

## **Vanuatu Red Cross Society - EVM Peer Review Report**

### **September 2016**

#### **Background :**

Vanuatu Red Cross Society (VRCS) was supported by IFRC under the 2015 Cyclone Pam Appeal for a livelihood project “Empowering Vanua Malagwelo” hereby referred as EVM. EVM had its genesis before Cyclone Pam which is referred to as the pilot phase.

*“The EVM pilot phase has delivered practical training and information to 48 participants over the course of 4, 2week workshops. These workshops covered subjects from activities such as sewing and cooking to informative sessions on reproductive health and safe sex. Through the delivery of these workshops it has become clear that the scope to provide assistance in these young women is enormous and work of this kind must continue towards achieving gender equality in Vanuatu”*

*“The EVM project aims to empower young women by running foundation life skills workshops. The project aims to increase opportunities for future empowerment by connecting participants with organisations who can offer opportunities in continuing education, employment placement and income generation skills.”*

The 2week pilot workshop was extended by a week to a 3week workshop, with the first 2week being called **Life Skills** and the third week as **Future Pathways**, where the participants were introduced to organisations offering empowering opportunities on completion.

The first-phase of 4 residential 3week workshop was completed with 86 beneficiaries being covered by July 2016. A peer review of the same was proposed to take stock of the coverage, efficiency and effectiveness of the programme before extending it further. DPCRR APRO was requested for support in conducting the Peer Review with the audience being VRCS, IFRC, ARC and other partner stakeholders.

Cash Preparedness and Livelihood Coordinator (CPLC) of APRO, undertook the assignment from 29<sup>th</sup> September to 5<sup>th</sup> August 2016 along with a team from VRCS and made a presentation of the findings to the audience. This report follows the presentation.

#### **Process and its Limitations:**

A stake-holder meeting was facilitated by CPLC to scope out the expectation from the Peer Review with a session devoted on the SWOT of the EVM amongst the assembled stakeholders. The Peer Review team (also comprising of 2 staff of VRCS managing the project) undertook focused group discussion and key informant interviews with trainees, parents, community members, trainers and partner-stakeholders over a period of 4 days. Documents pertaining to the EVM Project were reviewed. The team also met with Resource Institutions in Port Vila involved in Skills Training as the peer review was expected to provide guidance for future programming. The scope of the peer review was limited to looking at economic empowerment and not to issues of gender equity or inclusion, given the limitation of data and time available. It is not to be considered a full-fledged evaluation. The review however was to provide guidance to the existing EVM programme for long-term development programme given the opportunities that exist and not explored, hence to be viewed in that context.

**Key Observations on Training Design:** Trainings were imparted in a rented residential setting with boarding and lodging provided at the venue. At the start of the week participants were picked up from various location by hired buses and dropped back on Friday-the end of the week. A 5day working week was followed. See annex B for more details.

1. There is no defined curricula or pedagogy for imparting the skills and non-skills component of the workshop as it was felt it need to be reviewed depending on the interest of the participants/trainees and very much dependent on the instructors creative engagement skills.
2. Over 95-100 hours of training, across 15 days, averaging to 7 hours per day was imparted in a residential setting through empaneled instructors. Some sessions were also conducted by the staff.
3. 27 different topics were taught across each workshop. The variance observed across sessions or in its duration was attributed to the availability of instructors and the feedback emerging from each training by the participants. In all there was too many topics to absorb by the participants who are school drop-out and some for years.
4. 60 % of the time was devoted to imparting practical skills, some reinforcing gender-stereotype and of marginal economic value, if not pursued at a scale for economic empowerment. Craft skills were more exploratory and dependent on the ingenuity of participants and the material in hand.
5. 23% of the workshop time was spent on self and gender related issues, such as self-esteem, hygiene, reproductive health, safe sex, nutrition, etc. Though workshop evaluation did record increase in awareness it was not possible to measure change in behavior.
6. 16 % of the time was devoted towards Future-Pathways which was primarily introduction to the agencies and these have not led to any placements through them.
7. Over 60% of the Workshop cost was spent towards accommodation and transportation of participants to the venue leaving little scope for investment in building market linkages or providing for tools and working capital to nurture economic initiatives. This, considering the alternative is not a cost-effective model.
8. 86 participants came from 18 settlements widely disbursed amongst the rural and urban areas (See Annex A). There were drop-outs in the last minute before commencing training and it had to be filled in through network contacts, and not necessarily from the planned settlement. The effectiveness in follow-up on the training imparted was reflected in the extent to which monitoring visits could not cover most participants.

