MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING REPORT FOR SKILLS YOUTH PROJECT

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SHARING KNOWLEDGE FOR INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP AND LIVELIHOOD SUCCESS (SKILLS) YOUTH PROJECT

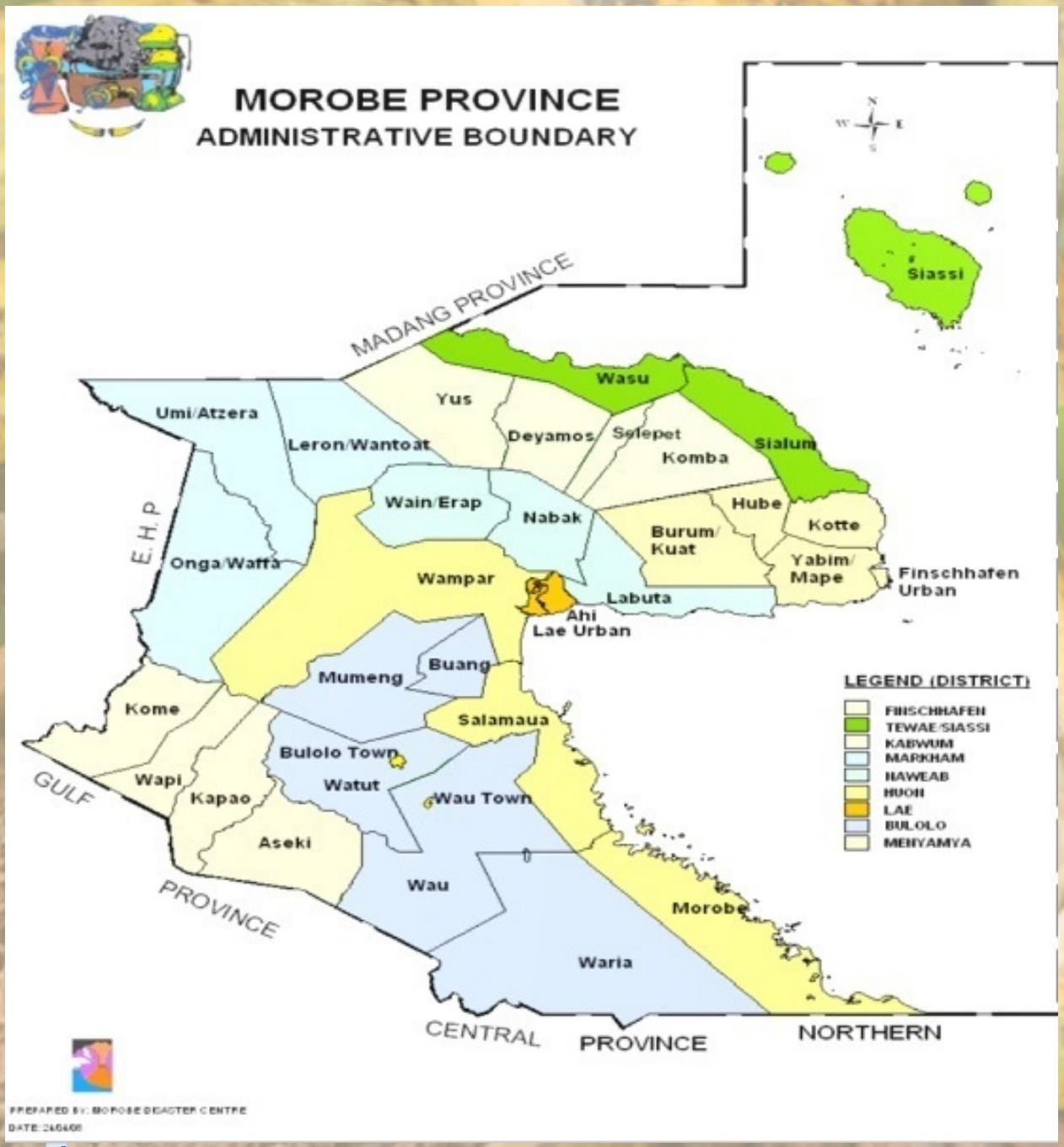
1. CONTEXT AND RELEVANCE TO EU PRIORITIES

Papua New Guinea (PNG) is home to one of the world's most diverse ecosystems and cultures, but also one of the most vulnerable societies to climate and economic shocks. More than 85% of the population live in rural areas**, relying heavily on subsistence agriculture for food and income. Yet these rural communities face rising pressures from youth unemployment, limited educational access, poor health and nutrition, environmental degradation, and climate stress. For young people in particular, the lack of opportunity has driven many toward risky and exploitative informal economies such as illegal logging, small-scale resource extraction, or even urban drift into unemployment and hardship.**

The SKILLS Youth Project promotes climate-smart agroecology, digital innovation, inclusive leadership, and rights-based development with a GEDSI focus, the project contributed to EU objectives of making societies greener, digital, inclusive, and resilient.

Socio-economic challenges

PNG's demographic structure is heavily youth-dominated, with nearly 60% of the population under 25 years of age. In Morobe Province, where the SKILLS project operated, young people often struggle with high unemployment, underdeveloped markets, and dependency on informal trade. Access to education remains uneven, with rural schools often under-resourced, leaving many youth without literacy, numeracy, or technical skills necessary for modern livelihoods. Gender inequality compounds these barriers: women's voices are often absent in decision-making despite their central role in agriculture and household economies. Persons with disabilities are particularly excluded, with limited access to training, livelihoods, or community leadership roles.



