

Citizen access to information in Vanuatu



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Any opinions represented in this report are those of the authors and research participants and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation or AusAID.

Abbreviations

ABC	Australian Broadcasting Corporation
ABC ID	Australian Broadcasting Corporation International Development
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
FM	Frequency Modulation
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
SEM	Structural Equation Modelling
SMS	Short Message Service
VBTC	Vanuatu Broadcasting and Television Corporation
VBY	Vois Blong Yumi
VWC	Vanuatu Women's Centre

The Citizen Access to Information in Vanuatu study was designed to assess information needs and media and communication habits of Vanuatu citizens, as well as their attitudes towards development issues, in order to help development, media and policy organisations better understand community needs and optimise their citizen engagement strategies in Vanuatu.

Specifically, the study focused on the following objectives:

1. **To assess the information needs and wants of Vanuatu citizens, identify information gaps and identify key sources of information on priority information issues.** This includes the assessment of the role of traditional media, new media and the role of word of mouth.
2. **To examine media access, media consumption patterns and trust in media among different population subgroups and identify the key barriers to media access and use.**
3. **To understand citizens' preferences for different media types, media formats and genres.** This includes obtaining insights into media's unique strengths, perceived shortcomings and the extent to which they fulfil citizen's information needs.
4. **To explore citizens' perceptions of development aid and their attitude towards international organisations and entities working in Vanuatu, including AusAID.**
5. **To gauge the impact of communication efforts related to civic participation and explore attitudes and behaviour related to domestic violence and land issues.**

The methodological approach for this study was grounded in InterMedia's **Citizen Access to Information**¹ research initiative, which suggests that the relationship between development outcomes and people's access to information is comprised of five key items - access to sources, consumption or exposure, content and evaluation of this content and sources as well as attribution of impact. The Vanuatu study also drew on the learning of InterMedia's 2011-2012 landmark **Citizen Access to Information Study in Papua New Guinea**, which covered similar questions and themes.

This report has eight core sections. In the first three sections we outline the overall purpose of the study, the methodological approach and the overarching insights that emerged from the study. This is followed by a section on key citizen information needs and sources. The fifth section discusses the media landscape in Vanuatu, varying media access and media consumption patterns and audience's preferences for different media outlets, media formats and genres. The next section provides an overview of citizens' attitudes towards development aid, their perceptions of international organisations and entities working in Vanuatu. Section seven focuses on assessing the impact of communication efforts on civic participation and exploring the attitudes and behaviour related to domestic violence and land issues. We conclude with considerations for the development, media and policy community working in Vanuatu and a more detailed description of the methodological approach applied in this study.

¹ Power, G., Khatun, S. and Debeljak, K. (2012) "Citizen Access to Information: Capturing the evidence across developing countries". In Ingrid Volkmer (ed.) *Handbook of Global Media Research*. Wiley Blackwell; Khatun, S., Debeljak, K. and Power, G. (2011); Khatun, S., Debeljak, K. and Power, G. (2011) Citizen Access to Information: Emerging trends from the developing world. *InterMedia*. March. Volume 39 Issue 1.p. 18-23.

The methodology and research instruments for this study were designed in close consultation with the research team at ABC ID. The study was based on a mixed-method approach and included two research phases:

PHASE 1

Phase 1 consisted of a **qualitative study**, which involved 26 citizen group discussions across the Shefa, Sanma, Penama and Malampa provinces (see Appendix for further details). All focus groups were conducted between October and December 2012.

The qualitative part of the study was designed to provide initial insights into information needs, media access and media consumption patterns, programming and content preferences, audience perceptions of media organisations and citizens' awareness of and attitude towards the international development entities working in Vanuatu. These insights from the focus groups also informed the design of the research instruments for Phase 2.

PHASE 2

Phase 2 included a representative face-to-face quantitative survey with Vanuatu citizens in all six provinces of Vanuatu. The purpose of the survey was to build on the initial findings from the qualitative phase and obtain quantitative, generalisable data on all issues explored in the citizen group discussions. In addition, the survey was also designed to assess the impact of communication efforts on civic participation and explore the attitudes and behaviour related to domestic violence and land issues.

The survey was based on a random sample of 1,212 Vanuatu citizens aged 15 years and above (excluding a booster sample), living in urban and rural areas of Shefa, Sanma, Penama, Malampa, Tafea and Torba. In addition, a booster sample of 102 citizens of Torba was included, to obtain a sufficient number of interviews that would allow for more detailed analysis in this province.

The survey used a multi-stage stratified random sampling design, based on provincial stratification. The sample of primary sampling units in each province was based on a random sampling procedure to ensure representation of the population living in those provinces in terms of age, education, socio-economic status and urban-rural split. The respondents were selected at random, based on the in-household recruitment. The selection of households was done by a random route method defined in the sampling plan (see Appendix for further details).

The final achieved sample was slightly higher than the target sample, namely 1,338 interviews. Weighting was applied to the survey results in order to replicate the national profile based on age, education and province.

Limitations

As noted, the methodological approach applied in the quantitative part of the study was designed to obtain representative and generalisable data on citizens' attitudes, knowledge and behaviour in a number of areas. However, it is important to also keep in mind a number of limitations to the interpretation of the data collected in this study:

1. **Sampling:** Due to significant logistical constraints associated with the geographical diversity of Vanuatu, a decision was made to conduct the survey in only one island in each of the six provinces (see Appendix for a complete list of islands). These islands were chosen primarily due to their comparatively large population size, accessibility by aeroplane and availability of transportation; elements which were necessary to complete the study within the specified timeframe. The selected islands together account for the vast majority (75%) of the population of Vanuatu, however, it is also important to note that the findings discussed in this survey cannot be generalised to the citizens living in the smaller islands, not included in the sampling plan for this survey.
2. **Survey timing:** The survey was conducted immediately after the 2012 general elections in Vanuatu, which may have implications for the findings on the citizens' prioritisation of political issues and their knowledge of and attitudes towards civic participation discussed in this report.
3. **Social desirability:** A common limitation of studies exploring sensitive topics is the effect of social desirability on survey responses, i.e. the tendency to provide answers that will be viewed favourably by others. This may have resulted in some over-reporting on socially desirable attitudes/behaviours and under-reporting on those that are considered undesirable.

For further details on the methodology, please refer to the Appendix.

1. **Prioritisation of information topics is influenced primarily by location.** While hunger for news is evident across all provinces, those living in more remote areas generally express a greater need for information on more basic issues that affect their daily lives, such as education, environment and domestic violence, than their counterparts in urban centres.
2. **MDG related issues generally do not rank high on the citizens' information agenda, apart from those living in the Torba province,** who are considerably more likely to prioritise information on MDG related issues, particularly related to environment, domestic violence and governance.
3. **Mobile phones are the most widely owned communication device in Vanuatu, while radio emerged as the most used and most trusted mass medium.** Household access to radio devices² tends to be more limited in rural areas and more remote provinces, where a poor or nonexistent signal presents one of the main barriers to radio listening.
4. **Men and older members of the household generally have the most control over the use of all media devices in the household.** Conversely, women and younger members of the household generally have the least say in how and when these media are used and what is listened to or watched.
5. **Communal use of radio, television and sharing of newspapers is important particularly in rural areas,** where home access to media tends to be limited.
6. **Word of mouth is an important source of information particularly for those living in rural areas,** where media access is scarce. Local community opinion leaders, in particular, play a crucial role as information brokers for many of the issues, and are also considered the most trusted sources of information, ahead of all traditional media.
7. **Overall, household access to media is heavily influenced by the geographical diversity of Vanuatu.** While household access to different media in the urban areas tends to be relatively diverse, citizens living in more remote areas often have access only to one media device, and also rely more heavily on word of mouth.
8. **News, music and talkback shows are the most popular radio programming styles in Vanuatu.** News is valued by all age groups with the exception of the youngest audience (15-24 year-olds), who put more emphasis on music. Talkback shows have a wide appeal across all age groups, but are somewhat more popular in urban areas and among the better educated radio listeners.
9. **Radio Vanuatu and Capital FM are the most listened to radio stations in Vanuatu, each reaching about a third of all adults on a weekly basis.** However, they both seem to have different strengths – Radio Vanuatu is valued mainly as a source of accurate, detailed, up-to-date news and information, while Capital FM's appeal lies in its music and provision of "lighter", entertaining content.
10. **The Australian government is the most well-known foreign entity working in Vanuatu,** and generally enjoys a positive image among Vanuatu citizens, as does AusAID.

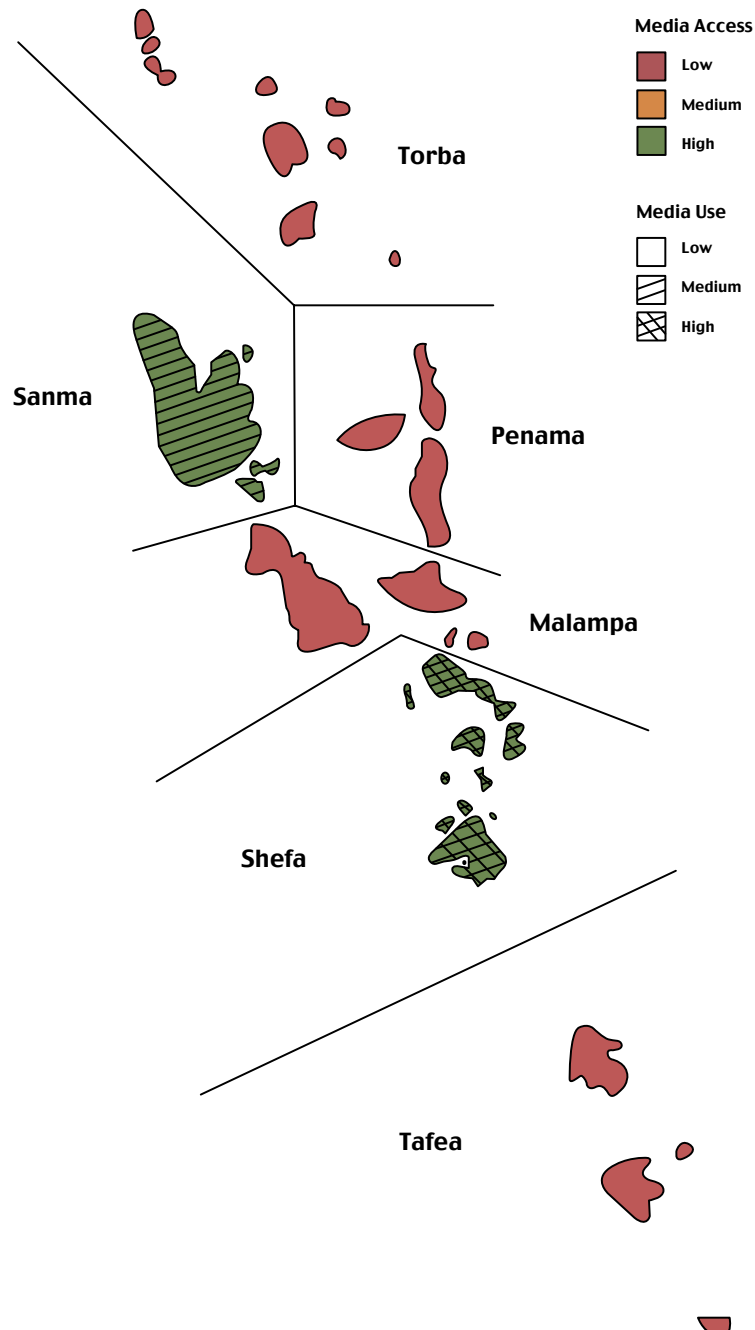
² This includes standard radio sets, radio on mobile phone, car radio and tele-radio (field or two-way radios).

Figure 1**Overall media access and media use by province**

Figure 1 illustrates a notable gap in media access and use between those living in the urbanised provinces of Shefa and Sanma and those residing in the solely rural provinces of Malampa, Torba, Penama and Tafea.

However, it is also important to note that this urban-rural gap varies between different media devices. The gap is the widest for those types of media that face the most significant infrastructural and cost barriers, such as television, internet, computers and landline phones.

- The **Media Household-Access Index** is calculated based on the household ownership of radio, TV, computer, internet and mobile phone. The index scores were averaged and divided into three categories of “low”, “medium” and “high”, representing different levels of household media access in a specific province. The higher the category, the more diverse the household media access in a specific province.
- The **Media Use Index** is based on the weekly use of radio, TV, internet, mobile phones and newspapers. The index scores were averaged and divided into three categories of “low”, “medium” and “high”. The higher the category, the higher the weekly use of these media sources in a specific province.



4

Information Needs and Sources

This section of the report focuses on citizens' information needs, key knowledge gaps and the sources that citizens use to stay informed about the topics that matter to them. This section also examines citizens' perceptions of information needs related to four information topics associated with Millennium Development Goals (MDG), namely health, corruption³, environment and domestic violence.

4.1. Prioritisation of information topics and knowledge gaps

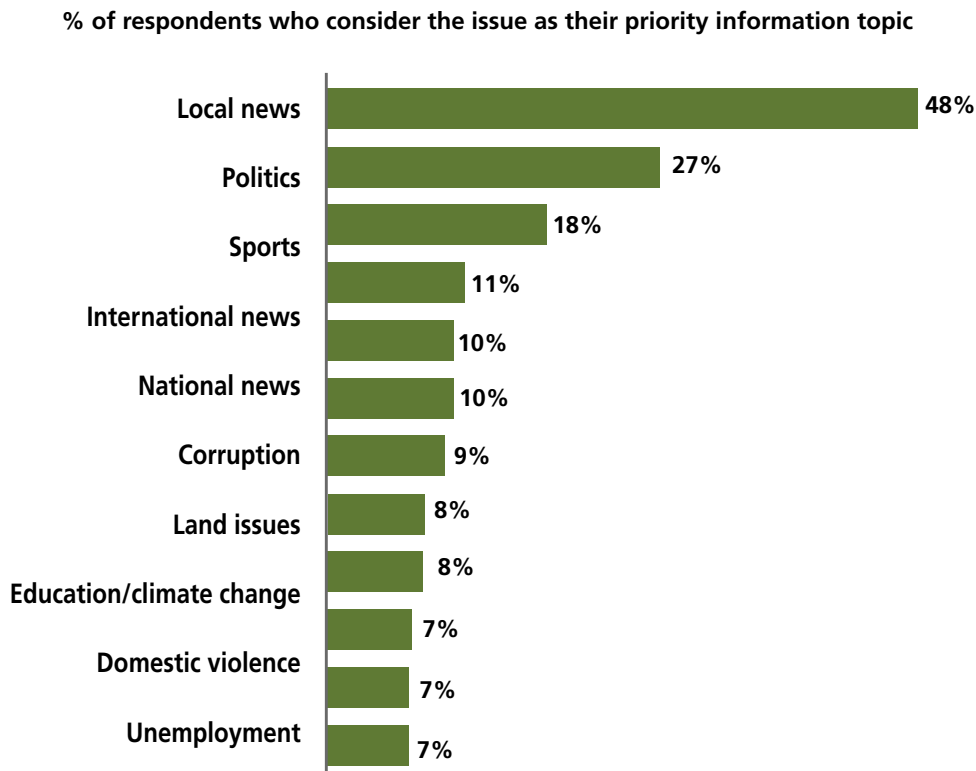
Key Finding 1:

Those living in more remote areas generally express greater need for information on more basic issues that affect their daily lives, such as education, environment and domestic violence than their counterparts in urban centres.

In the survey, respondents across Vanuatu were asked to spontaneously identify three information topics that they considered the most important to them. When their answers are examined in aggregate, local news emerges as a clear information priority for Vanuatu, with nearly half of survey respondents spontaneously citing it as one of the three information topics they consider the most important to them, followed by politics and sports (see Figure 2).

Please note that the survey respondents were not asked to elaborate on their definition of local news, however, the insights from the focus groups suggest that the "local news" tends to refer to the news on the village, community and island level.

Figure 2 Key information needs on the national level



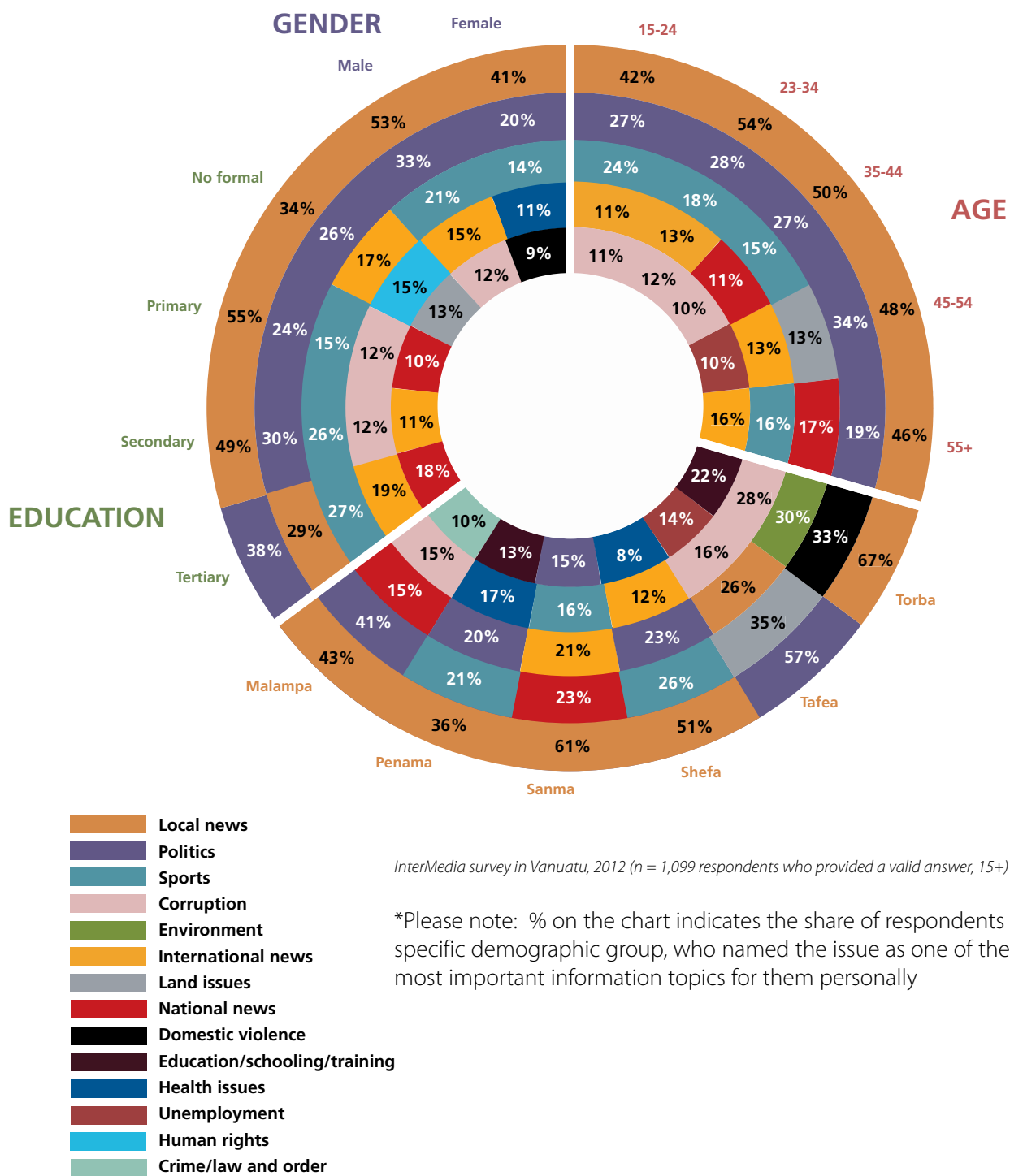
Source: InterMedia survey in Vanuatu, 2012 (n = 1,099 respondents who provided a valid answer, 15+)

³ Please note that corruption was included in this section due to its association with MDG 8, as these issues affect the ability of developing nations to utilise donor funds effectively.

However, these results on the national level can be somewhat misleading, as they disguise the significant variations in information needs between and within different demographic groups, originating from the geographical and cultural complexity of Vanuatu.

When these national findings are broken down further, it is evident that information needs and prioritisation of information topics are far from uniform, and vary significantly between different segments of the Vanuatu population (see Figure 3).

Figure 3 Information Needs Spectrum™



Some of the important insights that emerge from this analysis include:

- First, **local news** is a clear information priority for the vast majority of Vanuatu citizens. While the share of those who prioritise this issue varies between different population segments, local news generally ranks very highly on most people's information agenda.
- Second, **political issues** are of most interest particularly to the better educated and those living in the Tafea and Malampa provinces, and interest in **sports** tends to be higher among men and generally falls with age.
- Third, information on **corruption** appears high on many citizens' information needs list, but appears to be of most interest to those living in the Torba province, who are generally also much more likely to name it as one of the key challenges facing Vanuatu.
- Fourth, **environmental** issues are of high interest particularly to Torba residents, who are four times more likely to cite it as an important information topic compared to the national average. In part, this may be a reflection of their higher and more direct exposure to the consequences of climate change, such as rising sea levels.
- Fifth, Vanuatu citizens living in Torba also value information on **domestic violence** much more than their counterparts in other parts of the country.
- Finally, **land issues** are particularly pertinent to those living in rural areas, especially to residents of Tafea province.

In line with the prioritisation of information topics, knowledge gaps on priority information issues also vary considerably between provinces.

Figure 4 illustrates the relationship between the importance of individual information topics for Vanuatu citizens living in different provinces and their knowledge of these issues.

