	12 zones participate in at least one data club pilot activity.	Zero zone participated.	# of zones that participate in data club meetings.	Workshop registration.	Not achieved
2.3.2	Supporting ARTTLe	3%	Train 200 principals in ARTTLe awareness.	22 principals trained.	# of principals trained in ARRTLe awareness	Workshop registration.	Not achieved
2.3.3	Support to VANSTA	107%	Finalise VANSTA Test for Years 4, 6 and 8.	VANSTA pilot test.	% of VANSTA tests finalised.	OV or CDU monitoring.	Not achieved
2.4.1	Supporting review of VNCS (Stage 1)	0%	Complete a report and recommendations to guide a review of the VNCS.	Data collection completed and waiting report.	Extent to which the VNCS report and recommendations are completed.	CDU Monitoring.	Not achieved

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2.4.2	Supporting review of teachers guides for Years 1-3	1%	Complete a report and recommendations to advise a review of the Years 1-3 teacher guides.	Data collection completed to support report development.	Extent to which the report and recommendations are completed.	CDU Monitoring.	Not achieved
2.4.3	Supporting literacy resources for schools	58%	Develop literacy resources, including ECCE Bislama Phonics resource, 30 K-3 Radio Reading Programs, 27 words of the week publications	ECCE Bislama Phonic resource has been developed. Others that were planned for development have not been	# and type of literacy resources developed.	CDU Monitoring.	Not achieved
3.1.1	Strengthening ICT in schools	107%	Implementation of Internet connectivity to four targeted schools.	One school with internet connectivity.	# of schools receiving internet connectivity.	IT Unit Monitoring.	Not achieved
3.1.2	Supporting statistical digest and key education factsheets	25%	2022 Statistical Digest published.	2022 statistical digest waiting for approval.	Progress of 2022 Statistical Digest published.	PPU Monitoring	Not achieved
3.1.3	Supporting OV data entry	-4%	OV policy reviewed.	The first draft of the OV policy was reviewed.	Progress on review of OV policy	IT Unit Monitoring.	Not achieved
			Schools are entering enrolment data into OV.	Schools are entering enrolment data into OV.	% of schools entering enrolment data into OV.		Achieved
3.1.4	Supporting the compulsory education study	NA	Implementation plan for the compulsory education study developed ( <i>based on the Council of Ministers' decision – yet to be made</i> ).	Presentation of the Council of Ministers' paper still pending.	Progress of implementation plan.	PPU Monitoring.	Not achieved

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3.1.5	Supporting OV integration	24%	Integration of OV with Civil Registry, Immigration, SmartStream, and Pac-SIMs is successfully implemented.	The First Integration happened while SmartStream will happen in 2024.	Progress of implementation plan.	IT Unit Monitoring.	Not achieved
3.2.1	Supporting the development of school procurement guidelines	0%	Deliver school procurement manual training to 40 officers in central MoET and Shefa provincial staff and principals.	Zero training participants, but the revision of the manual was completed.	Progress of OV Intergrations implemented	IT Unit Monitoring	Not achieved
3.2.2	Strengthening management systems	62%	Train 12 MoET staff and 20 key principals in finance management training.	560 MoET staff and key principals trained (MoET quarterly report).	# Finance Management Training delivered to MoET staff and principals.	OV Attendance Register.	Achieved
3.2.3	Supporting planning	52%	Six provinces supported to develop business plans.	Six provinces supported.	# of provincial business plans developed.	PPU Monitoring.	Achieved
3.2.4	Supporting the alignment of M&E systems	20%	Develop MoET M&E Plan.	Results matrix now under review.	Progress on M&E Plan.	PPU Monitoring.	Not achieved
3.2.5	Supporting the Joint Sector Review	55%	Deliver JSR Aid Memoire with PPU.	Aid memoire delivered within MoET.	Progress of JSR Aid Memoire.	PPU Monitoring.	Achieved
3.2.6	Support to review IT policy	73%	MoET's IT policy is updated and reviewed with a costed plan.	Draft of IT policy.	% of MoET IT policy updated and reviewed.	PPU Monitoring.	Not achieved

