

AHP Disaster READY

DISASTER READY ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23

Vanuatu



Image: Oxfam



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WHERE WE WORK IN VANUATU*



◆ CARE

◆ CAN DO

◆ Oxfam

◆ Plan

◆ Save the Children

◆ World Vision

* Based on data provided by AHP Partners in Year 1 Phase 2 Disaster READY Project Plan Annual Reports

INTRODUCTION

Vanuatu

Disaster READY aims to improve preparedness, resilience, and the ability to respond to the impacts of natural disasters and climate change in Vanuatu. The program supports communities, civil society organisations (CSOs) and government. Disaster READY emphasises the inclusion of women and girls, people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups as well as the localisation of program design, implementation, and monitoring. Disaster READY in Vanuatu is being implemented by six lead agencies: Plan International, Oxfam, CAN DO, Save the Children, World Vision and CARE who form the Disaster READY Country Committee (DRCC). These non-governmental organisations (NGOs) work in partnership with 12 local CSOs and/or faith-based organisations.

Year 1 of Phase 2 of Disaster READY (July 2022-June 2023) included completion of Disaster READY Phase 1 (2017-2022) activities and associated reporting. Partners also completed the country and project-level design process to support work that will be undertaken from 2022-2026. This involved a country led and comprehensive redesign of Disaster READY projects, country level plan and associated deliverables including a localisation plan and development of a collective learning agenda.

Simultaneously, Disaster READY partners commenced implementation of

Phase 2. All projects and country-level plans are designed to support the achievement of three overarching intermediate outcomes:

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

Intermediate Outcome 1.2: Local Civil Society actors — Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), Community Based Organisations (CBOs), Organisations of People with Disabilities (OPDs), churches, and informal groups — have improved institutional and technical capacity to fulfil their role in effective disaster preparedness and CCA.

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

A summary of early results against the intermediate outcomes is outlined in the sections below. This report also outlines initiatives and results against the key cross cutting themes of the program: inclusion, localisation and coordination.

CONTEXTUAL OVERVIEW

The 2021 World Risk Index lists Vanuatu as the country with the highest disaster risk in the world. Communities in Vanuatu are at risk of volcanic eruptions, cyclones, and earthquakes, as well as drought and flooding. With a population of more than 307,000 people, Vanuatu spans more than 80 islands, most of them vulnerable to climate change-induced hazards such as sea-level rise, coastal erosion, and storm surges. Cyclones and storms across the region are predicted to become more intense in a warming climate.

In February and March 2023, Vanuatu was impacted by twin tropical cyclones (TC) Judy and Kevin. While this did cause partners to pause some of their Disaster READY activities, it also led to an Australian Humanitarian Partnership (AHP) response that leveraged the community and government partnerships developed through the program. This report outlines some key examples of how partners leveraged their preparedness work through Disaster READY to improve the responses.

YEAR ONE HIGHLIGHTS

- Partners have supported communities to establish 16 Community Disaster and Climate Change Committees (CDCCCs) in Vanuatu.
- Partners provided a total of 19 trainings across four provinces to communities to embed disaster management and resilience into their everyday practice.
- Partners in Vanuatu have supported seven local civil society actors with organisational and technical training.
- Partners provided technical training that enhanced the capacity of civil society actors to respond to TC Judy and Kevin.
- Partners are working closely with the NDMO in Vanuatu and local councils, including leveraging these relationships to enhance and quickly respond to TC Judy and Kevin.



FROM PREPAREDNESS TO PRACTICE

Disaster READY supports community committees to prepare for disasters and mitigate the impacts of climate change. In April 2023, the Erangorango Community Disaster and Climate Change Committee (CDCCC) arranged for community members to harvest crops from their gardens to donate to another community that was impacted by Tropical Cyclones Judy and Kevin. This community-led initiative was done as part of the Erangorango's disaster response plan that was activated following the cyclones.

"We wanted to put into action what we learned from the disaster preparedness trainings Oxfam has been giving us." Said Pastor Jimmy Joshua, chairman of the committee. "We wanted to set an example of how resilient we can be as a CDCCC and as a community by helping our fellow CDCCC members at Tamanu." Following the donation of local food crops to Tamanu, the NDMO supplied community members of Erangorango with relief food items to help respond to the immediate needs of families there.