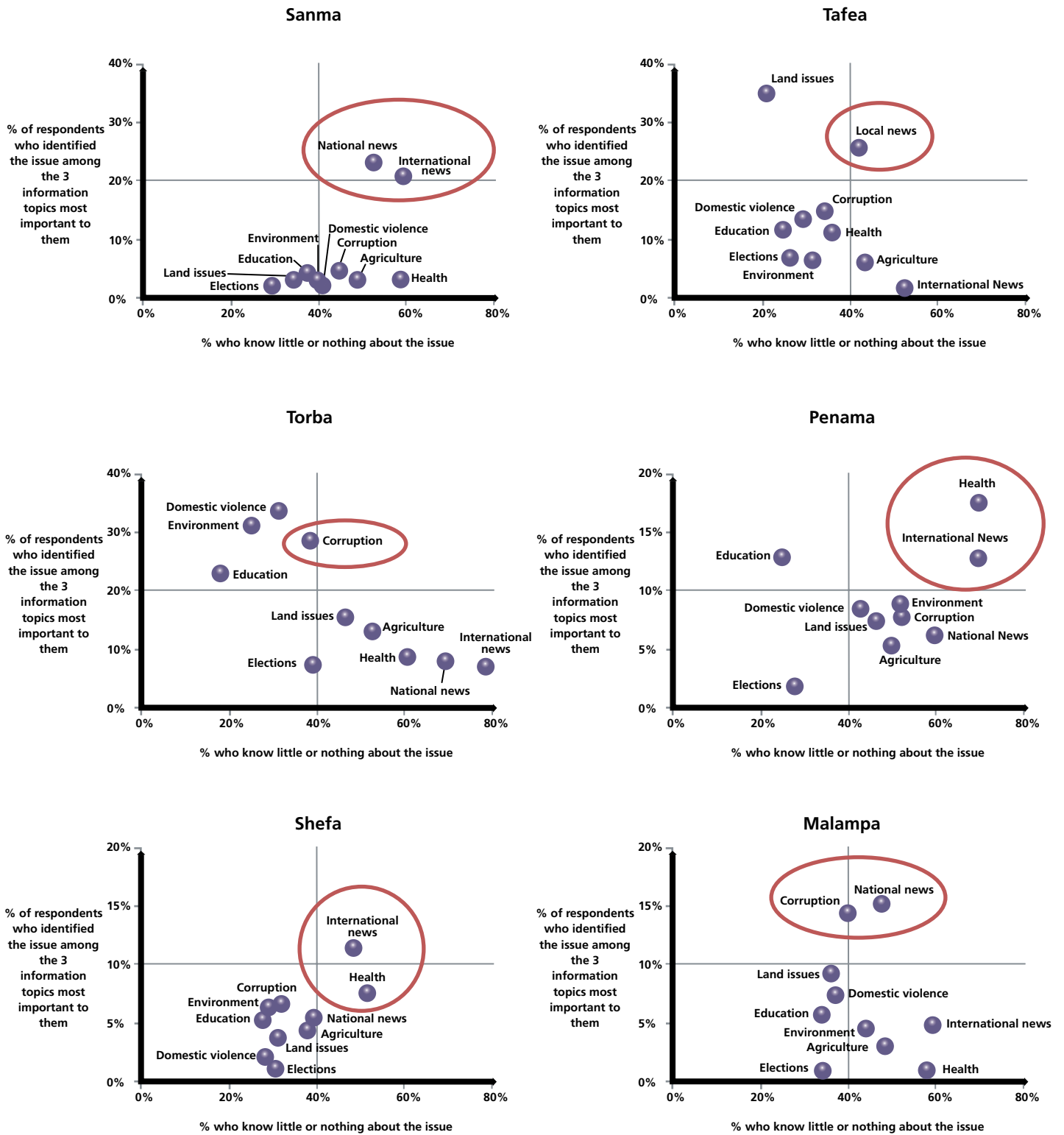
Overall, it is evident that **the need for news** (particularly local, but also national and international news) currently remains one of the most unfulfilled needs for citizens living in all provinces. There are also notable self-reported knowledge gaps related to **health issues**, particularly in Penama, and **corruption** (Torba, Malampa).

There are also several provinces where knowledge gaps exist across other topics that are currently not considered as important by the respondents as some of the other issues, but are essential for the overall development of Vanuatu and for achieving progress on Millennium Development Goals. For example, Figure 4 highlights a number of such topics in the Shefa, Malampa, Penama and Tafea provinces, including environment and domestic violence.

Figure 4 Knowledge of priority information topics by province

Please note that due to substantial differences in the level of information prioritisation across the provinces, two types of vertical (y) scales were used in Figure 4, namely 0% to 40% and 0% to 20%.

Please also note that local news was omitted from the charts on Torba, Penama, Malampa, Shefa and Samma, due to the vast difference between prioritisation of local news and all other issues, which prevented effective visual representation of results.



4.2. Sources of information on priority topics

Key Finding 2:

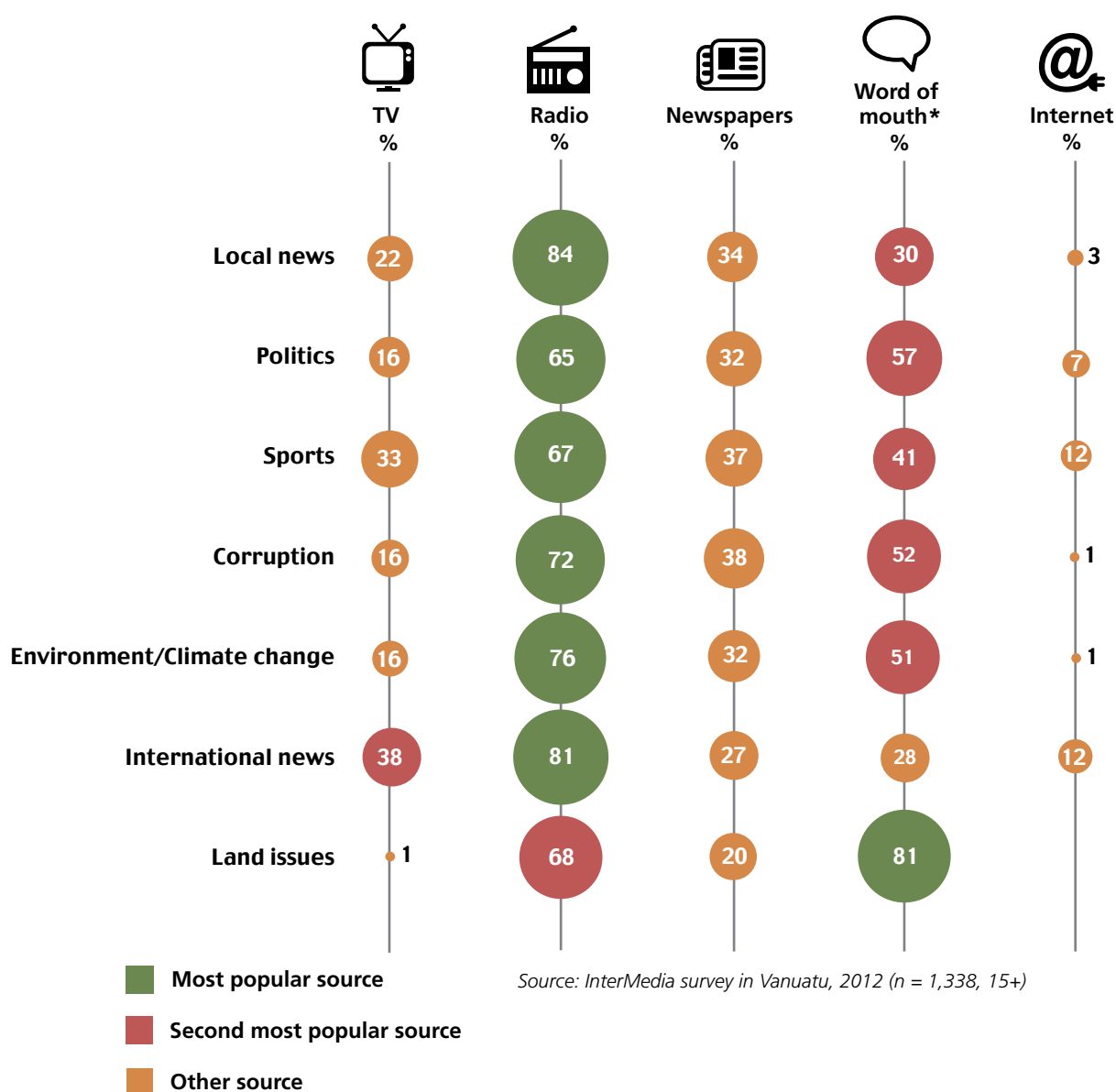
Radio is the main source of information on all priority information topics, with the exception of land issues. Word of mouth is essential for obtaining and sharing information on land issues, particularly in rural areas.

Overall, radio emerged as the most important source of information on most priority information topics for Vanuatu citizens, with the exception of land issues, where word of mouth tends to play a more central role (see Figure 5). Reliance on word of mouth, including friends and family, local and religious leaders and community meetings, is particularly heavy in rural areas, where access to other sources of information and mass media tends to be limited.

Newspapers are the third most popular source of information on priority issues, with the exception of international news, which tends to be the domain of television.

Figure 5 Top sources of information on priority information topics

% of respondents who use the source to stay informed about a specific issue



Source: InterMedia survey in Vanuatu, 2012 (n = 1,338, 15+)

* Includes information from friends, family, community elders and community meetings

4.3. Information needs associated with Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

4.3.1. Health

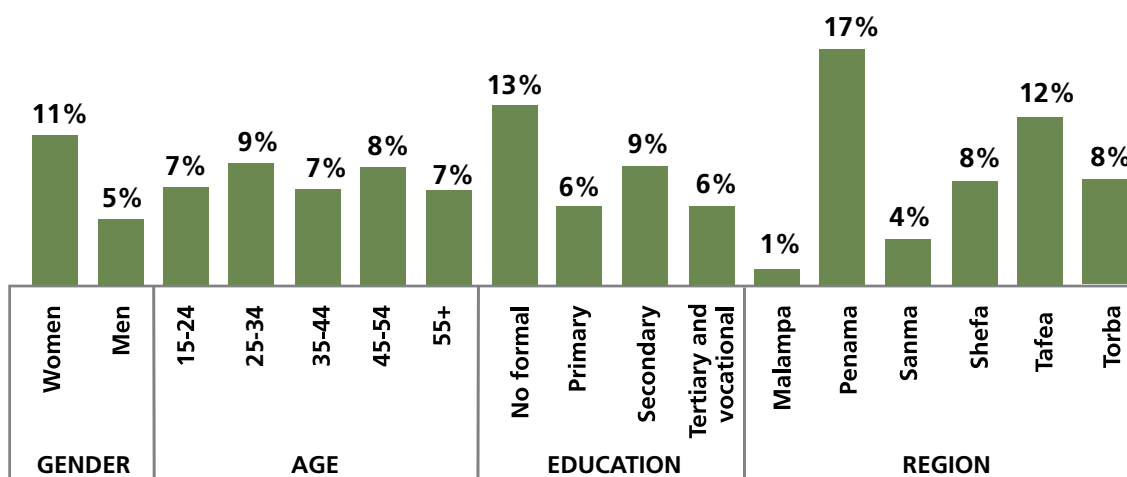
Key Finding 3:

Knowledge gaps related to individual health issues, such as HIV/AIDS, maternal and child health and malaria remain significant.

While health issues did not rank very high on the citizens' information agenda overall, the knowledge gaps related to individual health issues, such as HIV/AIDS, maternal and child health and malaria remain significant. It is essential that these knowledge gaps are addressed in order to achieve progress on related MDGs.

Overall, women tend to prioritise information on health more compared to men. As Figure 6 illustrates, 11% of female survey participants⁴ spontaneously cited health as one of their top three priority issues, compared to 5% of men⁵. Those living in the Penama province and citizens with no formal education also value health information more than other segments of Vanuatu population.

Figure 6 Share of respondents who named health issues among 3 most important information topics



Source: InterMedia survey in Vanuatu, 2012 (n = 1,099 respondents who provided a valid answer, 15+)

Conversely, the **knowledge gaps** on specific health issues seem to be a challenge for the population as a whole. As Figure 7 illustrates, both men and women report very similar levels of knowledge (or lack thereof) on HIV/AIDS, maternal and child health and malaria. In line with prioritisation of health issues, the largest knowledge gaps around health issues seem to exist in Penama, where half of all respondents⁶ reported that they know little or nothing about malaria and 44% and 33% said the same about HIV/AIDS and maternal and child health, respectively.

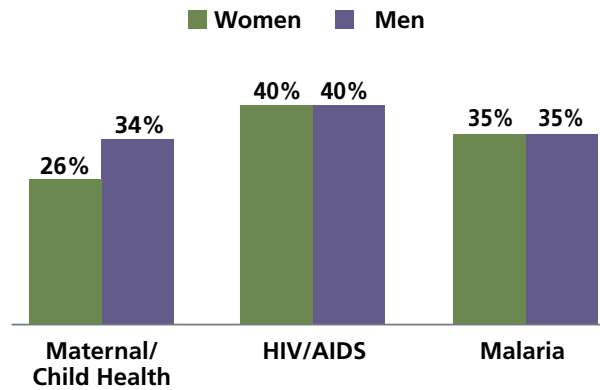
⁴ n = 502

⁵ n = 604

⁶ n = 178

Figure 7

Share of respondents who know little or nothing about the issue (by gender)



Source: InterMedia survey in Vanuatu, 2012 (n = 1,338 respondents, 15+)

Radio is the most widely used source for information on health (68% of those who consider health a priority information topic cite it as the main source⁷). Nevertheless, many participants of the citizen group discussions complained about the insufficient amount of radio content on health and highlighted the need for more health-related programmes and talkback shows, particularly on issues such as reproductive health, pregnancy and family planning.

Due to this scarcity of health information in traditional media, many Vanuatu citizens (42%), particularly those in rural areas, also rely on **word of mouth sources**, such as family, friends, community elders and community meetings.

“I think the best people to pass on the information are the people that are leading the villages. For example, you are here today to give us some information, but there are only a few of us here, so how do we pass the information on to others? There must be church leaders or chiefs that can continue to pass on the information when you leave.”

(Male, 35+, rural location, Shefa)

Community visits from health NGOs and awareness campaigns also play an important role. In fact, some group discussion participants noted that urban residents may be disadvantaged when it comes to access to information about health. One participant, for example, noted that their friends and contacts living in remote islands often shared detailed information via phone and were generally more knowledgeable about health. This may be related to more extensive and frequent health-related awareness campaigns and community visits in rural areas compared to urban areas, and highlights the need for more educational health-related content in traditional media.

⁷ n = 79

4.3.2. Corruption

Key Finding 4:

Citizens in Torba feel the least knowledgeable about corruption and are the most hungry for information on this topic.

Corruption⁸ is not only considered one of the top five most important information topics by Vanuatu citizens, but is also seen as the main challenge facing Vanuatu today⁹. At the same time, the information needs on corruption are not fully met and citizens are hungry for more regular and more detailed content on this issue.

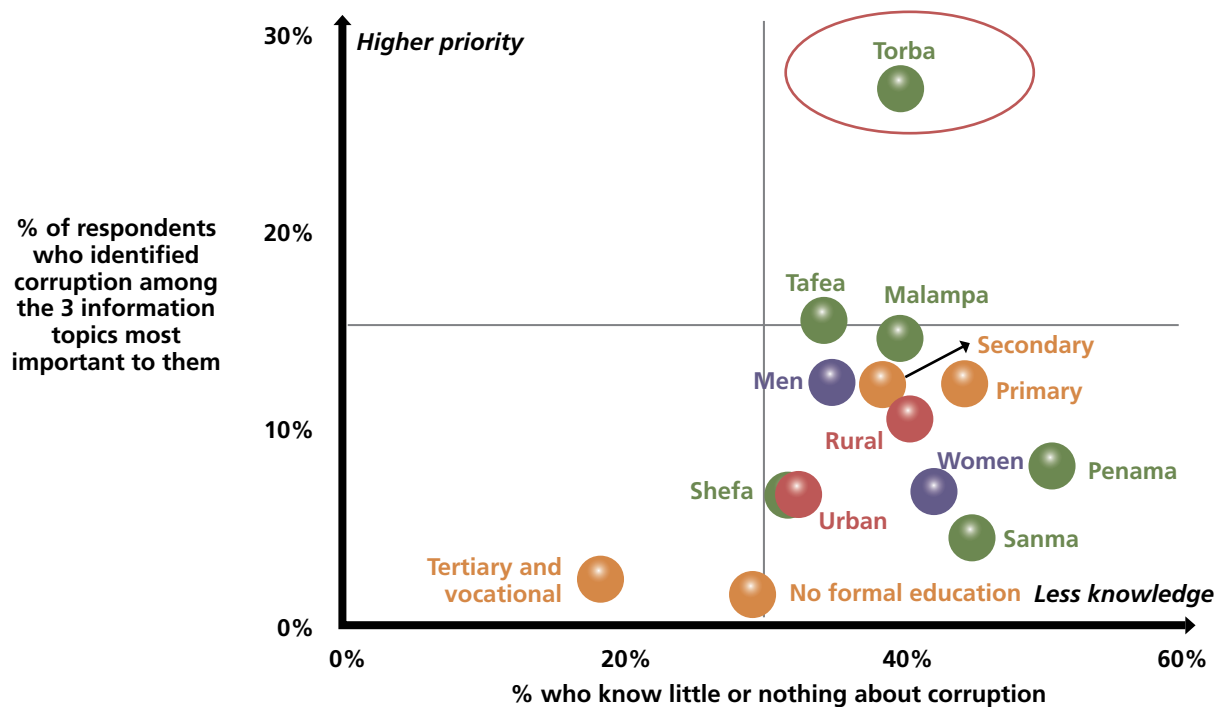
It is important to note that the citizens' understanding of the notion of corruption is not uniform. Overall, they talk about two different types of corruption:

- Corruption on an **institutional level**; particularly in relation to the national government and the parliament, for example, misuse of public funds by ministers and MPs. Most references to corruption in the focus groups fall into this category.
- Corruption on an **individual level**; lying, theft, drug abuse and physical violence committed by individual citizens were, for example, considered an act of corruption by a number of focus group participants, particularly in rural areas.

Generally, citizen discussion group participants in rural locations were less able to articulate in detail what corruption meant to them. In contrast, urban residents were often able to give specific examples of corruption, including the alleged misuse of money at NISCOL (Northern Island Stevedoring Company), misuse of donor funds, misuse of state land by Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, etc.

Figure 8 Knowledge of corruption as a priority information topic

Figure 8 maps the importance of corruption as an information topic for different segments of the population and their knowledge of this issue.



Source: InterMedia survey in Vanuatu, 2012 (n = 2,338 respondents, 15+)

⁸ Please note, corruption was included in this section due to its association with MDG 8, as these issues affect the ability of developing nations to utilise donor funds effectively.
⁹ See Section 6.1 for further details.

However, despite the high interest in information on corruption, the information needs of many citizens on this topic remain unmet. These information and knowledge gaps are evident particularly among:

- **Citizens living in the Torba province:** Residents of Torba represent the single most important population group whose information needs on corruption appear to be unfulfilled. People living in this province stand out both in terms of their high level of prioritisation of corruption as an information topic and a large proportion of people who know little or nothing about corruption (see Figure 8).
- **Rural population:** Those living in rural locations are generally more interested in information on corruption compared to urban residents, yet rural residents feel less informed about this topic than their urban counterparts.

Radio tends to be the main source of information on corruption in Vanuatu for almost three quarters (72%) of those who consider corruption a priority information topic¹⁰, followed by the **word of mouth sources** (family, friends, community) with 52%. Personal networks are particularly important for those living in rural areas, where household media access is generally more scarce.

Both urban and rural focus group participants also mentioned getting useful information from NGOs who run awareness campaigns on corruption, however, they also acknowledged that such visits from NGOs may not reach everyone on the island:

“People from Wan Smolbag came here and talked about what is happening in the government, the behaviours that are causing corruption in the country. So it is good that they come to us, our eyes are now open. But it is not enough, they have not reached some places.”

(Female, 35+, rural location, Sanma)

With regard to the quality of information on corruption, a number of urban and rural citizen group discussion participants noted that information on corruption on radio, TV and in newspapers is often given in a summarised form and with insufficient detail. Some of the specific areas that the participants felt needed to be given more attention in the media included accountability of the national government, the parliament and its representatives (particularly government ministers and MPs), government transparency, prosecution of corrupt officials and ways to tackle corruption.

¹⁰n = 156

4.3.3. Environment

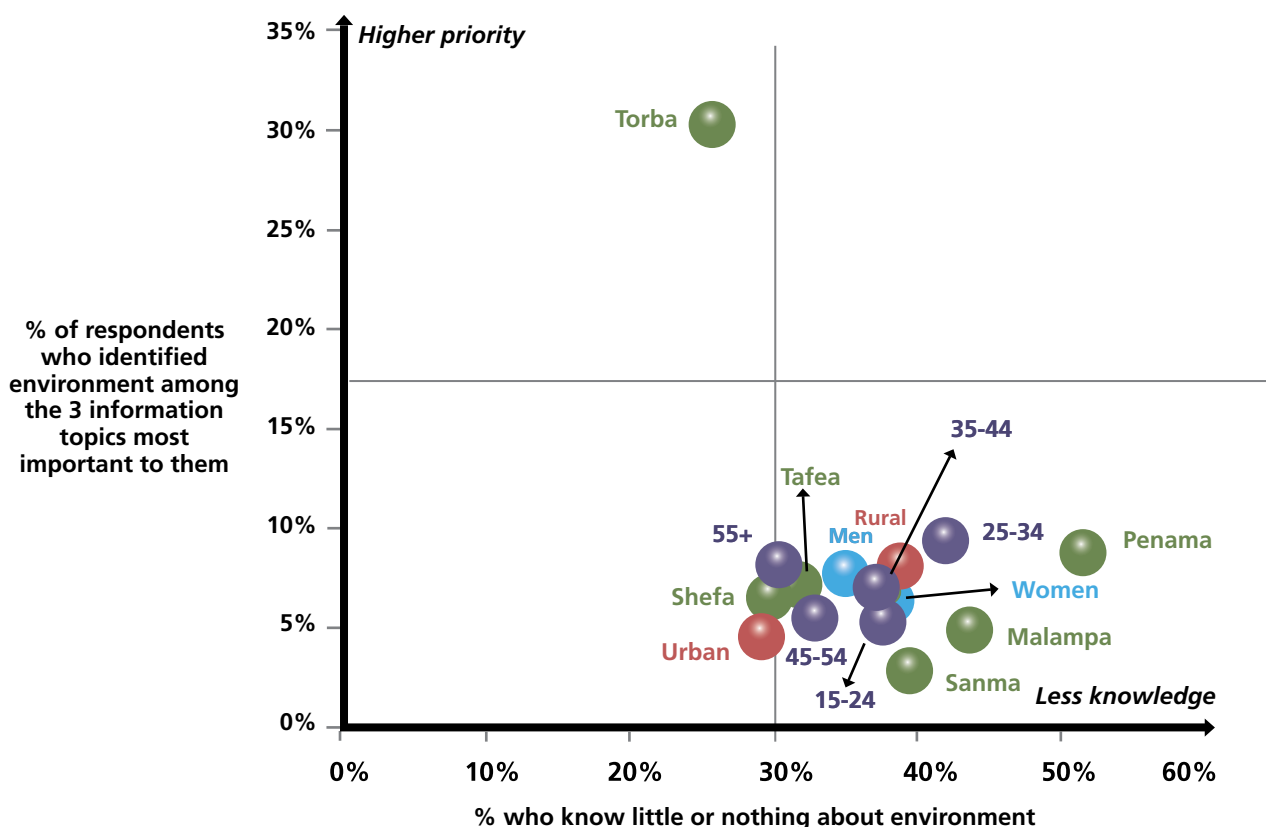
Key Finding 5:

Torba residents are the most concerned about environmental issues and climate change and express the need for more and better information on a number of specific environmental issues.