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3.3.1	Supporting school leaders' certificate training	28%	57 school leaders graduate from a certified course in leadership and management training.	42 school leaders graduated.	# of enrolled school leaders who complete leadership and management training.	OV Attendance Register.	Not achieved
3.3.2	Supporting principals' handbook training	10%	Appointed principals inducted and appraised.	Five appointed principals inducted and appraised.	% of newly appointed principals inducted and appraised	SBM Monitoring	Achieved
3.3.3	Strengthening provincial coordination and support	88%	Provincial education officers attend two capacity building workshops (March/October).	Two capacity building workshops.	# of workshops conducted.	SBM Monitoring.	Achieved
3.3.4	Supporting the implementation of MQS	80%	All schools in Torba are surveyed for MQS baseline.	All islands in Torba except Ureparapara Island were surveyed for MQS baseline.	# of schools surveyed for MQS baseline.	SBM Monitoring.	Not achieved

## Annex II: Technical advice inputs

Table 10 outlines the level of technical inputs that supported the Ministry's priorities and plans during the reporting period.

Table 10: Short-Term Adviser inputs January - December 2023

Technical Assistance	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23
Monitoring & Evaluation Adviser	8.5	12	6.50	5.00	22.50	3.00	15.5	11.5	17	8	15	3.5
Disability Inclusion Adviser			5.00	5.00	4.00	12.00			10	15		0
School Grants & Rationalisation Support												
Public Finance Management Adviser			2	10	10.5	16			3			
ICT Adviser			3.5									
Corporate M&E			16.9	12	2	1.5	12.8	5.5	1	16.8	15.9	1
Australia Awards Adviser												
National Sustainable Infrastructure Development Specialist	2	6	5	4	4.5	4	5	5	4	4	13	5
In-Service Teacher Qualification Upgrade Specialist							37.75	13	13.875	10.5		4.875
Teacher Registration and Standards Adviser		9	13.5	11.5	14.5	14	11	16.5	13.5	14	11.5	0
Unallocated (including Neville Saunderson <sup>11</sup> )	8.5	5	4.3			2	1			4	7.5	7.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>19.0</b>	<b>49.0</b>	<b>59.2</b>	<b>48.5</b>	<b>73.5</b>	<b>74.5</b>	<b>117.1</b>	<b>68.5</b>	<b>83.9</b>	<b>89.3</b>	<b>65.4</b>	<b>21.9</b>

<sup>11</sup> Neville Saunderson assesses academic achievement for scholarships under the Australia Awards Vanuatu (AAV) program.

## Annex III: Staffing

Table 11: VAESP Staff List 2023

Name	Position	Staff Type	MoET Counterpart	Location	Supervisor
1. Alan Swan	Curriculum Adviser	Long-term adviser	Felicity Nilwo	CDU	David Letichevsky
2. Ben Schultz	Financial Management Adviser	Short-term adviser	Julia Whippy	MoET	David Letichevsky
3. Bruce Trief	Finance and IT Support	Locally engaged staff – full-time	NA	Vila Mall	Sani Bebe
4. Dick Hopkins	Curriculum Improvement Coordinator	Locally engaged staff – full-time	Felicity Nilwo	CDU	David Letichevsky
5. Florence Bellon	Communications and Strategic Reporting Manager	Locally engaged staff – full-time	Julia Whippy	MoET Office	David Letichevsky
6. Hansel Liunamel	AAV Officer	Locally engaged staff – full-time	NA	Vila Mall	Michael Bracher Rebecca Pryor
7. Herem Navat	Senior Education Officer	Locally engaged staff – full-time	Jean Jacques/Marcel Yamsiu/Dick Hopkins	Malapoa Office	David Letichevsky
8. Helen Tamtam	Literacy Specialist	Locally engaged staff – part-time	Marie Dolores	CDU	Alan Swan
9. Honorine Chabod	Activity Support	Locally engaged staff – full-time	N/A	Vila Mall	Roline Guila
10. Jennifer James	ECCE Specialist	Locally engaged staff – full-time	Serah Vuroburavo	MoET	Alan Swan