**Key Observations from Trainees and Community:** 11 trainees and 5 parents were met during the course of the review in the field. A large planned assembly at Tanalou could not be.

9. Good recall of skills component of the training and relative low recall on non-skill component especially on awareness on rights and gender issues. Most participants found skill training interesting though could not practice it after the workshop due to following reasons
  - a. Material availability: Lack of tools and materials or working capital was the prime reason for most not venturing on an economic scale. Material, with exception of Jewelry from recycled material, for cooking or sewing or fabric painting was not available locally
  - b. Access to Market: Due to locational disadvantage of the settlements in the rural area, tapping market for cooked item or for sewing items was a challenge.

- c. Motivation: With exception to few, most lacked motivation to pursue the skills for income and often dropped out in course of time. Often the remoteness of the location or the lack of material and sustained support were mentioned as reasons for low motivation.
- 10. Cooking and Craft had high acceptance amongst the participants though pursued during the spare time and not as an economic supplementary income, which is also tied to lack of opportunities to market
- 11. Group ownership of sewing machines seems not be working, with those migrating to the urban areas carrying it with them and denying other members of the group. There is a need for creating collective ownership. A critical mass, for peer to peer learning, sharing and development of skills and products, is to be nurtured to transform the skills into a vocation.
- 12. Parents responses to the training varied from “it’s a waste of time”, “I did not know”, “will encourage if she is motivated”, “she needs support”. This has implication on beneficiary selection as parental consent more than the village elders seems to be critical.
- 13. Parental preference is for employment or attachment versus starting an enterprise. They while motivated to support their child do not want them to be indebted such as borrowing from microfinance institutions such as Vanwod.
- 14. The New Pathway component of the workshop has not created a demand with the participants to access opportunities. 8 of those who did, have yet to find employment through this route.
- 15. On the whole most participants have a “Feel Good Factor” about having attended the workshop and interested in attending some more but there is NO evidence to support that these workshop are empowering social or economically hence their effectiveness is questionable.

**Key Observation from Trainers/Instructors:** In all 4 trainers were interviewed. Some have extensive experience as woman entrepreneurs and have extended their skills to other institutions such as the Government, VTI and NGOs such as Oxfam. Their observations were

- 16. Need to limit the array of topics at the workshop and it need to be focused based on interest and opportunity to pursue these interest as a vocation.
- 17. There is a need for attachment or on-the-job experience and exposure to market, to go beyond class-room training setting.
- 18. A successful trainee need to be supported with tools and material and later if necessary with the working capital through linkages to financial institutions.
- 19. There is need for collective experience – especially for Sewing and Fabric Painting so that resources can be shared for production and for market access before each individual recognizes her potential.
- 20. For Handicraft – consistent support for quality guidance, innovation and improvisation is required
- 21. Most trainers feel motivated to engage with Red Cross in supporting the young women, especially in linking up to the market or for expanding opportunities.

**Key Observations of Resource Institutions in Port Villa:** Peer Review Team met up with select Resource Institutions offering skills training in Port Villa (Annex C). There are few institutions offering skills training, whil Vanuatu Qualification Authority (VQA) is setting standards for Competency and Skills Sets. IVET has been engaging with Rural Technical Institutions and VTI in taking these standard forward and is supported by Australian Aid under its programme “Skills for Economic Growth”.

22. VQA accredited institutions are willing to collaborate with Red Cross to offer skills training to young women and address gender in-equity in the skilled manpower.
23. They can adapt short-term courses to the specific interest of young women and matching the needs of the labor market with whom they are in continuous dialogue while also exploring placements to graduating trainees.
24. They can support in assessment and selection of trainees, and are willing to work with drop-outs. They can provide qualification certificate and help successful trainees in on-the-job placements.
25. VTI offers also residential accommodation within campus suited for girls.
26. The cost of a 3 week course in which 2-3 competency sets of a particular trade can be acquired works out to 300-400 CHF.
27. Hospitality, Tourism, Culinary Arts, Electrical, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning were some of the desired modules for young women in which there is demand from industry. The training resource institutions are more in-tune with the industry and been catering to specific trained manpower needs of the various sub-strata of the formal employment sector.
28. IVET has developed provincial level “Skills Plan 2015-2018”, detailing the manpower needs for Vanuatu.

