

YOUTH CHALLENGE VANUATU

STORIES OF CHANGE



FOREWORD

It has been another great year for Youth Challenge Vanuatu (YCV). Our programs supporting youth employment, leadership and entrepreneurship opportunities have positively impacted the lives of many young people. This collection of 20 stories reflects the breadth of young people we support from rural to urban based, young men and women, and those with a disability. YCV is proud of its participants and achievements but there continues to be a great need for more of these youth focused programs.

In 2015, YCV facilitated an external evaluation and the positive results reflect the need for YCV to continue:

- ✓ *YCV programs are relevant as there is a clear need for programs targeting young people with an incomplete education and/or those with minimal work experience struggling to become economically active*
- ✓ *YCV programs are unique in Vanuatu and no other organisation offers a comprehensive focus on delivering employment and business skills alongside strengthening life skills*
- ✓ *Employers positively rate YCV participants interning at their organisation as interns are motivated and hardworking, and the relationship with YCV is formalised through an MOU*
- ✓ *YCV programs have had a visible impact on young people's confidence, behaviour and attitude.*

Youth Challenge Vanuatu has plans to increase the number of youth participants in our programs. The number of applications show there is demand for a larger youth intake each year. YCV would like to thank our long term funder Oxfam, for believing in these YCV programs and believing in the potential of Ni-Vanuatu youth. YCV is also grateful to the dedication of the YCV Board members who tirelessly volunteer their time to support and guide YCV's organisational direction.

Shirley Abraham

***Executive Director
Youth Challenge Vanuatu***



YOUTH CHALLENGE VANUATU

Ni-Vanuatu youth have limited access to further education, employment, decision making and participation opportunities, resulting in economic and social marginalisation. Risky behaviours heighten young people's vulnerability to involvement in illegal activities and to sexual and reproductive health morbidities such as unplanned pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections and coerced or transactional sex. Rapid social change and urban drift has also had a profound impact on young people's sense of identity and belonging, and on their access to land. Many of these factors are magnified for youth living in urban settlements and for young women and youth with a disability. Young people are caught between parents and elders' expectations to behave responsibly, make a worthwhile contribution to family and community and be financially successful, whilst navigating hard realities of socio-economic circumstance: high unemployment, a low wage economy for unskilled jobs, and expensive urban living conditions. These challenges are even greater for early school leavers, those without work experience and/or experience of the formal economy.

Youth Challenge Vanuatu is a local NGO working in youth leadership and livelihoods since 2001. It started as a program for Australia and Canadian youth to gain leadership and community development experience, alongside national youth. In 2003, the program prioritized the involvement of an increased cohort of Ni-Vanuatu youth participants. This gave these young Ni-Vanuatu women and men opportunities to increase their leadership skills and livelihoods opportunities through engaging in community development programs, training and internship, business mentoring and access to career support. It has also provided YCV greater insight into the challenges that young women and men in Vanuatu experience in seeking employment, becoming leaders and creating their own businesses. To find out more about Youth Challenge Vanuatu contact the office on +67828182

MINI MULIU

FROM HIGH-SCHOOL DROP-OUT TO OXFAM OFFICER



Mini Muliu had always enjoyed school, but when she fell pregnant, she had to drop out of high-school. She took care of her daughter for three years and thought there was never going to be any chance for her to resume her education again.

She got a job as cleaning lady at Youth Challenge Vanuatu (YCV). She observed the young people who came in: "I saw the youth coming into the office every day, filling in forms, using the computers, attending trainings. I became more curious about the programs and wanted to participate in the trainings myself."

Which is exactly what she did. In 2010 she became a participant in the Future Leaders Program (FLP). She received trainings about life skills, leadership, gender based violence, personal budgeting, job seeking, computer skills and first aid. She also participated in a community project, where, with volunteers from Vanuatu, Australia and Canada, "we worked together with community leaders and youth on Tongoa Island to build a new primary school classroom." The community project was the opportunity to put into practice what they had learnt.

In 2011, Mini worked as intern with YCV, where she helped arrange and prepare for the community projects to be implemented on all the different islands in Vanuatu. YCV then recruited her as Field Team Leader and she led teams of Ni-Vanuatu and international volunteers in their respective community projects, from building a new library for a French primary school to constructing an aid point.



Working and earning an income meant that Mini could fulfil one of her dreams: she went back to school. "If I had not seen that job advertisement to be a cleaner at YCV, I think I would have had to go back to the island with my baby.

YCV provided me and so many other youth, with the environment and strength to believe in ourselves again. And to say: yes, I do have the courage, confidence and skills to go back to study and find a job. I'm so proud of myself."

In 2015, she joined Oxfam in Vanuatu as a Program Officer and is relishing the learning opportunities about good governance, leadership, resilience, climate change, food security and WASH. "I am so happy at work, and I am so happy at home because I provide school fees for my daughter and provide income for my parents too."

MAXWELL NASAK

NEVER GIVING UP IN TOUGH TIMES



Maxwell has always loved learning and was a great student throughout his schooling. In 2013, he left his home island of Tanna, Vanuatu, to go to college in Fiji, to study Theology, History and English. Max, who also loved sports, joined the local soccer team. A serious knee fracture during a soccer game was about to end his college education. His leg did not heal well, and Max was flown back to Vanuatu, where he underwent surgery and treatment. He did not return to Fiji: "I was devastated because I really wanted to keep on with my studies in Fiji."

One day, whilst gardening, Max re-injured his weak knee. He was flown to the capital's hospital but his leg had to be amputated. After the amputation operation, Max didn't know what his future held: "I just wanted to go back to Tanna because I felt useless in Port Vila. Life is hard in town unless you have a job."

When he saw an advertisement on TV for Youth Challenge Vanuatu (YCV), an organisation that provides trainings for youth, Max saw it as a chance to keep learning and maybe have a career. "I received trainings on

life skills, personal budgeting, leadership, business management, first aid, job seeking, interview skills, computer skills and even more."

"YCV stands up for the youth with poor education backgrounds. They build them up and upgrade them to a level they never thought that they would ever reach in their lives."

YCV saw Max's strength of character how he responded to all the challenges in his life, so they asked him to be a motivational speaker for other youth. YCV asked him to share his experiences and tips about 'never giving up in tough times'. After leaving Fiji and having his leg cut off, there were many times Max nearly gave up. But "YCV took all the negatives out of my life and replaced them with positive hope for a successful future."



