

Quarter two Newsletter

ORCBDS



Apr-Jun 2025



Here's what has happened in the last three months and what's to come!

Welcome to Office of the Registrar of Cooperative Business Development Services Q2 newsletter! We are thrilled to share with you the latest developments for Vanuatu Cooperative Movement that eventually create positive impact in our communities through out six provinces.

Firstly, we would like to express our gratitude to Vanuatu government all of our Stake Holders, cooperative societies, coop members who have continued to work with us in Quarter two. Your generosity and dedication have allowed us to keep our programs running smoothly and effectively.

In terms of our activities, we have successfully launched new cooperatives, conduct governance trainings, audits, provide business advise, provide short seminars in pricing to educate and improve cooperative societies.

Cooperatives are based on the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity, and solidarity. In the tradition of their founders, cooperative members believe in the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others.

Together, we can make a real difference in the lives of those who need it most.

Thank you for your continued support!

Enjoy Q2 newsletter!

Training team x

In this newsletter you can expect:

Cooperative Updates

Cooperative Awareness

Governance workshop insights

Supporting rural cooperative

cooperative audit should include



Cooperative Community Updates

‘Sanma Province’

Reviving Nokuku Memeran: A Cooperative’s New Beginning

The sun was just rising over the quiet village of Nokuku as our ADRA team, alongside the ORCBDS Sanma office, made our way to the small community hall where the Nokuku Memeran Cooperative Savings and Loan had once thrived. For years, the cooperative had lain dormant—its funds frozen, its members scattered. But today marked a new chapter.

First Visit: Laying the Foundation

Our first visit was one of hope and determination. The cooperative, inactive since 1999, had finally regained access to its funds in 2023 after persistent efforts by ORCBDS and the committee. With the money secured, the members had made a bold decision—**revive Nokuku Memeran**.

We gathered under the semi permanent roof of the meeting house, where old record books dusted with time sat on wooden benches. The committee, newly re-elected, listened intently as we discussed the importance of proper bookkeeping, transparent leadership, and member participation. Excitement buzzed in the air—this was their chance to rebuild.

Second Visit: Checking Progress

Months later, we returned to assess their progress. The cooperative had begun accepting savings again. We reviewed their books—**cash receipts, payment records, share registers, and daily summaries**—ensuring everything was properly recorded.

There were challenges, of course. Some members struggled with filling out passbooks correctly, while others needed reminders on repayment schedules. But the committee was learning, adapting, and slowly gaining confidence.

This Year: Strengthening the System

Now, on our latest visit, we conducted a **refresher training**—focusing on the backbone of any successful cooperative: **accounting and management**.

We started with the basics:

- **The importance of accurate bookkeeping**—how every transaction must be recorded to ensure trust.
- **Navigating key tools**—the passbook, member savings ledger, loan section, and cash book.
- **Calculating interest on loans**—balancing fairness with sustainability.
- **Determining fair wages for the cooperative’s manager**—a crucial step in ensuring long-term operation.

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A Fruitful Discussion & A Brighter Future

As we packed up our materials, the committee chairman stood and smiled. "This cooperative was asleep for too long," he said. "But now, we are awake—and we will make it strong again." With renewed energy, Nokuku Memeran Cooperative Savings and Loan was no longer just a name in old bank records. It was a living, growing force in the community—ready to uplift its members once more.

And we would be back to ensure it thrived.

—The End.



Cooperative Community Updates

The Mystery of Elisa Cooperative: A Village's Fight for Transparency

In the quiet, leafy village of Ellia in South Santo, the **Elisa Consumer Cooperative Society Limited** had been a pillar of the community for decades. For **32 years**, it was managed by a single man—a trusted figure who oversaw savings, loans, and store purchases for the villagers. But trust, once broken, is hard to restore.

A Manager's Sudden Exit

For the past two years, the cooperative had gone unaudited. The former manager had become **evasive**, refusing to provide clear records—no account statements, no breakdown of active members, no reliable balance sheets. Then, without warning, he **handed in his resignation** and left.