Although Vanuatu citizens consider climate change as the second most important challenge facing Vanuatu¹¹, over a third of survey respondents (37%)¹² say they know little or nothing about this issue. This knowledge gap is particularly problematic in Torba (see Figure 9), where citizens seem to be more aware of and exposed to the negative implications of climate change. For example, in 2005, Torba had seen the implementation of the first ever global climate change adaptation project in Vanuatu, with more than 100 residents of Tegua Island in the Torba province relocated half a kilometre inland due to constant flooding from rising sea levels¹³.

Figure 9 Knowledge of environment as a priority information topic

Figure 9 maps the importance of environment as an information topic for different segments of the population and their knowledge of this issue.



Source: InterMedia survey in Vanuatu, 2012 (n = 1,338 respondents, 15+)

¹¹ See Section 6.1 for details.

¹² N = 1,338

¹³ Vanuatu village relocated due to rising sea level. ABC, 6 December 2005. Available online: <http://www.abc.net.au/worldtoday/content/2005/s1524755.htm>

This high level of interest in and awareness of the importance of environmental issues is also reflected in the very sophisticated language that the Vanuatu citizens use to talk about this topic. Broadly, they discuss two different sets of environmental issues:

- **Climate change** and its negative effect on rising sea levels, droughts, unpredictable weather changes and their crops and cattle.
- **Other environmental damage caused by human activities**, such as littering, logging, use of pesticides, land erosion and others.

This study did not examine whether this language is reflected in the media content available to the Vanuatu population, however, many respondents who participated in the study complained about the insufficient quantity and quality of information conveyed by the media on this topic. Rural residents in particular, called for more information, advice and educational content on the impact of environmental changes on health and the importance of maintaining a clean environment in order to prevent diseases.

“Illness comes out of poor environments and people’s carelessness. So, if we have a clean environment, we would be healthier. It would be good if people could visit communities with the same information that is coming out from the media, so they could walk through the community and talk to people.”

(Male, 35+, rural location, Shefa)

While **radio** for now remains the main source for information on environmental issues (76% of those who prioritise information on environment¹⁴ cite radio as their main source), many also rely on information they obtain through their **personal networks** (51%), due to limited access to the media. These sources are complemented by community visits by different NGOs and awareness campaigns:

“What they told us, the people from agriculture, is that we should not cut our trees often, and we should cut only those close to the village and close to our houses, because we should remember that in hurricanes trees fall and can ruin our houses.”

(Female, 25-34, Penama)

¹⁴n = 124

4.3.4. Domestic violence

Key Finding 6:

On average, more than one third of adults know little or nothing about domestic violence.

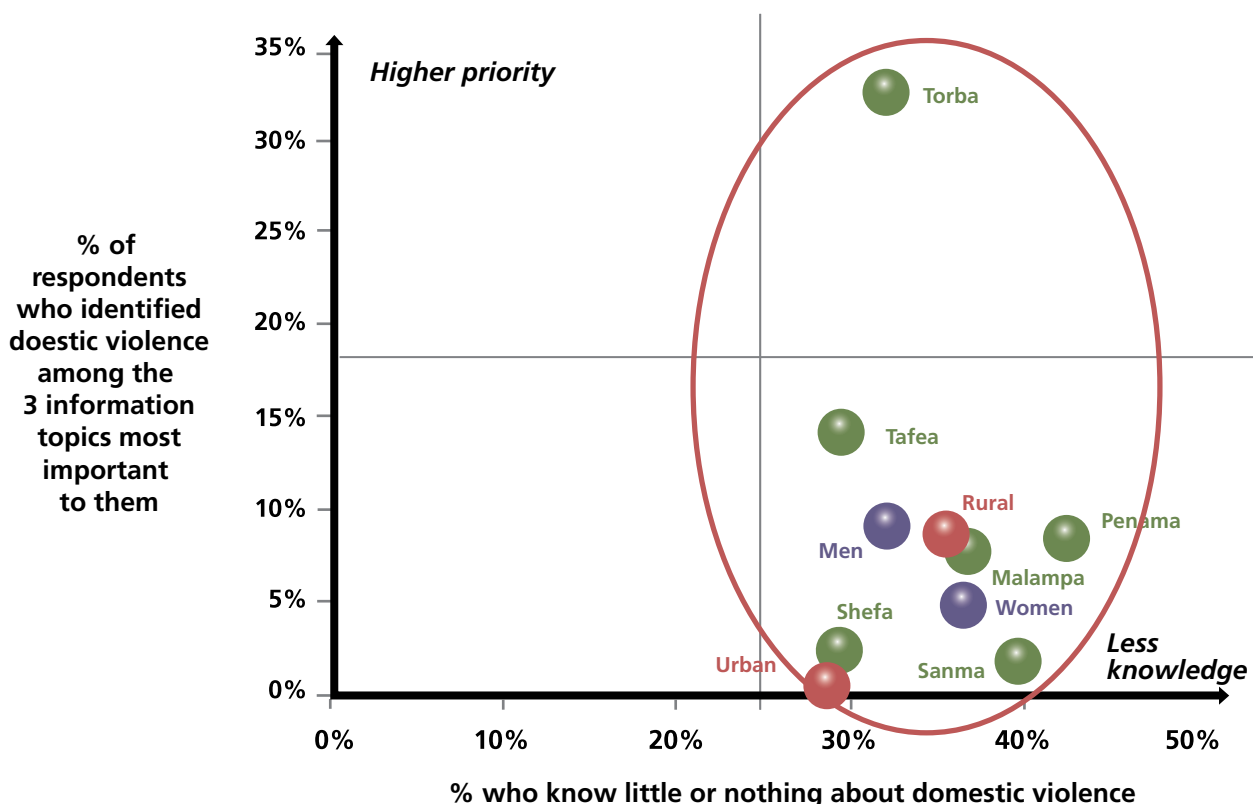
Domestic violence generally ranks lower on the information agenda of Vanuatu citizens compared to health and corruption, with only 7% of adults¹⁵ citing it as one of the most important information topics to them. However, previous studies indicate that violence against women is still common, with most cases of domestic violence not reported due to cultural norms, lack of knowledge about women's rights, fear of reprisal and lack of access to police in rural areas¹⁶.

While information on domestic violence for most population segments (with the exception of Torba residents) does not seem to be a priority, knowledge gaps on this issue across the country are pertinent, as illustrated in Figure 10. On average, more than one third of all adults know little or nothing about the issue.

The need to fill this knowledge gap seems to be recognised particularly by the residents of Torba province, who are most likely to cite domestic violence as one of their priority information topics (see Figure 10). This need is also somewhat stronger among those living in rural areas.

Figure 10 Knowledge of domestic violence as a priority information topic

Figure 10 maps the importance of domestic violence as an information topic for different segments of the population and their knowledge of this issue.



Source: InterMedia survey in Vanuatu, 2012 (n = 1,338 respondents, 15+)

¹⁵ n = 1,099 respondents who provided a valid answer

¹⁶ Vanuatu Country Report on Human Rights Practices. United States Department of State, 2001. Available on: <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/186528.pdf>; Forsyth M., A Bird that Flies with Two Wings: The kastom and state justice systems in Vanuatu, 2009. Available on: http://epress.anu.edu/kastom/mobile_devices/ch01s06.html

Radio tends to be the main source of information on domestic violence among those who consider it as one of their priority information topics. Overall, 33% of them¹⁷ cite radio as one of their main sources of information on this issue. About a quarter (23%) turn to their **friends and family**, while less than one in ten receive information about domestic violence from **community elders** (7%) or at **community meetings** (7%). This is in line with comments heard in the focus groups, where some respondents noted that, while village chiefs can be information sharers, they can often also act as information gate keepers and essentially block the discussion about any subject that is considered taboo.

For this reason, some respondents believed that providing information on sensitive issues through radio is preferable. Talkback may be a particularly appropriate format, as it gives citizens a voice and enables the discussion on issues that may be considered taboo in their own communities (e.g. domestic violence).

"I like to listen to all the talkback shows about health, about marijuana, about domestic violence. I like them because I don't have enough knowledge, so they help me."

(Female, 15-24, Malampa)

¹⁷ n = 94

4.3.5. MDG Index

Key Finding 7:

With some of the lowest levels of interest and self-reported knowledge on MDG issues, the provinces of Sanma, and Malampa appear to pose the most significant challenge for communication strategies on MDG issues.

Finally, based on the citizens' overall assessment of the importance of the MDG-related topics discussed above, as well as their knowledge of these issues, two MDG indices were constructed; namely the **MDG Importance Index** and the **MDG Knowledge Index**. These two indices are designed to better understand the overall differences between the provinces of Vanuatu in citizens' prioritisation of MDG related issues, as well as their knowledge of these issues.

For the purpose of these two indices, MDG issues included health issues (maternal health, child health, HIV/AIDS, malaria), domestic violence, gender inequality, corruption, education and environment.

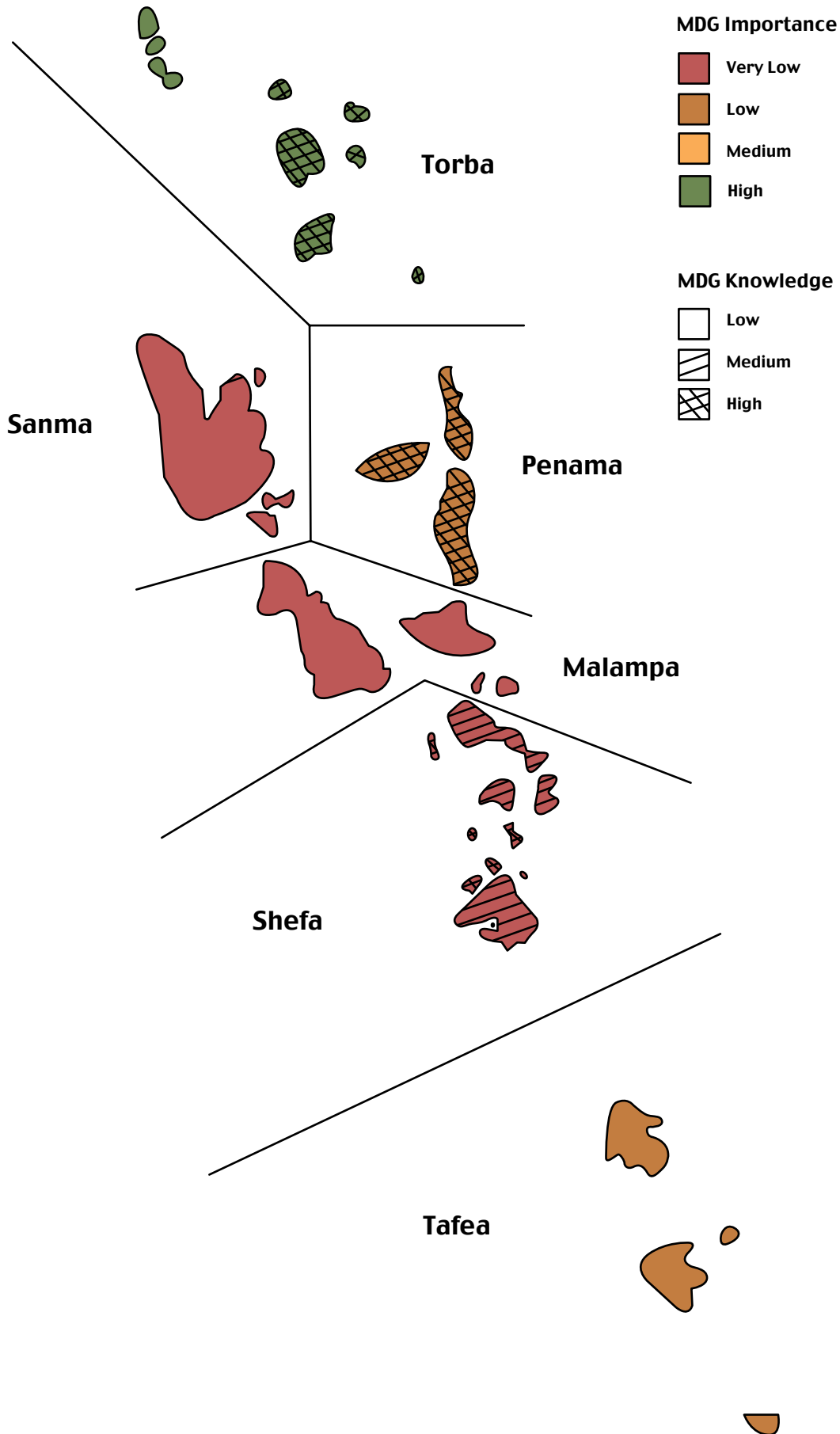
The **MDG Importance Index** was created by scoring both the frequency and intensity of the importance individuals place on MDG issues. Survey respondents were asked what information issues are most important to them. If the first topic they mentioned was an MDG related issue, they received three points, if the second topic was an MDG issue, they received two points, and if the third topic was an MDG issue, they received one point. The points were cumulative; if all three topics listed by an individual were MDG related issues they would receive the maximum point score of six. If none of the important topics were MDG issues, they would receive the minimum score of zero. The scores were then averaged by province, and according to the distribution across provinces, each province was categorised as "very low", "low", "medium", or "high".

The **MDG Knowledge Index** was created through a similar method. Individuals were asked how much they know about each MDG related issue and replied either "a lot", "a fair amount", "not much", or "nothing at all". For each MDG related issue about which they reported knowing a lot, they received three points; for each issue about which they reported knowing a fair amount, they received two points; for each issue about which they reported knowing not much, they received one point; and for each issue about which they reported knowing nothing at all, they received zero points. The maximum total number of points was 24 and the minimum 0. The scores were then averaged by province, and each province was categorized as "medium-low", "medium", or "medium-high". Based on the distribution of the data, a decision was taken to exclude categories "low" and "high".

The overall results for both indices are presented in Figure 11 and confirm the observations from earlier sections discussing specific MDG topics:

- First, those living in **Torba** are more likely to put MDG issues high on their information agenda, than their counterparts in other provinces. Despite some notable information gaps discussed in the previous sections of this report, they also express more confidence in their knowledge on MDG issues than the residents of other provinces.
- Conversely, residents of **Shefa, Sanma** and **Malampa** tend to be the least interested in MDG issues, with citizens from Sanma and Malampa also expressing little confidence in their knowledge of these topics. Those living in Shefa, however, appear slightly more knowledgeable, which may be associated with their generally better access to the media.
- Finally, citizens from **Penama** and **Tafea** sit between the two extremes in terms of their prioritisation of MDG information topics. However, those living in Penama tend to report higher levels of knowledge on these issues than their counterparts in Tafea.

Figure 11 MDG Importance Index and MDG Knowledge Index



Media Access, Perception and Consumption

This section outlines key indicators of household and personal access to different types of media, discusses the control over media use in Vanuatu households and identifies key media consumption patterns and preferences.

5.1. Household access to media

Key Finding 8:

After several years of rapid growth, mobile phones are now the most widely-owned media device in Vanuatu, with three out of four households owning at least one.

Overall, household access to media in Vanuatu is influenced primarily by location, with rural areas and more remote provinces lagging behind urban centres of Port Vila and Luganville. While household media access in urban areas tends to be relatively diverse, citizens living in more remote areas often have access only to one media device, and also rely more heavily on word of mouth.

However, the urban-rural gap varies between different media devices and is the highest for those types of media that face the most significant infrastructural and cost barriers, such as television.

On the other hand, rapid growth in availability and adoption of **mobile phones** over the past few years means that mobile phones have now become the most widely owned media device in Vanuatu, with more than three out of four households reporting that they own at least one (see Figure 12). This is remarkable, particularly given that only five years ago the penetration of mobile phones in Vanuatu was below 20%¹⁸.

Radio¹⁹, which is available in about half of all Vanuatu households, is another important medium that helps to connect remote areas with urban centres and is essential for keeping citizens up to date with the news and information they need in their daily lives. However, unlike mobile phones, access to radio is much more restricted in rural areas. While more than half of all urban residents²⁰ (57%) have access to a radio in their home, only about a third of those in rural areas²¹ can say the same (35%). Of those who do have a radio in their households²², the largest share owns a standard radio set (77%), followed by a radio on a mobile phone (42%).

Conversely, home access to **television, computers, internet**²³ and **landline telephones** is due to significant infrastructural and network challenges and high cost, still considered a luxury for many. Household ownership of these devices is thus largely limited to the urbanised Shefa and Sanma provinces and more affluent citizens. For example, while 54% of all urban residents reported having access to TV in their household, the comparable share for rural areas is only 8%. Similarly, household ownership of computers among urban residents was recorded at 16%, compared to 5% among rural households²⁴.

¹⁸ Cave, D. (2012). The Pacific's digital future. Lowy Institute for International Policy. Available online: <http://www.lowyinterpreter.org/post/2012/11/21/The-Pacific-digital-future.aspx>

¹⁹ This includes standard radio sets, radio on mobile phone, car radio and tele-radio (remote-controlled radio)

²⁰ n = 238

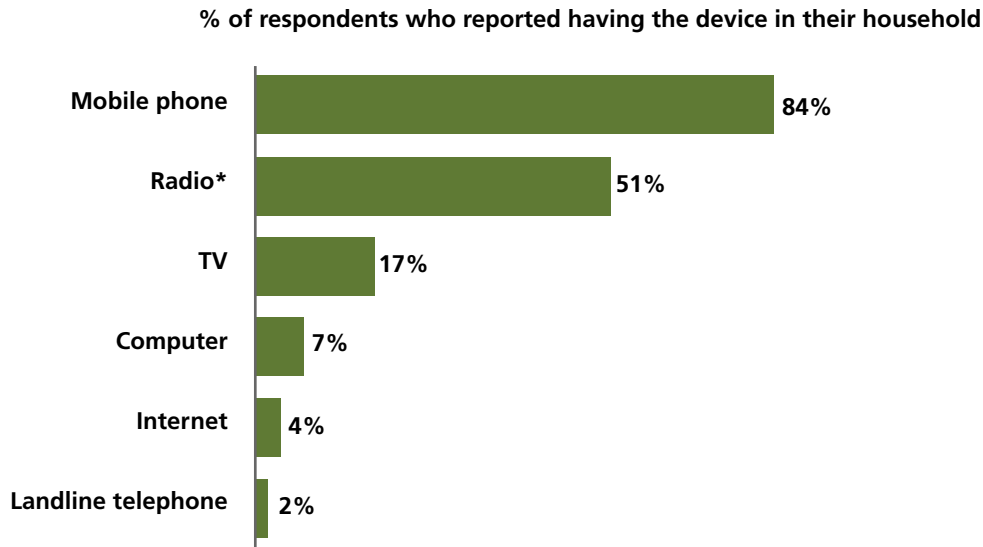
²¹ n = 1,095

²² n = 686

²³ This includes internet access on any device, including mobile phone.

²⁴ Please note that the majority of rural residents who reported having a computer in their household live in rural areas near Port Vila.

Figure 12 Household access to media devices



* This includes standard radio sets, radio on mobile phone, car radio and tele-radio

Source: InterMedia survey in Vanuatu, 2012 (n = 1,338 respondents, 15+)

5.2. Media control

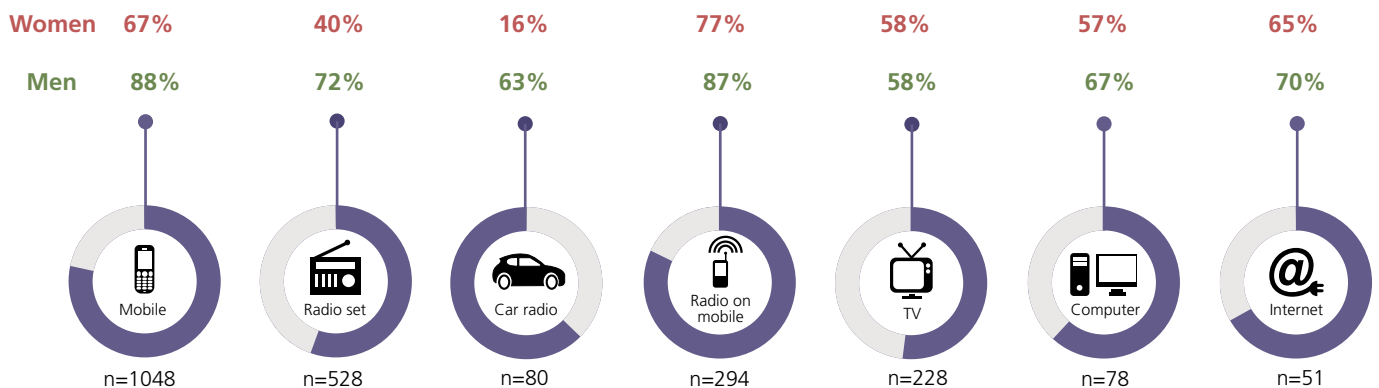
Key Finding 9:

Men and older members of the household generally have the most control over the use of all media devices in the household.

Where mobile phones, radio, TV, computers and internet are available in people's households, these devices are more often controlled by men and older members of the household. Conversely, women and younger members of the household generally have less say in how and when these media are used and what is listened to or watched (see Figure 13).

Figure 13 Control of media devices in the household

% of men and women who have the final say regarding the use of a particular media device in the household



5.3. Trust in sources of information

Key Finding 10:

Local leaders are seen as trusted information brokers on most issues, and radio is considered the most trusted mass medium.