As part of the program, Max completed an internship with Vanuatu Society for People with a Disability (VSPD), supported by a stipend paid by Oxfam. He later got his current job with the VSPD. His job involves making surveys and assessments in communities about disability inclusion, and using the results to improve the lives of people with disability. "Having a disability myself means that I am really committed to and enjoy my job."

Max's life is different now that he is able to support his family. Using the business skills he learnt with YCV, he also opened a small store and has plans to open up a second one. "I owe my success to YCV. I am now able to help myself, my family and pay for my younger brother's school fees."

KOLETA LAUKO

YOU CAN DO IT!



Ever since she finished college, in 2009, Koleta had always wanted to find the 'right job'. In 2012, she thought she had found the right company to build a career. That was before she went on maternity leave. The company replaced her. Koleta didn't have a job to go back to. Koleta settled to be a stay-at-home mum for a year, but she really wanted to get back to a career.

A 'Ready for Work' training program, offered by Youth Challenge Vanuatu (YCV), an Oxfam partner, helped her get back on tracks. She received trainings on computer skills, basic financial trainings, life skills, leadership, gender based violence, interview skills, public speaking, workplace expectations as well as job seeking skills. "I was very nervous to speak in public before joining YCV, but the facilitators encouraged me a lot to overcome my shyness. YCV really supported every young individual in their program and together we all became a group of stronger more positive motivated people."

Koleta enjoyed the training, as well as meeting other like-minded youth from the rural islands of Vanuatu to Australia and Canada, all determined to improve their future. But as a single mum, it was really challenging to juggle the trainings and looking after her 3 children.

After an internship, Koleta got a paid job at the YCV. In April 2015, she was recruited by Oxfam and is now Finance Officer for Oxfam in Vanuatu. "Oxfam really believes in supporting national staff so I have had many professional development and promotion opportunities, and this helps my motivation a lot." Koleta's life had changed quite a bit: she is very happy with work and her role, can provide financial support for her family, and believes she has found the organization she would like to build her career with.

Koleta is certain that the success she has is the result of the experiences she had with YCV. She believes all young people who are feeling down should try to register with YCV. Koleta wants to encourage young women in particular to 'not give up' even if they have babies and children to look after. **"It's not the end of the world to have a baby whilst trying to achieve your education and career dreams. You can do it! – with the support from organisations like YCV."**



MAURICE JOEL

SAILING WITH A BROKEN COMPASS



"I was a ship sailing with a broken compass. Youth Challenge Vanuatu (YCV) helped the skies to clear so that I could see a bright star, my potential, and I decided to follow that star with enthusiasm. I want others to see and follow their own star too."
How did Maurice change from an eleven year old drunk smoking and selling marijuana, into a positive youth leader?

Living in Luganville town, his parents could not afford to pay school fees. He made friends with older children who taught him about 'street life'. "I was heavily into drinking, smoking weed, selling marijuana to others and breaking into people's houses to steal their property. I would get drunk and beat up anyone along the road, and even if I wasn't drunk I would still beat people." Maurice had no self-esteem – he didn't care about himself so he therefore didn't care about anyone else. At the age of fourteen, Maurice was arrested and jailed for possession of marijuana. "I was following a very dark journey, I did not know where I was going and I pretended I liked my bad reputation. I was lost."

With encouragement from YCV staff and volunteers, Maurice joined the Future Leaders Program (FLP). Maurice's strong energy started being used for good causes. "Before, I was seen as a leader in my community but not the good type of leader," he laughs. The leadership and life skills trainings helped to change his view about life and he realised that it felt great to do good things for himself and his community, and to be a positive

role model. Maurice encourages all young people to become involved in YCV. "YCV not only provides trainings but includes practical experiential learning which is life-changing. YCV opens up young peoples' eyes and minds to allow them to look at life in a different angle to better understand the decisions they make for themselves and their future. I was a very bad person but YCV changed me. If YCV can do this for me then others can change too if given the chance."

Maurice interned with YCV in Luganville for two months in 2013 and he then got a job with the Traditional Entertainment and Cultural Support (TECS) program in 2014. "At work I love using the communication, leadership and negotiation skills to help make teamwork in the work place become strong – it's so much fun". Maurice also had to conduct village based research and he said it was "like the 'monitoring and research activities that he did with YCV so it was easy."

Maurice's violent past meant that many people were scared of him, and didn't believe that he was any good. "Community leaders didn't believe me when I wanted to be part of community meetings so I had to slowly prove to them I had truly changed. I helped the youth to organise music nights, fundraisers, and clean ups in the village. I also advise the young people about all the opportunities that exist so they don't end up in jail like me."



BRUCE SIBA

THE LEADER IN ME



"The business management course was the best thing I ever did" says 34 years old Bruce Siba. But he's not talking about a class he took at university.

6 years ago, Bruce was selected in a program called "Ready for Business" (RFB), run by Youth Challenge Vanuatu (YCV), an Oxfam Partner. There, he participated in trainings including basic financial skills, life skills, leadership skills, business management, gender based violence, interviewing skills, computer skills, and job seeking skills.

Bruce faced many challenges when he first arrived in Port Vila, the capital, from his village of Pentecost and he had a difficult time transitioning from 'village life' to 'city life'. He strongly believes that he would not have achieved his business dream without the RFB program. "YCV not only gives practical skills to young people but one of the most important things is the ongoing support and

encouragement that YCV gives to all youth. Even when you feel like giving up, the YCV staff believe in you and help you to keep going. They somehow make you feel strong about yourself and what you can achieve."

"YCV offers a great model because it not only educates and trains us but helps to create job opportunities too, and this is why we all like it." And sure enough, Bruce created his own opportunities. Since 2007, he had wanted to start his own construction company but with no training at the time, he had not known where to start. In 2011, after YCV, Bruce decided to try developing his own business. He used many of the concepts from the business management, leadership and computer trainings to help him start up and promote his construction business. He now has many building contracts in both Santo and Pentecost with different companies to

build, repair and renovate houses. It's great to have such businesses stimulate the rural areas too, not just the towns. Bruce has earned himself a very good reputation and he has many return customers. Bruce's business is now thriving. "My business is going so well, and I want it to grow it even more in the future."

"YCV built the leader in me. It filled the gap that connected me to my goal." Thank you YCV for helping me start and grow my business, I hope many more youth make the most of YCV opportunities."



