



NATIONAL EDUCATION REFORM AGENDA 2026

Programme & Participant Handbook

Theme:

**“ Building a Nation from
Its Own Foundation”**

Prepared By

Forum Secretariat

Date

August 2026



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Welcome to Participants	3
Foreword: Hon. Simil Johnson	4
Foreword: Mrs. Cherol Ala	5
Background to the Reform Forum	6
Critical Findings: World Bank Report	7
Provincial Priorities: 2026 Conferences	8
The National Education Reform Journey	9
Official Programme: Day 1	10
Official Programme: Day 2	11
Official Programme: Day 3	12
Official Programme: Day 4	13
Expected Outcomes	14
The Reform Architecture	15
Governance & Structure	16
Reporting Mechanisms	17
The Four Reform Shifts	18-21
The Five Implementation Pillars	22-26
Whole-of-Government Linkages	27-28
Contacts & Back Cover	29

WELCOME TO PARTICIPANTS

Forum Background

Dear Delegates,

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Vanuatu and the Ministry of Education and Training, it is my pleasure to welcome you to the National Education Reform Forum 2026.

This Forum marks a significant milestone in our nation's commitment to building an education system that responds to the aspirations of the people of Vanuatu. It brings together Government leaders, educators, traditional leaders, and partners to engage in an open dialogue on the future of education.

We encourage every delegate to contribute openly and constructively. Your ideas are essential in shaping an education system that prepares future generations for the opportunities of tomorrow.

Education has been one of the cornerstones of Vanuatu's national development since Independence. Over the past four decades, successive Governments have invested significantly in expanding access to education and strengthening teacher development.

Recognising these challenges and the opportunities presented by a rapidly changing environment, the Government has resolved to undertake a comprehensive review of the education system through an inclusive national consultation process.



FOREWORD



Hon. Simil Johnson
Minister for Education and Training

1. Education has always been one of the most powerful investments a nation can make in its future. For Vanuatu, the time has come to examine not only how we educate our children, but why we educate them.
2. This Forum is based on COM Decision 209 of 2025 for a complete reform and Decision 109 of 2026 to organise the Forum in August 2026. It provides an historic opportunity for our nation to reflect on these important questions as we move from an imported purpose for education to one that reflects the national aspirations of Vanuatu.
3. We recognise the importance of genuine trilingual education. Strong educational foundations begin in our vernacular languages and are strengthened through Bislama as our national language, and are complemented by proficiency in English and French.

FOREWORD



Mrs. Cherol Ala
Director General, Ministry of Education and Training

It is my great pleasure to welcome all delegates to the National Education Reform Forum 2026.

The Ministry of Education and Training is honoured to facilitate this important national dialogue on the future of education in Vanuatu. This Forum represents the culmination of extensive preparation involving Government agencies, education professionals, provincial representatives and development partners.

The Ministry views this Forum as an opportunity to listen, learn and work collaboratively with stakeholders from across the country. The ideas and recommendations generated during these discussions will provide an important foundation for the preparation of a National Education Reform White Paper and future policy development.

BACKGROUND TO THE FORUM

Education has been one of the cornerstones of Vanuatu's national development since Independence. Over the past four decades, successive Governments have invested significantly in expanding access to education, strengthening teacher development, and improving learning facilities.

Recognising these challenges and the opportunities presented by a rapidly changing national and global environment, the Government has resolved that the time has come to undertake a comprehensive review of the education system through an inclusive national consultation process.

Rather than focusing solely on individual policies or programmes, the National Education Reform seeks to examine the broader purpose, direction and future of education in Vanuatu. It asks a series of important questions:

- What knowledge, skills and values should every child acquire?
- How can education better support national development while respecting cultural identity?
- How should schools prepare learners for employment, entrepreneurship and leadership?
- How can education respond effectively to technological change and climate resilience?



CRITICAL FINDINGS

World Bank Public Expenditure Review

The World Bank's recent analysis provides a stark evidence base for the necessity of reform. While Vanuatu has maintained a high level of investment in education relative to its Pacific peers, the outcomes for our children have not kept pace.

Learning Outcomes: Literacy and numeracy levels remain below regional and international benchmarks. This suggests that the current system is not effectively translating financial inputs into the knowledge and skills our students need.

Value-for-Money Gap: There is a significant gap between public expenditure and educational performance. Education's share of the national budget and GDP is high, but the return on this investment in terms of student achievement is insufficient for long-term national development.

