



# Building Climate Resilience

LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM A COMMUNITY-BASED ADAPTATION PROJECT IN VANUATU

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### About CARE International

CARE is an international humanitarian aid and development organisation fighting global poverty, with a special focus on working with women and girls to bring lasting change to their communities. As a non-religious and non-political organisation, CARE works with communities to help overcome poverty by supporting development projects and providing emergency relief. We believe that supporting women and girls is one of the most effective ways to create sustainable change in communities.

### About Save the Children

Save the Children is the world's leading independent children's rights organisation, with members in 30 countries and operational programs in more than 125 countries. We fight for children's rights and deliver immediate and lasting improvements to children's lives worldwide.

### About this Report

This report is a result of a collaboration between CARE International in Vanuatu and Save the Children and is drawn from the community-based adaptation and resilience work carried out from January 2016 to May 2017 in Vanuatu. It was made possible through the generous support of the American people, through the Pacific-American Climate Fund of the United States Agency for International Development.

### Disclaimer

The views in this report are drawn from the outcomes and learnings of the project and do not reflect the position of the Government of the United States of America.

### Readers

We actively encourage your feedback so your comments may be fed into future design and implementation of our climate change adaptation projects. Please contact us: Corinne.schoch@savethechildren.org.au and Megan.Chisholm@careint.org.



# Executive Summary

Vanuatu is one of the most vulnerable countries in the world to climate change and disaster risks. Located on the Pacific 'Ring of Fire' and in a 'cyclone belt', it is uniquely sensitive to a wide range of climate and disaster risks, including tropical cyclones, tsunamis, droughts, coastal flooding and sea level rise. Many of these hazards are expected to worsen as climate change impacts increase over time. Unaddressed climate change will exacerbate current challenges and place pressure on the Government of Vanuatu's ability to deliver on their sustainable development plans and policies. It will also threaten people's livelihood opportunities, economic development and resilience to environmental risks.

To address some of these challenges, build the climate resilience of communities, and support the achievement of Vanuatu's climate and development policy objectives, CARE International in Vanuatu (CARE) and Save the Children together developed a community-based climate change adaptation project with support from the USAID Pacific American Climate Fund (PACAM). The project built on the success of a two-and-a-half-year community-based adaptation project supported by the Australian Aid program. The project was implemented over a 16-month period (January 2016 to May 2017) in the southern province of Tafea and the northern province of Sanma.

The overall goal of the project was to increase the resilience of communities, especially women, young people, boys and girls, to shocks, stresses and future uncertainty resulting from climate change.

The goal was achieved through working towards two objectives:

1. Women, men, young people, boys and girls in Tafea and Sanma provinces have increased awareness and capacity to anticipate, plan for and respond to the impacts of climate change;
2. Women, men, young people, boys and girls in Tafea and Sanma provinces have the ability to implement and lead climate change adaptation actions, including livelihoods enhancement and income diversification, food security, natural resource management (including water resource management) and ecosystem management.

Through this project, CARE and Save the Children have supported 5,701 women, men, girls and boys in 32 communities to implement essential, local climate change adaptation actions that build their resilience to the impacts of climate change. Support was provided through a series of community-based training programs, focusing on agriculture, food security, livelihoods, and water resource management. As a result of these trainings and workshops, communities are taking adaptation actions, such as:

- replanting hybrid plant cuttings from demonstration plots
- using solar dryers to preserve their food ahead of the cyclone season
- reusing their water and cooking scraps to increase the nutrient levels of their soils
- continuing to engage with their local government departments to ensure that their economic activities and preparedness plans continue to be responsive to their changing environments.

To support our recommendations and lessons learned, a series of case studies were developed to explore the key successes and challenges of the project and the strategies used to approach it, including:

- mainstreaming climate change into government planning,
- the importance of engaging at the provincial level
- leveraging partnerships for enhanced impact
- addressing gender issues
- engaging children.

These areas of work demonstrate the importance of ensuring that climate change tools and processes reach target beneficiaries and communities. This includes:

- ensuring integration of climate change tools into the school curriculum
- providing the necessary training to school curriculum advisors and teachers
- working together with key Ministries and Departments in the development and implementation of climate change adaptation activities
- the development and subsequent standardization of the Provincial disaster response and climate change management plan to create a more coherent and targeted planning mechanism for all disaster responses
- supporting groups such as the community disaster climate change committees as platforms for enhancing women's participation and voice in key climate change and disaster risk reduction planning processes
- acknowledging the importance of women and children's agency and establishing a series of activities and forums for ensuring their participation.

It is our hope that the work carried out and the recommendations and lessons learned captured in this paper will support our partners and other organisations across Vanuatu and the region to take an increasingly evidenced-based approach to developing community-based climate change and disaster risk reduction programming. Sharing our lessons learned will enable us to continue to build a set of program approaches that reinforce the importance of ensuring that climate finance reaches the community level to further build the resilience of the most vulnerable.



> Through this project, CARE and Save the Children have supported communities to implement essential, local climate change adaptation actions that build their resilience to the impacts of climate change. © Mark Chew/CARE

# Key Recommendations

- I. **Build climate resilience by considering the broader adaptation and development issues**  
Climate change adaptation interventions cannot achieve sustainable results without dealing with the fundamental root causes of poverty and vulnerability.
- II. **Increase community resilience by supporting community-based disaster management structures**  
Community Disaster and Climate Change Committees (CDCCCs) are an effective platform for communities to mainstream disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation into local planning processes.
- III. **Enhance sustainability by deepening relationships with local authorities**  
Collaboration between local technical government departments and community members ensures that project activities are more likely to be sustained over time.
- IV. **Achieve greater impact by investing in cross-learning opportunities**  
The design of community-based adaptation interventions should embed opportunities for cross-learning between local stakeholders and across other similar contexts in the region.
- V. **Increase adaptation uptake by making information accessible and locally relevant**  
Information disseminated to communities should be simple, relevant, digestible and applicable to ensure that climate change adaptation tools and techniques become part of broader community life.
- VI. **Trigger sustainable change by extending project timeframes**  
Changes in attitudes and practice take time to develop. Projects need to be an adequate length to achieve sustainable changes and scaled impacts.
- VII. **Transform structural causes of gender inequality by making climate change interventions gender sensitive and gender transformative**  
Project interventions should be underpinned by gender transformative interventions that tackle the structural causes and power dynamics that reinforce gendered inequalities.<sup>1</sup>
- VIII. **Enable children to be agents of change by increasing the focus on children's participation**  
Children should be given access to knowledge to better understand climate change impacts and solutions and should be given opportunities to affect change.
- IX. **Engage the right partners to bridge gaps in technical expertise**  
Understanding the strengths and limitations of project partners is critical to ensure that the right mix of skills and experience is available to meet project objectives and community expectations.

