

# Vernacular language, biocultural diversity, intangible cultural heritage and social order: Case-studies of applied language maintenance and revitalization from Vanuatu

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Philippines

Guam

Marshall Islands

Hawaii

Palau

Micronesia

Indonesia

Papua  
New Guinea

Solomon  
Islands

Kiribati

Samoa

Australia

Coral  
Sea

Vanuatu

Fiji  
Islands

Tonga

Cook  
Islands

Tahiti  
Bora Bora  
Moorea  
French Polynesia  
Huahine  
Rangiroa  
Mānihi

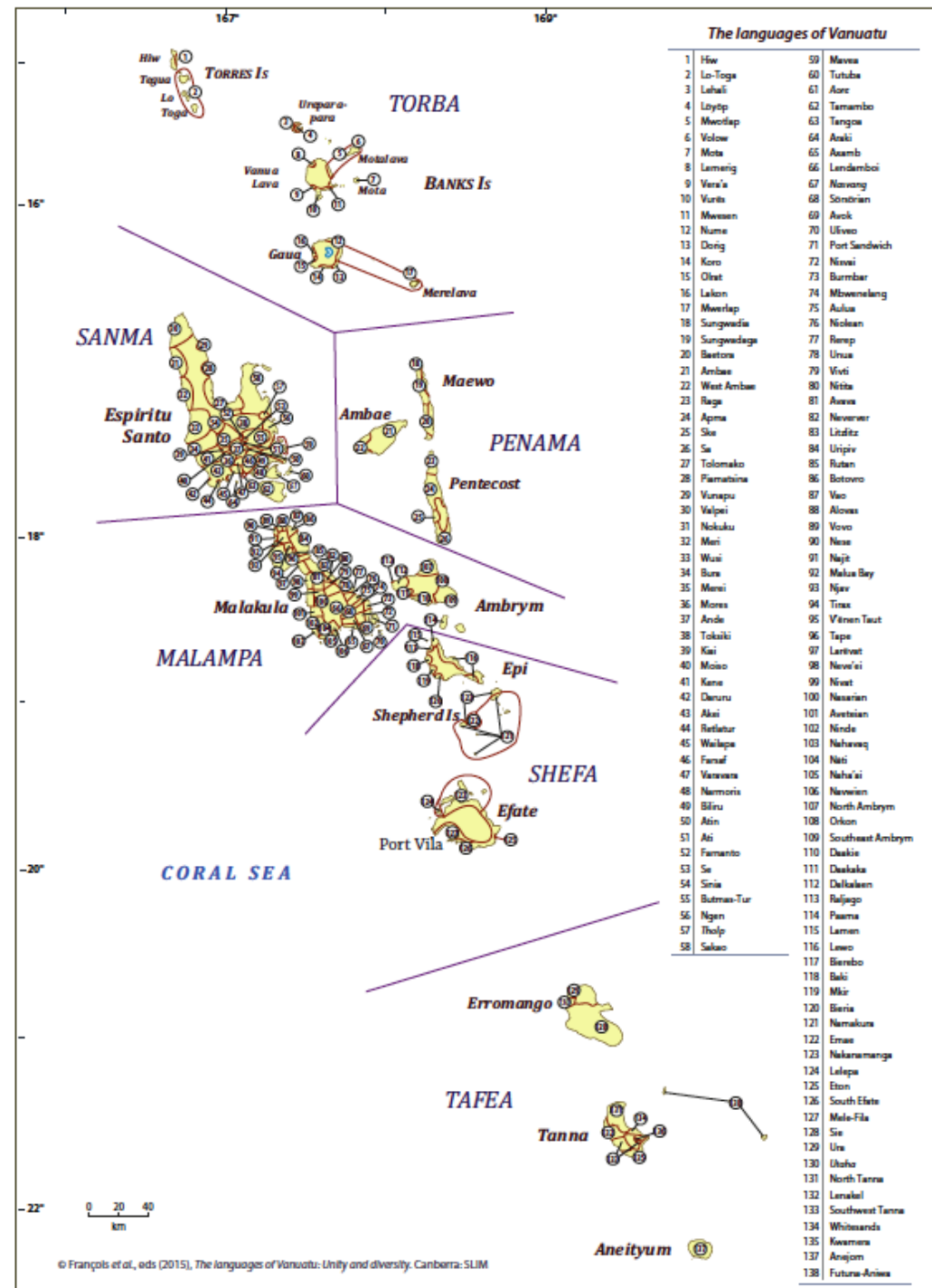
Norfolk Is.

