



# RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE

## **M.Ed. In TESL Program Country Informational Reports**

Produced by Graduate Students in the M.Ed. In TESL Program  
In the Feinstein School of Education and Human Development

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# VANUATU



Information compiled by

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# Vanuatu Facts

**The Republic of Vanuatu is located** in the South Pacific between the latitudes 13 degrees and 21 degrees south of the equator and about 500 miles due west of Fiji. It is an irregular Y-shaped chain of about 80 islands, with the total area of about 12,200 sq. km. It is roughly bigger than the state of Connecticut. The largest inhabited island is Espirito Santo. Vanuatu's capital city is Port-Vila, located on the island of Efate.

**The official languages are French and English** due to the colonization of the islands by the French and English. **Bislama** is in a diglossic relationship with English. The national anthem is written in Bislama. There are over forty local languages in everyday use throughout Vanuatu, which are protected by the constitution of the Republic and regarded as part of the national heritage.



# Vanuatu History

**The colonial history of Vanuatu** is unique in the Pacific Islands. For 74 years prior to independence, the islands were ruled as a "condominium," controlled by France and England together. This meant that each colonial power maintained a separate administration. Though these were equal in theory, the actual amount of French and English influence varied greatly from island to island.



# Vanuatu And Literacy Rates

- **The overall literacy rate is (64% of the population)**, literacy is relatively widespread among persons under 35 years of age. Primary education is available for almost all children except in a few remote tribal areas. Education is provided in either English or French. In 1992, there were 272 primary schools with 852 teachers and 26,267 students. Student-to-teacher ratio stood at 31 to 1. General secondary schools had 220 teachers and 4,269 students in the same year. There were also 124 students in teacher training schools and 444 in vocational schools. The pupil-teacher ratio at the primary level was 24 to 1 in 1999. In the same year, 96% of primary-school-age children were enrolled in school, while 23% of those eligible attended secondary school.

Excerpt from: [http://www.icde.org/projects/regulatory\\_frameworks\\_for\\_distance\\_education/country\\_profiles/vanuatu/education\\_system](http://www.icde.org/projects/regulatory_frameworks_for_distance_education/country_profiles/vanuatu/education_system)

• Youth (15-24 years) literacy rate (%), 2005-2010*, male	94
• Youth (15-24 years) literacy rate (%), 2005-2010*, female	94
• Number per 100 population , 2010, Internet users	8
• Pre-primary school participation, Gross enrolment ratio (%), 2007-2010*, male	58
• Pre-primary school participation, Gross enrolment ratio (%), 2007-2010*, female	56
• Primary school participation, Gross enrolment ratio (%), 2007-2010*, male	111
• Primary school participation, Gross enrolment ratio (%), 2007-2010*, female	105
• Primary school participation, Net enrolment ratio (%), 2007-2010*, male	-
• Primary school participation, Net enrolment ratio (%), 2007-2010*, female	-
• Primary school participation, Net attendance ratio (%), 2005-2010*, male	80
• Primary school participation, Net attendance ratio (%), 2005-2010*, female	82
• Primary school participation, Survival rate to last primary grade (%) , 2006-2009*, admin. data	71
• Primary school participation, Survival rate to last primary grade (%) , 2005-2010*, survey data	88
• Secondary school participation, Net enrolment ratio (%), 2007-2010*, male	-
• Secondary school participation, Net enrolment ratio (%), 2007-2010*, female	-
• Secondary school participation, Net attendance ratio (%), 2005-2010*, male	38
• Secondary school participation, Net attendance ratio (%), 2005-2010*, female	36

Excerpt from: [www.unicef.org/infobycountry/vanuatu-statistics.htm/#90](http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/vanuatu-statistics.htm/#90)

