



**Kolisen Blong Leftemap Edukesen Submission To The OHCHR 4<sup>th</sup> Universal Periodic Review  
11 October 2023**

**Accessible, equitable, inclusive, quality-focused education**

Kolisen Blong Leftemap Edukesen (KOBLE) is a not-for-profit organization that was established in Vanuatu on 30<sup>th</sup> August 2017, by six local Civil Society Organisations, as a national advocacy coalition, with the aim of engaging the Government of Vanuatu and other stakeholders on the national education policy, to help ensure that all Ni-Vanuatu have access to good quality and inclusive publicly provided education. Kolisen Blong Leftemap Edukesen is dedicated to the advancement of educational opportunities for all Vanuatu citizens, especially those from disadvantaged groups.

**Issue: Lack of Quality Education**

KoBLE acknowledges the Vanuatu Government for committing to provide quality education for all as stated in the National Sustainable Development Plan and the Vanuatu Education and Training Sector Strategy 2020- 2030.

KoBLE is concerned that despite the existing education sector policies and the commitments made at the international level, Vanuatu lacks access to quality education. The current policies are not sufficiently resource (financial and human) and there is lack of socialization of the policies to mainstream across all the government agencies.

KoBLE notes that the Vanuatu government supported 12 UPR recommendations related to the right to education during the 41st session of the UPR, including:

90.46 made by Sri Lanka called the Government to Vanuatu to progress with the implementation of the Universal Primary Education Policy and consider expanding free education to cover secondary schools. Portugal in recommendation

90.45 recommended the government to make primary education free and compulsory to all children without discrimination. Singapore in recommendation

90.39 called on the government to ensure that its educators at all levels, from preschool to post-school education, are adequately trained to facilitate learning by children with disabilities, to support the Government's inclusive education policies. Cuba in recommendation

90.41 called on the government to continue efforts to ensure access to education, in particular to expand the continuity of studies, and inclusive education for children with disabilities.

90.90 End all forms of discrimination against children with disabilities and take the necessary measures to enable access for children with disabilities to education (Belgium);

90.37 Consider compulsory education to facilitate the commencement of school at the right age (Australia);

90.40 Continue promoting measures for the full education and literacy of all citizens (Chile);

90.42 Promote equal opportunity in education (Iraq);

90.43 Continue to improve access to quality education for all children (Maldives);

90.44 Enhance access to quality education, particularly for children in rural areas, and take steps to ensure every child's rights to enrolment in and continuation of education (Nepal);

90.74 Ensure the effective schooling of girls (France);



90.85 Take all the necessary measures to guarantee that girls remain in secondary education, particularly girls from remote and rural areas (Argentina).

KoBLE is concerned about the following key issues:

- Lack of qualified and trained teachers
- Outdated curriculum is currently under review
- Overcrowded classrooms in urban areas
- According to the Vanuatu Standardized Test of Achievement (VANSTA) 2019<sup>i</sup>, the literacy rate in Vanuatu ranges between 25% and 40%. Similarly, the status of Pacific Education Report 2022 stated that the percentage of Ni Vanuatu students meeting the minimum proficiency level in Year 6 literacy in 2021 was 50% compared to the 87% Pacific benchmark<sup>ii</sup>. The coalition of NGOs noted that the VANSTA test is not inclusive of children with disabilities.
- Twenty-five % of the national budget is allocated to the Ministry of Education. It is used mainly for staff payroll, with only a limited portion spent on operations and implementation of activities<sup>iii</sup>.
- Out of this budget, 20% of the budget is allocated to tertiary education, leaving fewer available funds for Early Childhood and Care Education, primary and secondary education.
- KoBLE notes that there are insufficient numbers of trained inclusive education teachers and lack of disability disaggregated data.
- Most of the current school facilities are not accessible to students with disabilities despite the endorsement of the inclusive education policy and the National Disability policy.
- There is a lack of curriculum, training, and materials for inclusive education.
- The government has an education in emergency policy. However, anecdotal evidence revealed that during emergencies, schools are used as evacuation centers. School facilities are damaged during disaster, events and post-disasters. Temporary and make-shift shelters are constructed and are still used to date. These temporary and make-shift shelters are not conducive to learning and do not provide an enabled learning environment.
- There is no budget for adult literacy, out-of-school children and youth, and there is insufficient overall data on education.

### **Recommendations:**

KoBLE calls on the Government to:

- Enforce and implement free and compulsory primary education to all children without discrimination and remove parents' contribution charge by the schools.
- Strengthen the coordination, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of education sector policies.
- Review existing education sector and school policies, bullying and harassment policy.



- Review the current student/ teacher ratio.
- Increase the allocation of budget for more school facilities and infrastructure.
- Strengthen health and sanitation of the school facilities.
  
- Ensure alignment between education strategies, policy framework, delivery and access.
- Strengthen Vanuatu Education Management Information System (VEMIS) for effective data collection, management and validation.

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<sup>i</sup> Vanuatu Standardised Test of Achievement 2019 highlights crisis in Education  
[https://www.dailypost.vu/news/vanuatu-standardised-test-of-achievement-2019-highlights-crisis-in-education/article\\_27dc57cc-e8bc-11ea-a90a-ef8595fd28ab.html](https://www.dailypost.vu/news/vanuatu-standardised-test-of-achievement-2019-highlights-crisis-in-education/article_27dc57cc-e8bc-11ea-a90a-ef8595fd28ab.html)

<sup>ii</sup>The status of Pacific education 2022 A regional monitoring report based on internationally comparable statistics.  
[https://spccfpstore1.blob.core.windows.net/digitallibrary-docs/files/d6/d67b82c7ea33c046084978d7dc1891d1.pdf?sv=2015-12-11&sr=b&sig=ScX69dCXJt9GviKL4hfLHoEx6QAqh7VphrPwHvXql0%3D&se=2023-12-23T14%3A43%3A55Z&sp=r&rsc=public%2C%20max-age%3D864000%2C%20max-stale%3D864000&rsct=application%2Fpdf&rscd=inline%3B%20filename%3D%2263313>Status\\_of\\_Pacific\\_Education\\_Report\\_2022.pdf%22](https://spccfpstore1.blob.core.windows.net/digitallibrary-docs/files/d6/d67b82c7ea33c046084978d7dc1891d1.pdf?sv=2015-12-11&sr=b&sig=ScX69dCXJt9GviKL4hfLHoEx6QAqh7VphrPwHvXql0%3D&se=2023-12-23T14%3A43%3A55Z&sp=r&rsc=public%2C%20max-age%3D864000%2C%20max-stale%3D864000&rsct=application%2Fpdf&rscd=inline%3B%20filename%3D%2263313>Status_of_Pacific_Education_Report_2022.pdf%22)

<sup>iii</sup> Vanuatu Education Support Program (VESP II) context analysis March 2022  
<https://espvanuatu.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/VESP-II-Context-Analysis-Jul-Dec-2021.pdf>  
National Sustainable Development Plan 2016-2030  
Vanuatu Education and Training Sector Strategic Plan 2021-2030