# Introduction

Vanuatu is one of the most vulnerable countries in the world to climate change and disaster risks. Located on the Pacific 'Ring of Fire' and in a 'cyclone belt', it is uniquely sensitive to a wide range of climate and disaster risks, including tropical cyclones, tsunamis, droughts, coastal flooding and sea level rise. Many of these hazards are expected to worsen as climate change impacts increase over time. Unaddressed, these hazards will continue to undermine sustainable economic growth, water security, agricultural practices and natural resource management. Climate change will exacerbate current challenges, disrupt existing development models and threaten people's livelihood opportunities, economic development, and resilience to environmental risks.

The Republic of Vanuatu is made up of 83 islands scattered across 1,200 square kilometers of the Pacific Ocean. Many ni-Vanuatu live in remote and isolated communities. This means Vanuatu has a rich and diverse culture, but it also creates significant challenges to ensuring access to resources, services and opportunities. There are very few economic opportunities outside of the country's political and economic hubs, with most people on outer islands heavily dependent on the natural environment for their livelihoods and food security.

Extreme weather events, while not new or unexpected in Vanuatu, are placing great pressure on the stability, prosperity and future of the country. Tropical Cyclone (TC) Pam, which struck Vanuatu in March 2015, was one of the most powerful storms ever recorded in the South Pacific. TC Pam caused massive damage across Vanuatu, with losses estimated at nearly US\$450 million – representing over 64% of Vanuatu's annual gross domestic product (GDP).<sup>1</sup> Climate change will increase the challenges presented by storms like Pam and other hazards like extreme rainfall or drought, as it increases their frequency and/or intensity, magnifying the resulting economic challenges.

To address these challenges, Vanuatu has developed a number of national and sectoral policies that aim to provide a more unified set of frameworks to guide stakeholder actions and investments. The Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction Policy (2016-2030), the Vanuatu National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (2012-2022), the National Sustainable Development Plan (2016-2030) and the Vanuatu Agricultural Sector Policy (2015-2030) together articulate the country's vision for a climate-resilient future, and provide a set of tools that enable government departments, civil society organisations, development partners and the private sector to align their support with Vanuatu's policy direction.

To build the resilience of communities across Vanuatu to the unavoidable impacts of climate change and support Vanuatu to achieve its climate and development policy objectives, CARE International in Vanuatu (CARE) and Save the Children together developed a community-based climate change adaptation project with support from the USAID Pacific American Climate Fund (PACAM). The project built on the success of a two- and-a-half-year community-based adaptation project supported by the Australian Aid program. The project was implemented over a 16-month period (January 2016 to May 2017) in the southern province of Tafea and the northern province of Sanma.

The overall goal of the project was to increase the resilience of communities, especially women, young people, boys and girls, to shocks, stresses and future uncertainty resulting from climate change.

<sup>1</sup> World Bank (2015) Cyclone Pam <<https://www.gfdr.org/sites/default/files/publication/infographic-cyclone-pam.pdf>>

The goal was achieved through working towards the following two objectives:

1. Women, men, young people, boys and girls in Tafea and Sanma provinces have increased awareness and capacity to anticipate, plan for and respond to the impacts of climate change;
2. Women, men, young people, boys and girls in Tafea and Sanma provinces have the ability to implement and lead climate change adaptation actions; including livelihoods enhancement and income diversification, food security, natural resource management (including water resource management) and ecosystem management.

We worked to build the capacity of children, women, farmers, local schools, community groups and provincial government bodies to adapt to the impacts of climate change by using a community-based approach. Community-based adaptation aims to: build community capacities to understanding climate risks and solutions, ensure community members are given a voice and seat at the decision-making table, be nimble in response to the needs of communities, and engage community members, practitioners and government officials in the development of current and future-based adaptation solutions. Community-based adaptation has a proven track record of success and should be considered a key component of the fight against climate change.<sup>2</sup>

Developing this publication has enabled CARE and Save the Children to step back and reflect on the results that have emerged from the 16-month project period, and to draw out key lessons and recommendations that will contribute to the wider climate change and community-based adaptation body of knowledge.

Additionally, we hope that this practical learning compendium will enable others supporting communities to adapt to climate change in Vanuatu and across the Pacific to consider and apply some of our lessons and recommendations in developing and implementing their climate change adaptation and broader resilience work.

This publication aims to capture some of the key experiences of children, women, farmers, teachers and government officials who engaged in project activities to demonstrate what has been achieved through this project, and to highlight elements that have the potential to be replicated and scaled up to achieve greater impact in Vanuatu and beyond.



> The project worked to build community capacities to understanding climate risks and solutions. © Mark Chew/CARE

<sup>2</sup>Schipper et al (2014) Community-based adaptation to climate change: Scaling it up. Routledge: New York

# Key Recommendations

## I. **Build climate resilience by considering the broader adaptation and development issues**

Climate change adaptation interventions cannot achieve sustainable results without dealing with the fundamental root causes of poverty and vulnerability. Adaptation must address the power relations that exist, leading to division and conflict within countries and communities. An individual's ability to move from merely coping to adapting is largely determined by access to, and ownership of, assets that are invariably affected by existing power relations.<sup>3</sup> Adaptation efforts, particularly those undertaken within a community-based adaptation (CBA) program context, should address existing development challenges and work to close current adaptation gaps.<sup>4</sup> Only once existing needs are met does the process of building long-term resilience to likely climate impacts become possible. It is, therefore, impossible to separate adaptation and development at the community level; in fact, when working at the community level, it is often unhelpful to do so. Consequently, while some activities within a CBA project may look like development activities, they should not be viewed in isolation, but rather as a component of a broader approach to building the long-term resilience of the community within the context of a changing climate.

In the context of this project, one of our interventions aimed to address communities' management of water resources by linking with and building on other Water, Sanitation and Hygiene program work and conducting awareness sessions on hand washing, water storage and safety, the creation of water committees, and the effective use of water resources. Aligned with up-to-date climate change science and knowledge of climate projections, these activities had both development and adaptation outcomes, building human capacity and enabling communities to take adaptive action to mitigate the impacts of water shortages and water-borne diseases.

## II. **Increase community resilience by supporting community-based disaster management structures**

The project has demonstrated that supporting the establishment and strengthening of community level committees and providing members with relevant technical expertise provides an effective platform for communities to mainstream disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change adaptation (CCA) into local development planning and budgeting processes. Committees can also play an integral role in provincial and national level development planning and disaster response mechanisms. A key component of the project was establishing and/or strengthening Community Disaster and Climate Change Committees (CDCCCs). The committees in the communities targeted by the project have championed messages around DRR and CCA, ensuring those messages are clear, relevant and reflective of local needs and priorities.

