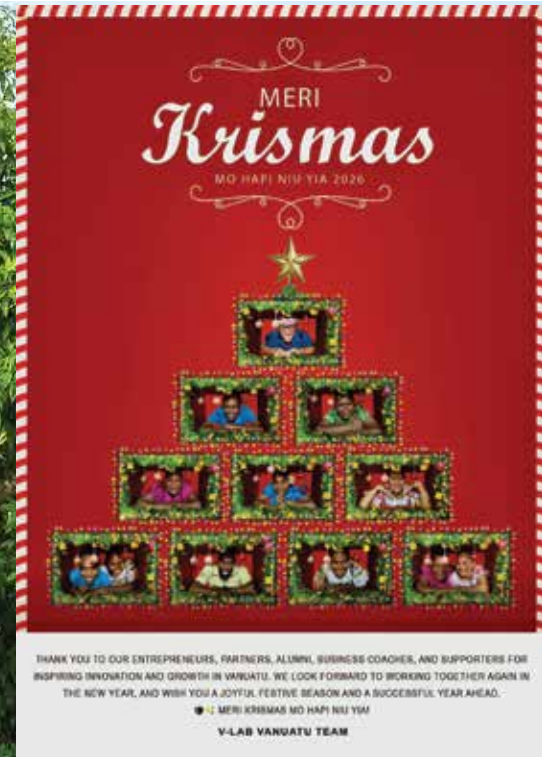


What has been happening lately with V-Lab?

#Together we are stronger

HIGHLIGHTS

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YUMI GROWEM VANUATU - COHORT 4 LAUNCH

Meet the next group of Yumi Growem Vanuatu participants! Over the next 10 months 55 motivated individuals and their business partners will be supported by V-Lab to grow their businesses or bring their business ideas to life.

Article in page 2

OUR PROGRAMS



ONGOING PROGRAMS:

Yumi Growem Vanuatu – Cohort 4 Launch



We are excited to welcome the fourth cohort of Yumi Growem Vanuatu! Over the next 10 months, 55 participants and their business partners will receive training and coaching from V-Lab to grow their businesses or bring new ideas to life.

Yumi Growem Vanuatu supports returned seasonal workers from the RSE and PALM schemes, helping them turn their savings, skills, and innovative ideas into sustainable businesses here in Vanuatu.

This year's cohort includes 40 participants in Efate and 15 in Santo, with ventures spanning agriculture, livestock, plumbing, catering, retail, and more, contributing to Vanuatu's growing economy.

Now in its fourth year, Yumi Growem Vanuatu continues to thrive thanks to strong partnerships with the Department of Labour – Circular Labour Mobility, Australian High Commission, New Zealand High Commission, and the Department of Agriculture & Rural Development, helping maximize the benefits of labour mobility schemes for Vanuatu's economic growth.

NEW PROGRAMS:

Santo Woman In Business Launch



The Canada Fund for Local Initiatives funds small, high-impact projects in developing countries. One such project is the Economic Empowerment of Women Entrepreneurs in Santo, a six-month program designed to support women who want to grow and strengthen their businesses. Participants receive free coaching and training focused on business development and leadership growth.

Program Objectives:

- Empower women entrepreneurs to manage and expand their businesses effectively.
- Improve financial management and operational skills.
- Build confidence and strengthen leadership capabilities.

Support Provided:

Participants benefit from tailored coaching and training, guidance to develop leadership and entrepreneurial skills, and continuous mentorship from experienced coaches to ensure practical

Women Business Academy



The Women Business Academy (WBA), a flagship initiative by V-Lab, has been launched to support women entrepreneurs in Vanuatu to start, grow, and sustain successful businesses.

The 18-month program will support 30 women in Port Vila and surrounding areas through practical training, one-on-one coaching, in-kind business support, and networking. It addresses key challenges faced by women in business, including limited access to skills, finance, and professional networks.

The program includes two streams: a Business Incubation Centre for 15 new and emerging women-led businesses, and a Business Acceleration Centre for 15 established businesses ready to expand. Both streams focus on building strong, sustainable, and competitive enterprises.

A core feature of the program is the Women Business Network, which brings women entrepreneurs together for mentorship, peer learning, and long-term collaboration beyond the program.

Through workshops, coaching, and networking, the Women Business Academy aims to strengthen women-led businesses and boost women's economic empowerment across Vanuatu.

CONCLUDED PROGRAMS:

Island To Global, Vanuatu Export Acceleration Program Closing



The Island to Global (ITG) – Vanuatu Export Ready Acceleration Program has officially concluded, marking an important step in preparing Ni-Vanuatu businesses for international markets.

