

Social Assessment

07/16/2019

CEPF Grant 109335

Vanuatu Environmental Law Association - VELA

**Strengthening Environmental Legal Education and Capacity in
Vanuatu**

**Green Hill KBA and Santo Mountain Chain KBA's of Tabuemasana, Vatthe and
Loru**

Grant Summary

1. The Vanuatu Environmental Law Association
2. Strengthening environmental legal education in the Santo Mountain Chain and Green Hill Key Biodiversity Areas of Vanuatu
3. Grant number 109335
4. Grant amount (US dollars) US\$108,482
5. July 01, 2019 until July 31, 2020
6. Vanuatu
7. July 16, 2019

8. Indigenous People affected:

The Vanuatu Environmental Law Association (VELA) is a locally registered NGO based in Port Vila supporting communities in Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) through legal education. Currently, VELA is applying for a large grant from the Critical Ecosystems Partnership Fund (CEPF) to support its legal education work in the East Melanesian Region, specifically working in 4 KBAs of Vanuatu of Green Hill, Tanna and the Santo Mountain Chain communities of Tubuemasana, Vatthe and Loru and surrounding communities.

It is VELA's objective under this current project that the indigenous community members in these 4 KBAs and surrounding communities will receive direct legal training in how to use environmental law to further conservation needs and provide free access to legal information that communities can use independently to further conservation needs. At least 10 affected by incompatible development projects provided with legal training and support.

As identified by Live & Learn Vanuatu, in Tabuemasana, the community is about 300 people. In Tabuemasana, household plant food gardens to provide food sources and plant and harvest sandal wood, kava and copra for income to meet school fee and other community and household needs. This is very much the agriculture base in Vanuatu which is subsistence agriculture and the other 3 KBAs of Green Hill, Vatthe and Loru are similar. People exploit natural resources for income or food.

The Nusumetu area hosts 5 communities of the Green Hill KBA with a paramount chief: Laperum, Laukapalet, Launapau, Launebing and Laukastaben. Nusumetu is home to about 600 men, women and children. The village has 2 schools: a primary Francophone school and a primary Anglophone (attached with a secondary bilingual school). After Cyclone Pam in 2015, a health centre and an aid post were built in the community. The community has 4 main different religions and various groups (women, youth and children). Economic activities at the moment include kava planting, which is harvested every 3 to 5 years and sold in Lenakel Town or send to Port Vila. Money is mostly used to pay school fees, food consumption at household level and other basic necessities.

The Loru area hosts 4 communities of Kole 1, Kole 2, Totkar and Etkar. The four chiefs of these 4 communities respectfully are, Ngisa, Thomar, Andre and Rief. Loru area is home to over 800 men, women and children. The communities have 2 schools: a primary Francophone school and a primary Anglophone. The Loru area has 2 main Christian denominations which are Presbyterian and Roman Catholic. Economic activities at the moment include kava planting, copra, cattle and sale of crops and vegetables at the market in Lugainvile, Santo. Money is mostly used to pay school fees, food consumption at household level and other basic necessities.

The Matantas area of Vatthe hosts 4 communities or sectors as is commonly called – sector 1, sector 2, sector 3, sector 4. These four sectors have 4 chiefs respectfully who are, Childson, Solomon Tavue, Bill Tavue and Tavue Tarihi. The Matantas area of Vatthe is home to over 300 men, women and children. The communities have 1 primary schools from year 1 – 8. Assembly of Gods and the Seventh Day Adventist church are the 2 main Christian denominations in the area. Economic activities at the moment include fishing, copra, cattle and sale of crops and vegetables at the market in Lugainvile, Santo. As with other areas mentioned, money is mostly used to pay school fees, food consumption at household level and other basic necessities.

Based on the need for legal training for Vanuatu Rangers and CCA committees identified by Live & Learn Vanuatu under their Rangers Program, VELA was requested to address this need and has collaborated with Live & Learn Vanuatu in identifying Conservation communities for these legal trainings.

VELA will undertake a Free, Prior, Informed, and Consent meeting at the start of this project to inform the indigenous peoples of Nusumetu before this project is implemented.

9. Summary of the proposed project: This section will describe what you plan to do and how you plan to do it, with a particular focus on activities implemented in areas inhabited and/or used by Indigenous People.

Prior to implementing the project a free prior informed and consent meeting will take place in the communities. The Project Coordinator and a staff or board member of VELA will be present at the communities to present project activities to inform the indigenous peoples and undertake questions and answers for clarity. Communications will be undertaken in Bislama. Rangers and chiefs will be available to communicate information in their mother tongue if information is unclear. Once the presentation of activities to be implemented is clear and understood by the people, the chief will normally lead a community discussion to have his community members consent. Agreements usually tend to be from a large group of people. Therefore, it is proper that VELA helps the community to put something in writing and have the chiefs sign their consents on behalf of the community.

There will be a number of legal trainings delivered by VELA with the local management committee members, Rangers and women who are able to demonstrate their interest in conservation activities. Hard copy printed legal training materials (fact sheets) written in Bislama from the legal training will be disseminated to the community members. Rangers can distribute these fact sheets to more isolated communities in the mountain interiors of the Santo mountain chain. VELA will capture discussions at each legal training with video recordings, photos and feedback from participants which will be shared later in a local newspaper article for the wider communities in Vanuatu to see and appreciate how the law protects conservation areas in Vanuatu.