The work of this project should be expanded to include new areas where CDCCCs currently do not operate to ensure greater disaster management coverage and community leadership on their own disaster and climate change responses. The support provided to communities to establish CDCCCs, and further support given to the committees to organize and develop and implement

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<sup>3</sup> Cannon, T. (2008) 'Reducing people's vulnerability to natural hazards: Communities and resilience', WIDER Working Paper 34 <<https://www.wider.unu.edu/sites/default/files/rp2008-34.pdf>>; Christen, B. and Speer, P. (2006) 'Tyranny/ transformation: Power and paradox in participatory development,' Forum: Qualitative Social Research 7.2 <<http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/91/189>>; Dutta, D. (2009) 'Elite capture and corruption: Concepts and definitions: Bibliography with an overview of the suggested literature,' National Council of Applied Economic Research <[https://www.academia.edu/237917/Elite\\_Capture\\_and\\_Corruption\\_Concepts\\_and\\_Definitions](https://www.academia.edu/237917/Elite_Capture_and_Corruption_Concepts_and_Definitions)>

<sup>4</sup> Burton, I. (2004) Climate change and the adaptation deficit, Environmental Monitoring and Assessment

their action plans, was well received and enabled communities to run their own committees. Continuing support for committee management and community engagement is required to ensure that effective capacity is maintained and strengthened. Regular follow up by Provincial Disaster and Climate Change Committee (PDCCC) members is needed, including technical expertise on DRR and CCA as well as continuous support to plan and undertake risk reduction and awareness actions. Sustainable and effective climate change programming takes time. The processes that are undertaken with stakeholders to achieve key outcomes, such as establishing and training gender-balanced CDCCCs and facilitating Provincial Disaster Response and Climate Change Management (PDRCCM) Plans, should not be rushed. Ultimately, for CDCCCs to be sustainable, government support is required. Individual projects like this one can help establish and embed community-level structures, but without the long-term support provided by domestic budgeting processes they are unlikely to be sustainable.

### **III. Enhance sustainability by deepening relationships with local authorities**

Fostering collaboration between local technical government departments to support climate change resilience through education interventions, climate-resilient agriculture training and resources, and community and provincial planning mechanisms are believed to have enhanced the sustainability, cost efficiency and effectiveness of project outcomes. The project worked closely with the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET), the Vanuatu Meteorology and Geo-Hazards Department (VMGD), provincial authorities and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) in the implementation of the project across Sanma and Tafea provinces. DARD provided a series of trainings and hands-on learning on climate-resilient agriculture for community members and students. MoET Zone Curriculum Advisors (ZCAs) helped to distribute and inform people about the newly developed climate change curriculum and materials, while the VMGD, in collaboration with provincial authorities, collaborated on developing Provincial Disaster Response and Climate Change Management Plans.

Engaging closely with a range of sub-national government departments in developing and implementing project activities assisted those departments to more effectively meet their responsibility to provide services to communities. It also helped build their capacity to provide ongoing support for local adaptation actions in a collaborative and holistic manner and reduced overlap and duplication. When developing locally relevant adaptation solutions, it is important to foster collaboration between local technical government departments and community members to lay the groundwork for more trusted, transparent and open communications and ensure that project activities are fully owned by each stakeholder group, making them more likely to be sustained over time.

### **IV. Achieve greater impact by investing in cross-learning opportunities**

CBA projects are essentially tailor-made approaches that work to support the most vulnerable people to gain a greater understanding of disaster and climate risks and provide them with the tools to develop locally appropriate adaptation plans and actions. While the approach needs to be reflective of the unique needs of a group of individuals, ensuring that outcomes can be scaled up to support national planning and policies and reach a far wider group of individuals is also critical. The complexities that are often associated with finding solutions to climate change can be simplified – or at least shared – if there are greater opportunities for social learning. Exposing community members to a diverse group of stakeholders and ideas through knowledge sharing hubs can help them to better understand the interconnected nature of climate change and the range of potential adaptation responses.

Cross-learning opportunities were provided internally between project staff for CARE and Save the Children, as well as externally, with community members and government officials brought together to discuss particular climate risks and associated solutions. These forums for discussion were well received by each of the stakeholder groups and opened up opportunities for future collaborations. Our experience suggests significant benefits in embedding opportunities for cross-learning between project staff, community members and government officials within the country but also across other similar contexts in the region.<sup>5</sup>

#### **V. Increase adaptation uptake by making information accessible and locally relevant**

Literacy levels are very low on the remote islands of Vanuatu where the majority of the population live and access to services such as education is challenging and often inaccessible. The result is that that women, men, girls and boys often have very limited access to the information they need to make adaptation decisions and reduce disaster risk.

In order to ensure that low levels of education did not undermine project outcomes or reduce resilience outcomes, the project developed activities that required no prior knowledge or literacy skills and prioritized participation and interaction. We found that community members preferred engaging in activities that were locally relevant and focused on climate-resilient agricultural practices, food preservation and water resource management. These kinds of activities enabled them to better understand the likely impacts of climate change and visualize possible adaptation solutions in a more tangible way. Information that is disseminated throughout communities should be simple, relevant, digestible and applicable. It must also recognize and work alongside the traditional knowledge built up by communities over centuries. This will help to ensure that climate change adaptation tools and techniques are used beyond the life of the project and become part of broader community life.



> Project developed activities were designed so that no prior knowledge or literacy skills were required and participation and interaction were prioritized. © Mark Chew/CARE

<sup>5</sup> A peer-monitoring visit was carried out in December 2016, where CARE visited Save the Children's implementing sites and the two teams conducted joint planning and sharing of resources: monitoring and evaluation tools and research frameworks. Both teams found this visit to be very useful, however, it was suggested that a similar visit should have also been conducted earlier in the project and further opportunities to holistically include project stakeholders should become a priority.

## **VI. Trigger sustainable change through longer project timeframes**

CBA is a bottom-up approach that is led by the community and driven by their needs and capacities. It is a process that relies on learning-by-doing and is fundamentally dynamic in nature. It requires community members and technical experts to work together to assess the synergies that exist between personal experience, traditional knowledge and accurate and reliable technical sources of information. This intermingling of knowledge and information provides the foundation for communities to draw up and apply locally relevant solutions that are built on both sound climate science and local traditional knowledge. Changes in attitudes and practice take time to develop, and result from a series of many small changes to social, cultural, economic and political processes and structures that are owned and implemented by community members.

Short project cycles do not make it easy to trigger the process of sustainable change within communities. Longer-term commitments of time and resources are required to achieve sustainable changes and impacts at scale.