Scarce and irregular access to media in many parts of Vanuatu means that many citizens, particularly those living in more remote areas, are heavily reliant on information provided through word of mouth. Local and religious leaders, in particular, play a crucial role as information brokers for many of the issues, and are also considered the most trusted sources of information, ahead of all traditional media (see Figure 14).

Trust in religious leaders and local chiefs is the highest in the most remote provinces of Tafea and Torba, where household access to media overall tends to be the lowest. Conversely, trust in community leaders tends to be somewhat lower among the better educated. For example, those with tertiary education are considerably more likely to find local chiefs untrustworthy compared to those without any formal education or those educated to the primary or secondary level.

In addition to other word-of-mouth sources, such as close family and friendship circles, some participants of the focus groups also emphasised the important role that representatives of the NGO sector play in keeping citizens in remote areas informed about issues such as health, corruption and environment:

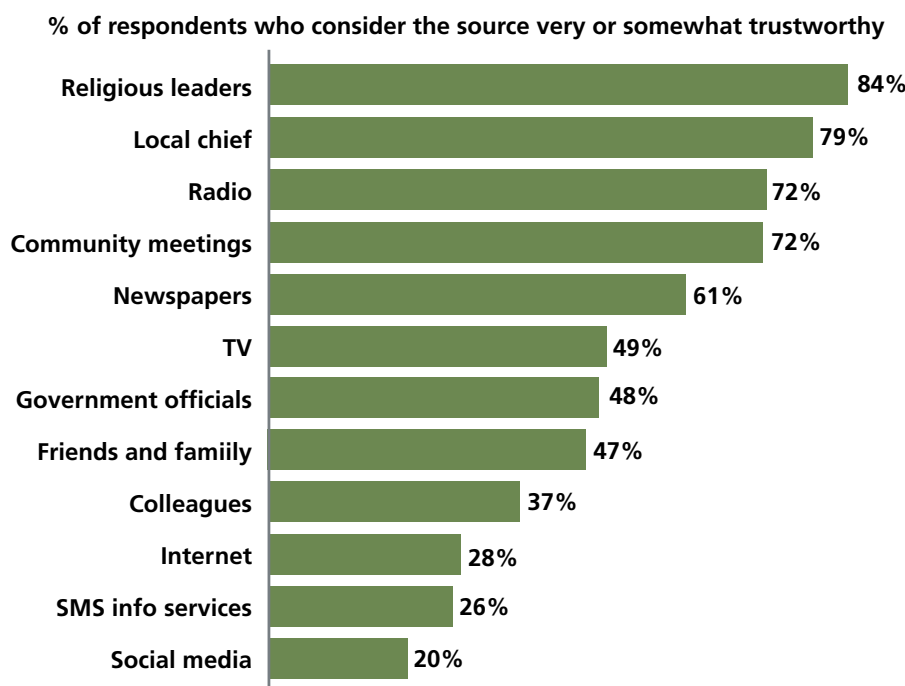
“Sometimes we hear information from the teachers, the government workers that come and give some information about our children, so that we can follow/use this information to look after them.”

(Female, 25-34, Malampa)

The findings on the perceived trustworthiness of the **media** closely reflect their consumption patterns. The most widely used media tend to score best on the “trustworthiness test”, while those regularly used only by a minority tend to do much more poorly. **Radio**, which is the most widely owned and used traditional medium in Vanuatu for now, also remains the most trusted, with little differences in the level of trust between different demographic groups and geographical areas. Conversely, **trust in television, newspapers**, internet and social media tends to be considerably higher among the young, more educated and those residing in urban centres.

Overall, trust in **traditional media** (radio, TV, newspapers) tends to fall with older age and rise with education. Thus, younger and better educated citizens are more likely to trust the information conveyed by these sources than older and those less educated.

Figure 14 Trust in information sources



Source: InterMedia survey in Vanuatu, 2012 (n = 1,338 respondents, 15+)

5.4. Media consumption habits

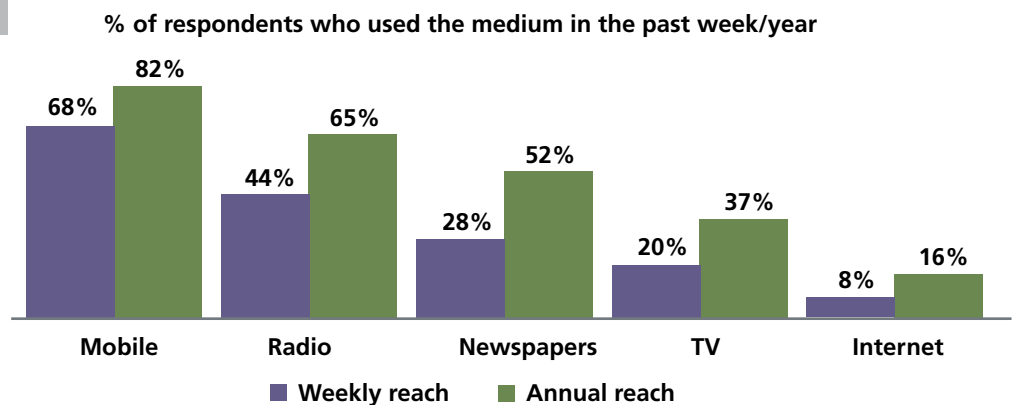
5.4.1. Overview

Key Finding 11:

The mobile phone is the most frequently used media device in Vanuatu; two-thirds use it at least once a week.

Media consumption patterns among Vanuatu citizens are closely aligned with their home media access. The better and the more diverse this household media access is, the higher the regular use of a specific medium. The latter is the highest for mobile phones, which are on a weekly basis used by more than two thirds of all adults. Radio has the widest reach among traditional media, however, as shown in Figure 15, the proportion of adults who listen to the radio on a weekly basis²⁵ for now remains relatively low (44%).

Figure 15 Media reach



Source: InterMedia survey in Vanuatu, 2012 (n = 1,338, 15+)

Similar to household access, regular use of media is uneven across population groups and geographies:

- **Men tend to be heavier media consumers than women.** This is, in part, a reflection of their greater control over media use in the household. These gaps are evident across all platforms: 51% of all men use radio on a weekly basis in comparison with 37% of women²⁶; 23% of men watch TV weekly compared to 16% of women²⁷; and 34% of men report reading newspapers weekly compared to 22% of women²⁸.
- **Younger generations (particularly 15-24 year-olds) are most avid consumers of all types of media,** especially mobile phones and internet. This is not surprising, as young people generally tend to be early adopters of new technologies. Overall, weekly media consumption tends to decrease with age, which suggests that older generations may be more difficult to reach through mass media and require more targeted communication strategies supplemented by other interpersonal forms of engagement.
- **Overall media consumption rises with education and wealth²⁹.** Educated and wealthier citizens tend to use media more regularly, and are also more likely to be regular users of a number of different media compared to less educated and less wealthy citizens. This allows educated and wealthier citizens to get information more easily and using a number of different channels.
- **Urban residents are much more likely to be regular media users** than those living in rural areas. Even with radio, which has the widest reach in rural areas, this gap is significant – for example, while 66% of all urban residents reported listening to the radio in the past week, only 38% of those from rural areas said the same³⁰. This wide gap is, on one hand, a reflection of varying household media access, but may also be linked to lower availability of electricity and batteries as well as poorer signal reception in rural areas.

²⁵ n = 616

²⁶ n = 355 for men, n = 260 for women

²⁷ n = 144 for men, n = 109 for women

²⁸ n = 235 for men, n = 154 for women

²⁹ Wealth was measured by asking respondents to self-assess the ability of their household to buy different types of goods.

³⁰ n = 162 respondents living in urban areas, n = 452 respondents living in rural areas

5.4.2. Radio

Key Finding 12:

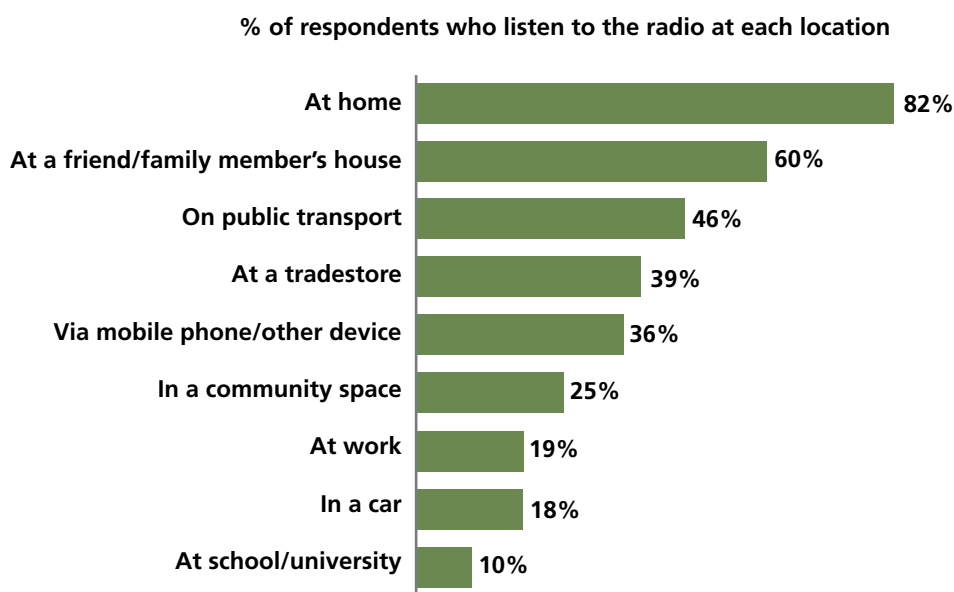
Radio listening is not constrained to one location. In addition to tuning in at home, community listening is prevalent in rural areas, listening on public transport is common in urban centres.

Due to limited availability of home access to radio and poor signals in many areas, most Vanuatu citizens listen to the radio when and where they can. Among regular listeners who listen to the radio at home, almost everyone (95%) also tunes in at other locations – either on public transport, at their friends' house, in a community hall or other public space, on the move on their mobile phones or elsewhere.

The choice of the location for radio listening is the result of a combination of factors, namely access, lifestyle and personal preferences. In rural areas, for example, communal radio listening is more prevalent than in urban areas, while listening on public transport tends to be much more common in urban centres. Younger generations (15-34 years of age), on the other hand, are more likely to listen to the radio on their mobile phone than their older counterparts.

Availability of radio on mobile phones is particularly important, as it offers listeners more flexibility and helps them circumvent (or at least reduce) many of the barriers to radio listening, such as potential lack of control over the use of a standard radio set in their home. While only 36% of all weekly radio listeners³¹ for now listen to the radio on their mobile phone (see Figure 16), this share can be expected to grow further in the future, particularly among the younger generation.

Figure 16 Locations of radio listening



Source: InterMedia survey in Vanuatu, 2012 (n = 616 weekly radio listeners 15+)

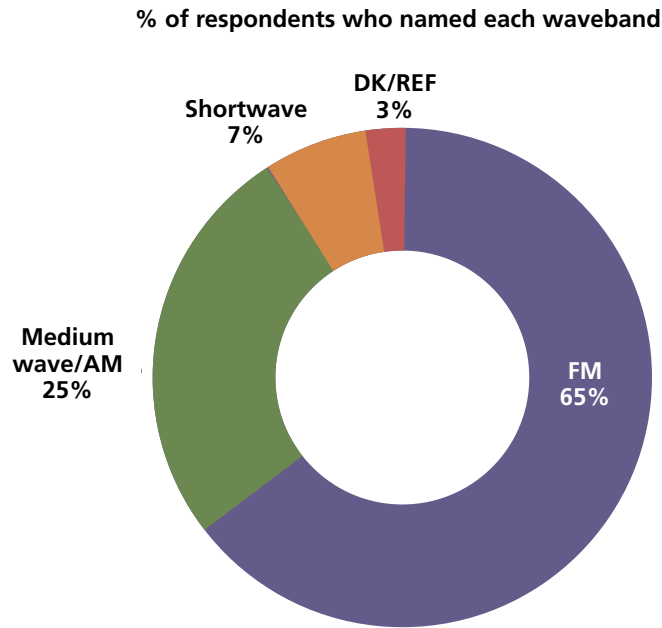
In terms of the waveband, the vast majority (65%) of all weekly listeners currently listen to the radio on FM (see Figure 17).

While the above figures may be a true reflection of the reality on the ground, it is also important to note that past research across the developing world shows that the respondents often have difficulties recalling the exact or correct frequencies they listen to or struggle with distinguishing between different wavebands. It is thus important that the results to this survey question are interpreted with caution.

³¹ n = 616 respondents who listened to radio in the past week

Figure 17

I usually listen to the radio on...



Source: Intermedia survey in Vanuatu, 2012 (n = 616 weekly radio listeners, 15+)

5.4.2.1. Programming preferences of regular listeners

Key Finding 13:

News, music and talkback shows are the most popular radio programming styles in Vanuatu.

Both qualitative and quantitative findings of this study indicate that news, music and talkback shows tend to be, overall, the most popular radio programming formats among Vanuatu citizens. However, programming preferences also vary between different segments of the radio audience, namely:

- **News** is the most popular genre of radio programming across all demographic groups with the exception of the younger audience (15-24 year-olds), who prefer music. Conversely, popularity of news increases with age and is thus the highest among weekly radio listeners aged 45 and over. These findings are supported by the qualitative study, in which almost every group reported listening to news, with most respondents citing morning, midday and evening news as the time that they tune in to catch up on news.
- **Music** is particularly important to the youngest listeners (15-24 year-olds). Several focus group respondents that fall into this age group, for example, noted that, if given a choice, they prefer to listen to radio stations that play more modern music, such as Capital FM.
- Interest in **quiz shows** generally rises with education, while **dramas** seem to have the most appeal among women as well as those living in the Sanma and Torba provinces.
- **Talkback shows** have a wide appeal across age groups, but are somewhat more popular in urban areas and among weekly listeners with higher levels of education. One of the reasons for the popularity of talkback shows is the ability of the programme to give people a voice and to connect Vanuatu citizens living in different parts of the country. Furthermore, talkback shows are also appreciated for their educational value. As some of the focus group participants noted:

“The talkback show is very good. It gives us all the chance to share our thoughts. That’s why everyone is interested in it, because you are a part of what’s happening, you have the opportunity to take part in it. Another thing is - the people on our islands, they’ve got some thoughts, but can’t share them. They won’t talk about it on the radio, except on talkback shows.”

(Male, 25-34, urban location, Shefa)

Nevertheless, while talkback shows remain widely popular, participation in these shows remains limited due to a high cost of calling in and poor radio reception in many areas. Of those who reported listening to talkback programmes³², only 17% had called in to the show before³³. More than a quarter (27%) of those who have never called in³⁴, cited the cost as the main reason for their non-participation in the programme.

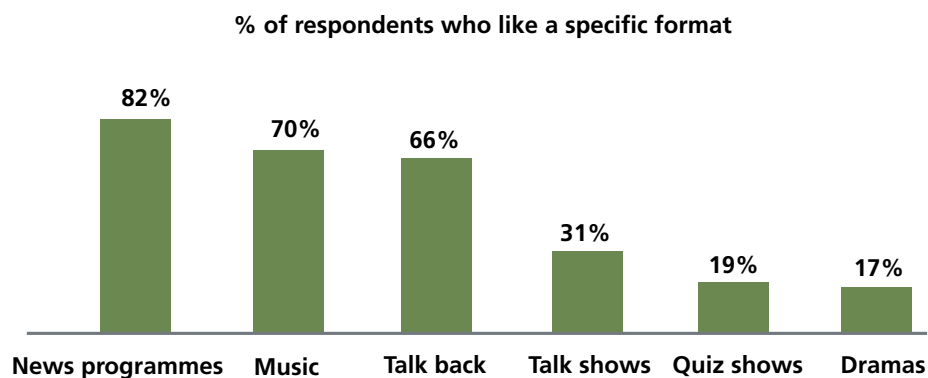
To overcome this cost barrier, some focus group respondents suggested that a free phone line, dedicated specifically for talkback shows, should be opened:

“If they were to use a free line, it would be good, because money is a problem. [There] are people who have really good comments but they don’t have credit so they keep them to themselves.”

(Male, 15-24, Malampa)

The majority of talkback shows that respondents did participate in were about politics. Some of the other topics on talkback shows that attracted participation were agriculture, land issues, domestic violence, health and crime.

Figure 18 Programme formats and genres appeal among regular radio listeners



Source: InterMedia survey in Vanuatu, 2012 (n = 616 weekly radio listeners 15+)

³² n = 815

³³ Most of these callers were men and highly educated

³⁴ n = 670

5.4.2.2. Popular radio stations

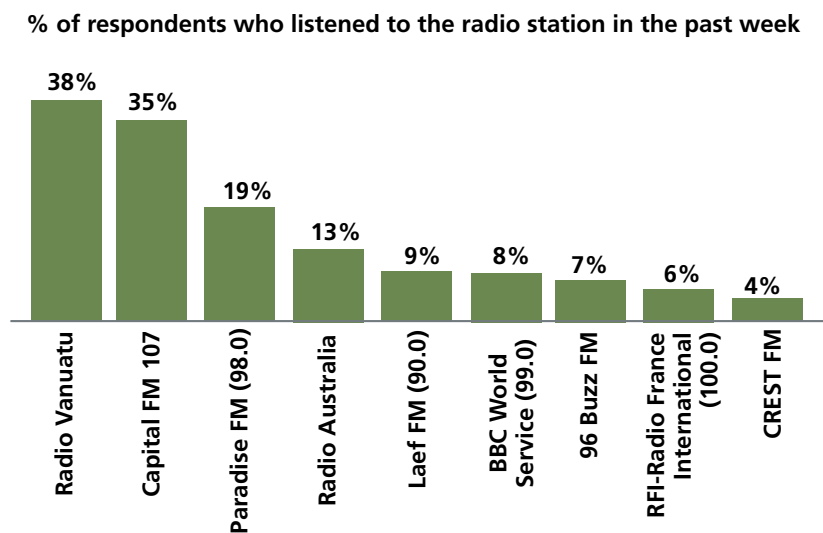
Key Finding 14:

Radio Vanuatu and Capital FM overall reach a similar share of the Vanuatu population but differ in the profile of their weekly audience.

Radio Vanuatu and Capital FM are the radio stations most widely listened to in Vanuatu, with each of them reaching over a third of all adults weekly (see Figure 19).

It is important to note that, except in Port Vila and Luganville, where radio signals are generally stronger and the choice of radio stations is more diverse, listening habits are often a reflection of radio access and availability of radio stations, rather than listeners' personal media preferences.

Figure 19 Weekly media reach of Vanuatu radio stations – national level



Source: InterMedia survey in Vanuatu, 2012 (n = 1,338 respondents, 15+)

Despite a similar weekly reach, Radio Vanuatu and Capital FM have slightly different audiences (see Figure 20):

- **Age**

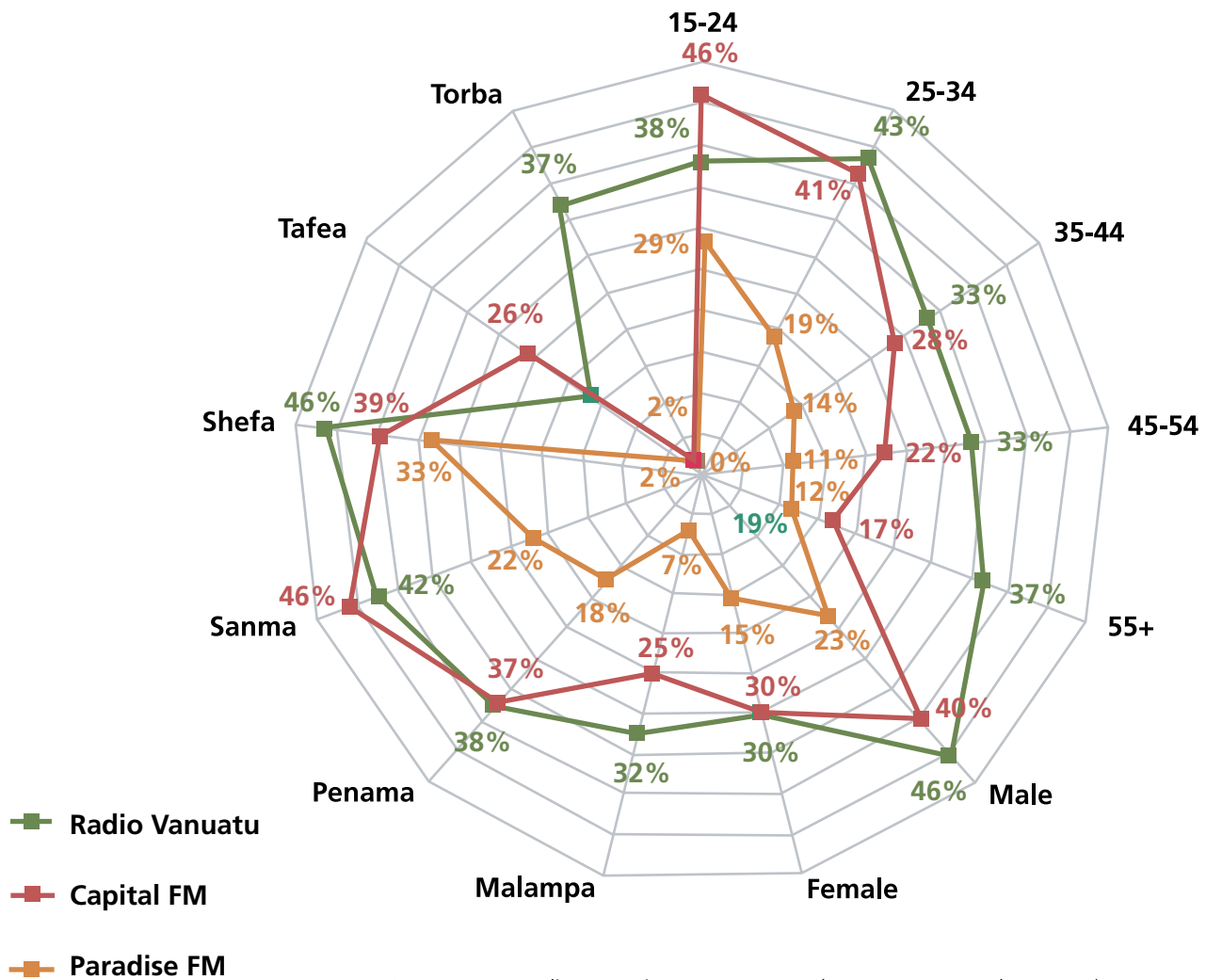
The findings from the citizen group discussions suggest that the differences in the stations' reach among different age groups, are primarily a reflection of their content focus and presentation style. For example, radio listeners value Radio Vanuatu particularly for its accurate, detailed and up-to-date coverage on news, while Capital FM's competitive advantage lies in its provision of music, "lighter" content and more modern presentation style. The latter appeals particularly to the youngest listeners (15-24), giving Capital FM a slight edge in its reach among this group.