RESULTS AGAINST INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES

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

Partners have achieved early progress in community level preparedness through establishing disaster management committees and providing a range of associated support. In Year 1, partners supported communities to establish 16 CDCCCs and 18 disaster risk reduction (DRR) and CCA action plans. Partners completed both foundational activities (community profiling, baselines, engagement) and early implementation of community-based disaster risk management activities. These activities support communities to be better prepared and resilient to the impacts of natural disasters which was demonstrated when Vanuatu was impacted by the twin tropical cyclones of Judy and Kevin.

Partners provided a total of 19 trainings across four provinces to communities to embed disaster management and resilience into their everyday practice. This included training to support:

- The National Disaster Management Office's (NDMO) community-based disaster risk management (CBDRM) handbook.

- Community leadership, child safeguarding, and using the Safe n Redi app (developed by CAN DO partners).
- Finding your voice (FYD), male reflection dialogues (MRDs) and socio-economic empowerment design (SEED) for community gender and disability sensitisation. 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 a disability's voice and participation.
- Early warning and preparedness for 60 participants from the Women I Tok Tok Tugeta (WITTT network) including 10 from the disability inclusion group WITT Sunshine. This training strengthened their capacity to rollout tools for preparedness in their communities.

Further information is available in the Inclusion section on pages 16 and 17.

*The highest rate of all Disaster READY countries.



1,188 people reached



62 per cent were women and girls



10 per cent were people with disabilities*



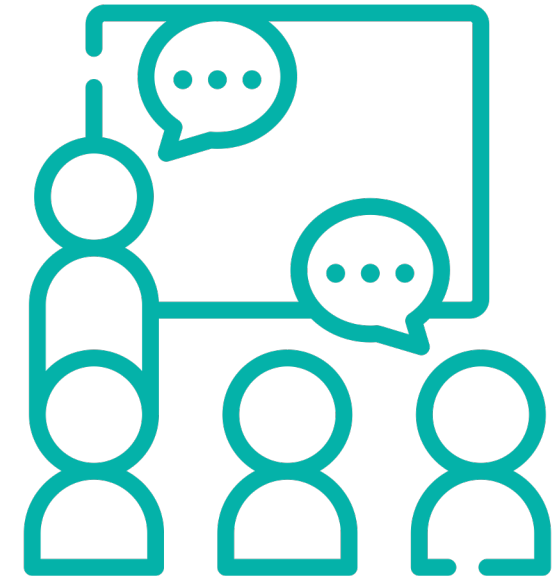
13 per cent were children

Intermediate Outcome 1.2: Local civil society actors non-government organisations (NGOs), community-based organisations (CBOs), organisations of 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.

Partners are championing disability inclusion by supporting local CSOs Vanuatu Society for People with a Disability (VSPD) and Vanuatu Disability Promotion and Advocacy Association (VDPA) to develop stronger organisational structures, policies and procedures. Save the Children provided training to the VSDP and VDPA on child safeguarding and protection, narrative and financial reporting, and donor compliance. This has resulted in stronger organisational structures, policies, and procedures related to disaster management and enhanced practical skills and resources for effective disaster response. The collaboration has also ensured the inclusion of people with disabilities in the capacity-building efforts, promoting a more inclusive and equitable approach to disaster management within the community. This approach has supported strong engagement of people with disability across the program, the highest of all the Disaster READY target countries. CARE is providing technical capacity development in community-based disaster risk

management (CBDRM) for VSPD. CARE has also provided funding and mentoring support for core roles and support costs within VSPD to strengthen identified organisational priorities.

Partners provided technical training that enhanced the capacity of civil society actors to respond to disasters including during TC Judy and Kevin. CAN DO supported the Vanuatu Christian Council (VCC) member churches with a series of trainings on psychosocial support (PSS), emergency coordination and disaster response. The VCC demonstrated improved technical capacity for disaster preparedness and response during the TC Judy and Kevin disaster response, coordinating across the church network in the lead up to the cyclones, engaging effectively in clusters and working with partners during and post-disaster interventions, providing lifesaving support to displaced families housed in evacuation centres in Port Vila, and engaging in disaster response activities in North Efate communities.



SEVEN

Civil Society Organisations increased technical or organisational capacity.

LEARNING WITH COMMUNITIES

This year, Disaster READY partners have jumped at opportunities to further increase awareness about preparedness and CCA. With the support from the NDMO, on the International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction, CARE in Vanuatu hosted a booth in Eton Village to provide communities with the information and tools needed to prepare for a disaster.



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.

Partners are supporting national and sub-national government through a variety of mechanisms.