## **VII. Transform structural causes of gender inequality by making climate change interventions gender sensitive and gender transformative**

Simply put, climate change impacts women and men differently. Most women are more susceptible to the impacts of climate change than men as their traditional household and community roles are more vulnerable to environmental factors. Women are dependent on an increasingly fragile environment to sustain their families' livelihoods and are responsible for securing water, food and fuel for their households but are challenged by degraded environments. While women often have a strong body of knowledge and expertise that can be used in climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction, they often face social, economic, and political barriers that limits their coping capacity and ability to access and affect change in key decision-making forums.

Increased understanding of the gendered dimensions of climate change impacts and response strategies has resulted in a drive to ensure that gender is mainstreamed into climate change programs. While this is a positive trend, in some cases this has resulted in organisations focusing simply on ensuring equal numbers of women, men (and sometimes girls and boys) are actively participating in project activities. Just adding women and girls to these processes will not, however, fully address issues of power or equity that increase their vulnerability to climate change impacts.

Finding entry points for addressing these power relations, such as the CDCCCs, was an important first step for providing a forum for women and men to openly discuss existing power relations and ways in which these could be addressed. Ensuring that these groups were gender-balanced provided a first important step, but it was ensuring that women then felt empowered to speak out and make decisions regarding community DRR and CCA plans that enabled those existing power structures to start shifting. Thus, gender transformative interventions<sup>6</sup> – those that aim to move beyond individual self-improvement among women and girls and towards transforming the structural causes and power dynamics that serve to reinforce gendered inequalities<sup>7</sup> – are critical in supporting gender equality and empowering women to fully participate economically and politically and engage in more sustainable practices.

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<sup>6</sup> A gender-transformative approach means that promoting gender equality and women's empowerment are central to an intervention<sup>6</sup> and lead to lasting change in the power and choices women have over their lives, rather than a temporary increase in opportunities resulting from a project intervention.

<sup>7</sup> Hillenbrand et al (2015) Measuring gender-transformative change: A review of literature and promising practices, CARE USA <[http://www.care.org/sites/default/files/documents/working\\_paper\\_aas\\_gt\\_change\\_measurement\\_fa\\_lowres.pdf](http://www.care.org/sites/default/files/documents/working_paper_aas_gt_change_measurement_fa_lowres.pdf)>, p.5.

## VIII. Enable children to be agents of change by increasing the focus on children's participation

Children are one of the most vulnerable groups to the impacts of climate change and yet they are rarely consulted to inform decision making processes that directly impact their lives.<sup>8</sup> The belief that children are incapable of making valuable, informed and coherent contributions to decision-making is still widely held. Yet the assumption that adults have sufficient insights into children's lives to be able to make informed and effective decisions on programming or policies that are designed for, or impact on, children is misguided.<sup>9</sup> Children have a unique understanding and knowledge regarding their environments, their lives, their needs, and their aspirations.

Our experiences from this project tell us that children can act as powerful agents of change with an ability to influence individuals in key decision-making positions. Decisions that are informed by children will be more sustainable and far more impactful in their lives and that of the communities.<sup>10</sup> In the context of climate change programming, children need to not only be given access to the necessary knowledge to better understand climate change impacts and solutions, but also be given opportunities that enable and empower them to affect change. Including children in a project goal and/or objectives is an important first step, but child participation should be a fundamental cornerstone across the entirety of a project, in the same way that gender and disability should be.

## IX. Engage the right partners to bridge gaps in technical expertise

Coastal fisheries and aquaculture provide an important source of food and income for communities across Vanuatu. However, unsustainable harvesting practices, poor management, ocean acidification and increases in sea surface temperatures are all having a detrimental impact on coastal ecosystems and the livelihood opportunities for the communities that rely on them. Coastal fisheries support significant numbers of households across Vanuatu that catch fish and collect shellfish from coral reefs and lagoons. Good management of coastal resources requires community-based approaches to be supported by national and regional level frameworks and finance.

This project supported a number of coastal protection activities but our ability to activate change in the absence of strong support structures was limited. Understanding the strengths and limitations of project partners is critical to ensure that the right mix of skills and experience is available to meet project objectives and community expectations. Where gaps are identified, appropriate additional partnerships should be formed to ensure that the required technical expertise is available where and when required.

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<sup>8</sup> Mitchell, P. and Borchard, C. (2014) 'Mainstreaming children's vulnerabilities and capacities into community-based adaptation to enhance impact', *Climate and Development* 6(4), p.372-381 <<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17565529.2014.934775>>

<sup>9</sup> Save the Children and UNICEF (2011) Every child's right to be heard: A resource guide on the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child General Comment No12 <[https://www.unicef.org/french/adolescence/files/Every\\_Childs\\_Right\\_to\\_be\\_Heard.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/french/adolescence/files/Every_Childs_Right_to_be_Heard.pdf)>

<sup>10</sup> Save the Children & UNICEF (2011) Every child's right to be heard: A resource guide on the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child General Comment No12 <[https://www.unicef.org/french/adolescence/files/Every\\_Childs\\_Right\\_to\\_be\\_Heard.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/french/adolescence/files/Every_Childs_Right_to_be_Heard.pdf)>

The recommendations are intended to inform future programming by CARE and Save the Children, and strengthen our approaches at the community, provincial and national levels in Vanuatu, the Pacific and beyond. Our CBA work aims to support communities manage the impacts of climate change and disasters by ensuring that they have access to the right tools and technical expertise and have built relationships with relevant government departments. It is our hope that the work carried out and the recommendations captured in this paper will also support our partners and other organisations across Vanuatu and the region to adopt an increasingly evidenced-based approach to developing climate change and disaster risk reduction programming.

The recommendations outlined are illustrated through a series of short case studies of our experiences throughout the project. The case studies highlight a range of key challenges faced by the project and the strategies used to address them, including mainstreaming climate change into government planning, the importance of engaging at the provincial level, leveraging partnerships for enhanced impact, addressing gender issues and engaging children. Sharing our lessons learned will enable us to continue to build a set of program approaches that reinforce the importance of ensuring that climate finance reaches the community level to further build the resilience of the most vulnerable.



> Partnerships that provided technical expertise, such as nutrition training facilitated by Wan Smolbag, enabled better outcomes for communities. © Mark Chew/CARE



> The project worked to help the Curriculum Development Unit to support teachers to understand climate change information and deliver it to students. © Mark Chew/CARE

# Mainstreaming climate change into government processes and plans

School-based education on climate change was a central component of this project. It is critical that teachers and children have access to up-to-date information on climate change in order to understand its likely impacts, and to ensure that they are better able to work within their communities to develop and implement locally appropriate adaptation solutions. To achieve this, the project worked to improve the capacity of teachers and students to manage climate change impacts by increasing the knowledge and understanding of education officers, trainers, teachers and students through integrating climate change into the curriculum.