# Vanuatu Education

- **The Vanuatu education system** recognizes six levels of education. These are: Preschool (ages 3–5), Primary (ages 6–12), Junior Secondary (ages 13–16), Senior Secondary (ages 17–20), Technical Education (ages 13–18) and Tertiary Education (ages 19 and up). Since 2003, the Ministry of Education has sought to provide an additional two years of primary education and to shorten junior secondary school to two years.
- **Primary and secondary education is both free** and compulsory. However, education in Vanuatu is neither in practice. School attendance in Vanuatu is the lowest in the Pacific. Primary and secondary schools charge fees for tuition, boarding, textbooks and other services and materials. Widespread rural poverty means that fees are a significant barrier to school attendance. High rates of non-attendance are also partly attributable to the discouragement arising from poor quality schooling, student health issues, rural isolation and the competing demand for child labor to support the household economy. Student progress is limited by quotas and the inadequate supply of school places, particularly in secondary schools.
- Excerpt from:
- [http://www.icde.org/projects/regulatory\\_frameworks\\_for\\_distance\\_education/country\\_profiles/vanuatu/education\\_system/](http://www.icde.org/projects/regulatory_frameworks_for_distance_education/country_profiles/vanuatu/education_system/)

# Vanuatu Education: Early Childhood

- **Early childhood education** for children aged 4-5 years is provided through community and church-run preschools. The latest available figures (2007) indicate that there were 644 preschools in Vanuatu.
- Cost, cultural factors and the limited number of places mean that preschool enrolments are small as a percentage of the preschool population. Even in the Port Vila area, it is estimated that as few as 13% of preschool aged children are enrolled in a pre-school.

**Although preschool education began** in Vanuatu as early as the 1960s, early childhood education was for a long time been accorded a low priority by the Vanuatu Government. This situation is slowly changing and Ministry of Education now gives increasing attention to preschools. The Ministry funds the Vanuatu Early Childhood Association (VEJA), a NGO which has existed since the early 1980s. Working with the VEJA, the Ministry of Education is currently addressing a number of pressing issues. The Ministry has approved guidelines on preschool standards and funds a network of Preschool Coordinators, who train preschool teachers and work to raise community awareness. The Ministry's efforts in this area are constrained by the relatively meager allocation of resources to the early childhood sector: as little as 0.1% of total budget in 2009.

• [Excerpt from:](http://www.icde.org/projects/regulatory_frameworks_for_distance_education/country_profiles/vanuatu/education_system/)

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# Vanuatu Education Primary and Secondary

- **Primary education** extends from grade 1-7. Around 96% of students in this age range actually attend primary school. This statistic combined with poor retention rates of students moving on to the secondary may be linked to low adult literacy rates.
- There were 488 primary schools in Vanuatu in 2007. Most of these schools are located in rural communities. High drop-out rates and non-attendance are a continuing problem. According to one estimate, the completion rate for Vanuatu primary students is only 73.2%. Before the recent introduction of fee subsidies, access to primary education was in decline and continued progress towards the universal basic education depends on foreign aid funding.
- [Excerpt from:](http://www.icde.org/projects/regulatory_frameworks_for_distance_education/country_profiles/vanuatu/education_system/)  
[http://www.icde.org/projects/regulatory\\_frameworks\\_for\\_distance\\_education/country\\_profiles/vanuatu/education\\_system/](http://www.icde.org/projects/regulatory_frameworks_for_distance_education/country_profiles/vanuatu/education_system/)

**Junior Secondary** is from grades 8-10 and senior secondary from grades 11-13. Only 17% of students in the secondary age-group are enrolled in a school.

- There are secondary schools (typically boarding schools) in each province and in the Port Villa area. The number of secondary schools has increased in recent years: from 42 in 2004 to 81 in 2007. Most of these schools are junior secondary schools and there is a serious shortage of places. Rates of non-attendance are high and increase sharply as student age rises. This trend is associated with “push-out” phenomenon, the process whereby quotas exclude increasing numbers of school-age children at each stage.
- [Excerpt from:](#)

# Vanuatu Other Educational Contexts

## • **Non-Government Schools**

• Most secondary schools are government-funded, but there are also a number of church schools receiving part-funding. In 2006, private school grants accounted for an estimated 19.2% of Ministry of Education expenditure.

• In addition to church-run schools, there are a number of private schools. Some of these teach on the basis of overseas curricula. The Port Vila International School (PVIS) offers education up until Year 10, based on the Australian and New Zealand curriculum. There is also a private Francophone secondary school, the Ecole Francaise de Port Vila, which follows the traditional French primary and secondary curriculum.

## • **Vocational education and training (VET)**

• Post-secondary education is a relatively small part of the education sector in Vanuatu. Less than 5% of the post-school age population are enrolled in post-secondary education. The underrepresentation of women is particularly marked in both TVET and university study.