ALISON HARUEL

A STRONGER WOMAN



When her mother died, in 2003, Alison lost more than a parent. She also had to say goodbye to her dreams of university studies. As the eldest child, Alison felt the responsibility to help her father take care of her younger siblings.

A year later, a friend told her about the Youth Challenge Vanuatu (YCV), an organization supported by Oxfam, that trains young men and in women in a variety of skills. Alison was accepted into the Future Leaders Program (FLP) which included many trainings on computer skills, gender, first aid, resume preparation, presentation skills, workplace environment, leadership and life skills. "At the YCV offices, I felt like I was part of a group of people who understood me and who all had similar life experiences to me."

As part of the training, the participants worked on a 'community project': Alison worked alongside Australian, Canadian and Ni-Vanuatu youth volunteers in a village on Malekula Island, to raise awareness on reproductive health. "During the community project phase it was challenging at times with the cross cultural communication differences

between the different nationalities, and the teamwork activities were wonderful but sometimes also frustrating. Funding challenges were difficult too but all of these program 'highs & lows' definitely helped to strengthen our sense of humour and our leadership skills."

"Many young people like myself go through hardships at home, and we lose our confidence and think we are no good. **The YCV program helps us to change within, so that we believe in ourselves. I left the YCV a stronger woman.** They see the potential in young people, regardless of their background, schooling level or social history."

After completing the course, Alison first got an internship, that ultimately led to a paid job with the Australian Pacific Technical College. With that, life changed a lot for her and her family, as she is now able to provide financial support to her younger siblings, her father and her own family. "It feels so good when you realise that you can do something positive with your life."

JILL WAI

SHADOWS OF THE PAST

When Jill was eight years old her parents divorced. Jill and her older sister went to live with their father. Jill experienced many hardships, including not having enough food, clothing and felt unwanted by her family. Jill was sexually abused by a family member. "I didn't have the confidence to tell anyone. I kept it to myself as my secret."

At 15, Jill left school. Priority was given to paying school fees for her father's new wife's children. Jill had very little hope for her future, so she started drinking and smoking at 16. In 2005, at 21, Jill had her first child, a boy and wondered if she would be able to give her son the life she dreamed of for him, with good schooling opportunities. She felt sad because she didn't think she was a very good mother. "I always felt awful, dirty and unloved and it hurt me a lot. I would often sneak out slowly at night to a quiet space where no one was watching and I would cry my heart out."

But in November 2009, Jill heard about Youth Challenge Vanuatu (YCV), an organisation supported by Oxfam, that trains young people. She visited their office the next morning, and was surprised and happy to meet many people her age. Jill started volunteering at the YCV. "Little did I know that doing these little volunteer tasks was the key and start to an exciting journey that was way beyond any of my dreams."

Jill was selected to be a participant in the 6 month Ready For Business (RFB) program, where she attended many trainings that brought her knowledge she actually used: etiquette and grooming in the work place, communications, time management, preparing application letters & resumes, client and customer services, leadership, negotiation and more. As part of the program, Jill did an internship with the Port Vila Municipality, Vanuatu's capital. "With the experience I gained from the two months internship, I was eager and confident to start applying for jobs. I would visit the YCV office every week to check out job vacancies on the notice boards and I would also drop off my job applications whenever I saw I job I may be able to do." After her internship ended,

Jill got her first ever paid employment, as a cleaning lady at the YCV office. Being a hard worker and eager to learn, YCV promoted her to higher responsibilities, up to a position of Youth Employment Rights and Responsibilities Coordinator. At first, Jill was scared but excited. She felt that she lacked the relevant educational background, but knew she had the determination, commitment and growing capabilities to successfully do the job.

"Through trainings, mentoring, encouragement and specific support from YCV and friends who had gone through similar challenges in their life, I learned to be strong, positive and to realise that I actually have many great leadership qualities even if I didn't know about them. **YCV really taught me to believe in myself and to set goals and reach for them. I am now positive and confident to achieve the goals that I set.**"

Jill now works at Oxfam in Vanuatu as the Program Quality Coordinator. She is loving and thriving in this role. She attributes so much of her learning, confidence building, employment and personal journey to her YCV experiences. One of the most valuable lessons Jill learned is to trust and believe in her true potential. "All my achievements have been because of YCV encouraging me to be the best person I can be."



JOEL KALPRAM

ACCEPTING YOUNG PEOPLE FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE



Meet Joel, 33, community and human rights activist from Vanuatu, dedicated to helping others. Yet, 15 years ago, Joel was the one reaching out for direction and help.

A school drop-out, he was unable to find a job. In 2002, hoping this would eventually lead to job opportunities, Joel engaged in different activities facilitated by local NGO, Foundation of the Peoples of the South Pacific (FSP). Through FSP, Joel became a volunteer with Youth Challenge Vanuatu (YCV).

Working alongside international volunteers from Canada and Australia was really insightful and life-changing for Joel: "The international volunteers brought their stories and experiences to share with us and we all learnt so much about another part of the world. They too loved learning from us about the Ni-Vanuatu culture and ways of working. Sharing cultural differences was always one of my favourite experiences."

Through the different workshops, trainings and conferences he participated in, Joel was able to learn about HIV & AIDS, Children's Rights, Women's Rights, Basic Life Skills, Wilderness First Aid, environmental issues,

governance, politics, human rights, land issues, leadership, facilitation skills and more. "Whatever we learnt during YCV we were able to share that information with community members – it was a great process."

"YCV truly wants to make a difference to the lives of young people and in communities throughout Vanuatu."

YCV is proud to accept and encourage youth from all walks of life. Young people think they have no future and then suddenly people believe in them, and they in turn believe in themselves."

"The skills that I gained from working in the field and at the YCV office has immensely impacted my life today and has shaped the way I view the world around me." Joel was involved with YCV for almost 8 years from 2002 until 2009. After resigning, he travelled to Australia where he completed a 3 year degree majoring in 'Community Studies'. "I learnt about new community development theories but in reality so much of my practical experience related to those theories."



Joel has been working in the youth work sector for the last 5 years. He is currently working in Kakadu for an Aboriginal Organisation: Djidbidjidi Residential College in Jabiru Northern Territory. "With the job that I have, I am now able to financially support my family back in Vanuatu. More than that, the knowledge and skills I gained at YCV helps me in my Youth Work roles to be a great employee, and those skills help me in my everyday life re: how to communicate well, how to relate and communicate to all different people, and how to be a strong but humble leader."