Map: SKILLS Project Sites, Morobe Province LLGs

Environmental and climate challenges

Climate stress and environmental degradation threaten rural survival. Communities in Morobe Province reported:

- **Wetland flooding that destroys cocoa gardens and food crops.**
- **Prolonged droughts leaving households without water and gardens barren.**
- **Deforestation and soil erosion from shifting cultivation, logging, and land clearance.**
- **Extractive resource exploitation (mining, logging) that displaces communities and accelerates environmental decline.**

These challenges directly undermine food security, biodiversity, and the ecological balance that traditional PNG farming has maintained for generations. For rural youth, who depend on the land for their future, climate change is both an immediate crisis and a long-term threat.

Alignment with EU priorities

The SKILLS Youth Project was designed to respond to these intersecting crises while aligning with the EU's strategic priorities:

- **European Commission's CSO-LA Programme: By strengthening civil society leadership through SAVE PNG and church-based networks, the project expanded local ownership of sustainable development.**
- **EU Green Deal: SKILLS advanced regenerative agriculture and biodiversity protection through agroecology training, promoting reduced deforestation and livelihoods.**
- **Horizon Europe 2021–2027 Priorities: The project made communities greener, more digital, inclusive, and resilient, particularly through the introduction of ICT toolkits and peer-to-peer digital learning.**
- **Gender Equality and Social Inclusion: By targeting women and persons with disabilities as educators and leaders, SKILLS directly addressed the EU's cross-cutting principles of equity and rights-based development.**

Why this matters

By embedding digital innovation within traditional agriculture and positioning youth, women, and marginalized groups as leaders, the project contributed to breaking the cycle of rural poverty and ecological decline. It created pathways for young people to see themselves not as passive victims of climate change, but as active agents of resilience and innovation. This locally rooted, human-centered approach exemplifies the EU's vision for development cooperation: building capacity, equity, and sustainability from the ground up.

2. PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND THEORY OF CHANGE

Overall Objective

The SKILLS Youth Project was designed with one overarching purpose: to empower rural youth, particularly women and persons with disabilities (PWDs), to become leaders of climate resilience, biodiversity stewardship, and sustainable livelihoods.

Over three years, this vision moved from concept to practice. By the project's end, hundreds of young people in Morobe Province had been trained not only in technical farming and digital skills but also in leadership, facilitation, and advocacy. They emerged as peer educators and social innovators, multiplying knowledge across their communities and demonstrating that rural youth are not passive recipients of development but agents of change.

Specific Objectives

The project pursued three interconnected objectives:

1. **Building agroecological and digital competencies among rural youth**
    - **Farmers were trained in climate-smart techniques such as cocoa and vanilla intercropping, poultry and fish farming, organic composting, and seed saving.**
    - **Digital tools - including ICT kits loaded with training materials enabled youth to document practices, share lessons, and extend learning to peers without internet access.**
2. **Establishing sustainable peer-to-peer education and local advocacy models**
    - **100 peer educators were equipped with facilitation skills and digital resources.**
    - **Through workshops, village screenings, and USB-based knowledge sharing, they reached more than 50,000 people directly, creating a self-sustaining education network.**
3. **Creating multi-stakeholder partnerships for green economic development**
    - **By connecting with churches, cooperatives, and the PNG Cocoa Board, peer educators linked knowledge to markets and governance.**
    - **Provincial authorities and farmer associations ensured the project's practices aligned with policy and market realities.**

The Theory of Change in Practice

The project's Theory of Change was built on a multiplier logic:

- **Inputs: Provide youth with knowledge (agroecology, ICT), tools (training kits, multimedia), and platforms (church groups, farmer associations).**
- **Processes: Youth disseminate knowledge through peer education, using both traditional (face-to-face, church meetings) and modern (digital toolkits, video screenings) methods.**
- **Outputs: Communities adopt improved agroecological practices and enhance food security.**
- **Outcomes: Women and PWDs emerge as visible leaders; youth reduce reliance on risky informal economies; families strengthen resilience against climate shocks.**
- **Impact: A new generation of rural leaders champions biodiversity protection, inclusive leadership, and sustainable livelihoods.**

Voices from the Field

The Theory of Change is reflected in the voices of participants:

- ***"Before SKILLS, I thought farming was only hard labour with no future. Now I see it as a pathway to business and leadership. When I share what I've learned, others follow."* Miriam, 24, peer educator**
- ***"At first, people laughed at me because of my disability. They said I couldn't lead. But when I showed them my fishpond and the tilapia I raised, the laughter stopped. Now I am a teacher."* Peter, 32, cocoa trainer**
- ***"For women, the biggest change is confidence. We speak now in meetings. We are leaders in gardens and in decisions."* Lucy, 35, vanilla farmer**

Contribution to EU Priorities

The Theory of Change aligned seamlessly with EU strategic goals:

- **Digital Transformation: ICT kits and multimedia tools bridged digital exclusion, creating inclusive learning even in off-grid areas.**
- **Inclusion and Rights-Based Development: With women comprising 45% of peer educators and PWDs 10%, the project directly implemented EU cross-cutting principles.**
- **Resilience and Governance: By embedding youth in civic forums and farmer cooperatives, the project advanced democratic participation and long-term resilience.**

3. MEL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

Participatory and Adaptive Approach

From the outset, the SKILLS Youth Project was designed to be community-driven and flexible, ensuring that activities reflected the realities of rural life in Morobe Province. Implementation followed a participatory model in which youth, women, and persons with disabilities were not just beneficiaries but co-designers of solutions.