Systemic Pressure Points Identified:

- **Teacher Deployment & Payroll Efficiency:** Challenges in ensuring teachers are where they are needed most.
- **Infrastructure Backlog:** Significant need for improved learning facilities across the provinces.
- **Spending Imbalance:** A critical need to rebalance recurrent versus development spending to ensure sustainability.
- **Fiscal Sustainability:** Reform is required to align the 2027 Budget Cycle with outcome-driven planning.

PROVINCIAL PRIORITIES

2026 Provincial Principals' Conferences

A consolidated analysis of resolutions from all six provinces—Torba, Sanma, Penama, Malampa, Shefa, and Tafea—identifying national mandates for reform. These findings represent complete national coverage and the collective voice of hundreds of principals and stakeholders.

National Priorities Identified:

Teacher Workforce: Addressing shortages, certification pathways, and recruitment standardisation across all provinces.

Leadership: Professionalising principal appointments and establishing uniform remuneration based on school size.

School Grants: Reforming the grant methodology to reflect cost-of-living realities and accurate enrolment data.

Curriculum (CIP): Accelerating the national rollout with a focus on indigenous values and vernacular literacy.

Decentralisation: Relocating MOET units closer to schools to improve management and compliance support.

THE REFORM JOURNEY



Phase 1: High-Level Education Reform Meeting

3 August 2026



Phase 2: National Education Forum

4 – 6 August 2026



Phase 3: Nation- Wide Consultations

August 2026 -February 2027



Phase 4: National Education Reform White Paper

Consolidating recommendations to guide future development.
March 2027

The reform journey has been carefully designed to encourage broad participation and informed dialogue. It is being undertaken in three interconnected phases:

Phase 1: High-Level Education Reform (3 August 2026)

Phase 2: National Education Reform Forum (4-6 August 2026)

Phase 3: Nation-Wide Consultations (August 2026-February 2027)

Phase 4: National Education White Paper (March 2027)

Following the Forum, the Ministry will consolidate recommendations into a National Education Reform White Paper to guide future development.

OFFICIAL PROGRAMME

Day 1 – Monday 3 August 2026 | High Level Forum

Time	Activity	Lead / Responsible
07:30	Registration	Secretariat
08:00	Official Opening Ceremony: Custom Performance by Lycée Students	Lycée Students / MC
08:30	Opening Prayer	MC
08:40	Welcome Remarks	Director General, MoET
08:50	Keynote Address	Prime Minister
09:30	Morning Tea & Group Photo	All Delegates
10:00	Address: Purpose of Education Reform	DPM & Minister of Finance
10:30	Address: World Bank PER Findings	DPM & Minister of Finance
10:30	Address: Delivery Challenges under NSDP	Minister of Education
11:30	Presentation: The 5 Pillars of Reform	Director General, MoET
12:00	Q&A/Plenary Discussions	Speakers
13:00	Lunch	All Delegates
14:00	Break-out into 5 Working Groups	Pillar chairs
15:00	Reporting Back to Plenary	Pillar Chairs
15:30	Plenary Discussion and Resolutions	DG, MoET / Floor
17:00	Closing ceremony	Minister of Education
17:15	Prayer + Close of Day 1	MC

OFFICIAL PROGRAMME

Day 2 – Tuesday 4 August 2026 | Public Forum (Day 1)

Time	Activity	Lead / Responsible
08:00	Registration of Public Stakeholders	Secretariat
08:30	Opening Prayer	MC
08:35	Opening Remarks and Government Reform Agenda	Minister, MoET
08:50	Presentation of Strategic Direction & Reform Pillars	DG, MoET
09:30	Pillar 1 - Curriculum Reform Dialogue and Means of Delivery	WG-1 Chair
10:30	Morning Tea	-
10:45	Pillar 2 - Vocational Pathways Dialogue	WG-2 Chair
11:45	Pillar 3 - Trilingual Policy Dialogue	WG-3 Chair
13:00	Lunch	-
14:00	Continued Dialogue and Plenary	Facilitators
15:30	Afternoon Tea	-
15:45	Summary of Day 2 Feedback	Secretariat
16:30	Close of Day 2	MC

OFFICIAL PROGRAMME

Day 3 – Wednesday 5 August 2026 | Public Forum (Day 2)