ANITA SAMANA

JOURNEY OF A TRAINER



Anita Samana completed secondary in 1999. In 2000, as her family was making plans for her to continue studying, her father passed away. "My father was the only one paying for my school fees. When he died I knew my university dream was over."

In 2001 she joined a Trainer of Trainer Life skills course run by UNICEF, where in addition to learning new skills, she realised that she really liked to facilitate workshops. Trainers were sent to communities in different islands around Vanuatu to train community members. "It was both fun and interesting because we travelled to places we've never been to before and also we continued to learn from the trainings we ran."

3 years later, Anita was selected for the Future Leaders Program, a project funded by Oxfam and run by a partner organisation, the Youth Challenge Vanuatu (YCV). Participants received training on life skills, first aid, business, leadership, gender based violence, job seeking and computer skills. They also worked with rural community members and youth to implement various community projects (construction of water tank, aid post, facilitation of workshops etc.).



Anita had passion and dedication but needed YCV to give her confidence and to nudge her forward. **"YCV offers young people who think they have no opportunities, a chance to become someone in the future."**

Anita was offered a volunteer position with YCV as a facilitator for educational programs being run by the Centre with youth, in Port Vila. This led to a position as Research Coordinator with the Vanuatu Cultural Centre, researching the issues affecting young people. Later she became Project Manager with YCV, a role that involved coordinating and managing all the community projects that YCV was facilitating in communities around the country. "I learnt so much from this job as it involved proposal writing, liaising with community members and donors, report writing and anything else really. YCV is small so we all helped each other out to do all the jobs together in one big team".

In September 2015, Anita joined Oxfam in Vanuatu as Network Coordinator as part of the 'Governance, Leadership & Accountability' program!

JACOB BUE TARI

REENERGIZED



From a young age, Jacob had always wanted to start his own electrical company. He's always had an interest in electrical appliances and refrigeration. At 25, he started working for two companies in Port Vila, Vanuatu's capital. He is grateful to both companies for teaching him everything he knows about being an electrician.

But he still had an urge to have his own business, so in 2012 he resigned from both jobs. Only to realize he did not have the skills and knowledge necessary to manage a business. "I really struggled when I first started my business as I didn't really know what to do."

Jacob looked for courses where he could learn business management skills, and in 2013, he registered in the 'Ready For Business' program, offered by Youth Challenge Vanuatu, an Oxfam Partner. There, he got trainings about business planning,

business management skills, human resources, life skills, leadership, work place teamwork, personal budgeting, business finance management, computer, first aid and gender based violence.

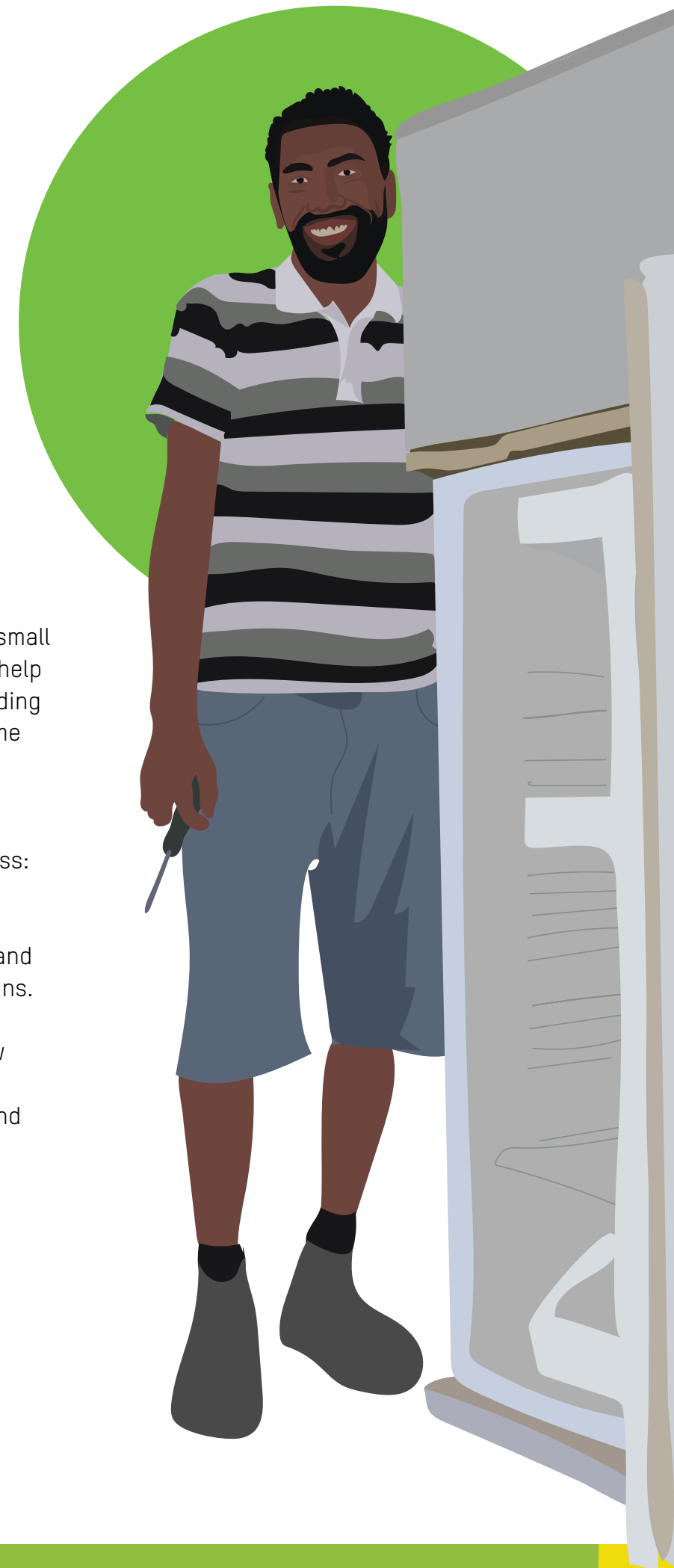
"I couldn't believe I had registered with the perfect course. These business planning and management trainings were exactly what I was looking for, and not only did I learning about how to run a business but actually the leadership and life skills were really relevant to me personally and to help me with the business management too.

I had the technical skills, but YCV gave me all my business management skills I really really needed to develop my business, and they also gave me back my motivation which had started to disappear."

Jacob was surprised to learn that participants were also provided with a small grant (40,000 vatu – about USD 357) to help establish their business ideas. The funding support small grant helped him buy some better tools and improve his business.