SAVE PNG coordinated closely with four core partners:

- Evangelical Lutheran Church of PNG (ELC PNG) – mobilized youth networks and church groups for outreach.
- Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA PNG) – integrated SKILLS training into existing community development programs.
- South Pacific Institute for Rural and Sustainable Development (SPISARD) – provided technical expertise in curriculum development.
- PNG Cocoa Board – ensured technical accuracy and linked farmers to trainers for quality assurance and improved production techniques.

This network of partners provided legitimacy, expanded outreach, and embedded knowledge within trusted institutions such as churches, farmer cooperatives, and schools.

Training and Delivery Modalities

Implementation relied on three complementary strategies:

1. Capacity Building of Trainers and Peer Educators
    - 20 partner staff were trained through Train-the-Trainers workshops, equipping them to mentor 100 peer educators.
    - Peer educators were selected to reflect gender balance and inclusion of PWDs, becoming role models within their communities.
2. Multimedia and ICT-Enabled Outreach
    - EMTV professional video episodes were produced and screened in communities, covering cocoa, vanilla, poultry, aquaculture, and climate-smart gardening.
    - 120 ICT toolkits were distributed, containing videos, manuals, and facilitation guides accessible via USB sticks and smartphones, ensuring use in off-grid settings.

3. **Peer-to-Peer Dissemination**
    - Educators conducted workshops, farm demonstrations, and awareness sessions at the village level.
    - Each educator reached an average of 500 peers, who then cascaded knowledge to family and community networks, multiplying impact across 50,000+ people.

Adaptive Management in Action

Flexibility was essential given the volatile context of rural PNG:

- Climate disruptions such as floods delayed on-farm filming and demonstrations. The project adapted by filming during the dry seson.
- Digital exclusion in remote areas was overcome through offline resources. USB sticks and printed manuals allowed peer educators to continue teaching where connectivity was impossible.
- Social stigma against PWDs was challenged through demonstration. When peer educators with disabilities successfully trained others, it shifted perceptions at the community level.
- Scheduling barriers for trainers and educators were resolved through combined workshops, flexible timetables, and staggered delivery across districts.

This adaptive learning cycle ensured continuity of results despite challenges.

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Framework

The MEL system underpinned accountability and guided real-time adjustments.

Key MEL components included:

- Baseline and endline surveys measured changes in farming knowledge, adoption of climate-smart practices, and household income.
- Quarterly peer educator reports documented outreach activities, challenges, and case studies.
- Training attendance records tracked participation and completion.
- Multimedia audits confirmed the frequency and reach of video screenings and ICT kit use.
- Project Steering Committee consultations provided participatory oversight, ensuring community perspectives informed decisions.

Findings from MEL data included:

- **By Year 3, 80% of surveyed farmers reported adopting at least one new agroecological practice.**
- **Households diversifying into vanilla, cocoa, or fresh produce reported an average 20–40% increase in income compared to baseline.**
- **Women's participation in community meetings rose significantly, with many women trained as peer educators taking on formal leadership roles.**
- **Over 70% of ICT toolkit users reported sharing content beyond their households, multiplying** the reach of EU investment.

4. MAJOR OUTPUTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

The Over the three-year implementation period, the SKILLS Youth Project delivered a comprehensive set of outputs that directly contributed to its overall objectives. These achievements combined technical innovation, inclusive leadership, and community-based wide-reaching impact.

Multimedia Productions for Agroecology

The project produced six professionally filmed video episodes on cocoa, vanilla, poultry, aquaculture, and climate-smart gardening. These episodes were designed for use in local communities, featuring practical demonstrations in relatable contexts.

