2020 POPULATION AND HOUSING CENSUS

VANUATU

THEMATIC REPORT ON

YOUTH

NEW ZEALAND
FOREIGN AFFAIRS & TRADE
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FOREWORD

Even though the world as a whole progresses, youth must always start again from the beginning. We must be young to do great things.

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The Sorrows of Young Werther

Youth should be given every opportunity to realize its highest potential; young people should have a great goal; they should have great dreams and they should know that they have great talents.

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Leading with a Purpose

Decision-making based on reliable evidence is a universally recognized norm of efficient administration of economic and social affairs as well as effective management of societies. This model requires generating relevant, accurate and timely statistics. Particularly important is the generation of detailed statistics for small areas and small population groups. A population and housing census is the main instrument used to collect, process, and disseminate statistics on a population, its composition, characteristics, spatial distribution and organization (households).

The Vanuatu Bureau of Statistics (VBOS) has been conducting population and housing censuses since 1979. The most recent census in 2020 was the fifth one. All these censuses have provided detailed accounts of the population's characteristics and composition. The results have contributed to policy formulation, planning, delivery of services, and monitoring and evaluation of national and international development agendas.

In response to stakeholder needs, VBOS prepared several different products based on the findings of the 2020 census, including thematic reports on topics such as disability, adolescents and youth, and gender. The reports were prepared with technical assistance from the UNFPA Pacific Sub-Office (PSRO).

The monograph contains the results of research on youth numbers and the structure, gender status, marital situation and childbearing orientation of Vanuatu youth aged 12–30. It examines the social and economic characteristics of youth, including educational level, economic activity, occupational and religious structures, and disability characteristics. It also examines the national youth policy in terms of solutions to social and demographic problems and offers recommendations on strengthening Vanuatu's youth policy.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ABBREVIATIONS

ASFR	Age specific fertility rate
GDP	Gross domestic product
PLS	Pacific Labour Scheme
RSE	Recognised seasonal employer
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SMAM	Singulate mean age at marriage
SWP	Seasonal worker programme
TFR	Total Fertility Rate
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNFPA APRO	UNFPA Asia and the Pacific Regional Office
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WHO	World Health Organization
WPR	Western Pacific Region

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This thematic report provides a detailed analysis of the demographic, social, economic, gender and structural characteristics of young people in Vanuatu, based on data from the 2020 Population and Housing Census.

COUNTRY OVERVIEW AND INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS

Vanuatu's economy has outperformed those of most other Pacific Island countries over the past decade due to implementation of structural reforms, with tourism, construction, and development partner-funded infrastructure projects emerging as key economic drivers. Low inflation, macroeconomic stability, and prudent fiscal policies have helped Vanuatu to consistently achieve GDP growth. In 2020, Vanuatu moved from the list of Least Developed Countries to the list of countries with Medium Human Development.

Vanuatu has experienced considerable improvement in health indicators in recent decades, with declining mortality and increasing access to essential services.

According to the 2020 Population and Household Census, Vanuatu's current population of 300,019 is predominantly rural, with around a quarter living in the urban areas of Port Vila and Luganville. The annual urban growth rate is relatively high (3.5%). The urban population has doubled in the last two decades and now accounts for 24% of the total population – an indication of continuing rural-urban migration.

Vanuatu is the seventh most populous state among Pacific Island countries, with a population growth rate of almost 5% for two years, after Cook Islands, Tuvalu, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia and Kingdom of Tonga.

Vanuatu also has one of the youngest populations – the median age of the population in 2022 was 21. Among Pacific countries, only Solomon Islands has a younger median age.

Compared to other Pacific countries, Vanuatu has a median level of life expectancy at birth of 72 years, while in other countries it ranges from 83 years in Australia to 60 years in Nauru. Life expectancy in Vanuatu is influenced by low life expectancy at birth for men – their mortality rate rises significantly after the age of 30.

In Vanuatu, net migration amounted to 120 people, which is quite a positive indicator compared to other Pacific Island countries. Only three other Pacific countries had positive net migration, namely Australia, New Zealand and New Caledonia. All other countries had negative net migration, meaning that more people left than entered the country.

GENERAL SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF YOUNG PEOPLE

Data for the population living in private households were used in the analysis. The calculated indicators from which findings were derived refer to the population living in private households.

Vanuatu's National Youth Policy defines persons aged from 12 to 30 years as young people. The results of the census show that in 2020, Vanuatu had 98,176 young people aged 12–30, which was 33.5% of Vanuatu's total population living in private households (292,798 persons). Of these young people, 49,362 (50.3%) were males and 48,814 (49.7%) were females.

In 2020, the share of young people aged 12–30 in the total population was considerably larger than in 2009. The total number of young people in Vanuatu increased significantly by 17%. The number of males increased by 18% and females by 16%. A sharp increase was observed in two age groups:

25–29 and 30 years old. The age group 25–29 grew by 28%, with females (29%) exceeding males (26%). The number of those aged 30 grew by 27.5% (males 31% and females 27%). In other age groups, the number of young people rose by 9% to18% compared to 2009 (Table 1).

The average age of Vanuatu youth increased by 0.3 years, from 20.2 in 2009 to 20.5 in 2020 as a consequence of changes in the age structure of the country's population.

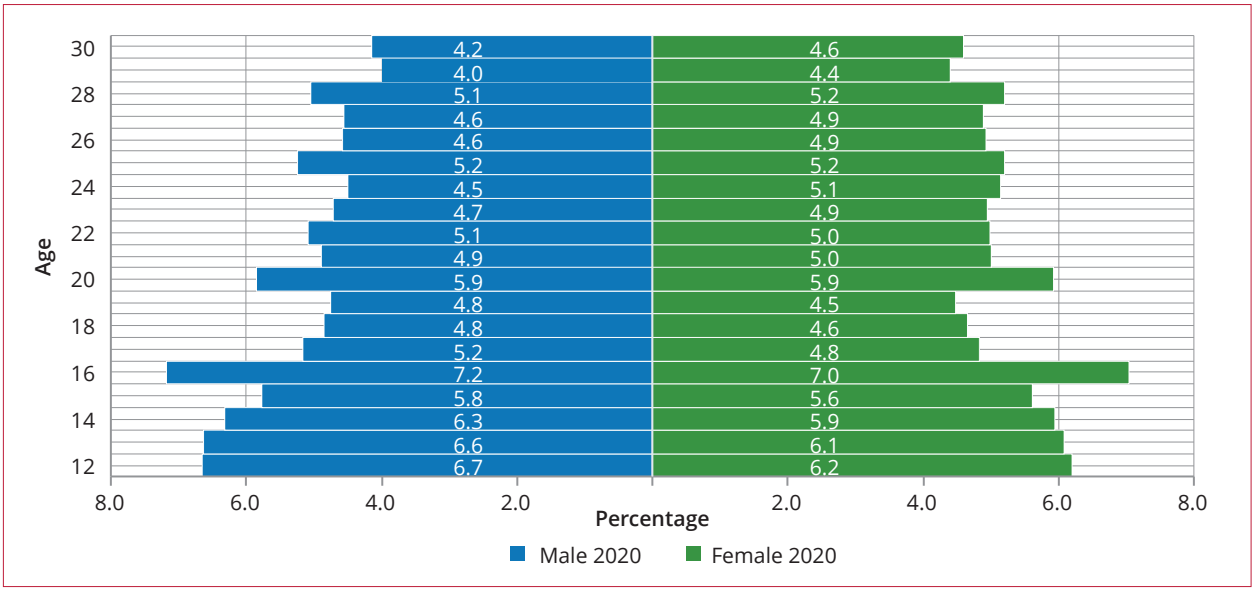
Table 1: Vanuatu youth, by age group and sex, as a percentage of the total population in 2009 and 2020.

Age group	2009			2020			Growth rate, 2020/2009 (%)		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
12-14	10.2	9.4	19.6	9.9	9.1	18.9	113.5	113.1	113.3
15-19	14.4	14.2	28.6	13.9	13.2	27.2	113.9	109.5	111.7
20-24	12.5	13.3	25.8	12.6	12.9	25.5	118.8	114.1	116.3
25-29	10.9	11.1	22.0	11.8	12.2	24.0	126.8	129.2	128.0
30	1.9	2.1	4.0	2.1	2.3	4.4	131.3	127.0	127.5
Total	**49.8**	**50.1**	**100.0**	**50.3**	**49.7**	**100.0**	**118.5**	**116.5**	**117.4**

Source: Calculations based on data from 2009 and 2020 National Population and Housing Censuses, Vanuatu.

Figure 1 shows the age–sex structure of Vanuatu young people. A local maximum (thickness of the pyramid) is observed at age 16 for both sexes. The age structure of males and females was similar. In the 12–19 age group, males slightly outnumbered females, while in the 20–30 age group, females slightly outnumbered males.

Figure 1: Population pyramid by age (12–30) and sex, 2020 census.



Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

In 2020, the sex ratio for the young population of Vanuatu was 101; that is, for every 100 females, there were 101 males. In all age groups from 12 to 20 years, males outnumbered females by 3% to 8%. Table 2 shows, that starting from age 21, the number of women in each age group begins to exceed the number of men. This is a consequence of the higher mortality of men in these age groups and the longer life expectancy at birth for females. This situation corresponds to world trends of a 'gender spiral' – more boys and men in younger age groups, and more women in older age groups.[1]

[1] *The World's Women 2020:* Trends and Statistics. Executive Summary. https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic-social/products/worldswomen/

Table 2: Breakdown of the youth population aged 12–30, by single age and sex (%).

Single age	Male	Female	Total	Sex ratio (average number of males per 100 females)
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**101.1**
12	6.7	6.2	6.4	108.4
13	6.6	6.1	6.4	110.1
14	6.3	5.9	6.1	107.8
15	5.8	5.6	5.7	104.4
16	7.2	7.0	7.1	103.3
17	5.2	4.8	5.0	108.3
18	4.8	4.6	4.7	105.5
19	4.8	4.5	4.6	107.6
20	5.9	5.9	5.9	100.1
21	4.9	5.0	4.9	98.8
22	5.1	5.0	5.0	103.2
23	4.7	4.9	4.8	96.6
24	4.5	5.1	4.8	88.4
25	5.2	5.2	5.2	102.1
26	4.6	4.9	4.7	94.1
27	4.6	4.9	4.7	94.3
28	5.1	5.2	5.1	98.3
29	4.0	4.4	4.2	92.1
30	4.2	4.6	4.4	91.6

Source: Calculations based on data from 2020, National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

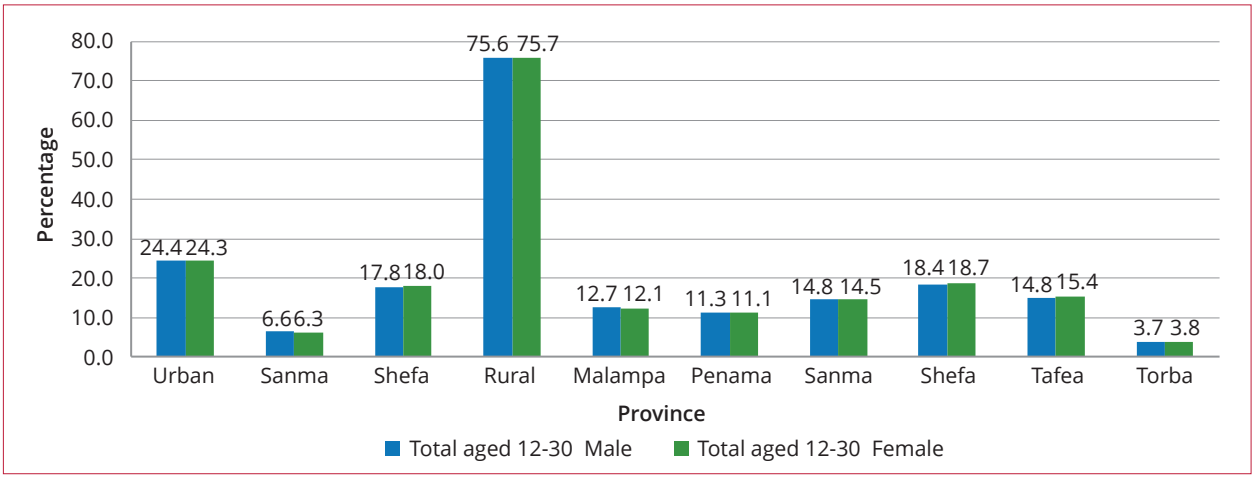
SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION OF VANUATU'S YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 12–30

Vanuatu has six provinces: Torba, Sanma, Penama, Malampa, Shefa, and Tafea. Two of them have urban areas: Vanuatu's capital, Port Vila is in Shefa, and Luganville is in Sanma.

In terms of area of residence, the distribution of youth people of both sexes showed sharp differences between urban and rural settlements. Almost 76% of youth lived in rural areas, and only 24% lived in urban areas. Most urban youth lived in Shefa province (74% of young urban females and 73% of young urban males). The figures for Sanma province were 25.8% for females and 27% for males.

In rural areas, the prevailing share of young people were in provinces such as Shefa (25% of youth aged 12–30 living in a rural area), Tafea (20%) and Sanma (19%). This tendency corresponds to the distribution of the total population by area of residence; more young people live in the more populated provinces (Fig. 2).

Figure 2: Distribution of youth population by age, sex and area of residence (%).



Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

The majority of young people were born in Vanuatu – about 94% of all youth; 50.2% were males, and 49.8% were females (Table 3). About 77% of all youth lived in the same place they were born in (males 51%, females 49%).

Table 3: Proportion of youth aged 12–30 years, by place of birth and sex (%).

Place of birth	Male	Female	Total
Same place	78.2	75.5	76.9
Different place in Vanuatu	16.1	19.1	17.6
Total in Vanuatu	**94.3**	**94.6**	**94.5**
Overseas	0.6	0.7	0.6
NA	5.0	4.7	4.9
Not stated	0.02	0.02	0.02
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

Almost 18% of all youth reside in a different place in Vanuatu than the one they were born in (females 54% and males 46%). Less than 1% of youth were born overseas (0.64%) – almost 48% of them were males and 52% were females.

CHARACTERISTICS OF MARITAL STATUS

Analysis of the 2020 census examined the marital status of the population, including youth aged 12–30.

As Table 4 shows, about one-third of young people aged 12–30 were living together with a partner (34%); 14% were in a legal marriage, and 20% in a de facto relationship. The proportion of females living in formal or informal relationships was higher by 16% than males: 42% of women aged 12–30 lived in formal or informal marriages compared to 26% of men in the same age group.

The proportion of young people in de facto relationships was notably higher (24% of females, 15% of males) than those in legal marriages (18% of females, 11% of males). This situation is in contrast with Vanuatu's total population. Almost 47% of persons aged 15 years and older were legally married and 20% were in a de facto relationship. The higher proportion of females in de facto and legal marriage indicates that females entered relationships earlier than males, and were likely to have older partners.

Table 4: Percentage of youth aged 12–30 years by marital status and sex, 2020.

Marital status	Proportion of total youth by sex (%)		
	Female	Male	Total
De facto	23.9	15.4	**19.6**
Legally married	18.3	10.8	**14.5**
Never married (single)	34.1	49.3	**41.7**
Divorced	0.2	0.1	**0.1**
Separated	0.9	0.3	**0.6**
Widowed	0.4	0.1	**0.2**
NA	22.2	24.0	**23.1**
Not stated	0.0	0.1	**0.1**
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

There were 15% more single males than single females: 49% of men aged 12–30 had never been married compared to 34% of women in the same age group (Table 5).

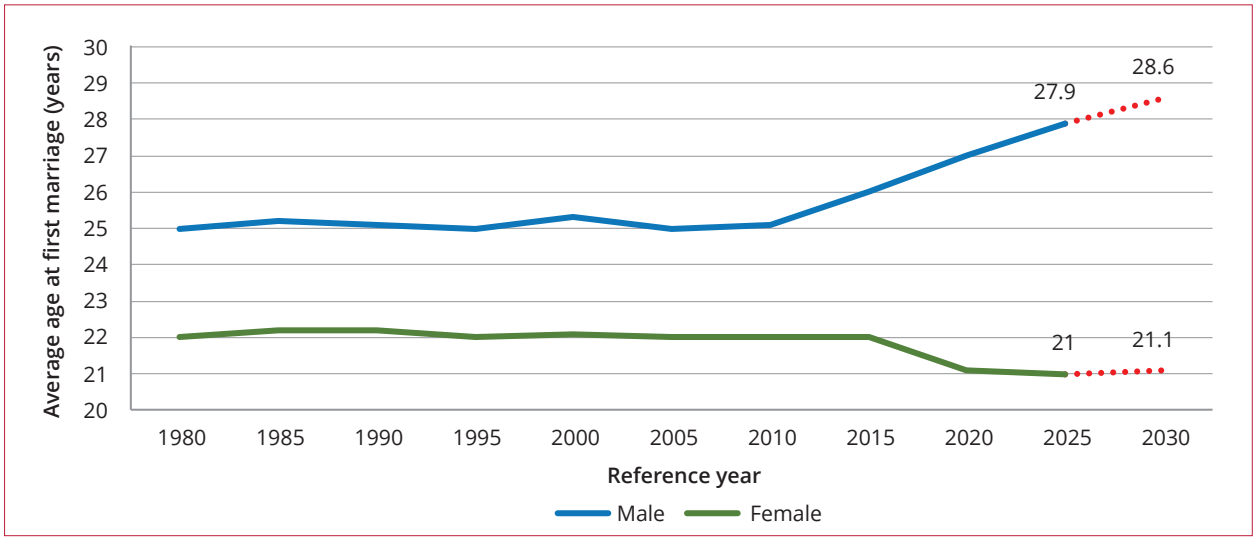
Table 5: Proportion of marital status of youth aged 12–30 by 5-year age groups and sex, and median age by sex.

Marital status (1)	Never married (single) (%)		Legally married (%)		De facto (%)	
Age group/sex	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
12-14	100.0	100.0	0	0	0	0
15-19	97.2	87.1	1.2	4.0	1.5	8.4
20-24	69.7	37.8	10.5	22.3	19.3	37.8
25-29	32.3	15.2	27.6	38.8	38.5	43.1
Median age (years)	21	19	46	42	32	29

Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

Using the singulate mean age at marriage (SMAM)[2] gave the following values for average age at first marriage: 21.2 years for women and 27.3 years for men (Fig. 3).

Figure 3: Average age at first marriage by census year and sex.



Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

[2] Average length of single life for those who marry before a defined age (in this case, 30 years).

The age difference is high (5 years using the median method and 6.1 years using SMAM). The values are similar to those reported from previous censuses and in accordance with the long-term observed non-linear trends (Fig. 3). Values from previous censuses (1967, 1979, 1989, 1999 and 2009) are displayed along with projections using a non-linear (polynomial) trend for 2020.

An important finding (clearly demonstrated by Figure 3) is that after a period where the age difference between males and females at first marriage decreased (until 1999), a turnaround occurred, and the difference increased again. The projected values using the identified trends (21.1 for women and 27.0 for men) are close to the values reported here using SMAM (21.2 years for women and 27.3 years for men).

The 2020 census data show that teenage marriages mostly involved girls (12.4% of the age group of girls; 4.0% legally married and 8.4% de facto), and boys to a much smaller extent (2.7%; 1.2% legally married and 1.5% de facto). De facto relationships exceeded legal marriages, particularly for girls, by a factor of two.

FERTILITY INDICATORS OF VANUATU'S YOUNG WOMEN AGED 15–30

The distribution of Vanuatu's female population aged 15–29 who have ever given birth is shown in Table 6. No cases of childbirth were registered for young women aged 12–14.

Table 6: Breakdown of the female population aged 15–29 years who have ever given birth.

Age group	15-19	20-24	25-29	Total
As a percentageof number of women aged 15-29	5.2	39.8	55.0	**100.0**
As a percentage of total number of women in Vanuatu who have ever given birth	1.4	10.8	14.9	**27.1**

Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

The average number of live-born children to women 15–30 years was:

- 0.09 for age group 15–19
- 0.84 for age group 20–24
- 1.80 for age group 25–29
- 1.92 for age group 30.

In Vanuatu, the estimated values for the age-specific fertility rate (ASFR) for rural areas were markedly higher than for urban areas. The maximum ASFR for the 30-year age group was 178 in urban areas and 223 in rural areas. The higher ASFR values for women aged 15 to 30 years in rural areas can be attributed to the social pressure on young women in these areas to have more children.

Teenage fertility is very high. There were 45 births per 1,000 teenage girls per year for all of Vanuatu. This value is much higher than in Europe (the average for all Western European countries is 9) and Australia (11), and comparable to other island counties such as Fiji (49). Teenage fertility for urban areas was 31, while for rural areas it was 50 – much higher than the value for all of Vanuatu.

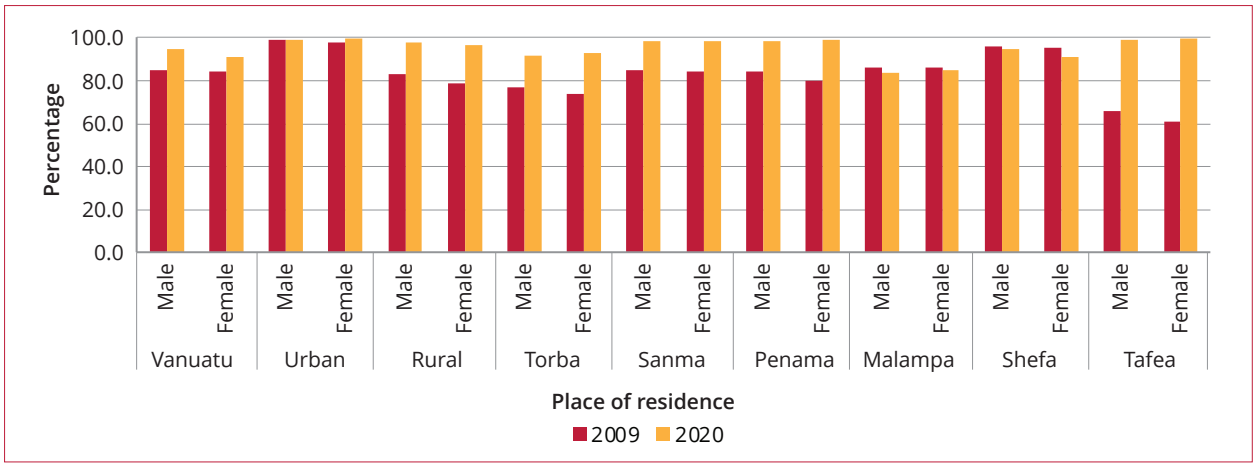
YOUTH EDUCATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

In 2020, the literacy rate for Vanuatu youth aged 15–29 was equal to 93.3%. This value is significantly higher than the value (84.8%) identified by the 2009 census[3] and a little higher than that for the total population of Vanuatu (93%). The literacy rate for women (91.3%) was slightly lower than that for men (94.7%).

There were substantial differences in literacy rates between urban and rural areas and between provinces. In urban areas, literacy values were 99.1% (98.9% for men and 99.3% for women), indicating high literacy and a small gender gap. In rural areas, the opposite situation was observed: literacy for men and women together was 97.7% (at 96.7%, women scored lower than men (97.7%).

There are huge differences in literacy between Vanuatu's provinces. As Figure 4 shows, the gender gap is more pronounced in regions with lower literacy. Thus, for Tafea, values were around 99% and the gap was quite small. In Torba, however, the literacy rate for women was higher than for men. In contrast, Shefa had relatively high literacy rates for men (94.7%) and women (91.35%), along with a slightly bigger gender gap than most other provinces. Along with the increase in men's literacy, the gender gap is closing and is expected to diminish or disappear in future.

Figure 4: Literacy rate for at least one language for youth aged 15–29 in private households, by region and sex.



Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

To illustrate the progress in literacy during the previous decade, literacy values by sex and region for 2009 (broken lines) and 2020 (solid lines) are shown in Figure 4. Marked progress was observed for rural regions that previously had low values of literacy. Gender differences were similar for both years.

EDUCATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

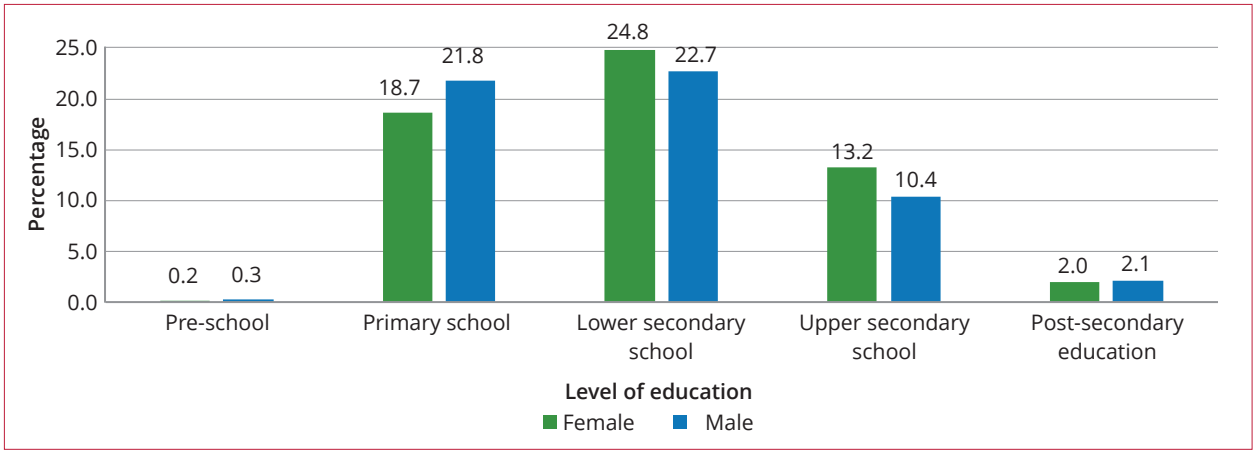
The proportions of the youth population aged 12–30 by highest completed levels of education, and by sex, are presented in Figure 5, as follows:

- For 20% (19% of females and 22% of males), the highest level was primary school.
- For 24% (25% of females and 23% of males), the highest level was lower secondary school.
- For 12% (13% of females and 10% of males), the highest level was upper secondary school.
- For 2% of both sexes, the highest level was post-secondary education.

There were some gender differences in the highest educational level completed. More females than males completed lower secondary (25% of females versus 23% of males) and upper secondary (13% of females versus 10% of males) education.

[3] Vanuatu National Statistical Office. 2009 National Population and Housing Census, Analytical Report, Volume 2.

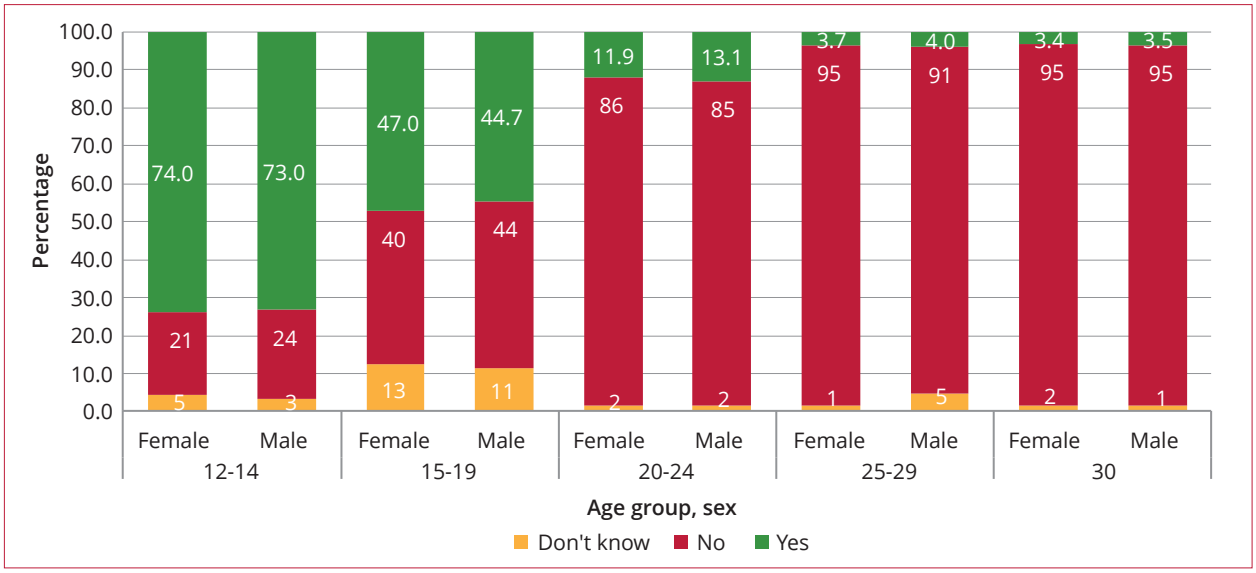
Figure 5: Proportion of youth aged 12–30 by highest educational level completed, by sex, and by percentage of total youth aged 12–30 (%).



Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

In 2020, the share of youth currently attending school was 31% of the population aged 12–30. The proportions of youth aged 12–30 currently attending a school, by sex and age group, are presented in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Proportion of youth aged 12–30 currently attending school, by sex and age group (2020 census).



Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

In terms of age, the highest share of youth attending school was in the age group 12–14 (74% of youth aged 12–14) with slightly more females than males (74% of all females aged 12–14 versus 73% of all males aged 12–14). Almost 46% of youth aged 15–19 years answered that they were attending school (47% of females and 44% of males).

In the age group 20–24 years, the share of persons attending school was significantly lower than for previous groups (12% of females and 13% of males). In the 25–29 and 30 age groups, the share of persons attending school was 4% and 3%, respectively, with slightly higher shares for males. This trend could be explained by graduation from school at the age of 19 years and entering the labour market, or getting married. The data demonstrates that females and males have equal conditions of access to school education, which is a good sign of gender equity among Vanuatu youth.

A part of the youth population has never attended school (Table 7). In younger age groups, the proportion of youth who had never attended school was slightly lower for females, while in older age groups, the proportions were slightly lower for males.

Table 7: Proportion of youth who have never attended school, by sex and age group, from 2009 and 2020 censuses (%).

Age group	2009		2020	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
12-14	-	-	4.8	5.4
15 – 19	8	9	4.0	4.9
20 – 24	10	10	5.8	5.6
25 – 29	10	10	6.4	5.8
30	-	-	9.7	9.3
Total	**9**	**9**	**5.4**	**5.6**

Source: Calculations based on data from 2009 and 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

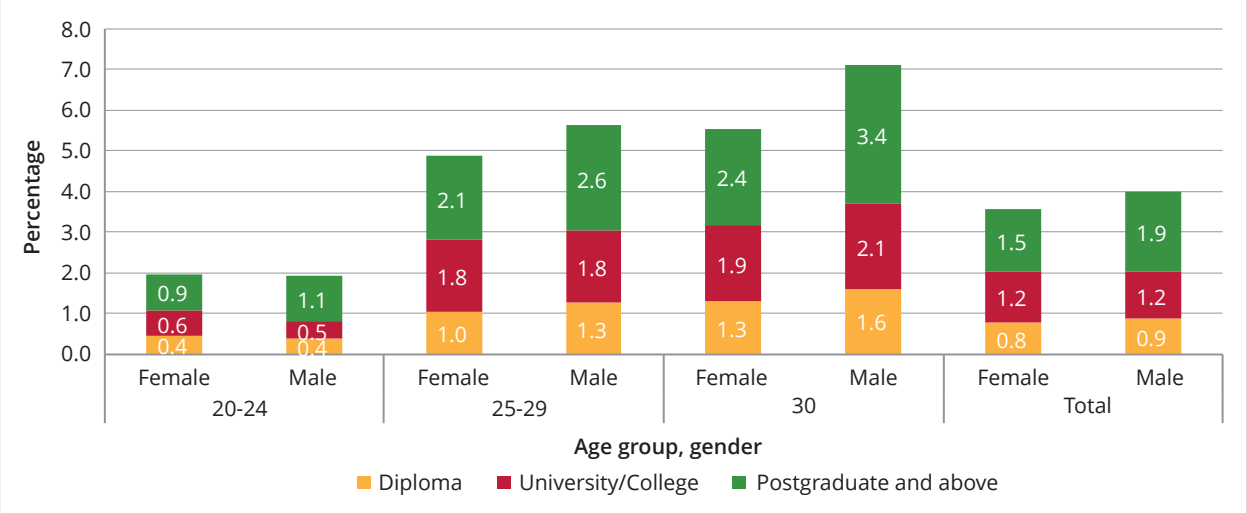
Compared to the 2009 census, in 2020 the proportion of persons who had never attended school decreased significantly.

- For age groups 15–19 and 20–24, it declined almost two-fold: from 8% of females in age group 12–14 in 2009 to 4% in 2020, and from 9% of males in age group 12–14 in 2009 to 5% in 2020.
- For both sexes, the percentage declined from 10% in age groups 20–24 and 25–29 in 2009, to 6% in 2020 (Table 7).

  This is a significant improvement, indicating that school education has become more universal and that the transformation of Vanuatu's education system is on the way to achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 (Quality education).

Figure 7 presents data on the distribution of youth aged 20–30 by completion of post-secondary school education (college, university, or postgraduate education), by age and sex in 2020. According to the data, 3.8% of all youth aged 20–30 (1,994 persons aged 20–30) completed post-secondary education. In terms of gender equity, there were small differences between males and females for completion of post-secondary education and level attained. The share of males with post-secondary education was 4.0% of all males aged 20–30 (1,036 persons) compared to 3.6% of all females (958 persons), which indicates a small gender gap.

Figure 7: Proportion of youth aged 20–30 by completion of post-secondary school education, by age and sex, and by all youth aged 20–30 (2020 census).



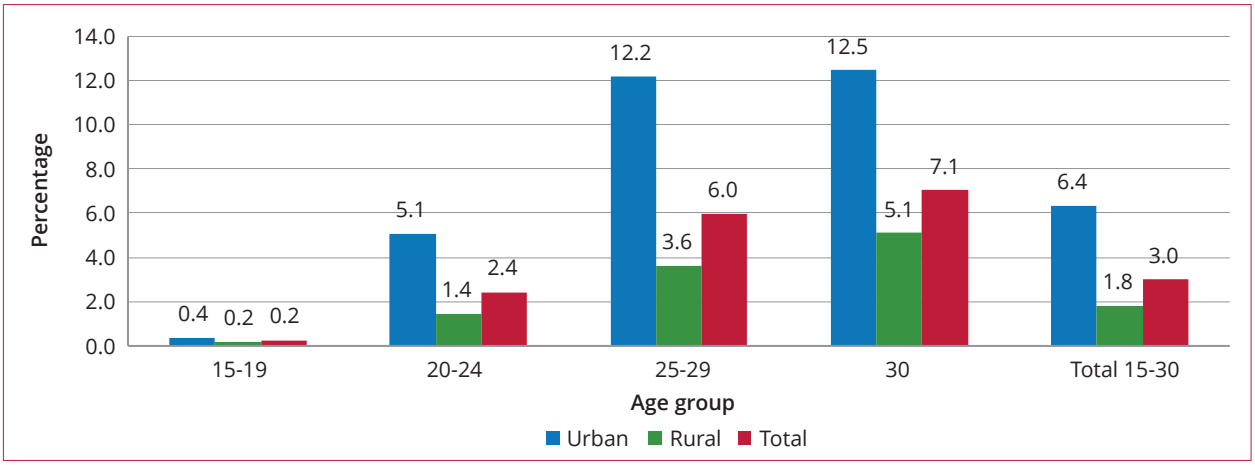
Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

According to the 2020 census data, only a small number of youth complete higher education: 3% of the age group 15–30 attained a level of higher education. In rural area it was 2% and in urban areas, nearly 6%.

Figure 8 shows the share of older youth aged 15–30 with higher education, by age group and area of residence, in comparison with all youth. There were big differences between urban and rural areas, ranging from 2 times to almost 4 times, indicating a wide gap in the education level of young people in these areas.

The small gender differences in access to schooling and in educational attainment indicate equal conditions for females and males, and gender equity in the youth population.

Figure 8: Proportion of older youth aged 15–30 with higher education, by urban and rural area and by age group, and as a percentage of all youth (2020 census).



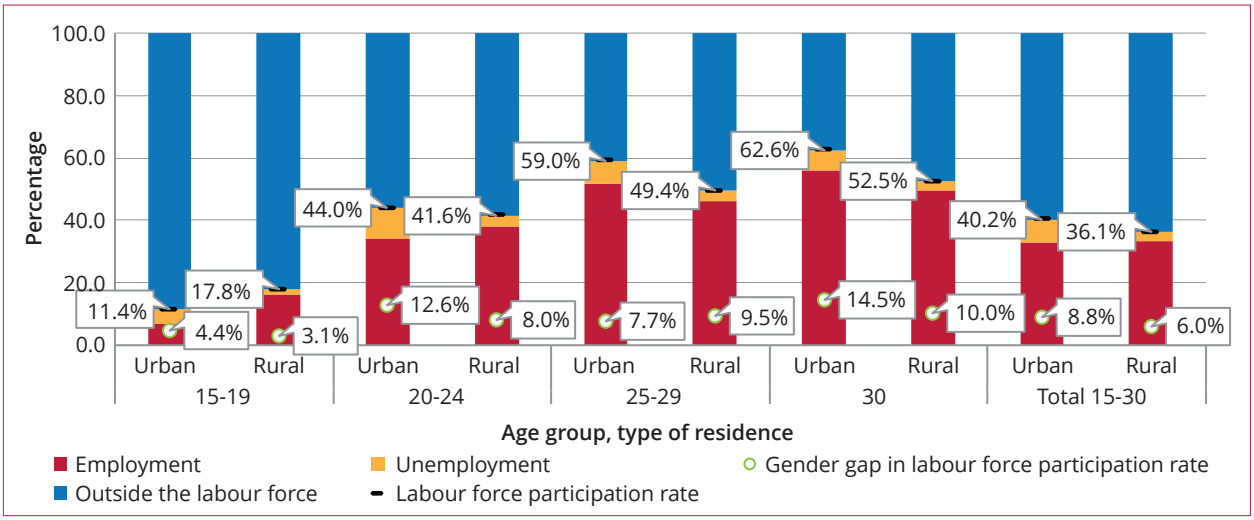
Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION

The youth labour force participation rate is the share of the working-age youth population (15–30 years old) in the labour force as a percentage of the total population aged 15–30.

Figure 9 shows significant gender, age and urban-rural differences in labour force participation. In 2020, the share of youth 15–30 years who participated in the labour force was low, with a trend to increase with age. The low working activity in this age group can be explained by the high proportion in study (44% of the total; 46% of females and 43% of males). The labour force participation rate was higher in urban areas in all age groups, except for youth aged 15–19 years old. In this age group, the labour force participation of urban youth is much lower, which could be explained by their higher attendance of educational institutions.

Figure 9: Composition of the working-age youth population (15–30 years) by labour force status in rural and urban areas, and by age group.



Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

Table 8 shows the labour force participation rates of young people aged 15–30 years old by age group and by sex. The work activity of young women was much lower than that of young men in both urban and rural areas. The labour force participation rates of all youth aged 15–30 in Vanuatu was 34% of females and 41% of males. In urban areas, it was 36% of females and 45% of males; in rural areas it was lower – 33% of females and 39% of males.

The gender gap in youth labour force participation is wider in urban areas than in rural ones in all age groups except for 25–29. Work activity in urban settlements is higher for both sexes, except youth in the 15–19 age group.

Table 8: Labour force participation rates of youth aged 15–30 in urban and rural areas, by age group and sex.

Age	Vanuatu			Urban			Rural		
	Total (%)	Female (%)	Male (%)	Total (%)	Female (%)	Male (%)	Total (%)	Female (%)	Male (%)
15-19	16.4	14.6	18.0	11.4	9.2	13.6	17.8	16.2	19.3
20-24	42.2	37.7	46.9	44.0	37.8	50.4	41.6	37.6	45.6
25-29	52.1	47.5	56.7	59.0	55.1	62.8	49.4	44.8	54.3
30	55.2	49.9	61.0	62.6	55.8	70.3	52.5	47.7	57.7
Total 15-30	**37.2**	**33.8**	**40.5**	**40.2**	**35.8**	**44.6**	**36.1**	**33.1**	**39.1**

Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

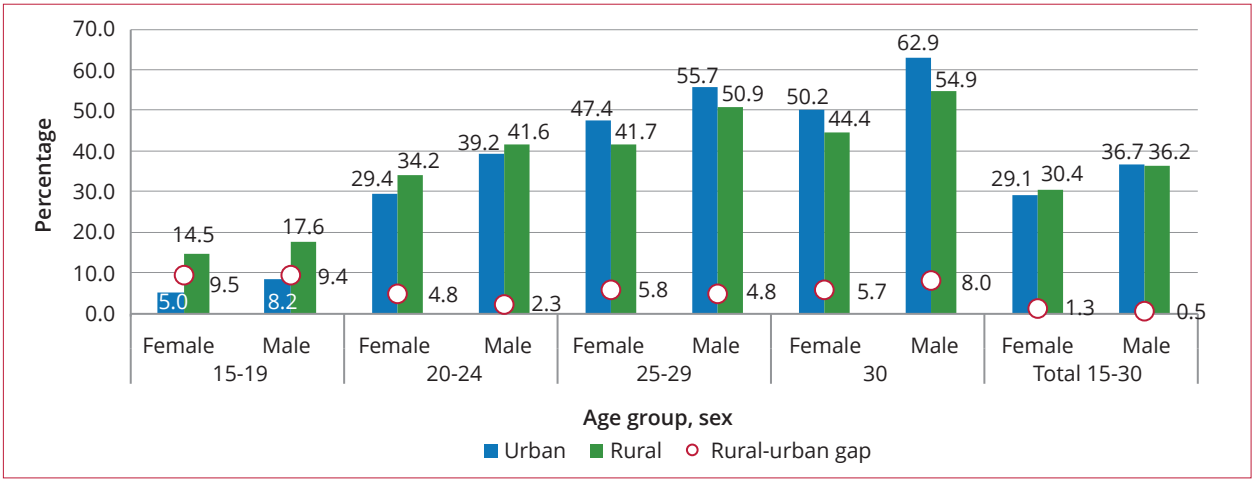
The urban-rural gap in youth labour force participation is wider among males than among females in all age groups except 25–29.

For youth, the employment-to-population ratio is defined as the proportion of a country's working-age population 15–30 years old that is employed. Figure 10 presents the youth employment-to-population ratio in urban and rural areas by age group and sex. Youth employment in Vanuatu is low (33%).

The ratio increases with age group (Fig. 10). The lowest share (14%) was in the 15–19 age group. At this age, young people are just starting to enter the labour market and a significant number have not yet finished their studies (almost 46% of all youth aged 15–19 were attending school). The highest share (51%) was in the 30-year age group.

The rural-urban gap for both sexes varied considerably. In the 15–19 age group, the employment-to-population ratio was more than twice as high in urban than in rural areas: for females it was 5.0% in rural areas and 14.5% in urban settlements, and for males, 8.2% and 17.6%. In the 30-year age group, it increased for females to 50.2% and 44.4% respectively, and for males to 62.9% and 54.9%. Thus, younger groups in urban areas were less involved in market-related activities, while older groups in urban areas had much higher engagement.

Figure 10: Employment-to-population ratio of youth in urban and rural areas, by age group and sex (%).



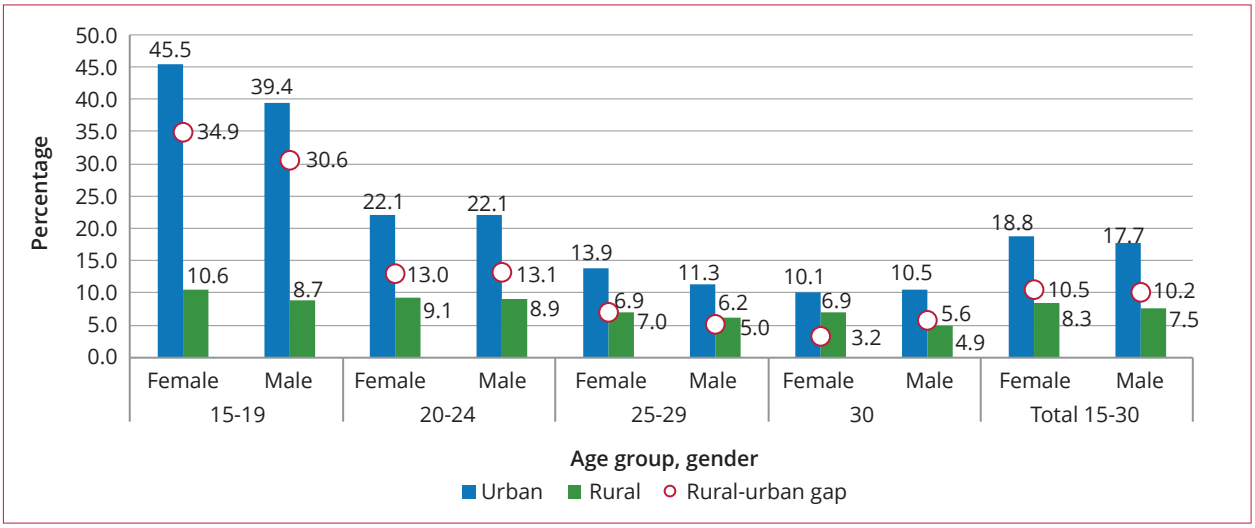
Source: Own calculations based on 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu, Basic Tables, Volume 1.

The unemployment rate is calculated by expressing the number of unemployed youth as a percentage of the total number of youth in the labour force, which is also known as the economically active population (the sum of the number of youth employed and unemployed).

Figure 11 presents the rate of unemployment for youth in urban and rural areas, by sex and age group. The highest value of the unemployment rate was in urban areas for youth aged 15–19 (45.5% of females and 39.4% of males). Labour participation in rural areas in this age group was more than twice as high.

The unemployment rate for both sexes differed significantly between territories. It was significantly higher in urban settlements in all age groups, with the variation in the rural-urban gap ranging from 35 percentage points to 3 percentage points depending on the age group.

Figure 11: Unemployment rate of youth in urban and rural areas, by age group and sex (%).



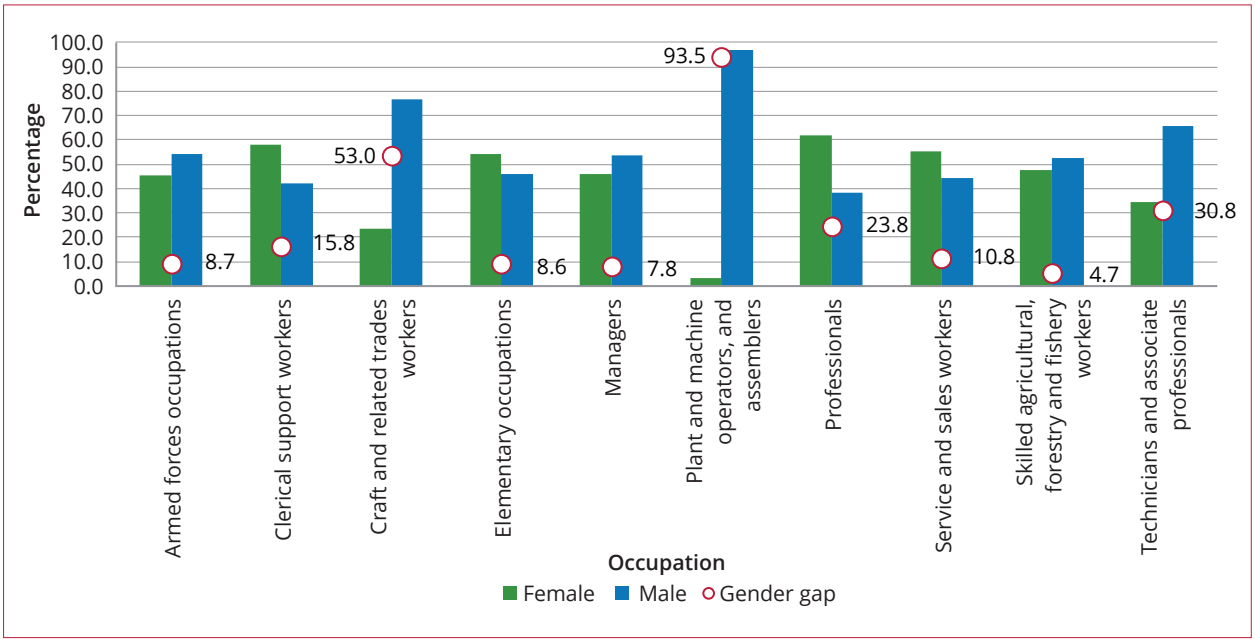
Source: Own calculations based on 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

The unemployment rate for females was slightly higher (19% of all females aged 15–30) than for males (18% of all males aged 15–30), with the exception of the 30-year age group. The most significant gender difference was in the 15–19 age group in urban areas where the unemployment rate of females exceeded that of males by 6.1 percentage points. Overall, the gender gap in unemployment rates was small (smaller than for the employment-to-population ratio).