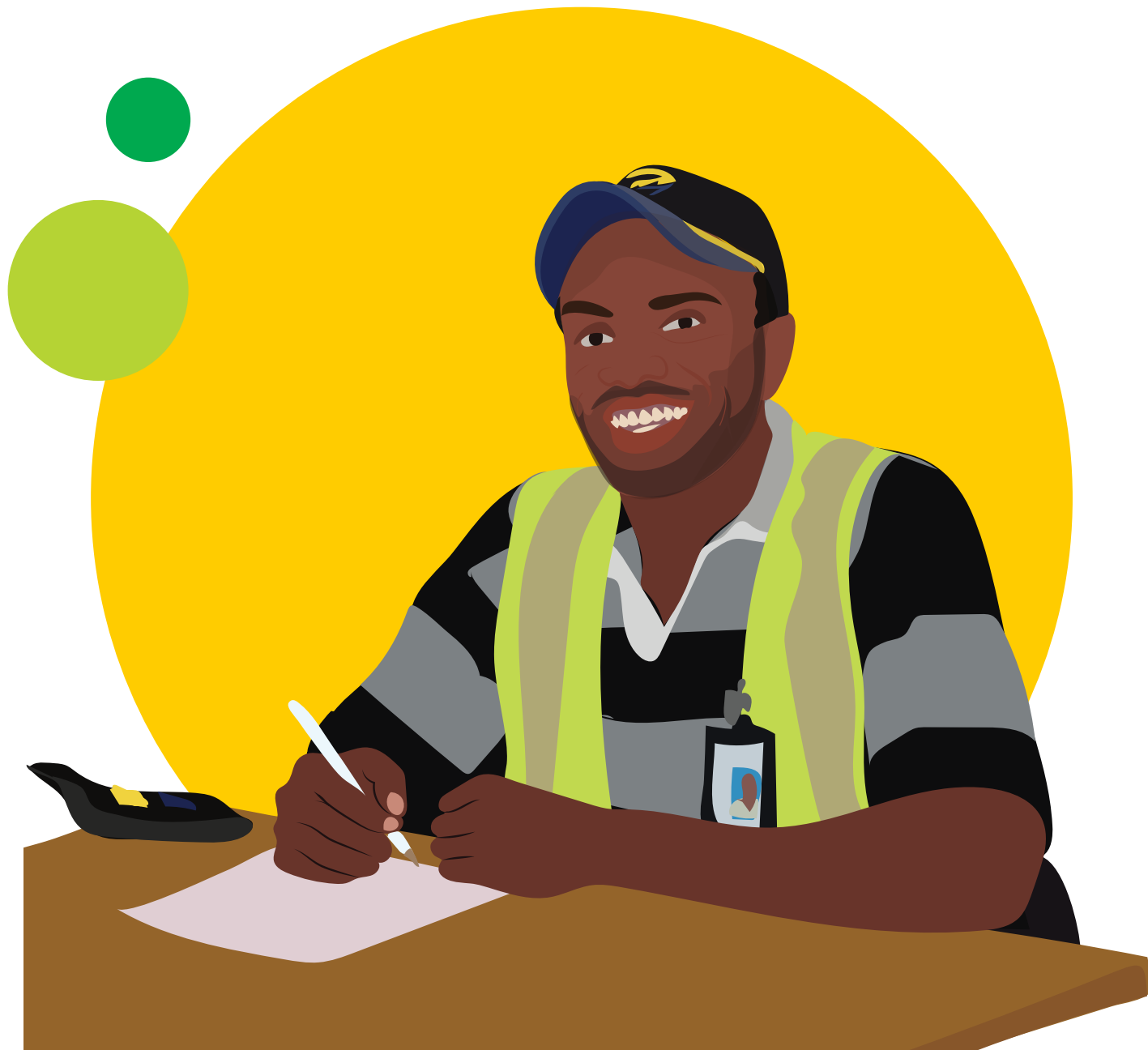
Two months after leaving YCV, Jacob began to see big changes in his business: he gained such a good reputation, and got so many clients, that he is now the proud owner of a successful company and employer of 2 full-time young electricians.

Jacob is so grateful to YCV that to show his support he helped them by fixing some of their broken air conditioners and refrigerators.



GEORGE CHARLIE

A HAPPY, POSITIVE LEADER



Meet 25 year old George Charlie, an Inbound Cargo Officer at the airports of Luganville, Vanuatu. George did not go to university: he couldn't afford it. And when his friends ask him how he got such a good job with his low education level, he's happy to share his secret.

In 2011, George participated in the Future Leaders Program, run by Youth Challenge Vanuatu (YCV), an Oxfam Partner. "The skills I learnt helped me to find a job and help me in the job too. I encourage my friends and relatives to join YCV too." One of his cousins joined YCV and is now working at a law firm in Port Vila.

The YCV trainings included life skills, leadership, gender based violence, personal budgeting, job seeking, CV and job application writing, interviewing, computer, and first aid. YCV also provided George with 'community project' and internship opportunities. George travelled to Malo Island to renovate a classroom in one of the primary schools on the island. He learned about construction, teamwork and leadership throughout the implementation of this project.

One of the important things that George experienced, and developed confidence from, is the interaction with all the other youth involved in the program. "Being surrounded by other youth interested in learning allowed me to come out of my shell and expose myself to new ideas, experiences and challenges and this has moulded me into the person I am today."



George says he was a different type of person before joining YCV. He was shy and quiet sometimes, but also he could be aggressive and swear a lot when he was with his friends.

"YCV trainings taught me about how important it is to use energy, knowledge and skills in a positive way for yourself and for those around you."

My life changed. Six months of being around positive people, attending trainings, having the opportunity to use my new skills, and making new friends has really made me a better person. Without a job, my plan was to return to Malekula, my home island, to help with farming. Now I have a job and I can pay for my brother's school fees and contribute to the family income, and I am a happy, positive leader with my friends."

GINO MOLKIS

I HAD LOST ALL HOPE

When Gino Molkis turned 18, in 2011, his mother passed away. As she was the main bread-winner, he knew he wouldn't be able to continue his education. Gino looked for work immediately but couldn't get a job anywhere. "I applied for so many jobs. I thought that one of my applications would land me a job opportunity but no. I lost all hope."