- **Province**

On the other hand, disparities in the audience reach across the provinces are mainly the result of the differences in the stations' signal strength in these areas. Radio Vanuatu, for example, seems to face a particular signal challenge in Tafea, while Capital FM's appears to be the weakest in Torba.

The third most listened to radio station in the surveyed provinces, Paradise FM, tends to have lower reach than Radio Vanuatu and Capital FM among all population segments.

Figure 20 Audience profile of top 3 radio stations



Source: InterMedia survey in Vanuatu, 2012 (n = 1,338 respondents, 15+)

5.4.2.3. Radio Vanuatu

Key Finding 15:

News programmes are considered Radio Vanuatu’s key strength; signal, music and presentation style are seen as the key areas for improvement.

As noted, provision of up-to-date, accurate and objective news is perceived as Radio Vanuatu’s key strength, with many citizen group discussion respondents who listen to the station noting that its news programmes enable them to stay up-to-date with the latest developments across the country.

Those living in more remote islands are particularly reliant on news from Radio Vanuatu, as it serves as an information link to other islands and provinces:

“I like Radio Vanuatu because when I listen to it, [I know] what is happening throughout the country, I can hear about it in the programmes on Radio Vanuatu.”

(Female, 25-34, Malampa)

“One strength of Radio Vanuatu is that lots of information about Vanuatu comes out on it.”

(Female, 25-34, Penama)

Still, some respondents note that Radio Vanuatu should further enhance its coverage of local events on more remote islands:

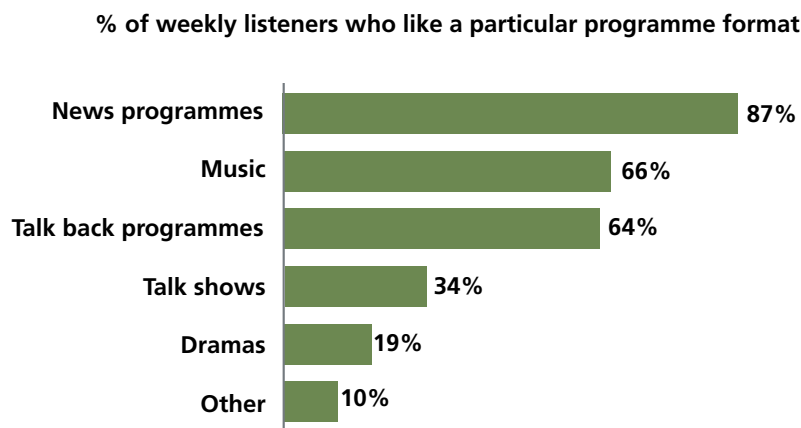
"I would like for someone from Radio Vanuatu to come to the island when there are some important activities going on. He should take some of the news that's happening here so that they can put it on the radio for people to hear about what's going on. We have done some pretty big events here, but they've never put anything about it on the radio."

(Male, 25-34, Malampa)

About two thirds of Radio Vanuatu's weekly audience also enjoy its music (see Figure 21). However, it is important to note that the findings of the focus groups suggest that this is one of the areas where Radio Vanuatu appears to be in a weaker position than its competitors. Particularly focus group participants between 15-24 years of age often noted that they prefer music from other stations, such as Capital FM, which tends to be more modern than the music played on Radio Vanuatu.

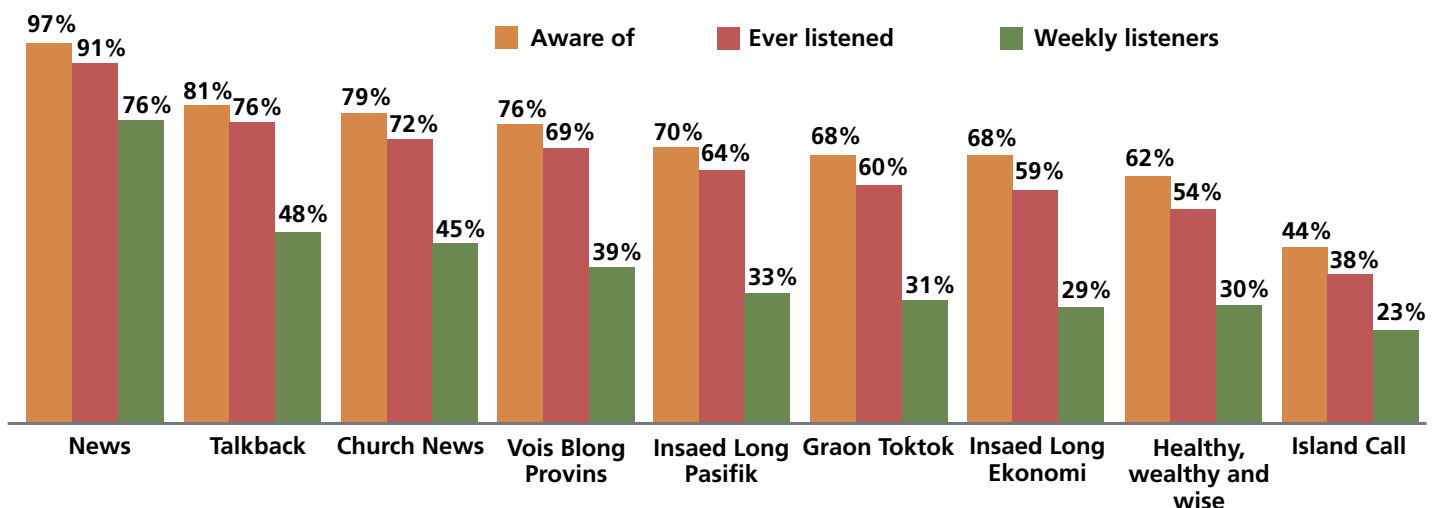
In the survey, almost nine in ten of all Radio Vanuatu weekly listeners³⁵ said that they like the station's news programmes (see Figure 21) and about three quarters listen to them on a weekly basis (see Figure 22).

Figure 21 Preferred formats of Radio Vanuatu programmes



Source: InterMedia survey in Vanuatu, 2012 (n = 526 weekly Radio Vanuatu listeners 15+)

Figure 22 Awareness and listenership of Radio Vanuatu programmes



Source: InterMedia survey in Vanuatu, 2012 (n = 526 weekly Radio Vanuatu listeners)

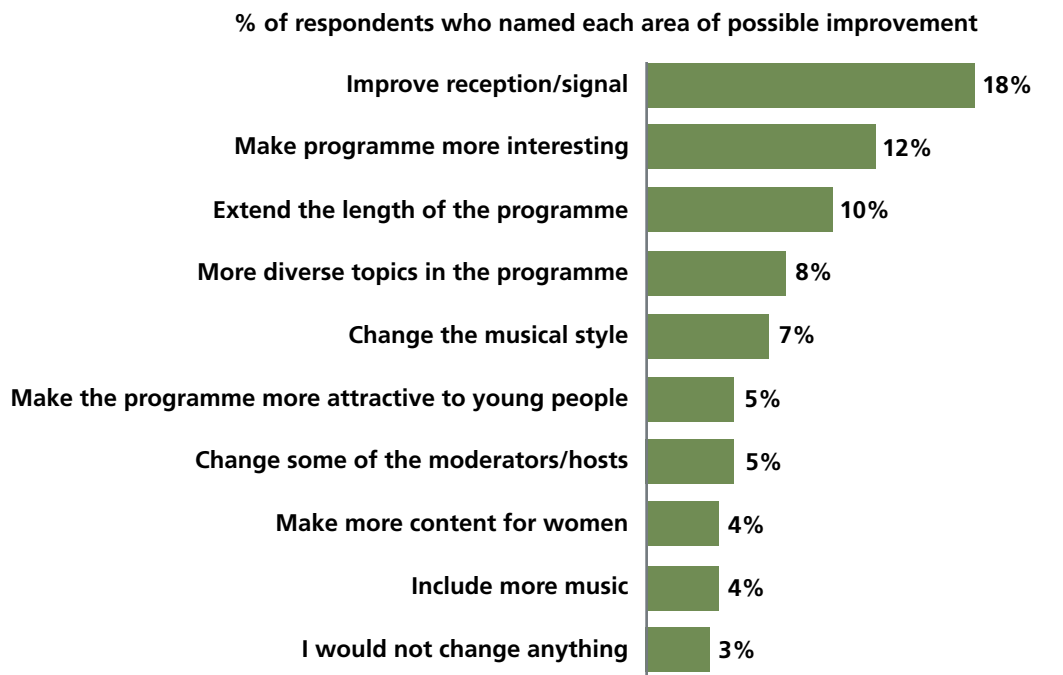
³⁵ n = 526

In addition, signal strength has also been identified by Radio Vanuatu regular listeners as one of the main areas for improvement (see Figure 23). Many focus group participants, particularly in rural areas, also noted that the signal has gotten worse in recent years and some believed that Radio Vanuatu signal was blocked by stronger Chinese and New Caledonian radio stations. It is not clear whether the worsening signal relates to a specific waveband (FM, SW, MW), as the respondents did not discuss this issue in this level of detail.

“They must improve the signal because sometimes when I try and turn the radio on, the signal is not very clear. Sometimes I listen to the radio from the Solomons or PNG and they are both clear, but Radio Vanuatu is not clear.”

(Female, 35+, Penama)

Figure 23 Suggestions for improving Radio Vanuatu programming



Source: InterMedia survey in Vanuatu, 2012 (n = 526 weekly Radio Vanuatu listeners)

5.4.3. Television

Key Finding 16:

Regular use of television is, for now, limited to urban centres, due to network challenges and the high cost of television sets.

Television is, at least for now, in most parts of Vanuatu considered a luxury and its regular use remains largely limited to urban centres, primarily due to limited TV network coverage in rural areas and the high cost of TV sets. Lack of access to a TV set is thus the most important barrier to TV viewing, with more than three quarters (76%) of those who have never watched television before³⁶ citing it as the main reason, followed by 35% who mentioned poor or non-existent TV signals.

Still, lower regular use of TV in rural areas does not mean that the appetite for TV content among rural residents lags behind the interest of those living in urban centres and several participants of the citizen group discussions called on the government to expand the TV coverage beyond just urban areas:

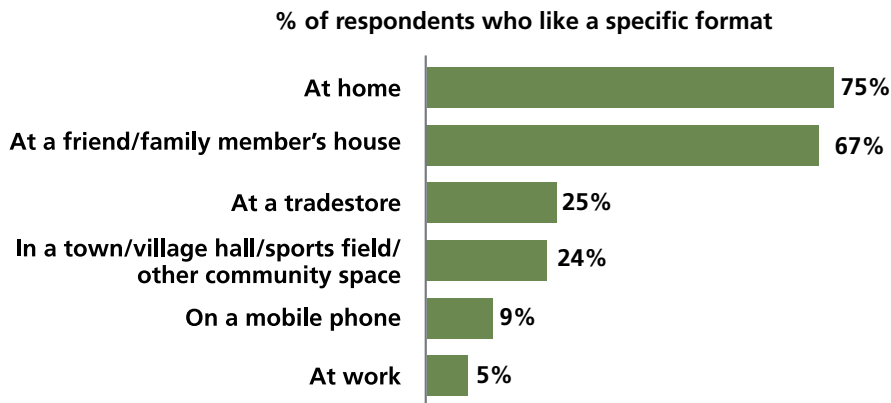
“I want the government to listen to me and make the TV reach Ambrym because we don’t have any sign of TV. We hear news, but can’t watch it. It would be good for all of the islands to be able to get TV. Those of us in town and on the island are the same people. We have one government. We’ve all chosen our government. It’s not fair for town people to be able to have TV, but rural people not to.”

(Male, 25-34, Malampa)

³⁶ n = 622

This high level of interest in television across the country coupled with a largely limited home access to TV means that **communal viewing** plays a crucial role, particularly in rural areas. For example, rural citizens are more than three times as likely to watch TV in a village hall/other communal space or at a trade store than those living in Luganville or Port Villa. As illustrated in Figure 24, the scale of communal viewing at a friend's or family member's house - even on the national level - rivals that of private viewing at home. Other forms of communal viewing, such as at a trade store or community spaces, are also common.

Figure 24 Location of TV viewing



Source: InterMedia survey in Vanuatu, 2012 (n = 253 weekly TV viewers, 15+)

5.4.3.1. Popular TV stations

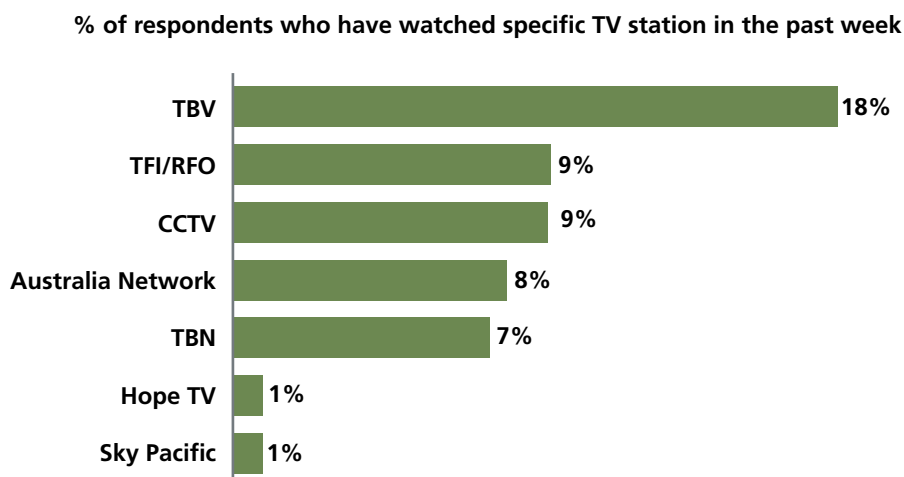
Key Finding 17:

TVB is the most watched TV station in Vanuatu, with a regular audience concentrated primarily in urban areas and among the young and better educated.

Television Blong Vanuatu (TBV) is the most widely watched TV station, reaching twice as many viewers on a weekly basis than the nearest rivals TFI/RFO and CCTV (Figure 25). Weekly audience of all top TV stations is skewed towards young people (15-24 year olds), better educated and urban residents.

Focus group findings revealed that TBV is highly valued particularly for its coverage on national news. International news tends to be watched on CCTV and Australia Network, while some also reported watching TV series on New Caledonia TV.

Figure 25 Popular TV stations – national level



Source: InterMedia survey in Vanuatu, 2012 (n = 1,338 respondents, 15+)

5.4.4. Newspapers

Key Finding 18:

Limited access to newspapers, high cost and poor literacy are the key barriers to future growth of newspaper readership.

Although newspapers emerged as the third most widely used media type in Vanuatu, the study also revealed significant barriers for further growth of the print media audience nationwide. Lack of availability of newspapers outside of urban centres, high cost and poor literacy, were some of the most often quoted barriers to newspaper readership among those who do not read newspapers.

Lack of access to newspapers is a particular problem in rural areas, where 57% of those who never read newspapers³⁷ quote lack of access as the main reason (17% in urban areas³⁸).

As a result, sharing of newspapers with one another is common. While 44% typically buy newspapers at a local shop or a market, almost a third (32%) of all regular newspaper readers³⁹ say they typically get newspapers from their friends and family. This reliance on personal networks to gain access to newspapers was also noted by the participants of the citizen group discussions:

“Yes we like to read newspapers, but we don’t have them. Sometimes, when people come and they bring a copy we read it, even the dirty ones. That’s how it is on the island.”

(Female, 15-24, Malampa)

“If I am in town, then I can buy a newspaper, but if I don’t go and another person brings one and there is something that they read in the newspaper, they then pass that newspaper to other people to read.”

(Female, 35+, rural location, Sanma)

Illiteracy is another significant barrier for increasing future newspaper readership both in urban and rural areas, and especially in the remote provinces of Tafea and Torba. In focus groups, many urban respondents in the Sanma province also highlighted the fact that reading and understanding newspapers in English was a problem, and that they would prefer if newspapers were printed in Bislama.

“Some people can’t read, they can’t write, but they can understand what they talk about on the radio. People will understand what the radio is saying and they’ll do it. But if you put it in the paper, they won’t.”

(Male, 25-34, urban location, Shefa)

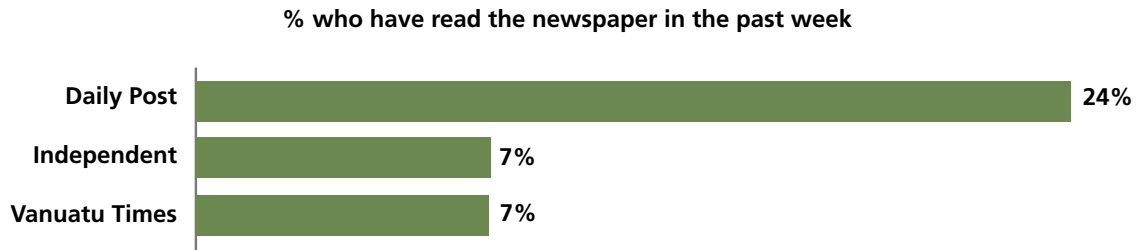
Overall, the Daily Post is the most widely read newspaper in Vanuatu, weekly reaching about a quarter of the adult population (see Figure 26). However, its audience is unequally spread across population groups and primarily limited to men, better educated citizens and those residing in the Shefa province.

³⁷ n = 239

³⁸ n = 66

³⁹ n = 390

Figure 26 Newspapers' reach on a national level



Source: InterMedia survey in Vanuatu, 2012 (n = 1,338 respondents, 15+)

5.4.5. Mobile phones

Key Finding 19:

More than a third of all regular mobile phone users use their phone to listen to the radio on a weekly basis.

Following the introduction of competition in the mobile communications market in 2008, Vanuatu experienced rapid growth in mobile phone ownership and today more than three quarters of Vanuatu adults have a mobile phone in their households⁴⁰. Personal ownership is also high, with 71% of adults included in this study⁴¹ reporting that they personally own a mobile phone. Those who do not own it personally⁴², tend to borrow it from other family members (73%) or friends (42%) when they need it.

For those who do not use mobile phones at all⁴³, lack of access represents the main barrier to mobile phone use - this barrier was cited by 70% of those who never used a mobile phone before. The cost of using mobile services (calls, texts and internet) is another significant barrier – expensive credit was quoted as a barrier by citizen discussion group participants in both urban and rural areas of Vanuatu. Some families, especially in rural areas, limited mobile ownership to one device per family is an attempt to keep costs down. Others tried to avoid making calls and used SMS as a way of reducing costs.

"Yes, I have a mobile phone at my house, we all have one, but we just use one because of the expense for mobile phones are too high now."

(Female, 15-24, Malampa)

"I have a mobile phone at the house, but I only use it for important things. There's no credit in it – it's there to just receive calls. When I need it for something, then I'll go and get 100 vatu credit from the Au Bon Marche and call. When you use it for a good purpose, it helps you. But when you use it too much, then it can cause you more problems, because it costs too much money and uses credit."

(Male, 25-34, urban location, Shefa)

⁴⁰ See section 5.1 for details.

⁴¹ N = 1,338

⁴² n = 208

⁴³ n = 142

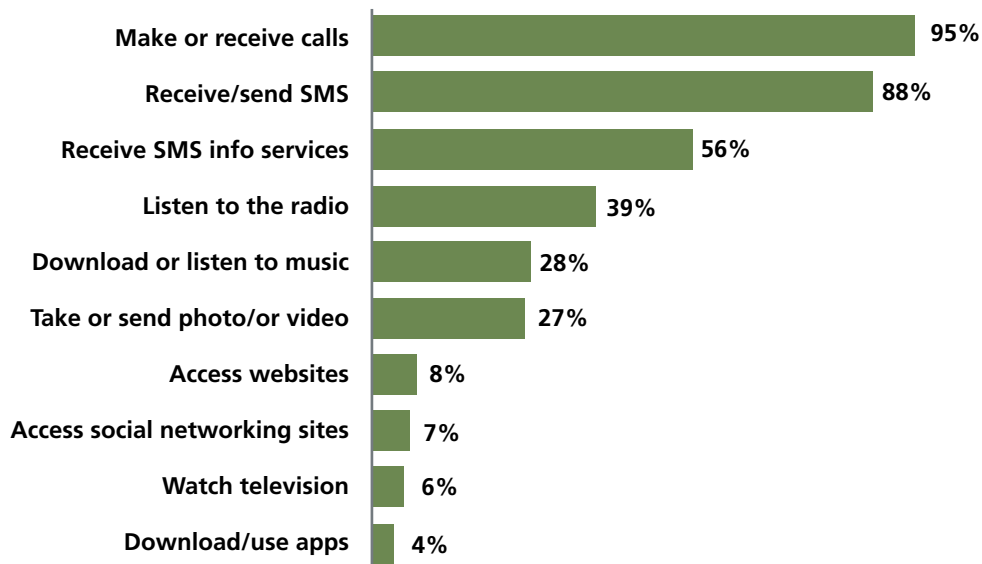
Despite rapid growth in personal ownership, mobile phones are, for now, used primarily for basic functions, such as making or receiving calls and sending or receiving text messages (see Figure 27).

While mobiles have the potential to also significantly enhance people's access to media content, whether via mobile radio, mobile TV or mobile internet, the use of these functions remains constrained by high cost, slow upload and download speeds and poor mobile signals in some areas. Those who do use these more sophisticated mobile services are mainly young (15-24) and live in Sanma and Shefa.

The one exception to this is the use of radio on mobile phones⁴⁴, which is currently utilised by more than a third of all regular mobile phone users in Vanuatu. As with using other more advanced mobile activities, the use of mobile radio is particularly high among young people (15-24), which may partly be related to their attempts to circumvent the lack of control over standard radio, TV and computers in their households. Mobile phones provide privacy and freedom for young people to control their own media consumption.