By March of this year, the members had enough. They **voted to replace the entire committee** and appointed a new manager. During the handover, they made a shocking discovery—the **cash box had no financial records inside**. Where was the money?

Demanding Answers—and Savings

Frustrated, members **demanded their shares back**, but the numbers didn't add up. There was a **shortage of cash**.

The new committee reached out to the former manager—**twice**—but each time, he denied any wrongdoing.

The Police Step In

This time, we arrived with backup—a **female police officer**. She confronted the former manager, pressing him with questions until, finally, he **admitted there was still money left**:

- **83,100 VT** in savings and loans
- **186,000 VT** in CPM and church tithes
- **70,000 VT** in consumer funds

Yet, the mystery wasn't fully solved. Six members **insisted on immediate refunds**, and the new manager handed over **300,000 VT**—but others were still missing their savings.

A Glimmer of Hope

Under police questioning, the former manager revealed another **186,000 VT—store tithe money**—that could be used to refund shares. Relieved, the committee began calling members to come forward and claim what was rightfully theirs.

Rebuilding Trust Through Training

The next day, we held a **refresher training** for the new committee—focusing on **savings, loans, and proper record-keeping**. They needed to regain control, and the villagers needed to believe in their cooperative again. As we left Ellia, the new committee stood a little taller. The road ahead wouldn't be easy, but for the first time in years, there was **hope**—and a chance for Elisa Cooperative to rise again.

—The End.



PENAMA
PROVINCE

Cooperative Awareness Initiative

Cooperatives play a vital role in fostering local economic growth and social development by empowering communities through collective effort, shared resources, and democratic decision-making. This awareness campaign, conducted on the 4th and 5th of May 2025 in Nataluhangele Village and Lombanga Village (West Ambae), aimed to educate community members on the benefits of cooperative societies and guide them in establishing their own. The initiative, implemented at the request of Hon. MP Jean Jack Ngwele, sought to enhance knowledge and encourage the formation of cooperatives in rural areas. A total of 30 participants (13 females and 17 males) attended the sessions, which included:

- **Information Sessions:** Presentations on the roles and benefits of cooperatives in driving community development.
- **Formation of Cooperatives:** Establishment of two cooperative societies—one in Nataluhangele Village and another in Namberrungwele Village.
- **Committee Formation:** Election of committee members to oversee operations and ensure accountability.

A key principle discussed was profit-sharing, where cooperative members collectively benefit from surplus earnings based on their participation, ensuring fair and inclusive economic growth.

The community response was overwhelmingly positive, with participants expressing gratitude for the initiative and requesting ongoing support to sustain their newly formed cooperatives. This effort marks a significant step toward economic resilience and social empowerment in West Ambae.





Supporting Rural Cooperatives for Sustainable Development in Vanuatu



Vanuatu has faced challenges in establishing a competitive market structure that aligns with the traditional practices of rural ni-Vanuatu entrepreneurs. However, the government's decentralization policy is creating opportunities to develop better business models for rural communities. One such approach is the cooperative business model, which strengthens communities by providing essential services and enhancing government support in remote areas.

A recent visit to **Port Patrick Cooperative Producers** focused on setting up a functional vanilla processing facility, covering the entire supply chain—from purchasing green beans to curing, drying, packaging, storage, and marketing. The goal is to ensure farmers understand governance frameworks and standard operating procedures to efficiently manage the facility. The cooperative follows an **Agri-coop business model**, offering members a **three-tier benefit system**: profit from raw materials, semi-processed goods, and value-added finished products.