The program supported five local enterprises: Green Forest Oils (Esmie Jimmy), Malo Noni (Edward Moli), Muvuten Development (Roy Tining), Natural Taste of Vanuatu (Juliana J), and Tahun Kava Export (Sergine Tahun). Participants received training and support to strengthen product quality, export compliance, and market readiness.

While the program has closed, organizers emphasized that it represents the beginning of new growth and global opportunities for participating businesses.

The initiative was delivered with support from the Australian High Commission, PACER Plus, the Ministry of Trade and Commerce, the Department of External Trade, Pacific Trade Invest Australia and New Zealand, and other national partners.

The Island to Global program continues to highlight Vanuatu's growing potential in international trade and the strength of locally made products entering global markets.

OUR EVENTS



Entrepreneurial Spirit Energized At Pepite Nc Interactive Session



An atmosphere of creativity and collaboration filled the room as participants recently connected with the team from PEPITE NC during an engaging session focused on entrepreneurship and innovation. Through a series of interactive games and activities, attendees were encouraged to think creatively, solve problems collaboratively, and strengthen their entrepreneurial mindset.

The hands-on approach sparked lively discussions and high energy among participants, highlighting the importance of experiential learning in nurturing innovation. By blending play with purpose, the session demonstrated how gamified methods can effectively inspire new ideas and entrepreneurial thinking, particularly among students and young professionals.

The event was made possible thanks to the support of the Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF) and Pépîte NC, whose continued commitment to fostering innovation and entrepreneurship plays a vital role in empowering emerging talent. Their collaboration provided a valuable platform for knowledge sharing, creativity, and meaningful connection.

Participants left the session motivated and energized, carrying forward fresh perspectives and renewed enthusiasm for entrepreneurial initiatives. Events like this reaffirm the growing momentum around innovation-driven education and the power of collaboration in shaping the entrepreneurs of tomorrow.

V-lab Alumni Recognised At Vanuatu Made Trade Show 2025



Several V-Lab alumni were proudly awarded at the closing of the Vanuatu Made Trade Show 2025, celebrating their success and contribution to local business and entrepreneurship.

The award recipients were:

1. Jack & Mary Kalsrap – Mamma's Laef Vanuatu
2. Irene Abbock – Tidy Haus Cleaning Services
3. Sherolyn G. Daniel – Sherolyn's Fancylicious Cakes
4. Dalida Borlasa – Yumi UP
5. Esmie Jimmy – Green Forest Oils

Their achievements highlight the positive impact of V-Lab's support—helping entrepreneurs not only start businesses, but also grow and scale them successfully.

Hackathon 2025 Celebrates Innovation On Un Day



On UN Day, six teams took the stage at Hackathon 2025 to pitch their creative ideas and solutions for a better Vanuatu.

Winners:

1. Wan Smol Bag Theatre – 1st Place, 100,000 Vatu
2. Lokol Solutions – 2nd Place, bag and earpiece sponsored by CW
3. Vanuatu Red Cross Society Cross Vanuatu – 3rd Place, gift bag sponsored by Vodafone Vanuatu

All teams showed amazing creativity and teamwork. The event was made possible with support from UN, V-lab, sponsors, and partners.

Hackathon 2025 highlighted youth innovation and their drive to make a positive impact in Vanuatu.

Aelan Krismas Market



The Aelan Christmas Market brought festive cheer and community spirit to life, leaving organizers and attendees alike grateful for a truly successful event.

Local vendors, artists, and creators came together to showcase their unique products, turning the market into a vibrant hub of creativity, flavors, and holiday cheer. Shoppers flocked to support local businesses, creating an atmosphere buzzing with excitement, music, and holiday goodwill.

Organizers expressed heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributed to the event's success. "We are truly grateful to our amazing vendors for sharing their beautiful products, creativity, and hard work. And to everyone who came to shop and support local, your presence made all the difference," they said.

The market offered more than just shopping—it was a celebration of community, connection, and the joy of the season. Visitors enjoyed a mix of local flavors, live music, and festive vibes that perfectly captured the spirit of Christmas.

As the day came to a close, organizers thanked attendees once again for celebrating, connecting, and supporting local entrepreneurs. With hearts full of gratitude, they wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, looking forward to the next festive gathering.

OUR ALUMNI CORNER



Regor Express, Vanuatu's First Digital Transport Service App



Vanuatu has taken a step toward digital transport services with the launch of ReGor Express, a new mobile ride-hailing app in Port Vila. The app allows users to book taxis and buses directly from their phones and get picked up from their homes.

ReGor Express was officially launched on 19 November at Yumiwork by young local developers Gordan Alick and Rehab Saul. Alick said the idea came after he and his daughter waited a long time in the rain for a bus, inspiring him to create a better transport system.