Figure 27

Share of respondents who use a mobile for these activities at least a few times a week



Source: InterMedia survey in Vanuatu, 2012 (n = 950 respondents who used a mobile phone in the last week, 15+)

⁴⁴This may include listening to radio via mobile internet; the survey respondents were not asked to specify the exact method of radio listening on their mobiles. However, the respondents in this study are much more likely to be using FM radio due to high cost of mobile internet.

5.4.6. Internet

Key Finding 20:

Regular internet use remains low and limited mainly to urban centres.

The insights from both the survey and focus groups indicate that regular internet use for now remains limited to urban centres and adjacent rural areas. Even mobile internet, which is currently the most common way for regular internet users to get online (see Figure 28) remains prohibitively expensive for the majority of Vanuatu citizens. Or as one of the citizen discussion group participants explained:

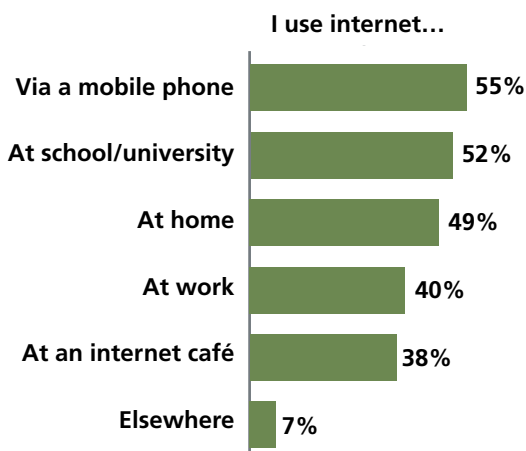
"When we talk about the internet, it is only for the millionaires."

(Male, 35+, urban location, Sanma)

Lack of knowledge about what the internet is and how to use it is another significant barrier to increasing internet use, which was quoted by more than two thirds (68%) of those who never used internet⁴³.

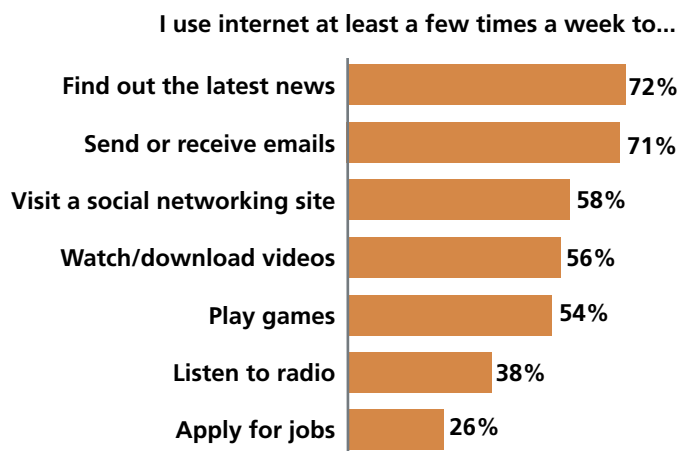
However, while regular use of the internet for now remains very low, the findings on the most popular online activities confirm the strong appetite for news among Vanuatu citizens, discussed earlier in the report. As illustrated in Figure 28A, almost three quarters of all regular internet users use it to access news. In addition, more than half of regular internet users access the web to connect with their friends on their social networking sites, with Facebook emerging as the most popular destination (Figure 29).

Figure 28 Locations of internet use



Source: InterMedia survey in Vanuatu, 2012
(n = 93 weekly users of internet, 15+)

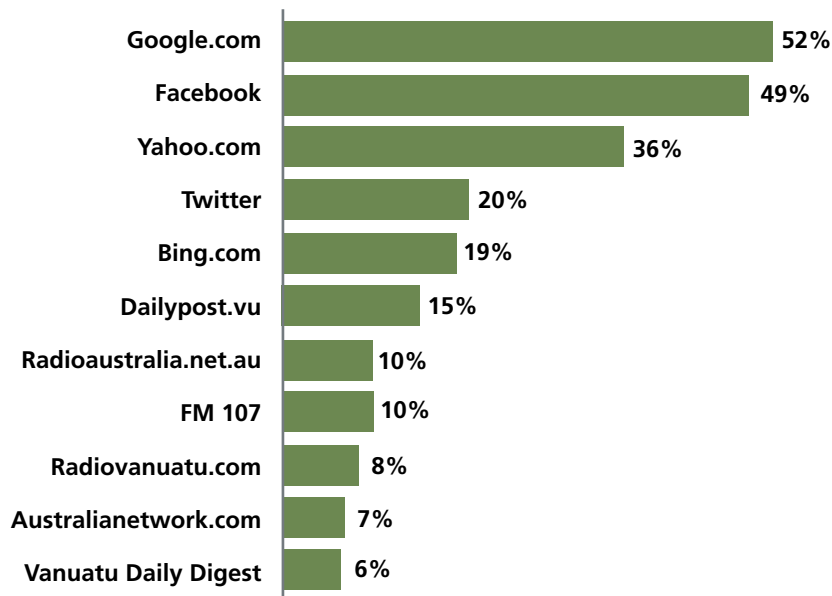
Figure 28A Key activities online



Source: InterMedia survey in Vanuatu, 2012
(n = 93 weekly users of internet, 15+)

⁴⁵ n = 1,031

% of weekly internet users who have accessed the website in the past week



Source: InterMedia survey in Vanuatu, 2012 (n = 93 weekly users of internet, 15+)

Development Issues: Perceptions and Attitudes

This section of the report starts by examining the citizens' perceptions of key challenges facing Vanuatu and their views on international organisations working in Vanuatu. It also provides an overview of the citizens' views on the Australian government and AusAID.

6.1. Challenges facing Vanuatu

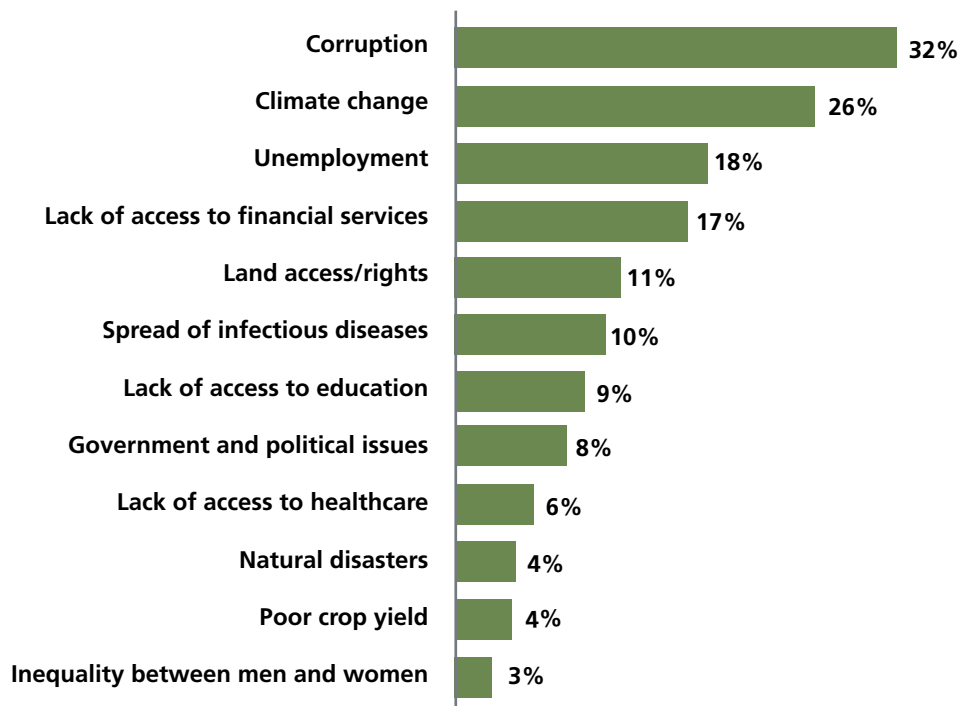
Key Finding 21:

Vanuatu citizens consider corruption and climate change as the two main challenges facing their country.

Citizens' perceptions of the key challenges facing Vanuatu are strongly associated with their key information needs. As such, it is not surprising that two of the issues that rank high on their information agenda also emerge as two of the main challenges that are in citizens' opinion facing their country, namely corruption and climate change (see Figure 30)⁴⁶.

Figure 30 Perceived challenges facing Vanuatu

% of respondents who named the issue as one of the two main challenges for their country



Source: InterMedia survey in Vanuatu, 2012 (n = 1,338 respondents, 15+)

⁴⁶ Please note that the survey respondents were asked to spontaneously name any challenge and were not presented with a list of topics to choose from.

However, perceptions of the most pressing challenges also vary across geographies and among different demographic groups:

- **Corruption** is considered the top challenge across most provinces. The two exceptions are Penama, where lack of access to financial services is seen as a more pressing issue, and Torba⁴⁷, where more than four in five respondents (81%) consider climate change as the biggest challenge for Vanuatu.
- **Climate change** is generally of most concern to those living in rural areas and in the Torba province. This is not surprising, given the strong reliance of rural areas on agriculture and farming and negative effects of climate change experienced by Torba residents over the past few years⁴⁸.
- **Unemployment** appears to be a particular concern to those living in the Sanma and Tafea provinces, with about a quarter of residents of each province naming it as one of the key challenges for Vanuatu.
- **Lack of access to financial services** is of most concern to those living in the Penama province and **lack of access to education** is considered a particular challenge in the remote regions of Torba and Tafea.

6.2. Perceptions of responsibility for improving the standard of living in Vanuatu

Key Finding 22:

The Vanuatu government is considered the entity with the main responsibility for improving the standard of living in Vanuatu.

Most Vanuatu citizens assign the main responsibility for improving the standard of living in their country to the Vanuatu government (see Figure 31). While this sentiment generally prevails across all demographic groups, it is also important to note that the residents of the remote rural provinces of Tafea and Torba seem to put more emphasis on the responsibility of local leaders (in Tafea) and the citizens themselves (in Torba).

For example, over a third (35%) of all survey respondents in Torba believe that it is the citizens themselves who are mainly responsible for improving their living standards, compared to the national average of 12%. In Tafea, about one tenth (13%) assign this responsibility to local leaders, compared to the national average of 7%.

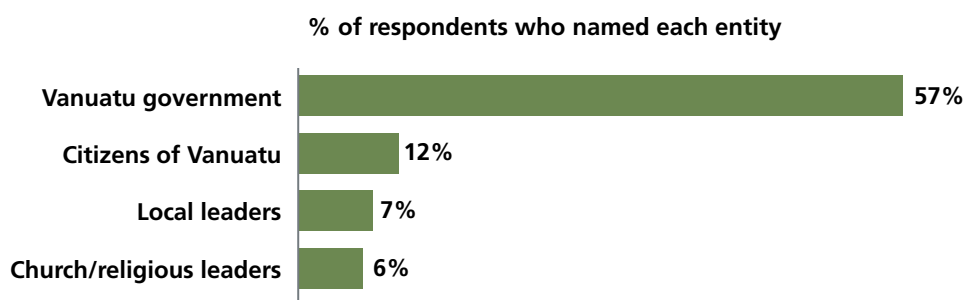
This is also in line with earlier findings on the heavy reliance on local leaders and other members of the community for information, advice and support, particularly in more remote provinces where access to other communication and media sources is scarce.

⁴⁷ n = 154 respondents living in Torba province

⁴⁸ See, for example: Vanuatu village relocated due to rising sea level. ABC. 6 December 2005. Available online: <http://www.abc.net.au/worldtoday/content/soo5/s1524755.htm>.

Figure 31

Top entities seen as having the main responsibility for improving the standard of living in Vanuatu⁴⁹



Source: InterMedia survey in Vanuatu, 2012 (n = 1,338 respondents, 15+)

6.3. Perception of Australian efforts to improve standards of living in Vanuatu

Key Finding 23:

The Australian government is the most well-known foreign entity working in Vanuatu and generally enjoys a positive image among Vanuatu citizens. Criticism is mainly related to the perceived lack of employment of a local labour force and local companies in the Australian government’s activities in the country.

Of all foreign entities working in Vanuatu, its citizens tend to be the most familiar with the activities of the Australian government. As illustrated in Figure 32, almost two thirds of all survey respondents noted that they know at least a fair amount about Australia or its government’s work in Vanuatu, slightly ahead of New Zealand and its government, international NGOs and the European Union.

The self-reported knowledge of the Australian government’s engagement in Vanuatu is the highest in Torba⁵⁰, where 75% of all respondents claim knowing at least a fair amount about this topic, and the lowest in Malampa⁵¹, where only 46% say the same. When asked specifically about AusAID, 64% of all respondents nationwide noted that they have heard of the organisation before and 38% of those familiar with the organisation⁵² felt they know at least a fair amount about its work.

Nevertheless, the familiarity with Australian activities in Vanuatu lags behind the awareness of domestic organisations and local groups engaged in efforts to improve the standard of living in Vanuatu, which is to be expected. The importance of religious and local leaders and the role that they play in the lives of Vanuatu citizens is highlighted in Figure 32.

⁴⁹ Please note: the mentions of all other entities were below 3%

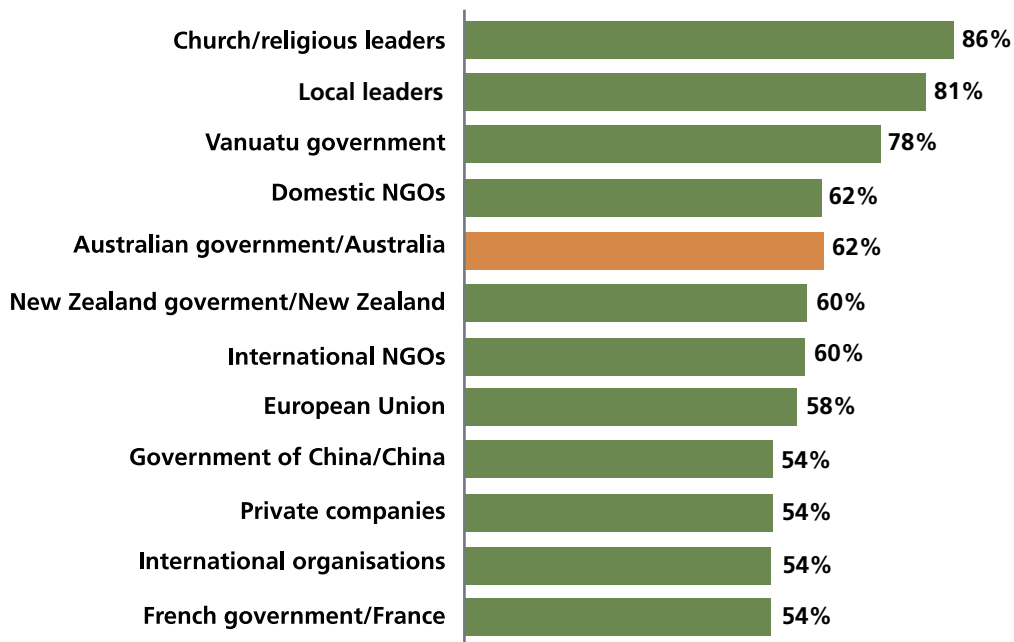
⁵⁰ n = 154 respondents living in Torba province

⁵¹ n = 182 respondents living in Malampa province

⁵² n = 856

Figure 32

Share of respondents who feel they know a lot or a fair amount about the efforts of different entities to improve the standard of living in Vanuatu



Source: InterMedia survey in Vanuatu, 2012 (n = 1,338 respondents, 15+)

Most of those who feel familiar with the Australian government’s work in Vanuatu⁵³ also note that they regularly receive information on the activities; about two thirds receive such information at least once a week. Radio and close family and friendship circles tend to be the main source of information on these issues. Word of mouth is essential particularly in Tafea and Torba, where 77%⁵⁴ and 87%⁵⁵ of all who know at least a fair amount about Australia’s activities in Vanuatu, respectively, cite friends and family as a source of information.

Furthermore, the majority of those who report being familiar with the development efforts of the Australian government in Vanuatu tend to perceive it in an overall positive light and believe its efforts have made a big difference in Vanuatu over the past 10 years. This perception tends to be stronger in rural areas, with 58% of rural residents⁵⁶ saying that, in their view, Australian efforts made a big difference to Vanuatu in the past decade, compared to 43% among urban residents⁵⁷. On the other hand, those between 15-24 years of age and better educated citizens tend to be the most critical of the effectiveness of Australian engagement in Vanuatu.

AusAID enjoys a similarly favourable image among the population of Vanuatu; nine in ten of all respondents believe that their involvement in Vanuatu benefits its citizens⁵⁸. Some of these sentiments are also reflected in the following comments from the participants of the citizen discussion groups:

⁵³ n = 834 respondents who know a lot or fair amount about Australian government’s efforts

⁵⁴ n = 109

⁵⁵ n = 116

⁵⁶ n = 677

⁵⁷ n = 153

⁵⁸ It is important to note that the research participants did not know that the study is funded by AusAID.

"I have seen the people from AusAID from Australia, they came and repaired a secondary school of ours on Pentecost and they are also helping us make our road good, especially on East Ambae. They are funding the water tanks in our communities. They are helping us in lots of ways."

(Female, 35+, rural location, Penama)

"Like from our side, we want to thank them for the good that they are doing for us, on the side of Australian High Commission. We want to congratulate them for the good work that they have done for us."

(Female, 35+, rural location, Sanma)

It is also important to note that the vast majority (86%) of those who have heard of AusAID⁵⁹ know that AusAID is part of the Australian government. However, AusAID's brand recognition seems to be relatively low⁶⁰ – only one in ten respondents (9%) who have seen the AusAID logo before⁶¹ say it belongs to AusAID. The majority of respondents (63%) identify the logo with Australia, with a further fifth of citizens (19%) identifying it with the Australian government.

In terms of specific areas of AusAID's work, Vanuatu citizens tend to be the most familiar with its activities in the area of education, health and infrastructure development.

However, despite the overall favourable perceptions of AusAID and the Australian government in general, research participants also expressed some criticism over their engagement in Vanuatu, arguing that what is positioned to Vanuatu as development and help is, in fact, simply a pursuit of Australian economic interests. Some also resented the fact that AusAID often hired only Australian companies or Australian staff (as opposed to local companies and local staff) and that certain food products were imported from Australia.

"It is mainly Australia that I don't like. I'm glad that they've funded stuff, but what I don't like is that when they fund things, they want to be the ones to control it and manage it. They send their own people instead of using people from Vanuatu. They sent Australians to come and work as a means of taking the money back to Australia."

(Male, 25-34, Malampa)

"Our problem lies with our economy. We don't have a rice factory, so every year we give billions to Australia. What we give is more than what they give back to us. We don't give it to New Zealand or France, mainly just to Australia."

(Male, 25-34, urban location, Shefa)

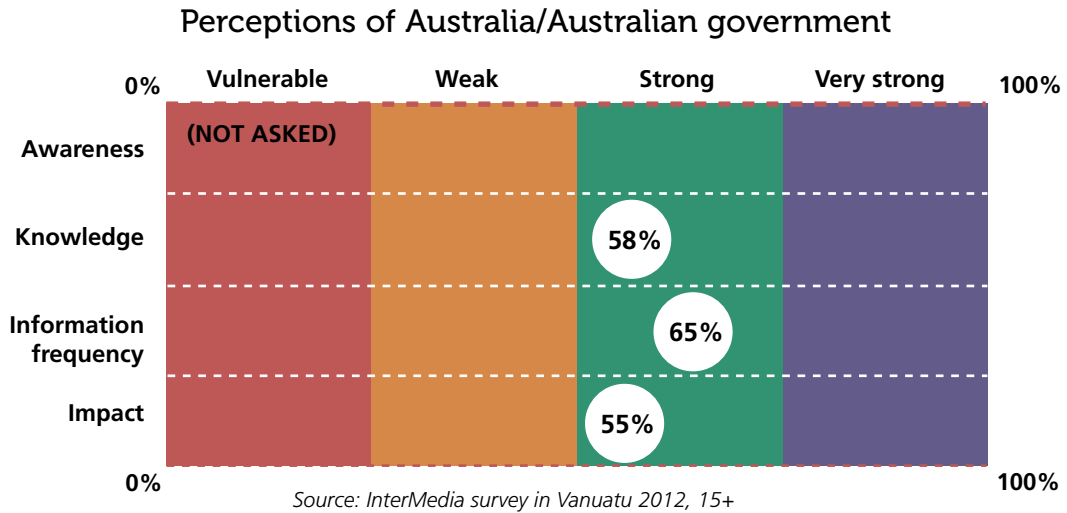
These perceptions and attitudes towards the Australian government and AusAID are summarised in two InterMedia **Donor Perception Dashboards** (Figure 33 and Figure 34). Overall, the results indicate that the performance and perceptions of both entities for now remain largely favourable, with the level of citizens' knowledge about AusAID's activities in Vanuatu showing the most room for improvement.

