

Building on the success of the Malampa Handicraft Centre

Vanuatu Economic Empowerment

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Project Name: Skills Centres supporting Women in Provincial Vanuatu – contributing towards inclusive economic growth

Project Partner: Vanuatu Skills Partnership (TVET Program)

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Ms Gloria Jeremiah, from Malampa Provincial Council of Women and a founding member of the Malampa Handicraft Centre, surrounded by the diverse products from across the island sold through the Centre. Photo Credit: Elton Barley, Vanuatu Skills Partnership.

The Malampa Handicraft Centre is a local initiative that has become a vibrant and thriving place for producers to sell their handicrafts. It is now looking to grow from a community run store within one province, to a sustainable and

profitable social enterprise by 2020, facilitating domestic and international trade.

The Malampa Handicraft Centre is a community enterprise in Norsup, Malekula. Over 300 local producers participate in the initiative, 90 per cent of whom are women, including women with disabilities. Its aim is to unite women, men and children by providing a space to engage in sustainable business and showcase and sell locally-made crafts.

Sales at the Malampa Handicraft Centre generated 2.8 million vatu during 2016–2017. The producers retain 80 per cent of profits and the remainder is reinvested into the Malampa Handicraft Centre.

Pacific Women is supporting the Department of Women's Affairs and the Department of Industry through the Vanuatu Skills Partnership to capitalise on this potential. A three-year business plan has been developed to link rural producers from the Malampa Handicraft Centre with vendors who are based on islands that are more frequented by tourists. A suite of customised skills training is being delivered through the Vanuatu Skills Partnership, focused on product design, quality control and business management. The improvement in product quality is now also leading to interest from international buyers.

Building on the lessons from the Malampa model, handicraft centres are being established in Tafea and Torba provinces. In Torba, the handicraft centre will open in October 2017 in a newly constructed community space. In Tafea, a handicraft industry working group has been established and the Department of Industry has mobilised a full-time officer to lead the development of a new centre there, linked to the volcano-based tourism industry.

The impact of the Malampa Handicraft Centre goes beyond improving livelihoods for individual women. There have also been changes in gender-related attitudes amongst those involved with the initiative. Producer Marie-Anne says her husband now assists with her basket weaving enterprise.

‘Before the Malampa Handicraft Centre was established, men in our village never touched pandanus – it was ‘women’s work’. This has changed; with the community seeing more sales from handicrafts, the men have begun supporting the collection of pandanus.’

Marie-Anne's husband now goes into the bush to collect the pandanus leave for her baskets. He cleans, dries and prepares the wheel. Once Marie-Anne finishes weaving, her husband closes the basket with pandanus and adds the colour. Their story is just one example of the Malampa Handicraft Centre meeting its objective of bringing women and men together in this empowering space.

*This Story of Change was originally published in the [Pacific Women Annual Progress Report 2016 – 2017](#). All values are consistent with that reporting period. For the most up-to-date value of activities, visit our [interactive map](#).