Time	Activity	Lead / Responsible
08:30	Recap of Day 2	Secretariat
08:45	Pillar 4 - Dual Governance Dialogue	WG-4/5 Chair
10:00	Morning Tea	-
10:15	Financing (Cross-Cutting Pillar) Dialogue	MoF / MoET
11:30	Open Floor - Plenary discussions	Facilitators
13:00	Lunch	-
14:00	Facilitated Synthesis of Public Forum Feedback	Secretariat
15:30	Afternoon Tea	-
15:45	Presentation of Consolidated general Input	DG, MoET
16:30	Closing Remarks	Minister of Education
17:00	Close of Public Forum	MC

OFFICIAL PROGRAMME

Day 4 – Thursday 6 August 2026 | Steering Committees

Time	Activity	Lead / Responsible
08:00	Registration	Secretariat
08:30	Opening Remarks	Director General, MoET
08:45	Presentation: Overview of Public Forum Outcomes	DG, MoET
09:15	Briefing: Nationwide Consultation Framework	DSPPAC
09:45	Breakout: Steering Committee Working Plans	Pillar Committees
11:00	Morning Tea	-
11:15	Committees continue Working Plan development	Pillar Committees
13:00	Lunch	-
14:00	Committees finalise Draft Working Plans	Pillar Committees
15:00	Presentation of Working Plans to Plenary	Pillar Chairs
16:00	Discussion and Endorsement of Working Plans	DG, MoET / Floor
16:45	Confirmation of Reporting Lines	DG, MoET
17:00	Closing Remarks	Minister of Education
17:15	Close of Forum	MC



EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Expected Outcomes:

- Endorsement of the National Education Reform Agenda.
- Confirmation of the Four Reform Shifts.
- Constitution of the Five Reform Pillar Working Groups.
- Endorsement of the National Education Reform Forum process.
- Formal resolutions guiding preparation of the National Education Reform White Paper.

Looking Ahead:

Part 4 - Nationwide Consultations (August 2026 - February 2027): Pillar Steering Committees roll out their endorsed Working Plans across the six provinces, guided by the reporting structure confirmed on 6 August.

Part 5 - White Paper (March 2027): Consolidated findings are submitted to the Council of Ministers and tabled in Parliament, with an Annual Progress Report to Parliament thereafter.



THE REFORM ARCHITECTURE

The National Education Reform is built on a structural architecture of four strategic shifts and five implementation pillars. This framework ensures that the reform is not merely an incremental change, but a comprehensive revolution in how we raise and educate our children.

THE FOUR REFORM SHIFTS

1. National Purpose
2. Land-Anchored Development
3. Trilingual Education
4. Culture as Curriculum

THE FIVE PILLARS

1. Curriculum Implementation
2. Vocational Pathways
3. Trilingual Language Policy
4. Dual Westminster-Imalum Governance
5. Financing Durability

See pages 27-28 for the Whole-of-Government Ministry Linkages supporting this architecture.

GOVERNANCE & STRUCTURE

The reform architecture is grounded in a constitutionally-mandated dual authority, ensuring that the Ministry of Education (Formal) operates in partnership with the Malvatumauri National Council of Chiefs (Informal).

Governance Arm	Institution	Role in Reform
Formal	Ministry of Education & Training	Legislation, funding, management, policy framework
Cultural	Malvatumauri Council of Chiefs	Cultural foundation, kastom knowledge validation
Joint	Joint Education & Culture Council	Curriculum validation, vernacular materials, teacher certification

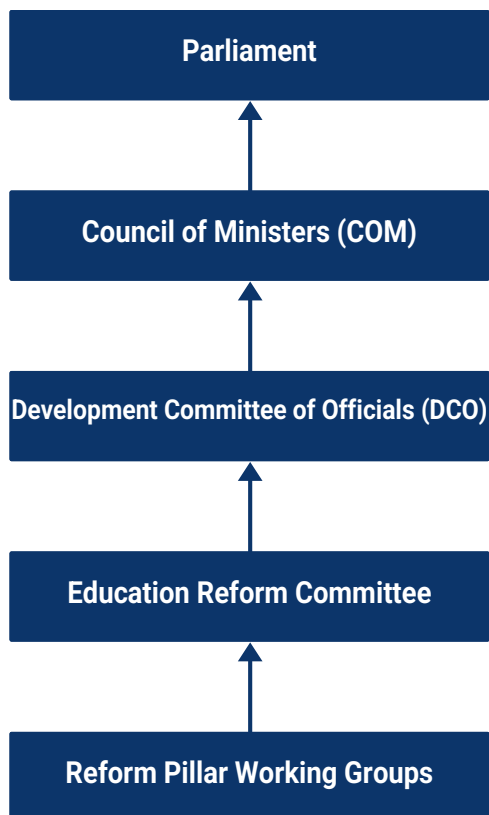
Reform Pillar Working Groups

Five technical taskforces develop detailed policy content for each dimension of the reform, reporting directly to the Director General and Minister of Education.