⁵⁹ n = 856

⁶⁰ See Appendix for the AusAID logo used as part of brand recognition question

⁶¹ n = 1,055

Figure 33 InterMedia Donor Perception Dashboard I

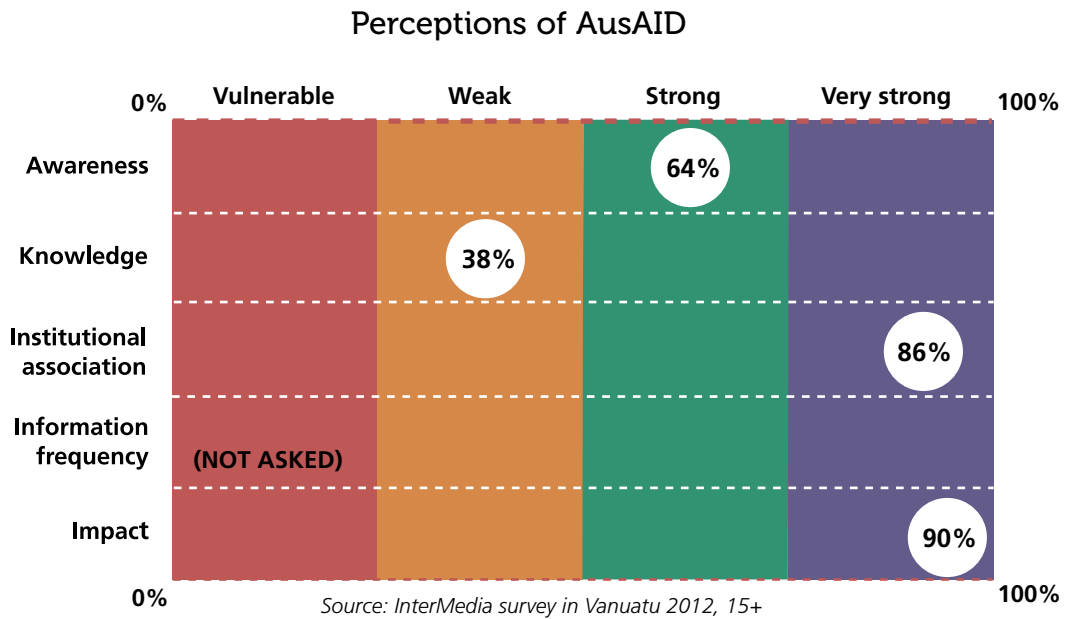


Knowledge: % of those who know a lot or a fair amount about Australia/Australian government's efforts in Vanuatu (N = 1,338, 15+)

Information frequency: % of those who receive information about Australia/Australian government's efforts in Vanuatu at least once a week (n = 779 respondents who know a lot or a fair amount about the efforts of Australia/Australian government in Vanuatu)

Impact: % of those who believe that the efforts of Australia/Australian government in Vanuatu in the past 10 years have made a big difference (n = 779 respondents who know a lot or a fair amount about the efforts of Australia/Australian government in Vanuatu)

Figure 34 InterMedia Donor Perception Dashboard II



Awareness: % of those who have heard of AusAID before (n = 1,338)

Institutional association: % of those who believe AusAID is a part of Australian government (N= 856 responders who have heard of AusAID before, 15+)

Knowledge: % of those who know a lot or a fair amount about AusAID (n = 856 respondents who have heard of AusAID before, 15+)

Impact: % those who believe that AusAID's involvement in Vanuatu benefits Vanuatu citizens (n = 856 respondents who know a lot or a fair amount about AusAID)

Attitudes and Behaviour on Civic Participation, Domestic Violence and Land Issues

This section of the report provides an overview of citizens' views, attitudes and behaviour related to civic participation, gender violence and land issues.

7.1. Civic participation

Key Finding 24:

Knowledge gaps on civic participation are particularly notable among women and 18-24 year-olds.

Before discussing the results of the study on respondents' attitudes and behaviour related to civic participation, it is important to note that the findings in this section have to be interpreted in the context of the timing of the study, which was conducted just after general elections in 2012. The elections may have influenced perceptions of election-related issues, as well as their self-reported civic participation behaviour.

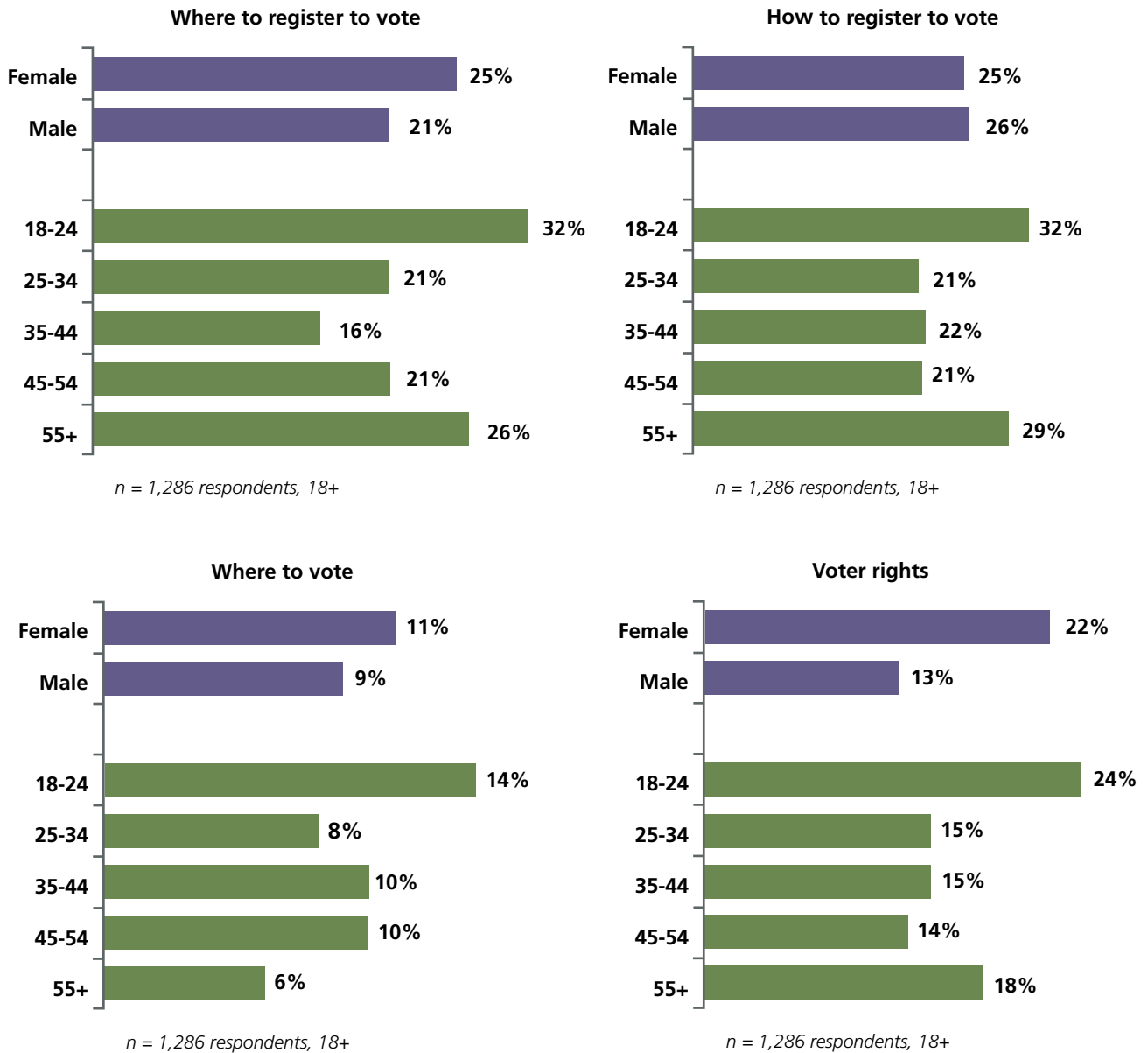
Respondents were asked to first assess their knowledge of civic participation in a number of areas, including their understanding of their voter rights and the registration process (where and how to register) as well as their knowledge of where to vote.

Despite the fact that the survey was conducted just after elections, a significant segment of the Vanuatu citizens who participated in the survey and were eligible to vote⁶² were unsure about how to register (26%) or where to register to vote (23%). In addition, almost a fifth (18%) of eligible voters who took part in this survey were unsure about what their voter rights were. As Figure 35 illustrates, knowledge gaps about all these civic participation issues tend to be the widest among women, and among the youngest voters (18-24 years of age).

⁶² n = 1,286

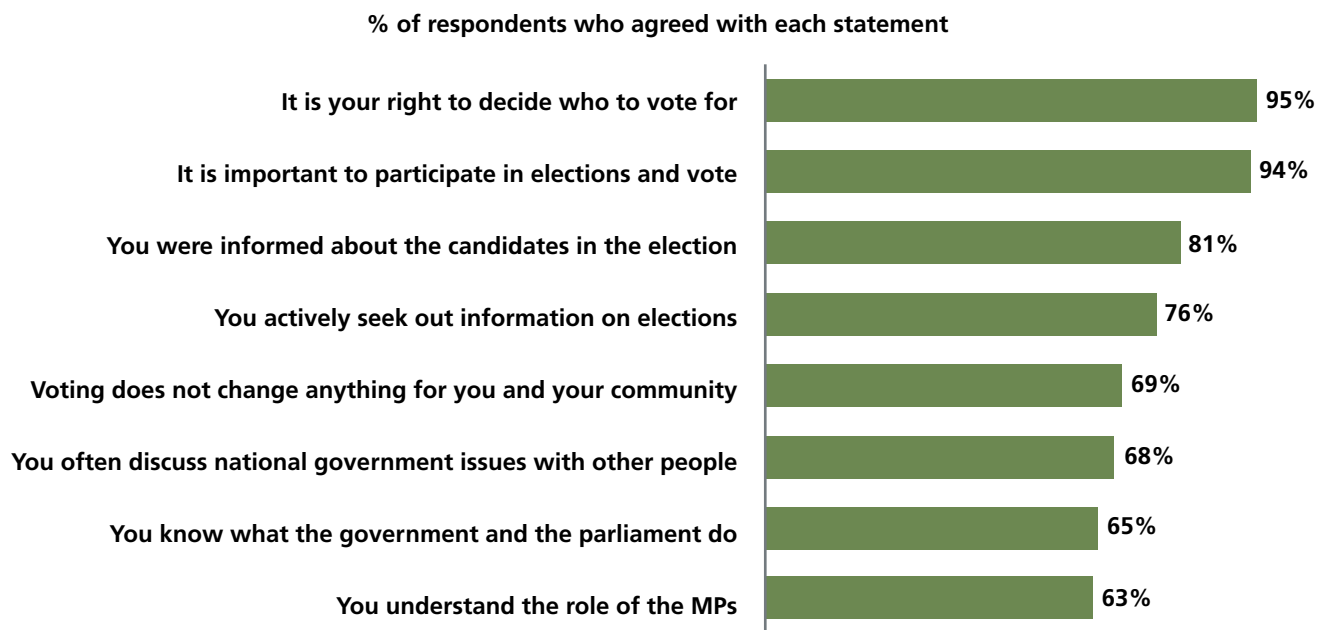
Figure 35 Knowledge about civic participation

% of eligible voters with no or little knowledge about the following



Furthermore, knowledge gaps are also reflected in a relatively low share of respondents who say that they know what the government and the parliament do and who are confident in their understanding of the role of MPs (see Figure 36). Conversely, voters' general attitudes towards their participation in elections and their confidence in their ability to choose who to vote for seem to be largely positive (see Figure 36).

Figure 36 Attitudes towards elections and voting intention



Source: InterMedia survey in Vanuatu, 2012 (n = 1,286, respondents, 18+)

However, despite these notable knowledge gaps the vast majority (74%) of eligible voters who participated in the survey recall receiving information about elections on the past year, although it is not clear what this information was about. The largest proportion (59%) received such information from friends and family, followed by the radio (49%) and newspapers (15%). Only 10% say they received information from the Electoral Office and 9% received information from Wan Smolbag.

7.1.1. Impact of Wan Smolbag and Electoral Office communication activities

In addition to examining general information gathering patterns and attitudes towards civic participation, the survey also collected data which allowed us to examine the impact of the communication activities of Wan Smolbag and the Electoral Office on these attitudes and behaviour.

To assess this impact, we employed structural equation modelling (SEM), as it allows complex relational hypotheses to be modelled and empirically tested. SEM enables us to examine how media access and media use relate to the exposure to the Wan Smolbag and the Electoral Office communication activities⁶³, and simultaneously examine how this exposure related to knowledge, attitudes and practices about elections and voting.

In order to measure the overall media access, recency of media use, exposure to the communication activities, the role of word of mouth, active information seeking behaviour and knowledge, attitudes and behaviour on civic participation, fifteen questions from the survey were included in the model.

⁶³ The following communication activities of Wan Smolbag and Electoral Office were included: theatre plays on elections, voter information booklet "Why we vote", film screenings in elections, radio spots on elections and songs on elections.

- 1. Household media access**
 - o Which of the following items do you have available in your household in working order (radio, TV, computer, mobile phone, internet, landline phone)?
- 2. Recency of media use**
 - o Apart from today, when was the last time you listened to the radio?
 - o Apart from today, when was the last time you watched television?
 - o Apart from today, when was the last time you read newspapers?
 - o Apart from today, when was the last time you used a mobile phone?
 - o Apart from today, when was the last time you used the internet?
- 3. Active information seeking**
 - o To what extent do you agree with the following statement: You actively seek out information on elections?
- 4. Word of mouth**
 - o To what extent do you agree with the following statement: You often discuss national government issues with other people?
- 5. Exposure to Wan Smolbag/ Electoral Office activities**
 - o Have you heard or seen any of the following activities by Wan Smolbag and Electoral Office: Radio spots on elections, voter information booklet "Why we vote", film screenings on elections, theatre plays on elections, songs on elections?
- 6. Knowledge on election and voting**
 - o How much do you know about the following: Where to register to vote, how to register to vote, where to vote, your voter rights?
 - o To what extent do you agree with the following statement: You understand the role of MP's?
 - o To what extent do you agree with the following statement: You know what the government and the parliament do?
- 7. Attitudes on elections and voting**
 - o To what extent do you agree with the following statement: It is important to participate in elections and vote?
 - o To what extent do you agree with the following statement: It is your right to decide who to vote for?
- 8. Practice**
 - o Please tell me if you voted in the 2012 general elections in Vanuatu?

Figure 37 presents the final model⁶⁴ in which arrows indicate statistically significant⁶⁵ relationships between different factors. The model illustrates the following key findings:

- As predicted, having access to more media in the household (e.g. radio, television, computer, mobile and landline phones, and the internet) is associated with using these media more recently⁶⁶.
- Additionally, people with access to a wider variety of media at home are more likely to actively seek out information on election issues⁶⁷.
- Active information seeking and using media recently increased the chances of respondents being exposed to Wan Smolbag and the Electoral Office activities⁶⁸. Active information seeking has a particularly strong relationship to exposure to the election activities, as it is both directly associated with exposure and indirectly associated through recency of media use⁶⁹. In other words, those who are active seekers of information on election issues are more likely to be regular media users and are more likely to have been exposed to the communication activities of Wan Smolbag and Electoral office.
- Exposure to the Wan Smolbag and Electoral Office communication activities is associated with higher levels of self-reported knowledge about voting, MPs, and Parliament⁷⁰, as is active seeking of information about elections and talking to others about national government issues⁷¹.

⁶⁴ The model was a good fit to the data: $\chi^2(16) = 114.9, p < .01, RMSEA = 0.079$ (90% confidence interval: 0.07 – 0.09), CFI = 0.95

⁶⁵ *p* set at .05 a priori

⁶⁶ $\beta = 0.69$

⁶⁷ $\beta = 0.19$

⁶⁸ $\beta = 0.15$ and $\beta = 0.25$, respectively

⁶⁹ Information seeking → recency $\beta = 0.18$

⁷⁰ $\beta = 0.15$

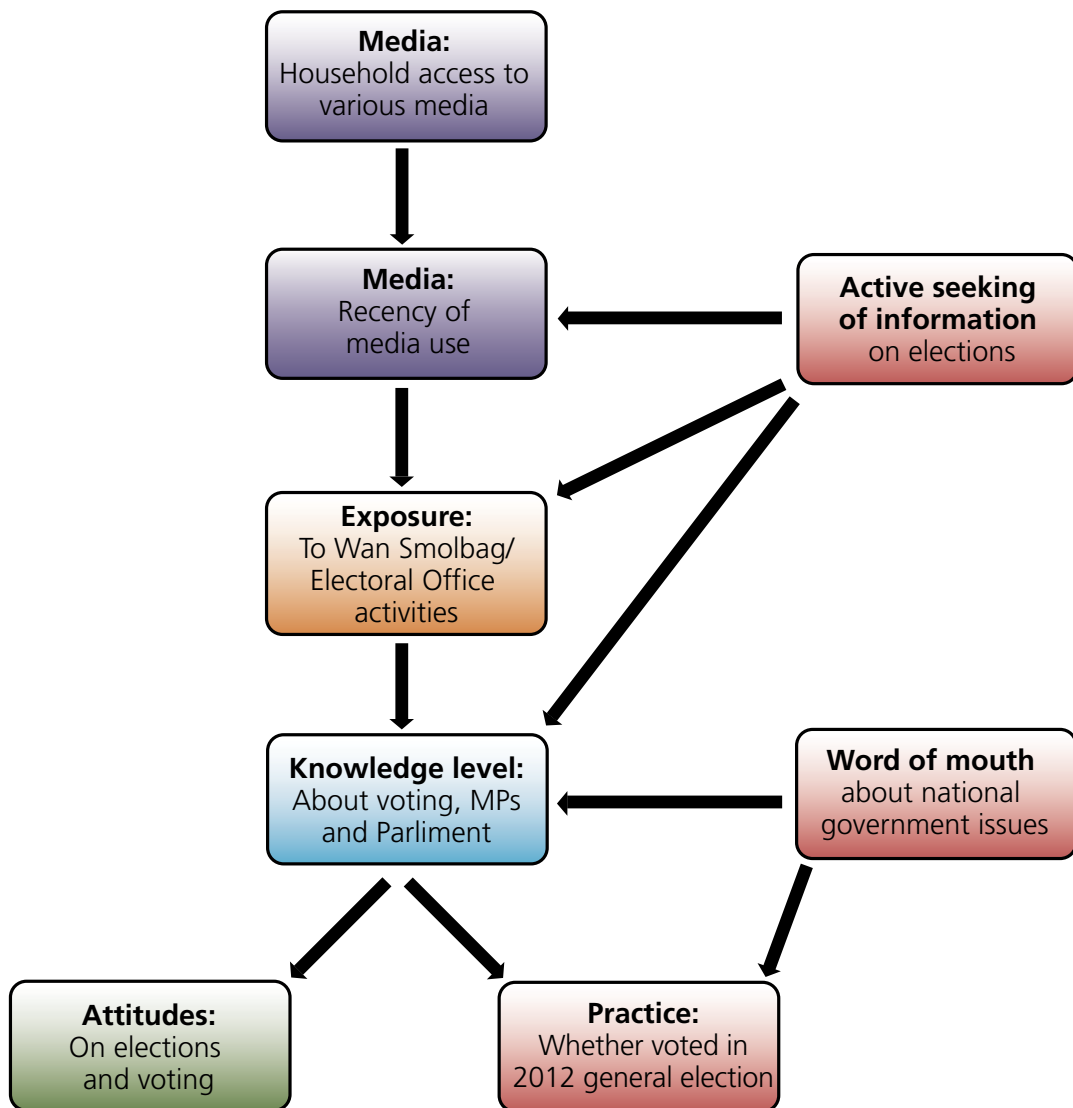
⁷¹ $\beta = 0.28$

⁷² $\beta = 0.22$

- Finally, knowing more about voting and civic participation was positively associated with both the attitudes supporting the importance of voting⁷², and actual behaviour, namely having voted in the 2012 general elections⁷³. Likewise, talking about national government issues was also associated with voting⁷⁴. However, this association was negative; the more that people reported talking about national government issues, the less likely they were to vote. Lastly, exposure to Wan Smolbag and the Electoral Office communication activities was positively and indirectly associated with both attitudes on election issues and voting behaviour.

Figure 37

Exposure to Wan Smolbag and the Electoral Office communication activities and their impact on knowledge, attitudes and practice



⁷³ $\beta = 0.36$
⁷⁴ $\beta = -0.08$

7.2. Vanuatu Women's Centre

Key Finding 25:

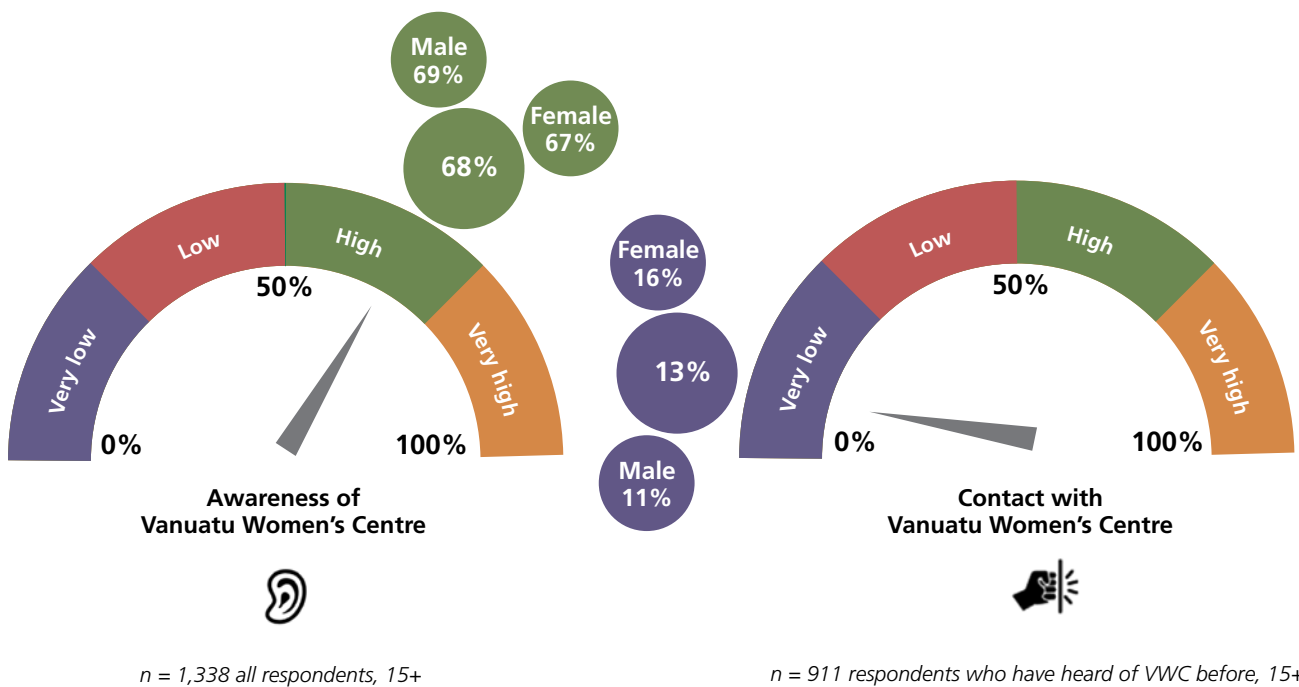
More than two thirds of all adults are aware of the Vanuatu Women's Centre, but few take the initiative to get in touch with the centre or its representatives.

The survey was also designed to assess the general awareness of the Vanuatu Women's Centre and the contact with the centre, as well as the attitudes on gender violence issues.

