

# Disaster READY

Annual Summary Level Report 2022/23



# INTRODUCTION

## Disaster READY Overview

Disaster READY is a component of the Australian Humanitarian Partnership (AHP) funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). Through the Disaster READY program, Australian-based non-governmental organisation (ANGO) partners assist local communities and organisations in the Pacific and Timor-Leste to prepare for and respond to natural disasters. AHP partners deliver locally led programs through their networks in Fiji, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste.

Overall, \$100 million is being invested (2017-2027) to support communities, local civil society actors and governments to manage disasters more effectively. This includes ensuring that women, youth, children, people with disabilities, and other at-risk groups are better prepared for and more resilient to disasters and climate change. DFAT has partnered with six Australian NGOs and their consortiums to deliver on these priorities: CARE Australia, Caritas Australia, Oxfam Australia, Plan International Australia, Save the Children Australia and World Vision Australia.

The Partnership has entered Phase 2 of programming (2022-2027). In the lead up to Phase 2, partners participated in a country and project-level design process to support work to be undertaken from 2022-2027. This involved a country-led and comprehensive redesign of Disaster READY Phase 2 project plans, country level plans and associated deliverables, including a localisation plan and development of a collective learning agenda. All projects and country-level plans are designed to support the achievement of three intermediate outcomes:

- **Intermediate Outcome 1.1:** Communities (especially vulnerable groups) plan and implement effective, inclusive, and integrated disaster preparedness and climate change adaptation activities.
- **Intermediate Outcome 1.2:** Local civil society actors — non-government organisations (NGOs), community-based organisations (CBOs), organisations for people with disabilities (OPDs), churches, informal groups — have improved institutional and technical capacity to fulfil their role in effective disaster preparedness and climate change adaptation.
- **Intermediate Outcome 1.3:** National and sub-national governments are supported to lead effective, inclusive and coordinated disaster preparedness, climate change adaptation and response activities.

These intermediate outcomes contribute to the achievement of one of the AHP's **End of Program Outcomes:** *Women, youth, children, people with disabilities and other at-risk groups are better prepared for and more resilient to disasters and climate change.*

This report provides a summary of early results against the intermediate outcomes. It also outlines progress toward the key cross cutting themes; inclusion, localisation and coordination. More detailed information regarding country-level progress can be found in the five country-level annual reports.

COVER: Children in Timor-Leste are thrilled to be able to wash their hands at school with thanks to the Disaster READY program IMAGE: Luis de Arujo/CARE International in Timor-Leste

## Methodology

This report tracks progress towards intermediate outcomes from July 2022 – June 2023 (Year 1, Phase 2). As such, this report does not reference activities or achievements completed under Phase 1 of Disaster READY. In some instances, partners have built on the progress established in the first four years of the program, in others they have commenced work in new areas and have focused mainly on foundational activities.

The content of this report is a collation of annual reporting submitted by partner ANGOs and Disaster READY Country Committees (DRCCs). ANGOs are required to provide annual and progress-level reports against their country projects. DRCCs are responsible for developing an overarching country report, which involves bringing ANGOs and implementing partners together to discuss key achievements, challenges and successes in each Disaster READY country. Annual reporting includes an overview of activities completed, participation figures and core indicator data.

This report also draws from the reflections of three independent reviewers, with focuses on gender equality, disability inclusion and climate change adaptation and resilience, who provided feedback on the project and country-level reports submitted by ANGOs and DRCCs. The purpose of these independent reviews was to highlight the importance of these DFAT policy priorities (articulated in the Investment Design Document) and encourage partners to ensure that their projects are actively working towards them. ANGOs were given the opportunity to respond to the feedback provided by the reviewers and incorporate changes into their reporting as appropriate.

# RESULTS AGAINST INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES

In Year 1 of Phase 2, Disaster READY partners engaged 9,416 individuals in disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation activities across Fiji, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste and Vanuatu. Of these 9,416 participants, 45.24 percent (4,260) were female and 55.63 percent (5,144) were male. A very small percentage (0.13) of participants identified as another gender.