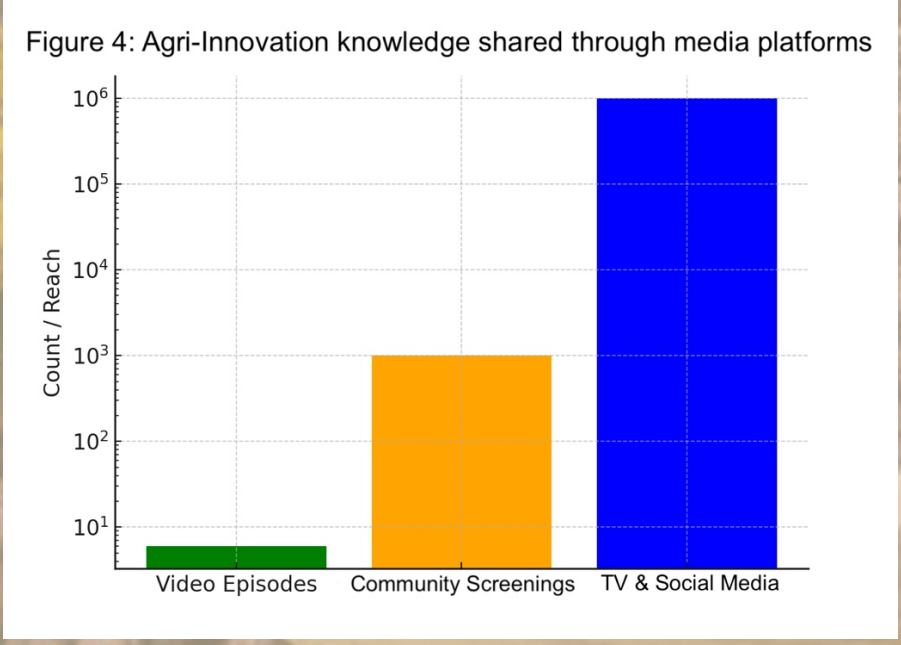


Figure 4: Agri-Innovation Knowledge Shared

ICT Kits for Knowledge Multiplication

A total of 120 ICT training kits were distributed to peer educators and local leaders. These kits contained videos, manuals, facilitator guides, and electronic resources in multiple formats, ensuring accessibility for diverse audiences. Their offline design allowed knowledge sharing in remote villages.

Capacity Building Through Training

The project delivered four Train-the-Trainers workshops that equipped 20 ADRA and ELC PNG staff with advanced facilitation and technical skills. These trainers mentored a cadre of 100 Peer Educators, who became central to community-level implementation.

Peer-to-Peer Outreach at Scale

The 100 Peer Educators reached an estimated 50,000 direct beneficiaries through workshops, demonstrations, and ICT-based awareness sessions. Given the cascading nature of peer-to-peer learning the project's overall reach is estimated at 100,000 people across Papua New Guinea.

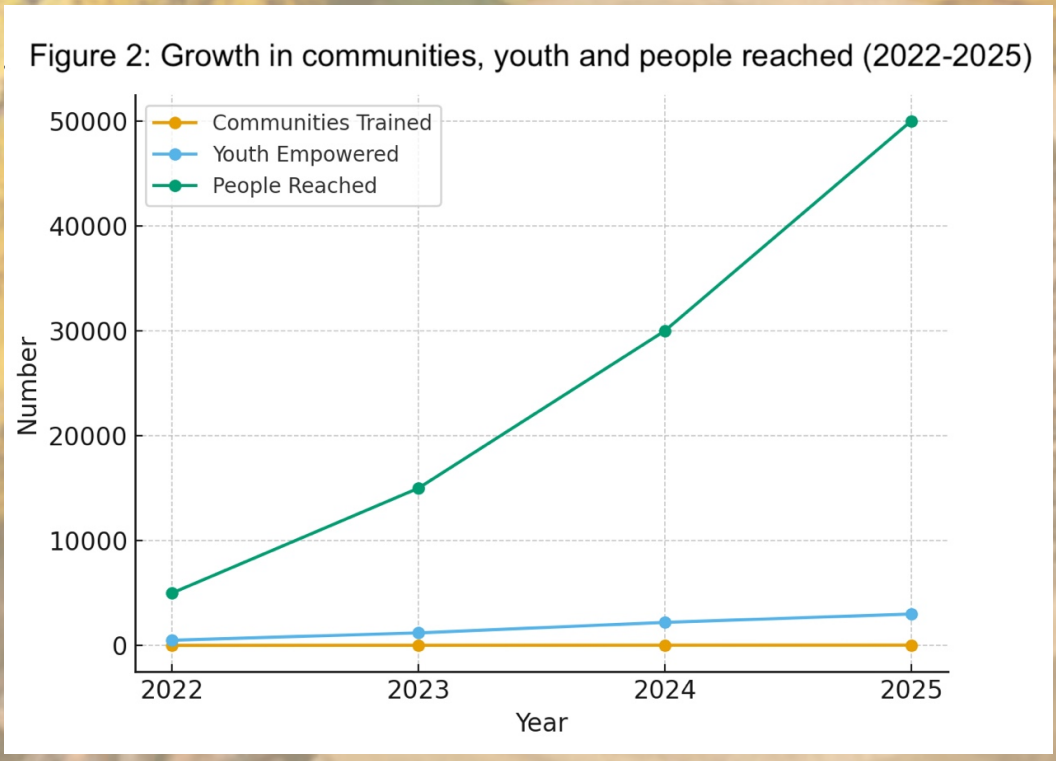


Figure 2: Communities, Youth & People Reached (2022–2025)

This growth highlights the scalability and cost-effectiveness of the peer-to-peer education model.

5. GEDSI AND HUMAN RIGHTS DEVELOPMENT

The The SKILLS Youth Project placed Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) at the center of its design and delivery. Over three years, the project created new spaces for women, persons with disabilities (PWDs), and marginalized youth to lead in areas where their voices were excluded.

Gender Equality

Women's participation in agriculture in PNG has always been high, yet their visibility in leadership and decision-making has been limited. The project deliberately ensured that 45% of peer educators were women, breaking long-standing social barriers.