Support to national level government:

- Partners have seconded staff into the NDMO to support and advocate for the coordination between national government, Area Council (AC) offices, and CDCCCs;
- CAN DO has presented and trained NDMO on the use of Safe n Redi Geospatial App that maps church facilities for use as evacuation centres. This was put into use during TC Judy and Kevin with the support of CAN DO with NDMO accessing and utilising the data through the app; and
- Oxfam and Save the Children are supporting cash preparedness with the government at national level.

Support to sub-national government:

- ActionAid worked with AC administrators and secretaries including women leaders and chiefs, as well as CDCCCs in the TC Judy and Kevin response and had WITTT community mobilisers join the Emergency Operation Centre linking national response with the community level. This led to more efficient exchange of assessment information;

- Partners have seconded staff members to ACs in Santo and Ambae and conducted CBDRM and Pacific Information Management System (PACSIMS) training for all AC administrators and secretaries in Sanma province; and
- Partners developed a community profiling tool and tested its use at AC and provincial level for preparedness, climate change and response work. The profile tool has been designed to support more targeted community-level interventions by having a better understanding of community vulnerabilities.

Partners leveraged relationships with national and sub-national government to enhance and quickly respond to TC Judy and Kevin. CARE seconded a communications advisor to support the Communication and Community Engagement (CCE) Sub-Cluster's national coordinator, providing critical support in the response through creation of key messaging for the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) and providing updates on the disaster response via the NDMO Facebook page and the media. CARE supported the CCE Sub-Cluster to create an online dashboard that synthesised feedback and provide real-time information to inform the response by NDMO and partner organisations. The dashboard is now available for future emergencies.



2

collaboration and coordination activities or events on DRR/CCA were held to support national and sub-national government in Vanuatu

GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIPS

As part of his tour of Vanuatu, the Hon. Pat Conroy, the Australian Government's Minister for International Development and the Pacific, visited a school where he heard stories about the response to Tropical Cyclones Judy and Kevin. The minister met with chiefs, community representatives, and Disaster READY partners, including Oxfam.

A tropical landscape featuring several tall palm trees with reddish-brown trunks leaning against a dense green forest. The sky is a clear, vibrant blue with a few wispy clouds near the horizon. The palm trees are the central focus, their fronds reaching towards the top of the frame. The forest below is lush and green, with various types of trees and vegetation. The overall scene is bright and sunny, suggesting a warm, tropical environment.

CROSS CUTTING ISSUES



INCLUSIVE RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

Disaster prone countries like Vanuatu should recognise the importance of being inclusive during the preparedness, response and recovery of a disaster. This is to ensure people living with disability and other vulnerable groups are provided with all necessary accommodation and are not overlooked. Therefore, AHP Vanuatu is focused on providing training sessions to ensure its partners are incorporating inclusivity into their Disaster READY activities.

The first training session was facilitated by Vanuatu Disability Promotion Advocacy. The two-day workshop was centred around United Nation Convention on the Rights of People with Disability (UNCRPD) and how to address disability inclusion needs during preparedness, response and recovery of a disaster.

Image: Save the Children

INCLUSION

Inclusion is a critical component mainstreamed across all Disaster READY partner projects and activities. In Year 1, progress towards inclusion across all activities has been modest with partners laying foundations for improved practices going forward. Two independent technical advisors have completed independent reviews of each of the Vanuatu projects and provided detailed recommendations for each partner to progress towards gender equality and disability inclusion.

Encouragingly, in Year 1, 62 percent (735) of participants were female and 10 percent (121) were people with disabilities.

At the community level, partners supported women leadership within the key disaster preparedness mechanisms. For example, Save the Children focused on promoting female leadership roles within the CDCCCs through Community-based Disaster Risk Reduction (CBDRR) training. In the Port-Olry community, six females now hold leadership positions, and in the Bombua community, one female assumed a leadership role.

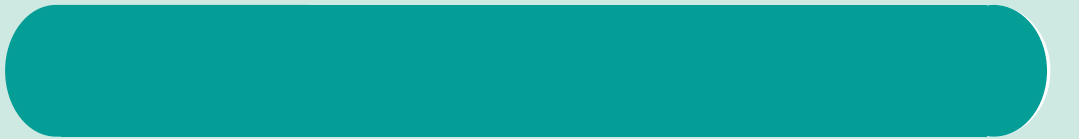
100%

of DRR/CCA action plans address the specific needs of people with disabilities



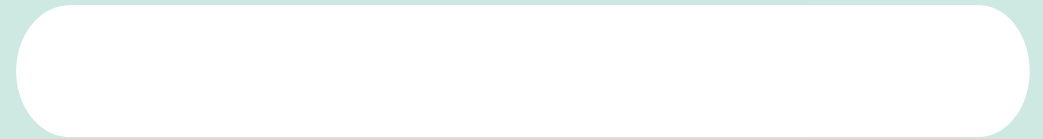
100%

of DRR/CCA actions plans address the specific needs of women and girls



0%

of DRR/CCA action plans address the specific needs of diverse SOGIESC peoples



INCLUSION

Partners have also enshrined inclusion into the development of community disaster plans. For example, Save the Children supported Sawai community to develop a plan that included disability accessible evacuation routes and communication systems.