• From the late 1990s onwards, the Vanuatu Government has placed increasing emphasis on TVET. The government-run *Vanuatu Institute of Technology* (VIT) is the major TVET provider in the country, with a main campus in Port Vila and two smaller provincial centers. The VIT has benefited in recent years from support from foreign agencies such as the European Union (EU) and AusAID.

• [Excerpt from:](http://www.icde.org/projects/regulatory_frameworks_for_distance_education/country_profiles/vanuatu/education_system/)

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# Vanuatu Educational Values



- **Public spending on education by the Vanuatu Government** averaged 6.4% of GDP and 28.1% of total government outgoings in 2008. Despite this high (by world standards) level of expenditure, there are persistent concerns regarding curricula and teaching outcomes. Teacher training standards are extremely low. Over a third of all teachers in Vanuatu have not completed secondary school. Teacher absenteeism also remains a significant issue. Despite the high level of spending on education, many rural schools lack basic teaching equipment, facilities and materials, while the level of physical infrastructure is often poor.

Excerpt from:

[http://www.icde.org/projects/regulatory\\_frameworks\\_for\\_distance\\_education/country\\_profiles/vanuatu/education\\_system/](http://www.icde.org/projects/regulatory_frameworks_for_distance_education/country_profiles/vanuatu/education_system/)

- **The Ministry of Education** is mandated to provide one of the fundamental human rights – education for all. Education is the pre-eminent tool for achieving increased economic prosperity and social welfare and stability.
- The Ministry provides education that is well managed, relevant and of a good quality to ensure that all the people of Vanuatu participate fully in the nation's social, cultural and economic development. The Ministry aims to create an education system, which provides good conditions for knowledge, skills and values development, with the view of enhancing a harmonious and peaceful society, conducive to the promotion of a sustainable Way of life in Vanuatu.

Excerpt from:

[http://www.governmentofvanuatu.gov.vu/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=89&Itemid=200](http://www.governmentofvanuatu.gov.vu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=89&Itemid=200)

# Vanuatu Global Relationships

- **Major countries of destination of migrants from Vanuatu** are Australia, France, New Caledonia, and New Zealand.

*Doing Business In Vanuatu (1992) Price Waterhouse*

- **U.S. Assistance to Vanuatu.** The Vanuatu Government's main focus has been to raise the economy, which is primarily agricultural. The United States is a major financial contributor to international and regional organizations that assist Vanuatu, including the World Bank, UN Children's Fund, World Health Organization, UN Fund for Population Activities, and Asian Development Bank (ADB). Peace Corps volunteers are assisting communities in Vanuatu in the areas of health and Education.

*Except from: [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov)*

- **Australia has invested \$192.9 million in Vanuatu** over the previous three years. Their investment has contributed to important development results including: 312 teachers were trained, 43,384 textbooks were delivered to primary schools, minimum school standards were endorsed, and a new national curriculum for kindergarten to Year 3 was developed in 2011. This will lead to improved education quality for over 40,000 primary school children.

*Excerpt from: <http://www.usaid.gov.au/countries/pacific/vanuatu/Pages/default.aspx>*

# Vanuatu Global Relationships

- **New Zealand's links with Vanuatu are long-standing**, dating back to Bishop Selwyn and the founding of the Melanesian Mission in 1849. Diplomatic relations were established following Vanuatu's independence in 1980. A resident New Zealand High Commission was established in 1987 in Port Vila, with accreditation prior to that coming from Honiara. Both countries enjoy a regular program of high-level visits and exchanges, and have been working together to develop a number of bilateral initiatives aimed at strengthening the relationship and supporting Vanuatu's development goals.

Excerpt from: <http://www.mfat.govt.nz/Countries/Pacific/Vanuatu.php>



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- Cover Slide [http://www.geo.fr/var/geo/storage/images/voyages/guides-de-voyage/oceanie/vanuatu/108562-26-fre-FR/vanuatu\\_940x705.jpg](http://www.geo.fr/var/geo/storage/images/voyages/guides-de-voyage/oceanie/vanuatu/108562-26-fre-FR/vanuatu_940x705.jpg)
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