Over the years, a range of climate change resources have been developed for schools in consultation with the Vanuatu Curriculum Development Unit (CDU), under the Vanuatu Ministry of Education and Training (MoET). Key resources have also been developed by the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Program (SPREP), the Pacific Community (SPC), and a number of Non-Government Organisations (NGOs). Based on surveys carried out in schools in areas targeted by the project, it became clear that these great resources were not being utilized. Discussions with the CDU revealed that the resources were not being used because of a lack of training in their use and a lack of funding for distribution, which rarely accompanied the delivery of the tools and was not factored into education budgets.

Rather than developing another school-based training kit, the project worked to help the CDU to support teachers to understand climate change information and deliver it to students. The project trained 42 teachers and Zone Curriculum Advisors (ZCAs) (19 women and 23 men) from 20 schools and reached 712 (387 girls and 325 boys) students. Schools, teachers and students in the targeted communities now have access to quality teaching materials and tools to help them better understand how climate change impacts their lives, along with a number of mechanisms that they can utilize to affect change in their schools and local areas.

To achieve this, the CDU partnered with GIZ and SPC to identify three key existing resources that would empower educators to teach grade appropriate elements of climate change and the disaster risk management both inside and outside the classroom. These resources, “Learning Climate Change in the Pacific Way,” “Pou and Miri<sup>11</sup>” and “Cloud Nasara<sup>12</sup>”, include materials suitable for students from years 1 to 13. These resources were chosen as they aligned with the existing teaching programs and enabled students to learn through exploration rather than memorization.

Two workshops,<sup>13</sup> with participants from across 20 schools,<sup>14</sup> were held to train educators in the use of these materials. The workshops resulted in an increase in teachers’ knowledge of climate change and disaster risk management, a reduction in misconceptions around climate change within communities, and an increase in teachers’ ability to identify specific topics and sub-topics within the broader curriculum into which climate change resources should be integrated. Course participants learned by doing, and were exposed to a variety of different experimental approaches aimed at developing participants’ analytical skills.

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.nab.vu/pou-and-miri>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.pacificclimatechangescience.org/animations/cloudnasara/>

<sup>13</sup> Workshops were conducted in Luganville in Santo and Dillon’s Bay in Erromango to train teachers on three approved climate change curriculum materials.

<sup>14</sup> Tafea: Antioch Primary School, Cooks Bay Primary School, Dillon’s Bay Primary and Secondary School, Enaula School, Happyland Primary School, Ipota Junior Secondary School, Irumori School, Melo School, and Port Narvin School. Sanma: Fanafo Primary School, Butmas Primary School, Natawa Primary School, Ballon Center School, Mwast Centre School, Tovotovo Primary School, Vilvil Primary School, St Augustin Primary School, Port-Orly Secondary School, and Hog Harbour Secondary School.

Mainstreaming these materials across 20 target schools in Tafea and Sanma provinces is a first step in supporting children and teachers to be better equipped and more resilient to the impacts of climate change. Continuing to work with young children and teachers to embed climate change learning into the education

culture is crucial for the future. Evidence from many similar projects has demonstrated that children can act as important catalysts for change<sup>15</sup> and government support and resourcing of such initiatives can ensure that materials are utilized and teachers and students have access to climate change knowledge.

## Key Lessons:

*Teachers should be regularly supported to access accurate and relevant climate information.*

The amount of information that exists on climate change is vast and can feel daunting, therefore teachers need to understand what sources are best placed to support them in teaching accurate and age appropriate climate information. To aid in this, national teacher training programs should include a component on climate change information and resourcing.

*Schools located on remote islands have a high student to teacher ratio and conditions of work continue to be a challenge for teachers.* Mainstreaming climate change into the curriculum plays an important role in enabling students to better understanding climate change impacts and solutions, yet the broader development context and its challenges should not be ignored.

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<sup>15</sup> Treichel, P. and Schoch, C. (2015) Child-centred climate resilience: Case studies from the Philippines and Vietnam [https://www.savethechildren.org.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0011/99551/CCCR\\_Report\\_High-Res\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.savethechildren.org.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/99551/CCCR_Report_High-Res_FINAL.pdf); Mitchell, P. and Borchard, C. (2014) 'Mainstreaming children's vulnerabilities and capacities into community-based adaptation to enhance impact', *Climate and Development* 6(4), p.372-381. and UNICEF and Plan International (2011) *The benefits of a child-centred approach to climate change adaptation*.



> Developing standardized Provincial Disaster Response and Climate Change Management (PDRCCM) plans created a shared understanding and vision across all disaster responses and climate change actors at the provincial level. © Mark Chew/CARE

# Building resilience at the provincial level

Since 2015, Vanuatu has experienced several climate-related extreme weather events, including Tropical Cyclone Pam (March 2015), an El Niño-induced drought (2015-2016), Tropical Cyclone Ula (January 2016), Tropical Cyclone Cook (April 2017) and Tropical Cyclone Donna (May 2017). While some of these events were considered large by international standards – attracting international support – many were small, localized, and managed at the provincial level with national support. Vanuatu is highly disaster-prone and climate change will increase the frequency and intensity of a range of existing hazards, making it harder for the country to effectively respond to each threat. As climate change impacts escalate, Vanuatu will need to significantly increase its disaster risk management capacity. This includes managing and coordinating emergency response mechanisms, as well as planning for the management and mitigation of future disasters and climate shocks.

Developing standardized Provincial Disaster Response and Climate Change Management (PDRCCM) plans creates a shared understanding and vision across all disaster responses and climate change actors at the provincial level. Through this project, the first set of PDRCCM plans<sup>16</sup> for Tafea and Sanma provinces were developed, in partnership with the respective provincial governments and the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO). These plans enable more consistent and targeted planning and action for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction at provincial and local levels.

The intention is that these plans will be regularly updated to ensure that they remain current. Each plan sits within the wider disaster management program,<sup>17</sup> which aims to:

- Establish and strengthen gender balanced CDCCCs in areas where there are no CDCCCs
- Strengthen Disaster Risk Management (DRM) capacity at all levels, ensuring strong links exist between national and provincial government and communities
- Support improved coordination and communication between national and provincial DRM bodies, emphasizing the crucial role for Provincial Disaster Officers Offices/Provincial Disaster and Climate change committees and ensuring sustainable cooperation between all DRM bodies
- Support the NDMO to develop Provincial Disaster Plan templates to ensure that content is consistent and the plans are completed to a high standard across all provinces, and that they link into the greater national disaster risk management approach.

