

## Brief Report on Manaro Ash Fall Evacuation and Relocation Education Cluster

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### **Introduction**

The Council of Ministers Decision no: 57/2018 has declared a State of Emergency on Ambae Island due to heavy volcanic ash fall on the 12<sup>th</sup> April 2018, the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) deployed a Capacity Assessment team to Ambae for an On Site assessment and an Off Site assessment on Maewo and Pentecost. The following sectors were part of this assessment team; Shelter, Logistics, Communications, Registration, Education, Gender Protection, Wash and Health

The overall purpose of this capacity assessment is to assess the identified relocation sites on Maewo and Pentecost. The interest of our Education Sector Cluster in these capacity assessments is to see how kindy, primary and secondary schools in Ambae will be hosted in Maewo and Pentecost considering school capacities, WASH and health facilities and walking distance between relocation sites to schools.

On arrival it was observed from firsthand information that the most affected area in Ambae are North and South of Ambae while north west part of Ambae is an ongoing affected area due to the continuous ash fall deposited by south east trade winds and this is extending to nearby villages of Loone and Nduidui.

### **Affected Schools in Ambae**

Schools affected in Ambae are kindies, Primary and Secondary schools and TVET Institutions that are summarized as follows;

39 kindy schools with total enrolment of 635 students

28 primary schools with total enrolment of 2094 students

7 secondary schools with total enrolment of 776 students

3 Technical Institution with total enrolment of 56 students (1 institution not registered as yet)

**Total of 77 schools with total enrolment of 3561 and students representing 35% of 10,112 current population of Ambae.(this figure does not include teachers and their families)**

### **South Ambae communities and school Evacuation**

After the ash fall, some communities and schools in south Ambae were evacuated to South East and East of Ambae and were hosted by communities and school children were hosted by primary schools in East and South East Ambae. Penama Adventist College was evacuated and was hosted by Ambaebulu Junior Secondary School.

The only challenge encountered by the south Ambae Schools is with Bagabulu Primary school that has an enrolment of over 200 students and when moved to East Ambae, schools in this area do not have the capacity to host this school and ended up in splitting the school to 5 schools including Vanuebulu a French primary School having no choice but to host an English component. This was a challenge for the Bakabulu School principal and teachers to support the schools hosting their students but made the effort to visit and assist their hosted schools.

### **Closing of all Schools in North Ambae**

Following the declaration of the state of emergency, all kindies and primary schools in North Ambae were closed including Tagaga College and St Patrick's College. Though North Ambae is seen as the most affected area, the principals has the understanding that once a state of emergency is declared all normal activities comes to a standstill including school activities.

### **St Patricks College**

St Patricks College has closed its doors after the heavy ash fall and the state of emergency was declared, students from other islands returned to their islands and homes leaving the school with no option but to close. It was difficult to regather the 360 students for relocation to Santo but we now know that there are over 200 students at Santo East while some of their students may have already enrolled into other schools in Vanuatu.

### **Capacity Assessment in Maewo and Pentecost**

A trip was organized by NDMO and Penama Provincial Council to Maewo and Pentecost for the Capacity Assessment team to conduct the capacity assessment on the identified relocation sites.

The Ambae Island Council of Chiefs were also part of the trip to negotiate with chiefs from Maewo and Pentecost to provide land for the relocation of the people of Ambae.

Maewo was seemed to be prepared and willing to give 4 green space land for the relocation but Pentecost chiefs were not quite ready and needs more time for consultation with their people and especially land owners.

Due to time constraint we only managed to visit a permanent relocation site including 2 existing nearby schools. The identified relocation site will be a new residential site that will require setting up of human life necessities but is a very good site. The capacity assessment was called off in Pentecost since a decision was not reached by the chiefs and the team returned to Ambae via RVS Tukoro.

### **West Ambae Schools**

West Ambae schools were operating when we went to West Ambae except for Londua as they were attending PISSA Games on Pentecost. There are challenges faced with the schools in the areas of North West of Ambae including Vuigalato Primary School while Loone Primary School is also affected but has the only best water source for west Ambae. (Underground drilling water) Other primary schools such as Vatuhagele, Ala Memorial, Nduidui and Londua are also affected and struggling to operate. The SIO in west Ambae will monitor the situation and this schools may be relocated to safer locations on Ambae if needed

Vuigalato community is currently evacuated to Navuturiki and Vuigalato Primary School is currently hosted by Navuturiki School.

It is very important to note that Vuigalato may need a permanent relocation site as this village is continuously affected by the ash fall deposited by the daily south easterly trade winds and the effect is ongoing.