In 2013, Gino heard about Youth Challenge Vanuatu (YCV), an Oxfam Partner, who trains young people. He enrolled in the 'Ready For Business' program. He saw that YCV was an organisation where unemployed youth could receive support on how to look at life more positively and overcome challenges that they face. **"After my mother passed away, YCV felt like my last hope in life."**

Gino participated in trainings which included life skills, leadership, gender based violence, personal budgeting, job seeking, computer skills and first aid. The fact that the trainings and internship was free was important. "If the trainings had costed even a small amount of money, then I wouldn't have been able to

participate and this would have stopped my learning opportunity."

When Gino was selected to be an intern at the Public Library in Port Vila, Vanuatu's capital, he was nervous at first, but the skills and confidence gained during YCV trainings helped him to adapt well to his new role. Gino's strong work ethic, dedication, great ideas and enthusiasm resulted in the Public Library recruiting him permanently.

He loves his job as the French Librarian, as he gets to meet and help different people every day. He is also looking after the accounting section of the library and is learning a lot about accounting and finances. Gino is grateful for his life and he is so proud that he contributes to the family income and feels good about himself.

He truly hopes other youth find out about YCV so they too can have the same opportunities. Gino says that the most valuable lesson he learned was to not look down on himself. "I need to keep my positive attitude and my confidence strong, even when life is hard – and this will help change my life for the better."



KALSONGI ESAU

I WAS LOST AND HAD GIVEN UP HOPE



Kalsongi Esau's story of change is yet another example of the challenges many young people in Vanuatu face trying to find jobs and support their families.

Though he had a degree in Business accounting from the Vanuatu Institute of Technology, Kalsongi couldn't find a job. He returned to his village where he helped his parents with farming and gardening. He continued to apply for jobs in the capital, but to no avail.

After 2 years, Kalsongi heard about Youth Challenge Vanuatu (YCV) and their Future Leaders Program. YCV is an Oxfam partner that offer trainings to young people. Kalsongi says he learned a lot from all the trainings he received, but above all, the program have him hope, confidence and a wonderful support network of like-minded people. As part of the program, Kalsongi did an internship with Care International.

"YCV would track my progress and always stayed in touch with me. They really care about the wellbeing and success of their participants."

He believes that YCV is truly filling an important gap in terms of supporting young people to become the person they want to be. He sees himself as living proof of this: "YCV gave me back my motivation and pushed me to be self-confident again. It gave me determination and hope for the future." His first job was actually with YCV, as Coordinator of the Future Leaders Program, the same program that had been so life-changing for him. "For me, this was unbelievable. Kalsongi is now working as Finance Coordinator for Care. "I am now supporting my family. I am very proud of the achievements I have made. It was YCV who kick-started it all. I was lost and had given up hope, but YCV found me and taught me to never give up and that I am a good person with many skills to use."



JOBEN SETH

FUTURE LEADER

22 year old Joben Seth never expected to be working with an education advocacy organisation in Vanuatu. Joben, who grew up on the island of Ambryn, in Vanuatu, did not go to university. When he came to Port Vila, the country's capital, a year ago, he wasn't sure where that would lead him. "I would have returned to the island to help in the garden if I couldn't find a job to support my life here in town."

But in 2015, Joben heard about Youth Challenge Vanuatu (YCV), an Oxfam partner training youth, and registered with the Future Leaders Program (FLP). In the next 10 months, he learnt about leadership, first aid, computer, life skills, computer, job seeking, interview skills, gender based violence, and public speaking. "One of the main things I learnt from YCV was about domestic violence and how bad the practice is for women. I want to share these lessons with others."

"I also really learnt to respect myself and not to look down on myself. Through the support from YCV staff and all the new friends I made, my confidence really grew back again." I realised that I'm not scared anymore to speak in public."

Joben also really enjoyed working alongside international volunteers: "I learnt so much from the Australian and Canadian volunteers. I learnt about cross cultural communication, different ways of living, and I realised they really enjoyed learning from me about our culture and our communities. This made me proud to be a Ni-Vanuatu."

As part of the program, they supported local communities to recover from the impacts of Category 5 Tropical Cyclone Pam. They learnt about humanitarian response processes and how to distribute emergency water and other emergency supplies. "I learnt so much about teamwork and how to work effectively with community leaders, women and young people."

Joben then got an internship with Vanuatu Education Policy Advocacy (VEPA), where he discovered research, advocacy and policy development. He believes he would never have found the opportunity to further his studies and professional life if not for YCV. "I feel more confident and capable about finding employment compared to when I first arrived in Port Vila one year ago."



KAL SHEM

NEVER LOOK DOWN ON YOURSELF



“Never look down on myself, work hard and always be determined to achieve my life dreams.”

Kal Shem, 26, says those are three of the most valuable things he learnt during a training program run by Youth Challenge Vanuatu (YCV), an Oxfam partner. In 2011, Kal resigned from his position as Science and Agriculture teacher at the secondary school in Vanuatu where he had been working for over 2 years. “Other teachers in the school thought that I was too young and inexperienced”. These criticisms caused him to lose interest and confidence in continuing his teaching career.

YCV’s Future Leaders Program restored Kal’s self-esteem and confidence. “I liked the fact that we socialised a lot and made new friends who were positive, and we all had a good influence on each other. I felt like my focus for my future became clearer”.