The most common occupations were skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery work (25% of total youth; 24% of employed women, 26% of employed men), elementary occupations (23% of total youth; 25% of employed women, 21% of employed men), service and sales work (9% of total youth 15–30; 10% of employed women, 8% of employed men). Professional occupations were held by 3% of total employed youth 15–30.

Women were dominant in the following occupations: professionals (62% of employed youth (15–30) in this category were females); clerical support (58%); service and sales workers (55%); and elementary occupations (54%) (Fig. 12).

Figure 12: Share of youth aged 15–30 by place of occupation and by sex (%).



Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

Males were dominant in the following occupations: plant and machine operation, and assembly (97% of employed youth 15–30 in this occupation category were males); craft and related trades (77%); technicians and associate professionals (65%); and skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery work (52%).

The majority of youth aged 15–30 were involved in agriculture, forestry and fishing economic activity (24% of the total), and in the activities of households as employers, and undifferentiated goods and services producing activities of households for own use (21% of the total).

The composition of the youth population aged 12–30 by main activities, region and sex shows that the share of the young population involved in work or education was higher in urban areas. The share of youth aged 12–30 involved in work was 23% in urban areas and 13% in rural areas, while for education, it was 27% in urban areas and 25% in rural areas (Table 9).

Table 9: Youth population aged 12–30 whose main activities were work, education, or neither, by region and sex, 2020 census (%).

	Female						Male					
	Neither	In education	In work	Both	DK	Total	Neither	In education	In work	Both	DK	Total
Total	**37.5**	**15.6**	**23.4**	**1.1**	**22.4**	**100.0**	**31.0**	**15.5**	**27.8**	**1.3**	**24.4**	**100.0**
Urban	34.7	24.1	23.5	1.4	16.3	100.0	26.9	22.0	29.6	1.3	20.2	100.0
Rural	38.4	12.9	23.4	0.9	24.4	100.0	32.3	13.4	27.3	1.2	25.7	100.0

Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

The highest proportion of people involved in education was in Shefa province (26% of women and 23% of men). In rural areas, youth participation in education was significantly lower, ranging from 9% in Penama to 18% in Tafea, with a small gender difference.

According to the 2020 census, 2,080 people aged 15–30 (2.6% of the total aged 15–30) had worked overseas during the last 12 months in overseas employment schemes such as RSE/SWP/PLS.[4] Of them, 472 were women (1.2% of total females aged 15–30) and 1,608 were men (4.1% of total males aged 15–30). Thus, the vast majority of people who worked overseas were men (about 77% of the total number who worked abroad). The major share of overseas workers were males aged 25–29 (49%). The lowest share of those who worked overseas was from the 15–19 age group (2.6% of total males, and 3.2% of total females).

A third of the total number (32%) worked in Australia (7.9% women, 24% men). A significant share of those who worked in Australia were men aged 25–29 years (52% of the total who went to Australia); 3.4% of the total number worked in New Caledonia, as well as in Australia under the PLS scheme (3.5%); and 4.6% of the total number worked in other countries (7.6% men, 7% women).

YOUTH DISABILITY

The 2020 census provides data on health, education and the livelihood of people with a disability, and reveals that there were 5,183 young people aged 12–30 with disabilities (5.3% of total youth; 2.6% women, 2.7% men) living in Vanuatu, most of them in rural areas (81%).

Table 10 shows the distribution of youth aged 12–30 years by disability status, and by sex and province. Most youth with disabilities lived in urban area (81%; 84% men, 79% women). The highest share of the population with disabilities was in the rural area of Sanma and the lowest share was in the urban area of Sanma.

Table 10: Youth population aged 12–30 by sex, disability status and province (%).

Region	Total (12–30)			With disability		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**
Urban	**24.3**	**24.4**	**24.3**	**18.6**	**15.9**	**21.5**
Sanma	6.4	6.6	6.3	5.9	5.1	6.8
Shefa	17.9	17.8	18.0	12.7	10.7	14.8
Rural	**75.7**	**75.6**	**75.7**	**81.4**	**84.1**	**78.5**
Malampa	12.4	12.7	12.1	10.6	11.5	9.7
Penama	11.2	11.3	11.1	12.3	12.6	11.9
Sanma	14.6	14.8	14.5	20.4	20.7	20.1
Shefa	18.5	18.4	18.7	14.4	14.7	14.1
Tafea	15.1	14.8	15.4	16.7	17.8	15.7
Torba	3.8	3.7	3.8	6.9	6.8	7.0

Source: Own calculations based on 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu, Basic Tables, Volume 1.

The proportion of young people aged 12–30 with disabilities, whose highest level of education was primary school, was 25% (23% females, 28% males). This was higher than the proportion of youth without disabilities (21%; 19% females, 23% males). The proportion of youth aged 12–30 with disabilities, whose highest completed level was lower or upper secondary school, was lower than that for youth without disabilities. Persons with disabilities had a higher share of post-secondary school education (2.4%) than persons without disabilities (2.1%). The proportion of youth with disabilities who attained advanced (0.3%) and bachelor or diploma qualifications (0.8%) was higher than the proportion of persons without disabilities (0.7% and 0.1%, respectively).

[4] Recognised Seasonal Employer, Seasonal Worker Programme, and Pacific Labour Scheme.

The employment-to-population ratio of persons with disability aged 15–30 was 37% of the total, which was higher than the share of employed persons without disability aged 15–30 (33%). This was due to the higher employment of females with disabilities compared to females without disabilities, and to more employed youth in the age group 15–19. Employment of persons with disability was higher among males (the same as for youth without disability), but the gender gap was narrower (Table 11).

Table 11: Employment-to-population ratio by disability status and sex (%).

Age group	Youth without disabilities			Youth with disabilities		
	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male
Total	**33.0**	**29.7**	**36.2**	**37.0**	**35.2**	**38.8**
15-19	13.8	12.1	15.4	18.1	17.1	19.1
20-24	36.9	32.9	41.1	35.4	33.5	37.3
25-29	47.7	43.1	52.5	47.1	44.3	49.9
30	51.3	45.8	57.3	50.3	48.1	52.7

Source: Own calculations based on 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu, Basic Tables, Volume 1.

The main activities for both male and female youth with disabilities were domestic work for self and for others (35% of the total), full-time student (10% of the total) and looking for work (4% of the total), with some differences by age and sex. The same activities were prevalent for youth without disabilities.

LIVING ARRANGEMENTS OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The results of the 2020 census show a significant difference in access to drinking water for rural and urban Vanuatu youth. In urban areas, the young population has significantly better access to improved sources of drinking water than their rural counterparts. Private piped water was more widely used in urban areas (42%) than in rural ones (7%), where the most common drinking water source was shared rainwater tanks (24%). Almost 8% of the rural population still uses a river, lake or spring as a source of drinking water. There were no noticeable differences between age group in access to improved sources of drinking water.

There was a significant difference in access to sanitation (toilet facilities) in urban and rural dwellings. In urban areas, access to improved sanitation is significantly better than in rural areas. Flush toilets inside the house were more widely used in urban areas (36%) than in rural area (4%), where the most common type of sanitation is a private pit latrine (36%). Almost 9% of the rural population still uses the bush as a toilet facility. There were no significant differences between age groups in access to improved sanitation.

ACCESS OF YOUTH AGED 12–30 TO INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

In 2020, internet access was low for youth aged 12–30. The share of youth aged 12–30 who used the internet was 36.7% (35.6% of women, 37.8% of men). The smallest share of internet users was youth aged 12–14 (9% for men and women). The highest share of users was in the 20–24 age group: 47% for women, and 53% for men. The maximum gender gap in the 20–24 age group was 6 percentage points; it was up to 5 percentage points for other groups (Table 12).

Table 12: Proportion of youth aged 12–30 who used the internet, by sex and age.

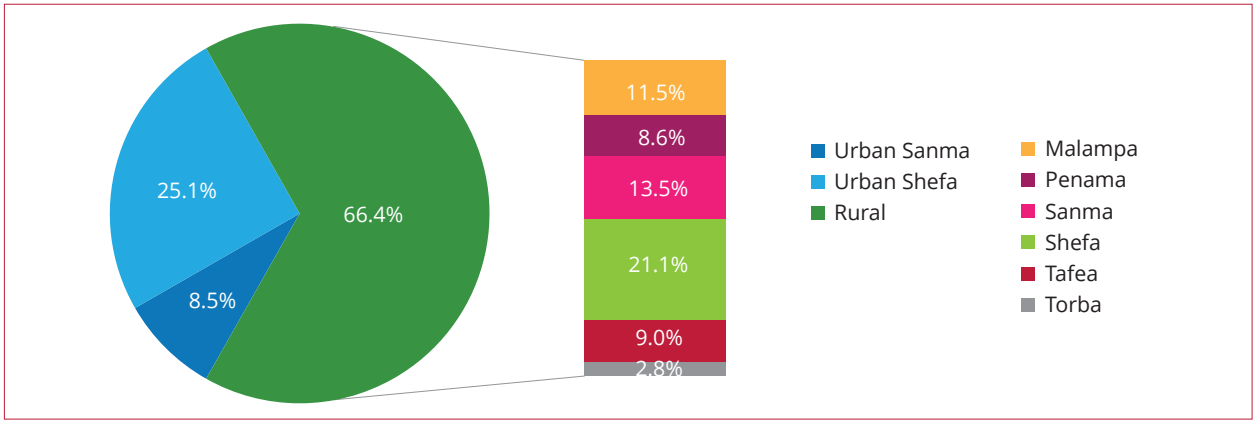
Age group	Number of internet users			Proportion of total population (%)		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
12-14	799	848	1,647	8.98	8.76	8.86
15-19	4,355	4,656	9,011	33.56	34.00	33.79
20-24	5,994	6,606	12,600	47.23	53.41	50.28
25-29	5,283	5,612	10,895	44.01	48.51	46.22
30	939	959	1,898	41.86	46.69	44.17
Total 12-30	17,370	18,681	36,051	35.58	37.84	36.72

Source: Own calculations based on 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

Most internet users were in the urban area (59.4% of total users). The share of users aged 12–30 was much higher among the urban population: 61% in urban settlements and 29% in rural areas. In urban areas, there were some gender differences in internet usage: 36% of women used the internet compared to 38% of men. In rural areas, the highest share of internet users was in Shefa (46% of women and 45% of men). In other provinces, the share of internet users ranged from 15% of females in Tafea to 32% of males in Malampa. Gender differences in favour of males ranged from 3 percentage points in Tafea to 11 percentage points in Penama (Fig. 13).

In Vanuatu, computer use and internet access were not widespread (2.2% and 6.2% of total private households, respectively). However, many households have access to a mobile phone (76.4% of total private households). This applies to nine out of ten households in urban areas and two out of three households in rural areas. According to the 2020 census, almost half of youth aged 12–30 years were mobile users. The proportion of mobile users out of the total youth population aged 12–30 was higher in rural areas: 66% versus 34% in urban areas.

Figure 13: Proportion of mobile phones users aged 12–30 in urban and rural areas, by region (%).



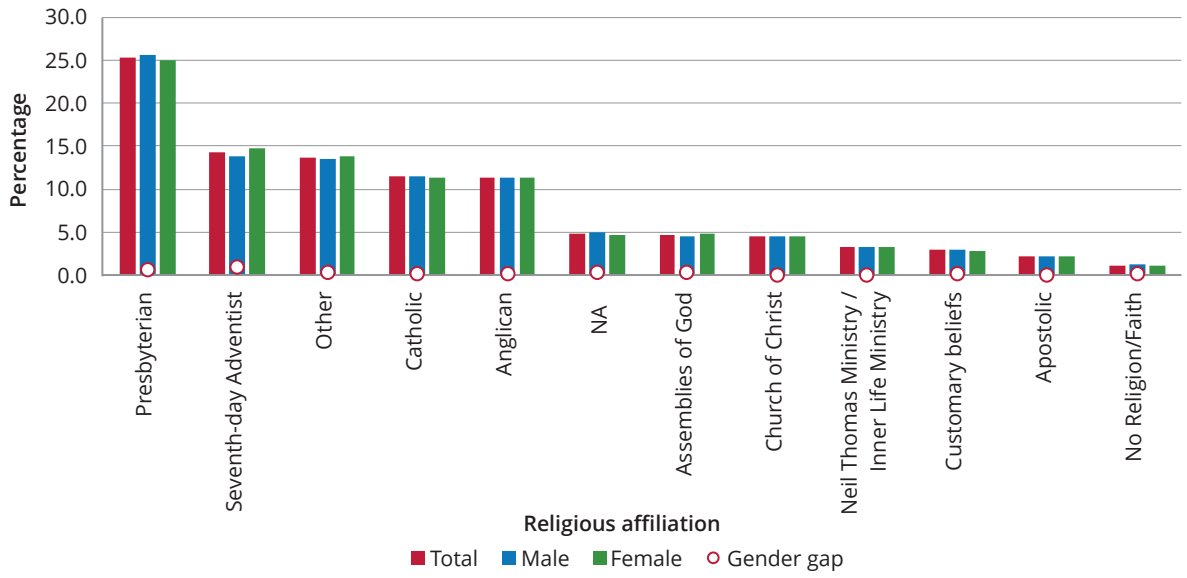
Source: Own calculations based on 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

Gender differences in access to mobile phones in urban areas were not significant. In rural areas, the differences were more noticeable. The widest gap was in Penama province (43% of men, 29% of women).

YOUTH AND RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION

Figure 14 shows the religious affiliation of the youth population aged 12–30 years. Almost 94% of all youth 12–30 years old of both sexes had some religious affiliation. Only 1% (1 out of 151 persons) of youth aged 12–30 stated they had no religion, and 5% (4,786 persons) declined to answer. The largest share of youth belongs to the Presbyterian Church (25%), followed by Seventh-day Adventist (14%), Catholic (11%) and Anglican (11%) Churches. The gender gap was insignificant at less than 1 percentage point.

Figure 14: Youth population aged 12–30 by religious affiliation and sex (%).



Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Goal of this monograph

The goal of this monograph is to provide accurate figures, based on Vanuatu's 2020 Population and Housing Census, for the development of a conceptual framework to (1) assess the transformative potential of population policies, particularly their impact on youth in Vanuatu, and (2) integrate these policies in decision-making and program development processes.

This report will shed light on potential policies for transformative change by analyzing a range of factors that present opportunities for fostering youth rights and well-being through the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The framework should then be applied to policy areas relevant to young people's development, such as social policy and care, and to assessing how policies can be implemented through resource mobilisation and governance systems. The social and economic impacts are also looked at in a cross-cutting way.

The aim is to stretch boundaries and invite new thinking on how to grasp the numerous opportunities offered by the SDGs to approach development challenges holistically and from a youth-centered perspective. This involves integrating the economic, social and environmental dimensions of development and fostering cross-sectoral approaches.

The new agenda is challenging but also promising for traditional aid actors who have designed and delivered programmes for specific population groups, including adolescents and youth. This is of particular interest to the authors of this monograph.

The vision of the 2030 Agenda, and its comprehensive goals and targets, is an important step forward. According to the author's point of view, to create the sustainable, long-term change laid out in the 2030 Agenda, new approaches to policy must be implemented. These approaches have to target the underlying generative framework of social injustice as opposed to implementing affirmative remedies that simply seek to alleviate the symptoms.

Based on this definition, we understand transformative change as a process that attacks the root causes of poverty, inequality and unsustainable practices through integrated and coordinated policies and reforms with the aim of achieving sustainable goals. The way that we conceptualize youth issues, and the role of youth in society, is key to the formation of transformative policies.

First, these policies address young people not as a set group of individuals between the ages of 12 and 30 who are alive at the present moment, but rather as a dynamic category that individuals enter and leave. This approach highlights issues of intergenerational justice and sustainable development from a life-course perspective, and centres on the principle of leaving no one behind. It resonates strongly with UNFPA's equity approach, while at the same time seeking to achieve measurable progress for all.

In each country, it is necessary to look at transformative change in terms of both processes and outcomes.

In terms of **processes**, a key issue is whether youth's voices and specific needs are respected in policy design and implementation, including in the evaluation and monitoring of policies and institutions.

In terms of **outcomes**, transformative change should reflect the best interests of youth and foster their long-term capabilities and potential to contribute in their turn to further change.

This monograph presents recommendations for action to ensure that young people have access to the services and guidance they need to make crucial life transitions safely and participate more fully and effectively in society. The recommended actions would also contribute to accelerating the achievement of the goals and objectives of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development.

1.2 Scientific concept of youth

Young people in the developed world have been the subject of an enormous amount of research over the last 40 years. The results are published in journals and scientific monographs (Annex 1). In general, this research assumes that young people constitute a separate and significant category of people as non-adults.

The idea that youth constitutes a distinct category is reinforced by popular media. Indeed, the analysis of media representation of young people occupies a distinct place in youth research.

A recurring theme in the studies is the problematic nature of being a young person and the even greater problem of becoming an adult. Much of the literature about youth has inherited assumptions from developmental psychology about the universal stages of development, identity formation, normative behaviour, and the relationship between social and physical maturation. Yet very little work has been done to clarify the theoretical basis of this categorization based on age.

Although the experience of youth varies widely, and may not exist at all for some, the concept of youth is important in enabling us to understand some of the complexities of social change and the intersections between institutions and personal biography. We argue that it is most usefully seen as a relational concept, which refers to the social processes whereby age is socially constructed, institutionalized and controlled in historically and culturally specific ways.

Summarizing the results of the numerous studies devoted to youth is difficult. It requires emphasizing that *youth* can be defined as all the people within a specific age group, or as a state of being, or even a state of mind. While there are no universally accepted definitions of adolescence and youth, the United Nations (UN) understands adolescents to include persons aged 10–19 years, and youth as those between 15–24 years for statistical purposes *without prejudice to other definitions by Member States.*

Together, adolescents and youth are referred to as young people, encompassing the ages of 10–24 years. Due to data limitations, these terms can refer to varying age groups that are separately defined as required.

The UN uses the terms *youth* and *young people* interchangeably, and while youth development programs focus on the 15–24 age range, different Member States, including Pacific Island countries, define youth as individuals aged 10–29. According to the 2009 Youth Monograph,[5] the now expired Vanuatu National Youth Policy 2007–2011 defined youth as 12–30 years old.

This brief therefore follows Vanuatu's definition of youth as those aged 12–30 years. This age range includes an early phase (between ages 12 and 14), middle phase (between 15 and 20), later phase (between 21 and 24), and transition to adulthood (25–30).

Young people in all four age groups face major events that affect their future well-being. At the younger end of the age spectrum, youth are still children in many respects. By the time they reach the middle phase, they are transitioning from puberty to maturity. This group can be considered adolescents. When a person finishes this stage of life, they have set in motion many of the events that will determine their life path. Finally, youth aged 25 to 30 are also young adults. They may be still discovering their interests and talents and making commitments to work, to a spouse, and often to becoming a parent.

[5] 2009 Youth Monograph https://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Vanuatu_2009_Youth_Monograph_Report.pdf

All these phases form the experience of being a young person. This brief addresses youth as a whole in some sections, but also specifies where the youth experience varies significantly by age group.

This report also proposes recommendations on enabling youth to provide a *demographic dividend* in the process of *demographic transition*. The task of the authors is to ensure that the monograph contributes to the formation of institutional, legal, economic and organizational conditions that empower Vanuatu youth to become the most powerful productive force in the country.

After analyzing Vanuatu's 2020 Population Census, the authors concluded that the country's processes of demographic transition and rapid population growth were reaching their peak.[6] Thus, the Government of Vanuatu faces the task of obtaining a demographic dividend from these two processes.

The UN as a whole, and UNFPA in particular, have an international mandate to help the Government develop information and analytical tools that can be used to address this difficult task. They can also develop programs that when implemented will ensure that Vanuatu receives economic dividends from its rapid population growth.

The first step has been taken. The 2020 Population Census was carried out successfully in accordance with international rules. The next step is a deep analysis of the data to identify trends and patterns, and suggest which programs could transform youth into a significant factor in Vanuatu's economic and social development.

It is important to note that both the objectives of the study and its conceptual background are organically linked to the report's scientific novelty and practical significance, which are reflected in Annex 2.

1.3 Sources of data

Usually, three main sources of demographic and social statistics are used to produce a report like this one: censuses, surveys and administrative records. They are part of an integrated programme of statistical data collection and compilation, and together they provide a comprehensive source of information for policy formulation, development planning, administration, research, commercial production and other uses. In this case, analysis of the relevant indicators was performed under the methodological supervion of UNFPA.

1.4 Cooperation between Vanuatu and the United Nations and UNFPA

A large number of Vanuatu's development programs could not be implemented without the comprehensive assistance of the UN and its specialised agencies. Vanuatu has been a member of the UN since it became independent in 1980. The UN has been present in Vanuatu since 1984, with 18 agencies implementing programs: UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNISDR, UNOCHA, UN Environment, UN Women, FAO, IAEA, IFAD, ILO, IOM, UNCDF, UNCTAD, WFP, WHO and WMO.

As one of the UN's specialised agencies, UNFPA supports many aspects of voluntary family planning, including procuring contraceptives, training health professionals to accurately and sensitively counsel individuals about their family planning options, and promoting comprehensive sexuality education in schools. In addition, UNFPA pays special attention to analytical work. For instance, in 2001, 2003 and 2004, UNFPA conducted ethnographic research on the meaning of biomedicine and modernity in Vanuatu and also supported the development and implementation of Population Censuses and Surveys. The last of these censuses, which provides the basis for this monograph, was conducted by the Vanuatu National Statistics Office in November 2020, under the methodological guidance of UNFPA.

[6] Young people's share of the world's population has already peaked and has diminished globally and in each region of the world between 2000 and 2020.

1.5 Concepts and definitions

Note: The numbers in brackets indicate the information sources listed below the table.

Indicator	Definition
Age specific fertility rate [1]	Number of births to women in a particular age group, divided by the number of women in that age group. The age groups used are: 15–19, 20–24, 25–29, 30–34, 35–39, 40–44, 45–49. The data refer to five-year periods running from 1 July to 30 June of the initial and final years.
Census [1]	The complete enumeration of a population or groups at a point in time with respect to well defined characteristics: for example, Population, Production, Traffic on particular roads. In some connection the term is associated with the data collected rather than the extent of the collection so that the term sample census has a distinct meaning. Partial enumeration resulting from a failure to cover the whole population, as distinct from a designed sample enquiry, may be referred to as an 'incomplete census'.
Child mortality (infant mortality) [1]	Probability of dying between birth and exact age 1. It is expressed as deaths per 1,000 births.
Crude birth rate [1]	Number of births over a given period divided by the person-years lived by the population over that period. It is expressed as number of births per 1,000 population.
Crude death rate [1]	Number of deaths over a given period divided by the person-years lived by the population over that period. It is expressed as number of deaths per 1,000 population.
Disability [2]	Long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments that, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder [a person's] full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.
Disability status [3]	This classification differentiates between persons with and without disability. The term 'disability', as defined in the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) (World Health Organization, Geneva, 2001), is used as an umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions. Impairments are problems in body function or structure, such as a significant deviation or loss. Activity limitations are difficulties an individual may have in executing activities. Participation restrictions are problems an individual may experience in involvement in life situations. For measurement purposes, a person with disability is defined as a person who is limited in the kind or number of activities that he or she can do because of ongoing difficulties due to a long-term physical condition, mental condition or health problem. The following list of broad categories of disabilities may be used: • seeing difficulties (even if wearing glasses) • hearing difficulties (even if using a hearing aid) • speaking difficulties (e.g. talking) • moving/mobility difficulties (e.g. walking, climbing stairs, standing) • body movement difficulties (e.g. reaching, crouching, kneeling) • gripping/holding difficulties (e.g. using fingers to grip or handle objects) • learning difficulties (e.g. intellectual difficulties) • behavioural difficulties (e.g. psychological, emotional problems) • personal care difficulties (e.g. bathing, dressing, feeding problems) • other difficulties
Dwellings [4]	Buildings used entirely or primarily as residences, including any associated structures, such as garages, and all permanent fixtures customarily installed in residences. Movable structures, such as caravans, used as principal residences of households are included.
Education level [1]	The highest level of an educational programme the person has successfully completed.
Employment [3]	Persons in employment are defined as all those of working age who, during a short reference period, were engaged in any activity to produce goods or provide services for pay or profit. They comprise employed persons 'at work', i.e. who worked in a job for at least one hour; and employed persons 'not at work' due to temporary absence from a job, or to working-time arrangements.
Employment-to-population ratio [5]	The proportion of a country's working age population that is employed.
Gender [6]	A social and cultural construct that values men's and women's (and girls' and boys') attributes differently. Accordingly, it assigns socially acceptable and often stereotypical roles and responsibilities to men and women. Gender-based roles and other attributes change over time and vary with cultural contexts. The concept of gender includes the expectations held about the characteristics, aptitudes, and likely behaviours of both women and men (femininity and masculinity). This concept is also useful in analyzing how commonly shared practices legitimize discrepancies between sexes.

Indicator	Definition
Gender analysis [6]	A critical examination of how differences in gender roles, activities, needs, opportunities and rights/entitlements affect men, women, girls and boys in certain situations or contexts. Gender analysis examines the relationships between females and males and their access to, and control of, resources, and the constraints they face relative to each other.
Gender difference [6]	Any kind of distinction between the characteristics of men and women, regardless of whether it is based on the social attribution of roles or on innate predispositions.
Gender gap [6]	Disproportionate difference between men and women and boys and girls, particularly as reflected in attainment of development goals, access to resources and levels of participation. A gender gap indicates gender inequality.
Growth rate [1]	Ratios of total change in a specified time reference period to values at the beginning of the period or at a specified earlier time reference. When changes over a period of more than one calendar year are studied, the mean annual rate of change may be computed.
Household (private) [4]	A household is a small group of persons who share the same living accommodation, who pool some or all of their income and wealth, and who consume certain types of goods and services collectively, mainly housing and food.
Infant mortality rate [1]	Annual number of deaths of infants under age 1 per 1,000 live births. It is used as an indicator of the probability of dying between birth and exactly one year of age.
Internet	A global system of interconnected computer networks that uses the internet protocol suite (TCP/IP) to communicate between networks and devices.
Internet access [4]	• Home broadband connection: High-speed communication system that links computers to the internet at home. Home broadband providers in Vanuatu include Wantok, Vodafone/TVL, Digicel, Telsat and 3link. • Internet café: A place where people can go to access the internet for a fee (usually time based). • Free WIFI connection: Access to the internet without paying any fee, e.g. using a friend or family member's Wi-Fi, neighbour's WIFI or a hotspot in a public place, workplace, or place of education. • Mobile data: Mobile phone internet connection via a cellular service provider (e.g. Digicel or Vodafone).
Labour force [3]	All persons of working age who supply labour for the production of goods and services during a specified time-reference period. It refers to the sum of all persons of working age who are employed and unemployed (the economically active population).
Labour force participation rate [3]	A measure of the proportion of a country's working-age population that engages actively in the labour market, either by working or looking for work
Labour force status [3]	Classification of persons in a short reference period according to their labour force status: in employment, in unemployment, outside the labour force; and among these, in the potential labour force.
Life expectancy (at birth) [1]	The number of years a new-born infant could expect to live if prevailing patterns of mortality at the time of its birth stay the same throughout its life.
Literacy [1]	Ability to both read and write with understanding (self-reported). A literate person is one who can both read and write a short, simple statement on his or her everyday life. An illiterate person is one who cannot, with understanding, both read and write such a statement. A person capable of reading and writing only figures and his or her own name should be considered illiterate, as should a person who can read but not write, and one who can read and write only a phrase that has been memorized.
Literacy rate [1]	Percentage of the population of a given age group that can read and write. The adult literacy rate corresponds to ages 15 and above, the youth rate to ages 15 to 24, and the elderly rate to ages 65 and above. It is typically measured according to the ability to comprehend a short simple statement on everyday life. Generally, literacy also encompasses numeracy, and measurement may incorporate a simple assessment of arithmetic ability. The literacy rate and number of literates should be distinguished from functional literacy, a more comprehensive measure of literacy assessed on a continuum to determine levels of proficiency.
Marital status [4]	Personal status of each individual in relation to the marriage laws or customs of the country and defined in the census in five categories: Never married: an individual who has never been in a union; Married: an individual who was in marital union at the moment of the census, legally or not; Divorced: an individual who has been separated from his or her spouse through a court decision, according to legislation; Separated: an individual who has separated temporarily from his/her spouse and is awaiting the court decision; Widowed: a man or a woman who has lost his or her spouse by death, not yet remarried. The marital status of all usual residents aged 12 and above is enquired about in the census questionnaire.

Indicator	Definition
Mean age at childbearing [1]	The mean of an age schedule of age-specific birth rates. The age-specific birth rates may refer either to a birth cohort or a time period.
Median age [1]	Age that divides the population in two parts of equal size, that is, there are as many persons with ages above the median as there are with ages below the median.
Migrants [3]	Migrants are individuals who change their country of usual residence. For the purpose of ILOSTAT, migrants are defined based on either their country of birth or their country of citizenship. They include either all individuals who were born outside the country (foreign□born population), or all individuals who do not hold the citizenship of the country (non□citizens or foreign population).
Net migration [1]	Net number of migrants, that is, the number of immigrants minus the number of emigrants. It is expressed as thousands.
Persons outside the labour force [3]	Persons outside the labour force comprise all persons of working age who, during the specified reference period, were not in the labour force (that is, were not employed or unemployed). The working-age population is commonly defined as persons aged 15 years and older, but this varies from country to country. In addition to using a minimum age threshold, certain countries also apply a maximum age limit.
Population pyramid [3]	The 'age-sex pyramid' is an illustration of the distribution of a population (typically that of a country or region of the world) by age groups and sex; it typically takes the shape of a pyramid when the population is growing.
Population sex ratio [3]	Number of males per 100 females in the population.
Rural area [1]	Area where more than 50% of the population lives in rural grid cells, as used in the degree of urbanization. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Glossary:Rural_area
Rural population [1]	De facto population living in areas classified as rural (that is, the difference between the total population of a country and its urban population). Data refer to 1 July of the year indicated and are presented in thousands.
Sex [1]	State of being male or female.
Sex ratio at birth [1]	Number of male births per one female birth.
Total fertility rate (TFR) [1]	Basic indicator of the level of fertility, calculated by summing age-specific birth rates over all reproductive ages. It may be interpreted as the expected number of children a women who survives to the end of the reproductive age span will have during her lifetime if she experiences the given age-specific rates.
Total fertility [1]	Average number of children a hypothetical cohort of women would have at the end of their reproductive period if they were subject during their whole lives to the fertility rates of a given period and if they were not subject to mortality. It is expressed as children per woman.
Total population [1]	(1) All the inhabitants of a given country or area (province, city, metropolitan area, etc.) considered together; the number of inhabitants of a country or area. (2) In sampling, the whole collection of units (persons, households, institutions, events, etc.) from which a sample may be drawn.
Unemployment [3]	All those of working age who were not in employment, who carried out activities to seek employment during a specified recent period, and who were currently available to take up employment given a job opportunity.
Unemployment rate [3]	Number of unemployed persons expressed as a percentage of the total number of persons in the labour force. The labour force (formerly known as the economically active population) is the sum of the number of persons employed and the number of persons unemployed.
Urban area [1]	Area of human settlement with a high population density and infrastructure of built environment.
Urban population [1]	De facto population living in areas classified as urban according to the criteria used by each area or country. Data refer to 1 July of the year indicated and are presented in thousands.
Usual place of residence [1]	Country in which a person lives; that is, the country in which he or she has a place to live where he or she normally spends the daily period of rest. Temporary travel abroad for purposes of recreation, holiday, visits to friends or relatives, business, medical treatment or religious pilgrimage does not change a person's country of usual residence.
Working-age population [7]	Population above the legal working age. According to the International Labour Organization, to promote international comparability, the working-age population is often defined as all persons aged 15 and older, but this may vary from country to country based on national laws and practices

Indicator	Definition
Youth [8]	Persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years, without prejudice to other definitions by Member States. According to Vanuatu's Ministry of Youth Development, Sport and Training, persons of 12 to 30 years of age.

Sources:
[1] UNdata, Glossary (https://data.un.org/Glossary.aspx?q=).
[2] UN General Assembly, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Resolution / adopted by the General Assembly, 24 January 2007, A/RES/61/106, https://www.refworld.org/docid/45f973632.html [accessed 23 February 2023].
[3] ILOSTAT https://ilostat.ilo.org/resources/concepts-and-definitions/description-labour-force-statistics/
[4] Vanuatu censuses.
[5] Key Indicators of the Labour Market. Ninth edition. Geneva, International Labour Office, 2016. ISBN: 978-92-2-130121-9.
[6] Gender Equality: Glossary of Terms and Concepts, UNICEF, 2017.
[7] Minimum Age Convention, 1973, No. 138. https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C138
[8] National Youth Development Policy 2012–2022 and Strategic Plan of Action 2012–2015. Ministry of Youth Development, Sport and Training, 2012. http://vnyc.gov.vu/, https://extranet.who.int/mindbank/item/6356

1.6 Overview of the monograph

This monograph covers the following topics:

- Country overview and international comparisons
- General socio-demographic characteristics of young people
- Spatial distribution of Vanuatu's young people aged 12–30
- Characteristics of youth marital status
- Fertility indicators of Vanuatu's young women aged 15–30
- Youth educational characteristics
- Youth employment and labour force participation
- Youth disability
- Living arrangements of children and youth
- Access of youth to information and communication facilities
- Youth and religious affiliation
- Youth as the main component of the demographic dividend

CHAPTER 2. ANALYSIS OF 2020 NATIONAL POPULATION AND HOUSEHOLD CENSUS DATA

2.1 Country overview and international comparisons

This chapter provides a broad picture of Vanuatu's country profile, and the overall statistical characteristics of the population's socioeconomic data at the time of the 2020 census, with an emphasis on youth issues. The analysis uses data for the population living in private households. Calculated indicators used for deriving the findings refer to the population living in private households.

The Republic of Vanuatu is an archipelago nation of more than eighty islands in a 'Y' shaped chain (65 of them inhabited), spread across 612,300km^2 of the South Pacific Ocean.[7] Vanuatu's economy has outperformed those of most other Pacific Island countries over the past decade, with tourism, construction, and development partner-funded infrastructure projects emerging as key economic drivers.[8] Low inflation, macroeconomic stability, and prudent fiscal policies have helped Vanuatu to achieve relatively consistent GDP growth. In 2020, Vanuatu moved from the list of Least Developed Countries to the list of countries with Medium Human Development.

According to the 2020 Population and Household Census, the current population of **300,019**[7] inhabitants is predominantly rural, with around a quarter living in the urban areas of Port Vila and Luganville. In Vanuatu, the share of the urban population was 24% of the total.

Vanuatu is the seventh most populous state among Pacific Island countries, with a high population growth rate of almost 5% for two years, after Cook Islands, Tuvalu, Republic of Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia and Kingdom of Tonga (Table 13).

[7] Vanuatu 2020 National Population and Housing Census: Analytical Report - volume 2. R. Hakkert and S. Pontifex. Vanuatu Bureau of Statistics and Pacific Community, New Caledonia, 2022. ISBN: 978-982-00-1458-9. P. 1.

[8] United Nations Pacific Strategy 2018 – 2022 UNPS 2018 – 2022, United Nations in the Pacific, 2017. https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2019-12/UNDP_WS_FINAL_UNPS_2018-2022.pdf

Table 13: Populations of Pacific Island countries, 2020–2022.

Country	Total population (number)		Growth rate, 2022/ 2020, (%)	Absolute growth, 2022-2020, (people)	Net migration (people)	Median age, years	Urban population (%)
	2020	2022					
Australia	25,398,179	25,499,884	100.4	101,705	158,246	38	86
Papua New Guinea	8,934,500	8,947,024	100.1	12,524	-800	22	13
New Zealand	4,872,500	4,822,233	98.9	-50,267	14,881	38	87
Fiji	895,000	896,445	100.2	1,445	-6,202	28	59
Solomon Islands	712,100	686,884	96.5	-25,216	-1,600	20	23
Federated States of Micronesia	501,506	539,013	107.5	37,507	-2,957	27	68
Vanuatu	**292,798**	**307,145**	**104.9**	**14,347**	**120**	**21**	**24**
New Caledonia	273,000	285,498	104.6	12,498	502	34	72
French Polynesia	278,900	280,908	100.7	2,008	-1,000	34	64
Samoa	198,600	198,414	99.9	-186	-2,803	22	18
Guam	176,700	168,775	95.5	-7,925	-506	31	95
Kiribati	118,700	119,449	100.6	749	-800	23	57
Tonga	99,800	105,695	105.9	5,895	N.A.	22	24
Republic of the Marshall Islands	54,600	59,190	108.4	4,590	N.A.	N.A.	70
Northern Mariana Islands	56,600	57,559	101.7	959	N.A.	N.A.	88
American Samoa	56,800	55,191	97.2	-1,609	N.A.	N.A.	88
Palau	17,900	18,094	101.1	194	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Cook Islands	15,300	17,564	114.8	2,264	N.A.	N.A.	75
Tuvalu	10,600	11,792	111.2	1,192	N.A.	N.A.	62
Wallis & Futuna	11,400	11,239	98.6	-161	N.A.	N.A.	0
Nauru	11,700	10,824	92.5	-876	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Niue	1,600	1,626	101.6	26	N.A.	N.A.	46
Tokelau	1,500	1,357	90.5	-143	N.A.	N.A.	0

Source: Compiled and recalculated by the authors on the basis of Worldometer, UNFPA, and World Bank. https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=Z4&view=map

Annual urban growth rate is relatively high (3.5%). The total urban population has doubled in the last two decades – an indication of continuing rural-urban migration.

Typical of the region, Vanuatu has a young population, with about 55% below age 25. There has been a considerable improvement in health indicators over recent decades, with declining mortality and increasing access to essential services.[9]

Vanuatu is also one of the youngest countries – the median age of the population in 2022 was 21 years. Among Pacific countries, only Solomon Islands has a younger median age.

Net migration amounted to 120 people, which is quite a positive indicator compared to other Pacific Island countries. Only three other Pacific countries had positive net migration: Australia, New Zealand and New Caledonia. All other countries had negative net migration, meaning that more people left than entered.

[9] Health and climate change: country profile 2020: Vanuatu. WHO/HEP/ECH/CCH/20.01.03. World Health Organization and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 2020.

Compared to Pacific countries, Vanuatu has a median level of life expectancy at birth of 72 years. In other countries, it ranges from 83 years in Australia to 60 years in Nauru. Vanuatu's median level of life expectancy is due to the low life expectancy at birth for men, whose mortality rate rises significantly after the age of 30 (Table 14).

The crude birth rate in Vanuatu is high at 32‰. Among Pacific countries, only Solomon Islands (33‰) and New Zealand (39‰) had a higher rate.

The crude death rate of 6‰ in Vanuatu was one of the lowest. Among Pacific countries, this indicator ranged from 11‰ in Papua New Guinea to 4‰ in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI).

The total fertility rate in Vanuatu was one of the highest at 4.2‰. Only Solomon Islands (4.4‰) had a higher rate. In other Pacific countries, this indicator ranged from 1.6‰ in Australia to 4‰ in Papua New Guinea. Vanuatu also had one of the highest teenage fertility rates of 45‰ in 2020, i.e. 45 births per 1,000 females aged 15 to 19 years. In other Pacific countries, the rate varied from 8.1‰ in Australia to 74‰ in Nauru.

The infant mortality rate in Vanuatu was 28‰, which means 28 infant deaths for every 1,000 live births. In other Pacific countries, this indicator ranges from 2‰ in Australia to 41‰ in Kiribati.

Table 14: Vital statistics of Pacific countries, 2020.

Country	Life expectancy at birth	Crude birth rate (‰)	Crude death rate (‰)	Total fertility rate (‰)	Teenage fertility rate (‰, 15–19)	Infant mortality rate (‰)
Australia	83.3	27.8	4.9	1.6	8.1	1.81
Papua New Guinea	65.7	29.0	10.6	4.2	56.4	33.0
New Zealand	82.1	38.79	4.42	1.9	12.9	3.62
Fiji	71.0	22.8	7.9	2.9	27.1	12.5
Solomon Islands	70.5	32.6	5.5	4.4	60.7	19.0
Federated States of Micronesia	70.7	25.3	5.3	3.5	36.1	29.0
Vanuatu	**71.6**	**32.5**	**5.5**	**4.2**	**45.0**	**28.0**
New Caledonia	78.1	14.5	5.5	2.0	21.9	6.4
French Polynesia	76.2	13.9	5.7	1.8	33.4	7.6
Samoa	75.3	24.7	4.4	3.8	44.2	14.3
Guam	76.8	19.3	6.4	2.8	35.4	8.2
Kiribati	62.3	26.9	6.9	3.3	41.2	41.0
Tonga	71.5	28.1	6.7	4.1	19.1	17.0
Republic of the Marshall Islands	71.9	20.0	6.0	2.7	60.3	23.0
Northern Mariana Islands	76.1	20.0	4.3	2.5	33.9	8.1
American Samoa	75.5	16.8	4.7	2.7	30.2	4.9
Palau	73.4	14.0	7.8	2.2	42.8	11.7
Cook Islands	76.6	13.2	6.1	2.7	44.7	8.9
Tuvalu	65.7	22.5	9.8	3.4	33.6	23.0
Wallis and Futuna Islands	76.2	14.2	5.7	2.1	12.8	4.6
Nauru	59.8	30.9	8.6	3.9	74.1	25.4
Niue	73.9	17.2	6.4	2.7	17.1	0.0
Tokelau	69.3	19.4	9.0	3.8	51.9	n.a.

Source: Compiled and recalculated by authors on the basis of Worldometer, UNFPA, and World Bank. https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/life-expectancy-death/deaths-in-australia/contents/life-expectancy; https://knoema.com/atlas/Australia/topics/Demographics/Fertility/Crude-birth-rate; https://figure.nz/chart/wYHyiilvB9uCUP8O; https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/NZL/new-zealand/infant-mortality-rate; https://population.un.org/wpp/Download/Standard/Fertility/

2.2 General socio-demographic characteristics of young people aged 12-30 in Vanuatu

The 2020 National Population and Household Census, which was carried out by the Vanuatu National Statistics Office under the methodological supervision of UNFPA, provides a precise and geographically detailed account of population characteristics. More than just a head count, the data collected provides a snapshot of how many people are living in the country by age, sex and geographic location and, importantly, how they are living, as well as other key socioeconomic characteristics.

This makes the census a rich source for analysis, providing key inputs for policy, administration and research, and resource allocation. This report draws on the information collected in the census to present a picture of the younger generation, enabling assessment of how well youth are transitioning to adulthood in ways that will contribute to the country's social and economic development. It therefore provides a useful resource on Vanuatu youth.

It is hoped that the analysis and data presented in this report will be used by government officials and decision-makers in Vanuatu to design youth-sensitive policies and programs, allocate appropriate resources, and monitor the effectiveness of interventions.

This report is intended for a broad audience, including people with limited statistical expertise, and presents key findings with clear explanations to help readers interpret the data and its limitations. Population figures are based on the de facto definition of population, which counts all residents regardless of legal status or citizenship.[10]

2.2.1 Distribution of youth by region of habitation

Table 3 shows the distribution of Vanuatu's youth population (aged 12–30) by sex and region of habitation.

Two age groups are defined as youth (Table 15):

1. Persons aged 12 to 30 years, as defined by Vanuatu's National Youth Policy.[11]
2. Persons aged 15–24 years of age, as defined by the UN and regional agencies[12] such as the Pacific Community (SPC) to make comparisons between countries.

In Vanuatu, the official youth age group of 12–30 years comprises 98,176 people, which is 33.5% of Vanuatu's total population living in private households (292,798 persons) as recorded in the 2020 census. As Table 15 shows, there are 548 (or 1%) more males aged 12–30 years than females.

[10] https://databank.worldbank.org/metadataglossary/gender-statistics/series/SP.POP.TOTL

[11] National Youth Development Policy 2012–2022 and Strategic Plan of Action 2012–2015. Ministry of Youth Development, Sport and Training, 2012. http://vnyc.gov.vu/, https://extranet.who.int/mindbank/item/6356

[12] Definition of youth. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2013. https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/youth/fact-sheets/youth-definition.pdf

Table 15: Distribution of Vanuatu's youth population aged 12–30, by sex and region of habitation, 2020 census ('000s).

Region	Age/Sex										Total population aged 12-30		Total population, both sexes, all ages
	12-14		15-19		20-24		25-29		30				
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Total	**9,679**	**8,900**	**13,693**	**12,976**	**12,368**	**12,692**	**11568**	**12,003**	**2,054**	**2,243**	**49,362**	**48,814**	**292,798**
Urban	1,860	1,685	3,010	3,004	3,300	3,383	3,324	3,187	528	602	12,022	11,861	66,248
Sanma	548	489	860	853	837	798	874	791	125	134	3,244	3,065	17,532
Shefa	1,312	1,196	2,150	2,151	2,463	2,585	2,450	2,396	403	468	8,778	87,96	48,716
Rural	7,819	7,215	10,683	9,972	9,068	9,309	8,244	8,816	1,526	1,641	37,340	36,953	226,550
Malampa	1,417	1,267	1,795	1,563	1,470	1,394	1,355	1,414	242	290	6,279	5,928	40,428
Penama	1,177	1,118	1,733	1,658	1,265	1,252	1,163	1,185	221	213	5,559	5,426	34,030
Sanma	1,475	1,263	1,995	1,800	1,871	1,924	1,653	1,786	291	316	7,285	7,089	42,141
Shefa	1,676	1,607	2,462	2,416	2,353	2,331	2161	2,350	407	445	9,059	9,149	54,990
Tafea	1,680	1,557	2,189	2,065	1,703	1,959	1,480	1,634	271	297	7,323	7,512	43,786
Torba	394	403	509	470	406	449	432	447	94	80	1,835	1,849	11,175

Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

It is interesting to compare the analysis of the results of Vanuatu's 2020 Population Census with the corresponding data from the 2009 census (Table 16). Compared to 2009, the share of young people aged 12–30 years in the total population increased by 17% (an 18% increase in the number of males, and 16% for females). A sharp increase was observed in two age groups: 25–29, and 30 years old. In the 25–29 age group, growth was 28%, and females (29%) exceeded males (26%). In the 30 age group, growth was 27.5%, and males (31%) exceeded females (27%). In other age groups, the number of young people increased by 9% to 18% compared to 2009.

Table 16: Vanuatu youth by age group and sex, 2009 and 2020 censuses (%).

Age group	2009			2020			Growth rate, 2020/2009 (%)		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
12-14	10.2	9.4	19.6	9.9	9.1	18.9	113.5	113.1	113.3
15-19	14.4	14.2	28.6	13.9	13.2	27.2	113.9	109.5	111.7
20-24	12.5	13.3	25.8	12.6	12.9	25.5	118.8	114.1	116.3
25-29	10.9	11.1	22.0	11.8	12.2	24.0	126.8	129.2	128.0
30	1.9	2.1	4.0	2.1	2.3	4.4	131.3	127.0	127.5
Total	49.8	50.1	100.0	50.3	49.7	100.0	118.5	116.5	117.4
Total (Persons)	**41,655**	**41,906**	**83,601**	**49,362**	**48,814**	**98,176**	-	-	-

Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

The more rapid growth of the number of youth in the older age groups (24–29 and 30 years) resulted in a significant increase in the average age of youth for 1.3% of the total population aged 12–30 (1.4% of females and 1.2% of males aged 12–30) (Table 16).

2.2.2 Average age of youth

The average age of Vanuatu youth increased by 0.3 years in 2020 (20.5 in 2020, against 20.2 in 2009). The median age of the population, which divides the younger and older halves of the population, increased by 0.5 years (21 in 2020 against 20.5 in 2009).

An increasing average and median age signifies population ageing due to declining fertility rates and/or rising life expectancy. Most countries have rising life expectancy and an ageing population. These trends first emerged in developed countries but are now seen in all developing countries.[13]

The world median age in 2020 was 29.7 years.[14] The country with the youngest population was Niger, with a median age of 14 years, and the oldest was Monaco, with a median age of 54 years. In the region of Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand), the median age was 22 years in 2020. The youngest population was in Solomon Islands, with a median age of 19 years.