- **Women moved from being background labourers in cocoa and vanilla farms to being trainers, facilitators, and decision-makers.**
- **Leadership training and mentorship programs provided women with the confidence to speak in public meetings and take active roles in cooperative groups.**
- **In some communities, women peer educators began managing training sessions independently, demonstrating the multiplier effect of gender inclusion.**

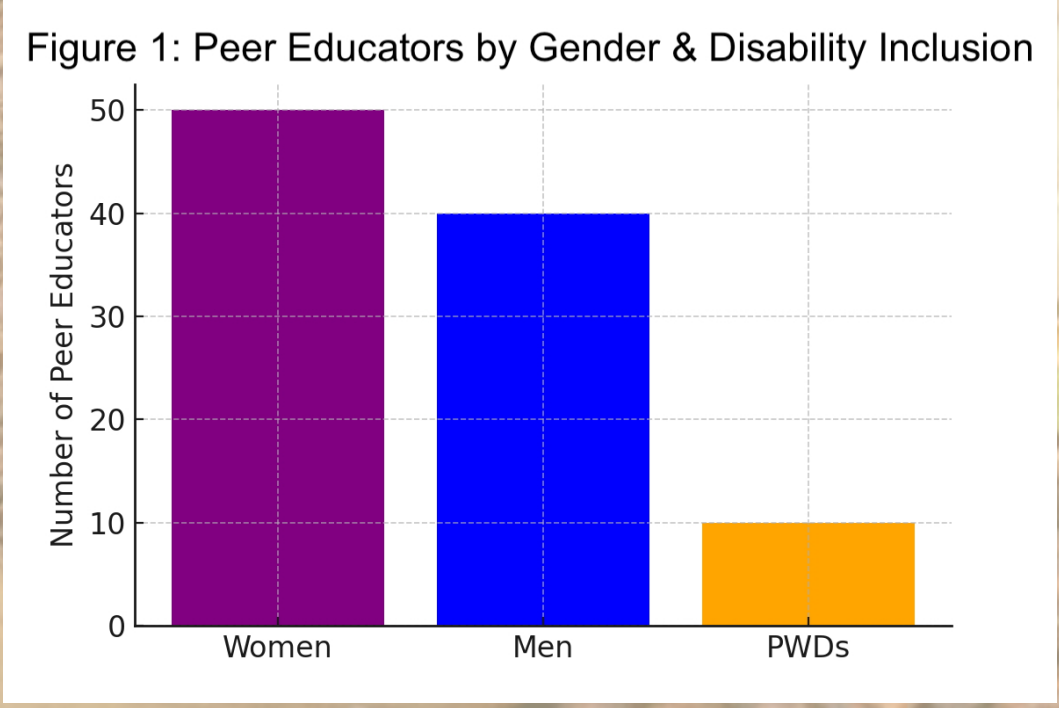


Figure 1: Peer Educators by Gender & Disability Inclusion

Disability Inclusion

Persons with disabilities are often marginalized in rural PNG, with little access to livelihoods or leadership. SKILLS intentionally set a target that 10% of peer educators would be PWDs, ensuring representation and visibility.

- Accessibility principles were integrated into training design, with materials adapted for diverse needs.
- PWD educators demonstrated strong leadership, particularly in poultry and aquaculture initiatives, challenging community stigma.
- Their success created a shift in perception: disability was no longer seen as inability, but as another dimension of leadership.

This commitment aligns directly with the EU's Disability-Inclusive Development Guidelines, making the SKILLS model an example of rights-based empowerment.

Human Rights and Indigenous Peoples

The project emphasized that sustainable development must uphold dignity, participation, and equity. Peer educator trainings integrated human rights education and cultural sensitivity, ensuring that outreach respected local values while promoting inclusivity.

- Traditional gardening methods, seed-saving, and ecological rituals were acknowledged as part of agroecological practice.
- Indigenous perspectives on land stewardship were integrated with climate science, strengthening both cultural continuity and resilience.
- Communities valued this hybrid approach, noting that the project did not "replace tradition" but rather enhanced it with modern knowledge.

Democracy and Governance

The SKILLS Youth Project also strengthened democratic participation at the local level:

- Peer educators were trained in advocacy and civic leadership, giving them tools to engage with village leaders, ward councillors, and provincial officers.
- Project Steering Committees, which included women and PWD representatives, created an inclusive governance structure.
- Youth-led forums, facilitated through church networks, fostered dialogue between young people and decision-makers on agricultural and climate issues.

6. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS

The The success of the SKILLS Youth Project depended not only on training content and resources but also on the strength of its partnerships and networks. From the start, SAVE PNG recognized that empowering rural youth required the involvement of trusted local institutions, technical experts, and policy actors. Over three years, this collaborative approach ensured both wide outreach and long-term sustainability.

Civil Society and Faith-Based Partners

- **Evangelical Lutheran Church of PNG (ELC PNG): Leveraged its extensive youth ministry and community networks to mobilize participants in remote districts. Church gatherings provided safe spaces for peer educator sessions, enabling wide reach in communities that might otherwise have been difficult to access.**
- **Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA PNG): Integrated SKILLS methodologies into its community development programs, ensuring that youth and women's groups were actively engaged. ADRA's field structures amplified dissemination of training resources, particularly ICT kits.**

Faith-based partnerships proved critical in building community trust and legitimacy. In many villages, churches are the most visible institutions, which gave SKILLS a platform for acceptance and scale.