Figure 1. Participants by country and gender

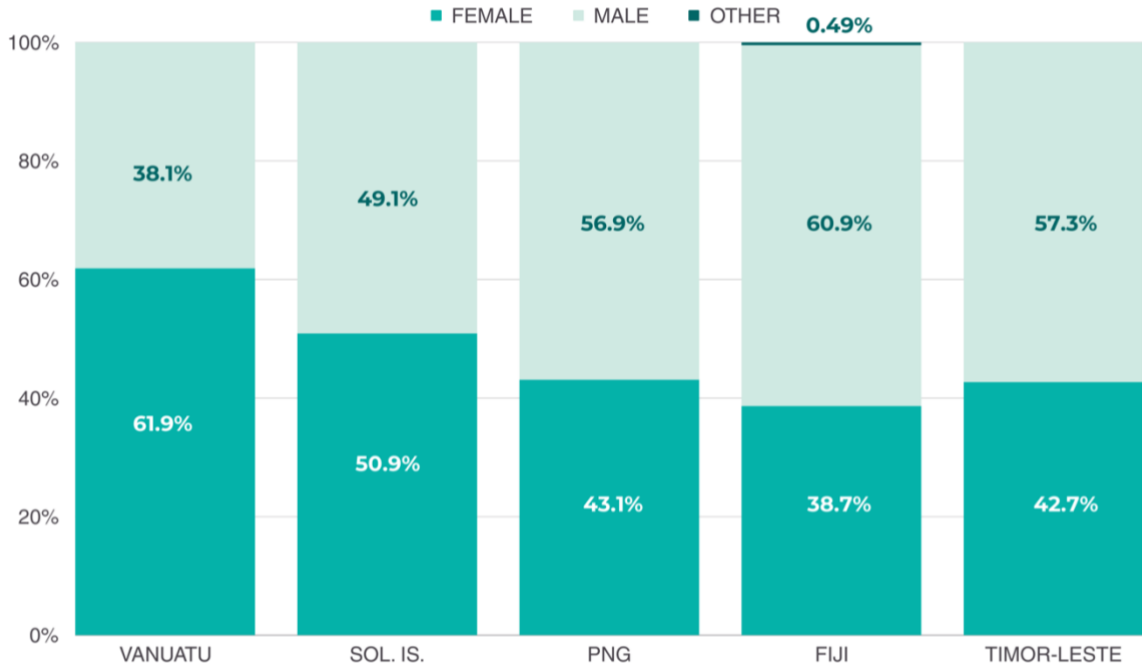
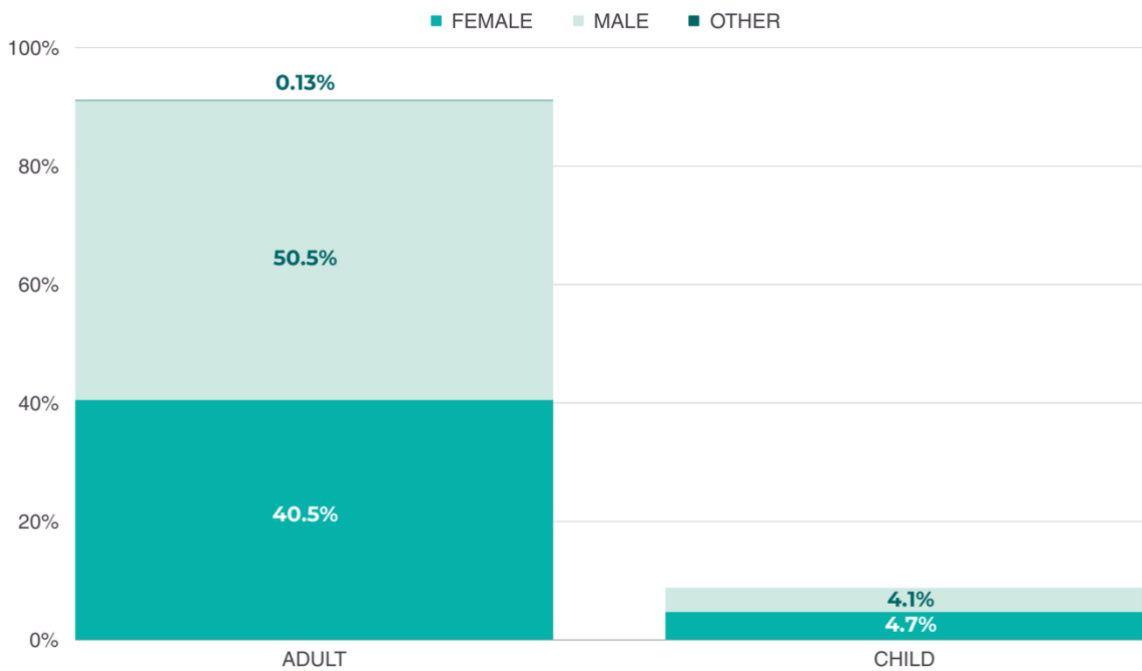