Table 17: Average age of the youth population aged 12–30 by sex, as a percentage of the total number of youth.

Age groups	2009			2020		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
12-14	20.5	18.8	19.6	19.6	18.2	18.9
15-19	28.9	28.3	28.6	27.7	26.6	27.2
20-24	25.0	26.5	25.8	25.1	26.0	25.5
25-29	21.9	22.2	22.0	23.4	24.6	24.0
30	3.8	4.2	4.0	4.2	4.6	4.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Average age of youth 12-30	**20.1**	**20.3**	**20.2**	**20.4**	**20.6**	**20.5**
Growth rate 2020/2009 (%)	**X**	**X**	**X**	**101.2**	**101.4**	**101.3**

Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

Between 2021 and 2050, all regions are expected to experience a rise in the median age from 30 years in 2021 to 36 years in 2050.[15] The region of Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand) is projected to experience an increase in the median age from 22 years in 2021 to 29 years in 2050.[16] Over the same period, in Vanuatu the median age is projected to increase to 25 years. Between now and 2050, 16 countries are expected to reach a median age of 50 years or higher.[17]

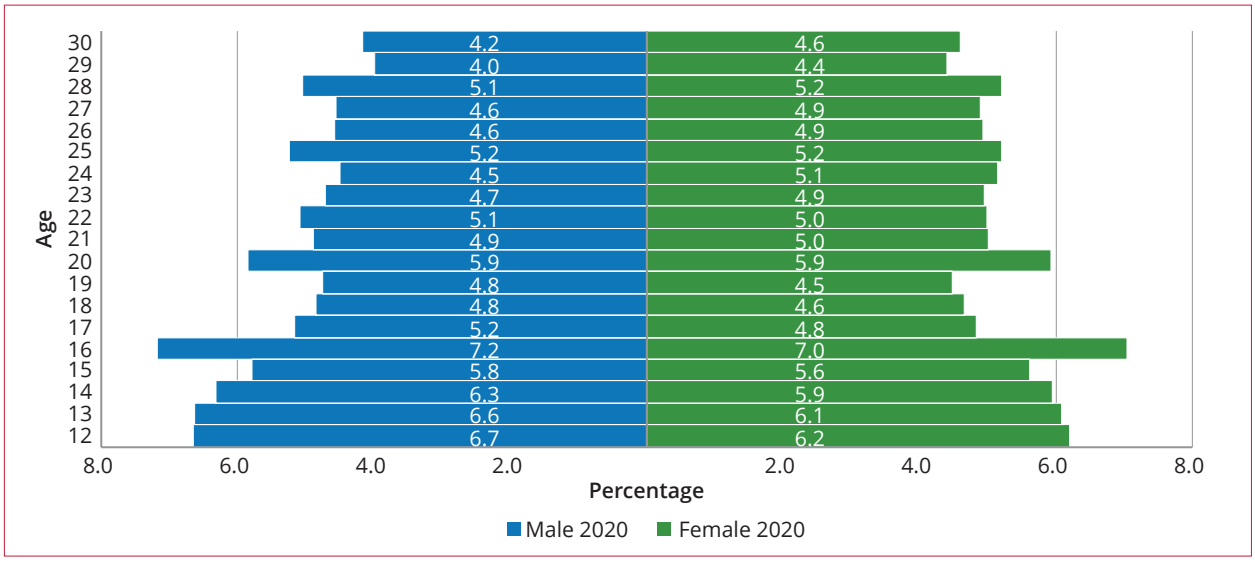
The dynamics of the values of the average and median age of Vanuatu's youth between two consecutive censuses (in 2009 and 2020) is reflected in changes to the age structure of the country's population.

2.2.3 Age-sex structure of youth population

Figure 15 displays the distribution of Vanuatu's young population (population pyramid), by age and sex, in 2020 (total of 100% for each sex). There is a local maximum (thickness of the pyramid) for age 16 for both sexes. In the 12–19 age groups, males slightly outnumbered females, while in the 20–30 age group, females slightly outnumbered males.

[13] World Social Report 2023: Leaving no one behind in an ageing world. United Nations, 2023. ISBN 978-92-1-130458-9. Pp 22-23.
[14] The 2022 revision of world population prospects. An online database (data portal) https://population.un.org/dataportal/data/indicators/67/locations/909,1835/start/2020/end/2030/table/pivotbylocation
[15] World Social Report 2023: Leaving no-one behind in an ageing world. United Nations, 2023. ISBN 978-92-1-130458-9. p 24.
[16] The 2022 revision of world population prospects. An online database (data portal) https://population.un.org/dataportal/data/indicators/67/locations/1835/start/2020/end/2050/table/pivotbyvariant
[17] World Social Report 2023: Leaving no-one behind in an ageing world. United Nations, 2023. ISBN 978-92-1-130458-9. p 23.

Figure 15: Population pyramid for 12–30 age groups, by age and sex, 2020 census.

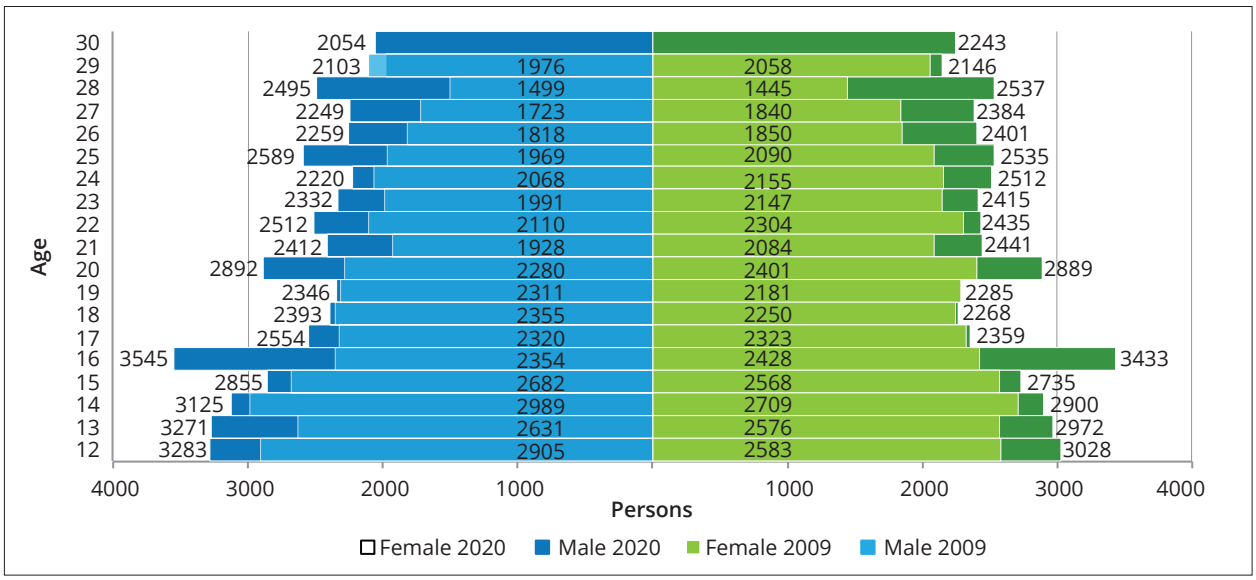


Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

The same changes in sex-age structure were also observed in 2009 (Fig. 16). This situation occurred as a result of sex differences in the crude death rate: the crude death rate for males was 5.2 per 1,000 male adults in 2020, and 4.5 per 1,000 female adults.[18] Life expectancy at birth in 2020 was 71.6 years for males, and 74.2 years for females.[19] The other reason could be migration overseas for study or work.

Figure 16 and Table 18 indicate changes in the age structure by sex in 2020 compared to 2009. The age structures for males and females were quite similar with the highest share of young people in the 16–20 age group (Fig. 16).

Figure 16: Population pyramid by 12–30 years of age, 2009 and 2020.



Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

As Figure 16 shows, the highest growth rate was in the number of youth aged 28, which increased by 71% in 2020 compared to 2009. The total number of youth aged 16 increased by 46% and the number of youth aged 27 by 30%.

[18] Vanuatu 2020 National Population and Housing Census: Analytical report - Volume 2. R. Hakkert and S. Pontifex. Vanuatu Bureau of Statistics and Pacific Community, New Caledonia, 2022. ISBN: 978-982-00-1458-9. p. 31.

[19] Vanuatu 2020 National Population and Housing Census: Analytical report - Volume 2. R. Hakkert and S. Pontifex. Vanuatu Bureau of Statistics and Pacific Community, New Caledonia, 2022. ISBN: 978-982-00-1458-9. p. 29.

Table 18: Distribution and growth rate of youth population aged 12–30, by single age and sex, 2009 and 2020 censuses (%).

Age	2009			2020			Growth rate, 2020/2009 (%)		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
12	6.98	6.17	6.57	6.65	6.20	6.43	113.01	117.23	115.00
13	6.32	6.15	6.24	6.63	6.09	6.36	124.33	115.37	119.90
14	7.19	6.47	6.82	6.33	5.94	6.14	104.55	107.05	105.74
15	6.45	6.13	6.29	5.78	5.60	5.69	106.45	106.50	106.48
16	5.66	5.80	5.73	7.18	7.03	7.11	150.59	141.39	145.92
17	5.58	5.55	5.56	5.17	4.83	5.00	110.09	101.55	105.82
18	5.66	5.37	5.51	4.85	4.65	4.75	101.61	100.80	101.22
19	5.56	5.46	5.50	4.75	4.47	4.61	101.51	95.45	98.50
20	5.48	5.74	5.61	5.86	5.92	5.89	126.84	120.32	123.50
21	4.63	4.98	4.80	4.89	5.00	4.94	125.10	117.13	120.96
22	5.07	5.50	5.29	5.09	4.99	5.04	119.05	105.69	112.08
23	4.79	5.13	4.96	4.72	4.95	4.84	117.13	112.48	114.72
24	4.97	5.15	5.06	4.50	5.15	4.82	107.35	116.57	112.05
25	4.73	4.99	4.86	5.24	5.19	5.22	131.49	121.29	126.24
26	4.37	4.42	4.39	4.58	4.92	4.75	124.26	129.78	127.04
27	4.14	4.40	4.27	4.56	4.88	4.72	130.53	129.57	130.03
28	3.60	3.45	3.53	5.05	5.20	5.13	166.44	175.57	170.92
29	5.06	4.92	4.98	4.00	4.40	4.20	93.96	104.28	99.06
30	3.76	4.22	4.04	4.16	4.59	4.38	131.33	127.01	127.51
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	118.66	116.61	117.57

Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

2.2.4 Sex ratio of young population

Of particular scientific and practical interest is the ratio between the number of men and women in the country's population as a whole, and in individual age groups including youth, i.e. 12–30.

For this purpose, a specific indicator called the **sex ratio** is calculated. The sex ratio can be reported in any of four ways: the ratio of males to females, the ratio of females to males, the proportion of males, or the proportion of females. Here, this indicator is calculated as the **average number of males per 100 females.** Usually, the sex ratio is close to 1:1. For humans, the natural ratio at birth between males and females is slightly biased towards the male sex: it is estimated to be about 105 or 106 males per 100 females.[20]

The sex ratio for the entire world population is approximately 101 males to 100 females.[21]

According to Table 19, the sex ratio for Vanuatu's total population of young people (aged 12-30) is 101.1.

[20] The 2022 revision of world population prospects. An online database (data portal) https://population.un.org/dataportal/data/indicators/72,58/locations/900/start/2019/end/2021/table/pivotbylocation

[21] The 2022 revision of world population prospects. An online database (data portal) https://population.un.org/dataportal/data/indicators/72,58/locations/900/start/2019/end/2021/table/pivotbylocation

Table 19: Distribution of youth population aged 12–30 by single age and sex (%).

Single age	Male	Female	Total	Sex ratio (average number of males per 100 females)
12	6.7	6.2	6.4	108.4
13	6.6	6.1	6.4	110.1
14	6.3	5.9	6.1	107.8
15	5.8	5.6	5.7	104.4
16	7.2	7.0	7.1	103.3
17	5.2	4.8	5.0	108.3
18	4.8	4.6	4.7	105.5
19	4.8	4.5	4.6	107.6
20	5.9	5.9	5.9	100.1
21	4.9	5.0	4.9	98.8
22	5.1	5.0	5.0	103.2
23	4.7	4.9	4.8	96.6
24	4.5	5.1	4.8	88.4
25	5.2	5.2	5.2	102.1
26	4.6	4.9	4.7	94.1
27	4.6	4.9	4.7	94.3
28	5.1	5.2	5.1	98.3
29	4.0	4.4	4.2	92.1
30	4.2	4.6	4.4	91.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	101.1

Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

In all age groups from 12 to 20 years, males outnumbered females by 3% to 8%. However, starting from age 21, the number of women in each age group began to exceed the number of men. This is a consequence of the over-mortality of men in these age groups and the higher life expectancy at birth for females. This situation corresponds to world trends of a gender spiral: more boys and men in younger age groups and more women in older age groups.[22]

2.3 Summary

Vanuatu's Ministry of Youth Development, Sport and Training defines youth as persons aged 12 to 30 years.[23] According to the 2020 census, there were 98,176 persons in the youth age group: 49,362 male youth (50.3%) and 48,814 female youth (49.7%). They made up 33.5% of Vanuatu's total population.

The sex ratio for the total population of young people (12–30) was 101.1 males per 100 females.

The average age of Vanuatu youth increased by 0.3 years in 2020 compared to 2009. The median population age increased by 0.5 years in 2020 compared to 2009.[24]

[22] The World's Women 2020: Trends and statistics. Executive summary. https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic-social/products/worldswomen/

[23] National Youth Development Policy 2012–2022 and Strategic Plan of Action 2012–2015. Ministry of Youth Development, Sport and Training, 2012. http://vnyc.gov.vu/, https://extranet.who.int/mindbank/item/6356

[24] Vanuatu 2020 National Population and Housing Census: Analytical report - Volume 2. R. Hakkert and S. Pontifex. Vanuatu Bureau of Statistics and Pacific Community, New Caledonia, 2022. ISBN: 978-982-00-1458-9. p. 1.

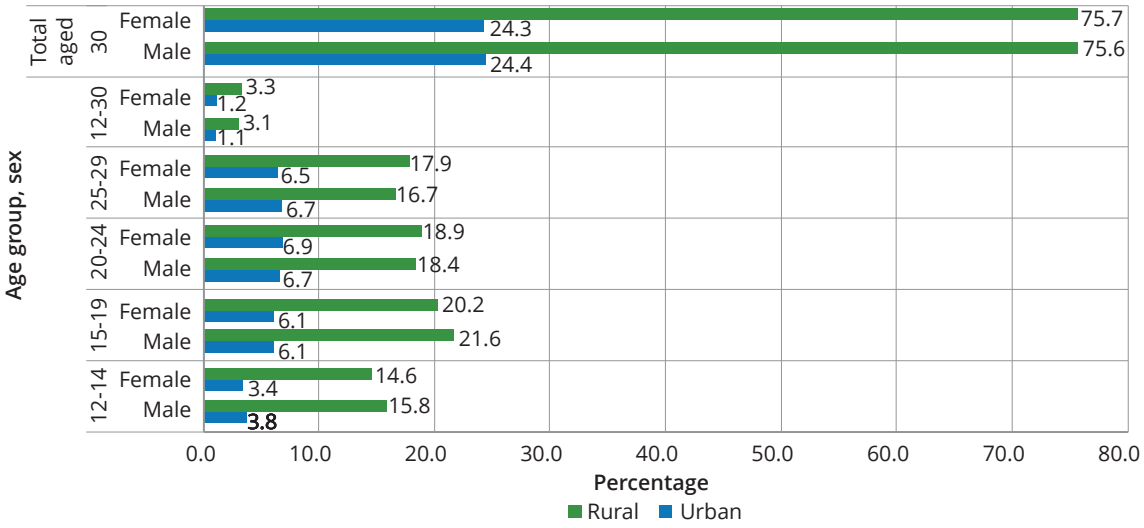
CHAPTER 3. SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION OF VANUATU'S YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 12–30

This chapter analyzes the spatial distribution of Vanuatu's youth.

Vanuatu has six provinces: Torba, Sanma, Penama, Malampa, Shefa and Tafea. Two provinces have urban areas: the capital, Port Vila, is in Shefa, and Luganville is in Sanma.

In terms of area of residence, there were sharp differences in the distribution of youth of both sexes between urban and rural settlements. In 2020, almost 76% of youth lived in rural areas, and only 24% lived in urban areas (Fig. 17 and Table 20). Most urban youth lived in Shefa (74% of females who lived in an urban area, and 73% of males). In Sanma, 25.8% of females lived in an urban area, and 27% of males.

Figure 17: **Distribution of youth population, by age, sex and area of residence (%).**



Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

Table 20: Spatial distribution of youth population aged 12–30 years, by place of residence and by sex, 2020 census (%).

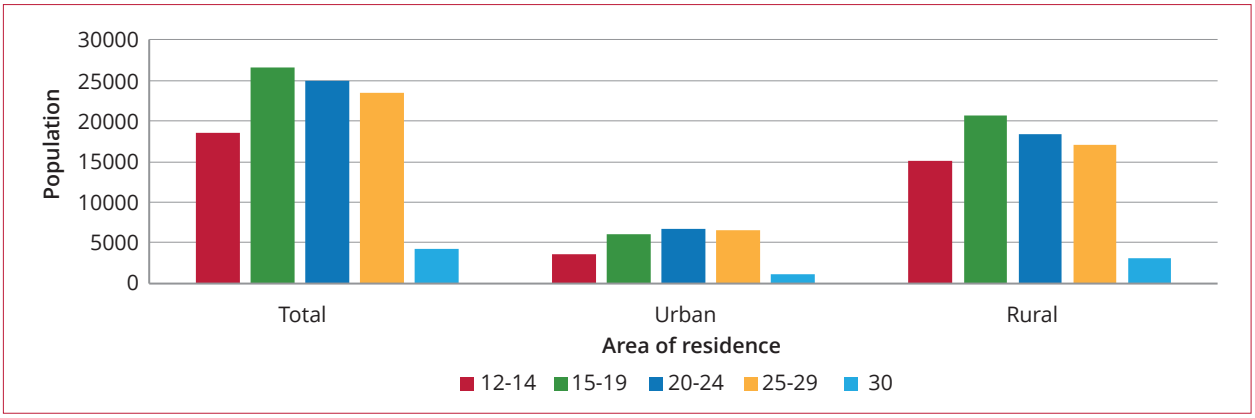
Distribution	By urban and rural			Detailed by rural areas of provinces					
Population	Vanuatu	Urban	Rural	Torba	Sanma	Penama	Malampa	Shefa	Tafea
Total (%)	**100**	**24**	**76**	**5**	**19**	**15**	**17**	**24**	**20**
12-14	19	19	81	5	18	15	19	21	21
15-19	28	21	79	5	18	17	18	23	21
20-24	25	26	74	4	20	14	16	25	20
25-29	24	28	72	5	20	14	16	27	18
30	4	26	74	5	19	14	17	26	18
Males (%)	**50**	**24**	**76**	**5**	**19**	**15**	**17**	**24**	**20**
12-14	10	19	81	5	19	15	19	21	22
15-19	14	21	79	5	18	17	18	22	20
20-24	12	26	74	4	20	14	17	26	19
25-29	11	29	71	5	20	14	16	27	18
30	2	26	74	6	19	15	16	26	18
Females (%)	**50**	**24**	**76**	**5**	**19**	**15**	**17**	**24**	**20**
12- 14	9	18	82	5	18	16	18	22	21
15-19	100	22	78	4	17	17	17	23	21
20-24	100	27	73	5	20	14	16	25	21
25-29	100	27	73	5	20	14	16	26	19
30	100	27	73	5	19	14	17	26	18

Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

3.1 Spatial distribution of youth by place of residence

Figure 18 shows the spatial distribution of youth aged 12–30 years by place of residence (urban and rural) for 2020. The distribution of the same population age group by sex are quite similar. The main feature is the substantial difference between the overall youth population in urban and rural areas.

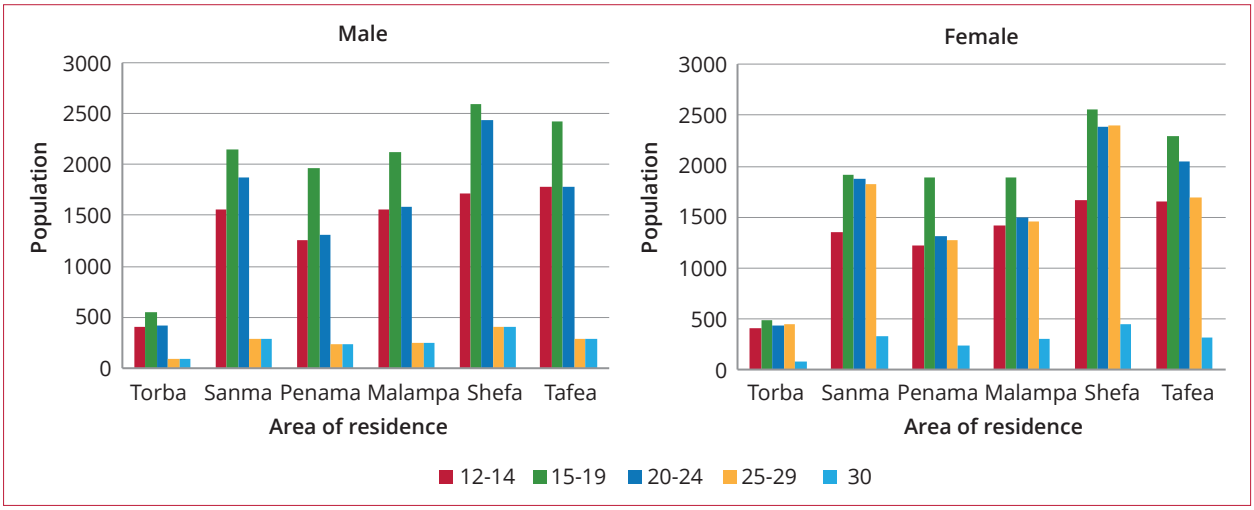
Figure 18: Breakdown of the total youth population aged 12–30 years by place of residence (urban and rural), 2020.



Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

The highest percentages of the population (for both men and women) were present in Shefa (connected to the capital, Port Vila) and Sanma (connected to the city of Luganville). The spatial distribution for men and women was similar.

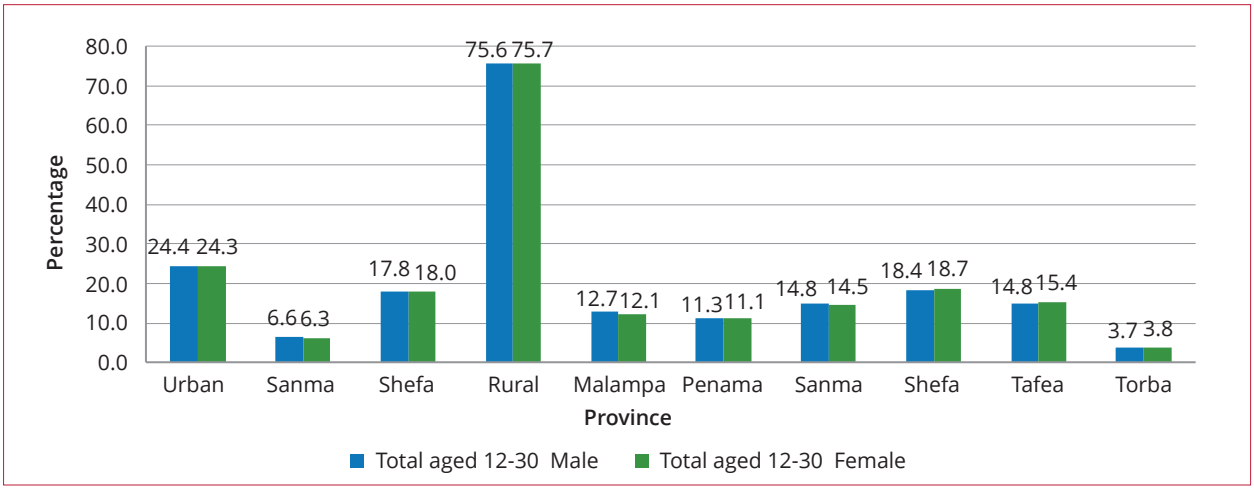
Figure 19: Spatial distribution of the female and male youth population aged 12–30 years by place of residence, 2020.



Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

In rural areas, the prevailing share of young people were in provinces such as Shefa (25% of youth aged 12–30 who lived in a rural area), Tafea (20%) and Sanma (19%). Shefa was the location for 24.8% of young females who lived in a rural area, and 24.3% of males. In Tafea, the share of young females who lived in rural areas slightly exceeded the share of males: 20.3% and 19.6%, respectively. In Sanma, the share of male and female youth who lived in a rural area were almost the same – 19.5% and 19.2%, respectively. The smallest number of youth aged 12–30 years lived in Torba, with 5% of females who lived in a rural area, and 4.9% of males. For three provinces – Shefa, Tafea and Torba – the number of females aged 12–30 years exceeded the number of males of the same age (Fig. 20). This tendency corresponds to the distribution of the total population by area of residence, with more young people living in more populated provinces.

Figure 20: Distribution of youth population by sex, area of residence and province, 2020 (%).

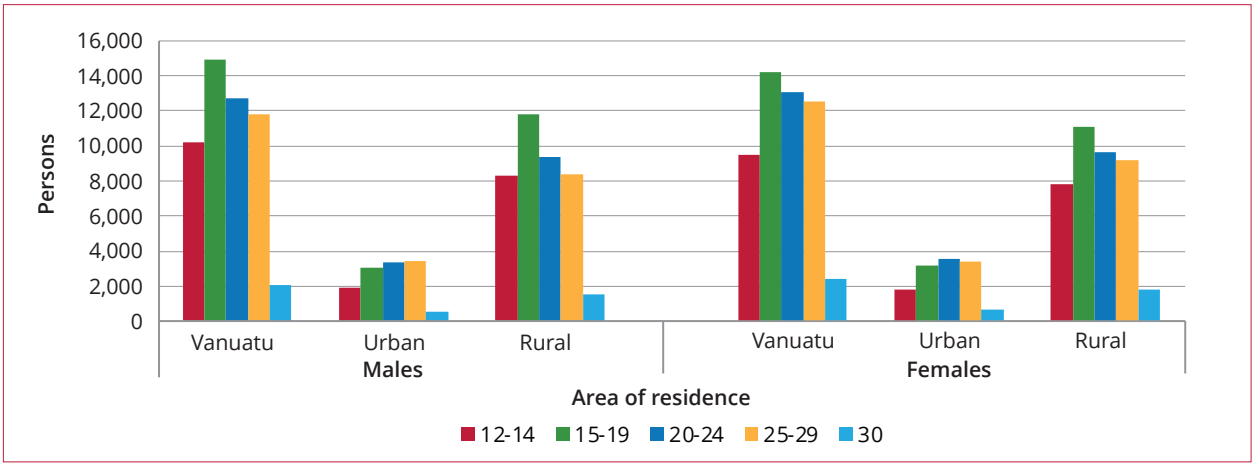


Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

3.2 Spatial distribution of youth by sex

Figure 21 shows the spatial distribution of the male and female youth population aged 12–30 years by place of residence and sex, in 2020. Distributions of the same population age group by sex were quite similar. The main feature was the large difference between the male and female population in urban and rural areas.

Figure 21: Spatial distribution of the male (graph 1) and female (graph 2) youth population aged 12–30 years by place of residence in urban and rural areas, 2020 (number of persons).



Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

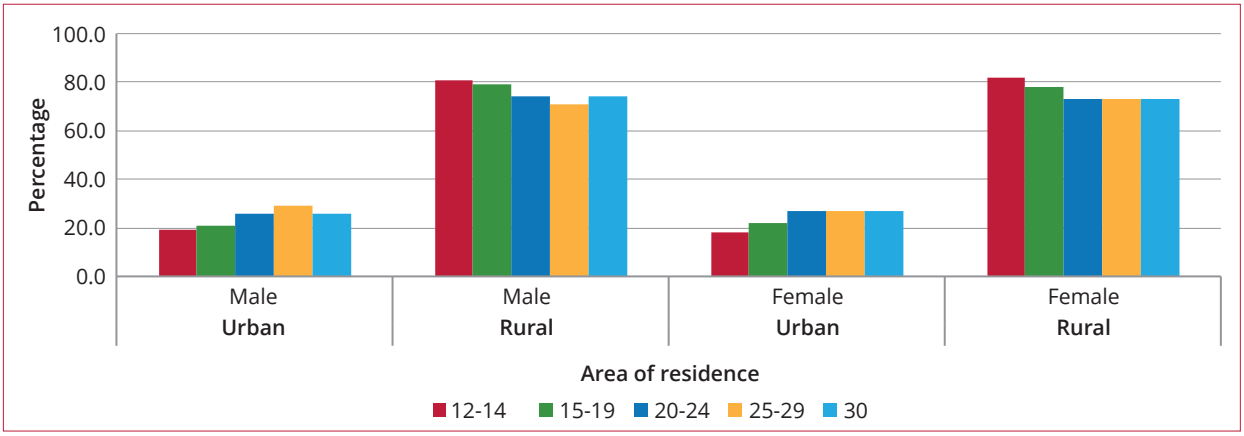
Of particular interest are the results of the analysis of the spatial breakdown of youth by age group, sex and area of residence (Table 21 and Fig. 22).

Table 21: Spatial distribution of the male youth population aged 12–30 years compared to the female youth population aged 12–30 years, by age group (%).

Region	Vanuatu		Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
Age group	Male	Female	Male	Male	Female	Female
12-14	100.0	100.0	19.0	81.0	18.0	82.0
15-19	100.0	100.0	21.0	79.0	22.0	78.0
20-24	100.0	100.0	26.0	74.0	27.0	73.0
25-29	100.0	100.0	29.0	71.0	27.0	73.0
30	100.0	100.0	26.0	74.0	27.0	73.0

Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

Figure 22: Spatial distribution of the male youth population aged 12–30 years compared to the female youth population aged 12–30 years, by age group (%).



Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

The spatial distribution of the values of the male to female ratio were 1.021 for the total youth population, 1.014 for urban areas, and 1.024 for rural areas. This was comparable to the distribution of values reported for Samoa:[25] total 1.04, urban areas 1.00, and rural areas 1.05. This indicates that the causes of non-uniform distribution by sex across rural/urban areas are similar.

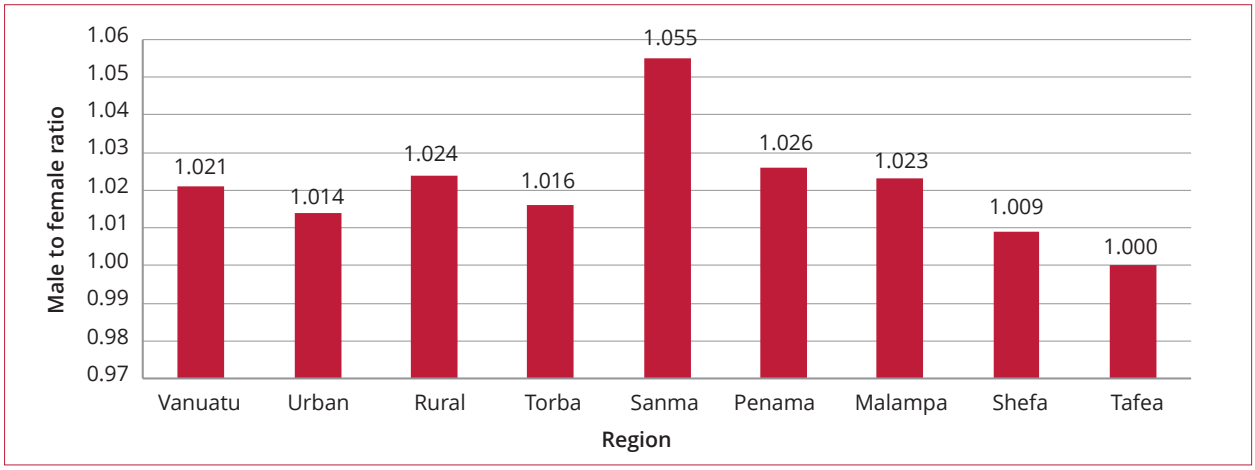
Table 22: Significance of male-to-female ratio, by area of residence, 2020 census.

Region	Vanuatu	Urban	Rural	Torba	Sanma	Penama	Malampa	Shefa	Tafea
Ratio	1.021	1.014	1.024	1.016	1.055	1.026	1.023	1.009	1.000

Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

Figure 23 shows the spatial distribution of the male to female ratio. The maximum value of the male to female ratio was in Sanma, where Luganville is located. The concentration of the male population in Sanma can be attributed to the migration of males to a region close to the city of Luganville, where there are attractive opportunities for employment.

Figure 23: Significance of the male-to-female ratio, by area of residence, 2020 census.



Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

3.3 Place of birth and place of residence

To understand macroeconomic and social processes in society, it is also important to have information about citizens' place of birth and their current place of residence.[26]

Country of birth is the country in which a person was born. An individual's nationality may change, but their country of birth does not change. This means that country of birth gives a more robust estimate of change and migration over time. Table 23 provides information on the distribution of Vanuatu's youth by place of birth and sex.

Table 23: Distribution of youth aged 12–30 years by place of birth and sex (%).

Place of birth	Male	Female	Total
Same place	78.2	75.5	76.9
Different place in Vanuatu	16.1	19.1	17.6
Total in Vanuatu	**94.3**	**94.6**	**94.5**
Overseas	0.6	0.7	0.6
NA	5.0	4.7	4.9
Not stated	0.02	0.02	0.02
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

[25] https://www.sbs.gov.ws/documents/census/2021/Census_2021_Final_Report.pdf?_t=1670528927

[26] Rogers A. and Belanger A. 1990. The importance of place of birth in migration and population redistribution analysis. Environment and Planning A, vol. 22(2), pages 193-210.

The majority of young people were born in Vanuatu: about 94% of the total number of youth (50.2% of males and 49.8% of females) (Tables 23 and 24). About 77% of all youth live in the same place they were born in (51% males, 49% females).

Almost 18% of all youth reside in a different place in Vanuatu than the one they were born in (females 54%, males 46%).

Less than 1% of youth were born overseas (0.64%; 48% males and 52% females).

Table 24: Distribution of youth aged 12–30 years by sex, and place of birth (number of persons).

Place of birth	Number of youth aged 12-30 years			Proportion of youth by place of birth		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Same place	38,620	36,855	75,475	51.2	48.8	100.0
Different place in Vanuatu	7,950	9,318	17,268	46.0	54.0	100.0
Total in Vanuatu	**46,570**	**46,173**	**92,743**	**50.2**	**49.8**	**100.0**
Overseas	304	323	627	48.5	51.5	100.0
NA	2479	2,307	4,786	51.8	48.2	100.0
Not stated	9	11	20	45.0	55.0	100.0
Total	**49,362**	**48,814**	**98,176**	**50.3**	**49.7**	**100.0**

Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

3.4 Summary

The distribution of youth showed sharp differences between urban and rural settlement. Almost 76% of youth live in rural areas, and only 24% live in urban areas. A larger population of young people live in more populated provinces, corresponding to the distribution of the total population by area of residence.

The majority of young people were born in Vanuatu: about 94% of all youth (50.2% of males, 49.8% of females). About three out of four young persons aged 12–30 live in the same place they were born in (51% of males, 49% of females).

CHAPTER 4. CHARACTERISTICS OF YOUTH MARITAL STATUS

In the 2020 Population Census, special attention was devoted to the marital status of Vanuatu's population, including youth aged 12–30. It is necessary to emphasize that marital status is influenced by many factors, such as social and economic situation, customs and habits, religious beliefs, profession, and educational and cultural levels.[27] An analysis of marital status is relevant to studies of fertility rates and population projections.[28]

The analysis covered detailed information on marital status – married, divorced, single, or widowed. The results showed that more young men were single than young women, and more young women were widowed. More women aged 12–30 were divorced than men in the same age group.

4.1 Marital status of youth by sex and age

Table 34 presents data for youth aged 12–30 years by marital status and sex. About one-third of youth aged 12–30 were living with a partner (34% of all young people), either in a legal marriage (14% of all young people) or in a de facto relationship (20% of all young people). The proportion of females living in formal or informal relationships was 16% higher than for males: 42% of women aged 12–30 lived in formal or informal marriages compared to 26% of men of the same age.

De facto relationships (20% of youth aged 12–30) dominated legal ones (15% of youth aged 12–30). A comparison with the total population of Vanuatu showed that almost 47% of persons aged 15 years and older were legally married and 20% were living in a de facto relationship.[29] As Table 25 shows, almost 24% of young women aged 12–30 lived with a de facto partner, while 18% of women were legally married. For males aged 12–30, 15% lived with a de facto partner and 11% were legally married.

Regarding the total population aged 15 years and older, 49% of females and 46% of males were legally married, and 21.7% of females and 18.9% of males were living in a de facto relationship. The higher proportion of females in de facto relationships and legal marriages shows that females entered relationships earlier than males, and that they likely had older partners.

Table 25: Youth aged 12–30 years by marital status and sex (number of persons).

Marital status	Sex, persons		Total	Proportion of total youth by sex (%)		
	Female	Male		Female	Male	Total
De facto	11,663	7,608	**19,271**	23.9	15.4	19.6
Legally married	8,946	5,324	**14,270**	18.3	10.8	14.5
Never married (Single)	16,633	24,335	**40,968**	34.1	49.3	41.7
Divorced	79	33	**112**	0.2	0.1	0.1
Separated	452	130	**582**	0.9	0.3	0.6
Widowed	199	28	**227**	0.4	0.1	0.2
NA	10,826	11,853	**22,679**	22.2	24.0	23.1
Not stated	16	51	**67**	0.0	0.1	0.1
Total	**48,814**	**49,362**	**98,176**	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

[27] Wodon Q., C. Male, A. Nayihouba, A. Onagoruwa, A. Savadogo, A. Yedan, J. Edmeades, A. Kes, N. John, L. Murithi, M. Steinhaus and S. Petroni (2017). Economic impacts of child marriage: Global Synthesis Report, Washington, DC: The World Bank and International Center for Research on Women; Li, Y., Weeks, J.R. (2004). Marital status. In: Encyclopedia of Women's Health. Springer, Boston, MA. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-306-48113-0_255.

[28] Prinz C. (1991) Marital status and population projections. IIASA Working Paper. WP-91-012: http://pure.iiasa.ac.at/3552

[29] Vanuatu 2020 National Population and Housing Census. Analytical report. Volume 2. p. 46.

The proportion of single males was higher by 15 percentage points than females. The share of men who had never been married was 49% of all males aged 12–30 years; the share of women who had never been married was 34% of all females in the same age group.

Table 26: Marital status of youth aged 12–30 by 5-year age group and sex, and median age by sex.

Marital status (1)	Never married (single) (%)		Legally married (%)		De facto (%)	
Age group/sex	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
12-14	100.0	100.0	0	0	0	0
15-19	97.2	87.1	1.2	4.0	1.5	8.4
20-24	69.7	37.8	10.5	22.3	19.3	37.8
25-29	32.3	15.2	27.6	38.8	38.5	43.1
Median age (years)	21	19	46	42	32	29

Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

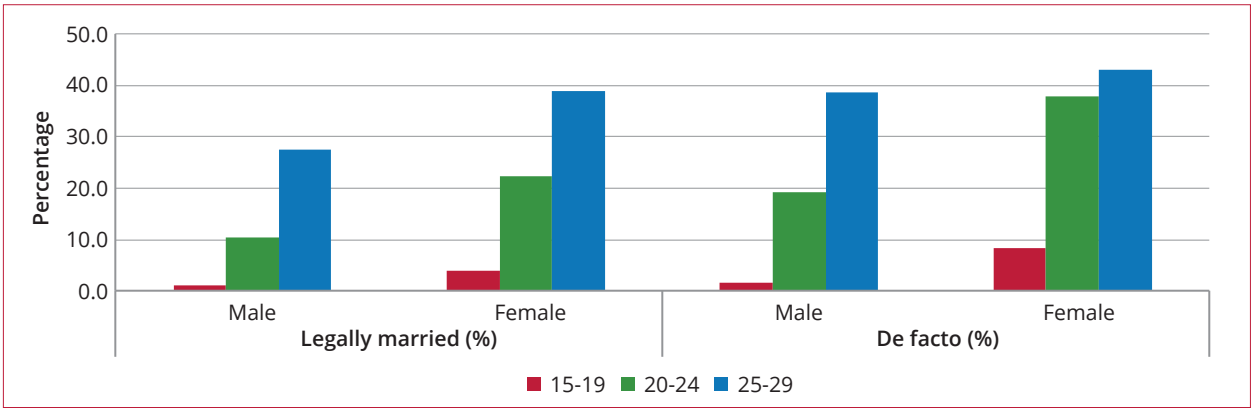
Fewer than 1% of young people were divorced, separated and widowed, with more females having this status because they were more often married (Table 27). Unfortunately, a significant share of respondents did not answer the question about marital status (24% of males aged 12–30, and 22% of females).

Table 27: Proportion of separated, divorced and widowed among youth aged 12–30 by 5-year age group and sex, and median age by sex.

Marital status (2)	Separated (%)		Divorced (%)		Widowed (%)	
Age group/sex	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
12-14	100.0	100.0	0	0	0	0
15-19	0.1	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.2
20-24	0.2	1.3	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.6
25-29	0.7	1.8	0.2	0.3	0.7	0.7
Median age (years)	45	38	49	44	45	63

Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

Figure 24: Proportion of youth aged 15–29 in legal and de facto relationships, by age group and sex.



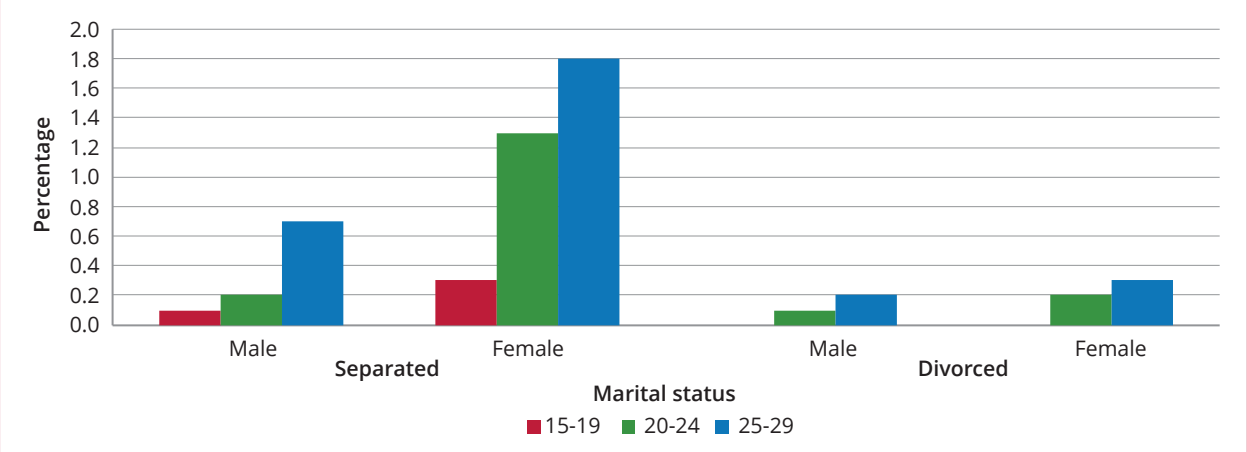
Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

As Figure 24 shows, for those aged 15–29, de facto relationships dominated legal marriages and women dominated men. It is necessary to note that this is common practice around the world.

A turnaround is observed at about 25–29 years, followed by a continuous decrease in the proportion of de facto relationships and higher values for men than for women. This change is mainly due to the transformation of de facto relationships to legal marriages.

Figure 25 shows the proportion of separated and divorced youth by 5-year age group and sex. The proportion of divorced youth was twice as low as the proportion who were separated, for both men and women.

Figure 25: Proportion of separated and divorced youth aged 15–29 years by 5-year age group and sex.



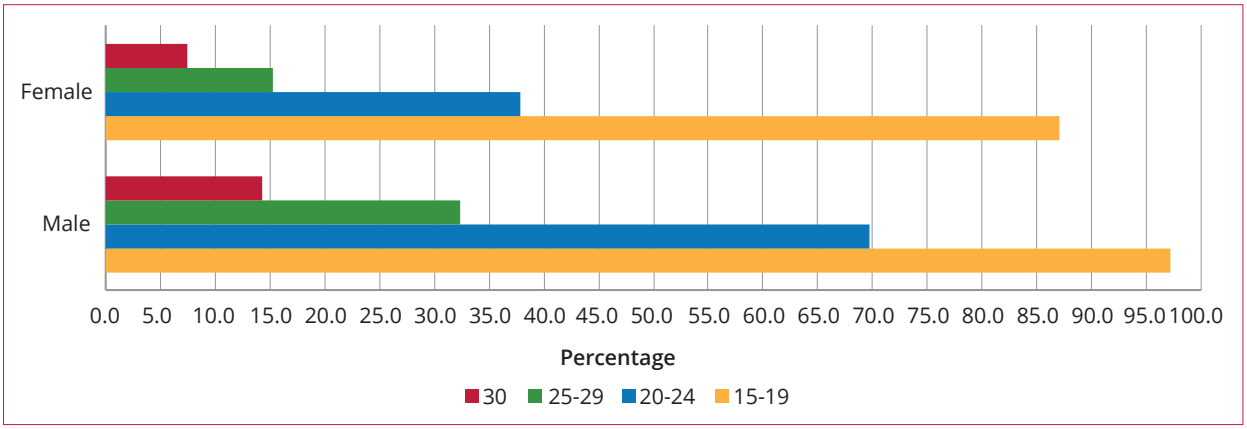
Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

The total number of married (legally, de facto and separated) women was 1.3 times higher than the number of married men. This ratio is due to the practice of polygamy that exists in Vanuatu.[30] The ratio was slightly lower than the value of 1.2 for 2009 (own calculations based on 2009 census data).

4.2 Age at first marriage

There was no data in the 2020 census on average age at first marriage. Below we estimate the median age at first marriage based on marital status data reported in the census.

Figure 26: Proportion of never married youth aged 12–30 years by 5-year age group and sex (%).



Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

Use of the SMAM method (singulate mean age at marriage),[31] with 5-year age groups for the proportion of never married, gave the following values for average age at first marriage:

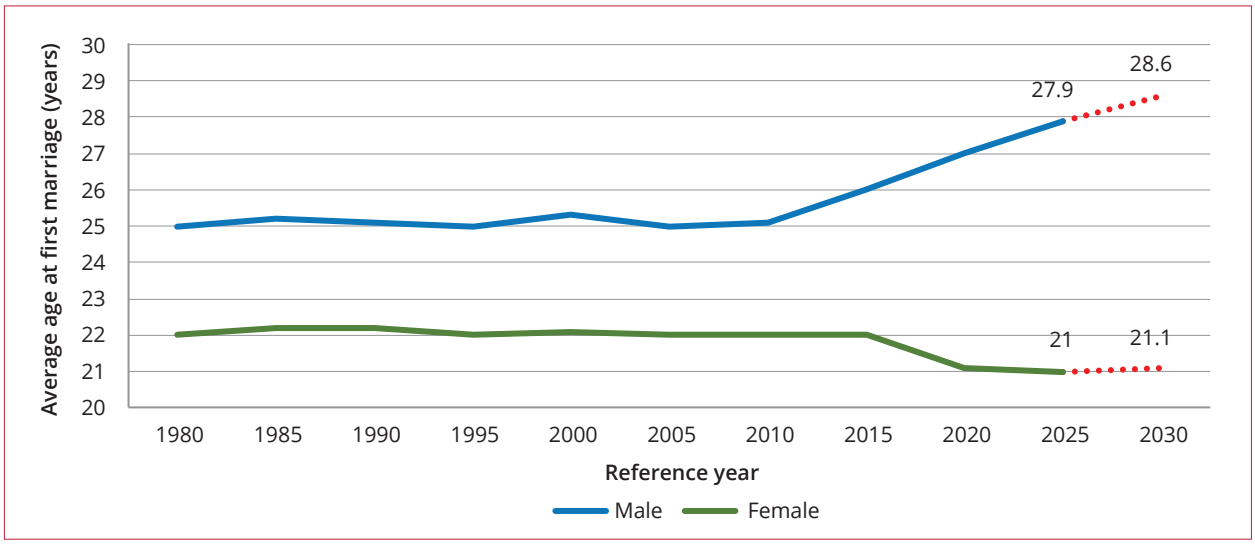
- 21.2 years for women, and
- 27.3 years for men.