New Zealand

Oceania

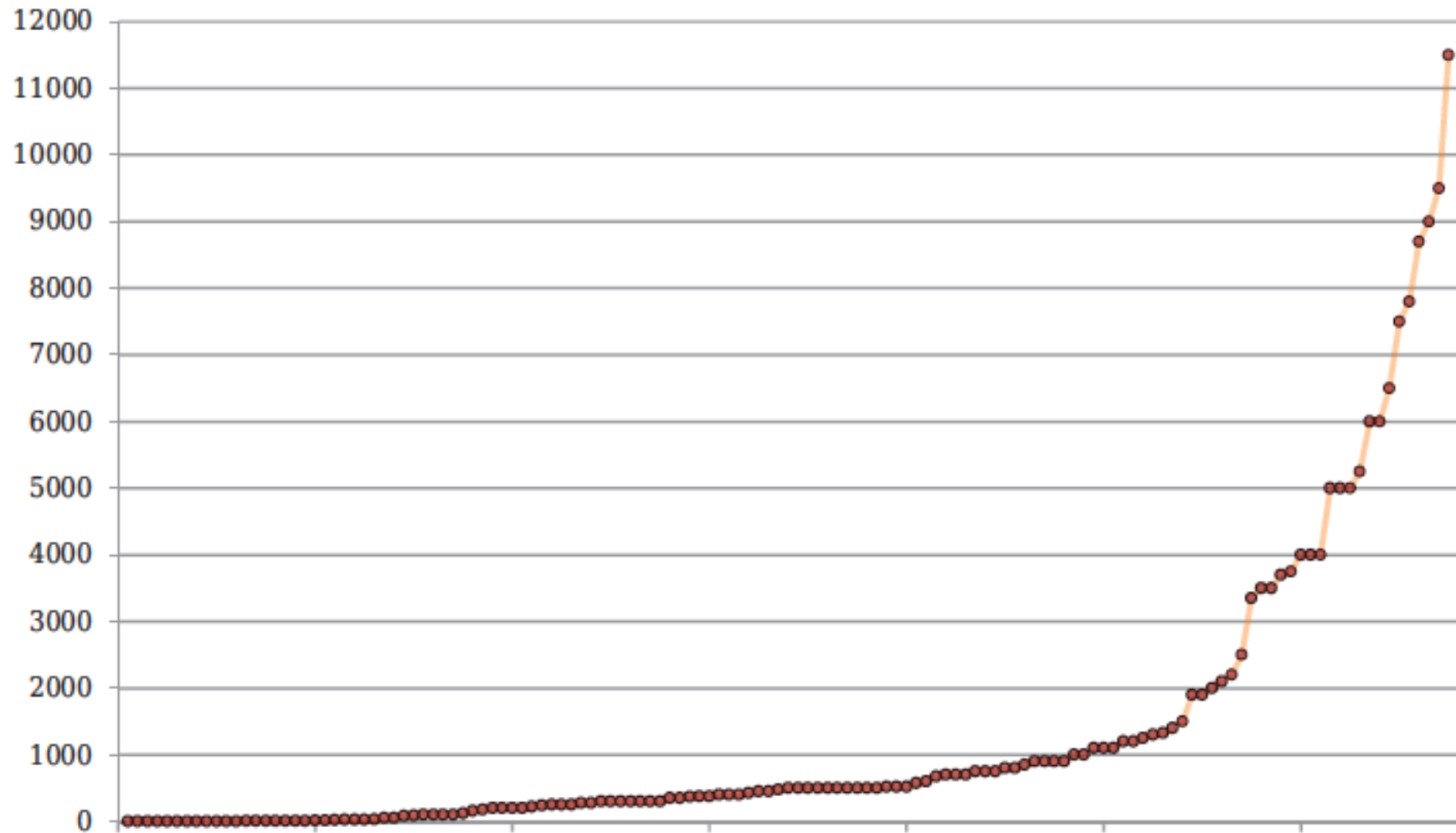
Destinations

# Reference map of 138 languages in Vanuatu



Source: François, A., M. Franjeh, S. Lacrampe, & S. Schnell. 2015, 'The exceptional linguistic density of Vanuatu'. In A. François, S. Lacrampe, M. Franjeh, S. Schnell (eds.), *The Languages of Vanuatu: Unity and Diversity*, Studies in the Languages of Island Melanesia, 5. Asia-Pacific Linguistics, Canberra. pp. 1-21.