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The training, led by Mr. Leintz Vusilai and Mr. Kaloran, was highly interactive, using discussions, exercises, and materials on cooperative management, accounting, and governance. This ensured participants fully grasped the concepts. From April 26 to May 3, 2025, a team from ORCBDS (Office of the Registrar of Cooperative and Business Development Services) and VSP (Vanuatu Strategic Partnership) will visit Port Patrick, Aneitym, to conduct a governance review and align the cooperative's agricultural operations. VSP is constructing a vanilla and pepper processing facility, and proper governance is crucial to maximizing member benefits. Port Patrick Cooperative Producers, established in 1997, consists of 12 members specializing in vanilla and pepper farming. The next generation of farmers is now involved, striving for high-quality yields. The community relies on both land and sea resources—farming vanilla, pepper, kava, oranges, and pineapples while also fishing for local and Port Vila markets. Their cashless subsistence lifestyle emphasizes savings from cash crop sales. This initiative is supported by an **MOU between ORCBDS and VSP**, reinforcing their commitment to rural development. Special thanks to **Mr. Richard Simeon, Mr. Joseph Kaloran, and the Department of Agriculture**, particularly **Mr. Mike (Aneitym's Agriculture Extension Officer)**, for their support. ORCBDS also acknowledges partnerships with the Department of Local Authorities, Department of Industry, and Vanuatu Bureau of Standards in promoting value-added farming. By processing raw materials locally, farmers can extend product longevity and increase value, ensuring sustainable growth for Vanuatu's rural economies.

Powering Progress Through Strong Cooperative Governance

Cooperatives are the beating heart of community development - where shared resources, collective action, and democratic leadership come together to create real change. This powerful model is transforming lives in Wintua Lorlow, where locals are taking charge of their economic future through the Electrical Cooperative. The spark for change was lit on 12th May 2025, when ORCBCS Trainer Mr. Ezikiel Ottiman and Principal Business Development Officer Mr. Ben Asmus led an electrifying governance workshop. With 38 energized participants (22 women and 15 men), the community demonstrated their commitment to building a stronger, more sustainable cooperative.

But success comes with responsibility. To keep the lights on, the cooperative must:

- ✦ Renew registrations annually
- ✦ Maintain valid licenses
- ✦ File VNPF/VAT properly
- ✦ Secure all permits

The Road Ahead: Wintua Lorlow's Power Plan

- ⚡ Boost inventory to meet growing demand
- ⚡ Host AGM elections for fresh leadership
- ⚡ Enforce strict no-credit policy (and recover outstanding debts)

The workshop's impact? Electrifying! Participants left equipped with governance knowledge that will keep their cooperative running smoothly for years to come. As one member put it: "Now we're not just keeping the lights on - we're powering our future!"



WHAT THE

COOPERATIVE AUDIT SHOULD INCLUDE



How to keep track on business performance

The cooperative audit should include a review of the balance sheet, income statement and statement of cash flows. The underlying documents supporting the information is given in these financial statements, along with verification of accounts receivable and payable balances with cooperative customers, and a review of the inventory quality, quantity, valuation, records and procedures. The auditor also will verify the existence of recorded securities and review justification for judgment decisions, estimates and review minutes of the board of directors' meeting for policy changes and instructions to management.

● Elevate Your Business

Unlock growth by strengthening governance, boosting member engagement, and ensuring legal compliance. Invest in training, diversify services, and adopt transparent financial practices. Leverage collective buying power, explore new markets, and prioritize sustainability. Empower members through shared leadership and innovation. Together, build a resilient, profitable cooperative that uplifts your entire community. Success starts with unity!



Brilliant Solutions for Your Cooperative's Success

Cooperatives thrive when they combine smart strategy, strong governance, and community power. Here's how to take yours to the next level:

1. Strengthen Governance & Transparency

- ✓ Train leaders & members on cooperative principles, financial management, and legal compliance
- ✓ Hold regular AGMs with clear voting and reporting
- ✓ Digitize records for transparency and efficiency



Promoting

Promoting cooperative principles and values is a core function for cooperatives, as it ensures their long-term sustainability and effectiveness. This involves educating members, fostering democratic member control, and upholding ethical values like honesty and social responsibility. Cooperatives also play a crucial role in promoting social and economic development, both locally and globally.



Bringing cooperative entrepreneurship to young generations: a challenge for the future

Cooperative play in childhood is crucial for developing essential social and problem-solving skills that benefit the future generation. By encouraging children to collaborate, communicate, and work together towards shared goals, cooperative play fosters empathy, teamwork, and conflict-resolution abilities, which are vital for success in both personal and professional life.