[30] https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/834333/files/CEDAW_C_VUT_CO_4-5-EN.pdf?ln=en

[31] United Nations. Department of International Economic, Social Affairs, Population Division, and National Research Council (US). Committee on Population. Indirect techniques for demographic estimation. Vol. 81. United Nations Publications, 1983.

The age difference was high (5 years by the median method and 6.1 years by SMAM), indicating that men enter marriage at an older age than women. These values are similar to those reported from previous censuses and are in accordance with the long-term observed non-linear trends (Fig. 26). Figure 27 shows the values from previous censuses (1967, 1979, 1989, 1999 and 2009) along with projections, using a non-linear (polynomial) trend, for 2020.

Figure 27: **Average age at first marriage by census year and sex.**



Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

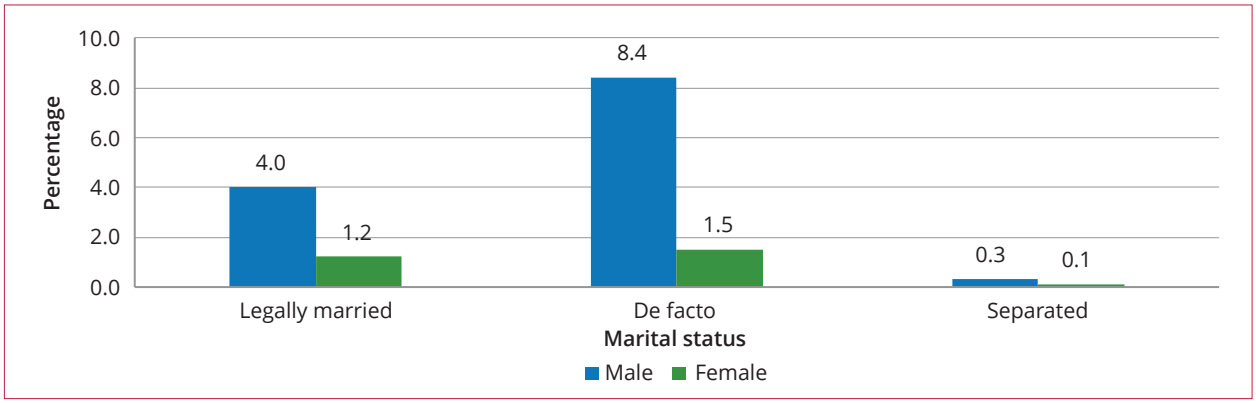
An important finding, clearly demonstrated by Figure 27, is that the male-female age difference at first marriage decreased (until 1999); then a turnaround occurred and the difference increased again. The projected values using the identified trends (21.1 for women and 27.0 for men) are close to the values reported here using SMAM (21.2 years for women and 27.3 years for men).

4.3 Number of teenage (15–19) marriages by sex

The low value of the average age at first marriage for women suggests that the proportion of teenage marriages is of high importance. Below are the results of an analysis of teenage marriages (15–19 years) by sex (Fig. 28).

Teenage marriages mostly concerned girls (12.4% of the 15–19 age group of girls; 4.0% were legally married and 8.4% were in a de facto relationship). Boys were much less involved (2.7%; 1.2% were legally married and 1.5% were in a de facto relationship). There was a huge predominance of de facto relationships over legal marriages, particularly for girls (by a factor of two).

Figure 28: **Proportion of teenage marriages (legal, de facto and separated) by sex (%).**



Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing census, Vanuatu.

4.4 Summary

The results of the 2020 census showed that about one-third of Vanuatu youth aged 12–30 were living together with a partner (34% of all young people), either in a legal marriage (14% of all young people) or in a de facto relationship (20% of all young people). There were significant gender differences in marital status. Almost 42% of women aged 12–30 were in relationships compared to 26% of men, meaning that women dominated men by 16 percentage points. Almost half of males in this age group had never been married compared to one-third of females.

Young people preferred de facto relationships (24% of females, 15% of males) to legal marriages (18% of females, 11% of males). This situation was in contrast with the status of Vanuatu's total population. Almost 47% of persons aged 15 years and older were legally married and 20% were living in a de facto relationship. The higher proportion of females in de facto relationships and legal marriages showed that females entered relationships earlier than males, and most likely had older partners.

Teenage marriages involved more girls (12.4%; 4.0% legally married and 8.4% de facto), than boys (2.7%; 1.2% legally married and 1.5% de facto). There was a huge predominance of de facto relationships over legal marriages, particularly for girls (by a factor of two).

CHAPTER 5. FERTILITY INDICATORS OF VANUATU'S YOUNG WOMEN AGED 15–29

This section is devoted to an analysis of the fertility of women aged from 15 to 30 (no cases of childbirth were registered for young women aged 12–14).

5.1 Overview of fertility

First of all, attention should be given to the fertility of age groups from 15 to 30 since these groups provide a qualitative transition from one type of population reproduction to another, and therefore, to a greater extent than other groups, they provide a demographic dividend.

Adolescent fertility is defined as the annual number of births to women aged 15–19 per 1,000 women in this age group. It is also called the age-specific fertility rate (ASFR) for women aged 15–19. A high birth rate often corresponds to traditional ways of living characterized by low standards of living and an unfavorable position of women in society.

Adolescent and youth birth control is one of UNFPA's main goals, with activities carried out under the 2030 Agenda and the corresponding SDGs.[32] SDG Indicator 3.7.2 (Adolescent birth rate)[33] outlines specific tasks that the UN as a whole, and UNFPA in particular, are consistently addressing in the Pacific region including in Vanuatu.

5.2 Fertility of young women aged 15–29

Table 28 shows the percentage of the Vanuatu female population aged 15–29 who has ever given birth (as noted above, no cases of childbirth were registered for women aged 12–14).

Table 28: Breakdown of the female youth population aged 15–29 years who have ever given birth (%).

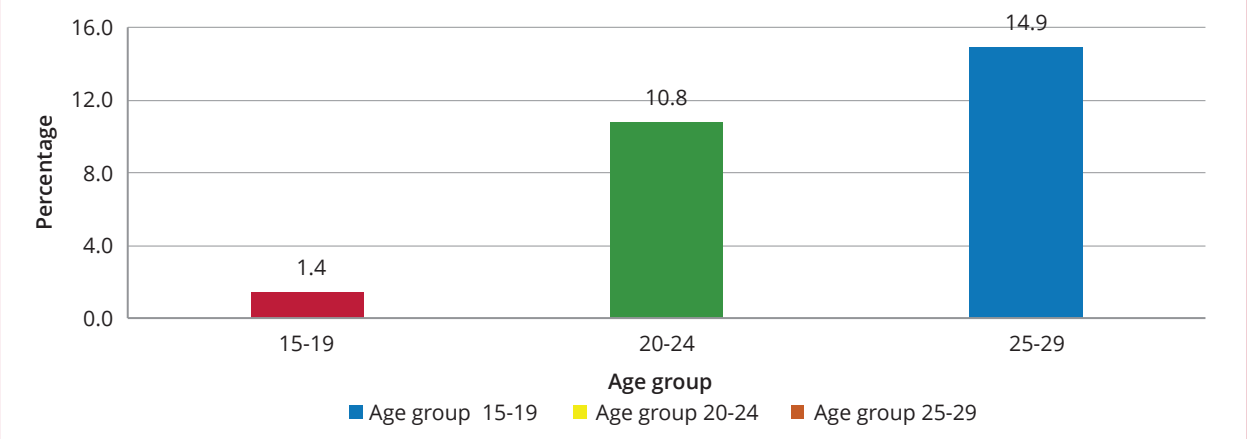
	Age group			Total
	15–19	20–24	25–29	
As a percentage of number of women aged 15–29	5.2	39.8	55.0	**100.0**
As a percentage of all women in Vanuatu who have ever given birth	1.4	10.8	14.9	**27.1**

Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

Figure 29 displays the breakdown by age group of the female youth population aged 15–29 years who have ever given birth in Vanuatu as a whole.

[32] https://SDG Agenda 2030/
[33] https://SDG tracking-progress.org/indicator/3-7-2-adolescent-birth-rate/

Figure 29: Distribution of the female youth population aged 15–29 years who have ever given birth in Vanuatu (%).



Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

Table 29 and Figure 30 further display the percentage distribution of mothers aged 15–30 by number of live-born children, by 5-year age groups, for all of Vanuatu.

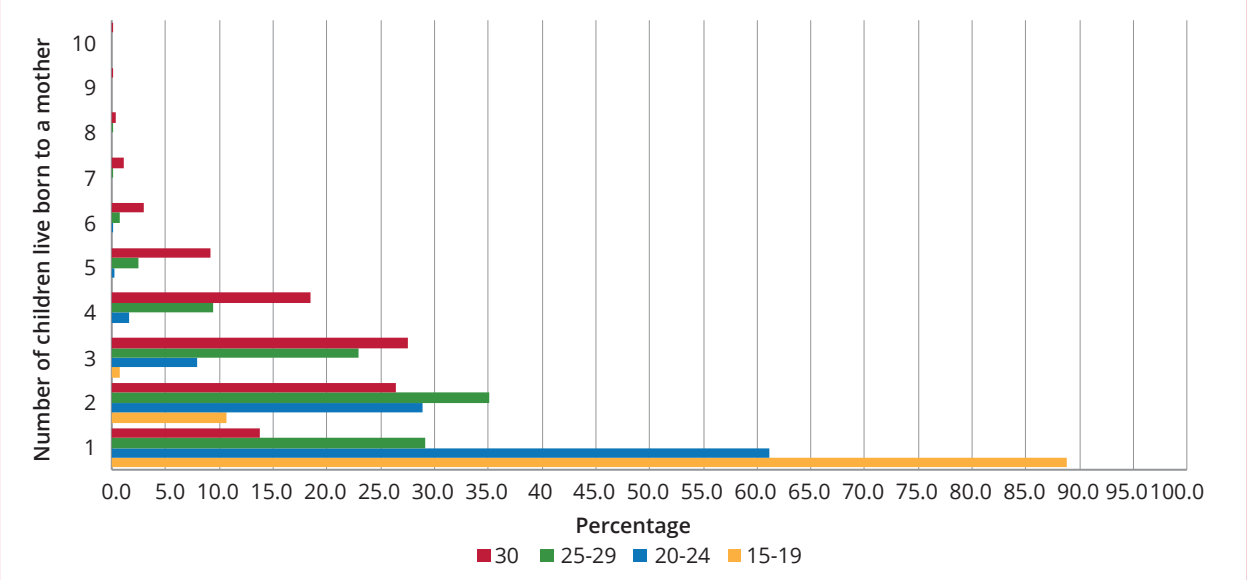
Table 29: Distribution of mothers aged 15–30 years by number of live-born children, by 5-year age groups (%).

Age group	Number of live-born children to a mother										Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
15-19	88.8	10.6	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
20-24	61.1	28.9	7.9	1.6	0.3	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
25-29	29.1	35.1	23.0	9.4	2.5	0.7	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	100.0
30	13.7	26.4	27.5	18.5	9.2	3.0	1.1	0.4	0.1	0.1	100.0

Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

As Figure 30 indicates, for older age groups, the maximum of the distribution decreases and shifts to the right.

Figure 30: Breakdown of mothers aged 15–30 by number of live-born children, by 5-year age groups, 2020 (%).



Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

It is worth noting that for the oldest youth age group, i.e. 30 years old, there is a significant tail of a high number of children. This is due to fertility levels in the past (up to 15 years), which led to exceptionally high values for the number of children born to each woman. For instance, 3% of 30-year-old women have had at least six live-born children. This number is quite large even in comparison with other developing Pacific Island countries.

(a) Number of live-born children to young women

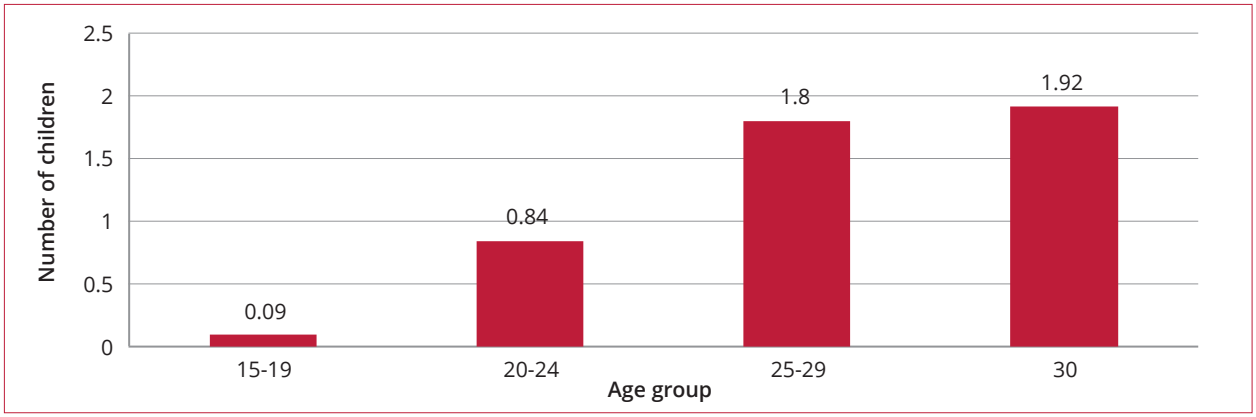
To further understand patterns of fertility, such as the overall fertility rate and ASFR corresponding to young mothers aged 15–30 years, the average number of live-born children to women aged 15–30 years, by 5-year age groups, was calculated for all of Vanuatu (Table 30 and Fig. 31).

Table 30: Average number of live-born children to women aged 15–30 years, by 5-year age groups.

Average number of live-born children			
Age group			
15-19	20-24	25-29	30
0.09	0.84	1.80	1.92

Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

Figure 31: Average number of live-born children to women aged 15–30 years, by 5-year age groups, 2020.

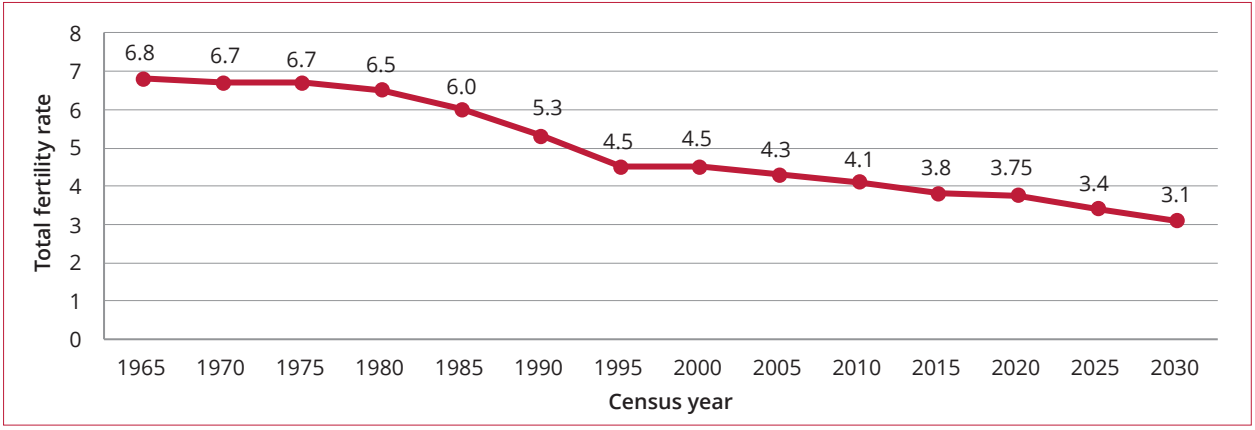


Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.
Note: For teenagers aged 15 to 19 years, fertility levels do not fit the elucidated distribution. The 'teenage fertility' phenomenon is the subject of a special scientific study, the results of which will be presented in a separate section of this chapter.

(b) Total fertility rate

Figure 32 shows the total fertility rate compared to values reported from previous censuses. The decreasing trend from previous periods is projected to be maintained till 2030.

Figure 32: Total fertility rate for Vanuatu, according to censuses from 1965 to 2020, and projected rate up to 2030.



Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

By 2030, the total fertility rate for Vanuatu is projected to decline to 3.1. It is estimated that quite significant population growth will continue for at least the next 10 years and probably in the longer term, more likely to 2050.

This projection requires a new macroeconomic approach by the Government of Vanuatu, and further support from the UN, particularly UNFPA. Otherwise, such an increase in the Vanuatu population with relatively weak economic growth limits the possibilities for reaching acceptable living standards for everyone.

(c) Number of live-born children to women in urban areas

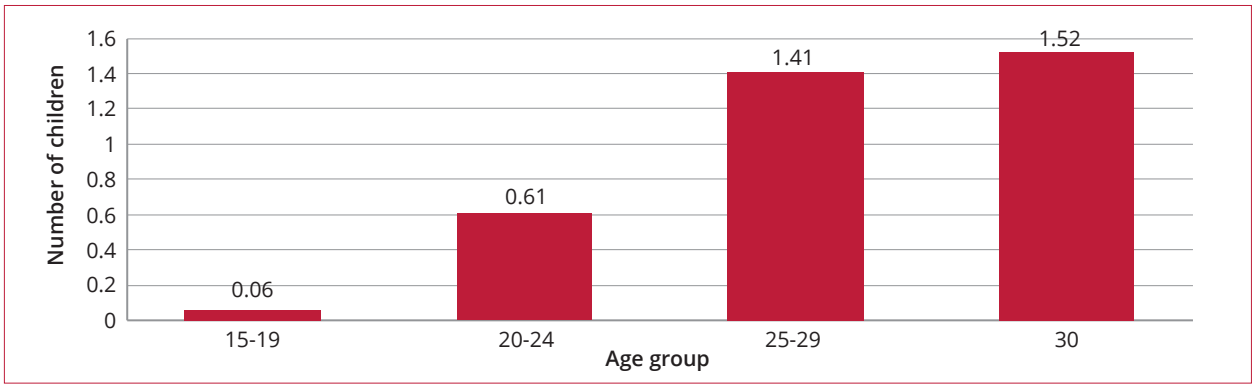
The same calculations were performed separately for urban and rural areas of Vanuatu. Table 31 and Figure 33 show the average number of live-born children to young women aged 15–30 living in urban areas.

Table 31: Average number of live-born children to women aged 15–30, by 5-year age groups, urban areas.

Average number of live-born children			
Age group			
15-19	20-24	25-29	30
0.06	0.61	1.41	1.52

Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

Figure 33: Average number of live-born children to women aged 15–30, by 5-year age groups, urban areas.



Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

(d) Number of live-born children to women in rural areas

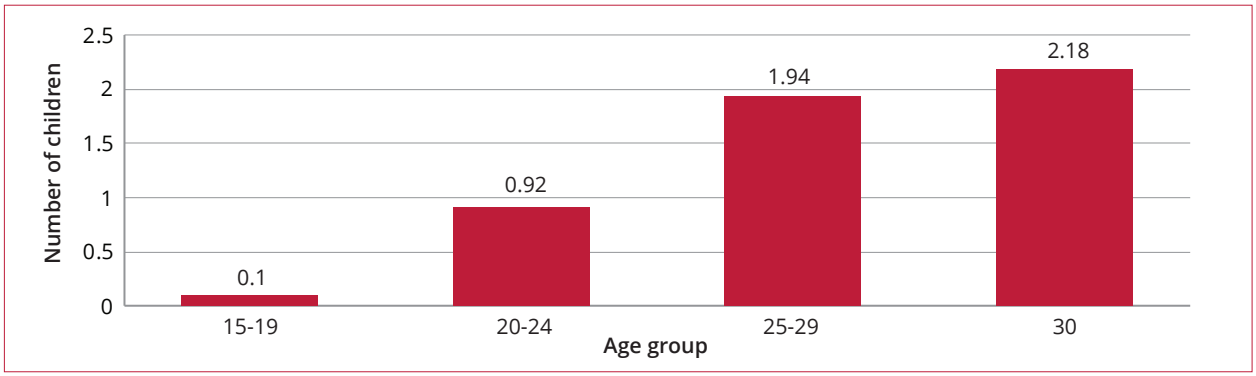
Average numbers of live-born children to women aged 15–30 years, by 5-year age groups, for all rural areas are shown in Table 32 and Figure 34.

Table 32: Average number of live-born children to women aged 15–30, by 5-year age groups, rural areas.

Average number of live-born children			
Age group			
15-19	20-24	25-29	30
0.10	0.92	1.94	2.18

Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

Figure 34: Average number of live-born children to women aged 15–30, by 5-year age groups, rural areas.



Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

The point corresponding to teenage fertility (15–19 years) again does not fit the elucidated distribution, indicating a high value for teenage fertility. More details on this issue are in subsection 5.3 Teenage fertility.

(e) Age-specific fertility rate

The methodological approach used in the subsection above – that is, calculation of the average number of live-born children to women aged 15–30 years by 5-year age groups – makes it possible to define ASFRs as a special *derivative distribution.* The results of the corresponding calculations are presented in Table 33. (Note that the method used here to estimate ASFR is in coherence with the value of the total fertility rate reported below.)

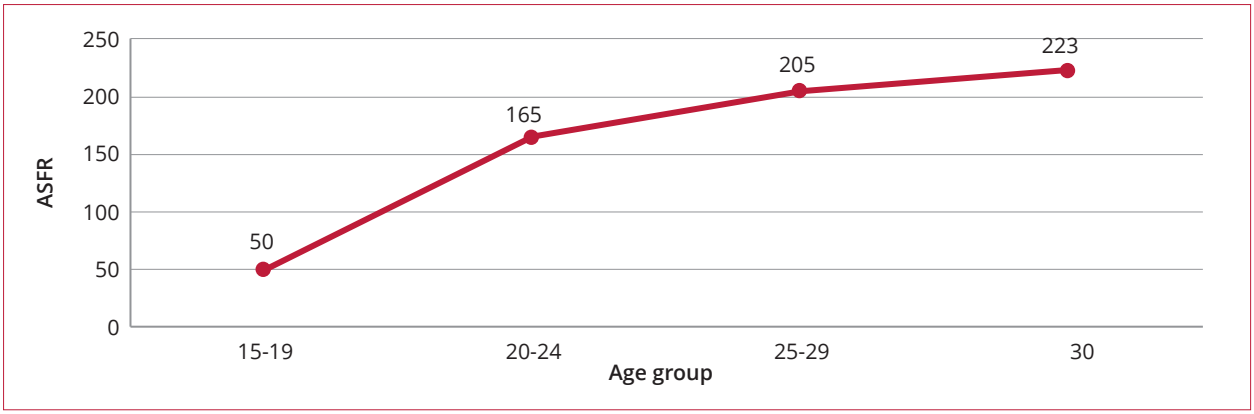
Table 33: Estimated ASFR for women aged 15–30, by 5-year age groups, Vanuatu 2020.

ASFR			
Age group			
15-19	20-24	25-29	30
45	150	193	211

Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

Estimated values for ASFR for all of Vanuatu are presented graphically in Figure 35. The maximum registered ASFR value of 211 was for the 30-year age group.

Figure 35: Estimated ASFR for women aged 15–30, by 5-year age groups, Vanuatu 2020.



Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

Tables 34 and 35 show the estimated ASFRs for urban and rural areas of Vanuatu, respectively.

Table 34: Estimated ASFR for women aged 15–30, urban areas.

ASFR			
Age group			
15-19	20-24	25-29	30
31	109	161	178

Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

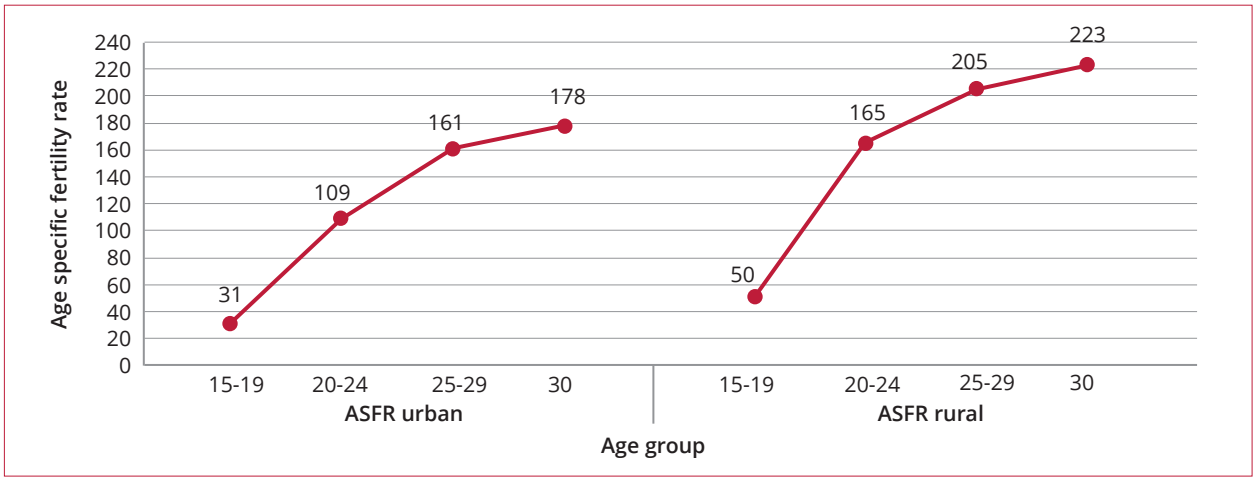
Table 35: Estimated ASFR for women aged 15–30, rural areas.

ASFR			
Age group			
15-19	20-24	25-29	30-
50	165	205	223

Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

Figure 36 shows the estimated ASFRs for urban and rural areas of Vanuatu. In urban areas, the maximum ASFR (178) was for the 30-year age group. In rural areas, the maximum ASFR (223) was also for the 30-year age group.

Figure 36: Estimated ASFRs for women aged 15–30, by 5-year age group, urban (1) and rural (2) areas.



Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

The higher ASFR values in rural areas compared to urban areas for women aged 15 to 30 years can be attributed to the social pressure on young women in rural areas to have more children. Taking this into consideration, and bearing in mind the need to develop a corresponding demographic policy to be implemented by the Government of Vanuatu, with methodological support from UNFPA, the authors of this monograph would like to express the scientific basis for proposals for demographic policies and measures to decrease the pressure on young women in rural areas to have more children.

(a) Number of children ever born/still alive

Table 36 and Figure 37 present a breakdown of children ever born/still alive by 5-year age groups of mothers aged 15–29 years, by region.

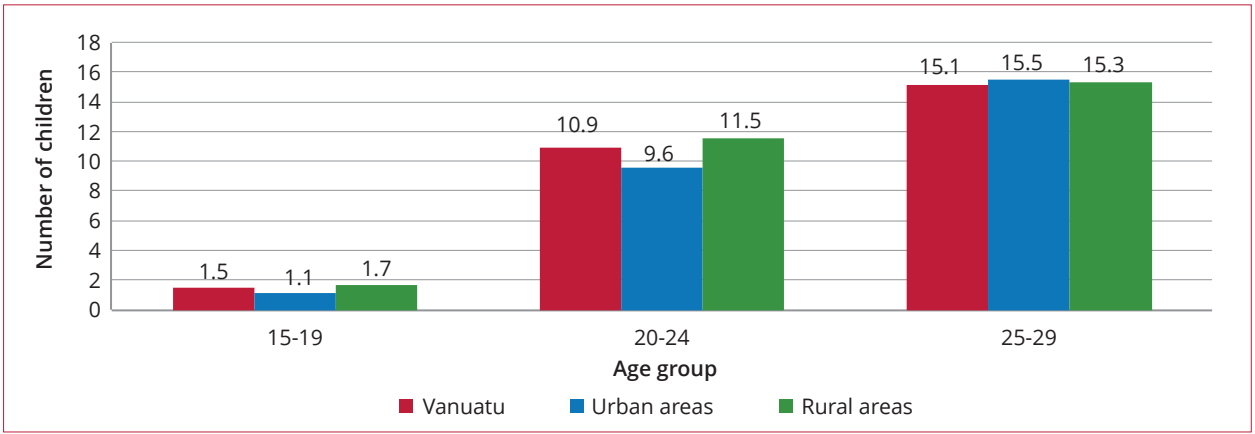
Table 36: Distribution of children ever born/still alive by 5-year age group of mothers aged 15–29 years, by region (%).

Age group	Vanuatu (%)	Urban areas (%)	Rural areas (%)
15-19	1.5	1.1	1.7
20-24	10.9	9.6	11.5
25-29	15.1	15.5	15.3

Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

Figure 37 indicates that there were no significant differences between the corresponding breakdowns of children ever born/still alive to mothers aged 25–29 years in rural and urban areas. As a result, the authors of this monograph can assume that the demographic behaviour of this age group in urban and rural areas was quite similar.

Figure 37: Breakdown of children ever born/still alive by 5-year age group of mothers aged 15–29 years, by region.



Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

At the same time, a separate comparison of teenage fertility levels (ages 15–19) in urban and rural areas shows that the demographic behaviour of the youngest population groups in urban areas has begun to change significantly. According to the authors, these substantial changes are the result of UNFPA demographic policy that has had more significant effect in urban areas than in rural ones.

5.3 Teenage fertility

A particular issue is teenage fertility (ages 15–19). In total, there were 45 births per 1,000 teenage girls per year. This value is much higher than the values for Europe (9) or the United Kingdom and Australia (11), and close to the value for Fiji (49).[34]

Teenage fertility for urban areas was 31, while for rural areas it was much higher at 50.

To further illustrate the situation, Table 37 and Figure 38 show the percentages of teenage (15–19) mothers by the total number of live-born children for all of Vanuatu, and for urban and rural areas.

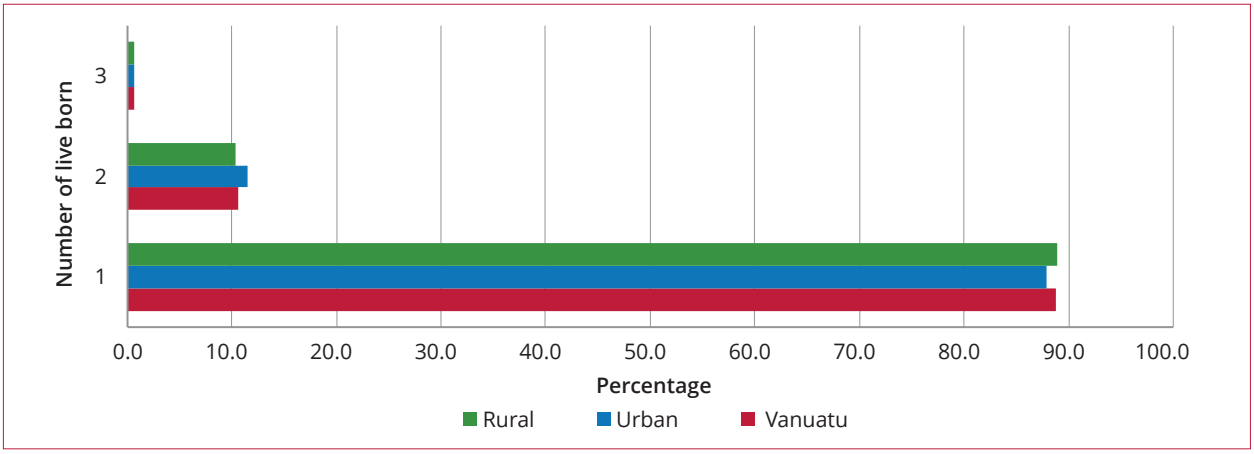
Table 37: Breakdown of teenage (15–19) girls by the total number of live-born children, Vanuatu, urban and rural areas (%).

	Total live-born			Total
	1	2	3	
Vanuatu	88.7	10.6	0.7	100.0
Urban	87.8	11.5	0.7	100.0
Rural	88.9	10.4	0.7	100.0

Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

[34] https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.ADO.TFRT?locations=EU

Figure 38: Distribution of teenage (15–19) girls by the total number of live-born children, Vanuatu, urban and rural areas (%).



Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

There was a negligible percentage of teenage mothers with two (particularly in urban areas, 11.5%) or even three children (0.7%). This finding indicates that teenage fertility cannot be explained by incidental events, but rather by systematic behaviour connected to the position of young women in Vanuatu.

5.4 Summary

The average number of live-born children to women aged 15–30 years was:

- 0.09 for the 15–19 age group
- 0.84 for the 20–24 age group
- 1.80 for the 25–29 age group
- 1.92 for the 30 age group.

The higher ASFR values in rural areas for women aged 15 to 30 years compared to those in urban areas can be attributed to the social pressure on young women in rural areas to have more children. Taking this into consideration, and bearing in mind the need to develop a demographic policy to be implemented by the Government of Vanuatu with methodological support from UNFPA, the authors of this monograph have expressed the scientific basis for proposed policies and measures to reduce the pressure on young women in rural areas to have more children.

Teenage fertility is very high. There were 45 births per 1,000 teenage girls per year for all of Vanuatu. This value is much higher than the values for the United Kingdom (11) and Australia (11), for instance, and is comparable to values for other island counties such as Fiji (49). Teenage fertility for urban areas was 31, while for rural areas it was 50, which was much higher than the value for all of Vanuatu.

The reduction of teenage fertility was the subject of population policies established by the Moana Declaration of 2013 (the Outcome Statement of Pacific Parliamentarians for Population and Development).[35]

[35] https://pacific.unfpa.org/en/resources/moana-declaration

CHAPTER 6. YOUTH EDUCATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Education is a crucial factor in determining the position of persons in the labour market and also their socio-economic position.[36]

6.1 Overview of education

Education is the basis for developing and improving of the lives of young people globally. It gives people the knowledge and skills they need to stay healthy, get jobs and foster tolerance. Education has been identified as a priority area in internationally agreed development goals, including the SDGs[37] and the World Programme of Action for Youth.[38] It is important in eradicating poverty and hunger and in promoting sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth and sustainable development, and is also a key defense against the spread of HIV.[39] Increased efforts towards improving the accessibility, quality and affordability of education are central to global development efforts.[40]

This chapter includes analyses of:

- literacy, as the basic measure for educational achievement
- highest educational level attained
- current school attendance

The information is desegregated by sex and region, allowing assessment of gender gaps and regional disparities.

6.2 Literacy

Literacy data from the 2020 census summarized answers from the self-assessment of enumerated persons and did not rely on a test of the person's ability to read and write. Specifically, enumerators asked each person in a household two questions:

- Whether he/she could read a simple sentence, and
- Whether he/she could write a simple sentence.

Separate options for English, French, Bislama, or any other language(s) were included in the questions. Based on the answers, literacy was calculated as the percentage of those who could read and write in any of the languages. Literacy rates for English and French were calculated and reported separately. Here, only overall literacy was analysed, disaggregated by sex and region.

Vanuatu has attained a high level of literacy of over 90% for the total population aged 15 years old and above. In Vanuatu, literacy is measured for the different languages in use (Bislama, English, French, and others). The data presented here are for at least one language.

36 https://gpseducation.oecd.org/revieweducationpolicies/#!node=41763&filter=all
37 https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/
38 https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/documents/wpay2010.pdf
39 https://www.unfpa.org/resources/education-factor
40 YOUTH AND EDUCATION. United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development. https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/youth/fact-sheets/youth-education.pdf

Table 38: Literacy rate for at least one language for youth aged 15–29 in private households, by region and sex (%).

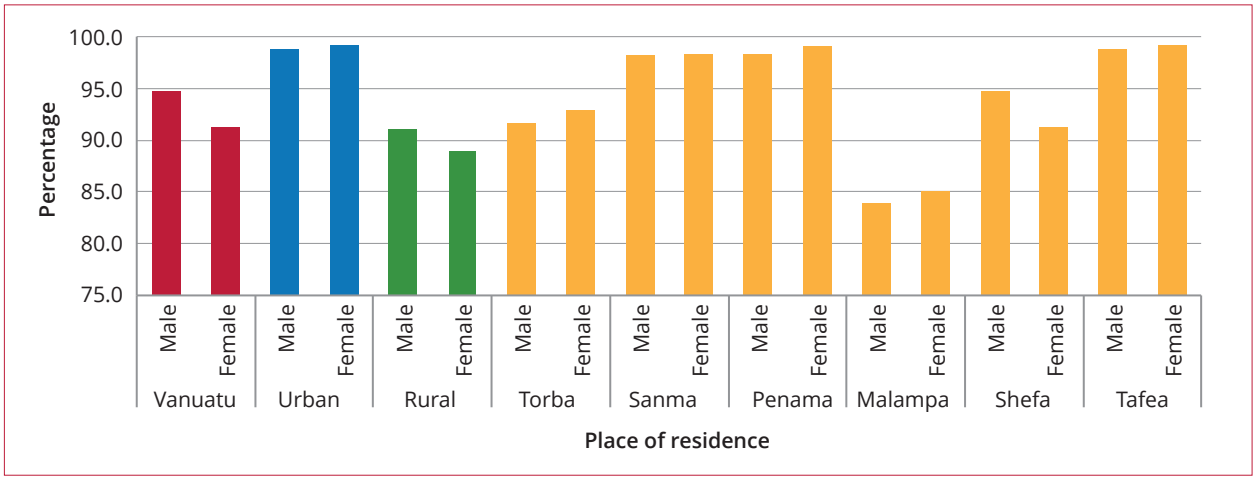
Region/Sex	Literacy rate in any languages (%)		
	Male	Female	Total
Vanuatu	**94.7**	**91.3**	**93.3**
Urban	98.9	99.3	99.1
Port Vila	93.3	94.1	93.7
Luganville	88.5	91.6	90.1
Rural	91.2	89.0	90.1
Torba	91.7	92.9	92.3
Sanma	98.2	98.4	98.3
Penama	98.4	99.1	98.7
Malampa	83.9	85	84.5
Shefa	94.7	91.3	93.0
Tafea	98.9	99.3	99.1

Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

As Table 38 shows, the overall literacy rate for Vanuatu youth aged 15–29 was 93.3%. This value was significantly higher than the value of 84.8% identified by the 2009 census[41] and slightly higher than the rate for the total population of Vanuatu (93%). The literacy rate for women (91.3%) was slightly lower than that for men (94.7%).

In terms of area of residence, there were substantial differences between urban and rural areas. In urban areas, very high values of 99.1% were attained (98.9% for men and 99.3% for women) and the gender gap was small. In rural areas, the opposite situation was observed. The overall literacy rate was 97.7%, with a lower rate for women (96.7%) than for men (97.7%). Not only was there a marked difference between urban and rural regions, there were also large differences between the provinces, as shown in Figure 39.

Figure 39: Literacy rate for at least one language for youth aged 15–29 in private households, by region and sex (%).



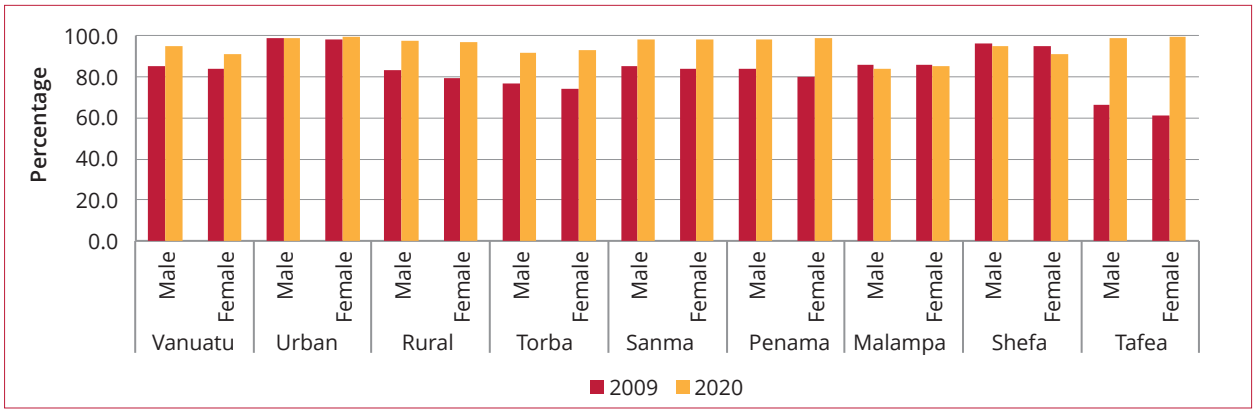
Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

Clearly, the gender gap is most pronounced for regions with lower literacy. Thus, for Tafea values were around 99% and the gap was quite low. For Torba, the literacy rate for women was higher than for men. In contrast, for Shefa, rather high literacy rates were obtained (94.7% and 91.35% for women), along with small gender gaps in other provinces. It seems that together with the increase in

[41] Vanuatu National Statistics Office, 2009 National Population and Housing Census, Analytical Report, Volume 2.

the literacy rate for men, the gender gap is lessening and is likely to diminish or disappear in future. To illustrate the progress in literacy during the previous decade, Figure 40 shows literacy values by sex and region for 2009 (broken lines) and 2020 (solid lines). There is marked progress in rural regions that previously had low values for literacy. Gender differences were similar for both years.

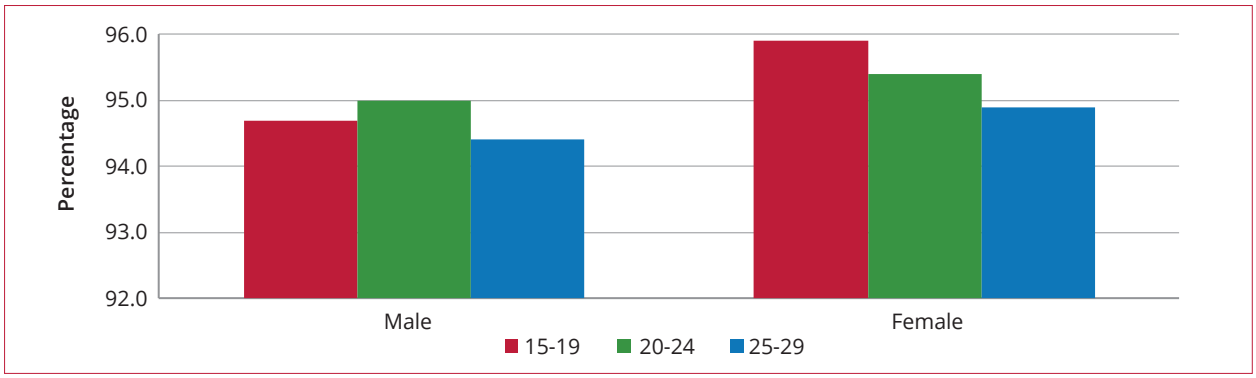
Figure 40: Comparison between 2009 and 2020 censuses of literacy rate for youth aged 15–29 in private households, by region and sex.



Source: Calculations based on data from 2009 and 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

The characteristics of literacy identified above can be explained further by more detailed analysis of the distribution by age group (Fig. 41). This shows that the gender gap was significant for the 15–19, 20–24 and 25-29 years age groups, in which females markedly dominated males.

Figure 41: Literacy rate for youth aged 15–29 in private households, by 5-year age groups and sex (%).



Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

Progress towards higher literacy levels is limited by the low level of literacy of the elderly population. The findings presented above suggest that the issue of improving literacy in Vanuatu for the youth population appears to be resolved in significant measure. No noticeable gender and regional gaps were observed for that part of the population.

6.3 Completed level of education

An analysis was carried out of the highest educational level completed by those aged 15–29 years living in private households, by 5-year age groups, sex and region.

Table 39 presents the proportion of the youth population aged 12–30 by highest completed levels of education, by sex:

- 20% (19% of females and 22% of males) completed primary school.
- 24% (25% of females and 23% of males) completed lower secondary school.
- 12% (13% of females and 10% of males) completed upper secondary school.
- 2% of both sexes completed post-secondary education.

Unfortunately, a significant share of respondents did not answer the question about highest grade attained (42% of those aged 12–30; 43% of males, and 41% of females).

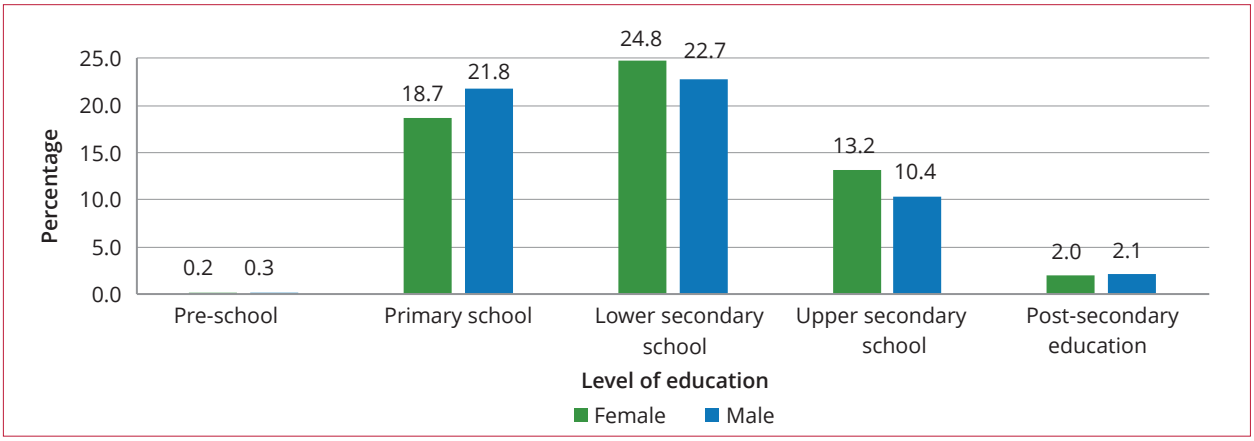
Table 39: Proportion of youth aged 12–30 by highest educational grade attained, by sex, 2020 census (%).

Level of education	Total	Female	Male
Preschool	0.21	0.17	0.26
Primary school	20.23	18.69	21.75
Lower secondary school	23.76	24.79	22.75
Upper secondary school	11.79	13.19	10.40
Post-secondary education	2.06	1.99	2.13
NA	41.92	41.15	42.68
Other	0.03	0.02	0.03
Total	**100.00**	**100.00**	**100.00**

Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

Figure 42 presents the distribution of youth by sex and highest grade attained. There were some gender differences in the highest educational level completed. More females than males completed lower secondary (25% of females, 23% of males) and upper secondary (13% of females, 10% of males); 22% of males completed primary education compared to 19% of females.

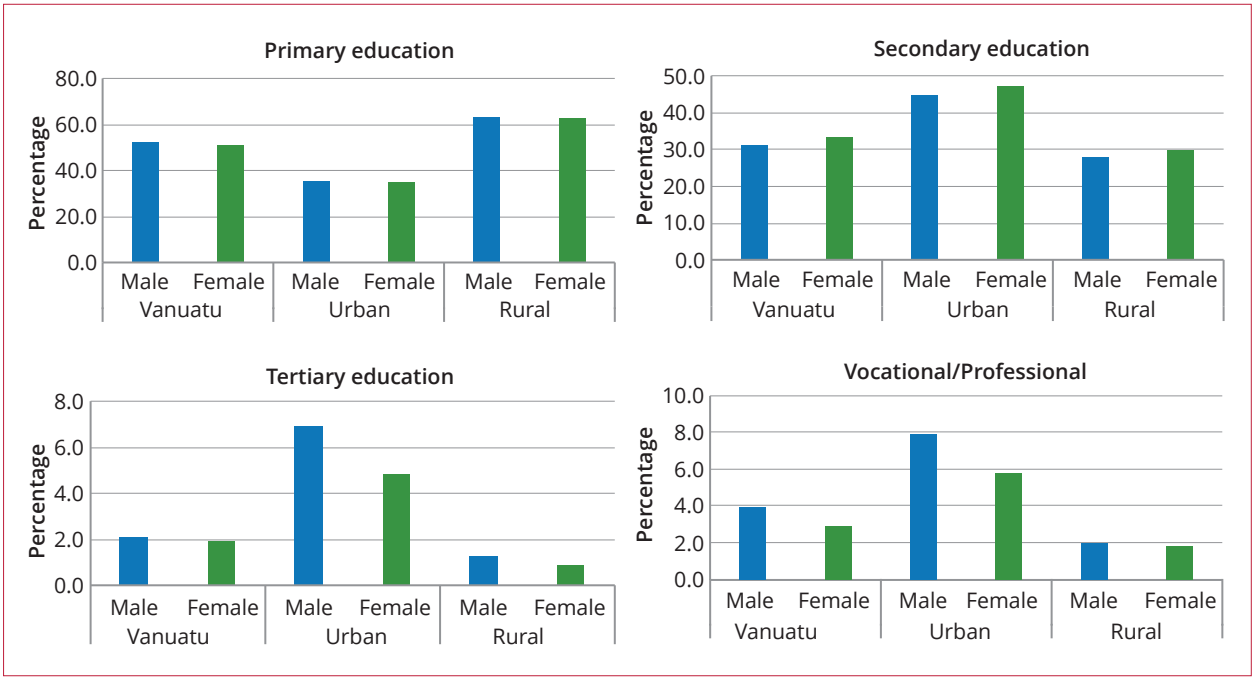
Figure 42: Proportion of youth aged 12–30 by highest educational level completed, by sex (%).



Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

Figure 43 shows the highest completed levels of education (primary, secondary, tertiary, and vocational/professional) as a share of the total population living in private households, by sex and by region.

Figure 43: Highest completed level of education by youth aged 15–29 as a share of the total population 15 years and over living in private households, by sex and by region (%).



Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

Table 40 shows separate numerical values for Vanuatu and for urban and rural areas.

Table 40: Highest completed level of education as a share of the total population of youth aged 15–29 living in private households, by sex and by region (%).

Level of education	Vanuatu			Urban			Rural		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Primary education	52.0	52.0	51.0	33.0	35.3	34.7	63.0	63.1	62.9
Secondary education	32.3	31.3	33.3	46.0	44.6	47.3	29.6	27.9	29.6
Tertiary education	2.1	2.1	1.9	4.0	6.9	4.8	1.1	1.3	0.9
Vocational/ Professional	3.1	3.9	2.9	7.8	7.9	5.8	1.5	1.9	1.8

Source: 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu, Basic Tables, Volume 1.

The share of primary education was markedly higher for rural (around 70%) than for urban (around 40%) areas. In urban areas, the proportion of women was slightly higher than that of men. There were marked regional disparities in attainment of primary education, but no significant gender gaps.

In urban areas, around 47% of men and 50% of women completed secondary education compared to 30% of youth in rural regions. A noticeable gender gap was present in urban areas and the majority of rural regions.

Attainment of tertiary education was highest in Port Vila (9.0% of men and 7.0% of women). There were marked gender gaps in all regions. For the whole urban area, the proportion of men was 7.0%, while the proportion of women was only 5.0%, corresponding to a gender gap of 2 percentage points. For the whole rural area, the proportion of men was 1.3%, while the proportion of women was only 0.9%, corresponding to 0.4 percentage points.

Completion of vocational/professional education was similar to tertiary education: the gender gap was similar and in urban areas, the proportion of women attaining this level was only 6.8% compared to 8.9 % for men. The corresponding gap was about 2 percentage points.

6.4 Current school attendance

Finally, we analysed current school attendance by the education levels defined in Vanuatu. Table 41 shows the proportion of the population 3 years and over living in private households currently attending an educational institution by sex, level of education and region.

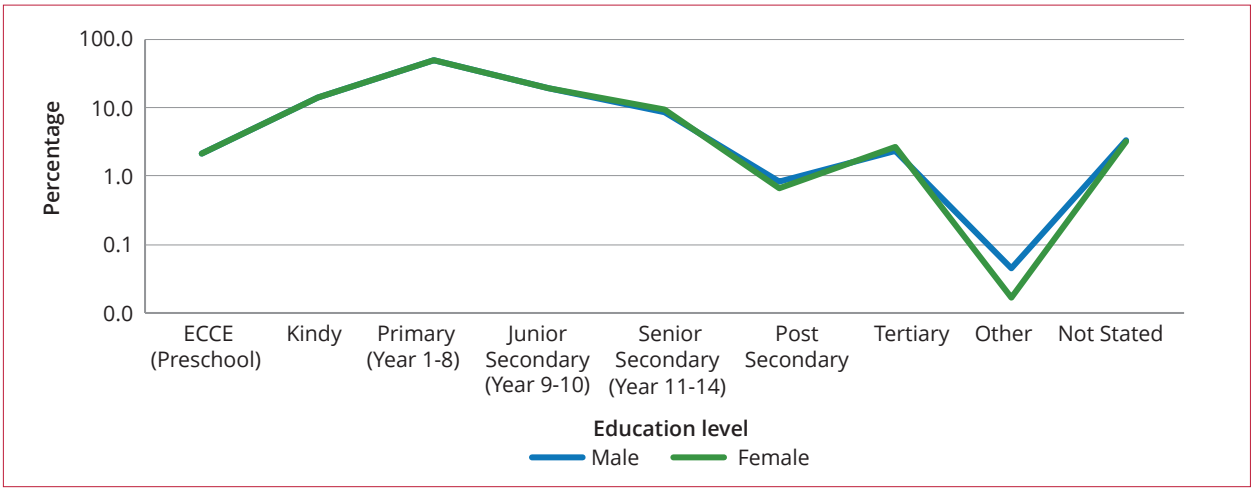
Table 41: Proportion of the population 3 years and over living in private households currently attending an educational institution, by sex, level of education and region (%).

Education level	Vanuatu			Urban			Rural		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
ECCE (Pre-school)	2.12	2.09	2.15	1.44	1.50	1.37	2.32	2.26	2.38
Kindy	14.04	14.12	13.96	11.87	12.05	11.68	14.68	14.71	14.64
Primary (Year 1-8)	49.43	49.81	49.03	41.91	42.90	40.91	51.62	51.76	51.47
Junior secondary (Year 9-10)	18.99	18.92	19.06	18.21	18.38	18.03	19.22	19.07	19.37
Senior secondary (Year 11-14)	8.91	8.57	9.27	14.22	13.05	15.41	7.36	7.30	7.43
Post-secondary	0.76	0.84	0.67	1.76	1.91	1.61	0.47	0.54	0.39
Tertiary	2.47	2.31	2.63	7.73	7.27	8.20	0.93	0.91	0.96
Other	0.03	0.04	0.02	0.04	0.05	0.03	0.03	0.04	0.01
Not stated	3.26	3.29	3.21	2.83	2.89	2.76	3.38	3.41	3.35

Source: 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu, Basic Tables, Volume 1.

To clearly see gender differences by education levels, Figure 44 displays the Vanuatu population 3 years and over living in private households currently attending an educational institution, by sex and level of education, in a logarithmic scale (enabling direct comparison of gender ratios for different levels of education). The benefit of using a logarithmic scale (semi-log or ln-log) resides in the property of the scale to present the same ratios of original values at the same distances after transformation. This is of particular importance when representing gender gaps for quantities with markedly different values. For example, the proportion of men and women in post-secondary education was 50 times smaller than in primary education and on a linear scale, the gender gap would not be at all visible.

Figure 44: Proportion of the population 3 years and over living in private households currently attending an educational institution, by sex and level of education (%).



Source: Own calculations based on 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu, Basic Tables, Volume 1.

Figure 45 clearly shows that there were marked gender gaps for post-secondary and other education. For other levels of education, the differences were substantially smaller. Nevertheless, it is worth noting

that there were significant differences in secondary education, where there were more women than men. This trend is expected to substantially change the existing social position of women in Vanuatu.

Table 42 and Figure 45 present the proportion of youth aged 12–30 (by sex) who were attending school in Vanuatu at the time of the 2020 census. The share amounted to 31% of the population aged 12–30 years. The gender difference (1 percentage point) was insignificant (Table 42).

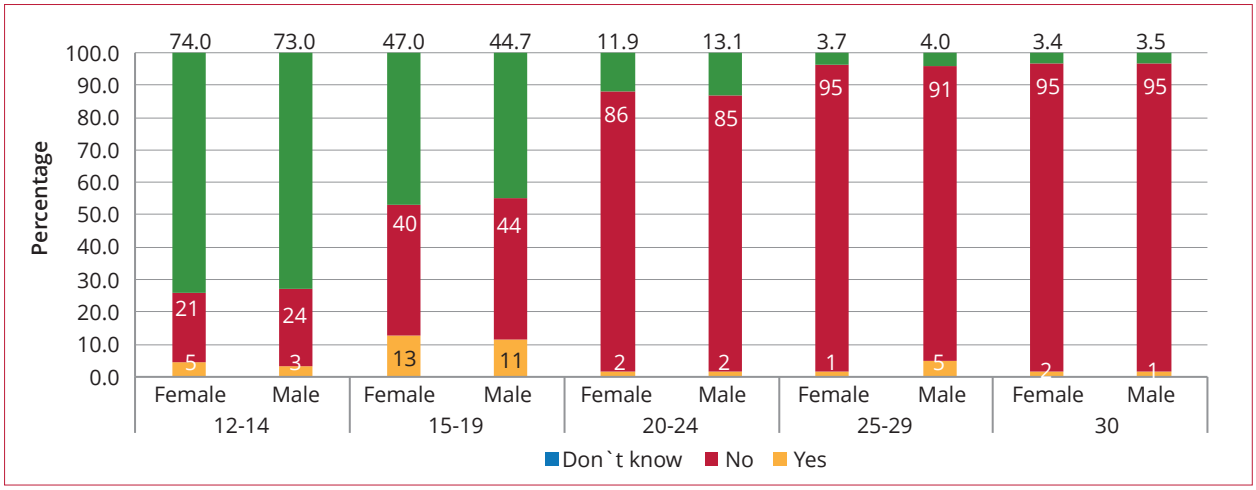
Table 42: Proportion of youth aged 12–30 currently attending school, by sex, 2020 census.

Age group	Sex	Don't know	No	Yes	Total
12-14	Female	5.0	21.0	74.0	100.0
	Male	3.0	24.0	73.0	100.0
	Total	**4.0**	**23.0**	**73.5**	**100.0**
15-19	Female	13.0	40.0	47.0	100.0
	Male	11.0	44.0	44.7	100.0
	Total	**12.0**	**42.0**	**45.8**	**100.0**
20-24	Female	2.0	86.0	11.9	100.0
	Male	2.0	85.0	13.1	100.0
	Total	**2.0**	**86.0**	**12.5**	**100.0**
25-29	Female	1.0	95.0	3.7	100.0
	Male	5.0	91.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	**3.0**	**93.0**	**4.0**	**100.0**
30	Female	2.0	95.0	3.4	100.0
	Male	1.0	95.0	3.5	100.0
	Total	**2.0**	**95.0**	**3.0**	**100.0**
Total population aged 12-30	Female	5.0	64.8	30.2	100.0
	Male	5.4	63.5	31.1	100.0
	Total	**5.2**	**64.1**	**30.6**	**100.0**

Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

In terms of age group, the highest share of persons attending school was in the age group 12–14 years (74% of youth aged 12–14) with slightly more females than males (74% versus 73%). Almost 46% of the total number of youth aged 15–19 years said they were attending school.

Figure 45: Proportion of youth aged 12–30 currently attending school, by sex, 2020 census.



Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

More females attended school than males by 2.3 percentage points: 47% versus 44.7%, respectively. In the 20–24 age group, the share of persons attending school was significantly lower than in previous groups. About 13% of all youth aged 20–24 years answered that they were still in the education system. The share of females attending school was 12% of all females in the 20–24 age group, slightly lower than the share of males by 1 percentage point. In the 25–29 and 30-year age groups, the share of persons attending school was 4% and 3%, respectively, with slightly higher shares for males (Fig. 45). Such trends could be explained by graduation from school after 19 years of age and entering the labour market or getting married. This data demonstrates that there are equal conditions of access to school education for females and males, which is a good sign in terms of gender equity among youth in Vanuatu.

It is important to analyze why some respondents answered that they were not attending school. The distribution of respondents who answered that they did not attend school, by ever having attended school, is presented in Table 43. Most of those who answered that they were not attending school at the time of the 2020 census responded that they had attended school before. Therefore, it can be supposed that they received a certain level of school education. Some youth have never attended school. In younger age groups, there were slightly fewer females, while in older age groups there were slightly fewer males (Table 43):

- In age group 12–14, 4.8% of females and 5.4% of males have never attended school.
- In age group 15–19, 4.0% of females and 4.9% of males have never attended school.
- In age group 20–24, 5.8% of females and 5.6% of males have never attended school.
- In age group 25–29, 6.4% of females and 5.8% of males have never attended school.
- In age group 30, 9.7% of females and 9.3% of males have never attended school.

Table 43: Proportion of youth aged 12–30, by school attendance and sex (%).

Age group	Sex	Don't know	NA	No, never attended school	Yes	Total
12-14	Female	5.0	74.0	4.8	17.0	100.0
	Male	4.0	73.0	5.4	18.0	100.0
	Total	**4.0**	**73.0**	**5.1**	**17.0**	**100.0**
15-19	Female	13.0	47.0	4.0	36.0	100.0
	Male	12.0	45.0	4.9	39.0	100.0
	Total	**12.0**	**46.0**	**4.4**	**37.0**	**100.0**
20-24	Female	2.0	12.0	5.8	80.0	100.0
	Male	2.0	13.0	5.6	79.0	100.0
	Total	**2.0**	**12.0**	**5.7**	**79.0**	**100.0**
25-29	Female	2.0	4.0	6.4	88.0	100.0
	Male	6.0	4.0	5.8	84.0	100.0
	Total	**4.0**	**4.0**	**6.1**	**86.0**	**100.0**
30	Female	3.0	3.0	9.7	84.0	100.0
	Male	3.0	3.0	9.3	85.0	100.0
	Total	**3.0**	**3.0**	**9.5**	**84.0**	**100.0**
Total population aged 12-30	Female	6.0	30.0	5.4	59.0	100.0
	Male	6.0	31.0	5.6	57.0	100.0
	Total	**6,0**	**31,0**	**5,5**	**58,0**	**100,0**

Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

Compared to the 2009 census, in 2020 the proportion of persons who had never attended school decreased significantly. In the 15–19 and 20–24 age groups, it declined almost two-fold: from 8% of females and 9% of males aged 12–14 in 2009 to 4% and 5%, respectively, in 2020, and from 10% of both sexes in the 20–24 and 25–29 age groups in 2009 to 6% in 2020 (Table 44). This is a significant improvement. It shows that school education has become more universal and the transformation of Vanuatu's education system is on the way to achieving SDG 4 (Quality education).

Table 44: Proportion of youth who have never attended school, by sex and age group, 2009 and 2020 census (%).

Age group	2009		2020	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
12 - 14	-	-	4.8	5.4
15 - 19	8	9	4.0	4.9
20 - 24	10	10	5.8	5.6
25 - 29	10	10	6.4	5.8
30	-	-	9.7	9.3
Total	**9**	**9**	**5.4**	**5.6**

Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

6.5 Post-secondary school education

Table 45 and Figure 46 present data on the distribution of youth aged 20–30 by completion of post-secondary school education (college, university or postgraduate education), by age and sex in 2020. According to the data, 3.8% of all youth aged 20–30 (1994 persons) completed post-secondary education (4.0% of all males (1,036 persons) and 3.6% of all females (958 persons). The figures indicate an insignificant gender gap.

In Pacific Island countries, there is a significant difference in the share of people with post-secondary education. The share of persons aged 25 years and over who have completed post-secondary education was 29% in Palau, 28% in Samoa, 26% in Cook Islands, 17% in Fiji, 6% in Nauru and 5% in Kiribati.[42]

The highest share of persons who had completed post-secondary education was among 30 year-olds, amounting to 6% of total persons in this age group. In the 25–29 age group, 5% had completed post-secondary education. In the 20–24 age group, the share of persons who had completed post-secondary education was much lower (2%), possibly because young men and women in this group may still be obtaining an education (Table 45).

[42] The status of Pacific education: a sector analysis based on internationally comparable statistics. Pacific Community (SPC). 2021. p. 25.

Table 45: Distribution of youth aged 12–30 by completion of post-secondary school education, by age and sex (%).

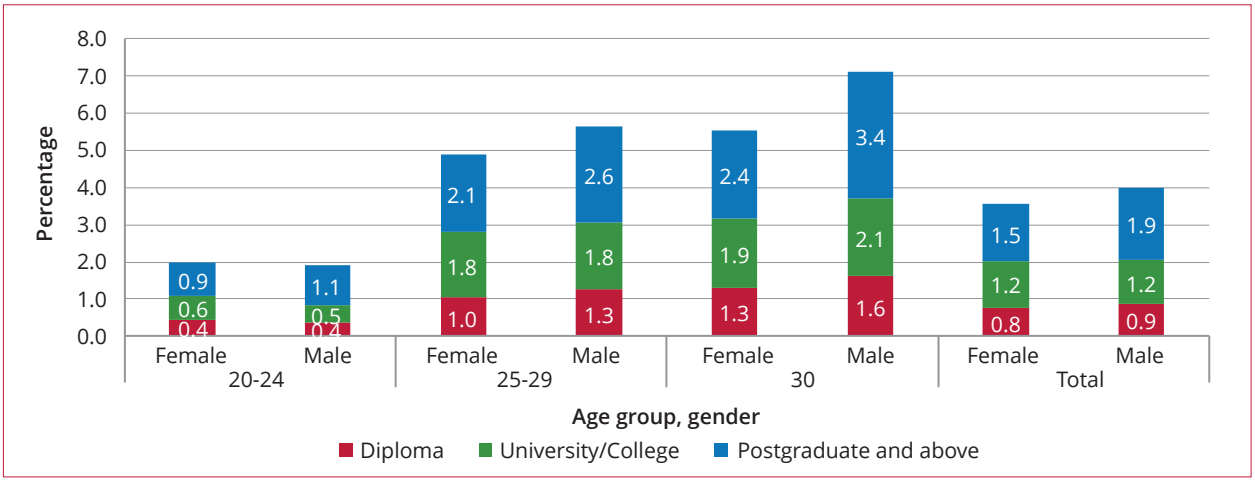
Age group	Sex	Diploma	University/ College	Postgraduate and above	Other	Total
20-24	Female	0.4	0.6	0.9	98.0	100.0
	Male	0.4	0.5	1.1	98.1	100.0
25-29	Female	1.0	1.8	2.1	95.1	100.0
	Male	1.3	1.8	2.6	94.4	100.0
30	Female	1.3	1.9	2.4	94.5	100.0
	Male	1.6	2.1	3.4	92.9	100.0
Total by sex	Female	0.8	1.2	1.5	96.4	100.0
	Male	0.9	1.2	1.9	96.0	100.0
Total by age group	20-24	0.4	0.5	1.0	98.1	100.0
	25-29	1.1	1.8	2.3	94.8	100.0
	30	1.4	2.0	2.9	93.7	100.0
	Total	**0.8**	**1.2**	**1.7**	**96.2**	**100.0**

Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

In terms of gender equity, there were small differences between males and females for completion of post-secondary education and level (Fig. 46). In the 20–24 age group, slightly more females than males completed post-secondary education (females: 250 persons, 2% of females aged 20–24; males: 238 persons, 1.9% of males aged 20–24). In other age groups, there were slightly more males than females.

In terms of highest educational level completed, slightly more women than men completed university or college in the 15–19 and 20–24 age groups, and received diplomas in the 20–24 age group. In all other cases, there were slightly more men, including at postgraduate level and above, in all age groups (Table 45 and Fig. 46).

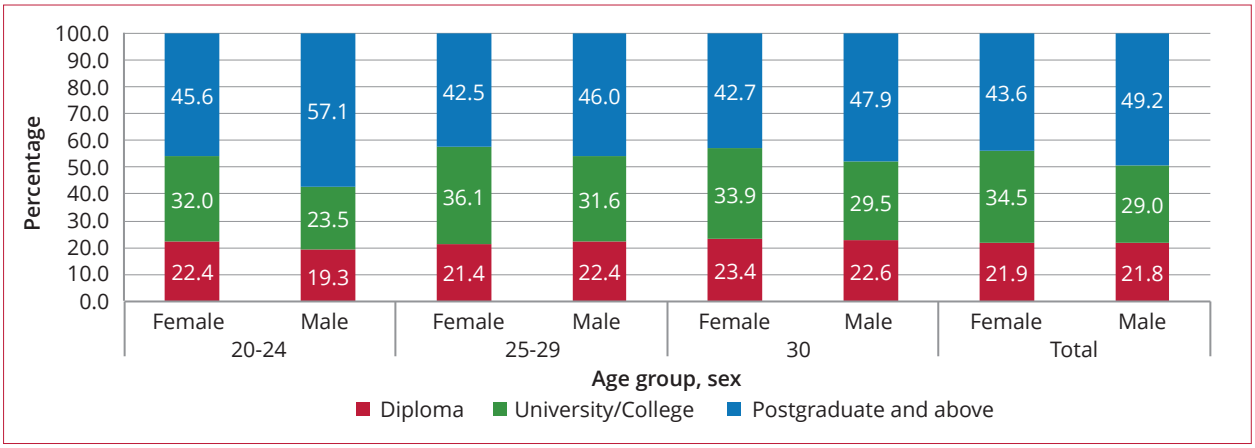
Figure 46: Proportion of all youth aged 20–30 who completed post-secondary school education, by age and by sex, 2020 census (%).



Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

Figure 47 shows the proportion of youth who completed post-secondary education. In all age groups, slightly more females completed university or college, and slightly more males completed postgraduate and higher levels of education.

Figure 47: Proportion of all youth aged 15–30 who completed post-secondary school education, by age and sex, 2020 census (%).

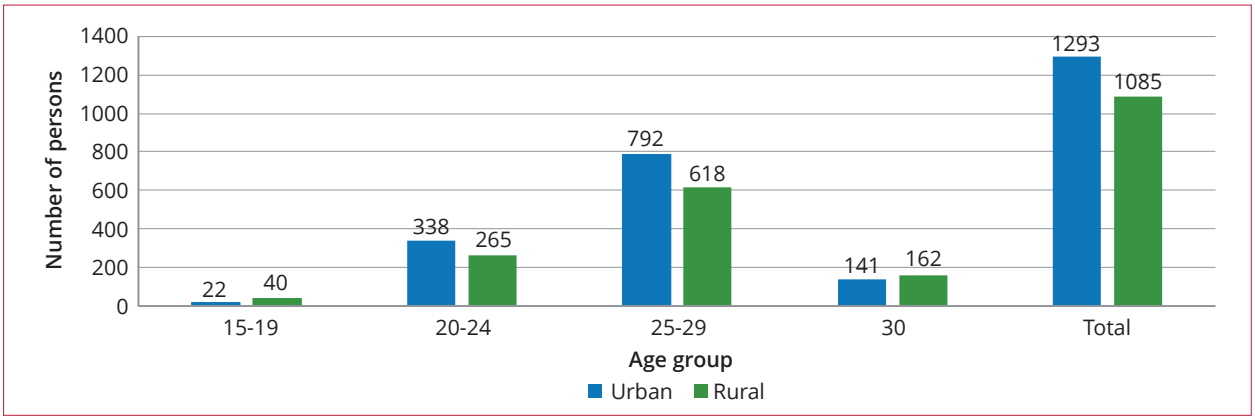


Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

6.6 Higher education

Figure 51 shows the distribution and number of older youth (15–30 years old) with higher education, by urban and rural area. According to the 2020 census, the level of higher education was very low. Only 3% of the 15–30 age group had a higher education. In rural areas, it was 2% and in urban areas, nearly 6%. Around 54% of young people aged 15–30 years with higher education lived in an urban area, and 46% in a rural area. There was a large difference in the absolute number of youth with higher education between rural and urban areas (18 persons versus 208 persons, respectively; from 7 to 29 percentage points).

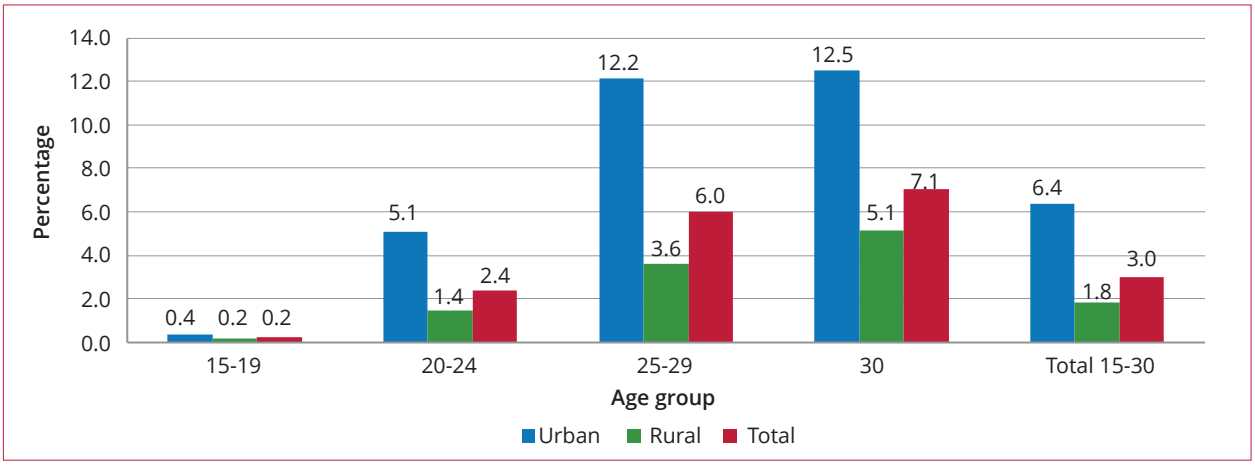
Figure 48: Number and proportion of older youth (15–30 years old) with higher education, by urban and rural areas, 2020 census.



Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

Figure 49 shows the share of older youth (aged 15–30) with higher education in relation to the total number of youth, by age group and area of residence. There were big differences, ranging from 2 times to almost 4 times, demonstrating a large gap between urban and rural youth in terms of level of education.

Figure 49: Proportion of older youth aged 15–30 with higher education (relative to all youth in that age group), by urban and rural area and by age group, 2020 census (%).



Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

6.7 Summary

Vanuatu made good progress between the 2009 and 2020 censuses in increasing literacy levels, with 93% of the overall population aged 15–30 years attaining high levels. The literacy rate for females (91%) was lower than for males (95%). This value was significantly higher than the value (84.8%) identified in the 2009 census[43] and a little higher than that for Vanuatu's total population (93%).

In Vanuatu, the majority of youth aged 12–14 were attending school (73.5% of the total). The gender difference was less than 1 percentage point in favor of females (74% of females, 73% of males). The share of youth who were attending school decreased for older age groups. This is a natural phenomenon of graduating from school, entering the labour market, or getting married.

The share of youth aged 12–30 who had never attended school was 6%. This proportion was a significant decrease since 2009 (from 9% to 5.5% of all youth aged 12–30). This improvement in access to schooling indicates that school education has become more universal.

In Vanuatu, 20% of youth 12–30 have completed primary education; 36% of youth aged 12–30 have completed lower and upper secondary education; and 2% of youth aged 12–30 have completed post-secondary education.

The level of higher education was 3% of youth aged 15–30. The share of youth with higher education was three times greater in urban than in rural areas (6% vs 2%).

The small gender differences in access to schooling and in educational attainment demonstrate that there were equal conditions for females and males, testifying to gender equity for Vanuatu youth.

[43] Vanuatu National Statistics Office, 2009 National Population and Housing Census, Analytical Report Volume 2.

CHAPTER 7. YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION

The issue of youth employment is important for societies and states, as confirmed by international organizations.[44] In the 2030 Agenda, the international community committed to increasing youth employment opportunities and to substantially reducing the proportion of youth not in education, employment or training (SDG 8.6). Young people form a specific socioeconomic group that needs additional support on the labour market.[45] Unemployed young people lose their professional skills and qualifications.[46] The results may include a lack of qualified human resources in the country, an increase in the unemployment level, and crime among young people.[47] The labour statistics on youth provide information to assist governments and society to design, implement and monitor policies to promote youth employment.[48]

The working-age population is the population above the legal working age. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), to promote international comparability, the working-age population is often defined as all persons aged 15 and older, but this may vary from country to country based on national laws and practices.[49] For many countries, this age corresponds directly to societal standards for education and work eligibility. In Vanuatu, the law establishes the minimum age for employment at 14 years-old. According to the 2020 census, labour force participation for the 12–14 year-old age group was null.

In 2019, Vanuatu acceded to the ILO Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), which set the minimum age for work at 14 years-old and brought Vanuatu into compliance with international standards. The convention came into force in 2020.[50] Permission to work from the age of 14 years indicates the existence of such a phenomenon in the country. However, the lack of data on 14 year-olds in the labour force indicates either the inability of these respondents to answer the questions sincerely, or the absence of such a phenomenon. The labour force participation of youth aged 15–30 years was therefore analysed.

7.1 Participation of young people in the labour force

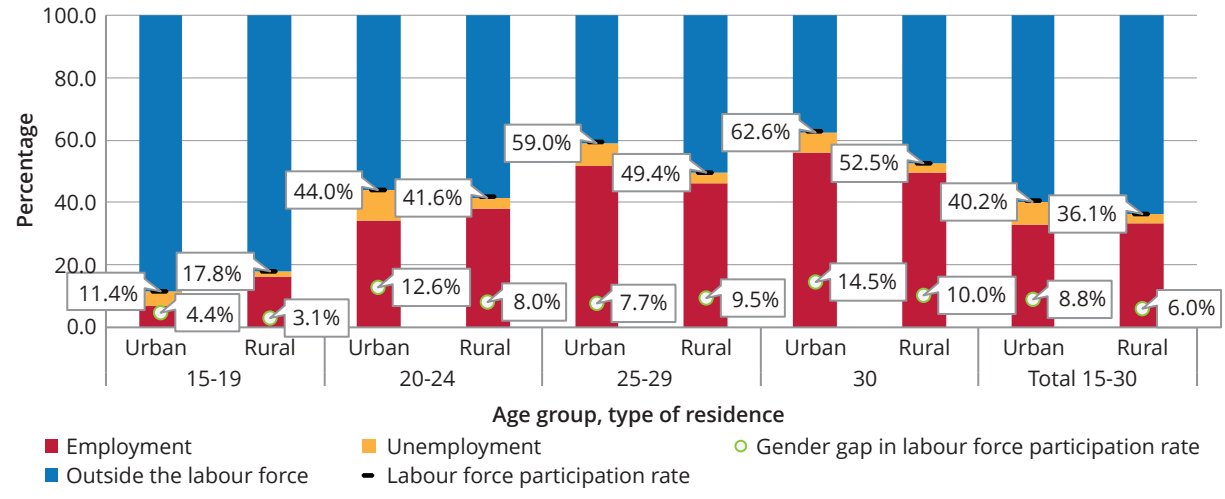
According to the ILO, the labour force participation rate is a measure of the proportion of a country's working-age population that engages actively in the labour market, either by working or looking for work.[51] In this study, the youth labour force participation rate expresses the share of the working-age youth population (15–30 years old) that is in the labour force and therefore actively participating in the labour market (either by being in employment or by actively seeking employment) as a percent of the total population aged 15–30 years.

44 https://www.un.org/development/desa/youth/wp-content/uploads/sites/21/2018/12/WorldYouthReport-2030Agenda.pdf
45 Linking income support measures to active labour market policies. International Labour Organization. 2021.
46 Pissarides, C. A. 1992. Loss of skill during unemployment and the persistence of employment shocks. The Quarterly Journal of Economics, 107(4), 1371–1391. https://doi.org/10.2307/2118392 ; V. Ortego-Marti, Loss of skill during unemployment and TFP differences across countries, European Economic Review, Volume 100, 2017. 215-235, ISSN 0014-2921, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.euroecorev.2017.08.006
47 Global employment trends for youth 2022: Investing in transforming futures for young people. Geneva: ILO, 2022. ISBN 978-92-2-036767-4
48 Ibid.
49 Minimum Age Convention, 1973, No. 138. https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=:P12100_ILO_CODE:C138
50 Government of Vanuatu. Employment Act (Cap 160). Enacted: May 30, 1983.; ILO NORMLEX. Ratifications of ILO Conventions: Vanuatu. Accessed April 7, 2020. https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=normlexpub:11200:0::no: :p11200_instrument_sort,p11200_country_id:2,103350
51 ILO Labour force estimates and projections: 1990-2030 (2017 edition). Methodological description. November 2017. pp. 7-8.

As Figure 50 shows, there were significant gender, age and urban-rural differences in labour force participation. In 2020, the share of youth 15–30 years who participated in the labour force was low, with a trend to increase with age. The low working activity in the 15–19 age group can be explained by the high proportion of youth in this group in study (44% of the total; 46% of females, 43% of males).

The labour force participation rate was higher in urban areas in all age groups, except for youth aged 15–19 years old. Again, the low participation of urban youth in this group can be explained by their higher attendance at educational institutions in urban areas.

Figure 50: Composition of the working-age youth population (15–30 years) by labour force status in rural and urban areas and by age group (%).



Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

7.2 Youth labour force participation by place of residence

Table 46 shows the share of the labour force and the inactive population as part of the total population in private households aged 15 years and over, by sex and region. The inactive population was substantially larger than the labour force for all rural regions except Sanma and for both sexes. The high proportion of inactivity was not due to old age, but to limited possibilities for economic activities. In urban areas, the labour force was larger than the inactive population, indicating that opportunities for inclusion in economic activities in rural areas were substantially less favorable than in urban areas. The only exception was Sanma, which can be explained by its immediate connection with the urban area of Luganville on the island of Espiritu Santo.

Table 46: Share of the labour force and inactive population as part of the total population in private households aged 15 years and over, by sex and region (%).

Indicator/ Region	Labour force			Inactive population		
	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females
Vanuatu	**46.7**	**51.5**	**42.1**	**53.3**	**48.5**	**57.9**
Urban	54.1	61.2	47.2	45.9	38.8	52.8
Port Vila	54.9	61.2	48.8	45.1	38.8	51.2
Luganville	51.8	61.4	42.5	48.2	38.6	57.5
Rural	44.3	48.3	40.4	55.7	51.7	59.6
Torba	40.3	44.1	36.4	59.7	55.9	63.6
Sanma	61.0	65.1	56.8	39.0	34.9	43.2
Penama	43.6	47.1	40.1	56.4	52.9	59.9
Malampa	48.1	51.0	45.2	51.9	49.0	54.8
Shefa	45.3	50.3	40.4	54.7	49.7	59.6
Tafea	24.0	27.0	21.2	76.0	73.0	78.8

Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

Overall, the economic activity of Vanuatu's population was low. The active population on a national level was only 46.7%. This value was much lower than the world average (60.1%) and lower than the value reported for Fiji for 2016 (57.6%).[52] The activity of women (42.1%) was much lower than that of men (51.5%). This indicates that opportunities for finding decent jobs were limited and that the socioeconomic position of various groups of the population may be unfavorable. Further details of the economic position of men and women in Vanuatu by region are analysed below.

Table 47 shows the labour force participation rates of young people aged 15–30 years by age group and sex. The work activity of young women was much lower than that of young men in both urban and rural areas. The labour force participation rate of youth aged 15–30 in Vanuatu was 34% for females and 41% for males. In urban areas, it was 36% for females and 45% for males, and in rural areas, it was 33% for females and 39% for males.

The gender gap in youth labour force participation was wider in urban areas than in rural ones in all age groups except for 25–29 years.

For urban areas, the gender gap for the 15–19 age group was 4.4 percentage points (20–24: 12.6 percentage points; 25–29: 7.7 percentage points; 30: 14.5 percentage points). For rural areas, the gender gap for the 15–19 age group was 3.1 percentage points (20–24: 8.0 percentage points; 25–29: 9.5 percentage points; 30: 10.0 percentage points).

Work activity in urban settlements was higher for both genders, except for the 15–19 age group. The urban-rural gap in labour force participation was wider among males than females in all age groups, except for 25–29 years old. For males, the urban-rural gap for the 15–19 age group was -5.7 percentage points (20–24: 4.7 percentage points; 25–29: 8.5 percentage points; 30: 12.5 percentage points). For females, the urban-rural gap for the 15–19 age group was -7.1 percentage points (20–24: 0.2 percentage points; 25–29: 10.3 percentage points; 30: 8.1 percentage points).

Table 47: Labour force participation rates for youth aged 15–30 in urban and rural areas, by age group and sex (%).

Age	Vanuatu			Urban			Rural			Gender gap urban	Gender gap rural	Urban-rural gap Female	Urban-rural gap Male
	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male				
15-19	16.4	14.6	18.0	11.4	9.2	13.6	17.8	16.2	19.3	4.4	3.1	-7.1	-5.7
20-24	42.2	37.7	46.9	44.0	37.8	50.4	41.6	37.6	45.6	12.6	8.0	0.2	4.7
25-29	52.1	47.5	56.7	59.0	55.1	62.8	49.4	44.8	54.3	7.7	9.5	10.3	8.5
30	55.2	49.9	61.0	62.6	55.8	70.3	52.5	47.7	57.7	14.5	10.0	8.1	12.5
Total 15-30	**37.2**	**33.8**	**40.5**	**40.2**	**35.8**	**44.6**	**36.1**	**33.1**	**39.1**	**8.8**	**6.0**	**2.7**	**5.4**

Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

7.3 Employment-to-population ratio

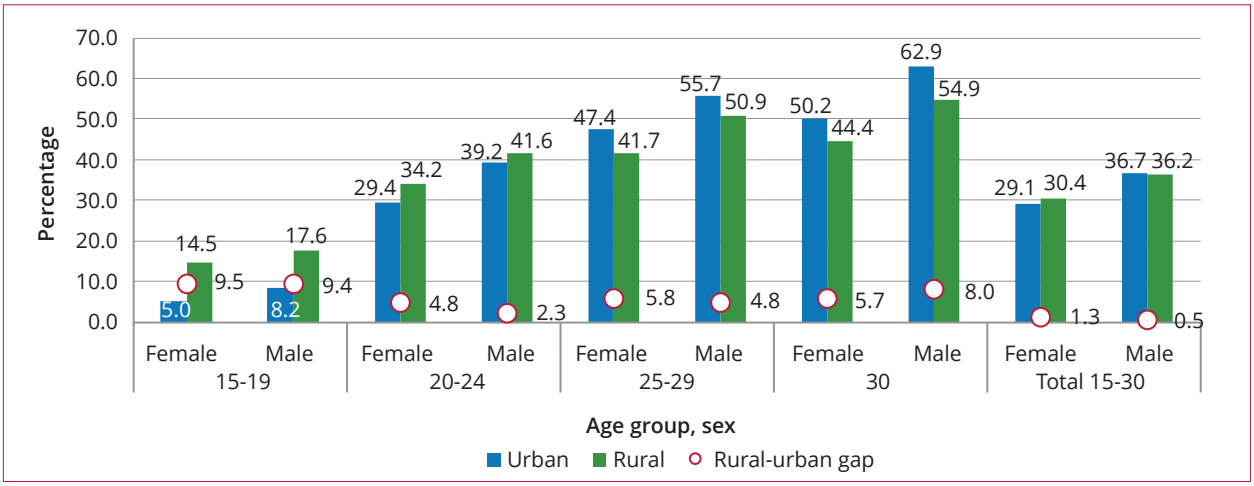
Information on the ability of an economy to create employment provides the employment-to-population ratio.[53] For young populations, it was defined as the proportion of a country's working-age youth population (15–30 years old) that was employed. Figure 51 presents the youth employment-to-population ratio in urban and rural areas by age groups and sex. It shows the low figure for youth employment in Vanuatu (33%), with the ratio increasing with age group. The lowest share (14%) was for the 15–19 age group because, as noted above, young people at this age are just starting to enter the labour market and a significant number have not yet finished their studies (almost 46% of all youth aged 15–19 were attending school). The highest share of employment (51%) was in the 30 year-old age group.

[52] https://ilostat.ilo.org/data/country-profiles/

[53] Key indicators of the labour market. Ninth edition. Geneva, International Labour Office, 2016. ISBN: 978-92-2-130121-9. p. 14.

The rural-urban gap for both sexes varied considerably (from 9.5 to 1.3 percentage points). In the 15–19 age group, the employment-to-population ratio was more than twice as high in urban areas than in rural ones: for females 5.0% and 14.5% in rural and urban settlements, respectively, and for males, 8.2% and 17.6%. For the 30 age group, it increased for females to 50.2% and 44.4% in rural and urban areas, respectively, and for males, to 62.9% and 54.9%, respectively.

Figure 51: Employment-to-population ratio of youth in urban and rural areas by age group and sex (%).

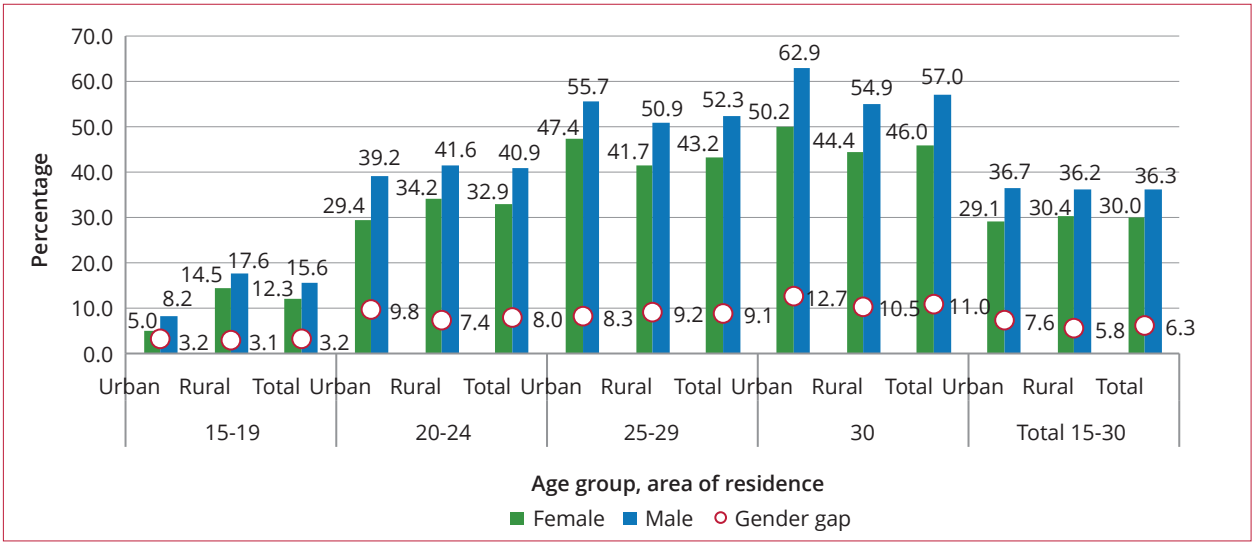


Source: Own calculations based on 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

For younger groups, involvement in market-related activities was lower in urban areas (the employment-to-population ratio in the 15–19 age group was 5.0 for females and 8.2 for males; 20–24: 29.4 for females and 39.2 for males). For older groups, engagement in the labour market was higher in urban areas (the employment-to-population ratio in the 25–29 age group was 47.4 for females and 55.7 for males; 30 age group, 50.2 for females and 62.9 for males).

Figure 52 shows the composition of the youth employment-to-population ratio by sex and age group in urban and rural areas, and the gender gap in urban and rural areas. The share of employed males (36.3% of the total aged 15–30) was significantly higher than females (30.0% of total aged 15–30) in both urban (36.7% of males versus 29.1% of females aged 15–30) and rural (36.2% of males versus 30.4% of females aged 15–30) areas in all age groups. The gender gap was notable, varying from 3 to 13 percentage points, and was wider in urban settlements.

Figure 52: Employment-to-population ratio in urban and rural areas, by sex and age group (%), and gender gaps.



Source: Own calculations based on 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu, Basic Tables, Volume 1.

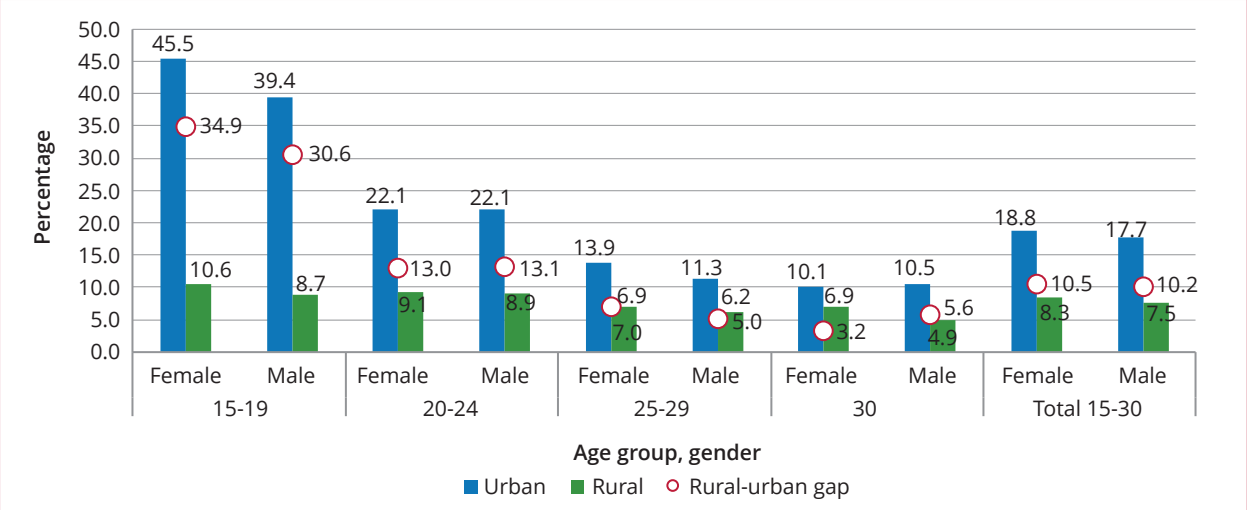
7.4 Unemployment rate

The unemployment rate reflects the inability of an economy to provide employment for those who want to work but are not doing so, even if they are available for employment and actively seeking work.[54] For youth, it is calculated by expressing the number of unemployed young persons as a percentage of the total number of young persons in the labour force, which is also known as the economically active population (the sum of the number of young population employed and the number of young population unemployed).

Figure 53 presents the unemployment rate for youth in urban and rural areas by sex and age group, and the rural-urban gap. The highest value of the unemployment rate (45.5% for females and 39.4% for males) was in urban areas among youth aged 15–19. Labour participation in rural areas in this age group was more than twice as high as for youth in urban areas (the employment-to-population ratio in rural and urban settlements was 5.0% and 14.5% for females, respectively, and 8.2% and 17.6% for males).

The unemployment rate among both sexes differed between territories. It was significantly higher in urban settlements in all age groups, with the variation in the rural-urban gap ranging from 35 to 3 percentage points depending on age group.

Figure 53: Unemployment rate for youth in urban and rural areas, by age group and sex (%), and the rural-urban gap.

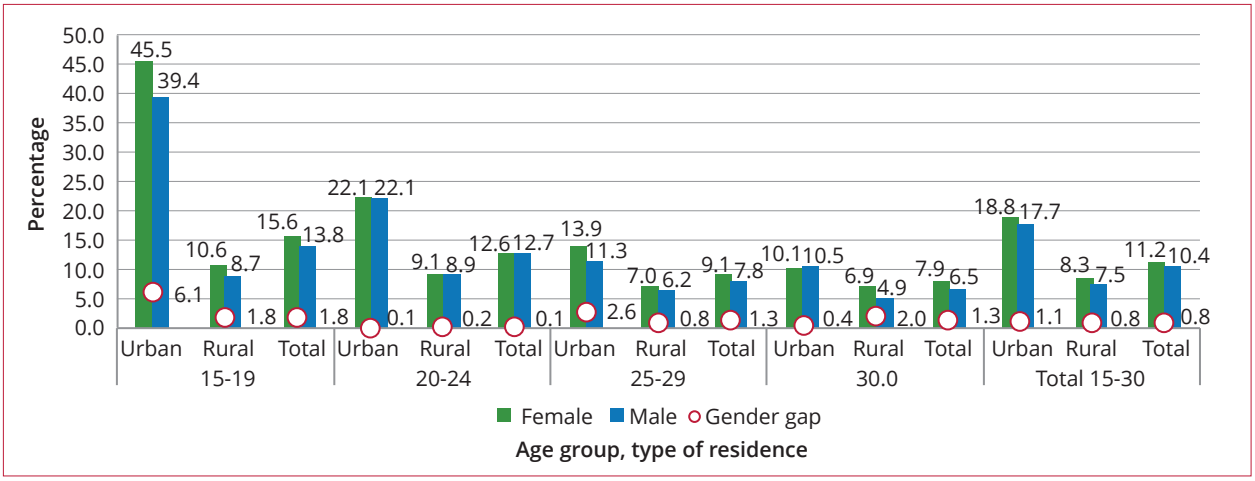


Source: Own calculations based on 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu, Basic Tables, Volume 1.