The purpose of the PDRCCM plan is to provide information and guidance for all agencies – local, national (government and non-government) and international – on how to manage different risks at the provincial level. The plans take into account the effects of climate change and the potential impacts of future disasters, and are used to consciously inform disaster preparedness and direct emergency responses and outline response mechanisms.

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<sup>16</sup> CARE and Save the Children worked together with provincial governments of Tafea and Sanma to develop two Provincial Disaster Response and Climate Change Management (PDRCCM) plans. The process involved engaging with 163 participants (109 in Tafea (66 male and 43 female) and 54 in Sanma (43 male and 11 female)) to develop the plans. Both PDRCCM plans have been signed and approved by the SG of their relevant province and the Director of the NDMO and then launched publicly.

<sup>17</sup> The PDRCCM plans and the Disaster Management Programming approach was also included in the YUMI REDI- Everyone is Prepared consortium project implemented by CARE, Oxfam, Red Cross and Save the Children which, was funded by DIPECHO. CARE and Save the Children then used PACAM funding to include essential Climate Change adaptation elements within the plan and the wider DRM approach.

To ensure plans are relevant, locally-endorsed and owned, and, most importantly, understood and applied by sub-national government departments, the process of developing them was participatory and engaged a diversified set of stakeholders, from the community through to national level. Each plan was developed through a number of workshops and trainings addressing emergency operation procedures, child protection, gender and protection, disability, climate change and disaster scenarios. These sessions were attended by Area Counsel Secretaries (ACS), male and female representatives from each

CDCCC, women representatives from across all islands, Provincial Disaster and Climate Change Committee (PDCCC) members, and provincial government stakeholders who were involved in the broader disaster management program. Prior to signing off and launching each plan, the relevant PDCCC provided feedback and amendments. The PDRCCM plans were then approved and signed off by the Secretary General of each province and the Director of the NDMO. The plans are now publicly available.<sup>18</sup>

The participatory process undertaken in the development of the plans – with relevant stakeholders and the broader disaster management community – has helped to bridge the national and local

“As a loud authority with an overall mandate to care and provide for the security and well-being of its people, and also having learned hard but real lessons from the category 5 cyclone in 2015, it is a milestone development to at last have in our possession a provincial disaster plan that will guide planning, preparedness and mitigation efforts, as well as boost resilience of our people when disaster threatens.”

**- Ketty napuatt, Tafea province secretary general**



> To ensure disaster plans are relevant, locally-endorsed and owned, the process of developing them was participatory and engaged a diversified set of stakeholders, from the community through to national level. © Mark Chew/CARE

<sup>18</sup> The Provincial Disaster Response and Climate Change Management (PDRCCM) Plans are accessible through the NDMO's website, [https://ndmo.gov.vu/resources/downloads/com\\_jaextmanager](https://ndmo.gov.vu/resources/downloads/com_jaextmanager)

levels. This improves the flow of communication and the speed of the response in emergencies. The recent responses to Tropical Cyclones Cook (in April 2017) and Donna (in May 2017) demonstrate the effectiveness of the process and resulting plans. Following the plans, the Tafea and Sanma PDCCCs set-up their Emergency Operations Centers, engaged with the NDMO, and communicated with CDCCCs in a timely, transparent and effective manner across the affected areas. Information successfully traveled up to the NDMO through the provincial mechanisms as outlined in the PDRCCM plans. The CDCCCs verified their information using the correct reporting mechanisms and channels and were able to rapidly mobilize their communities.

The development and use of the PDRCCM plans are important achievements for Vanuatu, which is now emerging as a regional leader in the Pacific for disaster preparedness. Using a holistic disaster management program approach that involves all relevant government stakeholders at provincial and national levels, while integrating the process across consortium projects, will lead to better coordinated response mechanisms. This will help maximize the impact of disaster management actions and should result in increased resilience among ni-Vanuatu.

## Key Lessons:

*Future development and disaster responses should operate within the framework of the PDRCCM plans. As the targeted provinces have disaster plans in place, government, non-government and international agencies need to make sure that projects and interventions further reinforce and support the plans, and do not work outside of them. This will ensure all actors are working towards the same objectives, within locally approved strategies.*

*Plans should be further strengthened over time, drawing from up-to-date climate data. This will enable provincial governments to better manage current and potential future risks and build their capacity to mainstream climate change into existing systems and processes. Technical expert support and sustainable finance will be required to ensure that plans are constantly evolving to mirror the changing environmental landscape.*

*Building understanding about why women need to be included in sub-national decision-making processes is critical. The policy space at local, provincial and national levels remains largely dominated by men. This reduces the utility of adaptation and disaster management plans for women and children. Changing long held cultural norms is a slow but critical process if we want to ensure that women's voices are part of these processes and that the resulting plans meet their needs.*



> Partnerships with DARD resulted in demonstration gardens being established in project communities, introducing community members to new techniques and varieties. © Matthew Abbott/PACAM

# THE VALUE OF PARTNERSHIPS TO AFFECT CHANGE

Working in partnership enables organisations and stakeholders to share knowledge, skills and expertise, producing tangible benefits for the community. Several partnerships were formed throughout this project, including with key government agencies like the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) and the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET). Relationships developed through this project will enable its outcomes to be sustainable well beyond the life of the project.

The benefits of the partnership approach in this project so far have been wide ranging. Partnerships have helped to ensure that technical resources from key sectors reached communities and strengthened communication lines between community members and key government staff. Collaboration between local and technical government departments on education interventions, new agriculture practices and community and provincial planning mechanisms also enhanced the project's effectiveness. But perhaps the most significant impact of the partnerships was that working with local departments and their extension officers provided government agencies with the resources they needed to implement their work plans and ensure that communities get the support they require.

The project worked closely with the Provincial Education Office, the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO), the Vanuatu Meteorology and Geo-Hazards Department (VMGD), DARD and provincial authorities. DARD ran a series of trainings and hands-on learning for community members and students on climate-resilient agriculture. Education Department Zone Curriculum Advisors distributed and informed users about the new climate change curriculum and materials. The NDMO, VMGD and provincial authorities contributed to developing the Provincial Disaster Response and Climate Change Management plans. This engagement with local departments both supported them to fulfil their responsibility to provide better services for their constituents and increased their involvement in local adaptation actions.