ActionAid continued support to the WITTT and the WITTT Sunshine group. The project seeks to strengthen localised diverse women's leadership through support for disaster risk management and protection programming to benefit its members and their communities. The project also supports resilience and women's economic empowerment through livelihoods and climate resilient agriculture training. WITTT Sunshine was established to specifically support women with disabilities from within the network with a similar package of support related to improving leadership and meaningful participation of people with disability in disaster risk management. As a result of this work, participants have observed women with disabilities 'move out from their comfort zone to speak for themselves'.

WITTT Sunshine undertook pre-disaster mapping of 100 people with disabilities in Eton. Mapping included identifying types of disability, living environments, the skills they have, the food they eat, identification of any non-communicable diseases, income sources and support needs in event of a cyclone. This approach strengthens community disaster management planning

processes and bring the specific needs of women with disability to the forefront.

The DRCC has also supported inclusion outcomes. Some key examples include:

- In Year 1, 100% of the DRCC are women including the Disaster READY Coordinator.
- The DRCC has finalised a GEDSI Action Plan, with implementation being a focus for Year 2.
- The DRCC continues to partner with VDPA to fund a dedicated Disability Officer to work with all partners to improve their approaches to disability inclusion across their respective projects. VSPD and VDPA will roll out a Disability Inclusion Coordinated Workplan for partners in Vanuatu in Year 2.

Across all Disaster READY countries, including Vanuatu, the inclusion of persons with diverse sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) has been a significant challenge. For example, the community DRR/CCA action plans developed currently do not include specific actions to address the needs of diverse SOGIESC peoples. This will become a focus area in future years.

INVESTING IN WOMEN LEADERSHIP

Women's voices must be heard when it comes to decisions around disaster preparedness. In East Tanna, CARE hosted a Foundational Leadership workshop as part of the Disaster READY program, for communities impacted by volcanic ash fall following the eruption Mount Yasur. CARE reported that the sessions motivated women to take up leadership roles, and build their skills and confidence to participate in the development of disaster response and recovery plans.

The workshop was specifically for members of Community Disaster Climate Change Committees, who learned about the qualities of a good leader. "This leadership workshop has supported community leaders with skills to lead and ensure communities are disaster ready," said Malia, a workshop participant. "The types of power we experience affect the way we work with others. We can use this power positively to involve community members including youth, women and people with disabilities to ensure their needs are not left out in disaster plans."



Image: CARE

Component	Description	Progress
Partnerships	Equitable and complementary partnerships between local, national and international actors.	Disaster READY partners have a country-led Partnership Agreement in place (See Coordination and Learning section). Oxfam co-designs monitoring tools and mechanisms with key local partners.
Leadership	National actors define and lead on humanitarian action.	Partners supported the establishment of 16 CDCCCs. These mechanisms emphasise local leadership and support local priorities for community preparedness and resilience. DRCC shifted to National staff member in the coordinator position who now plays a key role of leadership for the Disaster READY and AHP program more broadly.
Coordination and complementarity	Application of and respect for commonly agreed approaches to 'as local as possible and as international as necessary'.	Partners have fostered collaboration and coordination between communities and provincial governments through exposing women's networks to provincial humanitarian actors' response systems.
Participation	Communities lead and participate in humanitarian response.	Partners supported the establishment of 16 CDCCCs with representatives of vulnerable groups and assisted in developing inclusive community preparedness plans, training CDCCCs to understand their roles and responsibilities.
Policy influence and advocacy	Humanitarian action reflects the priorities of affected communities and national actors.	Partners collaborated, engaged and supported key agencies such as NDMO, PEOC and Area Councils / Administrators to continue localising response work and strengthening coordination.
Capacity	Local and national organisations are able to respond effectively and efficiently, have targeted and relevant support from international actors.	Seven CSO partners have been supported with technical and/or organisational capacity building.
Funding	Increased number of national and local organisations describing financial independence that allows them to respond more efficiently.	17 per cent of expenditure went to national or local organisations.