**Recommendations:** This section provides the scope for re-alignment of the current livelihood programme of VRCS keep in view the key observations from the Peer Review and Opportunities that exist within Port Villa, Vanuatu so that it is cost effective and efficient in its outcome of socio-economic empowerment of young women.

**Recommendation 1. Re-Targeting:** In order for the EVM to be more focused and effective in access to skilled vocation, it should move away from focusing on adolescent girls of 16 year age and instead broaden the age-group to 18-24 years school drop outs. Skilling up underage minor girls has the implication of promoting child-labour, an unintended consequence for the project. Targeting should be based on

**A. School Drop-out in the Age Group 18-24**

- a. Working adults aspiring to be self-reliant and currently engaged in economic activities which are of subsistence nature such as 20Vatu food vending should be encouraged.
- b. It is expected that this age-group will be focused learners and aspiring to ameliorate there current economic condition at the household level. They are receptive to learning and can bring in their own experience to the skilling-up process.
- c. They are confident and willing to take risk and engage with the market and external forces and use the training imparted more effectively. They also have the support of their families in stepping-out and broadening their opportunities.

**B. Vulnerabilities:** Among the above age group prioritisation should be based on the following vulnerability criteria.

- a. Single-mothers who are self-supporting and reliant on informal economy for survival and meeting their basic needs.
- b. Those young adult who do not have parental support and eke a living on their own at the subsistence level.
- c. Those aspiring young adults from lower economic strata within the community whose household would benefit by their skill-up.

- C. **Shift from Rural to Urban:** VRCS while focusing on young working adult, should limit the catchment of new trainees to urban areas. The demographic of Efate indicate 60% of the populations reside in urban areas and also the income opportunities for young women to be more economically active and empowered are more so in the urban areas with greater access to market for products and services. While re-targeting from rural to urban the prioritization should be on
  - i. Informal settlements
  - ii. Sub-urban areas with ease of access to market and resource institutions.
- D. **The perceived benefits of re-targeting** are :
  - i. More concentrated and optimal size of catchment of potential trainees.
  - ii. Reduced cost in follow-up and in nurturing/incubating self-employed enterprises.
  - iii. More effective support post-training in link-up to employers and other resource institutions to actually operationalize the vision of “new pathway”.
  - iv. More time spent in consultation and counselling aspiring participants and their family on the realities of economic empowerment.

**Recommendation 2. Design and Delivery of Skills Training:** Given the limitation of the current EVM skills training workshop it is recommended that following be considered.

- A. **Community mobilization for participant selection:**
  - a. Wider dissemination of EVM’s skill-up programme should be undertaken besides the chief and elders in the communities to engaging with agencies working in the area, such as micro-finance partners, use of media or community boards, if it is to be focused to a particular settlement
  - b. Parental and Community involvement is required to define the vulnerable households and within which the youth to be trained. A more proactive engagement with identified youth and family is needed so that the purpose and expectation are clearly understood and at best a pledge is made by the family – to minimize drop-outs and encourage the youth to the skill-up programme.
- B. **Partnership for Institution Based (IB) and Community Based (CB) approach:**
  - a. Skills such as Hospitality, Tourism, Electrical, Air-conditioning and Refrigeration short courses are being offered by VQA accredited institutions. VRCS should enter into a MoA with these institutions to impart a tailor made competency based training programme which is in demand and has greater chance of placement.
  - b. For community based approach supporting existing Resource Persons for training and incubating enterprises for greater market access should be explored especially for Craft and Apparel sector. Training can be organised at the community level with the supervision of resource persons.
- C. **Nurturing Young Women Associations:** The current programme of forming Girls Clubs should be re-visioned not just to provide a platform for awareness raising and meeting monitoring needs of the Project but to address both practical needs of “what more beyond training” and also strategic needs of “engagement on gender empowerment issues”. It should be a platform for bringing about change within the lives of young women towards socio-economic empowerment in years to come and at the same time to broaden the pool of volunteers and supporter for Vanuatu Red Cross.

**D. Perceived benefit of Re-design and Delivery of skills training:**

- a. Higher turnover of trainees with freeing of staff time from conducting trainings to facilitating placement of participants to partnering institutions.
- b. More coverage due to cost saving from accommodation and travel expenses.
- c. More focused choice of course aligned with employment avenues in consultations with technical training institutions.
- d. Accredited course with Certification and motivation to skill-up amongst those who have successfully graduated and find the training of meaning and want to add-on new skill-sets.
- e. Opportunity to provide structured engagement for self-employed trainees to skill-up and scale-up their enterprise/vocations.
- f. Visioning beyond practical needs to strategic needs of young women empowerment.