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<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Staff Type</b>	<b>MoET Counterpart</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Supervisor</b>
<b>11. Jill Wai</b>	M&E Officer	Locally engaged staff – full-time	Marie Keiruan	MoET Office	David Letichevsky
<b>12. Joanne Mosen</b>	Disability Inclusion Adviser	Short-term adviser	Marie Jonah	Overseas	David Letichevsky
<b>13. Johnny Ishmael</b>	Driver	Locally engaged staff – full-time	N/A	Vila Mall	Sani Bebe
<b>14. John Niroa</b>	Senior Education Officer	Locally engaged staff – full-time	Cobin Ngwero	MoET Office	Herem Navat
<b>15. Julesberto Sewere</b>	IT Officer	Locally engaged staff – full-time	Emory Tinning	MoET Office	David Letichevsky Herem Navat
<b>16. Junila Sese</b>	Australia Awards Vanuatu Alumni and Promotions Officer	Locally engaged staff – full-time	N/A	Vila Mall	Michael Bracher Rebecca Pryor
<b>17. Karl Turnbull</b>	ICT Adviser	Short-term adviser	Emory Tinning	MoET	David Letichevsky
<b>18. Leanah Tambe</b>	Teacher Training and PD	Locally engaged staff – full-time	Felicity Nilwo	CDU	Alan Swan
<b>19. Loreen Ala'Ngwele</b>	Finance Support Officer	Locally engaged staff – full-time	Felicity Nilwo	CDU	Alan Swan
<b>20. Louise Quinn</b>	In-Service Teacher Qualification Upgrade Specialist	Short-term adviser	John Kaltau	Overseas	Alan Swan
<b>21. Michael Bracher</b>	Australia Awards Vanuatu Manager	Short-term adviser	N/A	Overseas	David Letichevsky
<b>22. Mayna Pandat</b>	Administration and Finance Officer	Locally engaged staff – full-time	N/A	Vila Mall	Rebecca Pryor
<b>23. Nish Vivekananthan</b>	Financial Management Adviser	Short-term adviser	Julia Whippy	MoET	David Letichevsky

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<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Staff Type</b>	<b>MoET Counterpart</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Supervisor</b>
<b>24. Rebecca Pryor</b>	Deputy Team Leader, Operations	Long-term adviser	N/A	Vila Mall	David Letichevsky
<b>25. Roline Guila</b>	Senior Finance & Administration Officer	Locally engaged staff – full-time	N/A	Vila Mall	Rebecca Pryor
<b>26. Roy Obed</b>	Senior Education Officer	Locally engaged staff – full-time	Julia Whippy/Marcel Yamsiu	MoET Office	Herem Navat
<b>27. Sani Bebe</b>	Operations Coordinator	Locally engaged staff – full-time	N/A	Vila Mall	Rebecca Pryor
<b>28. Sarah Freeman</b>	AAV Consultant	Sub-contractor	N/A	Vila Mall	Michael Bracher Rebecca Pryor
<b>29. Sonia Wasi</b>	Gender & Inclusion Strategy Officer	Locally engaged staff – full-time	Marie Jonah	MoET Office	David Letichevsky
<b>30. Vanessa Dick</b>	Australia Awards Vanuatu Scholarships Coordinator	Locally engaged staff – full-time	N/A	Vila Mall	David Letichevsky
<b>31. Grace Nicholas</b>	M&E Specialist	Short-term adviser	N/A	Overseas	David Letichevsky
<b>32. Ellie McDonald</b>	M&E Specialist	Short-term adviser	Marie Keiruan	Overseas	David Letichevsky
<b>33. Prema Clarke</b>	M&E Adviser	Short-term adviser	Cobin Ngwero/Dick Hopkins/Jean Jacques	Overseas	David Letichevsky