VELA will further support the Rangers and communities with regard to procedures in reporting breaches of environmental laws in CCAs to responsible authorities such as the Department of Environmental Protection and Conservation (DEPC) and VELA. VELA may assist in addressing environmental complaints of breaches of CCAs.

10. Potential impacts: This section will assess expected project impacts (both positive and negative) on Indigenous People.

Currently we perceive that the VELA's legal training will increase Rangers' and community members' knowledge of conservation and biodiversity laws in Vanuatu. This Project aims to strengthen the capacity of conservation Rangers and management committee members including community members with legal education and reporting of CCA breaches.

For the implementation of this project, there will be a joint effort. VELA will collaborate with Live & Learn Vanuatu, other stakeholders and the communities of Green Hill and Santo Mountain Chain. Our relationship with these communities will commence with this project and we will continue to strengthen it to avoid adverse impacts. Hence, we will maintain participation, involvement, communications, honesty, transparency with all parties involved in this project. Communities will also be involved in discussing what specific legal areas they would like further training on for future projects with regards to conservation and biodiversity.

11. Participatory preparation: This section will describe the participation of affected communities during the project design process (i.e. prior to submission of the full proposal), and explain how Free, Prior and Informed Consent was obtained.

VELA will undertake a Free, Prior, Informed, and Consent meeting at the start of this project to inform the indigenous peoples of the CCAs before this project is implemented with assistance from Live & Learn Vanuatu. VELA had approached Live and Learn Vanuatu earlier this year (2019) and had proposed providing legal education to communities in KBA/CCAs. Live and Learn Vanuatu expressed a need taken from their Rangers Program in Vanuatu that Rangers wanted legal training on how to report breaches of CCAs. Live & Learn will invite VELA to its Port Vila rangers workshop on July 17 2019 to meet with rangers.

VELA will then present to Rangers during the rangers workshop a flow of activities which will be undertaken in this project and will explain the processes and request submitted to VELA by Live & Learn Vanuatu and VELA's processes with CEPF to undertake this project. VELA believes that for communities to be informed, involve and participatory in all activities undertaken, staffs will need to do one-on-one conversations to ensure information adequately reach all levels of audiences.

VELA will also be liaising via phone call with rangers, provincial authorities, chiefs, youths, church leaders, women leaders, chairmen of conservation management committees and indigenous members of the 4 KBA communities to define their interest in receiving environmental legal education under this project. Phone contacts will be obtained from rangers during the Rangers Workshop organized by Live & Learn.

VELA believes that for communities to be informed, involved and participatory in all activities undertaken, its staff will need to do one-on-one conversations to ensure information adequately reaches all levels of audiences.

12. Mitigation strategies: This section will outline measures to avoid adverse impacts and provide culturally appropriate benefits.

VELA will undertake this project in collaboration with Live & Learn Vanuatu to ensure code of minimum standards also respects the cultural values of the indigenous peoples. Since custom governance is highly respected in Vanuatu, VELA will ensure an inclusive education approach in all of its legal trainings. VELA will also adhere to cultural sensitivities in VELA's approach to its legal training. To achieve this at the start of this project VELA will discuss with both communities ways in which individuals are able to voice their concerns better either through their governance systems or through the development of one for the conservation project.

13. Monitoring and evaluation: This section will explain how compliance with the safeguard policy on Indigenous Peoples will be monitored, and reported to CEPF and/or the Regional Implementation Team. Monitoring and evaluation methodologies should be adapted to the local context, indicators, and capacity.

Field Legal Training Reports will be completed and communicated to CEPF. VELA perceives to train Rangers that will report to DEPC or VELA on any breaches of CCAs. VELA will ensure that all its legal training participants will fill out an evaluation tool to provide feedback on the legal training presentation and contents of legal material.

14. Grievance mechanism: The grievance mechanism must include, at a minimum, the following elements.

At the beginning of the project, VELA will explain the grievances process to the communities so that they are able to raise concerns directly, in the event that they are not comfortable to bring them to the VELA team. Therefore, contacts of the RIT and CEPF will be made available to all communities at the start of the project.

Chiefs and Local Management Committees will also be reminded that VELA will be the initial recipient of grievances and we will share all grievances – and a proposed response – with the Regional Implementation Team and the CEPF Grant Director within 15 days.

However, if the claimant is not satisfied following the response, then we will provide them with the opportunity to submit the grievance directly to the CEPF Executive Director at cepfexecutive@conservation.org or by surface mail. If the claimant is still not satisfied with the response from the CEPF Executive Director, they may submit the grievance to the World Bank at the local World Bank Office.

At a minimum, this grievance mechanism will include the following elements:

- Email and telephone contact information for the Grantee organization, Vanuatu. Environmental Law Association (VELA) Albert Taufa , (+678) 7779371 / 5989004 vela.vanuatu@gmail.com
- Email and telephone contact information for the CEPF Regional Implementation Team, Vatumaraga Molisa, vatumaraga.molisa@ext.iucn.org, Helen Pippard, +679 331 9084, helen.pippard@iucn.org
- Email of the CEPF Executive Director: cepfexecutive@conservation.org
- Address and telephone contact information for the local World Bank Office, ADB Liaison Office Level 5, Reserve Bank Building Rue Emile Mercet, PO Box 3221, Tel +678 25581.