Figure 2. Participants by age and gender



### **Intermediate Outcome 1.1: Communities (especially vulnerable groups) plan and implement effective, inclusive, and integrated disaster preparedness and climate change adaptation activities.**

**Partners assisted local communities to establish 117 Community Disaster Management Committees (CDMCs).** The inclusion of vulnerable community members in disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change adaptation (CCA) planning, management and response is a key component of Disaster READY. Partners were asked to indicate how many CDMCs were formed with equal gender representation and participation by people with disabilities. They were also asked to indicate how many DRR/CCA action plans contained activities to address the specific needs of women and girls, people with disabilities and people of diverse sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC). In total, 50 percent (59) of CDMCs were formed with equal gender representation and 33 percent (39) were formed with participation by people with disabilities. 74 percent (58) of DRR/CCA action plans contained activities to address the specific needs of women and girls, 53 percent the needs of people with disabilities and five percent the needs of diverse SOGIESC peoples. Across the Disaster READY countries, there is evidence of efforts to include women and girls and people with disabilities in partner's activities and advocacy but the needs of the SOGIESC community are yet to be identified and addressed. In Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, homosexuality is illegal. This undoubtedly limits partners' ability to safely identify SOGIESC participants in Disaster READY activities in these countries. To date, Fiji is the only country to have made any progress on SOGIESC inclusion. Further information is available in the Inclusion section below.

**The training of local community members has resulted in greater understanding of disaster resilience and the promotion of gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI) in DRR/CCA.** In addition to establishing CDMCs and DRR/CCA action plans, partners conducted numerous trainings with local communities on a wide range of topics. In Fiji, CAN DO trained over 270 volunteers (208 women, 62 men and seven SOGIESC) in DRR/CCA. Oxfam in Fiji supported 17 rural fisher women from eight communities across Rewa, Tailevu and Ra provinces to participate in a training of trainers (ToT) workshop focussing on strengthening resilience and disaster risk reduction approaches affecting their livelihoods. Activities included identifying local adaptation and mitigation activities to incorporate into their community level disaster preparedness and response approaches.

In the Solomon Islands, CAN DO completed training with 18 volunteers across three communities on evacuation centre management, preventing sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (PSEAH), child protection and safeguarding. This training complemented the work CAN DO did to map and assess evacuation centres using Safe n Redi. As a result of this mapping, CAN DO and evacuation centre staff have identified opportunities to retrofit evacuation centres to increase their suitability, safety and accessibility during a disaster. For example, the mapping found that just one percent of evacuation centres have ramp access, only five percent have lockable toilets, and none (0 percent) have specifically allocated disabled toilets. The inclusion of people with disabilities varies between Disaster READY countries, which is further detailed in the Inclusion section below.

In Vanuatu, 19 communities across four provinces were provided with training to embed disaster management and resilience into everyday life. This included training on the National Disaster Management Office's (NDMO) community-based disaster response management (CBDRM) Handbook, community leadership, child safeguarding, using the Safe n Redi app, finding your voice (FYV), male reflection dialogues (MRDs) and socio-economic empowerment design (SEED) for community gender and disability sensitisation. The FYV and MRD trainings were both organised by CARE. The MRDs aimed to increase understanding about the impact of gender inequality on individuals, families and communities and the importance of women and people with disability's voice and participation. A male participant from East Tanna reflected on the usefulness of the training:

*"This training is very good because it will help the men to change their mindset to share responsibilities with women. Also, the upcoming generation need to know and understand this [so] that they would make the change in the future."*

**Partners supported local communities to increase resilience with a series of climate change adaptation focused activities.** This included supporting 78 communities to develop DRR and CCA action plans, of which 32 (41 percent) commenced implementation.