LOCALISATION

Year 1 of Phase 2 of Disaster READY included partners undertaking 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 creating their project plans. This process culminated in the development of the Vanuatu Disaster READY Country Plan.

During the refresh process, the DRCC developed a Vanuatu Localisation Plan that outlined collective goals and measurement approaches to progress towards locally led humanitarian action. Partners developed these and integrated their approaches with the Disaster READY intermediate outcomes and use of tools from the Pacific Islands Association for Non-Government Organisations/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 (left), with accompanying notes on country-level progress.

PREPAREDNESS DRIVING RESPONSE



Underpinning all three of the intermediate outcomes outlined is the level to which Disaster READY has improved locally led responses. This was demonstrated through the AHP response work to TC Judy and Kevin.

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.

During the response itself, for the first time the DRCC Coordinator sat in on daily DFAT crisis meetings. The DFAT after-action review of the broader TC Judy and Kevin response noted the importance of this and is a further example of the impact of the Disaster READY project.

During the landfall of TC Judy and Kevin, AC administrators in Sanma and Penama provinces, who were trained in Disaster READY Phase 1, used the Pacific Incident Management System (PACIMS) system to communicate early warnings promptly to ACs and CDCCCs.

This supported effective two-way communication between the ACs and Provincial Disaster Office within 24 hours of the cyclones hitting. There was no loss of life in the two provinces due to the cyclones, which can be attributed in part to communities being fully prepared.

Image: Save the Children



Image: Save the Children

(...continued) Partners leveraged the Women Wetem Weta (WWW) early warning and communications channel which has been fostered through Disaster READY. Early warning alerts through the WWW network resulted in women being able to prepare their homes and use indigenous farming techniques to prolong the life of their crops, ensuring food supply for their families for a month after the cyclone, and demonstrating strong resilience outcomes. CAN DO and VCC leveraged their Safe n Redi app and engagement in the development of the National Evacuation Centre Management Guidelines. The Safe n Redi data identifies local evacuation centres. In Port Vila, this involved opening evacuation centres to individuals and families at risk of displacement and ensuring that the facilities were safe and accessible. Post cyclone, VCC continued to provide food rations and solar lighting in each centre and conducted daily assessments of internal displaced numbers and their home situations. These assessments informed the immediate response and helped VCC to connect with government and civil society actors to acquire and distribute essential supplies to impacted communities, including food items, hygiene kits, rapid repair shelter kits and jerry cans.

Partners also reported increased engagement and leadership by the CDCCCs that are supported through Disaster READY.

COORDINATION AND LEARNING

The program funds a country DRCC, with positions related to coordination, monitoring and evaluation, communication and disability inclusion. This plays a key role to support coordination of the program and also has a dedicated budget for joint learning activities. In Year 1, the DRCC coordinated the development of this learning agenda which will focus best practice of CCA and integration of community-based preparedness work. This research will be rolled out in Year 2.

The DRCC in Vanuatu is leading other Disaster READY countries when it comes to formalising its partnership process. In 2023, during the response activations of TC Judy and Kevin, partners were able to utilise the standard operating procedures developed during Phase 1 as part of the Partnership Agreement, which in turn led to improved coordination and collaboration.

The DRCC also leveraged this mechanism to successfully submit a concept proposal to undertake a joint project for Anticipatory Action. The Vanuatu partners will begin development and implementation of the proposal from early 2024.

GOING FORWARD

With foundational activities in Year 1 complete, partners across the board will seek to increase their level of implementation according to their workplans. For the DRCC, the learning agenda will play a key role in supporting partners' cross learning and moving towards best practice. Moving from output to outcome focussed reporting, with emphasis on capturing qualitative and quantitative data that tell the 'so what?' story of Disaster READY, is also a key area for future improvement.

AHP

Disaster READY

DISASTER READY IS SUPPORTED BY THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT AND IMPLEMENTED BY THE AUSTRALIAN HUMANITARIAN PARTNERSHIP.

THIS REPORT WAS COMPILED BY THE AUSTRALIAN HUMANITARIAN PARTNERSHIP SUPPORT UNIT BASED ON INFORMATION AND DATA PROVIDED BY PARTNERS IMPLEMENTING DISASTER READY PROGRAMS IN VANUATU. ALL INFORMATION WAS CORRECT AT THE TIME OF PUBLICATION.