The service includes two apps: ReGor Rider for passengers and ReGor Driver for transport operators. Passengers can request rides, track vehicles in real time, message drivers, and schedule trips in advance. The app also shows routes, travel time, and estimated costs.

V-LAB President Marc-Antoine Morel praised the initiative, saying it will help drivers save fuel and reduce vehicle wear while making transport easier for passengers and tourists. The project has been supported by V-LAB, which provided training and coaching to the founders.

The developers say the app is still in its early stages and will continue to improve as more users and drivers join. As ReGor Express expands, it promises more convenient, reliable, and transparent transport for Port Vila residents.



Hackathon 2025 Celebrates Innovation On Un Day

Vanuatu is proudly represented on the global innovation stage as Norah from V-Lab and Kevin from Lapita Café take part in the prestigious ClimateLaunchpad international pitching competition in Vienna, Austria.

The ClimateLaunchpad is the world's largest green business ideas competition, bringing together climate innovators from 43 countries to showcase solutions addressing some of the planet's most pressing environmental challenges. Norah and Kevin are among the select participants pitching innovative ideas on behalf of Vanuatu, highlighting the country's growing presence in climate-focused entrepreneurship.

Adding to the achievement, Kevin and Lapita Café received an award for their Reef Safe Sunscreen, a product designed to protect both people and fragile marine ecosystems. The recognition underscores the importance of locally driven, environmentally responsible solutions, particularly for Pacific Island nations that are highly vulnerable to climate change.

The award marks a significant milestone for Lapita Café and reflects Vanuatu's commitment to sustainability, innovation, and climate resilience on an international platform.

Their success in Vienna not only celebrates individual achievement but also places Vanuatu firmly on the global map of climate innovation.

Lucie Nmara Nauka Champions Menstrual Health Innovation in Vanuatu

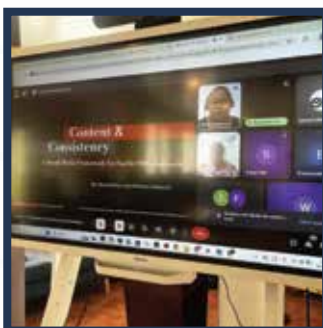


Lucie Nmara Nauka, founder of Let It Flow, recently presented her work in menstrual health management to key partners in Vanuatu. Her innovation is currently being incubated through the V-Lab Student Innovation Program, supported by AUF - Vanuatu.

The session brought together organizations including Save the Children Vanuatu, Mamma's Laef Vanuatu, and ik-kana Cancer Foundation, who attended in support of the initiative. World Vision Vanuatu and Sista also expressed interest and reached out to explore potential collaboration.

Let It Flow continues to contribute to improved access to dignified and sustainable menstrual health solutions for women and girls across Vanuatu.

Business Link Pacific Hosts Live Online Session on Social Media for Businesses



Business Link Pacific successfully hosted a live online session today, aimed at helping business owners and entrepreneurs set up and optimize their social media pages. The interactive session provided practical tips and strategies for businesses to establish a strong online presence and engage effectively with their audience.

Participants expressed appreciation for the hands-on guidance, noting that the insights gained would help them enhance their digital marketing efforts. The event is part of Business Link Pacific's ongoing initiative to support small and medium-sized enterprises in navigating the digital landscape.

A spokesperson from the organization stated, "Our goal is to empower businesses with the tools and knowledge they need to succeed online. Today's session was a step toward helping businesses grow and connect with their customers in meaningful ways."

Yumi Growem Vanuatu Field Visit



The Yumi Growem Vanuatu team visited Muvuten Development, meeting Roy Tinning, whose innovative work is transforming locally grown ginger, turmeric, black pepper, and vanilla into premium products enjoyed both locally and overseas.

The visit highlighted how local innovation is helping take Vanuatu products to global markets while supporting sustainable agriculture.

The team also extended their appreciation to Ta Vai Peri-Urban Backyard for warmly hosting the visit and sharing their inspiring work. Their commitment to strengthening urban food systems, improving green spaces, and providing fresh local produce continues to make a positive impact in Port Vila and surrounding communities.

OUR TEAM UPDATE



Meet our New Project Manager

V-Lab is pleased to announce the appointment of **Saviana Raynes** as its new Project Manager, marking an exciting milestone for the organization's continued growth and innovation.

Saviana brings a strong blend of creativity, passion, and professional experience to the role. Her expertise is expected to play a key role in driving projects forward, strengthening collaboration, and supporting V-Lab's mission to connect more meaningfully with its community.

As V-Lab continues to expand and evolve, Saviana's leadership and fresh perspective will be a valuable addition to the team.