Technical and Educational Partners

- **South Pacific Institute for Rural and Sustainable Development (SPISARD): Contributed technical knowledge and pedagogical expertise. SPISARD collaborated in designing training curricula that combined scientific agroecology with culturally grounded practices, making learning accessible and relevant.**
- **PNG Cocoa Board: Provided certified trainers and market linkage support. By aligning with the Cocoa Board's extension services, SKILLS ensured that young farmers not only improved cultivation techniques but also connected to value chains and quality standards.**

Government and Provincial Authorities

Engagement with provincial government authorities and ward-level councillors ensured that SKILLS activities were aligned with local development priorities. Officials from agricultural extension, education, and youth divisions participated in workshops and consultations, reinforcing institutional support for agroecology and youth empowerment. This provided opportunities to influence policy dialogues, with youth peer educators presenting in community forums attended by local government representatives.

Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) and Cooperatives

CBOs and farmer cooperatives were engaged as entry points for outreach. Peer educators frequently partnered with these local structures to conduct workshops, distribute ICT kits, and organize video screenings. This approach ensured that knowledge dissemination was anchored in existing community institutions, enhancing uptake and ownership.

Project Steering Committee (PSC)

A Project Steering Committee was established with representation from youth, women, PWDs, churches, NGOs, and government officials. Meeting quarterly, the PSC reviewed project progress, advised on cultural and gender protocols, and provided a channel for grassroots voices to shape implementation. This mechanism ensured transparency, inclusivity, and accountability.

Added Value of Partnerships

These diverse partnerships ensured that SKILLS was not a stand-alone project but an embedded community initiative. Churches provided outreach, NGOs added facilitation capacity, technical partners ensured quality, and government actors aligned policy. Together, they created an enabling environment for SKILLS to grow into a movement of inclusive agroecology and youth leadership.

📌 SKILLS Project Steering Committee, Stakeholder Meeting, Lae, Morobe Province

7. KEY CHALLENGES AND MITIGATION MEASURES

The While the SKILLS Youth Project achieved its objectives, it was implemented in a highly complex environment where social, environmental, and logistical barriers continually tested resilience. The project's success was partly due to its ability to adapt and mitigate these challenges in real time.

Climate Impacts on Training and Production

Challenge: Severe droughts, flooding, and pest outbreaks disrupted farming activities and sometimes made on-farm filming or training difficult.

Mitigation:

- **Supplementary footage and resources were sourced from other agroecology initiatives**
- **Training shifted focus to alternative livelihoods such as poultry and aquaculture during climate shocks when crop-based training was less relevant.**
- **Peer educators used ICT kits to run indoor sessions when field conditions were not viable.**

Digital Access Limitations

Challenge: Many remote villages lacked internet access, electricity, or digital literacy, limiting uptake of online or electronic training.

Mitigation:

- **Mobile phone ICT kits were distributed to ensure content was available offline.**
- **Solar-powered devices and community screening equipment were used.**
- **Peer educators provided hands-on facilitation, ensuring that digital resources were complemented by personal explanation.**

Scheduling Conflicts and Human Resource Pressures

Challenge: Trainers, partner staff, and peer educators often balanced multiple responsibilities, creating difficulties in aligning schedules.

Mitigation:

- **Workshops were delivered in combined or staggered formats to maximize attendance.**
- **Partner organisations (ADRA, ELC PNG) built SKILLS into their existing workplans.**
- **SAVE PNG introduced a flexible calendar and rotated facilitators to maintain momentum.**

Social Stigma Around Disability Inclusion

Challenge: Persons with disabilities faced initial skepticism and exclusion, with communities doubting their capacity to teach farming or lead sessions.

Mitigation:

- **Inclusive messaging and visibility campaigns highlighted PWDs as role models.**
- **Success stories of PWD educators (e.g., leading aquaculture demonstrations) directly challenged stereotypes.**
- **Community leaders were engaged to reinforce the principle that disability is not inability.**

Geographic and Logistical Barriers

Challenge: Morobe Province's mountainous terrain and dispersed rural settlements made travel costly and time-consuming.

Mitigation:

- **Peer-to-peer structures reduced the need for trainers to cover all areas themselves, with local educators embedded in communities.**
- **Churches and farmer cooperatives acted as decentralized hubs for training and dissemination.**

Conclusion on Challenges

The project's ability to anticipate, adapt, and innovate in response to these challenges ensured continuity of learning and strengthened community ownership. Each challenge became a learning opportunity, demonstrating that resilience lies not only in farming systems but also in the flexibility of delivery models.

📌 **SKILLS Trainers and Volunteers, Damborade Village, Morobe Province**

8. LESSONS LEARNED

The SKILLS Youth Project generated a rich set of lessons with relevance not only for future work in Papua New Guinea but also for EU-supported development cooperation across the Pacific. These lessons reflect the importance of combining inclusivity, technology, and indigenous knowledge with flexible and locally owned approaches.

Peer Education is Scalable and Cost-Effective

Training 100 peer educators who then reached over 50,000 people directly demonstrated that peer-to-peer education models multiply impact at low cost. This model is especially effective in geographically dispersed, resource-constrained settings where conventional extension services cannot reach everyone.

