

WATER, WOMEN AND DISABILITY STUDY

DISABILITY PREVALENCE



SUMMARY

The Water, Women and Disability study* found that in Vanuatu's SANMA and TORBA Provinces the rate of disability prevalence was 2.6% (across all ages using the standard Washington Group definition). This is lower than estimates using the same tool in different settings, but comparable to other Pacific estimates. There are a number of possible explanations for this, including Vanuatu's relatively young population (disability is known to be associated with ageing) and culture. Anecdotally, it was felt that people in the study with functional limitations that may be reported as "a lot" of difficulty in other settings, might be more likely to consider these as "some" difficulty in this context due to the adaptability of ni-Vanuatu. **The findings show the significant impact that disabilities have on quality of life for participants, and in particular for women with disabilities.**

KEY FINDINGS

The study found the rate of disability prevalence across the two provinces to be 2.6%, increasing to 3.5% in Luganville.

The prevalence of disability increased with age but was similar by sex.

9.8% of households included at least one person with a disability across the two provinces, including 15% of urban households and 9.6% of rural households.

22% OF ALL PEOPLE SURVEYED REPORTED "SOME" DIFFICULTY IN FUNCTIONING which was **ten times higher** than the prevalence of disability.

Mobility and sight were the most common functional limitations reported by survey participants, particularly for older adults. Anxiety (1.7%) and depression (2.4%) were also common in adults (*these results are not included in the prevalence estimate above*).

Children with disabilities were 10 times less likely to be in school than children without disabilities. Children who were enrolled were less likely to be in the same grade as other children their age.

Of children with disabilities out of school, 61% have never attended.

The child's health, lack of resources and inaccessible schools/lack of accessible resources were often reported by parents as reasons for children with disabilities never being enrolled or having been taken out of school.

Both **women and men with disabilities** were **more likely not to be working on account of illness** compared to women and men without disabilities, and **women with disabilities** were **less likely** than women without disabilities **to be engaged in household activities.**



Compared to people without disabilities in the case-control study, **people with disabilities** were:

- **TWICE AS LIKELY TO LIVE IN A FEMALE HEADED HOUSEHOLD**
- **THREE TIMES LESS LIKELY TO HAVE COMPLETED PRIMARY SCHOOL**
- **SEVEN TIMES MORE LIKELY TO HAVE NEVER MARRIED OR LIVED WITH A ROMANTIC PARTNER**
- **TWICE AS LIKELY TO BE WIDOWED OR DIVORCED**

Compared to women without disabilities, **women with disabilities** were:

Five times less likely to have completed primary school

Less than half as likely to read or write Bislama, English, French or an indigenous language

Nine times more likely to have never married or lived with a romantic partner, and twice as likely to be widowed or divorced

* *The Water, Women and Disability study findings on disability prevalence are based on data collected from 56,402 individuals across SANMA and TORBA provinces in Vanuatu, from 11,446 households. In addition, a case-control study of 1516 participants was also carried out. This means a sub-sample of survey participants identified as having a disability age 5+ and an equal number of people without disabilities were examined more closely to assess differences in WASH access and experiences about a range of topics such as education, menstrual hygiene and incontinence explored by the study.*