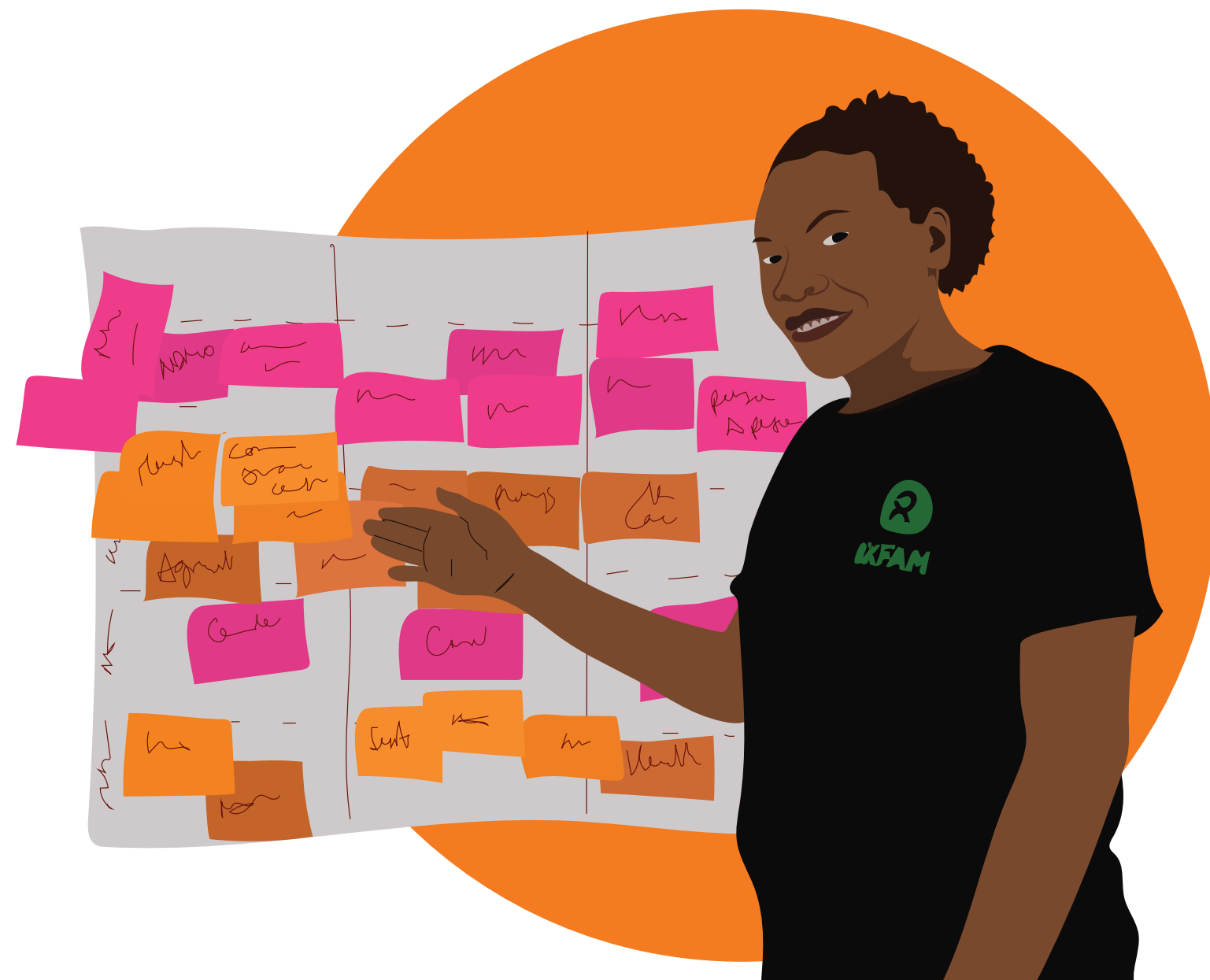
He received trainings in life skills, leadership, gender based violence, personal budgeting, job seeking, computer and first aid skills. Kal found the trainings that he received to be really helpful as they complemented his formal education.

Today, Kal works in a company specializing in renewable energies such as the solar energy, wind turbines and micro- hydro. Committed and motivated, he attributes much of this to his experience with YCV. “The trainings and mentoring I received from my YCV experiences has made me a better person.”



PRISCILLA SAMSON

LEARNING NEVER STOPS



"I wanted to prove to myself that I was capable of continuing to learn so I jumped into any activity, all youth development programs, and I even volunteered in programs that I did not really understand. I didn't want my learning experiences to stop." In 2006, Priscilla dropped out of year 12 due to financial challenges, so she joined in the trainings offered by Wan Smolbag (WSB) Youth Centre, and then became a participant of the Future Leaders Program (FLP) facilitated by Youth Challenge Vanuatu (YCV).

Priscilla's family and friends were not very supportive of her joining YCV as she was not earning money. "YCV was so encouraging about our participation and personal growth that I knew I was doing the right thing for my future career."

Priscilla attended FLP trainings on report writing, life skills, personal budgeting, job seeking, computer skills, first aid, leadership, public speaking and many more. Working alongside volunteers from Canada and Australia also resulted in her learning about cross cultural communication and teamwork. "It was at times very challenging. I was the group leader so I had to try to ensure the team worked well with each other and with the community members. It was wonderful but also difficult."

"The wonderful positive vibe and environment that YCV created made me so determined to work hard and reflect success for YCV." Priscilla volunteered and worked with YCV for six and a half years. "I felt obliged to help and train other young people to seek better futures for themselves so that they too grew into positive hardworking people."

In 2016, Priscilla was recruited into Oxfam Vanuatu's Resilience Program as the Vanuatu Climate Action Network (VCAN) Coordinator. "I feel I am working for an organisation that is passionate about Vanuatu and Ni-Vanuatu people." Priscilla believes YCV addresses such an important gap in Vanuatu, for all the young people unable to complete their education. **"YCV provides so many great role models and helps young people believe in themselves again. I hope YCV continues to grow more".**



PATO ULLIVENAL

POSITIVE ATTITUDE



"I like to do things and not hang around doing nothing, but when there is really nothing for me to do, then I follow my friends around, smoking, drinking and doing stuff we weren't supposed to do."

But in 2006, Pato, then 19, participated in 'community awareness workshops' where he learned about different social issues affecting the lives of young people. It was a big eye opener, that led him to volunteer in the local Youth Council, to try and improve life for his community, by repairing infrastructures, leading on clean ups, and helping the vulnerable community members.

A few years later, Pato heard about Youth Challenge Vanuatu (YCV), an Oxfam partner providing training to young people. He joined their Future Leaders Program and really enjoyed learning more about leadership, life skills, gender based violence, personal budgeting, job seeking, computer skills, public speaking, and first aid.

One of the most important things that he learned from YCV though was how important it is to maintain confidence in yourself, "because when you lose your self-esteem, it's then difficult to see positive aspects about you and your life. Many youth nowadays are easily misled because many of them have lost support from parents and community leaders. They lose hope and end up choosing lifestyles that aren't always socially or culturally acceptable."

"It's really great how skilled the YCV staff are in supporting young people to shake off the negative thoughts, attitudes and actions and look at themselves as positive change makers who have a leadership purpose in life."

As part of the program, Pato completed an internship at the Forestry Department in 2013, and immediately became a permanent staff member. Pato remembers trying to impress his colleagues and his supervisor during the internship, with many of the skills he learned through the YCV experience: leadership, good work ethic, punctuality, using clear communication, active listening and having a positive working outlook. He said he was also conscious of what he wore and used the dress code tips that he learned at YCV.