Figure 54 presents the unemployment rate for youth in urban and rural areas by age group and sex, and the gender gap. Female unemployment was slightly higher (19% of all females aged 15–30) than for males (18% of all males aged 15–30), with the exception of the 30 age group. The most significant gender difference was in the 15–19 age group in urban areas where the unemployment rate for females exceeded that for males by 6.1 percentage points. Overall, the gender gap for unemployment rates was small (smaller than for the employment-to-population ratio).

[54] Key indicators of the labour market. Ninth edition. Geneva, International Labour Office, 2016. ISBN: 978-92-2-130121-9. pp 17, 89.

Figure 54: **Unemployment rate for youth in urban and rural areas, by age group and sex (%), and the gender gap.**



Source: Own calculations based on 202, National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu, Basic Tables, Volume 1.

7.5 Occupations of employed youth

Table 48 shows the distribution of employed youth according to the nature of the business or organization they worked in, by age groups.

The most common occupations were skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery work (25% of total youth; 24% of employed females and 26% of employed males; 19,835 persons – 10,388 males and 9,447 females); elementary occupations (23% of total youth 15–30; 25% of employed females, 21% of employed males; 18,087 persons – 8,268 males and 9,819 females); service and sales workers (9% of total youth 15–30; 10% of employed females, 8% of employed males; 7,484 persons – 3,337 males and 4,147 females).

The lowest number and share of women were among plant and machine operators, and assemblers (1% of the total; 1.5% of males, 0.05% of females; 616 persons – 596 males and 20 females). The lowest number and share of men were among managers (0.4% of the total; 0.4% of males, 0.4% of females; 321 persons – 173 males and 148 females). The number and share of professionals were 2.7% of the total (2,184 persons), 2.1% of males (832 persons) and 3.4% of females (1,352 persons). In the 25–29 and 30 age groups, the share of professionals was higher (females around 6.1% to 6.8%, and males 3.6% to 5.2%).

Table 48: Composition of youth aged 15–30 according to the nature of the business or organization they worked in, by age group and sex (%).

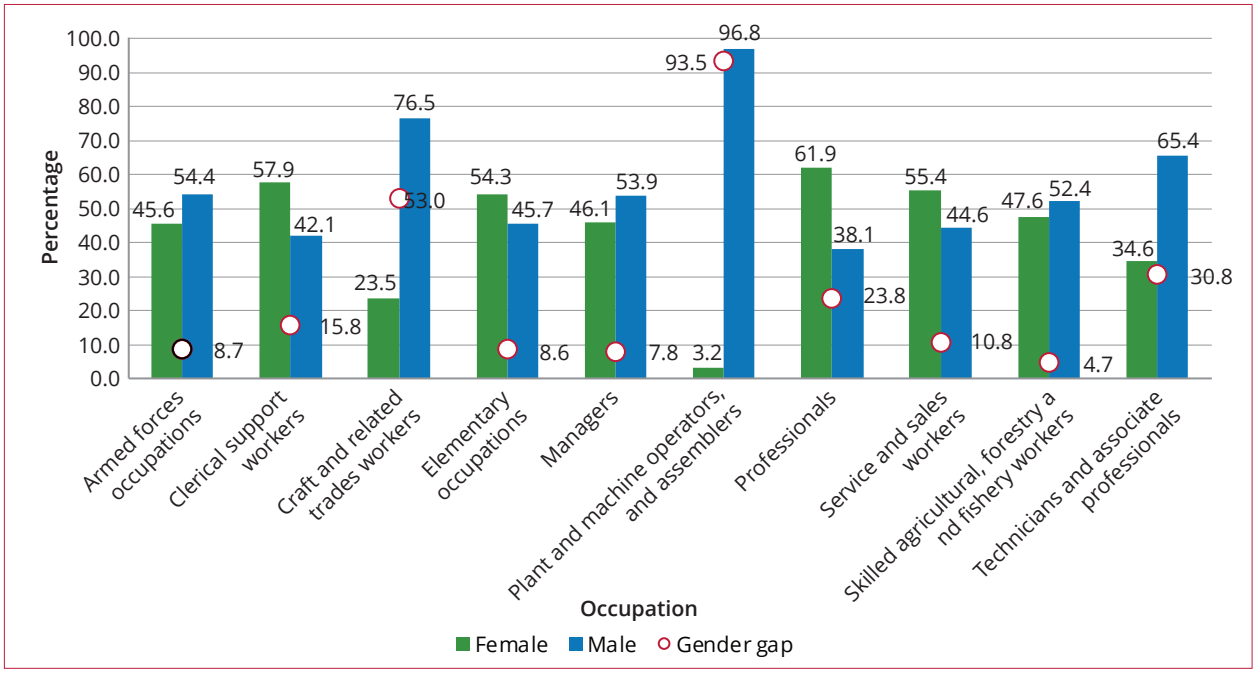
Age/sex	15-19			20-24			25-29			30			Total 15-30		
Nature of business	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
Armed forces occupations	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.9	0.8	0.4	0.8	0.6	0.5	0.7	0.6
Clerical support	0.3	0.4	0.4	1.6	1.2	1.4	2.2	1.5	1.9	2.4	1.6	2.0	1.4	1.0	1.2
Craft and related trades	0.7	1.2	0.9	1.2	4.1	2.7	1.2	5.0	3.1	1.6	5.5	3.5	1.0	3.4	2.2
Elementary occupations	18.1	17.8	17.9	27.8	23.0	25.5	27.6	21.7	24.7	27.9	23.4	25.7	24.6	20.8	22.7
Managers	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.7	0.9	0.8	1.2	1.3	1.3	0.4	0.4	0.4
Plant and machine operators, and assemblers	0.0	0.2	0.1	0.1	1.4	0.7	0.1	2.8	1.4	0.1	3.1	1.6	0.1	1.5	0.8
Professional	0.8	0.7	0.8	2.8	1.7	2.3	6.1	3.6	4.9	6.8	5.2	6.1	3.4	2.1	2.7
Service and sales	5.5	5.4	5.4	11.7	9.1	10.4	13.4	10.8	12.2	14.9	10.9	13.0	10.4	8.4	9.4
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery work	15.8	18.0	16.9	27.0	30.0	28.5	28.1	30.9	29.5	26.3	30.9	28.5	23.7	26.2	24.9
Technicians and associate professionals	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.5	0.9	0.7	0.8	1.9	1.3	1.0	1.6	1.3	0.5	1.0	0.7
NA	58.3	55.9	57.1	26.3	27.3	26.8	19.1	20.0	19.5	17.2	15.7	16.5	34.0	34.5	34.2
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

There were more females in such occupations as professional (women comprised 62% of employed youth 15–30 in this category); clerical support workers (58%); service and sales (55%); and elementary occupations (54%) (Fig. 55).

There were more males in plant and machine operation, and assembly (males comprised 97% of employed youth 15–30 in this category); craft and related trades (77%); technicians and associate professionals (65%); and skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery work (52%).

Figure 55: Share of youth aged 15–30 by type of occupation and by sex (%).



Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

7.6 Main type of economic activity for youth

Table 49 shows numbers of youth and their distribution by the main type of economic activity, and by age group and sex. The majority were involved in agriculture, forestry and fishing; 19,399 persons were employed in this economic activity (24% of all youth aged 15–30; 10,334 males (26% of all males aged 15–30) and 9,065 females (23% of all females aged 15–30). 'Activities of households as employers; undifferentiated goods and services producing activities of households for own use' involved 16,572 persons (21% of all youth aged 15–30); 6,947 males (18% of all males aged 15–30) and 9,625 females (24% of all females aged 15–30).

Education involved 4,812 persons (6% of all youth aged 15–30); 2,184 males (5.5% of all males aged 15–30) and 2,628 females (6.6% of all females aged 15–30). Other service activities involved 4,499 persons (5.7% of all youth aged 15–30); 2,008 males (5.1% of all males aged 15–30) and 2,491 females (6.2% of all females aged 15–30).

Nearly 2% of all youth aged 15–30 were involved in 'wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles' (1,860 persons). 'Other' economic activities involved less than 2% of all youth 15–30. The lowest number of young women and men were in 'mining and quarrying' (30 persons; 24 males (0.06%) and 6 females (0.02%), accounting for 0.04% of all youth (Table 48).

Figure 56 present the proportion of youth 15-30 involved in the main economic activities, by sex. Males held the majority of jobs in 'construction', 'transportation and storage', 'water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities', 'mining and quarrying', 'electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply', 'public administration and defense; compulsory social security', and 'manufacturing'. For instance, men held 97% of construction jobs and 62% of manufacturing jobs, indicating a large gender gap in these categories.

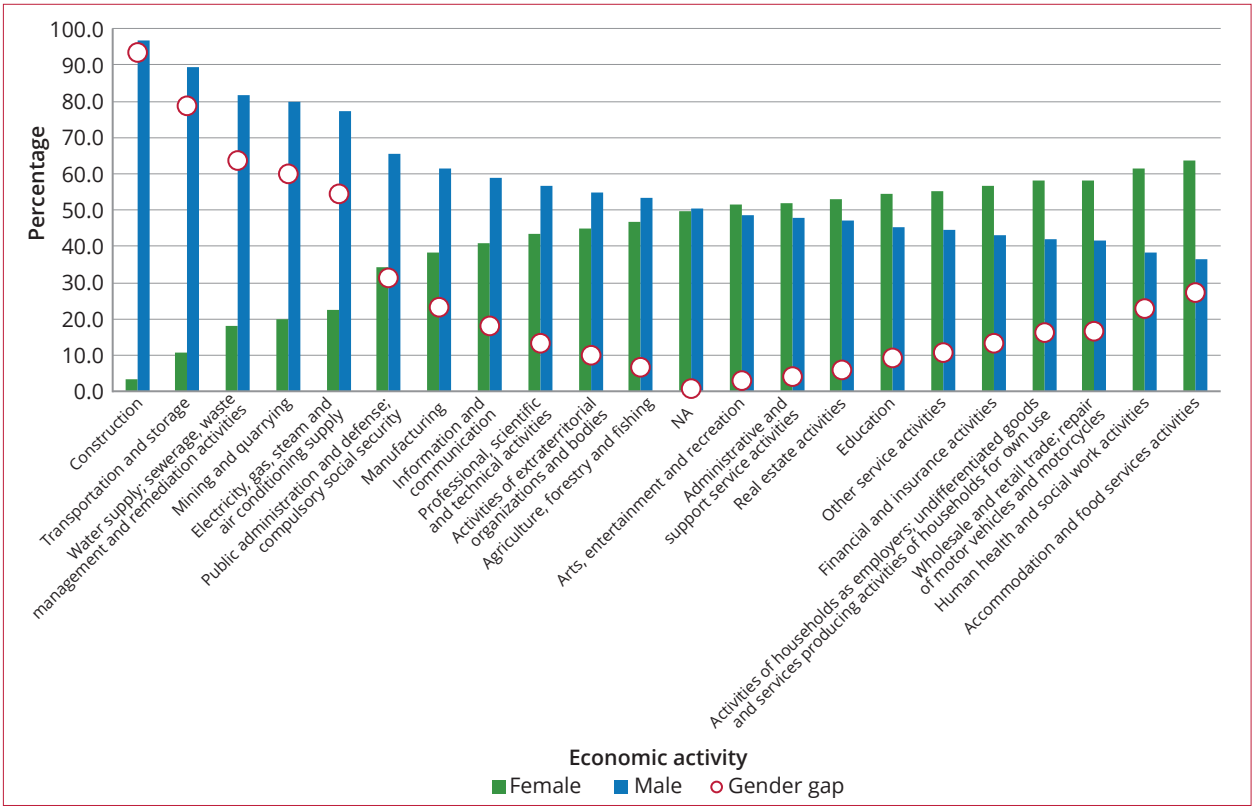
Females dominated employment in 'activities of households as employers; undifferentiated goods and services producing activities of households for own use', 'wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles', 'human health and social work activities', 'accommodation and food services activities', and 'financial and insurance activities'. For instance, women made up 64% of employees in accommodation and food services, and 57% in financial and insurance activities.

Table 49: Distribution of youth by main type of economic activity, and by age group and sex (%).

Activities	Age/Sex									
	15-19		20-24		25-29		30		Total 15-30	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	13.9	17.2	26.2	29.9	27.8	31.3	27.0	32.2	22.7	26.0
Activities of households as employers; undifferentiated goods and services producing activities of households for own use	15.5	13.9	28.4	20.4	28.2	18.4	27.8	18.9	24.1	17.5
Education	10.9	10.1	4.7	3.7	4.4	2.3	4.0	3.0	6.6	5.5
Other service activities	3.8	3.7	7.1	5.8	7.7	5.8	7.8	5.6	6.2	5.1
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	0.7	0.5	3.3	2.4	4.0	3.1	4.1	2.7	2.7	2.0
Construction	0.0	1.2	0.1	4.4	0.2	5.3	0.4	5.7	0.1	3.6
Manufacturing	0.2	0.4	1.1	1.7	1.5	2.5	1.5	2.2	1.0	1.5
Accommodation and food services activities	0.3	0.2	1.4	0.7	1.9	1.2	3.0	1.3	1.3	0.7
Transportation and storage	0.0	0.2	0.2	1.6	0.4	3.4	0.5	4.3	0.2	1.8
Administrative and support service activities	0.1	0.1	0.9	0.7	1.4	1.4	1.6	1.9	0.8	0.8
Public administration and defense; compulsory social security	0.0	0.1	0.5	1.0	0.8	1.6	1.3	1.6	0.5	0.9
Human health and social work activities	0.2	0.1	0.6	0.2	1.2	0.9	1.4	1.3	0.7	0.4
Financial and insurance activities	0.1	0.0	0.5	0.3	0.9	0.8	1.1	1.1	0.5	0.4
Activities of extraterritorial organizations and bodies	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.6	0.8	0.9	0.3	0.4
Information and communication	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.7	0.4	0.5	0.3	0.4
Arts, entertainment and recreation	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.3	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.5	0.3	0.3
Professional, scientific and technical activities	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.8	0.2	0.2
Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.4	0.1	0.5	0.3	0.5	0.1	0.3
Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1
Real estate activities	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.1	0.1	0.1
Mining and quarrying	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1
NA	53.9	52.0	23.9	24.8	17.7	19.0	16.0	14.5	31.4	32.0
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**
Total, persons	**8900**	**9679**	**12976**	**13693**	**12692**	**12368**	**12003**	**11568**	**2243**	**2054**

Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

Figure 56: Proportion of youth 15–30 involved in main economic activities, by sex (%), and gender gaps.



Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

7.7 Main activities of youth

The distribution of the youth population aged 12–30 by main activities, region and sex shows that the share involved in work or education was higher in urban areas. The share of youth aged 12–30 involved in work was 23% in urban areas and 13% in rural areas, while 27% in urban areas and 25% in rural areas were involved in education (Table 50).

Table 50: Main activities (work, education or neither) of youth population aged 12–30, by region and sex (%).

Province/ Population	Female						Male					
	Neither	In education	In work	Both	DK	Total	Neither	In education	In work	Both	DK	Total
Total	**37.5**	**15.6**	**23.4**	**1.1**	**22.4**	**100**	**31.0**	**15.5**	**27.8**	**1.3**	**24.4**	**100**
Urban	**34.7**	**24.1**	**23.5**	**1.4**	**16.3**	**100**	**26.9**	**22.0**	**29.6**	**1.3**	**20.2**	**100**
Sanma	39.5	19.9	21.5	0.5	18.6	100	23.6	19.0	32.9	0.5	24.1	100
Shefa	33.0	25.6	24.2	1.7	15.6	100	28.1	23.1	28.4	1.6	18.8	100
Rural	**38.4**	**12.9**	**23.4**	**0.9**	**24.4**	**100**	**32.3**	**13.4**	**27.3**	**1.2**	**25.7**	**100**
Malampa	33.5	13.1	26.2	1.2	26.0	100	29.7	12.6	29.1	1.3	27.2	100
Penama	35.8	9.0	23.8	0.8	30.6	100	32.5	8.8	27.4	0.9	30.4	100
Sanma	28.6	11.3	38.1	0.9	21.0	100	20.8	11.8	41.8	1.5	24.1	100
Shefa	40.5	15.1	21.6	0.9	22.0	100	33.9	15.2	26.9	1.4	22.6	100
Tafea	49.1	15.0	10.1	0.8	25.0	100	42.0	18.1	12.0	1.1	26.9	100
Torba	45.1	10.2	20.3	1.1	23.3	100	40.1	9.4	26.0	1.0	23.5	100

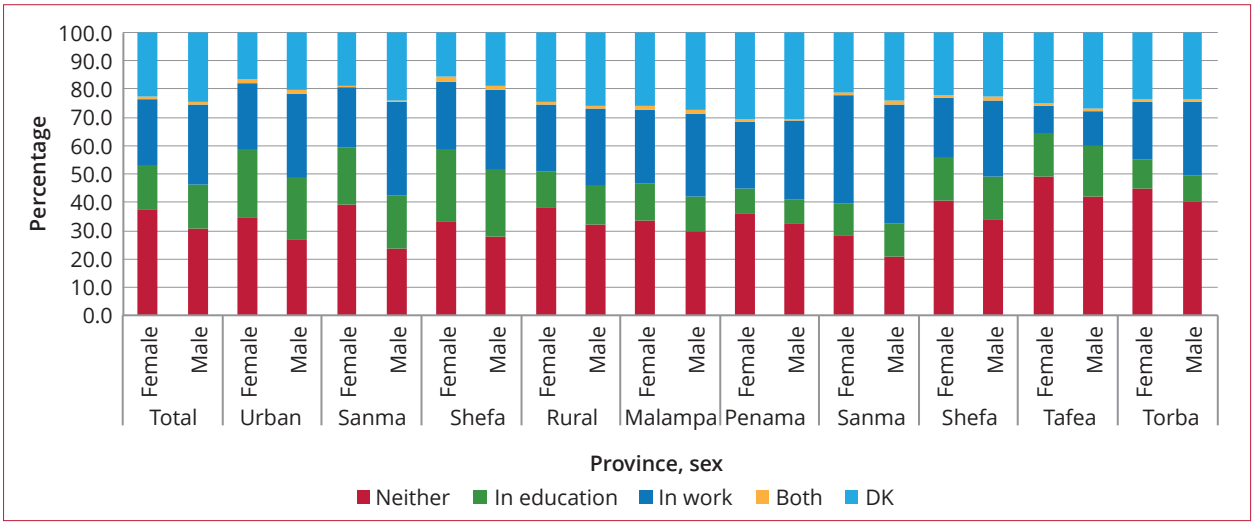
Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

Education involvement was higher among women living in urban areas. The highest proportion of people involved in education was in Shefa province (26% for women and 23% for men). In rural areas, youth participation in education was significantly lower, ranging from 9% in Penama to 18% in Tafea, with a small gender difference.

The employment rate was also higher among urban youth compared to rural youth – almost 24% versus 23% among women, and 30% versus 27% among men (Fig. 57). The largest gender gap was in the urban part of Sanma (11 percentage points). In other provinces, the gap was from 2 percentage points in Tafea to 6 percentage points in Torba.

The share of youth neither in work or education was significant, especially for females in rural areas: 35% versus 38% of females, and 27% versus 32% of males. The highest share of unemployment (49%) was among women in Tafea. There was a noticeable gender gap, with a maximum value of 16 percentage points in Sanma, and a minimum of 3 percentage points in the rural areas of Penama.

Figure 57: Distribution of the youth population aged 12–30 according to main activities, by region and sex (%).



Source: Own calculations based on 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

7.8 Main activities of youth by age group

Table 51 shows the proportion of youth aged 15–30 years involved in work, education, or neither, by age and sex. It shows a high level of unemployment among young people. Almost 42% of youth aged 15–30 were neither in work or education. The largest number of those not employed in any type of activity were in the 20–24 age group (38% of youth 15–30 were neither in work or education); 21% (6,995 persons) were females and 17% (5,694 persons) were males. The highest proportion of those involved in education was in the 15–19 age group (78%); 39% (5,942 persons) were females and 39% (5,909 persons) were males. The highest proportion of those involved in work were in the 25–29 age group (43%); 20% were females (5,034 persons) and 23% were males (5,852 persons).

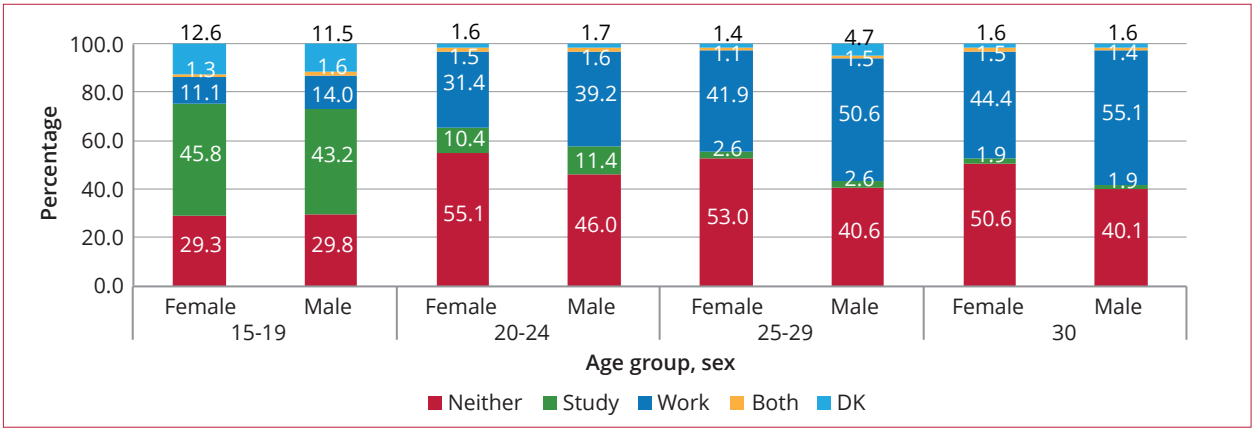
Table 51: Youth aged 12–30 years working, in education, or neither, by age and sex (%).

	Age/Sex								
	15-19		20-24		25-29		30		Total 15-30
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	
Neither	11.3	12.2	20.8	17.0	18.9	14.0	3.4	2.5	100.0
Study	38.9	38.7	8.7	9.2	2.0	2.0	0.3	0.3	100.0
Work	5.7	7.6	15.8	19.3	20.0	23.2	3.9	4.5	100.0
Both	14.4	18.8	16.6	17.9	11.6	15.0	3.0	2.8	100.0
DK	37.2	35.7	4.6	4.7	3.9	12.4	0.8	0.7	100.0
Total	16.3	17.2	15.9	15.5	15.1	14.5	2.8	2.6	100.0
Total persons	**12,976**	**13,693**	**12,692**	**12,368**	**12,003**	**11,568**	**2,243**	**2,054**	**79,579**

Source: Own calculations based on 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu, Basic Tables, Volume 1.

Figure 61 presents the percentage of youth aged 15–30 by main types of activities (work, education, neither) and by age group. It shows a high level of unemployment among young people. The largest share of those not employed in any type of activity was in the 20–24 age group (55% of women and 46% of men). This was due to a decrease in the share of those involved in education, from 46% for women and 43% for men in the 15–19 age group, to 10% and 11% in the 20–24 age group, respectively (Fig. 58). At the same time, there was a notable gender gap. The share of men neither in work or education was lower than that of women in the same age groups: by 9 percentage points (20–24 age group); 12 percentage points (25–29); and 11 percentage points (30). The share of men in work was higher than the share of women in all age groups: by 3 percentage points (15–19 age group); 8 percentage points (20–24); 9 percentage points (25–29); and 11 percentage points (30).

Figure 58: Percentage of youth aged 15–30 by main types of activities, and by age group and sex (%).



Source: Own calculations based on 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu, Basic Tables, Volume 1.

7.9 Youth overseas employment

Tables 52 and 53 present the distributions of youth aged 12–30 years who worked overseas in an overseas employment scheme in the previous 12 months (to 16 November 2019). Since the working age is set at 15 years, we did not evaluate the 12–14 age group (the results of the 2020 census showed that no-one in this group worked abroad).

According to the 2020 census, 2,080 people aged 15–30 worked overseas in the previous 12 months, which was 2.6% of the total number of people aged 15–30. They included 472 women (1.2% of all females aged 15–30) and 1,608 men (4.1% of all males aged 15–30). The vast majority of people who worked overseas were men (about 77% of the total); 49% were males aged 25–29. The lowest share was for the 15–19 age group (2.6% of all males who worked overseas and 3.2% of all females).

Table 52: Percentage of youth aged 12–30 years who during the previous 12 months (to 16 November 2019) worked overseas in an overseas employment scheme (Recognized Seasonal Employer Scheme (RSE); Seasonal Workers Program (SWP); Pacific Labour Scheme (PLS) (%).

	Age/Sex										
	15-19		20-24		25-29		30		Total 15-30		
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Total
No.	87,66	86,41	95,54	96,97	86,40	96,38	87,88	95,68	89,76	93,29	91,53
Yes, % of total 15-31	0.39	0.52	2.72	0.99	8.72	1.92	10.18	2.14	4.05	1.18	2.61
Yes, elsewhere	0.19	0.29	0.40	0.33	0.65	0.44	0.39	0.53	0.40	0.36	0.38
Yes, in Australia (PLS)	0.02	0.02	0.08	0.05	0.28	0.10	0.29	0.00	0.13	0.05	0.09
Yes, in Australia (SWP)	0.04	0.06	0.66	0.32	2.97	0.79	3.41	0.94	1.26	0.41	0.84
Yes, in New Caledonia	0.04	0.07	0.09	0.06	0.16	0.07	0.39	0.04	0.11	0.07	0.09
Yes, in New Zealand (RSE)	0.11	0.07	1.49	0.23	4.67	0.52	5.70	0.62	2.16	0.29	1.22
Not stated	0.07	0.02	0.03	0.05	0.28	0.07	0.05	0.04	0.12	0.05	0.08
NA	11.87	13.05	1.71	1.99	4.60	1.63	1.90	2.14	6.07	5.48	5.78
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.00**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Source: Own calculations based on 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu, Basic Tables, Volume 1.

7.9.1 Distribution of youth who worked overseas

Table 53 shows that the main destination for overseas work was New Zealand; 46.6% of the total number worked there (5.5% were women and 41.2% were men). A significant share of those who went to New Zealand were men in the 25–29 age group (56% of the total number).

Table 53: Distribution of youth aged 12–30 years who during the previous 12 months (to 16 November 2019) worked overseas in an overseas employment scheme, such as RSE/SWP/PLS.

	Age/Sex										
	15-19		20-24		25-29		30		total 15-30		
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	total
Total 15-30, persons	**13,693**	**12,976**	**12,368**	**12,692**	**11,568**	**12,003**	**2,054**	**2,243**	**39,683**	**39,914**	**79,597**
Yes, total, persons	54	67	336	126	1,009	231	209	48	1,608	472	2,080
Yes, % of total youth aged 15-35 by sex	0.39	0.52	2.72	0.99	8.72	1.92	10.18	2.14	4.05	1.18	2.61
Yes, % of total who worked overseas	2.6	3.2	16.2	6.1	48.5	11.1	10.0	2.3	77.3	22.7	100.0
% of total youth aged 15-35 who worked overseas by sex and age group											
Yes, total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**
Yes, elsewhere	48	57	15	33	7	23	4	25	10	31	15
Yes, in Australia (PLS)	6	4	3	5	3	5	3	0	3	4	3
Yes, in Australia (SWP)	9	12	24	33	34	41	33	44	31	35	32
Yes, in New Caledonia	9	13	3	6	2	4	4	2	3	6	3
Yes, in New Zealand (RSE)	28	13	55	23	54	27	56	29	53	24	47
% of total youth aged 15-35 who worked overseas											
Yes, total	**2.6**	**3.2**	**16.2**	**6.1**	**48.5**	**11.1**	**10.0**	**2.3**	**77.3**	**22.7**	**100.0**
Yes, elsewhere	1.3	1.8	2.4	2.0	3.6	2.5	0.4	0.6	7.6	7.0	14.6
Yes, in Australia (PLS)	0.1	0.1	0.5	0.3	1.5	0.6	0.3	0.0	2.5	1.0	3.5
Yes, in Australia (SWP)	0.2	0.4	3.9	2.0	16.5	4.6	3.4	1.0	24.0	7.9	32.0
Yes, in New Caledonia	0.2	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.9	0.4	0.4	0.0	2.1	1.3	3.4
Yes, in New Zealand (RSE)	0.7	0.4	8.8	1.4	26.0	3.0	5.6	0.7	41.2	5.5	46.6

Source: Own calculations based on 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu, Basic Tables, Volume 1.

A third of the total number (32%) worked in Australia (7.9% were women and 24% were men). A significant share of those who worked in Australia were men in the 25–29 age group (52% of the total who went to Australia). In addition, 3.4% of the total number worked in New Caledonia, and in Australia under the PLS scheme (3.5%); 4.6% of the total number worked in other countries (7.6% were men and 7% were women).

As the data show, there was a significant gender difference in working overseas. There were more females than males only in the 15–19 age group (by 0.6 percentage points). In all other age groups, males prevailed, especially for work in New Zealand.

7.10 Summary

In 2020, the labour force participation rate of youth 15–30 years was low (37%) with significant urban-rural, age and sex differences. Work activity in urban settlements was higher for both sexes, except for youth in the 15–19 age group, which can be explained by the high proportion of this group still studying. The gender gap in youth labour force participation was wider in urban areas than in rural ones in all age groups except 25–29.

The gender gap in the youth employment-to-population ratio was notable (from 3 to 13 percentage points), and was wider in urban settlements.

The unemployment rate of youth aged 15–30 was 11%, with significant urban-rural and age differences. The unemployment rate was significantly higher in urban settlements, with variations in the rural-urban gap ranging from 35 to 3 percentage points, depending on age groups. The gender gap for unemployment rates was small, smaller than for the employment-to-population ratio.

The most common occupations were skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery work, elementary occupations, and service and sales. Youth aged 15–30 held 3% of professional occupations.

The majority of youth aged 15–30 were involved in agriculture, forestry and fishing activities (24% of the total) and in activities of households as employers; undifferentiated goods and services producing activities of households for own use (21% of total).

According to the 2020 census, 2.6% of all youth aged 15–30 worked overseas in the previous 12 months. The majority of young people who worked overseas were men (77%), with most of them aged 25–29 (49%).

CHAPTER 8. YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES

Children and youth with disabilities are among the most vulnerable demographic groups in the world and, even in developed countries, they are more likely to face serious social, economic and civil inequalities compared to people without disabilities.[55] According to the UN,[56] for many children and young people with disabilities, exclusion and isolation, as well as lack of educational and economic opportunities, are daily experiences. Youth with disabilities face the same challenges as people without disabilities, but societal prejudices, barriers, and ignorance can compound these challenges.[57]

In Vanuatu, the rights of persons with disabilities were incorporated in The People's Plan.[58] The Plan provides for the adoption of strategic actions to empower and support persons with disabilities; ensure their access to government services, buildings and public spaces; and increase their employment opportunities. Based on The People's Plan, Vanuatu has adopted a National Disability Inclusive Development Policy (2018–2025), which is aimed at ensuring that persons with disabilities 'enjoy their right to participate effectively in all areas of development in Vanuatu on an equal basis with others'.

The 2020 census provided some data on the health, education and livelihood of people with a disability and revealed that there were 5,183 young people aged 12–30 with disabilities (5.3% of the total) in Vanuatu, with most of them living in rural areas (81%).

8.1 Youth by disability status

Table 54 shows the distribution of youth aged 12–30 years by disability status, and by sex and province. The average share of people with disabilities was 5.3% of all youth aged 12–30 (2.6 women and 2.7% men). In urban areas, the share of the population with disabilities was lower than in rural areas by 1.7 percentage points (4% and 5.7%, respectively).

Table 54: Youth population aged 12–30, by disability status, sex and province (%).

Region	Total (12-30)			Without disability			With disability			NA		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Total persons	**98,176**	**49,362**	**48,814**	**88,207**	**44,230**	**43,977**	**5,183**	**2,653**	**2,530**	**4,786**	**2,479**	**2,307**
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**
Urban	**24.3**	**24.4**	**24.3**	**25.1**	**25.1**	**25.2**	**18.6**	**15.9**	**21.5**	**15.4**	**20.6**	**9.8**
Sanma	6.4	6.6	6.3	6.5	6.6	6.4	5.9	5.1	6.8	5.8	8.3	3.1
Shefa	17.9	17.8	18.0	18.7	18.5	18.8	12.7	10.7	14.8	9.6	12.3	6.6
Rural	**75.7**	**75.6**	**75.7**	**74.9**	**74.9**	**74.8**	**81.4**	**84.1**	**78.5**	**84.6**	**79.4**	**90.2**
Malampa	12.4	12.7	12.1	12.4	12.7	12.1	10.6	11.5	9.7	15.1	14.7	15.6
Penama	11.2	11.3	11.1	10.4	10.5	10.2	12.3	12.6	11.9	25.2	23.5	27.0
Sanma	14.6	14.8	14.5	14.4	14.4	14.3	20.4	20.7	20.1	13.8	14.3	13.2
Shefa	18.5	18.4	18.7	19.0	18.9	19.1	14.4	14.7	14.1	15.0	13.2	17.0
Tafea	15.1	14.8	15.4	15.1	14.8	15.3	16.7	17.8	15.7	13.9	11.8	16.1
Torba	3.8	3.7	3.8	3.7	3.6	3.7	6.9	6.8	7.0	1.7	1.9	1.5

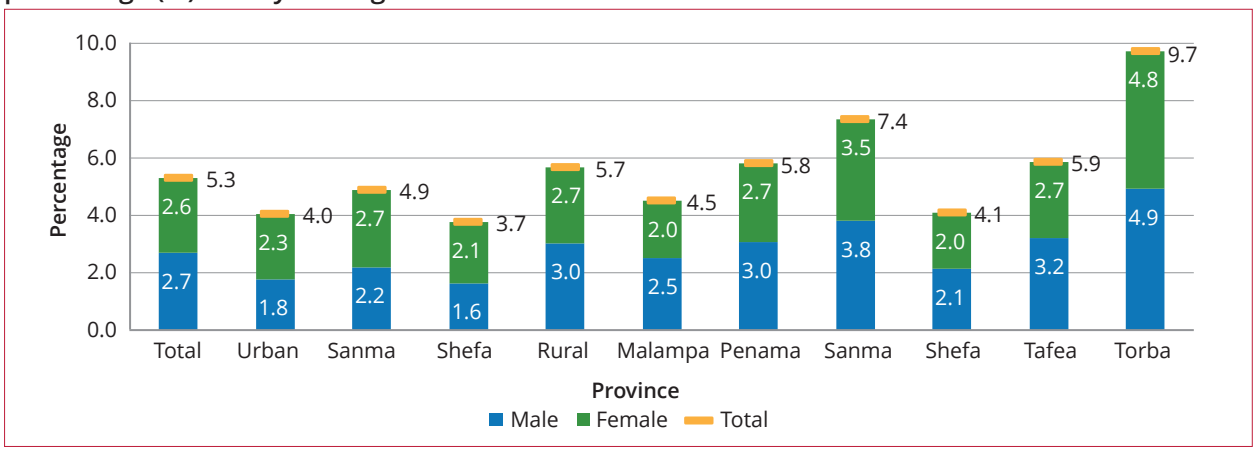
Source: Own calculations based on 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu, Basic Tables, Volume 1.

[55] Young persons with disabilities: Global study on ending gender-based violence and realizing sexual and reproductive health and rights. UNFPA, July 2018. https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/Final_Global_Study_English_3_Oct.pdf
[56] https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/youth-with-disabilities.html#conclusion
[57] Ibid.
[58] https://www.nab.vu/sites/default/files/documents/Vanuatu%20Sustainable%20Dev.%20Plan%202030-EN_0.PDF

8.1.1 Young people with disabilities by sex and place of residence

Shefa had the lowest share of youth with disabilities (3.7% of all youth aged 12–30; 2.6% were women and 2.7% were men) (Fig. 59). The highest share of persons with disabilities was in the rural province of Torba (9.7% of all youth aged 12–30; 4.8% were females and 4.9% were males). Sanma also had a high share (7.4% of all youth aged 12–30; 3.5% were women and 3.8% were men).

Figure 59: Proportion of youth population aged 12–30 with disability, by sex and province, as a percentage (%) of all youth aged 12–30.



Source: Own calculations based on 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu, Basic Tables, Volume 1.

8.1.2 Young people with disabilities by highest educational level attained

Table 55 presents the proportion of the youth population aged 12–30 with disability status by the highest educational level attained, and by sex. The share of youth with disability status amounted to 5.3% of the total youth population aged 12–30 (5,183 persons; 2.6% females and 2.7% males). However, 37% of total persons aged 12–30 with disabilities did not answer the question about the highest grade attained.

For 25% of young people aged 12–30 with disabilities, the highest level attained was primary school (23% of females and 28% of males). This was higher than the 21% of youth without disabilities (19% of females and 23% of males). Fewer youth aged 12–30 with disabilities completed lower or upper secondary school compared to youth without disabilities (Table 55).

Table 55: Proportion of youth aged 12–30 by highest educational level attained, by disability status and sex (%).

Level of education	Total			Without disability			With disability		
	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male
Preschool	0.21	0.17	0.26	**0.18**	0.15	0.22	**0.93**	0.71	1.13
Primary	20.23	18.69	21.75	**21.03**	19.44	22.60	**25.31**	22.61	27.89
Lower secondary	23.76	24.79	22.75	**25.11**	26.15	24.07	**22.79**	23.68	21.94
Upper secondary	11.79	13.19	10.40	**12.46**	13.87	11.07	**11.21**	13.48	9.05
Post-secondary	2.06	1.99	2.13	**2.15**	2.06	2.25	**2.41**	2.65	2.19
NA	41.9	41.2	42.7	**39.04**	38.31	39.76	**37.28**	36.80	37.73
Other	0.03	0.02	0.0	**0.02**	0.02	0.03	**0.08**	0.08	0.08
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	**100.00**	100.00	100.00	**100.00**	100.00	100.00
Total persons	**98,176**	**48,814**	**49,362**	**88,207**	**43,977**	**44,230**	**5,183**	**2,530**	**2,653**

Source: Own calculations based on 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu, Basic Tables, Volume 1.

More persons with disabilities (2.4%) attained post-secondary levels of education than persons without disabilities (2.1%) (Table 56). The proportion of youth with disabilities who attained Advance and Bachelor qualifications was higher than the proportion of persons without disabilities.

Table 56: Proportion of youth aged 12–30 by highest educational level attained, by disability status (%).

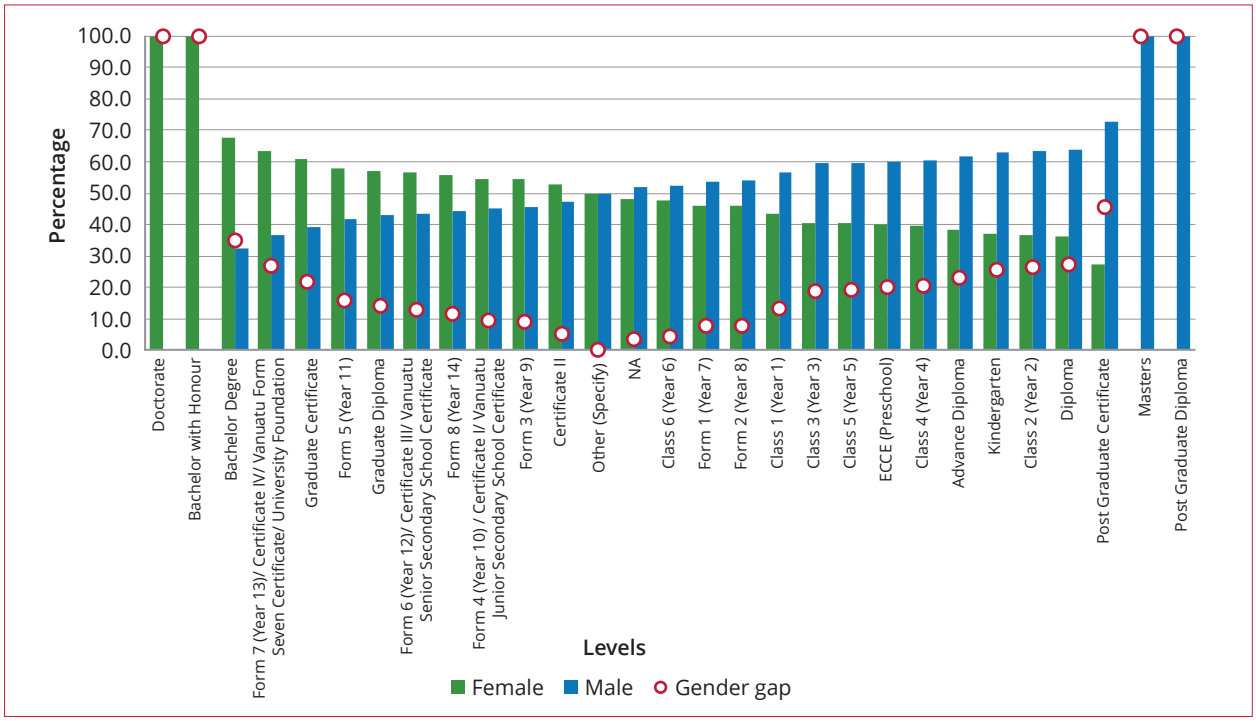
Level of education	Total	Persons without disability	Persons with disability	Youth 12-30 without disability (% of total)	Youth 12-30 with disability (% of total)
Total	**100.0**	**89.8**	**5.3**	**100.00**	**100.00**
Advance Diploma	100.0	87.0	13.0	0.10	0.25
Bachelor degree	100.0	93.3	6.7	0.68	0.83
Bachelor with Honours	100.0	85.7	14.3	0.02	0.06
Certificate II	100.0	94.7	5.3	0.38	0.37
Class 1 (Year 1)	100.0	90.0	10.0	0.38	0.71
Class 2 (Year 2)	100.0	88.2	11.8	0.76	1.74
Class 3 (Year 3)	100.0	90.9	9.1	1.84	3.14
Class 4 (Year 4)	100.0	92.6	7.4	2.70	3.65
Class 5 (Year 5)	100.0	93.6	6.4	3.57	4.15
Class 6 (Year 6)	100.0	94.4	5.6	11.78	11.92
Diploma	100.0	93.6	6.4	0.36	0.42
Doctorate	100.0	88.9	11.1	0.01	0.02
ECCE (Preschool)	100.0	77.3	22.7	0.02	0.10
Form 1 (Year 7)	100.0	94.3	5.7	5.45	5.56
Form 2 (Year 8)	100.0	94.8	5.2	5.26	4.86
Form 3 (Year 9)	100.0	95.0	5.0	5.20	4.71
Form 4 (Year 10)	100.0	95.3	4.7	9.19	7.66
Form 5 (Year 11)	100.0	94.4	5.6	2.73	2.76
Form 6 (Year 12)	100.0	95.0	5.0	4.79	4.26
Form 7 (Year 13	100.0	95.5	4.5	3.97	3.16
Form 8 (Year 14)	100.0	93.9	6.1	0.60	0.66
Graduate Certificate	100.0	95.4	4.6	0.54	0.44
Graduate Diploma	100.0	95.2	4.8	0.16	0.14
Kindergarten	100.0	77.2	22.8	0.17	0.83
Masters	100.0	97.8	2.2	0.05	0.02
Other (specify)	100.0	77.8	22.2	0.02	0.08
Postgraduate Certificate	100.0	93.9	6.1	0.19	0.21
Postgraduate Diploma	100.0	97.7	2.3	0.05	0.02
Not stated	100.0	100.0	0.0	0.01	0.00
NA	100.0	83.7	4.7	39.04	37.28

Source: Own calculations based on 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu, Basic Tables, Volume 1.

8.1.3 Young people with disabilities by completed level of education and by sex

As Figure 60 shows, there were wide gender differences in the highest levels attained among persons with disabilities. More females attained such qualifications as a Doctorate, Bachelor degree, Form 7 (Year 13), and Graduate Certificate. It should be noted, however, there were few students in some levels. For example, one person (female) attained a Doctorate; three people (all female) attained Bachelors with Honours, and seven (four females) attained a Graduate Certificate.

Figure 60: Proportions of female and male youth aged 12–30 with a disability by highest educational level attained, as a percentage of all youth aged 12–30 with a disability, by levels.



Source: Own calculations based on 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu, Basic Tables, Volume 1.

More males attained the following levels: Class 4 (Year 4), Advance Diploma, kindergarten, Class 2 (Year 2), Diploma, Postgraduate Certificate, Masters, and Postgraduate Diploma. Again, there was a small number of persons in some grades; e.g. the Postgraduate Diploma was attained by one person (male), a Masters by one person (male), and a Postgraduate Certificate by 11 persons (eight males).

8.2 Young people with disabilities by economic activity

People with disabilities more often experience negative socioeconomic outcomes, such as lower education, poorer health, lower employment, and greater poverty.[59] Disability can increase the risk of poverty and unemployment due to lack of educational opportunities, lower wages, and the increased cost of living with a disability.[60] Increased costs are incurred because of the shortage of services available to disabled people and the obstacles they face in everyday life.[61] Table 57 shows the economic activity of the youth population with disabilities.

Table 57: Economically active and inactive youth aged 12–30 years, by age group, sex, and disability status (%).

Total youth	Economically active			Economically inactive		
	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
15-19	14.1	13.3	14.8	40.3	37.5	43.4
20-24	35.0	34.8	35.1	31.5	32.1	30.9
25-29	42.5	43.2	42.0	24.0	25.8	21.9
30	8.3	8.6	8.1	4.2	4.6	3.8
Youth with disabilities	**Economically active**			**Economically inactive**		
	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
15-19	11.5	11.0	11.9	30.4	28.9	32.0
20-24	29.2	29.2	29.2	31.3	31.4	31.2
25-29	48.3	48.1	48.6	31.9	32.8	30.9
30	11.0	11.7	10.3	6.4	6.8	5.9

Source: Own calculations based on 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu, Basic Tables, Volume 1.

8.3 Employment-to-population ratio of youth with disabilities

Table 57 shows the employment-to-population ratio of youth aged 15–30 with disabilities. Clearly, the share of employed persons with disabilities increased with age for both sexes. The total share of employed persons with disability aged 15–30 was 37% of the total number of disabled people in that age group (35% for females and 39% for males). This was 4 percentage points higher than the share of employed persons aged 15–30 without disability. Employment of persons with disability was higher among males (similar to the young population without disability), but the gender gap was narrower. In other words, youth living with a disability had about a 37% chance of being economically active, while 63% were considered inactive.

The employment-to-population ratio of females aged 15–30 with disabilities (35%) was higher than the ratio of females aged 15–30 without disabilities (30%). The employment-to-population ratio of males aged 15–30 with disabilities (39%) was higher than that of males aged 30 without disabilities (36%) due to low employment in the 15–19 age group. In the higher age groups, the employment-to-population ratio of males without disabilities exceeded the ratio of males with disabilities (Table 58).

[59] World report on disability 2011. World Health Organization. ISBN 978 92 4 156418 2. p. 11
[60] World report on disability 2011. World Health Organization. ISBN 978 92 4 156418 2. p. 10
[61] Disability and development report: Realizing the Sustainable Development Goals by, for and with persons with disabilities. United Nations, New York, 2018. ISBN: 9789211303797. pp. 45, 46, 65.

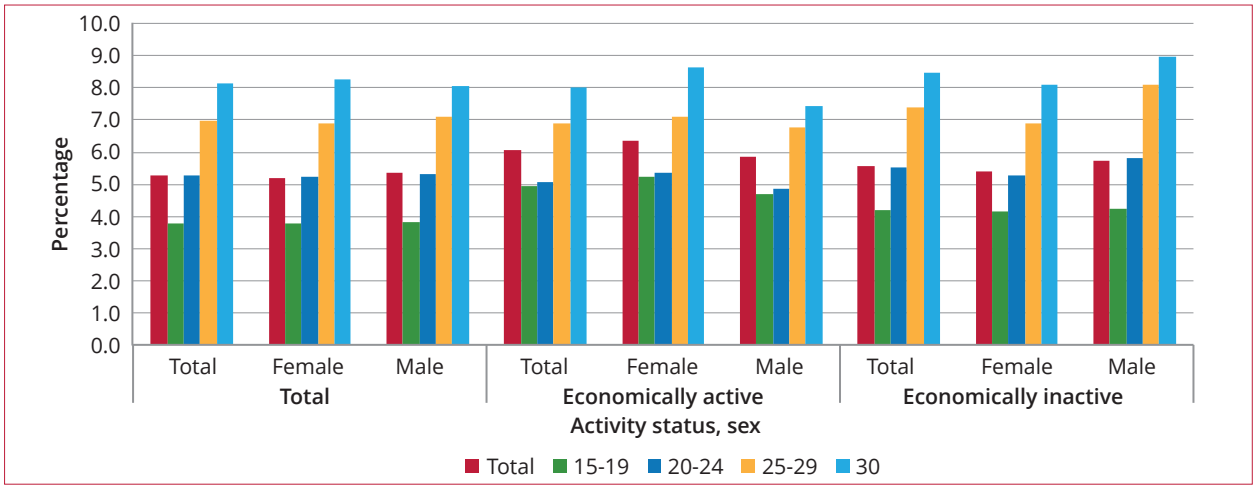
Table 58: Employment-to-population ratio of youth, by disability status and sex (%).