Group	Reform Pillar	Lead Ministry / Body	Reporting Line
WG-1	National Purpose & Curriculum	MoET Planning + Malvatumauri	DG & Minister of Education
WG-2	Land-Anchored & Vocational	MoET PSET + Min. of Agriculture	DG & Minister of Education
WG-3	Trilingual Education & Language	MoET Educations Services+ Vanuatu Cultural Centre	DG & Minister of Education
WG-4	Governance & Institutional	OPM + MoET + Malvatumauri	DG & Minister of Education
WG-5	Finance & NSDP Alignment	MoET Finance+ Min. of Finance	DG & Minister of Education

REPORTING MECHANISMS

The hierarchical flow of accountability ensures that technical recommendations from the Reform Pillar Working Groups are reviewed and endorsed through official and executive channels before final presentation to Parliament.



SHIFT 1: NATIONAL PURPOSE

Re-anchoring Education to Vanuatu's Aspirations

The first shift involves re-anchoring curriculum delivery to a clearly stated national purpose for education. This ensures that the Paramount Outcomes for our students translate into measurable institutional accountability, not only classroom-level values.

We seek to move from an imported purpose for education to one that reflects the national aspirations of Vanuatu, preparing our children for leadership, entrepreneurship, and community service within our own context.

Key Outcome: Institutional accountability measures tied directly to the success of every Ni-Vanuatu child in achieving the Paramount Outcomes.



SHIFT 2: LAND-ANCHORED DEVELOPMENT

Education Rooted in Our Livelihood

This shift makes land-based livelihood and knowledge an explicit, resourced strand of the curriculum. It reflects the reality of a land-owning population, moving beyond treating agriculture merely as an implicit theme within Science.

By elevating land-anchored skills—including agriculture, fisheries, forestry, and enterprise—to a named strand with its own standards, we ensure that education is directly relevant to the lives and futures of our people.

Key Outcome: A vocational certification pathway that recognizes and validates traditional land-based expertise and modern agricultural innovation.



SHIFT 3: TRILINGUAL EDUCATION

From Policy to Classroom Practice

The third shift moves the constitutional and VNCS language progression from a stated policy to an enforced, resourced classroom practice. This recognizes that strong educational foundations begin in our vernacular languages.

Our trilingual commitment involves a clear progression: starting with vernacular/Bislama-first instruction, followed by Bislama complemented by proficiency in both English and French.

Key Outcome: Enforced resourcing and compliance mechanisms that ensure trilingual education is delivered in every classroom across the nation.



SHIFT 4: CULTURE AS CURRICULUM

Co-Governing Our Knowledge

The fourth shift formalises kastom knowledge and Informal governance as co-equal to Introduced structures in shaping and approving what is taught. This aligns with the Government's commitment to decolonise the education system through indigenous frameworks.

This involves giving the Malvatumauri National Council of Chiefs a formal role in curriculum standards approval, ensuring that our ancestral knowledge and traditional expertise are at the heart of our education system including preservation, research and documentation of cultural wisdom and traditional knowledge.

Key Outcome: A governance model where cultural and land-based content is co-governed by traditional authorities and the Ministry of Education.



PILLAR 1: CURRICULUM and Means of Delivery

Strategic Implementation Plan

Pillar 1 addresses the implementation gap in the current VNCS. By attaching a phased implementation plan to the VNCS revision and designating the CDU/NEC as the standing accountable body, we ensure that reform moves from paper to practice.

Challenge	Intended Action
VNCS lacks implementation architecture and accountable delivery body.	Attach phased plan; designate CDU/NEC as accountable body; set sunset date for exam harmonization.
Past initiatives stalled once donor funding ended.	Specify recurrent funding sources for all new initiatives before approval.

PILLAR 2: VOCATIONAL PATHWAYS

Elevating Land-Anchored Skills

Pillar 2 formalises the Land-Anchored Development shift by creating explicit vocational pathways for agriculture, fisheries, and forestry, ensuring these skills are certified and valued.