In the Solomon Islands, Save the Children and World Vision assisted 11 communities to identify areas of disaster vulnerability and opportunities for improvement through vulnerability assessments. Out of the seven communities (141 men, 132 women and 6 people with disabilities) that participated in the assessment and training with World Vision, 100 percent developed hazard maps. Out of the 20 people that participated in vulnerability assessments and CBDRM training run by Save the Children, most survey respondents indicated an increase in knowledge and understanding of CBDRM tools.

Partners in Timor-Leste introduced and trained community members using the Climate Vulnerability and Capacity Analysis (CVCA) tool. This training reached 340 community members (including 10 people with a disability) in Viqueque municipality and five CDMCs. In addition, the Community Owned Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment training reached 22 facilitators (including 10 youth, 8 CDMC members, and 4 partners staff) in Bobonaro municipality.

In Papua New Guinea (PNG), five communities in the Eastern Highlands Province (Anengu, Miruma, Kwongi 2, Koningi and Komongu) engaged in crop diversification as a food security initiative. This initiative involved more than 150 families and established seed gardens to produce seeds for ongoing cultivation and sharing with other community members. CSO Baptiste Union PNG (BUPNG) completed the installation of two rainwater tanks at the church in the Wangumali community in the Baiyer district of Western Highlands Province. This activity was originally planned for Year 3, but BUPNG brought the activity forward due to the drought affecting the highland region. Labourers from the community were engaged for the water tank installation, allowing more than 1,000 people in the community to easily access water. Women who previously walked between 20-30 minutes to fetch water now have easy access to water close to their houses, improving gender equality outcomes and reducing risks of gender-based violence.

**Intermediate Outcome 1.2:** Local civil society actors (NGOs, CBOs, OPDs, churches, informal groups) have improved institutional and technical capacity to fulfil their role in effective disaster preparedness and climate change adaptation.

**Disaster READY partners supported 67 civil society organisations across the five countries, resulting in improved technical and organisational capacity.** This has involved a range of activities including undertaking joint capacity assessments, developing support plans and then implementing these with a series of strategic trainings and workshops. The support aims to increase the capacity of these partner organisations so that they can lead on DRR/CCA more efficiently and effectively in their local communities.

In Fiji, Oxfam partners with Rise Beyond the Reef (RBTR) and Women in Fisheries Network (WiFN). In Year 1, they supported both organisations with training on child protection, PSEAH, youth safeguarding, SOGIESC, and digital safeguarding.

In PNG, CARE provided the women-led civil society organisation (CSO) 'Touching the Untouchables', and the PNG Assembly of Disabled Persons (PNGADP) with gender in emergency training. CARE also supported an additional five CSOs with disaster risk management training. As a result of attending this training, one of the CSOs (Goroka District WASH Agency) reported that they were able to put new knowledge and skills into action by conducting a CVCA process in Lapegu Ward. This process helped the community to develop action plans to mitigate risks associated with natural disasters.

In Vanuatu, CAN DO supported the Vanuatu Christian Council (VCC) member churches with a series of trainings to 14 communities on psychosocial support (PSS), emergency coordination and disaster response.

**Partners worked with CSOs to encourage the adoption of international humanitarian standards.** Oxfam in Vanuatu engaged a consultancy to provide training of trainers on Sphere Humanitarian Inclusion Standards with 24 staff and local partners. Participants reported that after the training they were more confident to facilitate training to government representatives and community leaders to improve inclusion in disaster planning and to reduce physical barriers for people with disabilities. In addition, participants from local organisations committed to cascade some of the training, particularly on finance management and safeguarding, to other office staff. The below quote from World Vision's implementing partner reflects their commitment to share the key training:

*"Thank you, World Vision, for partnering with us as a local implementing partner. Through this finance training we are aware of how to comply with the finance procedures and to avoid fraud. We are also aware about safeguarding that helps our staff to behave better towards the community. We will adopt this safeguarding as mandatory for our staff not only for the AHP project but also in other projects."*

The Fiji Council of Social Services (FCOSS), in collaboration with ChildFund Australia, facilitated the inclusion of AHP partners in workshops, national clusters, programs and policy discourse on the Fiji Humanitarian Code of Conduct for CSOs. They worked with AHP partners to endorse the Code and contingency plan. As a result, 11 FCOSS DRR sub-committees selected focal points in member communities. In Year 2, AHP partners will engage with FCOSS in a follow-up visit to the DRR sub-committees to help with the development of annual plans and complete community engagement activities. In addition, partners in Fiji agreed to participate in FCOSS' Contextualised Localisation Framework pilot, which will enable partners to test and measure localisation with the FCOSS's ongoing support and guidance.