Age group	Youth without disabilities				Youth with disabilities			
	Total	Female	Male	Gender gap	Total	Female	Male	Gender gap
Total	**33.0**	**29.7**	**36.2**	**6.4**	**37.0**	**35.2**	**38.8**	**3.7**
15-19	13.8	12.1	15.4	3.3	18.1	17.1	19.1	2.0
20-24	36.9	32.9	41.1	8.3	35.4	33.5	37.3	3.7
25-29	47.7	43.1	52.5	9.4	47.1	44.3	49.9	5.7
30	51.3	45.8	57.3	11.6	50.3	48.1	52.7	4.6

Source: Own calculations based on 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu, Basic Tables, Volume 1.

The share of employed females with disability aged 15–19 was higher than the share of employed females without disability by 5 percentage points (17% versus 12%, respectively). For other age groups, the share of economically active females with disability was higher than the share of economically active females by 2% to 5%. The share of economically active males with disability was less than the share of economically active males by 5% to 9% (Fig. 61).

Figure 61: Share of persons with disabilities of total youth 15–30, by employment status (%).



Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

8.4 Comparison of main activities of young people with and without disabilities

Tables 58 and 59 provide information about the main activities of young people aged 12–30 by sex and disability status. The main activities for youth of both sexes with disabilities were domestic work for self and others (35% of total), full-time student (10% of total), and looking for work (4% of total), with some differences by age and sex. These activities were the same for youth without disabilities.

Domestic work for self and others was a prevalent economic activity for both sexes with disabilities (35% of the total; 37% of females, 32% of males). The gender gap for women aged 20 and older with disability was around 6 to 8 percentage points. For women aged 20 and older without disability, it was 10 to 11 percentage points (Tables 59 and 60).

Table 59: Proportions of young people with disabilities aged 15–30, by economic activity (%).

Economic activity	Female				Male				Total				
	15-19	20-24	25-29	30	15-19	20-24	25-29	30	15-19	20-24	25-29	30	15-30
Not stated	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0
Disability	10.0	6.6	6.6	4.3	12.8	10.3	7.7	6.7	11.4	8.5	7.2	5.4	8.4
Domestic work only for self and others	27.3	42.6	39.4	36.8	28.4	35.8	31.9	30.3	27.9	39.2	35.7	33.7	34.8
Full-time student	34.8	6.8	1.0	0.0	28.4	4.8	1.3	0.0	31.5	5.8	1.2	0.0	9.6
Looking for work	3.5	4.4	3.9	2.7	4.0	3.5	2.7	4.8	3.7	3.9	3.3	3.7	3.6
Other	1.4	1.2	1.2	1.1	3.1	2.3	2.2	1.8	2.3	1.7	1.7	1.4	1.8
Part-time student	3.1	0.9	0.5	1.1	1.0	2.0	0.2	0.0	2.0	1.4	0.4	0.6	1.1
Retired pensioner or income recipient	0.0	0.2	0.1	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.1
Sick or injured	2.0	2.3	1.3	2.7	2.9	3.8	3.1	3.0	2.5	3.0	2.2	2.9	2.6
Too old or infirm to work	0.4	0.0	0.4	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.3	0.2
NA	17.5	35.2	45.6	50.3	19.5	37.6	50.7	52.7	18.5	36.4	48.1	51.4	37.9
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100**	**100**	**100.**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Source: Own calculations based on 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu, Basic Tables, Volume 1.

The highest share of full-time students was in the 15–19 age group among both sexes, amounting to 32% of youth with disabilities and 50% of youth without disabilities, with the number sharply decreasing in all older groups. The share of full-time students in the 15–19 age group was higher for females with disabilities (35% of females with disabilities in this age group) by almost 6 percentage points compared to males (28% of males with disabilities in the same age group). The share of females without disabilities (52% of females in the 15–19 age group without disabilities) was almost 4 percentage points higher compared to males (48% of males in the 15–19 age group without disabilities).

The share of youth who were looking for work was lowest in the 15–19 age group and increased in the next age groups for both sexes, with and without disabilities (Tables 58 and 59). The share of job seekers among youth without disabilities was slightly lower for females in all age groups. Considering men's lesser involvement in domestic work and their higher share of the student population, it could be concluded that males were more economically active than females.

Table 60: Proportion of young people without disabilities aged 15–30, by economic activity (%).

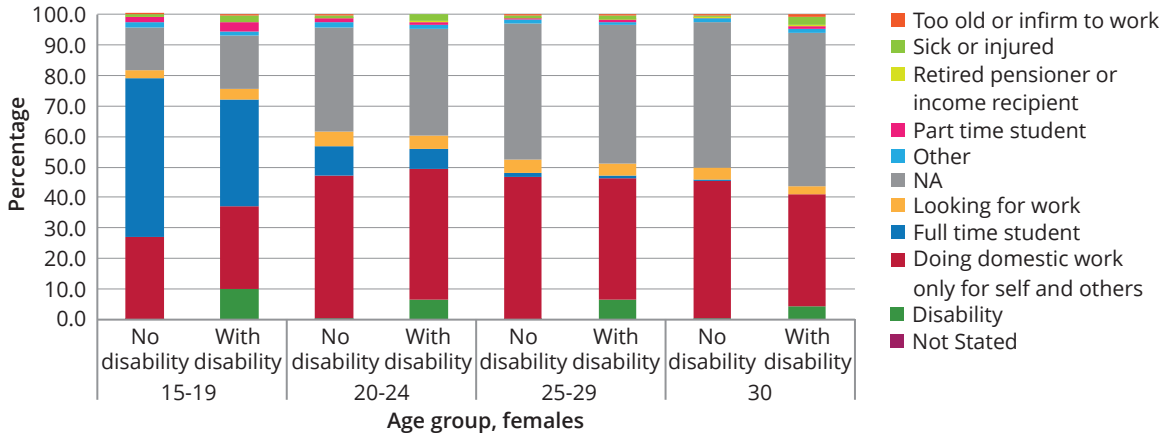
Economic activity	Female				Male				Total				
	15-19	20-24	25-29	30	15-19	20-24	25-29	30	15-19	20-24	25-29	30	Total
Not stated	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.3	0.1	15-19	20-24	25-29	30	0.1
Disability	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.0
Domestic work only for self and others	27.0	47.2	46.5	45.4	27.4	37.1	34.9	34.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	37.0
Full-time student	51.9	9.3	1.3	0.3	48.2	11.0	1.8	0.6	27.2	42.2	40.9	40.0	19.6
Looking for work	2.6	4.8	4.4	4.1	2.8	6.2	4.8	3.9	50.0	10.1	1.5	0.4	4.3
Other	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.4	1.6	1.4	1.4	1.3	2.7	5.5	4.6	4.0	1.6
Part-time student	1.8	1.3	0.4	0.3	1.7	1.5	0.5	0.3	1.7	1.6	1.5	1.4	1.2
Retired pensioner or income recipient	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	1.8	1.4	0.4	0.3	0.1
Sick or injured	0.5	0.9	0.8	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.7	0.7	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.6
Too old or infirm to work	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.5	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.1
NA	14.0	34.0	45.0	47.0	18.0	42.0	55.0	59.0	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2	35.5
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**16.0**	**38.1**	**49.8**	**52.8**	**100.0**

Source: Based on 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu, Basic Tables, Volume 1.

The share of job seekers among young people with disabilities was slightly higher for females in the 20–24 and 25–29 age groups. Considering the higher involvement of women in education, it could be concluded that females were slightly more economically active than males.

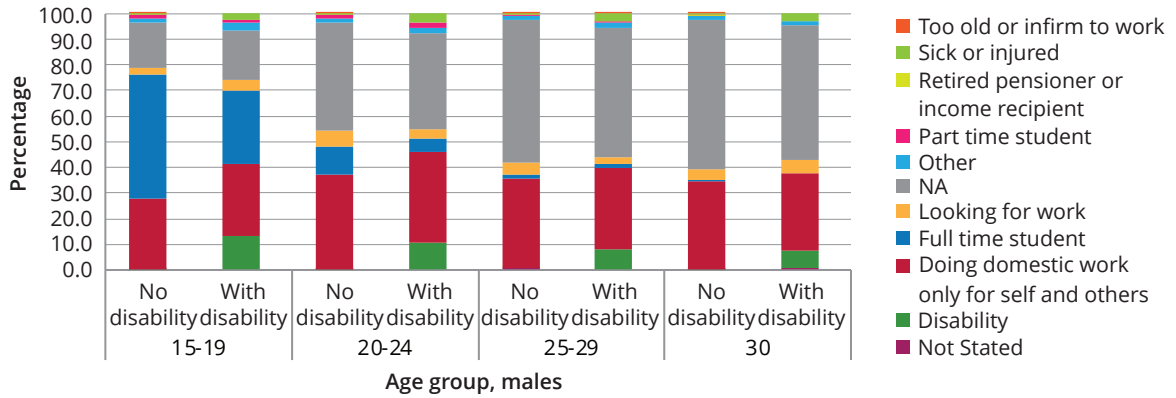
Figures 62 and 63 show comparisons of females and males with and without disabilities by type of activity (domestic work only for self and others, full-time student, looking for work, etc.).

Figure 62: Proportions of females aged 15–30 with and without disabilities, by type of activity (%).



Source: Own calculations based on 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

Figure 63: Proportions of males aged 15–30 with and without disabilities, by type of activity (%).



Source: Own calculations based on 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

8.5 Summary

The 2020 census revealed that there were 5,183 young people aged 12–30 with disabilities (5.3% of the total) living in Vanuatu, most of them in rural areas (81%). The proportion of males with disabilities was slightly higher (2.7%) than for females (2.6%). The most affected province was Torba (9.7%), while the least affected was the urban province of Shefa (3.7%).

Overall, 25% of young people aged 12–30 with disabilities completed primary education, which is higher than for youth without disabilities (21%). The proportions of youth aged 12–30 with disabilities who completed lower secondary and upper secondary education were lower than for youth without disabilities. At the same time, the share of persons who completed post-secondary education was slightly higher for persons with disabilities (2.4%) than for persons without disabilities (2.1%). There were wide gender differences among persons with disabilities in the highest levels attained.

The employment-to-population ratio of persons with disability aged 15–30 was 37% of the total, which was higher than the share of employed persons without disability in the same age group (33%). This was due to the higher employment of females with disabilities compared to female without disabilities, and the higher number of employed youth in the 15–19 age group. Employment of persons with disability was higher among males. It was the same as for the young population without disability, but the gender gap was narrower.

The main activities for youth of both sexes with disabilities were domestic work only for self and others (35% of the total), full-time student (10% of the total) and looking for work (4% of the total) with some differences by age and sex. The same activities were dominant among youth without disabilities.

CHAPTER 9. LIVING ARRANGEMENTS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

This chapter provides information on living arrangements for children and youth, based on the 2020 census.

9.1 Access to drinking water

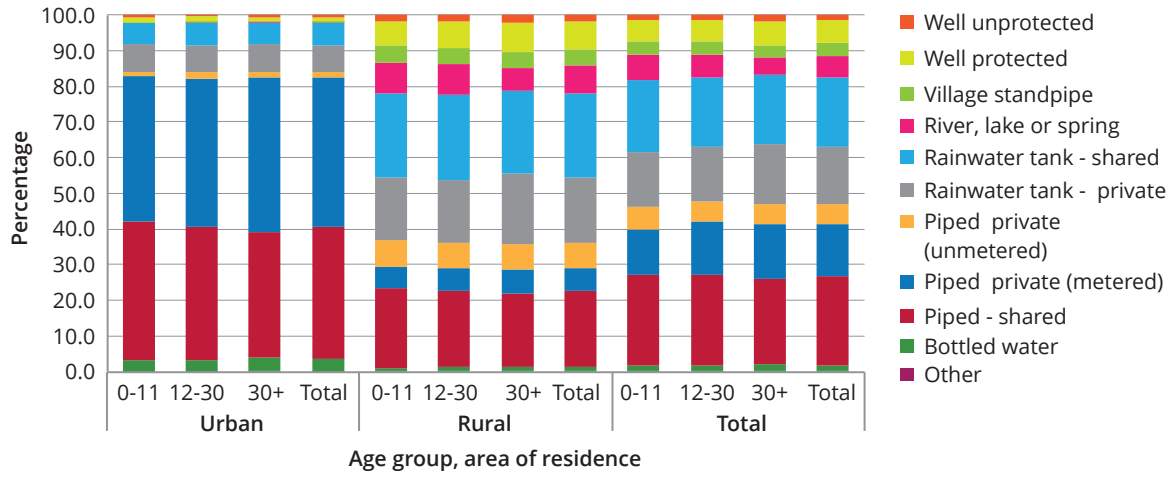
The distribution of the Vanuatu population in urban and rural areas by main source of drinking water is displayed in Figure 64. It shows there is little difference between age groups, and significant differences in the water sources for urban and rural settlements.

Overall, Vanuatu people used a shared pipe (25%); 21% had their own private pipe (metered and unmetered); 20% used a shared rainwater tank; 16% used a private rainwater tank; and 6% relied on a river, lake or spring.

In urban areas, the young population had significantly better access to improved sources of drinking water than their rural counterparts. Private piped water was more widely used in urban areas (42%) than in rural ones (7%), where the most common drinking water source was shared rainwater tanks (24%). Almost 8% of the rural population still used a river, lake or spring as a source of drinking water (Fig. 24).

There were no noticeable differences between age groups in access to improved sources of drinking water. In urban areas, children aged 0–11 had slightly better access to piped drinking water (by 1 percentage point) compared to the total urban population (81% versus 80%, respectively). In rural areas, children aged 0–11 also had slightly better access to piped drinking water source (by 1 percentage point) compared to the total urban population (36% versus 35%, respectively). In rural areas, 8.6% of children aged 0–11, and 8.5% of youth aged 12–30 used a river, lake or spring for drinking water. In urban areas, these ratios were 0.09% and 0.1%, respectively.

Figure 64: Proportion of population in urban and rural areas with access to improved sources of drinking water, by age group (%).



Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

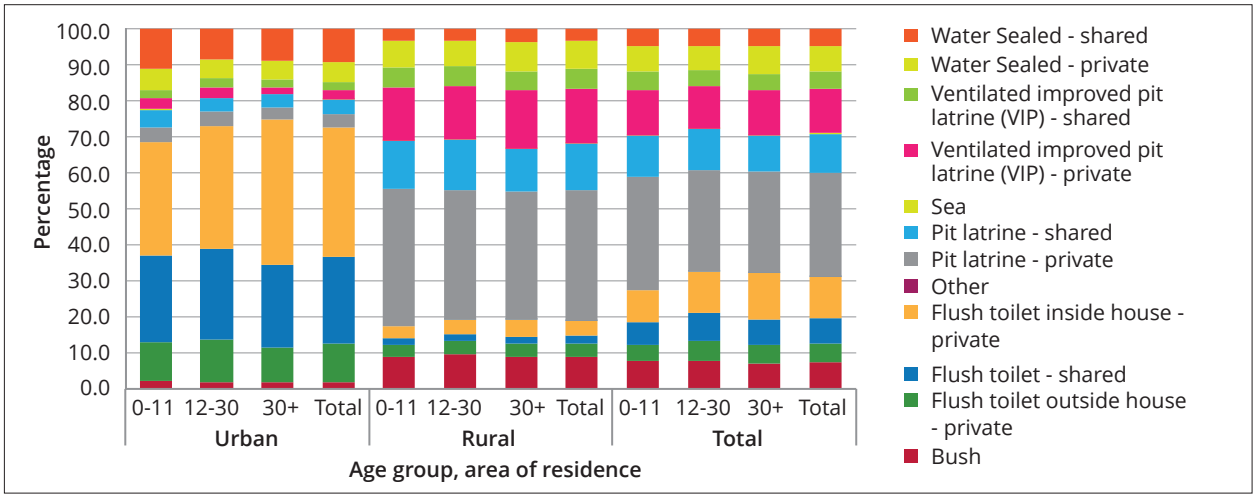
9.2 Access to sanitation facilities

The distribution of the Vanuatu population in urban and rural areas by access to improved sanitation is displayed in Figure 65. It shows small differences between age groups and significant differences for access to sanitation (toilet facilities) in urban and rural dwellings.

In total, 30% of the population used private or shared pit latrines; 17% used private or shared ventilated pit latrines; and 11% had a flush toilet inside the house.

In urban areas, access to improved sanitation was significantly better than in rural areas. Flush toilets inside the house were more widely used in urban areas (36%) than in rural areas (4%), where the most common sanitation type was private pit latrine (36%). Almost 9% of the rural population still used the bush as a toilet facility (Fig. 65).

Figure 65: Proportion of youth population with access to improved sanitation in urban and rural areas, by age group (%).



Source: Calculations based on data from 2020, National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

There were no significant differences between age groups in access to improved sanitation. In urban areas, youth aged 12–30 had slightly better access to shared flush toilets and to private flush toilets outside the house (by 1 percentage point) compared with the total urban population (25% versus 24%, and 12% versus 11%, respectively). The population aged 30 and older had better access to private flush toilets inside the house (40% versus 36%, respectively). Other differences were less than 1%.

In rural areas, children aged 0–11 had better access to pit latrines by 2 percentage points compared with the total rural population (51% versus 49%, respectively). Other differences were less than 1%.

9.3 Summary

In Vanuatu, there was a significant difference in access to drinking water for urban and rural settlements. In urban areas, the young population had significantly better access to improved sources of drinking water than their counterparts in rural areas. Private piped water was more widely used in urban areas (42%) than in rural ones (7%), where the most common drinking water source was shared rainwater tanks (24%). Almost 8% of the rural population still used a river, lake or spring as a source of drinking water. There were no noticeable differences between age groups in access to improved sources of drinking water.

There were significant differences in access to sanitation (toilet facilities) in urban and rural dwellings. In urban areas, access to improved sanitation was significantly better than in rural areas. Flush toilets inside the house were more widely used in urban areas (36%) than in rural area (4%), where the most common type of sanitation was a private pit latrine (36%). Almost 9% of the rural population still used the bush as a toilet facility. There were no significant differences between age groups in access to improved sanitation.

CHAPTER 10. ACCESS OF YOUTH TO INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION FACILITIES

Access to the internet can transform children's and youth's lives. It creates new ways for people to communicate and learn and share information, and it influences their social, political and economic activities.[62] One of the most popular device for accessing the internet is the mobile phone. Mobile phones support communication between people. They enable people in different situations to stay connected to each other, to instantly get assistance in emergencies, and to access educational and information resources.[63]

10.1 Internet access

The share of youth aged 12–30 who used the Internet was 36.7% (35.6% of women and 37.8% of men). The 12–14 age group had the smallest share of internet users (9%). The 20–24 age group had the highest share of users: 47% for women and 53% for men. The maximum gender gap in the 20–24 age group was 6 percentage points; in other groups, it was up to 5 percentage points (Table 61).

Table 61: Proportion of youth aged 12–30 who used the internet, by sex and age.

Age group	Number of internet users			Proportion of total population (%)		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
12-14	799	848	**1,647**	8.98	8.76	**8.86**
15-19	4,355	4,656	**9,011**	33.56	34.00	**33.79**
20-24	5,994	6,606	**12,600**	47.23	53.41	**50.28**
25-29	5,283	5,612	**10,895**	44.01	48.51	**46.22**
30	939	959	**1,898**	41.86	46.69	**44.17**
Total youth aged 12-30	17,370	18,681	**36,051**	35.58	37.84	**36.72**

Source: Own calculations based on 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

10.1.1 Youth internet users

The majority of internet users were in rural areas (59.4% of total users), but the share of users aged 12–30 was much higher among the urban population: 61% in urban settlements and 29% in rural areas. In urban areas, there were some gender differences in internet usage: the share of women who used the internet (62.8%) was higher by 2.9 percentage points compared to men (59.9%). In rural areas, the highest share of internet users was in Shefa province (46% of women and 45% of men). In other provinces, the share of internet users ranged from 15% of females in Tafea to 32% of males in Malampa. Gender differences in favour of males ranged from 3 percentage points in Tafea to 11 percentage points in Penama (Table 62).

[62] Valaitis RK. Computers and the internet: tools for youth empowerment. J Med Internet Res. 2005 Oct 4;7(5):e51. doi: 10.2196/jmir.7.5.e51; F. P. Barbosa Mota, I. Cilento, Competence for internet use: Integrating knowledge, skills, and attitudes, Computers and Education Open, Volume 1, 2020, 100015, ISSN 2666-5573, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.caeo.2020.100015.

[63] Kopecký K, Fernández-Martín FD, Szotkowski R, Gómez-García G, Mikulcová K. Behaviour of children and adolescents and the use of mobile phones in primary schools in the Czech Republic. Int J Environ Res Public Health. 2021 Aug 6;18(16):8352. doi: 10.3390/ijerph18168352 L. Srivastava. Mobile phones and the evolution of social behaviour. Behaviour & Information Technology, Vol. 24, No. 2, March – April 2005, 111–129.

Young people's access to information through public media such as radio, newspapers and the internet is crucial to their capacity to participate in their communities and in provincial and national initiatives, programmes and projects, as well as to continuing their education, training and skills development.[64]

In Vanuatu, computer use and internet access are not widespread (2.2% and 6.2% of total private households, respectively).[65] However, many households have access to a mobile phone (76.4% of total private households). This applies to nine out of ten households in urban areas and two out of three in rural areas.[66]

Table 62: Number and proportion of youth aged 12–30 who used the internet, by sex and age.

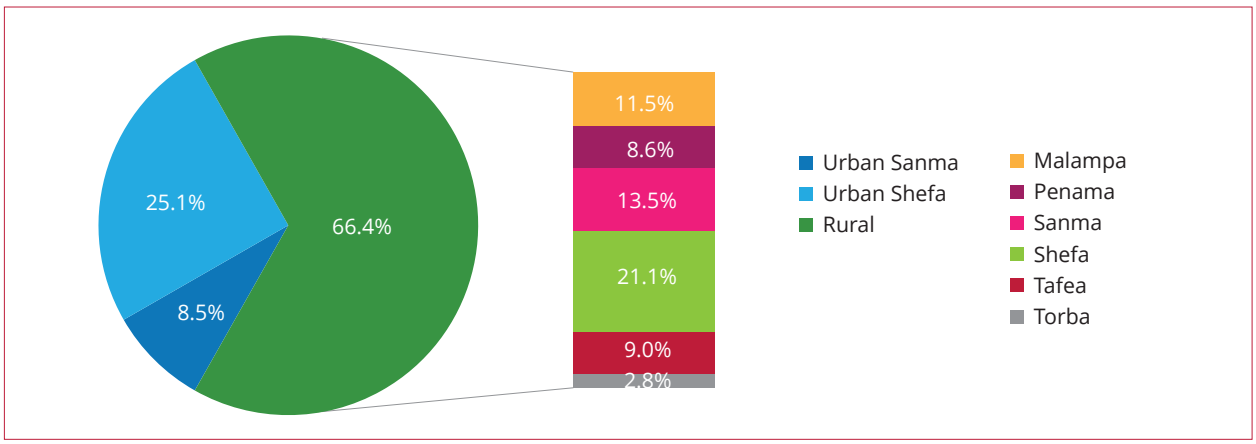
Province/ Area	Number of internet users			Proportion of total internet users (%)	Proportion of total population aged 12–30, (%)		
	Female	Male	Total	Total	Female	Male	Total
Urban total	**7,447**	**7,196**	**14,643**	**40.6**	**62.8**	**59.9**	**61.3**
Sanma	1,744	1,833	3,577	9.9	56.9	56.5	56.7
Shefa	5,703	5,363	11,066	30.7	64.8	61.1	63.0
Rural total	**9,923**	**11,485**	**21,408**	**59.4**	**26.9**	**30.8**	**28.8**
Malampa	1,673	1,999	3,672	10.2	28.2	31.8	30.1
Penama	853	1,482	2,335	6.5	15.7	26.7	21.3
Sanma	1,725	2,211	3,936	10.9	24.3	30.4	27.4
Shefa	4,206	4,059	8,265	22.9	46.0	44.8	45.4
Tafea	1,121	1,302	2,423	6.7	14.9	17.8	16.3
Torba	345	432	777	2.2	18.7	23.5	21.1
Total	**17,370**	**18,681**	**36,051**	**100**	**35.6**	**37.8**	**36.7**

Source: Own calculations based on 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu, Basic Tables, Volume 1.

10.2 Youth mobile phones users

According to the 2020 census, 47% of youth aged 12–30 years used mobile phones. Figure 66 shows that a significant number of mobile users lived in rural areas – 66% of total mobile users. The greatest number of rural mobile users lived in Shefa (21%), and the smallest number in Torba (3%). Almost 34% of mobile users lived in urban areas – 25% in Shefa and 9% in Sanma.

Figure 66: Proportion of mobile phones users aged 12–30 in urban and rural areas, by region (%).



Source: Own calculations based on 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu, Basic Tables, Volume 1.

[64] Sen, Amartya, ed. Peace and Democratic Society. Open Book Publishers, 2011, ISBN 978-1-906924-41-6; Han R, Xu J, Pan D. How media exposure, media trust, and media bias perception influence public evaluation of the COVID-19 pandemic in international metropolises. Int J Environ Res Public Health. 2022 Mar 25;19(7):3942. doi: 10.3390/ijerph19073942

[65] Vanuatu 2020 National Population and Housing Census: analytical report - volume 2 / R. Hakkert and S. Pontifex. Vanuatu Bureau of Statistics and Pacific Community, 2022. p. 89.

[66] Ibid.

However, the share of mobile users among all young people aged 12–30 was much higher in urban (65%) than in rural areas (41%) (Table 63). The majority of mobile users was in the urban part of Shefa province, with 66% of total youth aged 12–30 years. The lowest share of mobile users was in Tafea, with only 28% of all youth aged 12–30 years.

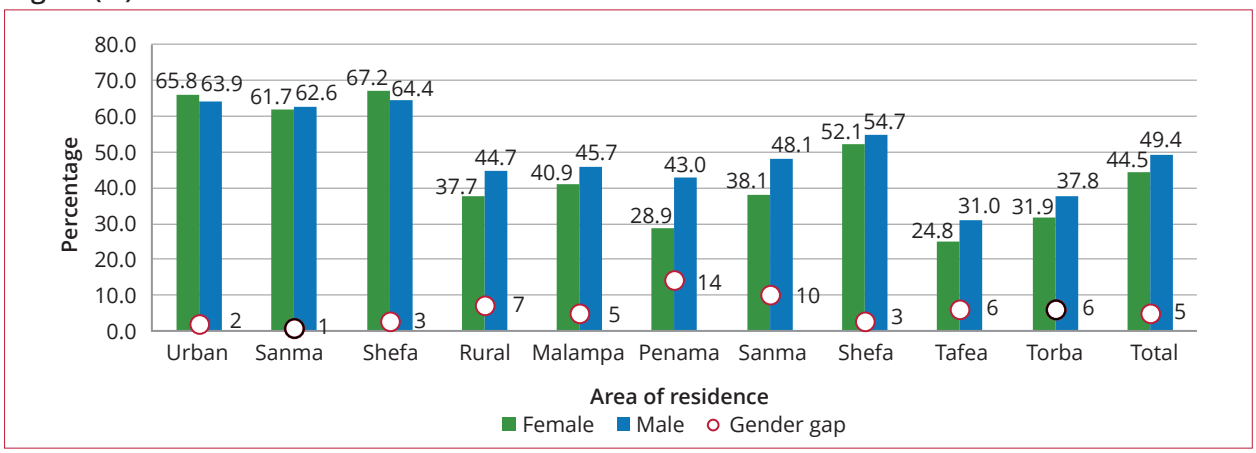
Gender differences in access to mobile phones in cities were not significant (within 2 percentage points). In rural areas, the differences were more notable. The widest gap was in Penama (14 percentage points); in Sanma it was 10 percentage points and in Tafea it was 6 percentage points (Fig. 67).

Table 63: Number and proportion of mobile phones users aged 12–30, by sex, urban and rural areas, and region.

Province	Number of mobile phones users			Proportion of total population, by sex and province (%)		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
Urban total	**7,799**	**7,686**	**15,485**	**65.8**	**63.9**	**64.8**
Sanma	1,890	2,031	3,921	61.7	62.6	62.1
Shefa	5,909	5,655	11,564	67.2	64.4	65.8
Rural total	**13,916**	**16684**	**13,916**	**37.7**	**44.7**	**41.2**
Malampa	2,424	2,869	5,293	40.9	45.7	43.4
Penama	1,568	2,389	3,957	28.9	43.0	36.0
Sanma	2,700	3,501	6,201	38.1	48.1	43.1
Shefa	4,770	4,959	9,729	52.1	54.7	53.4
Tafea	1,865	2,272	4,137	24.8	31.0	27.9
Torba	589	694	1,283	31.9	37.8	34.8
Total users 12-30	**21,715**	**24,370**	**29,401**	**44.5**	**49.4**	**46.9**

Source: Own calculations based on 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

Figure 67: Proportion of mobile phones users aged 12–30, by sex, urban and rural areas, and region (%).



Source: Own calculations based on 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu, Basic Tables, Volume 1.

10.3 Summary

In 2020, the access of youth aged 12–30 to the internet was low; 37% of this age group used the internet (36% of women, 38% of men). The share of users aged 12–30 was more than twice as high among the urban population. Gender differences in access to the internet in cities were not significant. In rural areas, the differences were more notable. The widest gap was in Penama (27% of men,16% of women).

In Vanuatu, computer use and access to the internet were not widespread (2.2% and 6.2% of total private households, respectively).[67] However, many households had access to a mobile phone (76.4% of total private households). This applied to nine out of ten households in urban areas and two out of three in rural areas.[68]

Almost half of youth aged 12–30 years were mobile phone users. The share of mobile users among all young people aged 12–30 was higher in urban areas – 65% versus 41% in rural areas.

Gender differences in access to mobile phones in cities were not significant. In rural areas, the differences were more notable. The widest gap was in Penama province (43% of men, 29% of women).

[67] Vanuatu 2020 National Population and Housing Census: analytical report - volume 2 / R. Hakkert and S. Pontifex. Vanuatu Bureau of Statistics and Pacific Community, 2022. p. 89.
[68] Ibid.

CHAPTER 11. YOUTH AND RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION

11.1 Characteristics of religious affiliation

Table 64 shows the religious affiliation of the youth population aged 12–30. Almost 94% of all youth of both sexes had some religious affiliation. Only 1% (1,151 persons) in this age group stated they had no religion, and 5% (4,786 persons) declined to answer (Table 64).

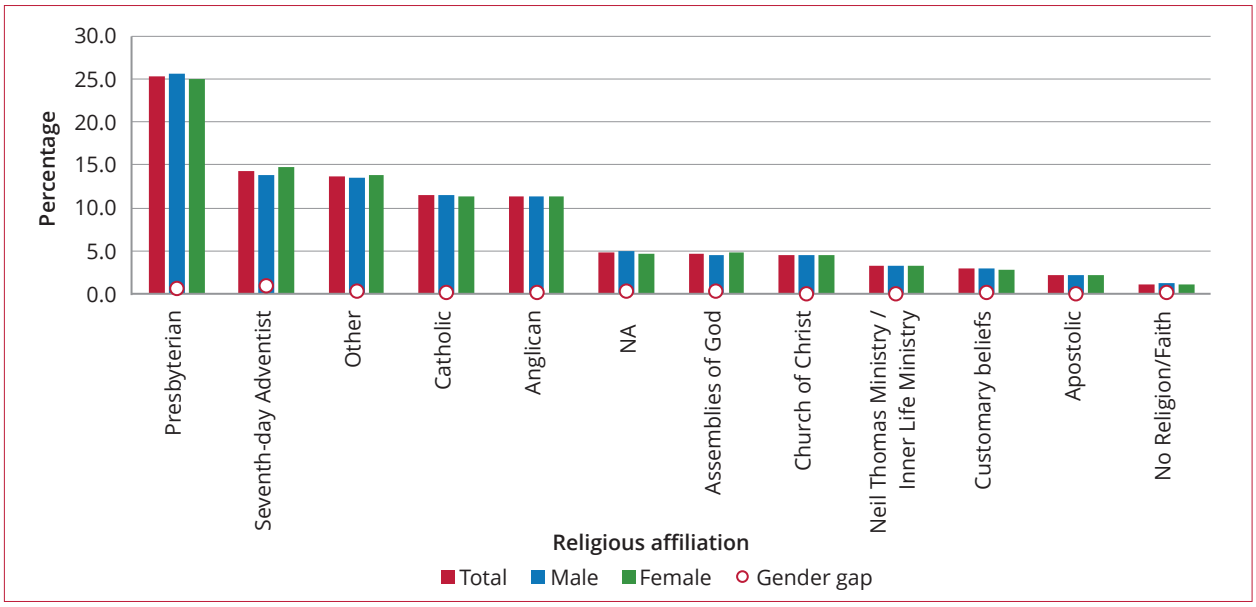
Table 64: Youth population aged 12–30 by religious affiliation and sex.

Religion	Youth aged 12–30 (persons)			Youth aged 12–30 (%)		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Total	**98,176**	**49,362**	**48,814**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**
Total with some religious affiliation	**92,223**	**46,244**	**45,979**	**93.9**	**93.7**	**94.2**
Not stated	16	8	8	0.0	0.0	0.0
Anglican	11,157	5,644	5,513	11.4	11.4	11.3
Apostolic	2,226	1,115	1,111	2.3	2.3	2.3
Assemblies of God	4,628	2,245	2,383	4.7	4.5	4.9
Catholic	11,240	5,687	5,553	11.4	11.5	11.4
Church of Christ	4,475	2,241	2,234	4.6	4.5	4.6
Customary beliefs	2,882	1,506	1,376	2.9	3.1	2.8
NA	4,786	2,479	2,307	4.9	5.0	4.7
Neil Thomas Ministry / Inner Life Ministry	3,215	1,622	1,593	3.3	3.3	3.3
No religion/faith	1,151	631	520	1.2	1.3	1.1
Other	13,434	6,651	6,783	13.7	13.5	13.9
Presbyterian	24,871	12,670	12,201	25.3	25.7	25.0
Refused to answer	120	63	57	0.1	0.1	0.1
SDA	13,975	6,800	7,175	14.2	13.8	14.7

Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

The largest share of youth belonged to the Presbyterian (25%), Seventh-day Adventist (14%), Catholic (11%) and Anglican (11%) churches. The gender gap was insignificant (less than 1 percentage point). The distribution of youth by religious affiliation and sex is presented in Figure 68.

Figure 68: Youth population aged 12–30, by religious affiliation and sex (%).



Source: Calculations based on data from 2020 National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu.

11.2 Summary

In Vanuatu, the majority (94%) of youth aged 12–30 had some religious affiliation. Only 1% of this age group stated they had no religion or faith.

The largest share of youth belonged to the Presbyterian (25%), Seventh-day Adventist (14%), Catholic (11%) and Anglican (11%) churches. The gender gap was insignificant.

CHAPTER 12. YOUTH AS THE MAIN COMPONENT OF THE DEMOGRAPHIC DIVIDEND

As noted in the introduction to this monograph, one of its goals was to study the impact of demographic changes in general, and the age and sex structure of Vanuatu youth in particular, on the country's economic growth. One of the measures of growth is the gross domestic product (GDP).

In this regard, the *demographic dividend* is of particular scientific and practical interest as a subject of research, as are the possibilities for the emergence and development of this phenomenon in Vanuatu.

In this regard, it is necessary to understand the role of international organizations, such as the UN in general and UNFPA in particular, in creating institutional conditions that will give impetus to the development of the demographic dividend to ensure it will begin to contribute to the harmonious development of the Vanuatu economy.

This role is stipulated by such strategic UN documents as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs. At the same time, *it is important to find out exactly how and when the UN and its specialised agencies, in particular, UNFPA, should act in order for the demographic dividend in Vanuatu to provide the highest possible share of GDP growth.*

We therefore need to talk about the development and implementation of specific national programmes that could help turn the objective process of the demographic transition into a 'window of opportunity'. In the third and final stage of a profound demographic transition in the structure of the population, this will help increase the amount of savings, which will, in turn, contribute to maintaining a stable level of consumption over a very long time.

At the same time, the authors note with great interest that the results of the analysis reported in this monograph show that Vanuatu may already be experiencing a demographic dividend.

This is evidenced not only by the growth of the working-age population's share of the total population, but also by the decrease in the age dependency ratio. This decrease was registered for the first time in 2017, when it dropped from its historic maximum of 7% to 6.5% in 2020 (Annex 3).

In this regard it is important to note that a great majority of *ni-Vanuatu* enact aspects of their traditional culture, including traditional demographic behaviour, in terms of the use of family planning initiatives on a daily basis. As a result, one of the most important characteristics of the country is that over 50% of the population is under 18 years of age, and of this 50%, perhaps half is under 6 years of age. The population is very young, one of the youngest in the world.

Given the peculiar demographic characteristics of the country, and in particular the strength of its traditional culture, we will attempt to describe some of the ways in which the concept of *ni-Vanuatu traditional demographic behaviour* is being used and contested as a national 'custom' to be revised and changed completely.

In-depth analysis of the transition from traditional demographic behaviour to a more modern one requires a historical perspective, which will be given first. In this context the words *traditional demographic behaviour* will be used to refer to those aspects of the national culture and society that can be demonstrated to have their origins in former times (pre-UN contact).

Taking this into consideration, the monograph deals with the simultaneous mainstreaming and diversification of *ni-Vanuatu* social categories associated with the ways in which traditional demographic behaviour and consequent population growth are understood as a possible crisis in both the demographic *modus vivendi* as well as everyday ni-Vanuatu national knowledge.

The authors are interested in understanding not the *downplaying*, but the *amplification* of the differences associated with the youth population, including age, sex, levels of education, employment characteristics and opportunities, disability, etc.

The relationship between natural demographic reproduction, social change and the multiple meanings of modernity is at issue. Our expertise in demography suggests it is the lack of *modern demographic behaviour and development* – in the form of adequate biomedical birth control, education, equality of women and ethnic minorities, access to benefits such as relatively comfortable and safe housing, water, sanitation, new communication methods and decent work – that is the implicit cause of population growth.

Yet many ni-Vanuatu see population growth as tied to the troubles that arise from the dilution of traditional social forms: there is too much modernity. In both demographic and ni-Vanuatu everyday narrations of the potential population crisis, diversification and mainstreaming take place and vulnerabilities are produced.

When talking about *youth*, it is necessary to research the main factors underlying the growth of the young population in developing countries, particularly in Vanuatu. Demographically speaking, the growth of the world population is determined by only two factors – fertility and mortality. All other factors, whether biological or sociological, even specific factors that operate in Vanuatu, are secondary to fertility and mortality.

As noted above, fertility tended to decline with modernization in all countries, including Vanuatu, with demographic transition processes beginning in the second half of the 20th century. It did not decline as fast as mortality, however, and the difference between the two provided tremendous growth of the world's population.

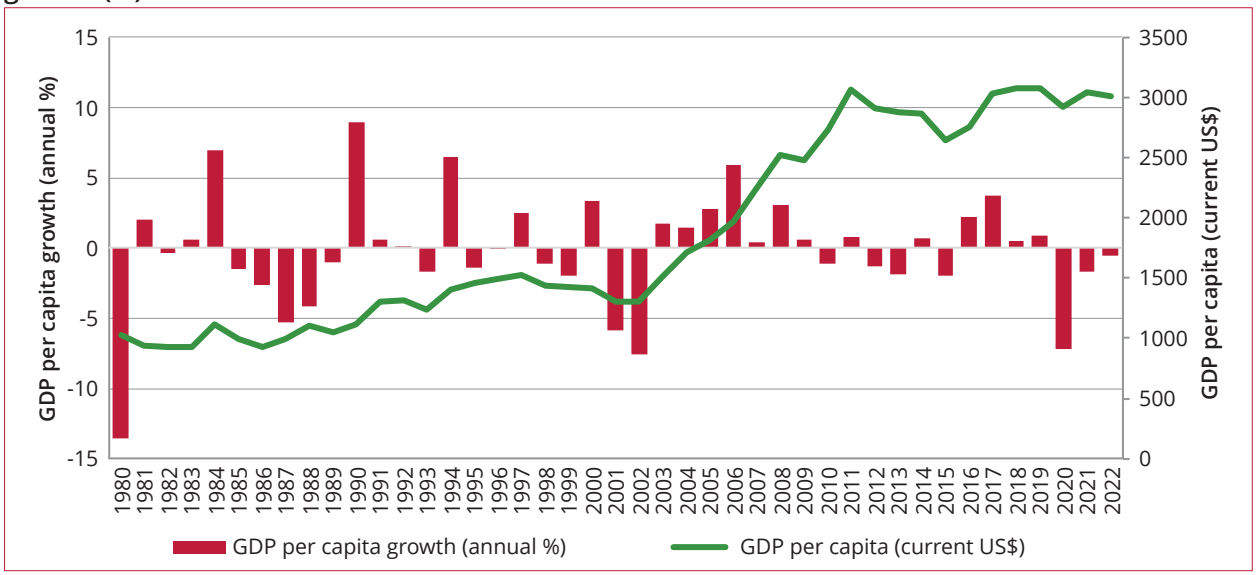
Eventually, however, the competitive, individualistic, urban society that had arisen made large families a burden rather than a blessing. At the same time, the extreme reduction in infant mortality meant that the old fertility patterns, if they were to continue, would produce even larger families than formerly. Consequently, there was every incentive for couples to reduce the number of births, and it was not long until the same scientific approach that had been applied to the limitation of death was also applied to the limitation of birth.

It is necessary to note that there is only one way to reduce mortality and fertility rates at the same time and that is to design and implement voluntary family planning procedures. Access to safe, voluntary family planning is a human right. Family planning is also central to gender equality and women's empowerment and is a key factor in reducing poverty.

Family planning includes the information, means and methods that allow individuals to decide if and when to have children. This includes a wide range of contraceptives (pills, implants, intrauterine devices, surgical procedures that limit fertility, and barrier methods such as condoms) as well as non-invasive methods such as the calendar method and abstinence. Family planning also includes information about how to become pregnant when it is desirable, as well as treatment of infertility.

In parallel, and to a certain extent, as a result of these demographic changes, a corresponding increase in GDP per capita was recorded during the same period. Starting from 2000, the historical minimum of this indicator was registered in 2002, when GDP per capita in Vanuatu was USD 1.299. In 2020, GDP per capita grew to USD 3.076, or 2.4 times (Fig. 69).

Figure 69: Vanuatu GDP per capita (USD) (constant price 2015, international) and its annual growth (%) 1980–2020.



Source: Compiled and recalculated by the authors on the basis of Worldometer, UNFPA and World Bank: https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.DPND?end=2021&locations=WS&start=2021&view=map

Of particular interest is the analysis of which part of this growth in GDP is caused by demographic factors, and which part is explained by all the remaining reasons combined.

12.1 Conceptual definition of the demographic dividend and its statistical measurement

In the last 30 years, Vanuatu's population increased from 116,000 in 1980 to more than 300,000 in 2020. Growth rates accelerated during the last 40 years, reaching peaks in 1986 (2.96%), 1996 (2.86%), and 2015 (4.76%) (Annex 2).

The response to rapid population growth was also unprecedented. Motivated by concerns about the environmental and economic effects of population growth, the UN, particularly UNFPA, and other bilateral and multilateral institutions invested millions of dollars in population development programs.

Following the strategies identified in several global documents approved by the UN, including the 2030 Agenda, Vanuatu identified population stabilization as a national development objective and adopted comprehensive programs intended to slow population growth.

Recent studies dedicated to demographic transition, policies, and demographic dividends differ in their methodological approaches and details, but the conclusions reached are broadly consistent. That is, *population change has more important effects on economic development than was widely believed a decade ago.* The evidence supports the view that the demographic transition has played an important, positive role in economic development.

A system of statistical indicators was developed to measure the influence of population change. The first indicator used for this purpose, i.e. the *demographic dependency ratio,* represents the ratio between the number of individuals from 0 to 14 years old and 65 and over, and the number of individuals between 15 and 64.

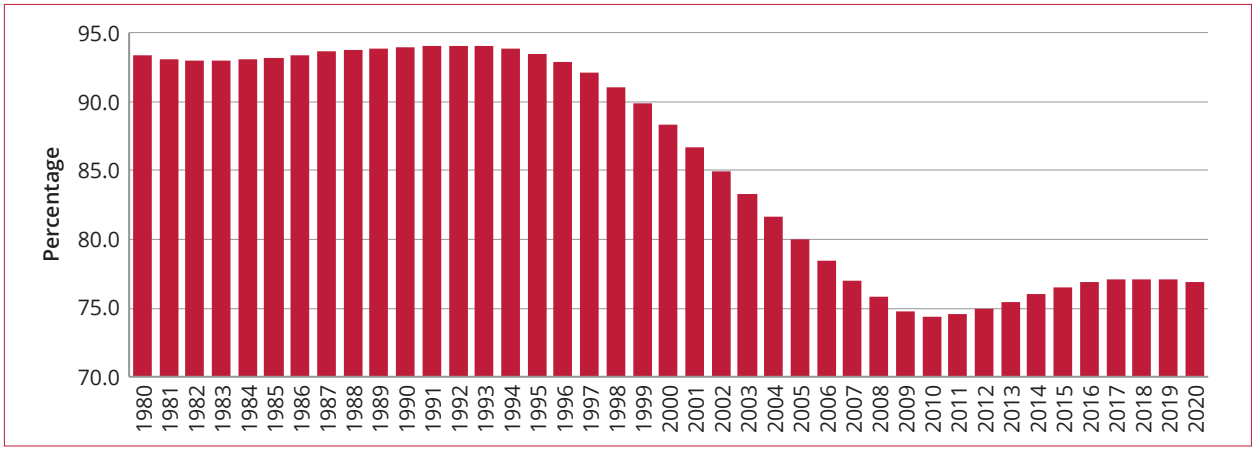
The second indicator, the *economic dependency ratio*, compares the number of individuals aged under 20 plus individuals aged 65 and over plus inactive individuals aged between 20 and 65.

The third indicator, the *dependency burden ratio,* can be defined as the ratio between the total transfer to dependent people and the total income of the active population. Unlike the first two indicators, it is not possible to calculate this indicator in Vanuatu due to the lack of statistical data. At the present

stage of Vanuatu's development, the practical significance of this indicator is not as great as the previous two.

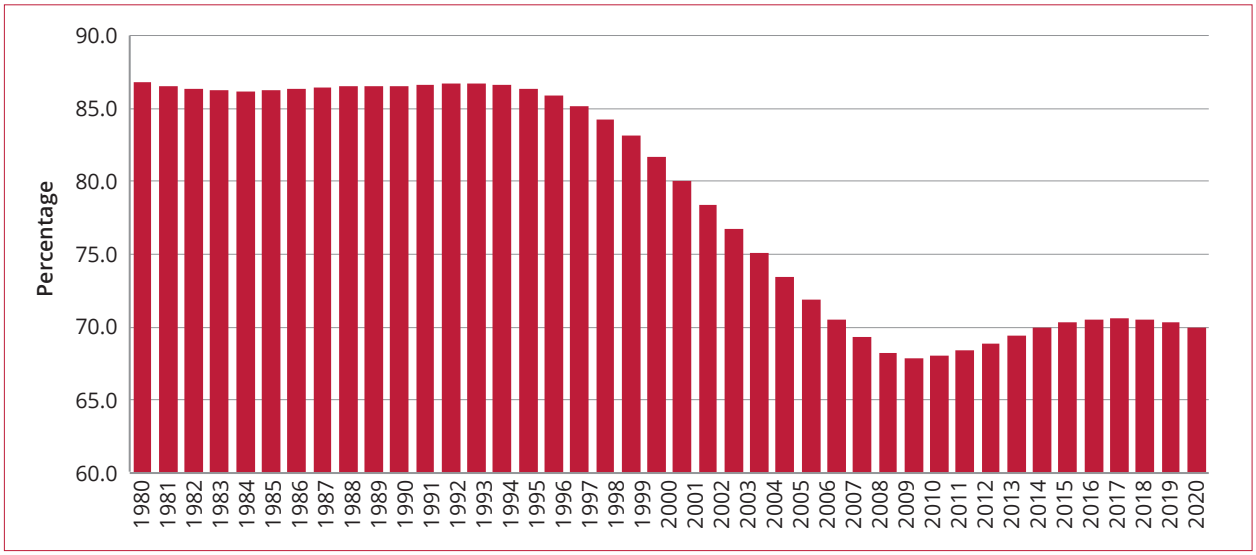
These three indicators combined support the development of informed population policies, i.e. the explicit or implicit measures taken (or not) to influence the workforce, growth, composition or distribution of population, macroeconomic policies (specifically those that are labour-related), and lastly social policies, in particular those relating to education and health.