### **Relocation of Secondary Schools and TVET Institutions**

We went along to implement the secondary school evacuation plan sent by MOET and have seen this progress;

1. Penama Adventist College is relocated to Aore Adventist Accademy
2. St Patricks is relocated to Santo East
3. Torgil TVET Institution is relocated to St Michel Technical College

The following relocation of secondary school has not eventuated pending preparations in host schools;

- Ambaebulu JSS to be relocated Gambule JSS
- Navuaturiki French to be relocated to Nasawa
- Navuturiki English to be relocated to Sulua
- Londua JSS to be relocated to Bombua
- Walaha JSS to be relocated to Nadiutu
- Tagaga College still undecided if they will be relocated to Melsisi College or going to Santo. LADEC should provide a clear direction on this school

Preparations are underway and all secondary schools should be relocated by end of this week and the host schools will keep the students until end of 2018 pending further directions from MOET and Respective and Responsible Education Authorities concerned.

### **Opening of Schools in Ambae – Primary Schools**

A meeting with principals and teachers of schools in East, North and South Ambae on the 04<sup>th</sup> May 2018 to provide brief update on the Ambae schools evacuation plans and ensuring that all have the same understanding and following same directions. During this meeting, we have established the understanding that all secondary schools will be the first to be relocated that needs preparations.. Kindies and primary school students will move with parents and this is not quite clear when this will happen so all kindies and primary schools were advised to open doors on the beginning of the second term to start classes while waiting for NDMO to execute its relocation plan to relocate the people of Ambae.

We have received advice that most schools have opened up their doors on the 14<sup>th</sup> May 2018 beginning of term 2 of 2018 except for Simon School who were evacuated to St Patricks College, however children were engaged into learning programs into the evacuation centres and thanks for the assistance provided by Save the Children.

Vuigalato Primary School is evacuated to Navuturiki JSS and has started classes also on the 14<sup>th</sup> May 2018.

### **Voluntary Movements**

The voluntary movement of families and communities has placed school children in other islands especially in Port Vila and mostly in Santo. Some of these people are relocating in areas such as Beleru, Stone Hill, Fanafo, Monicxil, Banban, Tevuroma, Botmas and etc and we are not sure if there are schools in these areas or the children might be still at home with their parents.

Would be good if we can at least have some information on this but we believe that once the parents settle in, they will make the effort to seek avenues and put their children in schools.

Schools in Vanuatu may have experienced or will experience students from Ambae schools to call into their schools seeking spaces for kindies, primary and secondary students.

### **Teachers Movement**

Some primary school teachers have moved with their spouses to Santo.

2 primary teachers from Ambaebulu Primary

1 primary school teacher from Vanuemarama Primary School

We have 3 Government paid primary school teachers in Luganville and their schools are still in Ambae.

### **School Fee Exemption**

COM decision no: 46/2018 has approved to offer school fee exemption to students in the most affected communities on West and South Ambae but then COM decision no: 57/2018 has declared a state of emergency on the whole island of Ambae which to our understanding it extends the eligibility of school fee exemption to the whole island.

School fee exemption data was collected in North, East and South Ambae and data entry is done by Penama Education Office. School fees exemption data form was emailed to Walaha School principal to liaise with SIO and collect data for west Ambae schools. The form was also email to all PEOs so they can have their school principals provide data on Ambaean students studying in their schools.

This is still an ongoing process we are following up to get the data for processing.

### **Food Ration for Relocated Schools**

It has been agreed that food rations for relocated schools will be supplied to them in their host schools by NDMO and these schools are aware that they will need to provide their food ration calculations in order for NDMO to order and distribute to their schools.

This will need some follow up from our end.

### **General Observations on Relocation of Kindies and Primary Schools**

Kindy and primary school students will move with parents as planned, however this will become clear in the next few weeks as the COM Decision 74/2018 stated that no compulsory evacuation on the people of Ambae.

People have mix feelings where some people may move and some may not but the Government through NDMO is in the process of putting a stop on the costly evacuation exercises during Manaro volcano eruptions.

NDMO is planning a permanent relocation which means all schools will be relocated as well but if the COM decision becomes flexible to give choices people whether or not they will move then this is where it gets interesting. MOET decision on the movement of kindy and primary schools will depend on the reaction and movement of the people of Ambae.

Below are additional information on the current population and hose holds and that could be of some interest to some of us;

<b>AREAS</b>	<b>HOUSEHOLDS</b>	<b>2017 POPULATION</b>	<b>2018 POPULATION</b>
East Ambae	538	2014	1902
South Ambae	409	1434	1820
West Ambae	924	3427	3400
North Ambae	764	3266	2990
Totals	2635	10,141	10,112

**Data source: Saratamata EOC**



*Picture of Simon Primary School in North Ambae used as evacuation centre as some homes in the community were damaged by the ash fall.*

The relocated schools and the remaining schools in Ambae needs MOET presence and good to see there are plans for some officers including senior officials to visit them in the coming days or weeks.

Thank you  
By Emmanuel Aru