# The languages of Vanuatu, ranked by speakers (each dot is a language)



Source: François, *et al.* (2015: 7)

# Main language used at home, by regional province (percentages comparing 1999 and 2009 Vanuatu census data)

	1999			2009		
Province (N to S)	Local language	Bislama	other	Local language	Bislama	other
TORBA	90.6	8.3	1.1	85.6	13.8	0.6
SANMA	60.1	36.2	3.7	51.1	46.5	2.4
→ incl. Luganville	23.8	67.2	9.0	14.0	81.9	4.1
PENAMA	94.1	5.3	0.6	91.8	7.6	0.6
MALAMPA	83.0	16.0	1.0	74.4	24.8	0.8
SHEFA	50.4	39.2	10.4	39.7	53.4	6.9
→ incl. Port Vila	31.2	52.4	16.4	22.4	67.8	9.8
TAFEA	95.6	3.6	0.8	91.2	8.0	0.8
National, rural	<b>85.3</b>	13.3	1.4	<b>77.1</b>	21.7	1.2
National, urban	29.3	<b>56.4</b>	14.3	20.5	<b>70.9</b>	8.6
National	<b>73.1</b>	23.3	3.6	<b>63.2</b>	33.7	3.1

# Why does linguistic diversity matter?

- Reaffirms cultural identity
- Maintains indigenous ways of knowing and doing (cultural practice)
- Facilitated better childhood learning outcomes (e.g. foster cognitive & intellectual development)
- Linguistic diversity is linked to biodiversity (and thus a component of human-environment well-being and resilience)
- United Nations: **“Languages are the most powerful instruments of preserving and developing our tangible and intangible heritage.”**

# Combating language shifts

## **Reversing language shift (RLS) (Fishman 1991, 2001)**

- ‘Top-down’ approaches don’t work
- Intergenerational transmission at home (most important before ‘higher level’ actions....)