The entire V-Lab family warmly welcomes Saviana Raynes and looks forward to the impact she will make in her new role.



V-Lab elects New Board Members

V-Lab successfully held its annual General Assembly, marking an important moment for the organization with the election of a new committee to guide its activities for the coming term.

The newly elected committee is led by President Marc-Antoine Morel, with Dalida Borlasa, Lida J. Borlasa, and Yumi UP serving as Vice-Presidents. The role of Treasurer has been entrusted to Turoa Vatoko, while Mattia De Biasi has been appointed Secretary.

The committee is further strengthened by a group of Active Members, including Sandrine Philemon, Senily Jacquier, Roy Tining, Nelly Willy, and Merly Charley of Merly Handicraft Collection.

The General Assembly highlighted V-Lab's commitment to collaboration, leadership, and shared vision, as the organization looks ahead to a new chapter with an enthusiastic and dedicated team in place.

Vanuatu to host first Pacific Innovation Forum on Climate & Environment in 2026



The Government of Vanuatu will host the first Pacific Innovation Forum on Climate and the Environment (PIFCE) in Port Vila in July 2026.

The three-day regional forum will bring together governments, businesses, innovators, researchers, youth, civil society, and development partners from across the Pacific to share practical climate and environmental solutions and build partnerships.

PIFCE 2026 is led by the Government of Vanuatu with partners including the Pacific Climate Change Centre (SPREP) and V-Lab. It aims to strengthen private sector involvement and promote innovative, scalable climate action.

A dedicated task force has been formed to organise the event and seek support from development partners. Leaders say PIFCE will provide a Pacific-led platform to showcase regional knowledge, innovation, and leadership on climate action.



NGO Day 2025: Working Together to Build Vanuatu

Vanuatu, 2025 – Non-governmental organizations (NGOs across the country marked NGO Day 2025 with messages of unity, collaboration, and shared responsibility in nation-building.

Under the theme "Tugeta Gavman mo CSO i bildim Vanuatu" (Together, Government and Civil Society Organizations build Vanuatu), the celebration highlighted the vital role NGOs play alongside government institutions in supporting community development, social welfare, and sustainable growth.

NGO Day serves as an annual reminder of the contributions made by civil society organizations in areas such as health, education, disaster response, environmental protection, and advocacy for vulnerable groups. This year's theme emphasized the importance of strong partnerships between government bodies and civil society to address national challenges more effectively.

Representatives from various organizations expressed appreciation for the continued collaboration and reaffirmed their commitment to working collectively for the well-being of communities across Vanuatu.

As NGOs commemorate this day, stakeholders are encouraged to strengthen cooperation, promote inclusivity, and continue building a resilient and prosperous nation together.

THE CANOE RACE

The Ultimate Entrepreneurs' Challenge

Season 2 of *The Canoe Race* Is at Risk Without Additional Funding mobilized

Vanuatu Broadcasting and Television Corporation (VBTC) and V-Lab wish to inform the public that Season 2 of the TV reality show *The Canoe Race* is now at serious risk of cancellation, due to the current lack of secured funding required to launch production.

This announcement comes despite the exceptional success of Season 1, which generated nationwide engagement, inspired countless young ni-Vanuatu entrepreneurs, and significantly elevated public interest in innovation and entrepreneurship.

Over the past months, both co-producers have worked intensively to mobilize sponsors and partners. The Government of Australia, through the Australian High Commission in Vanuatu, have already confirmed its commitment, and several partners from Season 1—including Vodafone and Vanuatu Ferry—expressed their willingness to support a new edition.

The Government of Vanuatu, through the Aid for Trade Management Unit, the Department of Industry, and the Vanuatu Financial Service Commission also confirmed its backing for a potential Season 2.

However, these confirmed contributions alone are not sufficient to cover the full production costs. Despite sustained efforts, VBTC and V-Lab were unable to secure additional sponsorship from a number of targeted partners, including several major financial institutions.

Call for Sponsors and Partners

VBTC and V-Lab strongly believe in the positive impact and national relevance of *The Canoe Race*. Before making a final decision on cancellation, both organizations are launching an open call for businesses, development partners, and institutions interested in supporting Season 2.

Prospective sponsors or partners—whether through financial contribution, in-kind support, or technical collaboration—are encouraged to contact VBTC and V-Lab as soon as possible to explore partnership opportunities.

While the future of Season 2 remains uncertain, VBTC and V-Lab reaffirm their ongoing commitment to promoting innovation and entrepreneurship in Vanuatu. Should Season 2 not proceed, both organizations will work together to develop alternative initiatives that continue to showcase and celebrate local entrepreneurial talent.