- **Evidence: Monitoring data confirmed that each educator cascaded knowledge to an average of 500 peers.**
- **Implication: Peer education should be considered a core strategy for rural development programs in PNG and beyond.**

Indigenous and Gender-Responsive Methodology Increases Buy-In

Integrating traditional practices such as seed-saving and ecological rituals into agroecology training increased community acceptance. Similarly, ensuring that nearly half of peer educators were women created a social shift, with more women now participating in decision-making forums.

- **Lesson: Programs are more successful when they respect culture and challenge inequities simultaneously.**

Multimedia Resources Enhance Learning and Retention

Videos and ICT kits proved powerful in extending knowledge beyond formal workshops. Communities repeatedly requested screenings, and many participants used ICT resources for ongoing reference.

- **Evidence: Over 1,000 screenings held; more than 70% of ICT kit users reported sharing content beyond their households.**
- **Lesson: Combining digital tools with human facilitation ensures learning continues long after training sessions.**

Partnerships with Local Institutions Anchor Sustainability

By embedding SKILLS activities within churches, schools, cooperatives, and government networks, the project ensured that knowledge and practices would endure beyond EU funding.

- **Lesson: Development initiatives should be anchored in trusted community structures to guarantee long-term impact.**

Adaptive MEL Strengthens Accountability and Impact

The participatory MEL system allowed the project to adapt to challenges such as droughts, scheduling conflicts, and stigma against PWDs. By using real-time data, SKILLS adjusted activities without losing momentum.

- **Lesson: Monitoring is not just about accountability to donors - it is a learning tool that improves outcomes for communities.**

Conclusion

The overarching lesson is that inclusion, adaptability, and local ownership are non-negotiable for success. When communities see themselves as co-creators, and when youth, women, and PWDs are empowered as leaders, development outcomes are deeper, more resilient, and more sustainable.

📌 **SKILLS Women Peer Educator Graduates, Finschhafen District, Morobe**

9. IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY

Over three years, the SKILLS Youth Project delivered measurable improvements in youth empowerment, agroecological practice, and community resilience across Morobe Province.

1. Empowered Peer Educators

- 100 youth trained as peer educators became recognised leaders in their communities.
- These educators facilitated knowledge transfer, shifting perceptions of youth from "jobless dependents" to social innovators.

2. Reach and Knowledge Transfer

- 50,000 people directly trained in agroecology, ICT use, and inclusive leadership.
- Estimated 100,000 indirectly reached through peer-to-peer dissemination, family networks, and community screenings.

3. Agroecological Adoption

- MEL surveys showed that by Year 3, 80% of farmers surveyed had adopted at least one new climate-smart practice (e.g., mulching, cocoa intercropping, composting).
- Cocoa and vanilla farmers reported healthier yields, while poultry and aquaculture diversified household income streams.

4. GEDSI Transformation

- Women (45% of peer educators) reported greater participation in decision-making forums.
- PWD educators became respected role models, reducing stigma in their communities.

5. Civic Engagement and Governance

- Youth networks established through SKILLS are now engaging in advocacy and community planning.
- Project Steering Committees (with youth, women, and PWD representatives) created a local governance model that can continue beyond the project.
- Average household income increased by 20–40% in households adopting diversified farming.

📌 SKILLS Media Training with Mobile Phone ICT Kit, Markham District, Morobe Province