Challenge	Intended Action
Land-anchored development is only implied, not explicitly resourced.	Elevate land-anchored skills to a named strand with its own standards and vocational certification pathway.
Vocational training often lacks direct market relevance.	Partner with Trade and Agriculture ministries to mentor young entrepreneurs and open market access.

PILLAR 3: TRILINGUAL POLICY

Resourcing Our Languages

Pillar 3 ensures that the trilingual policy is backed by real resources, training, and monitoring, moving beyond a simple statement of intent.

Challenge	Intended Action
Vernacular-first policy has no compliance or resourcing mechanism.	Attach enforcement mechanisms: funded materials, teacher training, and annual monitoring indicators.
Lack of support structure for schools struggling to deliver.	Establish a national support network for vernacular material development and translation.

PILLAR 4 & 5: DUAL GOVERNANCE

Westminster-Imalum Partnership

Pillar 4 and 5 formalise the dual governance relationship between the state and traditional authorities, ensuring that kastom knowledge is co-governed.

Challenge	Intended Action
Curriculum governance and MOET units remain centralized and Westminster-based.	Give Malvatumauri/Imalum a formal role in curriculum standards approval and decentralise MOET units to provinces.
Kastom knowledge is often referenced but not co-governed.	Establish joint standards-setting committees for cultural and land-based learning areas.

THE FINANCING PILLAR

Ensuring Reform Durability

The financing pillar is cross-cutting, ensuring that every reform action is durably funded through recurrent sources rather than temporary donor cycles.

Challenge	Intended Action
Past reforms collapsed once donor funding ended.	Require every initiative to specify a recurrent funding source against the 60/20/20 target.
Address the VT 4.66 billion budget-recording gap between MoET and MoF.	Establish standing annual review of PER/PILNA/provincial data as a cross-government indicator set.

WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT LINKAGES

Part 1: Strategic & Social Ministries

If this reform is a revolution rather than a reform, it cannot be owned by the Ministry of Education alone. This table sets out how each ministry links to education innovation and cultural expertise.

Ministry	NSDP Pillar	Innovation Linkage	Cultural Linkage
Office of the Prime Minister	Cross-cutting	Coordination & strategic policy oversight.	Coordinates dual governance relationship.
Finance & Economic Mgmt	Economy	Owens financing durability (60/20/20 target).	Enables resourcing for cultural strands.
Education & Training	Society	Owens curriculum standards & VNCS revision.	Delivers Culture & Community learning.
Health	Society	Co-owns Healthy Living; school nutrition.	Traditional healing & bush medicine knowledge.
Infrastructure & Utilities	Econ/Env	School infrastructure & ICT connectivity.	Traditional building knowledge (nakamal).
Foreign Affairs & Trade	Economy	Scholarships & regional benchmarking.	Represents cultural heritage internationally.
Internal Affairs	Society	Provincial coordination with school associations.	Works with area councils and chiefs.

WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT LINKAGES

Part 2: Economic & Environmental Ministries

Continuing the linkage mapping for the remaining government ministries, focusing on economic development and environmental sustainability.

Ministry	NSDP Pillar	Innovation Linkage	Cultural Linkage
Tourism, Trade & Commerce	Economy	Enterprise education; mentors entrepreneurs.	Market access for customary arts & crafts.
Justice & Community Svcs	Society	Child rights; inclusive education compliance.	Houses Malvatumauri Council of Chiefs.
Agriculture & Fisheries	Econ/Env	Co-owns Land-Anchored Development pillar.	Customary land-based & marine knowledge.
Climate Change & Env	Environment	Co-owns Safety & Sustainability components.	Traditional ecological knowledge (weather).
Lands & Natural Resources	Env/Econ	Land-Anchored Development; custom land tenure.	Kastom land governance; central partner.
Youth & Sports	Society	Talent pathway from school sport.	Traditional games & youth-elder mentorship.

NATIONAL EDUCATION REFORM FORUM 2026

Venue: Warwick Le Lagon Hotel & Spa, Port Vila.

Registration: Monday 3 August, 7.00 am – 8.15 am.

Facilities: Plenary Hall, Breakout Rooms, Secretariat, Media Centre.

Ministry of Education and Training

Government of the Republic of Vanuatu

Acknowledgements:

The Government of Vanuatu acknowledges the contributions of the OPM, MoET, Malvatumauri, Provincial Governments, Churches, and Development Partners.

Role	Mobile
Director	+678 7742738
Coordinator	+678 5304897
Logistics	+678 7769271

Forum Contact

 +678 5304897

 erf@education.gov.vu

 www.education.gov.vu