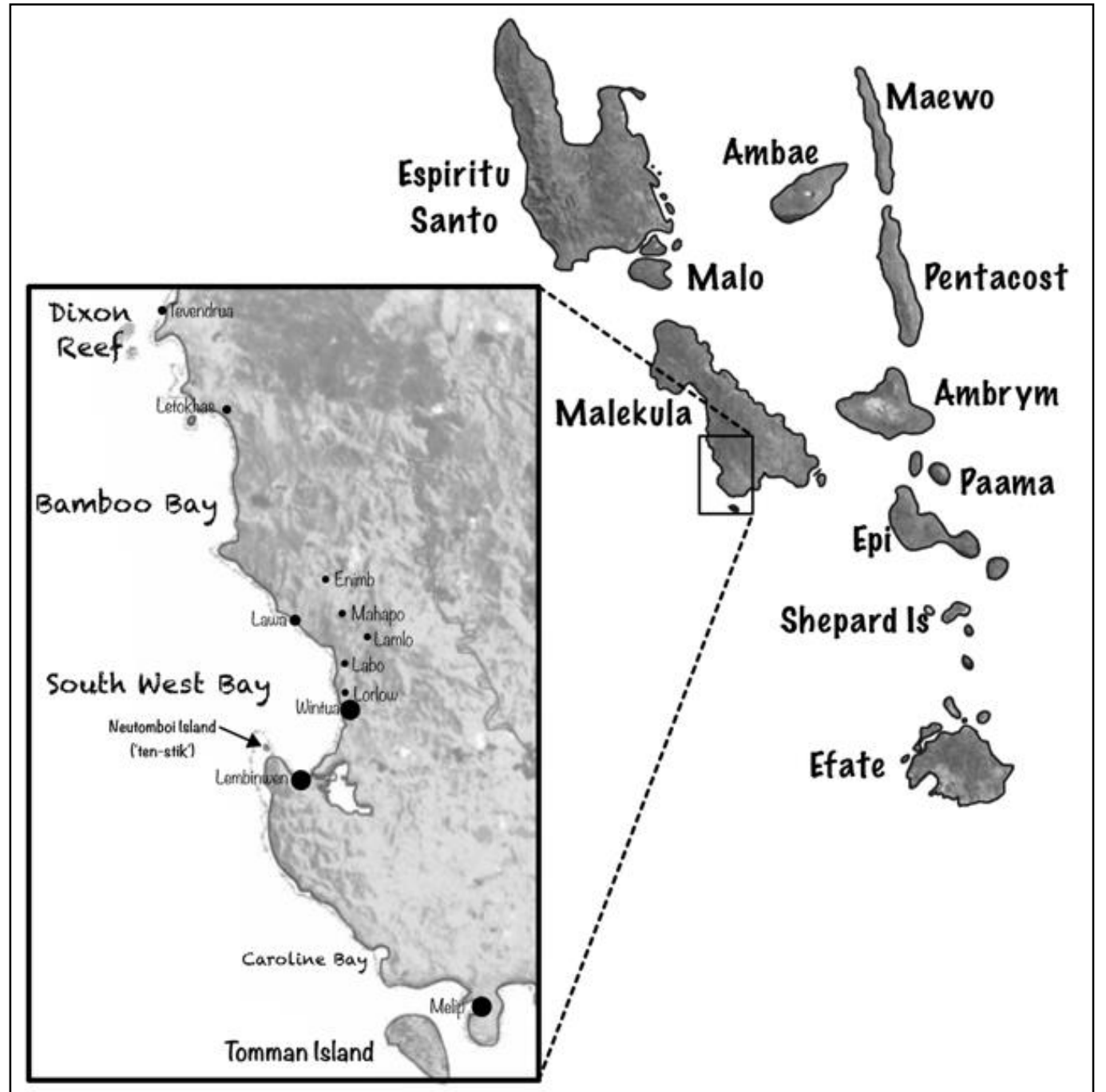
# Cultural renewal and language maintenance in Vanuatu

## Community-level approaches to language maintenance and cultural renewal

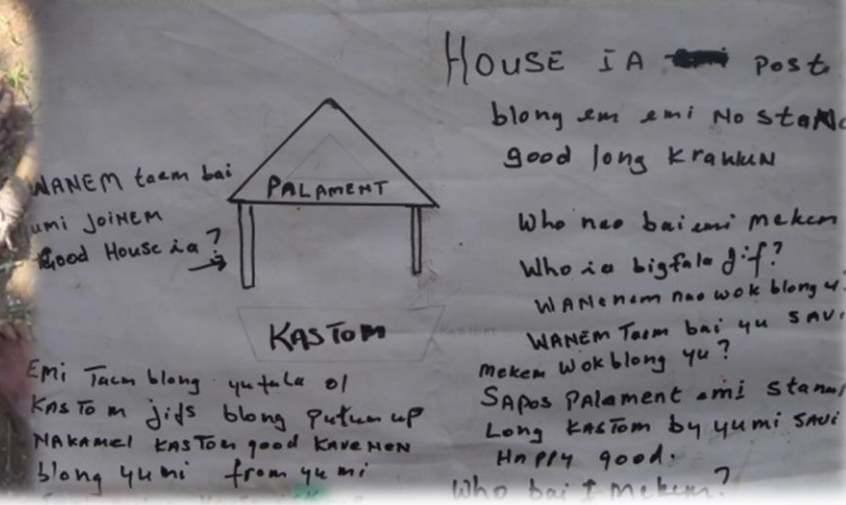
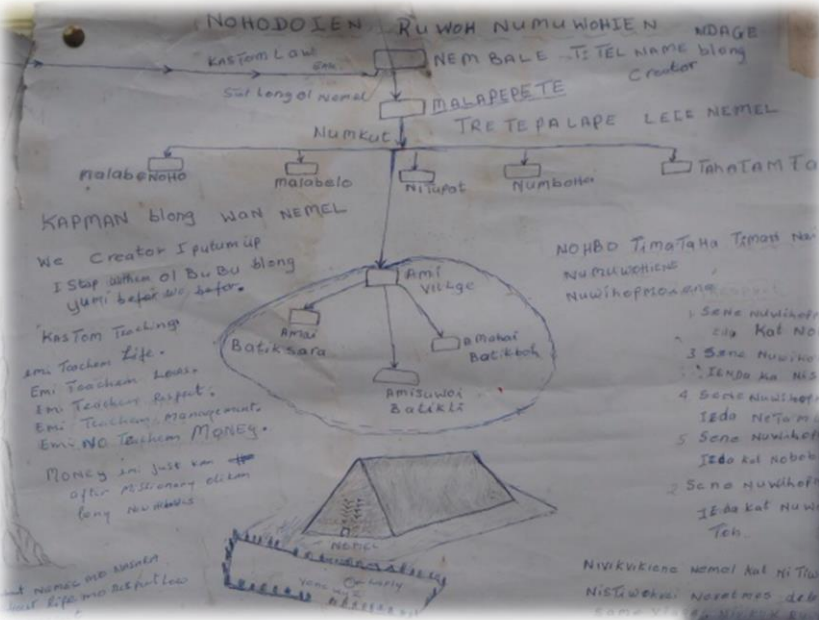
- ***Kastom skul*** movement (started with the Vanuatu Cultural Centre, Port Vila, c. early-mid 2000s)
- **Outreach** village *storians* (presentation & discussions)
- **Curricula** (Sunday School & Adult Literacy Education)