**Intermediate Outcome 1.3:** National and Sub-national governments are supported to lead effective, inclusive and coordinated disaster preparedness, climate change adaptation and response activities.

**Disaster READY partners held 23 collaboration and coordination activities and events on DRR/CCA to support national and sub-national governments.** Partners also reported influencing three policy and/or practice changes (one in Timor-Leste and two in Vanuatu) made by government or other humanitarian actors.

Partners supported national governments to promote coordinated and inclusive disaster preparedness through their NDMOs and other agencies:

- In Fiji, CARE delivered 'Inclusion in Emergency Operations Centre' training to the Eastern Division Emergency Operation Centre to improve the knowledge of key personnel from the NDMO, Ministry of Fisheries, Ministry of Rural, Maritime and Disaster Management and the Ministry of Women, Poverty and Social Protection on community preparedness and response priorities.
- CAN DO presented and trained NDMOs in Fiji and Vanuatu on the use of the Safe N Redi Geospatial App to access geospatial data on church facilities as evacuation centres. The NDMO in Vanuatu utilised the app for the first time during Tropical Cyclone (TC) Judy and Kevin in March 2023.
- In Timor-Leste, Oxfam supported the Civil Protection Authority with Sphere and Humanitarian Inclusion Standards (HIS) training for 15 staff members from 10 municipalities. Participants reported that they felt better able to understand and incorporate international humanitarian standards into their work and to prevent discrimination in disaster planning after the training.
- The Solomon Islands DRCC began the process of establishing a Disaster READY partner agreement with the Ministry of Environment and other key government stakeholders. The DRCC has also engaged with the NDMO for joint training on the revised CBDRM manual.

Sub-national governments were also the focus of Disaster READY coordination activities and events. As a result:

- Two sub-national governments (Eastern Highlands Province and the Autonomous Region of Bougainville) in Papua New Guinea have committed to supporting DRR/CCA action plans developed by Disaster READY implementing partners.
- Partners have seconded staff members into Provincial and Area Council (AC) Governments across Disaster READY countries. For example, in Santo and Ambae (Vanuatu), these staff members conducted CBDRM and Pacific Information Management System training for all AC administrators and secretaries in Sanma province.
- Partners have supported both national and sub-national levels of Government on cash and voucher preparedness. Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and PNG are all working to support Governments with systems that would enable the use of cash and vouchers in future humanitarian responses.

**Intermediate Outcome 2.3:** Disaster READY has increased local leadership, coordination and capacity for responses.

Partners provided technical training that enhanced the capacity of civil society actors to respond to disasters like Tropical Cyclones Judy and Kevin in Vanuatu. In the immediate aftermath of the cyclones, partners were approved to pivot existing Disaster READY funds for early response activities such as supporting assessments and distribution or pre-positioned supplies. Partners subsequently utilised the DRCC mechanism and activation guidelines created and funded through Disaster READY to develop and deliver a joint response. For example, CAN DO supported the VCC member churches with a series of trainings to 14 communities on PSS, emergency coordination, and disaster response. The VCC demonstrated improved technical capacity for disaster preparedness and response during the tropical cyclone Judy and Kevin disaster, coordinating across the church network in the lead up to the cyclones, engaging effectively in clusters and working with partners during and post-disaster; providing lifesaving support to displaced families housed in evacuation centers in Port Vila, and engaging in disaster response in North Efate communities.

Partners supported government to provide an effective and coordinated response to the Mount Bagana eruption. CARE’s support to the Bougainville Disaster and Emergency Directorate (BDED) was highly important for the Autonomous Bougainville Government’s response to the Mount Bagana eruption. CARE completed mapping of civil society and non-government organisations, which allowed the government to identify which organisations were best placed to provide support. As a result, CARE was engaged to support rapid needs assessments and rapid gender analysis and coordination, Plan International was engaged for water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) support, and Save the Children assisted with market impact assessments.