The overall awareness of the Vanuatu Women's Centre⁷⁵ (VWC) among Vanuatu citizens tends to be relatively high, with over two-thirds of survey participants⁷⁶ (68%) reporting that they have heard about the centre (see Figure 38). Young, uneducated citizens and those living in the Tafea and Malampa provinces are less likely to have heard about VWC than respondents belonging to other population segments.

However, despite a relatively high level of awareness, the share of those who have been in contact with the Vanuatu Women's Centre or its representatives is low – only 13% of those who are aware of the Centre⁷⁷ have done so in the past. Those who did contact VWC⁷⁸ tend to be women of all ages, and primarily live in the urban areas of the Sanma and Shefa provinces.

Figure 38 Vanuatu Women's Centre awareness and engagement dashboard



As Figure 39 illustrates, radio and close personal networks tend to be the main sources of information on VWC among those who have heard of VWC before.

⁷⁵ This also includes Sanma Counselling Centre, Tafea Counselling Centre and Torba Counselling Centre

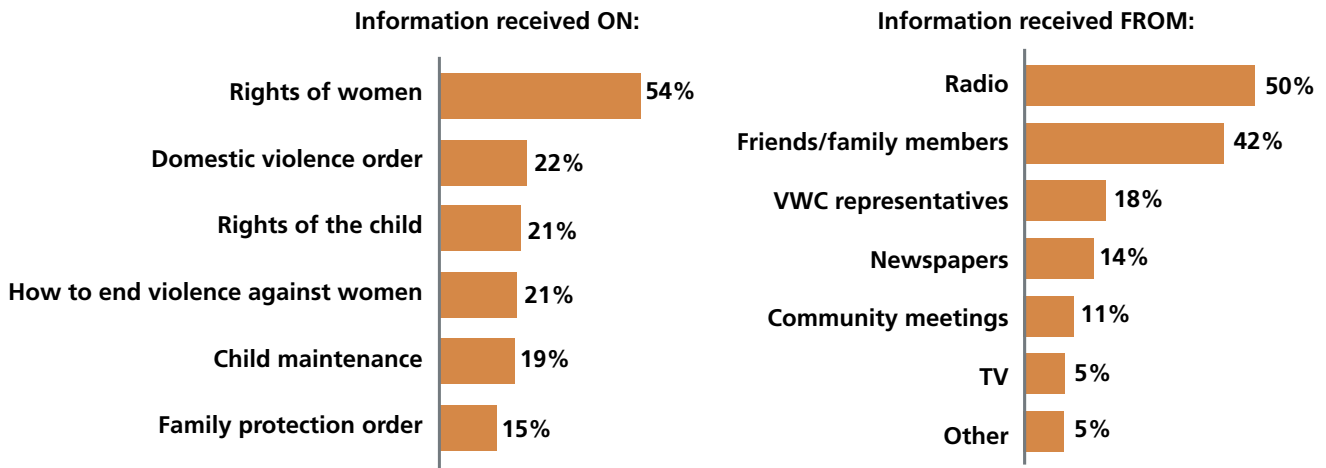
⁷⁶ *N* = 1,338 respondents aged 15+

⁷⁷ *n* = 911

⁷⁸ *n* = 135

Figure 39

Content and sources of information on the Vanuatu Women's Centre



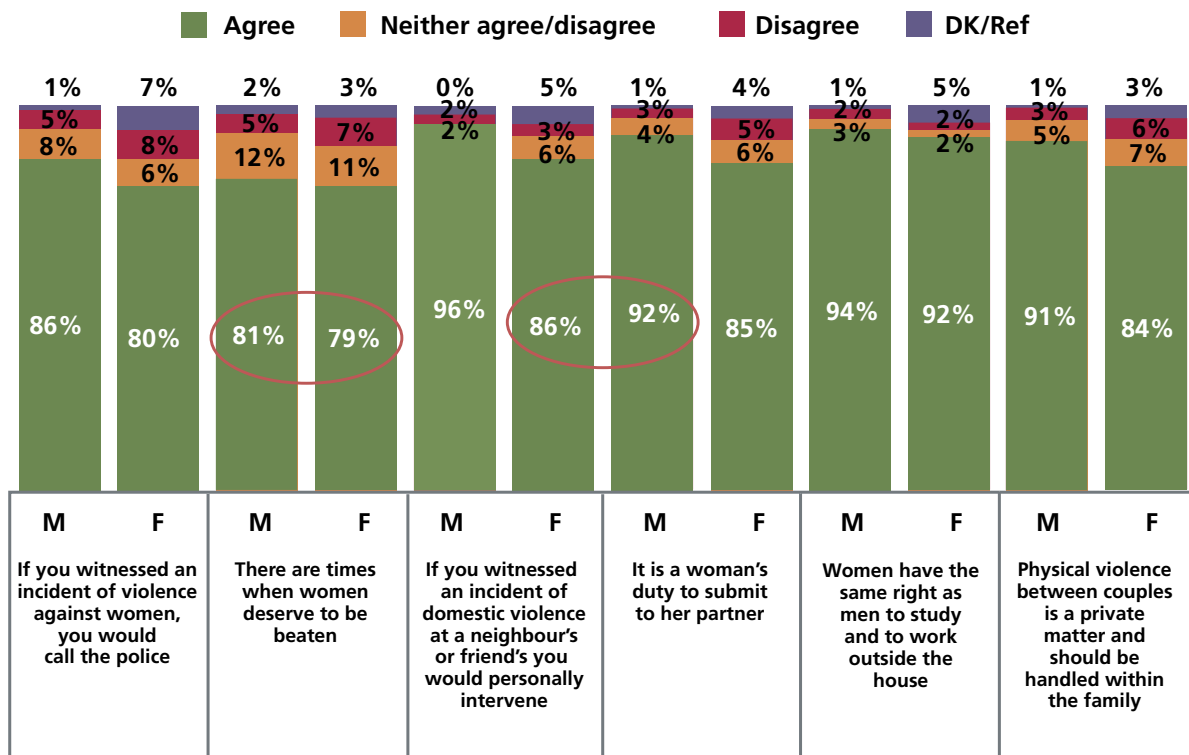
Source: InterMedia in Vanuatu, 2012 (n = 911 respondents who have heard of VWC before, 15+)

With regard to attitudes to gender violence more broadly, unfavourable attitudes towards gender violence for now remain culturally acceptable. As Figure 40 indicates, the majority of both men and women still agree that it is a woman's duty to submit to her partner and there are times when women deserve to be beaten. At the same time, the majority of respondents exhibit socially desirable behaviour intentions regarding domestic violence. For example, most respondents say that they would personally intervene if they witnessed an incident of domestic violence at a neighbour's or friend's place.

However, it is also important to note that social desirability, i.e. the tendency to provide answers that will be viewed favourably by others, may have influenced the respondents' answers to the questions concerning their behaviour and attitudes on violence against women. This may have resulted in some over-reporting on socially desirable attitudes/behaviours and under-reporting on those which are considered undesirable.

Figure 40

Attitude towards violence against women



Source: InterMedia survey in Vanuatu, 2012 (n = 1,338, 15+)

7.3. Land issues

Key Finding 26:

Attitudes towards custom ownership are universally positive, however, there are some signs of distrust of the government when it comes to land administration, especially among rural populations.

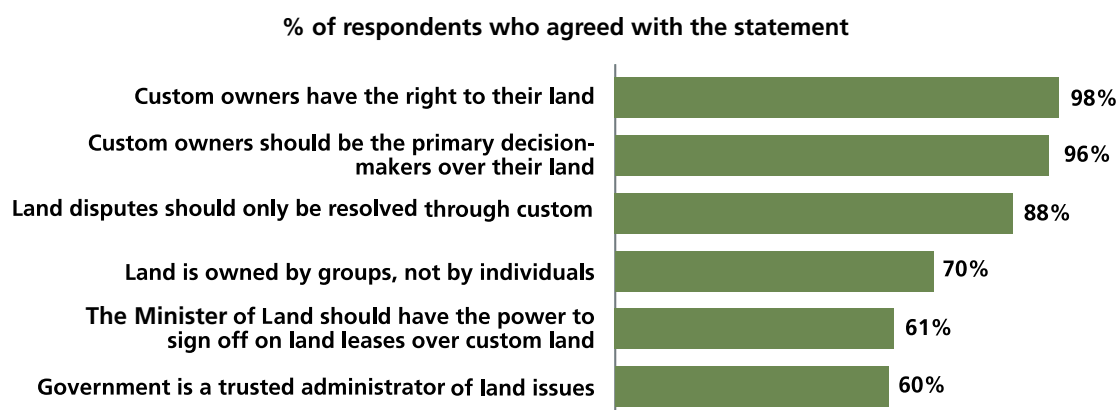
Finally, the study also sought to assess the survey participants' attitudes towards land issues, a pertinent issue for the Vanuatu population.

Given the prominence of land issues in the country's public discourse, it is not surprising that the vast majority of all survey respondents (70%) report receiving information about this topic before. However, it is important to note that, unlike in most other topic areas, radio does not represent the main source of information on this topic. Instead, close personal networks of friends and family emerge as the dominant source of information on land issues (cited by 64% of all who have received information on land issues before), followed by community meetings (35%). In contrast, only a quarter of adults say they received information about land issues from radio and 15% of them cite local community elders and church leaders.

Overall, most of the information they received, was related to customary land tribunals (43%), Mama Graon land programme (22%) and land administration and leasing (15%).

One of the key challenges of the Land reform, introduced in 2006, was to ensure that the Vanuatu Government fulfils its constitutional mandate to ensure land dealings were in the best interests of the landowning communities and the country⁷⁹. The survey results suggest that Vanuatu citizens tend to be more critical of the government's role in administering land issues compared to custom, as illustrated in Figure 42. This scepticism about the government's involvement in administering land issues is particularly strong in rural areas, where only 58% of respondents agree that the Minister of Land should have the power to sign off on land leases over custom land, in comparison with 74% of those living in urban centres.

Figure 41 Attitudes towards land issues



Source: InterMedia survey in Vanuatu, 2012 (n = 1,338, 15+)

⁷⁹Issues with land reform in Vanuatu, Journal of South Pacific Law, 2008, <http://www.paclii.org/journals/fJSPL/vol12no1/pdf/regenvanu.pdf>

8

Considerations

Drawing on the key insights from the Citizen Access to Information study, we propose a set of considerations under five key headings – signal, target audiences, platforms, format and content. These considerations are intended to support the development, policy and media community, aiming to optimise engagement with citizens in Vanuatu.

SIGNAL

(1) Address the signal challenge

Poor or non-existent radio, TV and mobile phone signals remain a significant barrier to improving media use and access to key life-saving information, particularly in more remote, rural areas.

TARGET AUDIENCES

(2) Recognise the diversity of information needs, media access and media use

In Vanuatu, no one size fits all, and the information needs, communication channels as well as the content and format preferences vary significantly between different population subgroups. Only a communication approach that considers these notable differences will be effective in the long term.

(3) Define primary, secondary and tertiary audiences

Given the significant differences in communication needs and media use patterns it is imperative to determine priority target groups, in order to optimise resources, outcomes and ultimately the impact of communication efforts designed for different purposes.

(4) Identify the extent to which language is a barrier among different groups

Provision of content in only one language, whether it is French, English or Bislama, for many remains a barrier to access to information. Developing the content in more than one language is important particularly for national communication campaigns, while those that target a particular population subgroup can remain restricted to one language, depending on the profile of that specific target audience group.

(5) Optimise the key role of community opinion leaders as information brokers

Local community and religious leaders play a central role in keeping citizens informed about the issues that matter to them. However, they can also act as information gatekeepers, especially in relation to more sensitive issues, such as domestic violence. It is important that their role as barriers and facilitators is well understood and incorporated into the communication strategies accordingly.

PLATFORMS

(6) Capitalise on the popularity of radio for news and information dissemination

Radio is the most used information source for the majority of priority information topics identified by Vanuatu citizens. Incorporating radio into communication campaigns, therefore, is essential, particularly for reaching non-literate citizens and those living in more remote areas of Vanuatu, where access to other media, for now, remains extremely limited.

(7) Leverage the rapid growth of mobile phone access and use

Mobile phone access and use have been growing rapidly over the past few years and the mobile phone is now the most widely owned and used communication device in Vanuatu. Therefore, optimising the content

and messaging for mobile phones is essential, particularly in order to maximise the reach among the youngest audiences (15-24 year olds).

FORMAT

(8) *Prioritise the use of talkback for engaging with audiences on more sensitive issues*

Talkback is one of the most popular radio formats among Vanuatu citizens, partially because it gives citizens a voice and stimulates the discussion on issues that may be considered taboo in their own communities (e.g. domestic violence).

(9) *Consider establishing a free telephone talkback line*

The high cost of telephone calls in Vanuatu, for now, remains the main barrier to participation in talkback programmes. This could be addressed by establishing a free telephone line, dedicated specifically to talkback shows.

CONTENT

(10) *Optimise thematic focus*

Local news, politics, sport, climate change and corruption are some of the areas where the information needs and gaps are the greatest and regular and in-depth communication on these issues is likely to attract significant attention and interest among audiences in Vanuatu. Specific recommendations for delivering the content on these issues more effectively include:

- **Local news**

Provide regular information on local developments (village, community level) to audiences across the country, particularly on the issues of local politics, corruption and on local land issues. Employ radio news as the primary outlet for communicating this type of content, with emphasis on the primetime morning, midday and evening news slots.

- **Politics**

Enhance the quantity and the depth of up-to-date news on political issues on all levels – local, national and international. Politics is of interest particularly to those with tertiary education and citizens living in Tafea and Malampa. Use the talkback format to encourage participation in discussion on politics.

- **Environment/climate change**

Build on existing communication efforts to address the information needs on environment and climate change, particularly in Torba. Ensure that the communication focuses on specific issues, such as rising sea levels, illegal logging, droughts and unpredictable weather changes, water shortages, land erosion, the impact of pesticides and other chemicals, rather than on the general topic of climate change and environment.

- **Gender/domestic violence**

Optimise the use of talkback to encourage discussion on domestic violence, particularly in Torba, where the need for information on this issue seems to be the greatest. Consider strategies to effectively engage local community opinion leaders, who often act as information gatekeepers on domestic violence, to reinforce key messages to both women and men.

- **Sport**

Recognise the high interest in sport and leverage the engagement with sport to integrate development related messaging into media coverage of sports, particularly educational, health and gender related content.

(A) Further details on the citizen group discussions

The qualitative phase of the research sought to obtain initial insights through a series of focus group discussions in four of the six provinces of Vanuatu.

A two hour long discussion guide was developed by InterMedia in collaboration with ABC ID and AusAID. The English versions of the discussion guide and the screener were then translated to Bislama by Wan Smolbag. The screener and discussion group summary forms were also translated.

The core team consisted of two female and two male focus group facilitators and a project manager from Wan Smolbag.

InterMedia trained all facilitators in the use of the discussion guide, screeners, and summary reports over a four day period from 1-4 October, 2012. The discussion guide went through several changes during the training and was finalised following the completion of the pilot citizen group discussions.

Table 1 shows the breakdown of discussion groups by province and the composition of the group participants.

Please also note that the citizen group discussions were designed and implemented to the principles of good practice in gender and disability, drawing on guidelines of ABC and AusAID. This was achieved by ensuring a gender balance in the research team and among the citizen group discussions participants (see **Table 1**) and by ensuring inclusion of people with disabilities in the focus groups. Citizen group discussions that included a participant with a disability are marked in **Table 1** with "D".

Table 1 Composition and location of citizen group discussions

	Port Vila, SHEFA	Rural location in SHEFA	Luganville, SANMA	Rural location in SANMA	Ambrym, MALAMPA	Ambae, PENAMA
MALE 15-24						
FEMALE 15-24						
MALE 25-34			D			D
FEMALE 25-34						
MALE 35+					D	
FEMALE 35+	D					

(B) Further details on the face-to-face survey

Sampling plan

A random sample survey with a target population size of 1,212 Vanuatu citizens aged 15 years and above, living in urban and rural areas of the Torba, Sanma, Penama, Malampa, Shefa and Tafea provinces was selected. In addition, a booster of 102 citizens of Torba was included in the survey to enable sub-group analysis. The sample selected in each province was based on random sampling procedure to ensure that it is representative of the population living in those provinces in terms of age, education, socio-economic status and urban-rural split.

The survey used a multi-stage random sampling approach with provincial stratification. Specifically, the following steps were taken:

1. Provincial level stratification

All six provinces of Vanuatu were covered, with the population provincial breakdown replicated in the sample (see Table 2).

Table 2 Population and interview distribution by province

Province	Island	Population	% of provincial population	% of Vanuatu population	Target Interviews	Achieved Interviews
Torba	Vanua Lava	2597	27.7	1.1	48 + booster (102)	154
Sanma	Santo	39,601	86.4	16.9	237	204
Penama	Pentecost	16,843	54.7	7.2	160	171
Malampa	Malekula	22,902	62.4	9.8	190	182
Shefa	Efate	65,734	83.5	28.1	408	406
Tafea	Tanna	28,799	88.5	12.3	169	181
Total					1212 + booster of 102 in Torba	1338

Source: National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu, 2009

2. Island level sampling

Due to logistical challenges and constraints originating from significant geographical diversity of Vanuatu, a decision has been made to conduct the survey on only one island in each of the six provinces. The islands sampled are listed in Table 3 below.

Table 3 Population and interview distribution by islands and provinces

Province	Island	Population	% of provincial population	% of Vanuatu population	Target Interviews	Achieved Interviews
Torba	Vanua Lava	2597	27.7	1.1	48 + booster (102)	154
Sanma	Santo	39,601	86.4	16.9	237	204
Penama	Pentecost	16,843	54.7	7.2	160	171
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Shefa	Efate	65,734	83.5	28.1	408	406
Tafea	Tanna	28,799	88.5	12.3	169	181
Total					1212 + booster of 102 in Torba	1338

Source: National Population and Housing Census, Vanuatu, 2009

These islands were chosen primarily due to their comparatively large population size, accessibility by plane and availability of transportation on these islands, necessary to complete the study within the specified timeframe.

- **Vanua Lava, Torba:** Vanua Lava is one of the larger islands in the Torba province. The villages are easily accessible by truck or by foot to carry out the interviews. However, many of the smaller islands in Torba are not easily accessible and their population size is too small to draw a random sampling for each of the primary sampling units or the secondary sampling units.
- **Santo, Sanma:** Sanma is made up of 2 larger islands and several smaller islands. The main island of Santo is where one of two urban centres is located, Luganville, allowing for samples from both rural and urban areas. From the main urban centre, there is also relatively easy to access transportation to both the South, East and Northeast areas of Santo. The northeast is still considered quite remote, which allowed for sampling of some of the least developed areas in Vanuatu.
- **Pentecost, Penama:** Penama is made up of three islands. The island of Ambae was covered during the qualitative part of this study. Maewo is difficult to access as flights are often cancelled due to poor weather. Pentecost has a large population and many villages are accessible by truck, boat, or foot, therefore allowing for an appropriate sample from approximately 16 different villages.
- **Malekula, Malampa:** Malampa is made up of 3 larger islands (Ambrym, Malekula, and Paama) and many small islands. Ambrym was covered during the qualitative part of this study, and Paama has less than 10 villages, which would not have allowed for appropriate sampling methods to obtain the total number of completed interviews required. Malekula is accessible by plane and has good access by truck or foot to the Northwest, Northeast, and East areas of the islands. The larger area allowed access to over 20 villages to conduct interviews.
- **Efate, Shefa:** Efate is the largest island in Shefa province and is also home to the most populated urban area of Port Vila. Surveys were conducted in both rural and urban areas and transport was easily accessible which was necessary as the largest number of interviews were collected in Shefa.
- **Tanna, Tafea:** Tanna is the most populated island in the Tafea province with available transport by truck or foot to all areas of the island. Road conditions in the South are more challenging, but access to this more remote area was nevertheless possible. The other islands do not have enough villages that are easily accessible for the time period that was allowed for the interviews.

3. City/village level sampling

In each of the islands a spread of secondary sampling units (towns/villages) was covered, ensuring a realistic representation of the population living on the islands.

4. Primary sampling unit level sampling

Primary sampling units were selected within secondary sampling units to ensure broad coverage of the province, with respect to appropriate infrastructure, i.e. available roads that allowed the interviewers to reach them. All primary sampling units were over-numerated to allow for conditions on the ground. A set of 'primary target locations' were backed-up by 'secondary locations', in case any of the situations, such as floods, landslips, washed-out roads or other conditions prevented the interviewers from completing the work in the primary target location.

Visuals

This AusAID logo was used as a point of the brand recognition question during interviews:



Fieldwork team

The fieldwork team consisted of 11 team leaders/supervisors and 55 interviewers. The supervisors and the interviewers for the quantitative study were recruited from existing Wan Smolbag staff and through Wan Smolbag networks on the outer islands. An effort was made for each provincial team to have a relatively balanced number of male and female interviewers. Overall, the fieldwork team for this survey included 46% women and 54% men.

The training for the quantitative survey was conducted in two phases. The first phase, which was led by InterMedia, included the training of all team leaders and the interviewers in the Shefa province. The second phase included training of the provincial interviewing teams, which was conducted by the team leaders who completed the phase 1 training in Port Vila.

Phase 1 and phase 2 training each took 3-4 days per province. The training consisted of the discussion of the purpose and objectives of the study, sampling design and sampling procedures, discussion of the questionnaire question by question, quality control procedures, logistics, mock-interviews and at least 1 day of piloting per province.

Quality control

A rigorous set of quality checks were implemented during the fieldwork and data cleaning stages. These quality control procedures included:

In-Field Quality Control

- The team leaders ensured that every respondent can be matched to the questionnaire and the interviewer and checked that the time and duration of the interview is recorded in the completed questionnaires.
- All completed questionnaires were checked twice in the field and every effort was made to check all questionnaires again before coding.
- In total, 15.3% (202) of the interviewers were observed by the survey supervisors.
- In addition, 15.9% of the interviews were verified through back-checks, either by phone call or in person.

Post-Field Quality Control

- During the first three weeks of coding, 30% of the questionnaires entered were verified. After the first three weeks of coding, 10% were verified by the coding supervisor.
- After the data entry process has been completed, a comprehensive set of data checks was performed to identify any errors, invalid responses, inconsistencies and any illogical patterns in survey responses. The problematic cases were identified and addressed by consulting the original questionnaires.



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