LESLINE EMIL

ENCOURAGEMENT, TRAINING, OPPORTUNITIES



Despite her degree in Business Management studies from the Vanuatu Institute of Technology, Lesline had a hard time finding a job. After a 6 month contract as cashier in a supermarket, she stayed unemployed for almost a year.

"I lost hope and got scared and shy of filling out job applications because I saw that I kept receiving negative responses."

The 'Future Leaders Program', offered by Oxfam partner Youth Challenge Vanuatu (YCV), helped her turn things around. Lesline received courses on life skills, leadership, gender based violence, personal budgeting, job seeking, computer skills and first aid skills.

She also gained self confidence in the process. She was very shy when she joined YCV. "I learnt lots of communication tricks that help me when I am presenting information, and also gave me confidence when speaking with people higher up."

"YCV is exactly what Vanuatu needs – a place where young

down-and-out people can go and they will receive positive encouragement, valuable helpful trainings and practical opportunities."

FLP participants also implement a 'community development project' so they have the opportunity to apply some of the skills they learnt. Lesline helped to renovate classrooms and she also facilitated awareness workshops with women, youth and children, about the importance of literacy and education. "I really enjoyed sharing the ideas about literacy with these communities because basic literacy will help us all, especially women become strong independent thinkers and more positive about life."

Lesline now has a job in Port Vila, the capital. She says the trainings she received were key in changing her life. "YCV taught me about good working principles, why and how to be committed to our jobs and to ourselves as people and as advocates for change."



KEITHSON JOSEPH

KEEPING AN OPEN MIND ABOUT EVERYONE'S POTENTIAL



"The positive life lessons I learned from YCV has moulded me to become open minded about myself and about other people."

When Keithson completed his form four in 2003, he could not further his studies anymore due to family finances. He started hanging around with his unemployed friends drinking and walking around town (SPR: sperem public road). In 2005 Keithson found a job working as a mechanic for 8 months and when that finished he became a taxi driver. "It was really hard trying to find a job as a Year 10 leaver. It was not easy at all." In 2015 Keithson's wife became a participant of Youth Challenge Vanuatu (YCV) in Luganville, in the Future Leaders Program (FLP). "My wife would excitedly tell me about YCV, and about all the trainings she attended and how YCV was helping young people find jobs. I became curious."

With encouragement from his wife, Keithson registered in the YCV Tourism and Hospitality program. During the next 6 months he learnt about how to communicate with tourists, what food they like, how to ensure resorts are providing a great atmosphere for tourists and about the importance of teamwork.

He enjoyed learning about leadership, communication skills, and tips for how to look for a job and perform well in the workplace. "YCV was a completely new and positive experience for me. I really enjoyed the trainings, and meeting all the other young people participating in the program. I never thought I would ever have the chance to join this type of course."

Keithson then interned for six weeks with Aore Island Resort. He performed so well they offered him a full-time job at the resort immediately after his internship. The 'communication and customer relations trainings' that Keithson received at YCV gave him great ideas of how to perform well in his new job. Keithson is currently employed as a kitchen hand at the resort, and hopes to become a chef. "I can't believe I have a great job at one of the top Santo resorts, that I can financially support my family, and have new friends from my YCV experience."



LILY ROSE KAPALU

A BRIGHTER FUTURE



When Lily dropped out of high school, she knew it was going to be difficult to find a job. Lily helped around at home and kept trying to get paid work. "I spent years trying to get a job after finishing school but I kept getting rejected."

In 2011, at 18, she started her own business. Her small store was successful for one year, but then closed down. The knowledge she had gained helped her find a job as a cashier. She then decided to focus on backyard gardening: she grew vegetables on a small plot of land and sold them in the local market. Lily thought this would be her future.

But at 25, Lily decided a Future Leaders training program offered by Youth Challenge Vanuatu (YCV), an Oxfam Partner. She received trainings about leadership, computer skills, job seeking, life skills, business management, financial literacy, gender based violence, and resume writing etc.

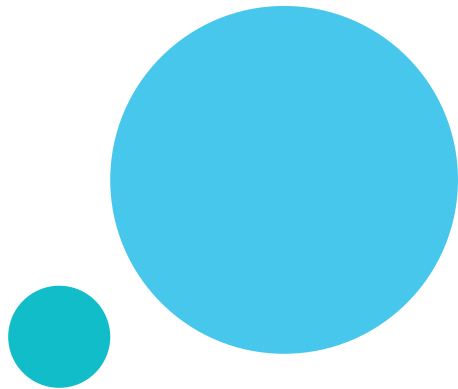
As part of the program, Lily volunteered on a community project, alongside volunteers from Australia and Canada. "Together we all built an aid post with the local community members, and we also facilitated awareness on literacy and child abuse."



"The cross-cultural communication experience allowed me to learn from international volunteers and they also learnt a lot from me and the other Ni-Vanuatu. I am a francophone so I was scared to use English to start with and then I just got used to it. The exchange between us all was wonderful."

"Somehow YCV helps us all believe in ourselves more and more."

After the community project, Lily got an internship with the Public Works Department, as part of the YCV intern program. She remembers telling herself to practise the communication and leadership skills she had learnt. "I worked so hard during those two months and I wanted to show my supervisor I have a strong work ethic, that I am good at time management, and that I am a worthy employee." Lily proved her worth and was offered a job.



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This collection of 'Stories of Change' was compiled by Oxfam and Youth Challenge Vanuatu (YCV). These twenty stories give voice to young men and women who embraced the opportunity to tell 'their story' of how being a YCV participant empowered them and changed their lives. All 20 young people have voluntarily shared their story.

Youth Challenge Vanuatu is a national Non-Government Organisation (NGO) committed to providing young Ni-Vanuatu women and men with opportunities to increase their leadership skills and livelihoods prospects through engaging in community development programs, training and internship, business mentoring and access to career support. Oxfam has a funding and organisational strengthening partnership with YCV through the Oxfam Governance, Leadership and Accountability (GLA) program. The GLA program and this booklet are funded by the Australian Aid Program.

For further information about Youth Challenge Vanuatu (YCV), you can contact YCV on +67828182 or visit <http://voiceaustralia.org.au/program/vanuatu/>

For further information about the Oxfam Governance, Leadership and Accountability (GLA) program, you can contact Oxfam on +67825786. Oxfam is an international confederation of 18 organisations networked together in more than 90 countries, as part of a global movement for change, to build a future free from the injustice of poverty. For further information visit www.oxfam.org

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