**Recommendation 3 - Revisit Role of VRCS in EVM Project :** The above 2 recommendations calls for a revisit of the roles of staff engaged in EVM Project with much broader and sustainable engagement towards the project goal of gender and economic empowerment of young women. These are

- A. From implementer to facilitator of Skills Training - **Counsellors**
  - Matching of market demand to community needs through IB & CB partnership
  - Focusing quality and effectiveness of training imparted.
- B. To proactively **scout** for new-employment opportunities
  - Actively being involved in Placement of Trainees
  - Engaging with industry and chamber of commerce
- C. To facilitate **nurturing** of business and collectives of young women
  - Collaborate with Resource Institutions and Individuals for incubation
  - Tie-ups with financial intermediaries for credit and technical support
  - To seek start-up capital from innovation funds under CSR – Corporate Social Responsibility.
- D. Giving **visibility and voice** to Women Empowerment in Vanuatu
  - Replicating Young Women Assn and collaborating with others
  - Engaging on advocacy and entitlements.

**In Conclusion:** In conclusion the stated outcomes of EVM Project of VRCS could be better achieved if shift in targeting, design and delivery of the programme is supported by good in-house skills and capabilities in Counselling, Incubating and strengthening Visibility and Voice of young women in Vanuatu. The geographical growth of the programme can be achieved in a cascading manner such it is focused initially to a few urban locations and contiguously grows with successes and lessons learnt. It does hold promise of sustainability if re-engineered and commitment exist amongst the leadership of Vanuatu Red Cross Society.

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Annexure A

<b>EVM Training Beneficiaries</b>			
	<b><u>COMMUNITY</u></b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>Covered</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>TEOUMA</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>EPAU</b>	<b>5</b>	
<b>3</b>	<b>ETAS</b>	<b>2</b>	
<b>4</b>	<b>ETON</b>	<b>4</b>	
<b>5</b>	<b>ERATAP</b>	<b>2</b>	
<b>6</b>	<b>PANGO</b>	<b>3</b>	
<b>7</b>	<b>MELE</b>	<b>3</b>	
<b>8</b>	<b>BLACKSANDS</b>	<b>2</b>	
<b>9</b>	<b>MELEMAAT</b>	<b>6</b>	
	<b>Subtotal from pilot-phase</b>	<b>31</b>	
<b>10</b>	<b>TAKARA</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>EPULE</b>	<b>8</b>	
<b>12</b>	<b>EKIPE</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>TAGABE</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>TANOLIU</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>15</b>	<b>NAMBATU LAGOON</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>16</b>	<b>BLADINIERE</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>17</b>	<b>MALAPOA</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>18</b>	<b>PRIMA</b>	<b>1</b>	
	<b>Subtotal from new area</b>	<b>55</b>	
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>11</b>

## Annexure B

<b>EVM Traing Hours / trainee</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	
<b>Craft</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>20</b>	22%
Flower Making	4	2	2	2	
Paper Beads	0	3	3	2	
Jewelery Making	2	2	4	2	
Purse Making	8	10	12	10	
Slipper Beading	4	6	4	4	
Bracelet from Bottles		1			
<b>Apparel</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>	17%
Sewing	12	12	12	12	
Fabric Painting	6	4	4	4	
<b>Food &amp; Beverage</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>22</b>	23%
Cooking	12	12	12	12	
Baking	4	4	6	8	
Jam Making	2	2	2	2	
Vegetarian Cooking		2	2		
Peanut Butter Making	2				
Pancake Breakfast	1				
Flower Arrangeent	4		3		
<b>Opportunities Network</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>15</b>	16%
Tourism	1	1	2	2	
Agriculture	3	4	4	2	
VanWood	5	5	5	6	
Wan Smol Bag	1	2	2	2	
Youth Challenge Vanuatu	2	2	2		
Vanuatu Women's Centre	1	2	3	3	
<b>Self and Gender Issues</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>28</b>	23%
Child Protection	2	2	2	2	
Nutrition and NCD Preventative Care	2	2	2	3	
Self Esteem & Peronal Capacity Building	4			6	
Personal Hygine & Reproductive Health	5	5	5	5	
First Aid	8	12	11	12	
<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>101</b>	100%

## **Annexure C : Resource Persons and Institutions met during the Peer Review Process**

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## Annexure C : Resource Persons and Institutions met during the Peer Review Process

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