## Inclusion

Inclusion is a cross cutting theme that Disaster READY partners are required to mainstream across all activities and projects. The Australian Humanitarian Partnership Support Unit (AHPSU) contracted two advisors to complete independent reviews of each country’s progress towards gender equality and disability inclusion. This section collates data from core indicators, activity reporting by partners and the feedback of the disability inclusion and gender equality advisors. The tables below provide an overview of country progress towards core indicators focussed on metrics of inclusion.

Table 1. Results against Disaster READY core inclusion indicators by country

Core indicator	Definition	Fiji	Papua New Guinea	Solomon Islands	Vanuatu	Timor-Leste
C1	No. of CDMC formed	33	21	22	16	25
D1	No. of communities that have developed DRR/CCA action plans	2	10	8	18	40
D2	No. of communities implementing activities from their DRR/CCA action plans	0	10	2	7	13
E1	No. of CDMCs formed with equal gender representation	31	5	9	3	11
E2	No. of DRR/CCA actions plans that address the specific needs of women and girls	12	11	8	0	27
E3	No. of CDMCs formed with participation by people with disabilities	4	10	3	3	19
E4	No. of DRR/CCA action plans that address the specific needs of people with disabilities	4	10	2	0	25
E5	No. of DRR/CCA action plans that address the specific needs of diverse SOGIESC peoples	4	0	0	0	0



Table 2. Disaster READY participants by ability and country (%)

Country	Participants with a disability	Participants without a disability
Fiji	1.7%	98.3%
Papua New Guinea	1.7%	98.3%
Solomon Islands	2.8%	97.2%
Timor-Leste	6.0%	94.0%
Vanuatu	10.2%	89.8%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>4.2%</b>	<b>95.8%</b>

As demonstrated in the tables above, progress towards gender equality and disability inclusion in Disaster READY varies from country to country. All countries are working with OPDs to strengthen their technical and institutional capacity in DRR/CCA and increase engagement with **people with disabilities** in Disaster READY communities.

Partners have provided support to OPDs and people with disabilities in several ways, including:

- Establishing partnership agreements with OPDs.
- Providing funding for core roles and overhead costs at OPDs.
- Providing mentoring for core roles at OPDs.
- Training community and government counterparts on disability inclusion.
- Training OPDs in child safeguarding and protection, narrative and financial reporting and donor compliance.
- Providing OPDs with briefings on CBDRM handbooks.
- The development of hazard maps in conjunction with people with disabilities.
- Training on Integrated Vulnerability Assessment tools.
- Adoption of the Washington Group Short Set of Questions on disability.

Vanuatu and Timor-Leste have made considerable progress towards disability inclusion, which is reflected in their participation and core indicator data respectively.

**Gender equality** is another cross-cutting issue within Disaster READY. Gender equality is prioritised through the inclusion of women and girls in core activities, like membership on CDMCs and participation in training. In Year 1, partners have supported gender equality through:

- Climate resilient agriculture/adaptive farming, community-based disaster risk reduction, gender and social inclusion, women’s leadership, gender-based violence and referral system training.
- Promoting female leadership in Disaster READY communities.
- Enshrining inclusion in DRR/CCA action plans.
- Climate vulnerability and capacity analysis (to ensure the needs of women and girls were reflected in community preparedness work).
- Prioritising gender balance on DRCCs and encouraging membership by women’s rights groups (such as FOKUPERS in Timor-Leste).

While Fiji has recorded the lowest levels of female participation (39 percent) across Disaster READY, they have some of the best results in terms of progress towards core indicators. Almost all (93 percent) CDMCs in Fiji have been formed with equal gender representation (E1). On the other hand, while Vanuatu has the highest levels of female participation (60 percent), they have recorded the lowest result against core indicator E1.

Feedback from the disability inclusion and gender equality reviewers praised the efforts made by partners in Vanuatu. There is evidence of partners’ efforts to incorporate gender equality and disability inclusion into activities, trainings and reporting in Vanuatu. In Timor-Leste, disability inclusion was also a strength. The reviewers reflected that across the other Disaster READY countries more focus on disability inclusion and gender equality is required in Year 2.

Across all Disaster READY countries, the inclusion of persons with diverse SOGIESC has been a significant challenge. This will become a focus area in future years.