# Sot Wes Bei kastom skul



# Sot Wes Bei Kastom skul



# Vanuatu Kastom Governance Partnership



- 2006-2012
- Malvatumauri National Council of Chiefs (MNCC)
- The University of Queensland
- Australian government - AusAID [now DFAT]
- 5 days workshop/discussion (*storian*) around Vanuatu
- 10 ni-Vanuatu facilitators

# Namakura week

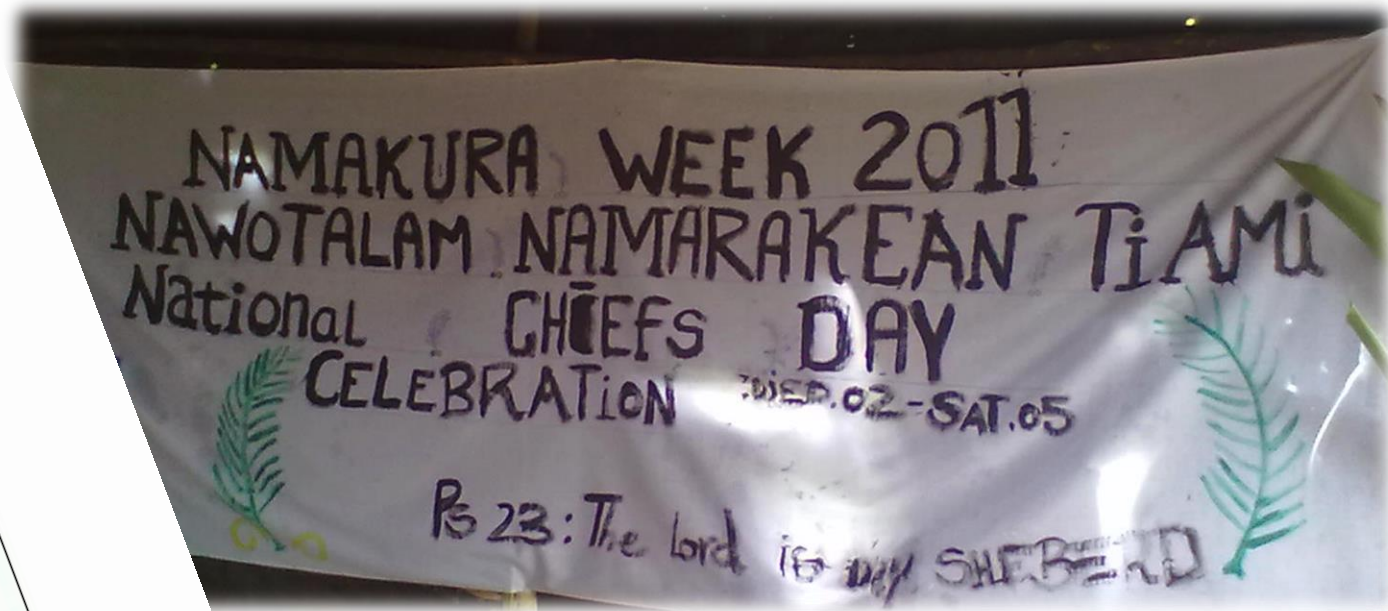
## PROGRAM BLONG NAMAKURA WEEK

1st to 5th March 2010

"UNITED LONG KASTOM, BLONG WAN PEACEFUL MO  
HARMONIOUS KOMUNITI LONG FIUJA"