# Annex IV: VAESP Organisational Chart

VESP Support for MoET - Updated on 30 October 2023  
Organisational Structure

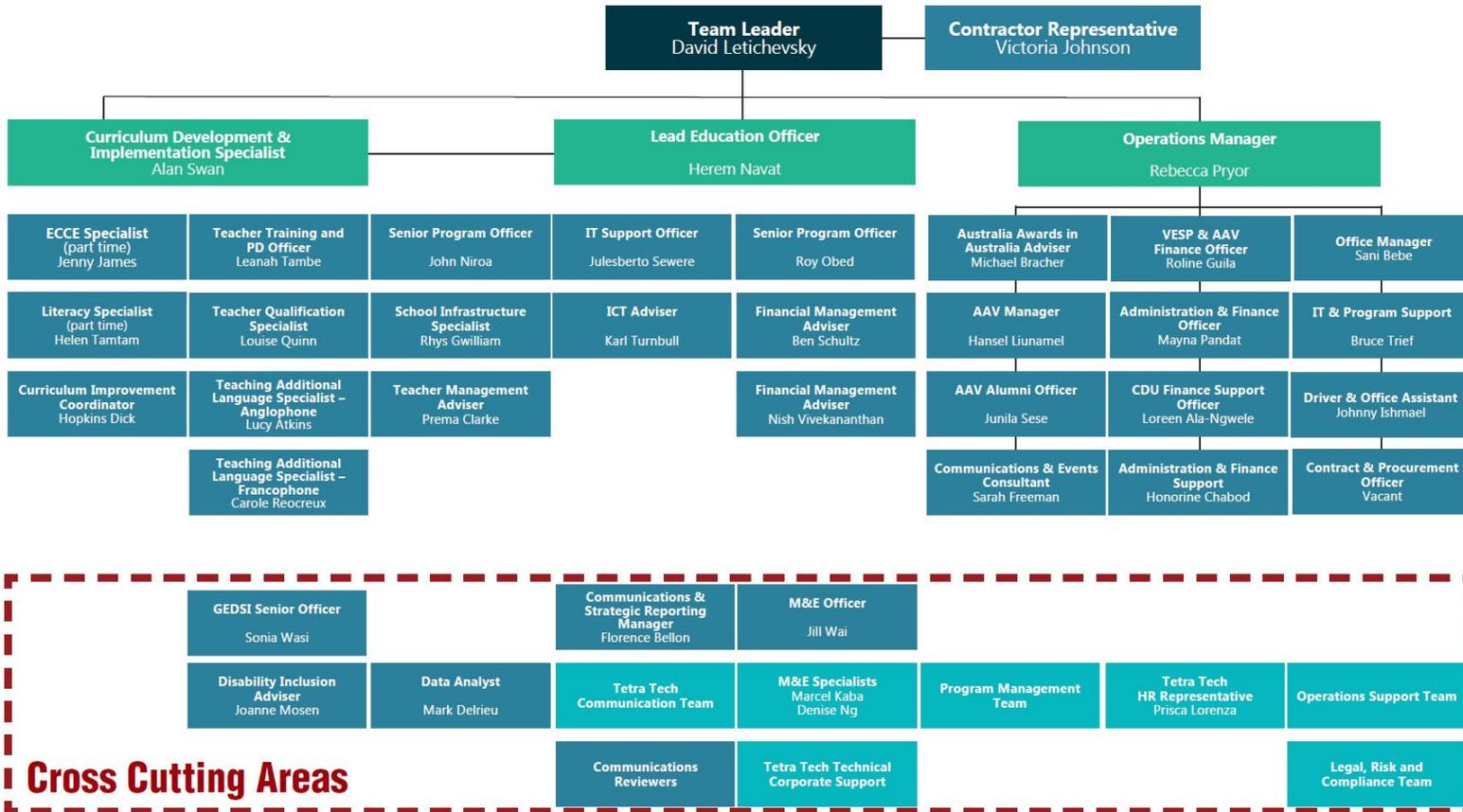


Figure 19: VAESP 2023 Organisational Structure

## Annex V: Financial Breakdown

Table 12 below breaks down VAESP spending by end-of-program outcomes. The table shows that work associated with EoPO3 (Pillar), which is largely focused on managing the education system, expended the largest proportion of VAESP funding in 2023. The biggest change was in Pillar 2 Quality, which dropped significantly. As mentioned above, this was the most impacted pillar by the halt in Ministry operations due to the states of emergency following the cyclones.