As a result of this project, the DARD extension officer in Tafea was able to visit communities within his jurisdiction that he had not previously been able to travel to due to budget constraints. This result was also echoed in Sanma, where feedback from DARD officers highlighted the work that they were able to complete as a result of the partnership and recommended that the project “should extend to sites in other area councils, and extend the period project to properly assess the impact of the training adoption” because “we need support with transport to help with monitoring and evaluations.”<sup>19</sup>

In the Vanuatu context, internal resourcing constraints place significant barriers in the way of government departments in fulfilling their mandates. Without strong engagement at the community level, it is difficult for government officials to accurately reflect the capacities and needs within remote communities. While the project supported and worked with the government agencies to increase their capacity to implement climate change adaptation activities at the local level, it was not set up to address the underlining financial limitations faced by government partners. To ensure that technical capacity, trainings and tools are further supported, developed and disseminated, further funding is required. Assisting provincial governments to access and effectively utilize international climate finance is one path to enhanced sustainability.

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<sup>19</sup> A peer-monitoring visit was carried out in December 2016, where CARE visited Save the Children's implementing sites and met with DARD's extension officers in Santo who provided the agencies with very detailed and valuable feedback on the project.

## The partnership approach – from the inside out

By working in partnership, care and save the children were able to implement a range of similar activities across a number of locations. This enabled the project to reach a greater number of beneficiaries across the two provinces. Using a joint project design document and a joint monitoring and evaluation framework, the two agencies implemented a holistic program across 32 communities at opposite ends of the country. This partnership framework produced standardized training materials for all staff and led to a sharing of technical resourcing in climate change, gender, and child protection practices across the two agencies. This led to a valuable set of cross-learning opportunities for staff, as well as increased project quality and implementation cost-saving efficiencies. While this partnership produced excellent results within the limited project timeframe, for more significant holistic outcomes to be jointly achieved a significantly longer project duration would be required. A longer project would enable project staff from each agency to spend more time with their counterparts, learning from each other's strengths and approaches.

### Key Lessons:

*Working in partnership with local authorities greatly increases the effectiveness and sustainability of community-based adaptation projects.* However, without the necessary resources and budget allocated to continue working in communities, government agencies will not be able to support this type of work on an ongoing basis.

*Working in a holistic manner across a consortium strengthens implementation.* Resources, tools, frameworks and stakeholder relationships are shared amongst a greater group of individuals, and knowledge is housed across agencies. This approach provides a buffer to knowledge losses when staff turn overs take place and substantially decreases implementations gaps. However, for the full benefits of working in consortium to be realized, and for significant sustainable change to be leveraged in communities, a substantially longer project duration is required.



> Encouraging women to actively participate in all project activities, such as constructing solar dryers, helps redefine social norms and promote gender equality. © Mark Chew/CARE

# Women, gender equality and climate change

Women's voices in decision making in Vanuatu at all levels – from households through to parliament – are very limited and often entirely absent. Yet real progress on climate change and broader community development cannot be achieved without the full participation and input of half of the population.

The development of Community Disaster Climate Change Committees (CDCCCs) through the project provided a platform to foster women's participation and leadership in community-level decision-making processes. The project helped establish and strengthen 32 CDCCCs across Sanma and Tafea provinces. Each CDCCC aimed to have equal representation of women and men. While this has not yet happened across all targeted communities, the number of women on committees is increasing and women's participation in decision-making processes is significantly higher than it was prior to the project.

In establishing the CDCCCs, CARE and Save the Children highlighted the importance of balanced gender representation and ensuring that women felt empowered to actively participate and take on leadership roles. We approached this by initially conducting gender and social inclusion sessions at community, area council and provincial levels. These sessions included gender equality promotion as a core component. To help turn this inclusion learning into action, we also ensured that women participated in every training conducted within the communities with which we work, including other program activities such as the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene program's participatory hygiene and sanitation training (PHAST) and drinking water safety and security planning (DWSSP) training. These training sessions also contained strong gender components.

While most communities targeted by the project were broadly receptive to the inclusion of women, several communities on the island of Tanna, in Tafea Province, were resistant to actions that attempted to change existing gender norms. Due to strongly male-dominated culture, traditions and gender norms on the island, men commonly would not permit women to participate in community committees or meetings, or to take on leadership roles within the community. To help address this issue, CARE placed additional focus on raising awareness of gender issues in Tanna, and increased the project's focus on gender training and advocacy at the community level. During the course of the project, this enhanced focus helped breakdown gender barriers and enabled women to become CDCCC members. Over time, women have been able to take on key leadership roles in the CDCCC, which was previously unheard of in Tanna. Key achievements include the Enarawia and Galilee communities electing women as CDCCC vice treasurers, the Ikurup community electing women in the vice secretary and communications officer positions, and the Nia Norari community electing women in the vice chair and communication officer positions. These outcomes are significant as they provide an important first step towards transforming the current power structures and enabling a more equitable representation of women across all decision-making forums.

Across Tafea, the project worked with 22 CDCCCs on three islands. Of these, 10 have reached a 50% gender balance, six have more than 40% women represented, three have 30% represented, and the final three are represented by 25% of women. All CDCCCs now have strong female representation and participation, and a total of 63 women have been voted into senior leadership roles within the CDCCCs across Tanna, Erromango and Aniwa islands.



> To ensure disaster plans are relevant, locally-endorsed and owned, the process of developing them was participatory and engaged a diversified set of stakeholders, from the community through to national level. © Mark Chew/CARE

Gender balance across Sanma was more difficult to achieve, as pre-existing gender sensitization had not taken place and CDCCCs had not yet been established. Still, of the ten CDCCCs that were established, 40% of the positions in three CDCCCS are held by women, six of the groups reached 30% women representation and the remaining group has 12% women representation. Though gender balance has not yet been achieved, of the 105 community members participating in the 10 CDCCCs, 42 are women – an incredible achievement given the short timeframe of the project and the highly inequitable starting point.

Recognition that women and men have an equally important role to play in the development of climate change action plans as well as disaster preparedness, response and recovery has started to emerge across the areas in which the project operated. However, this shift remains slow, and

## Meet May Saskias

May is a mother of two teenage boys and a girl. She feeds her family of five by growing vegetables for them to eat and selling the surplus at market. In addition, she is the village health worker and volunteers three days a week at the local aid post. She has recently joined the community disaster climate change committee in her community of Stonehill Sector 2 on Santo island. May volunteers her time in both roles. This is challenging as both roles require significant time commitments and yield no direct financial returns.

However, being a member of the CDCCC enabled may to participate in climate-resilient agricultural and organic pest management training, as well as a traditional food preservation techniques workshop. Because she and her family rely on their garden for their food and income, this training has had a huge impact on may. “Attending the workshops increased my capacity, especially the food preservation workshop, so I can use this towards my livelihood,” says May.

women and men's roles are still largely constructed around traditional gender norms. In particular, there is very little female representation among Area Council Secretaries and in provincial governments, which could have the potential to halt the gender equality progress that has been made at community level. Reinforcing gender inclusion and equality at all levels and providing women with the opportunity to learn more, have their voices heard and acted upon, and gain confidence outside their families has proved to be a valuable impact of the CDCCC approach.