"NATOK VILITEKEAN ANGO NATOTOW ANIGIT, MI NA  
AMBOHEAN NE NALAELEEAN NATOKEAN ANIGIT"

Report



# Lanwis, famili mo Relensip

## Language, Family and relationships

2015-2018

GROUP #1 - Santa Fe/Falks

Name	Relationship	Meaning	Responsibilities
Father	Tadat Temak Tata	Tadi blo mi Safe ples blo mi	Head blo home Step blo Katermat of blo mi Shapem future.
Mummy	Dajik Bah	Mummy blo mi Plan use mi safe Secret of uwan lara	Wash Cook Lulwach mi sora child Kane 'nau mi independent
Sister	Kisak Wakur	Sister blo mi Ples use mi sora wak, idea etc... uwan	Helpem mammy lo hoos, nuan, Apote chas
Brother	Hojik Wakos	Brother blo mi	Helpem daddy Protectem sister
Uncle	<del>Uncle</del> Bowob Majjak	Uncle blo mi Brother blo mammy Man blo any blo mi	Next apeman after lo daddy ex Married, ded ceremony
Aunt	Nanus	Aunt blo mi Sister blo daddy Mammy blo unnie blo mi	Step lo sora blo u Man blo mared
Grandpa/Grandma	Bibidolona Bibihavia Tibik	Grandpa mammy Daddy blo mi Babi man mo bush nauan blo mi	Take ol custom thing mo Lara carls in sora
Sister in law	Luwak <del>Brother</del>	Mammy blo mammy blo mi	Luwak lo mammy blo mi mi insed lo mammy blo mi
Brother in law	Lalik Tasak	Man blo sister blo mi	Luwak lo sora blo mi Helpem Helpem ol param