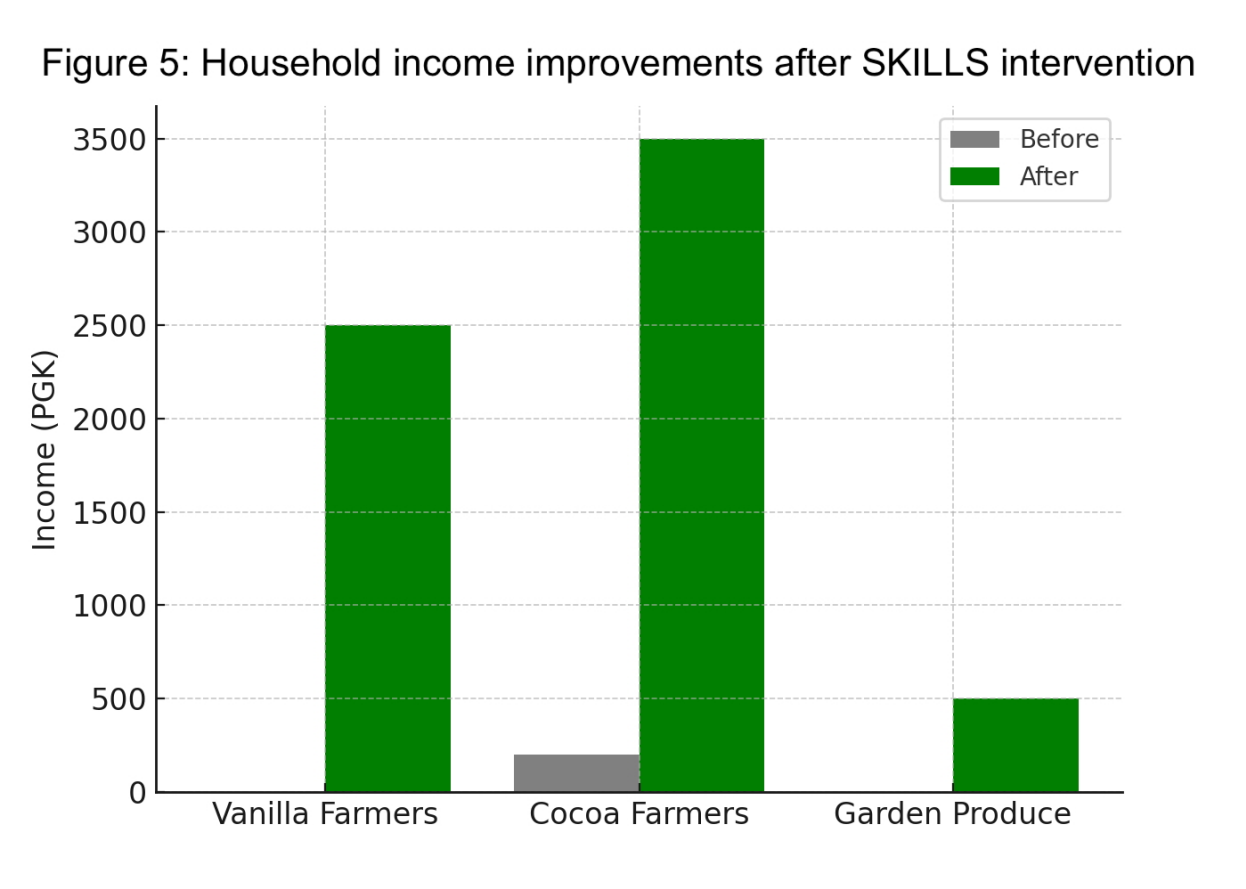


Figure 5: Income & Livelihood Impacts (Before vs After SKILLS)

- **Households practicing cocoa and vanilla farming reported the highest resilience during climate shocks.**
- **Income diversification reduced dependency on a single crop, cushioning against market and environmental risks.**

Sustainability

Ensuring continuity of impact beyond EU funding was a core objective of the project. Several mechanisms were embedded to guarantee sustainability:

1. Institutional Anchoring

- **Churches, schools, and cooperatives integrated SKILLS practices into their ongoing activities, ensuring continuous use of training methods.**
- **Provincial authorities expressed interest in adapting SKILLS materials into services.**

2. Resource Continuity

- **ICT kits and multimedia resources remain in the hands of peer educators and local institutions, continuing to serve as training tools.**
- **SAVE PNG's Agri-Learning Centre has been institutionalized as a hub for ongoing training, demonstration, and youth innovation.**

3. Community Ownership

- **Peer educators are embedded in their own villages, reducing dependence on external trainers.**
- **Communities demonstrated willingness to self-organize screenings and workshops even without project support.**

4. Market Linkages

- **Partnerships with the PNG Cocoa Board created pathways for trained farmers to access markets, increasing the likelihood that agroecological practices will continue to generate income.**

5. Replication Potential

- **The SKILLS model has attracted attention from other provinces. Church and NGO partners in the Highlands and Islands regions expressed interest in replicating the peer education and ICT-based approach.**

SKILLS Agri-Innovations video series, EMTV Television, Papua New Guinea

10. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Over its three years of implementation, the SKILLS Youth Project has shown how an EU-supported, locally led initiative can transform rural development outcomes in Papua New Guinea by:

- **Adopt climate-smart practices that strengthen food security and biodiversity.**
- **Diversify livelihoods, leading to measurable increases in household resilience and income.**
- **Empower marginalized groups to take visible leadership roles in farming, governance, and advocacy.**
- **Build sustainable networks of peer educators, institutions, and partnerships that will continue beyond the project's funding period.**

The project's most important legacy is the shift in mindset: rural youth, once seen as unemployed and dependent, are now recognized as educators, leaders, and innovators. In the words of one peer educator, *"We used to wait for help from outside. Now we see we are the help."*

Recommendations to the European Commission

Based on the project's achievements and lessons learned, SAVE PNG recommends the following actions for the EU's consideration:

1. **Scale Up the SKILLS Model**
    - **Expand implementation to other high-risk provinces in PNG, particularly those vulnerable to climate change and food insecurity.**
    - **Adapt the peer education and ICT toolkit model for use in other Pacific Island nations.**
2. **Continue Supporting Community-Led Innovation**
    - **Strengthen EU funding for initiatives that combine digital tools, agroecology, and inclusion.**
    - **Invest in further development of green economy and digital economy sectors, ensuring youth leadership.**
3. **Integrate SKILLS Content into Formal Education**
    - **Work with the PNG government to embed SKILLS agroecology curricula into schools and vocational training programs.**
    - **Ensure young people leaving school are prepared with practical, climate-smart livelihood skills.**

4. **Deepen EU–CSO Partnerships**

   - **Foster long-term partnerships between EU Delegations, CSOs, churches, and youth platforms to consolidate impact.**
   - **Support stronger links between grassroots actors and policy frameworks to ensure local voices inform national and EU programming.**

Final Reflection

The SKILLS Youth Project demonstrates that inclusive, climate-smart, and digitally enabled rural development is both achievable and sustainable in Papua New Guinea. With continued EU support, the movement seeded by SKILLS can grow into a national and regional model of resilience, ensuring that the next generation of Pacific youth are equipped not only to survive climate change but to lead their communities toward a more sustainable future.

END PROJECT MEL REPORT

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