Table 12: End of program expenditure breakdown

Program Outcomes	Total 2019 (A\$)	Total 2020 (A\$)	Total 2021 (A\$)	Total 2022 (A\$)	Total 2023	Five-year %
EoPO1 (Access Pillar)	115,693	14,233	652,400	426,330	329,856.90	13%
EoPO2 (Quality Pillar)	2,758,886	1,231,646	1,487,967	1,493,019	347,543.09	64%
EoPO3 (Management Pillar)	615,917	228,971	440,746	419,905	554,742.00	20%
VAESP II Cross-Cutting Program	155,328	170,605				3%
<b>Total Program Activity Costs</b>	<b>3,645,824</b>	<b>1,645,455</b>	<b>2,581,114</b>	<b>2,339,255</b>	<b>1,232,141.99</b>	<b>100%</b>

The table below outlines the key activity areas within each pillar. It is important to note that the first three months of the calendar year often include expenditure delayed from the previous year. In terms of key expenditure per pillar:

### Access:

The asset master plan was the highest expenditure under access. Note that in 2022 this was called 1.2 Increase involvement of school communities, but in 2023 activity '1.3 Improve School Infrastructure' activity area was added.

### Quality:

Supporting the Junior Secondary Curriculum Development (Year 7 Teacher training) was the highest expenditure item within Pillar 2 Quality. Following, the 2.2.1 Strengthening Provincial Curriculum Implementation activity is the second highest expenditure item.

### Management:

Support to review the IT policy was the activity with the highest expenditure within Pillar 3 Management.

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Table 13: Key activities and expenditure under pillars

Pillar and Activity Area	Expenditure AUD
	Sum of Total \$
<b>ACCESS</b>	
1.1 Strengthen Inclusive Education	23,361.92
1.2 Increase Involvement of School Communities	128,680.70
1.3 Improve School Infrastructure* Asset Master Plan was included in 1.2 in 2022	137,371.09
1.4 Strengthen Response to Disaster	40,275.94
1.5 Supporting Monitoring **(2022 Activity Area)	167.25
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>329,856.90</b>
<b>QUALITY</b>	
2.1 Strengthening Teachers' Management	22,256.12
2.2. Strengthen teaching and learning	198,862.90
2.3. Strengthen assessment monitoring and reporting	47,256.85
2.4 Strengthen curriculum resources	69,074.11
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>347,543.09</b>
<b>MANAGEMENT</b>	
3.1 Strengthening Data Information and Knowledge Generation	59,223.44
3.2 Strengthen Policy Direction, Planning, Management and Accountability Systems	180,417.98
3.3 Strengthen School Management and Leadership	195,880.25
Personnel on management	119,220.33
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>554,742.00</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1,232,141.99</b>

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Table 14: Expenditure relating to themed categories

Expenditure categories	Total 2019 (A\$)	Total 2020 (A\$)	Total 2021 (A\$)	Total 2022 (A\$)	Total 2023 (A\$)	Total Cumulative 2019–22 (A\$)
COVID-19*	-	127,281	-	52,721.83		180,002.83
TC Harold*	-	39,946	-	-	32,463.28	72,409.28
Expenditure on gender-focused activities	59,687.83	32,943	-1,448	14.69	33,907.56	125,105.08
Expenditure focused on people with disability	16,634.48	4,194	25,440	54,687.74	4,600.62	105,556.84
Climate Change	-	-	-	-		-
Torba Province	53,734.63	18,631	101,786	135,588.71	77,970.65	387,710.99
Sanma Province	166,610.85	70,679	182,594	162,667.53	45,328.68	627,880.06
Penama Province	70,457.69	47,484	242,830	80,056.29	38,995.47	479,823.45
Malampa Province	99,922.05	81,648	111,241	62,026.5	49,775.77	404,613.32
Shefa Province	139,583.82	149,882	335,640	101,654.35	54,887.13	781,647.30
Tafea Province	84,486.46	88,634	179,609	116,365.19	72,715.82	541,810.47
Private Sector/ Sub-contracts	43,653.16	8,494	-		-	52,147.16
<b>Total</b>	<b>734,770.96</b>	<b>669,816</b>	<b>1,177,692</b>	<b>765,783</b>	<b>410,644.98</b>	<b>3,758,706.78</b>

\*COVID-19 costs were intertwined with many response strategies aimed at recovery and support following TC Harold (such as communication costs and radio podcasts).

\*\* Gender expenditure is understated, as the costs for provincial workshops have been allocated to the provinces. The women's leadership activity expenditure was approximately \$39,580.