## Localisation

Year 1 of Disaster READY Phase 2 included a country-led ‘design refresh’. This process was driven at the country level, with implementing partners coming together with stakeholders including government to develop a shared barrier analysis and a coordinated locally led approach to the development of project plans. During the refresh process, each DRCC developed a country level Localisation Plan that outlined collective goals and measurement approaches to progress towards locally led humanitarian action. The AHP adopted the Pacific Islands Association for Non-Governmental Organisations and Humanitarian Advisory Group’s localisation framework. The framework consists of seven core components for measuring progress on localisation in a holistic way. These are outlined in the table below, with accompanying notes on some high-level progress for the program.

Table 3. Progress towards localisation

Component	Description	Disaster READY Year 1 Progress
Partnerships	Equitable and complementary partnerships between local, national and international actors.	<p>All five DRCCs began or completed the process of developing Country Level Partnership Agreements which outline shared principles and objectives for all implementing partners.</p> <p>The Vanuatu DRCC put this into practice by activating the operating procedures outlined in their partnership agreement to develop and begin implementation of a joint AHP response proposal for TC Judy/Kevin.</p>
Leadership	National actors define and lead on humanitarian action.	Partners supported the establishment of a total of 117 CDMCs. These are a key vehicle for local leadership and to develop preparedness plans based around community priorities.
Coordination and complementarity	Application of and respect for commonly agreed approaches to ‘as local as possible and as international as necessary’.	<p>Each country has established a Country Committee as a mechanism for partners to coordinate with each other and key national stakeholders. Partners have also undertaken steps to make these DRCC entities more localised including moving towards national staff members and including local CSO partners.</p> <p>All five Disaster READY countries undertook a locally led design refresh. This culminated in creation of country plans that articulate a collective barrier analysis and approaches to contribute towards common objectives.</p> <p>All five DRCC have developed localisation plans that outline collective and commonly agreed objectives and targets for Disaster READY in their respective countries.</p>

<p><b>Participation</b></p>	<p>Communities lead and participate in preparedness and humanitarian response.</p>	<p>In Year 1 the program reached a total of 9,416 direct participants. Partners have supported local communities to develop 78 DRR/CCA plans. These plans outline the priority preparedness activities to be implemented by communities, with ongoing support provided by Disaster READY partners.</p>
<p><b>Policy influence and advocacy</b></p>	<p>Humanitarian action reflects the priorities of affected communities and national actors.</p>	<p>Disaster READY partners included in three government policy dialogues.  Disaster READY partners held 23 collaboration and coordination activities and events on DRR/CCA to support national and sub-national government.</p>
<p><b>Capacity</b></p>	<p>Local and national organisations are able to respond effectively and efficiently, have targeted and relevant support from international actors.</p>	<p>Partners supported 67 CSOs across the program with a range of organisational and technical capacity support.</p>
<p><b>Funding</b></p>	<p>Increased number of national and local organisations describing financial independence that allows them to respond more efficiently.</p>	<p>24 percent of funding provided to local partners.</p>

## Coordination and Learning

Each DRCC receives funding from the program to recruit specialists in program coordination, monitoring, evaluation and learning, communications and disability inclusion. DRCCs also have a dedicated budget for joint learning activities with partners across their respective countries.

Across all five countries, partners developed country level Partnership Agreements. These Agreements outline the shared principles and objectives as well as the processes for developing collaborative proposals for AHP activations. This was put into use in Vanuatu, where partners put together a collaborative joint proposal in response to TC Judy/Kevin. Some countries have completed these agreements, while others plan to have them finalised in Year 2.

In Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, PNG and Vanuatu the DRCCs have leveraged Partnership Agreements to successfully submit joint proposals for an Anticipatory Action (AA) pilot. The pilot rollout, beginning in early 2024, will be phased with Vanuatu and Timor-Leste the first of the Disaster READY countries to implement AA programming.

In PNG, Disaster READY proved to be a useful modality to manage additional bilateral funding for drought preparedness activities including due to *El Nino* impacts.

## GOING FORWARD

With foundational activities in Year 1 complete, partners will seek to increase levels of implementation in line with their workplans. For DRCCs, Learning Agendas will play a key role in supporting partners' learning and movement towards best practice. Moving from output to outcome focussed reporting, with emphasis on capturing qualitative and quantitative data that conveys the impact of Disaster READY, is also a key area for future improvement.



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