Figure 70: Age dependency ratio (percent of working-age population), Vanuatu, 1980–2020.



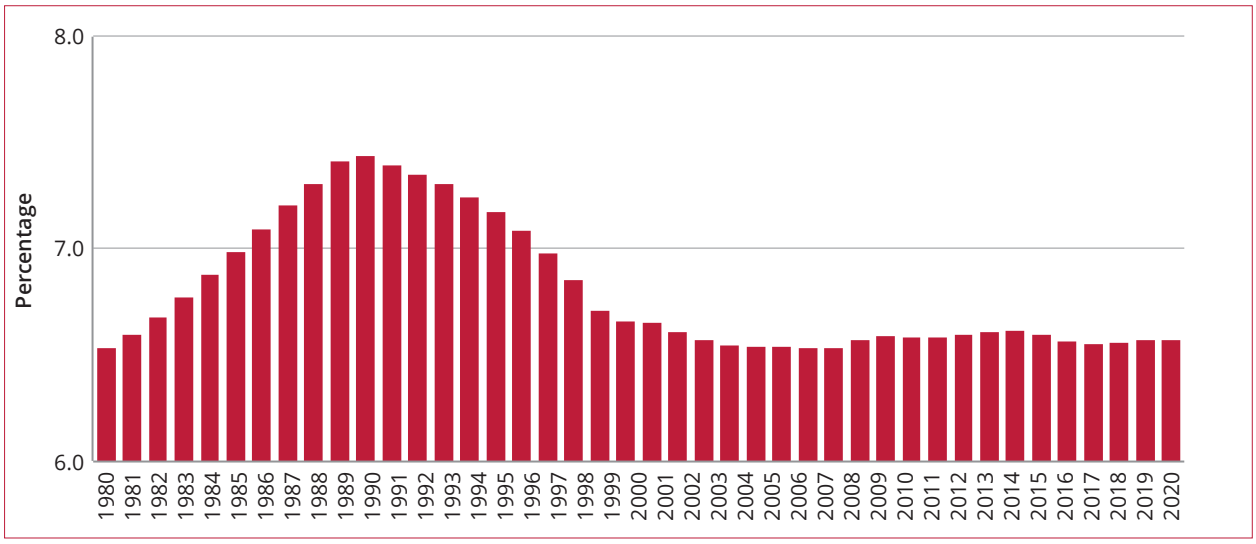
Source: Compiled and recalculated by the authors on the basis of Worldometer, UNFPA, and World Bank: https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.DPND?end=2021&locations=WS&start=2021&view=map

Figure 71: Age dependency ratio, young (% of working-age population), Vanuatu, 1980–2020.



Source: Compiled and recalculated by the authors on the basis of Worldometer, UNFPA, and World Bank: https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.DPND?end=2021&locations=WS&start=2021&view=map

Figure 72: Age dependency ratio, old (% of working-age population), Vanuatu, 1980–2020.



Source: Compiled and recalculated by the authors on the basis of Worldometer, UNFPA, and World Bank: https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.DPND?end=2021&locations=WS&start=2021&view=map

The data in Table 65 indicates that there is a high and inverse correlation between changes in the values of the dependency ratio and GDP per capita. The calculated value of Spearman's correlation coefficient shows that for 10 Pacific countries, 68% of the increase in GDP per capita is associated with a change in the dependency ratio. The remaining 34% of this increase is explained by the influence of all other factors. Thus, the data demonstrates that the demographic dividend is a key driver of economic growth.

Table 65: Dependency ratio and GDP per capita in Pacific countries, 2010–2020.

Country	Dependency ratio (%) (15–59) 2010		Dependency ratio (%) (15–59) 2020		GDP per capita 2010 (USD '000s)		GDP per capita 2020 (USD '000s)	
	Value	Rank	Value	Rank	Value USD	Rank	Value USD	Rank
Australia	48	9	54	6	52,134	1	51,720	1
Papua New Guinea	68	4	61	4	1,879	9	2,446	9
New Zealand	51	7	53	7	33,676	3	41,596	2
Fiji	54	6	52	8	3,469	6	4,864	5
Solomon Islands	81	1	76	2	1,662	10	2,222	10
Federated States of Micronesia	63	5	58	5	2,760	7	3,639	7
Vanuatu	79	3	77	1	2,732	8	3,076	8
New Caledonia	50	8	50	9	37,495	2	34,801	3
French Polynesia	47	10	46	10	21,448	4	18,910	4
Samoa	80	2	75	3	3,494	5	4,043	6

Source: Compiled and recalculated by the authors on the basis of Worldometer, UNFPA, and World Bank: https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.DPND?end=2021&locations=WS&start=2021&view=map

It is well known that demographic change, or demographic transition, *leads to lower death and birth rates.* As a result, at an early (first) stage of demographic transition, fertility rates fall, leading to fewer young mouths to feed. During this period, the labour force temporarily grows more rapidly than the population dependent on it, freeing up resources for investment in economic development and family welfare. Other things being equal, per capita income grows more rapidly too.

During the second stage, the proportion of people of working age grows, and the demographic burden decreases, which, other things being equal, has a positive impact on the pace of economic development. This stage is usually referred to as the demographic dividend, *demographic bonus or window of demographic opportunity.*[69]

The concept of the *demographic dividend* combines its causes, i.e. the age and sex structure of the population at a given moment in time, and corresponding consequences, namely, the dividend, particularly in terms of potential economic growth, employment level, income, savings, etc.

In other words, the *demographic dividend* is the *economic dividend* that a country could draw from a specific evolution of its demography and national economy, i.e. the period when:

- dependents (under 15s and over 65s) are less numerous than active or potentially active people;
- active people have higher levels of education and professional qualifications than previously;
- labour force growth is rapid;
- employment is increasing;
- average remuneration is also increasing;
- income per capita and savings are growing.

As generally defined, a demographic dividend occurs when a falling birth rate changes the age distribution so that less investment is needed to meet the needs of the youngest age groups, and resources are released for investment in economic development and family welfare.[70]

The root cause of the demographic dividend is the demographic transition, which affects labour supply in several ways.

First, the high rate of population growth during the transition phase accelerates the supply of new entrants into the labour market. During this period, the labour force temporarily grows more rapidly than the population dependent on it, freeing up resources for investment in economic development and family welfare. The number of people who would like to work (labour supply) therefore gets bigger and, provided the labour market can absorb the larger numbers of workers, per capita production increases.

In addition, women are more likely to enter the workforce as family size declines. This effect is magnified by the fact that adult women themselves are more likely to have been brought up in small families and are more likely to be educated. This increases their productivity in the labour market, leading to a stronger workforce and smaller families.

This is referred to as the first *demographic dividend.* As mentioned above, this process has already started in Vanuatu. Taking into consideration the economic history of other countries, one can assume that its duration may be quite long. When it is coming to an end, the age distribution of the population will change again, as the large adult population moves into the older, less-productive age groups and is followed by the smaller age cohorts born during the period of fertility decline.

The old-age dependency ratio (ratio of elderly people to adults of working age) rises again, now involving the need to provide and care for the elderly, as opposed to taking care of young people. Eventually, lower fertility reduces the growth rate of the labour force, while continuing improvements in old-age mortality increase the growth of the elderly population. At this point, other things being equal, per capita income grows more slowly and the first dividend turns negative.

[69] Mason A, Lee R. Reform and support systems for the elderly in developing countries: Capturing the second demographic dividend. International Seminar on the Demographic Window and Healthy Aging: Socioeconomic Challenges and Opportunities; China Centre for Economic Research, Peking University, Beijing. 2004.

[70] Ross J. 2004. Understanding the demographic dividend. (http://www.policyproject.com/pubs/generalreport/Demo_Div.pdf)

As a result, there is the possibility of a *second demographic dividend,* arising from an increasing number of older workers and extended retirement benefits. A population concentrated at older working ages and facing an extended period of retirement has a powerful incentive to accumulate assets. Whether these additional assets are invested domestically or abroad, national income rises.

In short, the first dividend yields a transitory bonus, and the second transforms that bonus into greater assets and sustainable development.

We have to emphasis that these potential and very desirable outcomes are not automatic but depend on the implementation of effective policies. Thus, the dividend period is a *window of opportunity* rather than a guarantee of improved standards of living. The dividends are sequential: the first dividend begins first and comes to an end, and the second dividend begins somewhat later and continues indefinitely.

Studies have shown that the second dividend has typically been larger than the first, and that they overlap. Taking into consideration the economic history of other countries, we can affirm that the first and second dividends both had positive effects in these countries. The fact is that demographic pressures ease whenever fertility falls, but some countries will take better advantage of this easing than others.

The expected slowdown in population growth and labour force participation rates will have implications for long-term economic growth and the composition of growth. The key determinants of the economy's longer-term growth rate are increases in the labour force and structural productivity – how effectively the economy combines its labour and capital inputs to create outputs. Demographics suggest that labour force growth will be considerably slower than it has been in recent decades, and this will weigh on long-term economic growth.

It is important to note that the effect of the demographic dividend is not deterministic. Economic growth depends on the ability of the economy to create jobs for an ever-increasing working-age population, and on the quality of the state's institutions, macroeconomic policy, educational policy, and other factors. In the absence of a macroeconomic policy aimed at realizing the demographic dividend, growth in the size of the working-age population can lead to an increase in poverty, political instability and crime, and a decrease in social capital.

The demographic dividend has long been viewed as an important factor for economic development and has provided a rationale for policies aimed at achieving a more balanced age structure through birth control and family planning. In assessing the relative importance of age structure and increases in human capital, recent studies have argued that the demographic dividend is related to education and have suggested that improving education is more important than age structure.

An increase in the working-age population share has a strong and positive effect on growth, even conditional on human capital, in line with the conventional notion of a demographic dividend. An increase in human capital only has positive growth effects if combined with a suitable age structure. An increasing share of the most productive age groups has an additional positive effect on economic performance. Finally, the results show considerable heterogeneity in the effect of age structure and human capital for different levels of development. Successful policies for sustainable development should take this heterogeneity into account to avoid the detrimental implications of a unidimensional focus on human capital without accounting for demography.

12.2 Delivery of the demographic dividend

The demographic dividend is delivered through a number of mechanisms. The three most important are *labour supply, savings,* and *human capital*. However, it is one thing to have a dividend; taking advantage of it is another matter.

The size of the components of a demographic dividend depend on how much people produce and consume at each age. Multiplying the population age distribution by these age profiles of production or consumption, it is possible to find the effective numbers of producers and consumers. The ratio of producers to consumers is the support ratio. During the dividend phase, the support ratio rises. A 1% increase in this support ratio allows consumption at each age to rise by 1% with no increase in the share of GDP consumed.

Demographic changes can affect GDP growth through several channels. First, lower growth in population directly implies reduced labour input. Second, lower population growth has an indirect, potentially negative impact on individual labour supply insofar as it leads to higher tax rates, which reduce the incentive to work. Third, under the life-cycle hypothesis, consumption smoothing through the lifetime would imply that people move from being net borrowers in their youth to being net savers in their working years, and finally to being dissavers in their elderly years. Therefore, if the share of elderly in the population rises, aggregate savings would fall, leading to lower investment growth, and, in turn, lower GDP growth.

The relationship between population changes and economic growth has been debated since the previous century. Rather than focusing on population growth, studies of the demographic dividend have now shifted attention to changes in age structures, with an assumed window of opportunity that opens when falling birth rates lead to a relatively higher proportion of the working-age population. This has become the dominant paradigm in the field of population and development, and an advocacy tool for highlighting the benefits of family planning and fertility decline.

While this view acknowledges that the dividend can only be realized if associated with investments in human capital, its cause is still seen as exogenous fertility decline. In contrast, the unified growth theory has established human capital as a trigger of both demographic transition and economic growth.

Declining youth dependency ratios even show negative impacts on income growth when combined with low education. Based on a multidimensional understanding of demography that considers education in addition to age, and considering the additional effects of education on health and general resilience, we conclude that the true demographic dividend is a human capital dividend.

Global population policies should thus focus on strengthening the human resource base for sustainable development.

The notion of a demographic dividend has recently received prominence in discussions around international development as a particular way of viewing the effects of demographic changes on economic growth. The original concept is based on the assumption that a decline in the proportion of young people, as a consequence of reduced fertility in a high-fertility context, *will give a boost to economic growth if investments in education and health services as well as economic policies conducive to income growth are implemented.* While international agencies, including UNFPA, that promote family planning tend to emphasize the role of low fertility, policy makers in developing countries tend to highlight the advantage of the human capital associated with a youthful population.

As already mentioned, the productivity of young adults depends on *schooling decisions, employment practices, timing and level of childbearing, and policies that make it easier for young parents to work.* Productivity at older ages depends on health and disability, tax incentives and disincentives, and, particularly, the structure of pension programs and retirement policies.

To the extent that countries meet the challenge of aging by expanding unfunded familial or public transfer programs, asset growth will be reduced, and the second dividend will be diminished. In contrast, if workers are encouraged to save and accumulate pension funds, population aging can boost capital per worker, productivity growth, and per capita income.

12.3 Demographic dividend policy implications

In this monograph, we present evidence that questions the currently dominant rationale for linking demographic trends with economic growth in developing countries. We would like to show that exogenously induced declines in fertility, which result in a higher proportion of the population of typical working age, do not by themselves provide an economic growth dividend. In fact, drops in fertility may lead to worsening economic conditions if they happen in the context of very low education, assuming that an increasing proportion of young adults with low education and fewer family duties has the potential to cause political and economic insecurity. A link could be drawn to the extensive literature on the negative trends and security risks associated with a youth bulge, although a study of this issue goes beyond the scope of this monograph. Our study confirms earlier analyses showing that improvements in the educational attainment structures of populations are a key driver of economic growth.

Given that variations in the educational composition of the population can also be denoted as demographic change, one could say that investments in human capital bring the true demographic dividend.

12.4 Relationship with the SDGs

The resulting policy focus on human capital formation is in line with the SDGs, in particular, with SDGs 3, 4 and 5 on health, education and gender equity.

Population growth and age structure are not explicitly mentioned in the SDGs, but reproductive health is listed as one of the more specific targets under SDG 3. The findings presented here endorse these global policy priorities. They do not diminish the importance of reproductive health and rights from a human rights perspective, but they imply that attempts to justify them in terms of economic benefits from possibly resulting fertility declines are not substantiated.

The findings do not imply that there should not be any specific population policies. Quite the opposite; they strongly suggest that an explicit policy focus on strengthening societies' human resources (the number of people by age, gender, education, health status, and labour force participation) should be a development priority.

12.5 Positive youth development model as the conceptual approach to achieving the SDGs and stable economic growth

The positive youth development (PYD) model is an intentional, pro-social approach that engages youth within their communities, schools, organizations, peer groups, and families in a manner that is productive and constructive; recognizes, utilizes, and enhances young people's strengths; and promotes positive outcomes for young people by providing opportunities, fostering positive relationships, and furnishing the support needed to build on their leadership strengths.

PYD is a view that sees youth as full of potential rather than overwhelmed by problems that need to be solved. It also promotes the idea that adults can make significant and positive differences in young people's lives. PYD strategies focus on enhancing the positive qualities that adolescents already possess.

There is growing evidence that incorporating PYD principles in youth-serving programs can have positive effects across multiple parts of young people's lives, including their physical and mental health, relationships, and academic progress. A PYD approach has been particularly effective when working with vulnerable and under-served youth and adolescents, including those who have been maltreated and those who are part of racial/ethnic minority groups.

Practitioners and policy-makers have spent decades trying varied approaches to prevent problem behaviours among youth and to help youth navigate the transition to adulthood. Most of these efforts, however, have had only modest success, and some have backfired.

First, PYD is intentional. That is, it is purposeful and deliberate. PYD may, and should, seem warm and casual, but it is actually a planned and thoughtful approach that involves training staff and monitoring whether PYD practices are actually being implemented on a day-to-day basis.

Secondly, PYD is also pro-social. This means that it benefits other people or society as a whole. Importantly, researchers find that getting youth involved in pro-social activities, such as volunteer work, working on a community project, or a group activity with other youth, reduces the likelihood that they will engage in problem behaviours.

Thirdly, and importantly, PYD is an approach. A PYD approach can be implemented across different types of programs, systems, and settings. It can take on different forms and can co-exist with varied programs such as an apprenticeship program, a clinic-based program, or an employment program.

And, finally, PYD engages youth. This means that it does not lecture or teach but seeks to engage youth in learning, for example, by involving them in a project that they themselves are invested in. This goes beyond just *doing* things and includes being emotionally and cognitively involved – caring and thinking – about what the program has to offer.

PYD also recognizes youth as young people with promise (not just problems). The working assumption is that all youth have strengths and that youth can contribute positively. PYD draws on the strengths that youth offer in ways that are a good use of time. Not 'busy-work', but meaningful projects or work that enhance their strengths. For example, an older participant might mentor a new participant, with benefits for both of them.

Importantly, PYD is not a 'one-size-fits all' sort of approach. The unique and particular strengths of each individual are likely to vary, and it may take some effort to find out what they are.

They may have IT skills that could be an asset to your program. Whatever their strengths, the goal is to recognize, use, and enhance those strengths. It is important, of course, to prevent problems. However, the PYD strategy involves building strengths, knowing that youth with greater strengths generally have fewer problems.

To reach these positive outcomes, PYD provides opportunities that can include:

- jobs, job training
- volunteering, service learning
- youth advisory boards
- referrals for assistance, or
- activities such as sports or mentoring.

These PYD elements represent approaches to providing services, rather than a specific program or curriculum. PYD elements can be integrated into any existing program, and there is no one single, correct way to implement a PYD approach. Workforce development providers have the ability to integrate the elements of PYD into their local program settings by infusing programs for young adults with PYD elements, training staff to feel comfortable with the PYD approach, and preparing young adults to deal with workforce realities. Although the integration of PYD practices into programs such as workforce development can take time and effort, the benefits of implementing these practices can be far reaching.

As a case in point, unrest across the Oceania world in recent decades finds its roots in the economic dislocation of the region's large youth population and their expectations for improved economic outcomes.

While the political unrest associated with large, restive youth populations across Oceania has found resolution in many states, it is important to note the escalation of violence and civil strife that continue to undermine the welfare of young people and their families in some Pacific countries.

CHAPTER 13. YOUTH AND THE FRAMEWORK OF THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

In September 2015, United Nation members agreed that they could change the world for the better when they unanimously adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 SDGs.

Young people are considered as important agents, actors and, simultaneously, beneficiaries of the 2030 Agenda. Many of them are not only among the most vulnerable groups affected by poverty, inequality, unemployment and climate change, they are also the generation that will reach adulthood during the realization of the SDGs.

The *World Youth Report: Youth and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,* produced by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), examines the mutually supportive roles of the new agenda and current youth development efforts. The report provides insight into the role of young people in sustainable development in the context of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and related frameworks, in particular, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, and the World Programme of Action for Youth.

The report considers the role the 2030 Agenda can play in enhancing youth development efforts and examines how evidence-based youth policies can help accelerate youth-related objectives. It explores the critical role of young people in implementing sustainable development efforts at all levels.

While all the SDGs are critical to youth development, the monograph focuses primarily on the areas of *education* and *employment*, recognizing that the realization of targets under SDGs 4 and 8 are fundamental to overall youth development. Issues related to other goals – including gender equality, good health, combating poverty and hunger, and action on environmental issues and climate change – are also addressed briefly by the monograph.

The report includes the following chapters: Youth and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; Youth education; Youth employment; Youth education and employment: exploring the nexus; Where's the evidence; Youth implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

13.1 Edited excerpts from the World Youth Report and the publisher's website

Following the recent adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), countries in the ESCAP region are in a prime position to harness the full potential of their youth populations so as to promote inclusive and sustainable development. Success depends on better involving and including young people in all steps of development by recognizing that they can play much greater roles in decisions that influence the challenges and opportunities they face and the environments they live in. The youth bulge in South and South-West Asia has the potential to spur growth if well-placed policies that empower youth are implemented. At the same time, the demographic trends underway in East and North-East Asia further increase the importance of fully integrating young people into the labour market.

Education. In the region, enrolment rates in secondary and tertiary education are only 64% and 25%, respectively Although overall enrolment rates have increased throughout Asia-Pacific, access to education remains an issue, particularly for marginalized groups.

For instance, in some countries in the region, youth with disabilities are four times less likely to attend school than their classmates without disabilities. Such exclusion can be due to a lack of appropriate facilities, support services or trained teachers, as well as to discrimination and social stigma.

Girls from lower socioeconomic backgrounds face multiple challenges and are up to 26% less likely to complete secondary education than girls from richer families. Along with economic barriers, female youth face obstacles resulting from social attitudes against educating young women, early marriage or pregnancy and a lack of safety and proper sanitation at schools. The skill mismatch is another issue. In the region, 51% of employers have difficulty finding young graduates with adequate skills, as compared to the global average of 35%.

This is partially the result of the lack of information about the skills and education required in the labour market, outdated curricula and inadequate resources. It is therefore critical to improve information about the skills and experience employers need today and in the future and to link this information with educational and career counselling as well as to enhance the quality and relevance of education. One way to increase the relevance of education is through Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET), with a focus on green jobs. Better teacher training and curricula that are aligned to labour market demands are also necessary to improve the current situation as well as implement SDG 4: 'Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all'.

Employment. National youth unemployment rates are up to 10 times those of adults. Along with a regional youth unemployment rate of around 11%, as many as 41% of all youth in some countries are not in employment, education or training (NEET). Another concern is that up to 85% of youth in some countries are working in low-productive jobs, often in the informal sector, which presents issues related to inadequate earnings, hazardous working conditions and exploitation.

Informal employment also hampers sustainability and economic growth by underutilizing the potential of workers while not contributing to tax-benefit schemes. A major source of informal labour consists of the young migrants from rural areas who move to cities in search of opportunity. This is not surprising given that urban areas account for 80% of the region's GDP. Unfortunately, for many it is not a choice, as some employers resort to forced migration, resulting in 20 million young people suffering from extreme forms of abuse.

SDG 4, Target 4, calls for "substantially increasing the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship". Investments in access to both green jobs and entrepreneurship can help address youth unemployment.

Reaffirming the importance of engaging all sectors of society, including youth, in sustainable growth, SDG 8 states: 'Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all'.

Approximately 890,000 deaths of youth in the region are preventable Many youth population groups in the region face significant threats from road accidents, reproductive health and mental health issues, tobacco and substance abuse and violence. Preventing the deaths of nearly one million youth requires addressing informational, financial, and infrastructural barriers so as to ensure access to essential health services.

Part of this includes increasing knowledge about the associated risks of certain behaviours and where help can be found. In this respect, a lack of adequate sexual education contributes to a variety of challenges, including over 690,000 youth living with HIV, as well as unwanted pregnancies, unsafe abortions, sexually related violence, and the spread of sexually transmitted infections and diseases.

ESCAP's work: ESCAP works to enhance knowledge, capacity and regional cooperation to improve the situation of young people, through assisting governments to develop comprehensive national youth policies and engaging young people in its programmes.

ESCAP:

- acts as the Asia-Pacific regional focal point for the World Programme of Action for Youth. It also supports the implementation of the Secretary-General's five-year action agenda, which aims to deepen the youth focus of existing programmes on employment and entrepreneurship; political inclusion; citizenship and protection of rights; and education, including comprehensive sexuality education.
- undertakes research on the situation of youth in the Asia-Pacific region, focusing on the SDGs and identifying trends and good practices on youth participation in development and decision-making, as well as the formulation and implementation of youth policies.
- is an active member of the UN Regional Coordination Mechanism for Asia-Pacific's Thematic Working Group on Youth to enhance the impact of UN youth development work in Asia-Pacific.
- from 2014–2017, led the implementation of an inter-regional project to strengthen the capacity of governments in Asia and the Pacific, Africa and Western Asia to respond to the needs of youth in formulating inclusive and sustainable development policies by, among other means, developing an interactive toolbox of policy and programme options.

CHAPTER 14. CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the last 30 years, Vanuatu's population has increased from 116,000 in 1980 to more than 300,000 in 2020.

As the labour force grows more rapidly than the population dependent on it, resources become available for investment in economic development. This offers an opportunity for economic growth – if the right social and economic policies and investments are in place.

It is necessary to note, however, that creating conditions for decent livelihoods will be an enormous task for Vanuatu, given that about 50% of its youth aged 12–30 are currently unemployed, underemployed or irregularly employed.

To reduce the large gap between the demands on its young people and the opportunities available to them, or in other words, to receive a demographic dividend, Vanuatu must go through a demographic transition.

Below, some of the issues raised by the analysis are discussed and recommendations are suggested, including for policy development.

14.1 Spatial distribution of youth and living arrangements for children and youth

There are sharp differences in the distribution of young people of both sexes between urban and rural settlements: almost 76% of youth live in rural areas, and only 24% in urban areas.

In urban areas, young people have significantly better access to improved sources of drinking water than in rural ones. Almost 9% of the rural population still use the bush as a toilet facility. There are no significant differences between age groups in access to improved sanitation.

To improve this situation, Vanuatu must go through a demographic transition where it moves from a largely rural agrarian economy, with high fertility and mortality rates, to an urban industrial society characterized by low fertility and mortality rates.

This will result in more rapid economic growth and positive changes in the social and economic conditions of Vanuatu's population.

14.2 Characteristics of youth marital status

In Vanuatu about one-third of youth aged 12–30 live together with a partner, about 14% in legal marriage (14% of all young people) and 20% in de facto relationships. The higher proportion of females in de facto relationships and legal marriage shows that females enter relationships earlier than males and are likely to have older partners.

This situation is in contrast with the total population of Vanuatu. Almost 50% of persons aged 15 years and older were legally married.

The number of teenage marriages is quite high. They mostly involve girls (12.4% of the age group of girls); 4.0% are legally married and 8.4% are in de facto relationships.

A marked improvement could be made by adopting the demographic policy to be developed by UNFPA and partners, and implemented by the Government of Vanuatu to reduce teenage marriage.

14.3 Fertility indicators of Vanuatu women aged 12–30

The average number of live-born children to women from the female population aged 15–30 years was 0.09 for the 15–19 age group; 0.84 for the 20–24 age group; 1.80 for the 25–29 age group; and 1.92 for the 30 age group. ASFR values for women aged 15 to 30 years were higher in rural than in urban areas, which can be attributed to the social pressure on young women in rural areas to have more children.

Bearing in mind the necessity to develop a demographic policy to be implemented by the Government of Vanuatu with methodological support from UNFPA, the authors would like to emphasise *the importance of scientifically grounded demographic policies and measures to decrease the pressure on young women in rural areas to have more children.*

14.4 Youth education

Young people in Vanuatu have a high level of literacy at 93% of the overall population aged 15–30. A significant improvement was reported in the period between the last two censuses (2009 and 2020).

Strengthening the national educational policy to provide a higher level of youth education is recommended as an effective tool for futher improving educational and social outcomes and raising national economic and social standards.

14.5 Youth employment and labour force participation

According to the 2020 census results, the labour force participation of youth aged 15–30 was low (37%) with significant urban-rural, age and sex differences.

Work activity in urban settlements was higher for both sexes, except for age group 15–19, which is explained by the high proportion of youth in that age group still studying.

The gender gap in youth labour force participation was wider in urban areas than in rural ones in all age groups except for 25–29.

The unemployment rate was significantly higher in urban settlements, with the rural-urban gap varying from 35 percentage points to 3 percentage points depending on the age group; 2.6% of the all youth aged 15–30 had worked overseas in the past 12 months. The majority of youth who worked overseas were men (77%). Males aged 25–29 accounted for the major share (49%) of those who went abroad.

It is strongly recommended that Vanuatu develops and implements national programs for the creation of jobs, including green jobs and, as a result, transforms voluntary and unpaid jobs to paid ones.

14.6 Youth disability

The 2020 census reveals that there were 5,183 young people aged 12–30 with disabilities (5.3% of the total) in Vanuatu, with most of them in rural areas (81%). The proportion of males with disabilities was slightly higher (2.7%) than that of females (2.6%).

The Census results indicate that people with disabilities more often experience negative socioeconomic outcomes in terms of education, health, employment, and poverty.

The employment-to-population ratio of persons with disability aged 15–30 was 37% of the total, which was higher than the share of employed persons without disability aged 15–30 (33%).

The main activities for youth of both genders with disabilities were domestic work only for self and others (35% of the total), full-time student (10%), and looking for work (4%), with some differences by age and sex.

In coming years, further improvement is expected in developing and implementing national programs for creating special job places for people with disability and also finding them decent jobs.

Given that Vanuatu's national capacity and resources are quite limited, strong international assistance is required to assure effective implementation of policies and programs developed by the UN, particularly by UNFPA and ILO.

CHAPTER 15. SUBSTANTIAL CONCLUSIONS

The demographic dividend is the economic growth potential that could result from shifts in the age structure of Vanuatu's population – namely, when the working-age population (15 to 64) is larger than the non-working population (14 and younger, and 65 and older).

There is enormous potential for economic gains, provided the right policies are in place and investments in human capital, particularly among young people, are substantial and strategic.

To realize a demographic dividend, Vanuatu has to undergo a demographic transition, i.e. a shift from high fertility and mortality to low fertility and mortality. Due to UN, particularly UNFPA, activities in the country, mortality generally falls as child survival rates improve, mainly because of improved health and sanitation standards. Declines in fertility follow, and as families have fewer children, household resources are freed up, allowing investment in their long-term well-being.

Over time, the children born in Vanuatu during the early stage of this transition will enter the labour force. As the labour force grows more rapidly than the population dependent on it, resources will become available for investment in economic development. *This offers an opportunity for rapid economic growth, if the right social and economic policies and investments are in place.*

To make the most of a demographic dividend, and its falling fertility rates, Vanuatu must undertake specific actions to enable young people to fulfil their potential. *This includes encouraging decent employment, investing in education, and ensuring access to adequate nutrition and health, including unrestricted and universal access to sexual and reproductive health care.*

Sexual and reproductive health care (SRH) plays an important role in taking full advantage of the demographic dividend and also reduces disease and injuries, ensuring people are better able to contribute to the economy. Women with access to SRH are better able to continue working, strengthening the financial well-being of their families and communities.

With its surging population of young people, the Government of Vanuatu has an exceptional opportunity to realize a demographic dividend.

Creating conditions for decent livelihoods will be an enormous task, especially as about 50% of youth aged 12–30 are unemployed, underemployed or irregularly employed. Additionally, the shortage of financial resources will make it difficult to maintain, let alone increase, spending on health, education and nutrition.

There is a large gap between the demands on young people in Vanuatu and the opportunities available to them. In reality, large numbers of young people are not able to complete school or find productive paid employment.

Taking into consideration all the factors mentioned above, the authors of this report took the liberty of formulating one deep conceptual idea based on the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, which provide a *framework for consideration of the global process of demographic transition as the basis for provision of a demographic dividend.*

In other words, to receive a demographic dividend, any developing country including Vanuatu, must go through a demographic transition where it moves from a largely rural agrarian economy with high fertility and mortality rates to an urban industrial society characterized by low fertility and mortality rates.

In the initial stages of this transition, fertility rates fall, leading to a labour force that is temporarily growing faster than the population dependent on it. All else being equal, per capita income grows more rapidly during this time too. This economic benefit is the first dividend received by a country that has gone through a demographic transition.

A decline in fertility and mortality rates boosts the productivity of the working population, which leads to a demographic dividend.

The benefits from a demographic transition are neither automatic nor guaranteed. Any demographic dividend depends on whether the government implements the right policies in areas such as education, health, governance, and the economy. In addition, the size of a demographic dividend that a country receives depends on the level of productivity of young adults which, in turn, depends on the level of schooling, employment practices, timing and frequency of childbearing, and economic policies that make it easier for young parents to work. The dividend amount is also tied to the productivity of older adults and depends on tax incentives, health programs and retirement policies.

There are four main areas where a country can find demographic dividends:

1. **Savings:** During a period of demographic transition, personal savings grow and can be used to stimulate the economy.
2. **Labour supply:** More workers are added to the labour force, including more women.
3. **Human capital:** With fewer births, parents are able to allocate more resources to each child, leading to better educational and health outcomes.
4. **Economic growth:** GDP per capita increases due to a decrease in the dependency ratio.

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ANNEXES

Annex 1. List of scientific publications and academic journals with a focus on youth and concepts of youth

During this study, about 500 academic publications on youth development were collected from the Web of Science (using CiteSpace) and were reviewed and analysed.

The following list presents the subject, institution and country relating to the published papers, and authors' collaborations and networks.

The results show that authors and institutions in leading western universities and think-tanks are the main contributors to adolescent and youth research and that interdisciplinary collaboration is gradually growing.

Document co-citation analysis was used to investigate research hotspots. Research frontiers and trending topics from 2010 to 2022 were found using burst detection, and research gaps were identified. The findings provide direction for future research on adolescents and youth.

MOST IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTORS

1. Journal of Youth Work – provides a forum for critical reflection on practice and for dissemination of research that contributes to the development of youth work and to understanding the conditions in which young people live, rest, work and play. The journal is concerned with the transfer of knowledge on issues that affect young people, and analysis of the circumstances that enable them to flourish. It provides a forum for academics and practitioners to pose problems, consider policy and practice, and create multi-disciplinary conversations.
2. Canadian Journal of Family and Youth (CJFY) – a fully refereed interdisciplinary journal that is published once a year. The journal responds to the diversification of scholarly interests and regional concerns, and is an outlet for Canadian and comparative scholarship on the changing dynamics of the family and the social situation of youth.
3. Child & Youth Care Forum – a peer-reviewed, multi-disciplinary publication that welcomes submissions – original empirical research papers, theoretical reviews, and invited commentaries – on children, youth, and families.
4. Children and Youth Services Review – an interdisciplinary forum for critical scholarship regarding service programs for children and youth.
5. Child & Youth Services – an international academic journal devoted to advancing knowledge and thinking about relational engagement with children, youth, their families, and communities. Recognizing that children and youth, no matter what challenges they may face, are citizens of the world, the journal is a forum for dialogue among the international community of scholars and practitioners concerned with the lives of young people.
6. Commonwealth Youth and Development – a multi-disciplinary biannual publication that seeks to promote understanding of, and impetus for the empowerment of youth, which will enable them to play a constructive role in the development of their communities. It recognizes the importance of youth and youth workers in developing countries and seeks to promote the professionalization of youth work.
7. International Journal of Adolescence and Youth – aims to identify, examine and compare particular issues, problems and policies related to adolescents and youth throughout the world.
8. International Journal of Child, Youth and Family Studies – a peer-reviewed, open access, interdisciplinary, cross-national journal that is committed to scholarly excellence in the field of research about and services for children, youth, families and their communities.

9. Journal of Adolescent and Family Health – promotes positive adolescent and family health through the publication of original articles. The journal attempts to provide an interdisciplinary forum that mixes clinical innovation, practice wisdom, and theory with academic rigor and excellence.
10. Journal of Adolescent Research – publishes informative and dynamic articles from a variety of disciplines that focus on development during adolescence (ages 10 to 18) and early emerging adulthood (18 to 22).
11. Journal of Research on Adolescence – presents methodological and theoretical papers of the highest standards of scholarship. Featured studies use diverse methods including multivariate, longitudinal, demographic, clinical, ethnographic, and experimental analyses. Cross-national, cross-cultural studies, and studies of gender, ethnic, and racial diversity are of particular interest.
12. Journal of Youth and Adolescence – provides a single, high-level medium of communication for psychologists, psychiatrists, biologists, criminologists, educators, and professionals in many other allied disciplines who address the subject of youth and adolescence.
13. Journal of Youth Development – an open-source, peer-reviewed, quarterly online publication dedicated to advancing youth development practice and research.
14. Journal of Youth Studies – an international scholarly journal devoted to a theoretical and empirical understanding of young people's experiences and life contexts
15. Latin American Journal in Social Sciences, Childhood and Youth – a half-yearly publication that presents research and inter- and transdisciplinary meta-analysis, to advance the debate and knowledge about childhood and youth.
16. New Directions for Youth Development: Theory, Practice, and Research – a quarterly publication focused on contemporary issues challenging the field of youth development. The journal is intended as a forum for provocative discussion that reaches across the worlds of academia, service, philanthropy, and policy.
17. Vulnerable Children and Youth Studies – a peer-reviewed journal analysing vulnerability in childhood from a scholarly and experiential perspective so that learning and good practice can be discussed and disseminated with the ultimate goal of improving the lives of children.
18. YOUNG: Nordic Journal of Youth Research – an international scholarly journal of youth research, which seeks to publish innovative and outstanding theoretical and empirical research on the life situation of young people.
19. Youth and Policy Journal – founded in 1982 to offer a critical space for the discussion of youth policy and youth work theory and practice.
20. Youth & Society – a multidisciplinary peer-reviewed journal that focuses on issues related to the 10–24 year-old population.
21. Youth Studies – first professional youth studies journal to be published in Ireland. The journal, which was established in 2006, represents the coming together of people interested in youth affairs throughout Ireland.
22. Youth Studies Australia – a peer-reviewed journal that has, for 32 years, provided interdisciplinary, research-based information and analysis on issues affecting Australians from early adolescence to young adulthood.
23. Journal of Youth Work – provides a forum for critical reflection on practice and for the dissemination of research that contributes to the development of youth and to understanding the conditions in which young people live, rest, work and play.
24. Child and Youth Care Work – the journal of the National Association of Child Care Workers, which aims to promote optimal standards of care for orphaned, vulnerable and at-risk children in South Africa.

Annex 2. Characteristics of this monograph's scientific novelty and practical significance

According to the methodology of scientific research it is necessary to define the main elements of any academic publication's scientific novelty.

Usually, research novelty refers to elements that are new in the research, which leads to a new knowledge discovery or, in other words 'scientific value added'. In other words, novelty has to contribute to scientific progress.

A statement of novelty about a book (or monograph or article) describes the features for which novelty or originality is claimed.

The scientific novelty of this monograph lies in:

- its untraditional definition of the youth concept. For the first time in demographic scientific literature, it combines two approaches to define the youth concept: categorical and relational;
- scientific interpretation of demographic behavior as one of the characteristics of the modern world and national development;
- understanding of the youth concept in the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs, and a global PYD model;
- consideration of the PYD model as a conceptual way to reach the SDGs;
- a conceptual approach to statistical measurement of youth socioeconomic characteristics in the SDG framework;
- definition of a hierarchical view of the numerous ways in which young people may contribute to sustainable development in the framework of a demographic dividend;
- a conceptual framework o help assess the transformative potential of policies, particularly with regard to their impact on youth, and how these policies should be meaningfully integrated and represented in decision-making and program development processes.

The monograph has practical value and significance because it provides information and an analytical basis for the design and implementation of specific UN and UNFPA programs dedicated to youth development in Vanuatu.

The monograph should therefore contribute to accelerating the achievement of the SDGs and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development in regard to adolescents and youth.

Annex 3. Vanuatu population data (2020 and historical)

Year	Population	Yearly change (%)	Yearly change	Migrants (net)	Median age	Fertility rate	Density (P/km²)	Urban Pop. (%)	Urban population	Country's share of world population	World population	Vanuatu's global rank
2020	307,145	2,42 %	7,263	120	21,1	3,80	25	24,4 %	75,025	0,00 %	7,794,798,739	181
2019	299,882	2,46 %	7,202	120	20,8	3,96	25	24,4 %	73,139	0,00 %	7,713,468,100	181
2018	292,680	2,51 %	7,170	120	20,8	3,96	24	24,4 %	71,301	0,00 %	7,631,091,040	181
2017	285,510	2,58 %	7,180	120	20,8	3,96	23	24,3 %	69,511	0,00 %	7,547,858,925	182
2016	278,330	2,66 %	7,200	120	20,8	3,96	23	24,3 %	67,768	0,00 %	7,464,022,049	182
2015	271,130	2,80 %	6,984	357	20,8	4,00	22	24,4 %	66,048	0,00 %	7,379,797,139	183
2010	236,211	2,45 %	5,386	-655	21,2	4,20	19	24,5 %	57,802	0,00 %	6,956,823,603	184
2005	209,282	2,50 %	4,862	-515	19,8	4,40	17	23,1 %	48,362	0,00 %	6,541,907,027	184
2000	184,972	1,92 %	3,363	-1,477	18,8	4,59	15	21,7 %	40,109	0,00 %	6,143,493,823	184
1995	168,158	2,79 %	4,317	-190	18,5	4,83	14	20,2 %	33,923	0,00 %	5,744,212,979	185
1990	146,573	2,43 %	3,318	-723	18,1	5,04	12	18,7 %	27,443	0,00 %	5,327,231,061	186
1985	129,984	2,37 %	2,877	-801	17,7	5,40	11	16,7 %	21,743	0,00 %	4,870,921,740	187
1980	115,597	2,97 %	3,148	-87	17,5	5,75	9	14,7 %	17,045	0,00 %	4,458,003,514	188
1975	99,859	3,18 %	2,896	155	17,3	6,11	8	13,4 %	13,378	0,00 %	4,079,480,606	187
1970	85,377	2,83 %	2,221	-243	17,3	6,46	7	12,3 %	10,524	0,00 %	3,700,437,046	189
1965	74,270	3,12 %	2,116	-130	16,8	7,00	6	11,3 %	8,416	0,00 %	3,339,583,597	191

Source: Own calculation based on: Worldometer (www.worldometers.info). Elaboration of data by United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (World Population Prospects: 2019 Revision)

Annex 4. Vanuatu population forecast

Year	Population	Yearly change (%)	Yearly change	Migrants (net)	Median age	Fertility rate	Density (P/km²)	Urban pop. (%)	Urban pop.	Country's share of world pop.	World pop.	Vanuatu global rank
2020	307,145	2.53%	7,203	120	21.1	3.80	25	24.4%	75,025	0.00%	7,794,798,739	181
2025	344,305	2.31%	7,432	0	21.7	3.80	28	24.8%	85,244	0.00%	8,184,437,460	181
2030	383,373	2.17%	7,814	0	22.7	3.80	31	25.3%	96,979	0.00%	8,548,487,400	179
2035	424,537	2.06%	8,233	0	23.8	3.80	35	26.0%	110,539	0.00%	8,887,524,213	178
2040	467,519	1.95%	8,596	0	24.7	3.80	38	27.0%	126,158	0.01%	9,198,847,240	176
2045	511,739	1.82%	8,844	0	25.7	3.80	42	28.1%	143,921	0.01%	9,481,803,274	175
2050	556,756	1.70%	9,003		26.5	3.80	46	29.3%	163,020	0.01%	9,735,033,990	175

Source: Own calculation based on Worldometer (www.worldometers.info). Elaboration of data by United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (World Population Prospects: The 2019 Revision) (medium-fertility variant).

Annex 5. Youth issues, the 2030 Agenda, and the demographic dividend

Youth are a positive force for development when they have the knowledge and opportunities they need to thrive. In particular, young people should acquire the education and skills needed to contribute to a productive economy, and have access to a job market that can absorb them into the labour force.

The UN youth agenda is guided by the World Programme of Action for Youth. The Programme of Action has 15 priority areas and proposals for action in each of these areas, which provide a policy framework and practical guidelines for national action and international support.

On 25 September 2015, the 193 member states of the United Nations unanimously adopted 17 SDGs to provide a 15-year framework for global development. The adoption of the 2030 Agenda represented the culmination of an extensive 3-year process involving member states and civil society, including youth organizations, in the development of specific goals and targets – and marked the beginning of 15 years of hard work by the international community to achieve sustainable development by 2030.

The SDGs are designed to be inclusive, transformative and global, and appropriate for developed and developing countries alike. Importantly, the goals were created through an inclusive and participatory process aimed at ensuring consideration of the voices of individuals, including young ones, and communities at all levels of society. The 17 goals present a shared vision to end poverty, rescue the planet and build a peaceful world.

The SDGs entail 120 actions on many dimensions. They emphaise interconnectedness between different population groups and spheres, including young people and national economies.

It is vital that voices from the Pacific are heard in regard to the 2030 Agenda. Pacific Island countries, including Vanuatu, face particular development challenges including small populations, geographical isolation and vulnerability to climate change.

A number of Pacific Island countries are classed as 'least developed countries' by the UN, and one quarter of their populations live below national basic needs poverty lines. Economic development within these countries is often limited due to poor institutional capacity and isolation from international markets.

The demographic transition process began only recently in Pacific Island countries, particularly in Vanuatu. Analysis of data collected by UNFPA indicates that around 10% of young people in Vanuatu have had sex by the age of 15, with the median age of sexual debut 16.7 years for males and 17 years for females. Less than 15% of sexually active youth (aged 15–24) report consistent condom use, and fewer than 35% of adolescent girls aged 15–19 who are married or in a de facto union use a modern method of contraception. More than 36% of ni-Vanuatu males and 14% of females aged 15–24 report ever being diagnosed with an STI, with surveillance data indicating the highest rates of chlamydia occur among adolescents aged 15–19. Adolescent fertility is relatively high (66 births per 1,000 girls aged 15–19). Adolescent girls account for almost one in eight births.

It was thus imperative that the special development challenges of Pacific Island countries are included in post-2015 development debates to ensure their particular needs are addressed.

It is important that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is seen as an opportunity to address the key development challenges of our time, with the aim being to improve the well-being and rights of all people, including young people.

Adolescents and youth are considered as important actors in, and beneficiaries of this process. Many young people are not only among the most vulnerable groups affected by poverty, inequality, unemployment and climate change, they are also the generation that will reach adulthood during the realization of the 2030 Agenda.

Realizing the sustainable, long-term transformation ambitions of the 2030 Agenda requires new policy approaches that include targeting underlying social injustice, rather than implementing affirmative remedies that simply seek to alleviate the symptoms.

Far from being mere beneficiaries of the 2030 Agenda, young people have been active actors, agents and even architects in its development and continue to be engaged in the frameworks and processes that support its implementation, follow-up and review.

The active engagement of youth is central to achieving sustainable, inclusive and stable societies by 2030, and to averting threats and challenges to sustainable development, including the impacts of climate change, unemployment, poverty, gender inequality, conflict, and migration.

Calls for investments in young people have increased dramatically in recent years. Meanwhile, more and more countries agree that policies that help young people fulfil their potential can also help drive economic development. The most recent edition of The State of World Population is significant because it frames investments in youth not solely as responding to the needs of young people, but also as an imperative for sustainable development. The perspective and data presented in this report are valuable assets.

Strategic investments can enable young people to claim their rights to education, health, employment and development, and to live free from violence and discrimination. Achieving these rights will require that young people are counted and have a voice –meaningful participation – in governance and policymaking.

With the right policies and investments, countries can realize a demographic dividend, made possible by falling mortality and fertility rates. With a larger working population and fewer dependants, a country has a one-time opportunity for rapid economic growth and stability.

Realizing this dividend requires investment in building institutional capacity, strengthening human capital, pursuing economic models that improve employment prospects, and promoting inclusive governance and the enjoyment of human rights. International support can unlock the potential of the next generation of innovators, entrepreneurs, change agents and leaders.

Education is critical. The skills and knowledge that young people acquire must be relevant to the current economy and enable them to become innovators, thinkers and problem-solvers.

Investments in health, including sexual and reproductive health, are also central. When young people can make a healthy transition from adolescence to adulthood, their options expand. (Today, more than 2 million 10–19 year-olds are living with HIV and about 1 in 7 of all new HIV infections occur during adolescence.)

All of these issues are important and a great majority of them are the subject of discussion in this monograph.