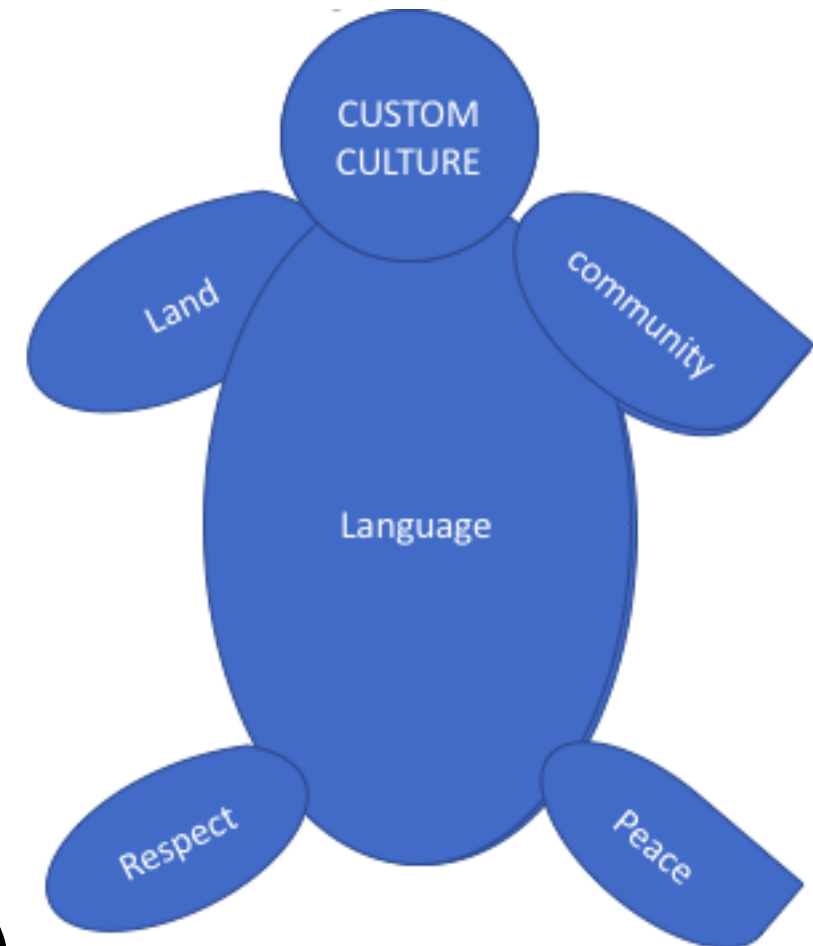
12 05 2015

# *Lanwis, famili mo Relensip*

- ***Promote, protect and use vernacular language***
- Education outreach (*community storian*)

## ***Content:***

- Types and importance of language
- Preamble to the Constitution
- Constitution - Chapter 1, Art 3 (2)
- Vanuatu National Flag
- *Kastom kalenda* (local ecological knowledge)
- Centrepiece of *storian* - Family matrix (kinship terms)
- Sunday School & Adult Literacy Curricula



# Lanwis, famili mo Relensip

Buk ia ikamaot wetem big'ala help blong:



**THE CHRISTENSEN FUND**

**RMIT UNIVERSITY**

Hara partna long bifo, hemi...



**Australian AID**



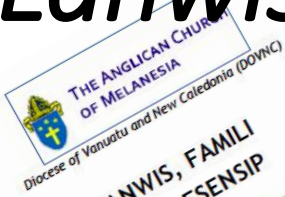
Infomesen we istap insaet long pepa ia hemi blong helpem yumi blong gat strong tingting blong protektem mo promotem ol indijenas lanwis blong yumi, bildimap mo mekem strong ol famili rilesensip mo apriestetem ol value mo poa blong lanwis.

famili

ol famili oitem Bislama ol indijenas wod role mo duti o e ol dedefren famili wetem nara famili memba

olsem ol laebri blong ol kastom ol lanwis hemi givhan lo save ol kastom lan mak mo groan

Oli stap rimaendem yumi se yumi ol tru indijenas pipot blong ol ples blong orijin blong yumi



**LANWIS, FAMILI MO RILESENSIP**

Protektem, promotem mo usum lanwis blong yumi save:

- Valiu blong lanwis
- Pawa blong lanwis
- Lanwis hemi identiti
- Lanwis hemi respek



Vanuatu Language, Family and Relationship Project

owa blo

taet ol praktikal em kastom kalenda, wild mo fulap nara samting we portem heliti mo gud laef blo

Lokal lanwis i gat fulap benefit...

OL RUS BLONG NABANGA ISOEM FAMILI RILESENSIP WE IKONEKTEM STRONG OL FAMILI TUGETA MO I OL INDIJENAS LANWIS I TOKBAOT INSAET LONG OL KASTOM FASIN BLONG YUMI.



SUNDAY SCHOOL CURRICULA

"You shall work patiently not only for God but for our most noble and wonderful... period of rapid change like a river empty a path of rapid water... During Weeks 12-18, 2018"



THE ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF VANUATU IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE RMIT UNIVERSITY

"LANGUAGE, FAMILY AND RELATIONSHIP PROJECT"



ADULT LITERESI KEHIKULA



KASTOM NAAMAL



KRISTEN JOU

RISPEKT, PIS MO UNITI KALJA BLONG MI, LAEF BLONG MI, AEDENTITI BLO MI



PALEMEN

ANGLIKAN DAESIS BLONG VANUATU MO NIU KALEDOINIA

JULY 2018

# Forum – Luganville, 15 Sept. 2018



Key resolutions include: *National Indigenous Language Day*



# Summary

- Language is not just a vehicle but an example intangible cultural heritage
- No vernacular language = no cultural heritage
- Land is the mother of Vanuatu; language is the father
- Language is power (important to holding respect and ensuring social order)
- It is only through *use* in the home that some languages in Vanuatu can be sustained into the future
- Linking family and relationships to language seemed effective and more powerful than linking language to ecological knowledge alone
- Approach has challenges and issues
- Is locally grown, locally-led, context specific, but may be a useful approach for elsewhere in Melanesia