

V-LAB: Ready for Business Program (R4B) Youth Empowerment Program – Phase 2

The Ready for Business (R4B) Program, implemented under the Youth Empowerment Program, aimed to equip young individuals with essential entrepreneurial skills and knowledge. A total of 51 youths was carefully selected from the initial phase and divided into two cohorts. Each cohort underwent an intensive training regimen lasting 5-7 weeks, comprising 9 comprehensive sessions covering crucial topics such as vision and goals, research, business ideation, and financial planning.

Despite efforts to maintain participant engagement by shortening program duration and integrating enjoyable activities, a notable number of participants dropped out towards the conclusion of the training sessions. In Cohort 1, out of 25 initial participants, only 10 persisted till the end, while Cohort 2 saw 9 out of 26 participants completing the program. The precise reasons behind these dropouts remain unclear, necessitating further research. However, initial insights gathered during follow-up surveys suggested reasons ranging from loss of interest to finding employment or seasonal work opportunities abroad.



The R4B program concluded with a pitching exercise for each cohort, where participants presented their business ideas. Subsequently, winners from both cohorts were awarded coaching support to nurture their entrepreneurial ventures. The diverse range of winning ideas reflects the program's impact on fostering local enterprise and economic empowerment. Winners included individuals with aspirations ranging from fashion and agriculture to retail and hospitality, underscoring the program's effectiveness in nurturing diverse entrepreneurial talent within the community.

Winners and their Business Ideas:

Cohort 1:

1. Kalonuk Erikan: Fashion and Sewing
2. Florie Lestour: Fish Trading
3. Jessica John: Photography and Printing Services
4. Micky Mael: Organic Egg Production
5. Lierau Kaltack: Beauty Salon
6. Faith Sereana Mangawai: Kava Bar (Nakamal)



Cohort 2:

1. Yahira Takifu: Organic Cooking Oil
2. Stephanie Jimmy: Village Shop and Bartering System
3. Winnie Wai: Village Shop
4. Colinette Langa: Kava Bar with Instant Kava Sachets
5. Adeline Matan: Shop Operation in Pentecost Island



The Ready for Business Program stands as a testament to the potential for youth empowerment and local economic development through entrepreneurship.