## Key Lessons:

*Taking a gendered approach to community-based adaptation takes time and needs to sit within a broader long-term strategy for transforming gender relations.* In project areas where communities had participated in previous gender-sensitive programming over a longer period of time, integrating gender into adaptation actions was met with less resistance and had greater positive outcomes than in communities where gender-specific programming had not previously been undertaken.

*Aiming to achieve gender balance within CDCCCs is important, but gender transformation must go deeper.* While representation and participation are important steps to achieving gender equality and women's empowerment, these do not necessarily lead to gender transformation. Extensive foundational work with communities to build understanding of the importance of gender equality is required to support lasting change and enable women's voices to be heard across decision-making forums, and to ensure that adaptation strategies address underlying power dynamics.

*CDCCC members should benefit from being part of the committee.* Participation in the CDCCCs is entirely voluntary, is not remunerated, and is often seen as an additional chore by members, in particular women. Linking relevant government departments with CDCCCs to provide training opportunities that enable CDCCC members as well as other community members to improve their own livelihoods can help reinforce the benefit of contributing to the CDCCC.



> Dedicated capacity and confidence building activities for children will help empower them to become active citizens in their schools and communities, and support them to hold government departments to account. © Mark Chew/CARE

# Triggering action on climate change for children in Vanuatu

Education is widely recognized as a universal right and an important predictor of economic growth, human development and poverty reduction.<sup>20</sup> The slogan, ‘No Child is Left Behind’ is a powerful one and a driving force behind a vast number of development programs that have sought to address the barriers that have kept children from completing a free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education.

Long-standing barriers that keep children away from the classroom – such as direct costs of schooling, remuneration of teachers, lack of access or child marriage – have featured heavily in development and government led programs. Climate change has, as yet, had limited visibility as a constraint to education. Yet climate change threatens to erode hard won development gains in the education sector, as impacts like drought, heatwaves and flooding reduce access to schooling.

Teaching materials, finance and qualified teaching personnel are often limited or entirely absent from schools. As the impacts of climate change intensify in coming years, these underlying factors will be further exacerbated, presenting additional barriers to children’s educational outcomes. The scope and timeframe of the project, as well as its objectives, limited our ability to address many of the challenges facing Vanuatu’s educational system. The project did, however, work to build relationships with local government departments to help ensure that materials and activities that address climate change were made available within classrooms. While this does not resolve the challenges around pay or teacher retention, it does help increase teacher and students’ adaptive capacity, and provide a strong basis for ongoing dialogue between key personnel in the department and within the schooling system.

A key example of the importance of taking a child-centered approach in all activities is the work the project undertook with the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) and the Vanuatu Agricultural Research and Training Centre (VARTC) to ensure accurate and locally relevant climate science was made available to communities.<sup>21</sup> The project supported agricultural trainings with 259 community members (127 females, 132 males) and 273 students (124 females, 149 males) across Tanna and Santo. As part of the training program, 17 climate-resilient agricultural demonstration plots (7 in schools and 10 in communities) were established across the two provinces. The agricultural training was based on the Climate Smart Agriculture Handbook (2014), which was developed by a partnership between DARD, CARE and VARTC, and included sessions on pest management, improved soil techniques, planting techniques, climate and disease

The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) plays a pivotal role in building the adaptive capacities of community members and farmers to the impacts of climate change. Ensuring that they can provide communities with climate related services has become critical in trying to safeguard their livelihoods and ensure that household economic capacities are not curtailed.

<sup>20</sup> United Nations (2015) The Millennium Development Goals Report <[http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/2015\\_MDG\\_Report/pdf/MDG%202015%20rev%20\(July%201\).pdf](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/2015_MDG_Report/pdf/MDG%202015%20rev%20(July%201).pdf)>

<sup>21</sup> As a result of their capacity and known levels of expertise, DARD in Santo has become a hub for farmers across Vanuatu to seek technical support and has also been an effective training resource for other DARD staff across the country.

resistant crops, the establishment of demonstration plots and fencing techniques. Participants were also provided information on more nutritious crop options and given seedlings for kumala, taro, manioc, muguna and glyricidia.

The demonstration plots were hugely popular across communities. The techniques that participants learned in establishing them have since been shared with community members that could not attend the training and applied by these non-participants, highlighting the desire of communities to increase the resilience of their agriculture systems. Ensuring that students could attend was also important as these trainings gave them a practical set of measures that could be used to respond to climate change. Schools are also not limited by the restrictions of land tenure rights and as result were an ideal location for developing and maintaining longer term agriculture plots.

While the plots were successful in being replicated across the community, the activities in the training program did not initially appeal to the children that took part. The initial student activities were inspired by those undertaken with broader community members, but were ineffective in engaging children. DARD staff members, supported by project staff, addressed this issue by changing their training approach using feedback from the children. Subsequent trainings were far more child-centered, which contributed to students and teachers now adopting the new practices learned in the training sessions.

Much work still needs to be done to ensure that these processes are truly participatory and child-centered, however, DARD staff members have been proactive in addressing this challenge by identifying that the processes were not working and re-evaluating how to best re-engage with the group of students. The students now understand the value of these plots for their schools and the wider community. They also have a clear sense of how the new cropping techniques have the potential to support their families during times of flooding or drought, and understand how their knowledge can help support their families by ensuring they are using these new, more resilient, techniques.

## **Key Lesson:**

*Providing avenues for children and local, provincial and national government bodies to engage and discuss practical adaptation solutions can be challenging but is fundamental to the success of CBA project outcomes.* Building relationships between students, teachers, principals and local government officials can be achieved by including a series of child-centered trainings and forums that promote children's active participation in the project design. Dedicated capacity and confidence building activities for children will help empower them to become active citizens in their schools and communities, and support them to hold government departments to account. Dynamics that may inhibit their participation should be explored and addressed throughout the project intervention to ensure that their voices are heard and acted upon.

# Conclusion

Climate change will exacerbate current challenges and expose weaknesses in Vanuatu's sustainable development plans and policies. It will also threaten people's access to viable livelihood opportunities, economic development and resilience to environmental risks. The Yumi Redi long Klaemet Jenis project aimed to address some of these challenges by building the resilience of children, communities and provincial government officials to these shocks and stresses through the development of locally appropriate awareness, education, plans, strategies and actions.

Through this project, CARE and Save the Children have supported 5,701 women, men, girls and boys in 32 communities to implement essential local climate change adaptation actions that contribute to building their resilience to the impacts of climate change. Support was provided through a series of community-based training programs, focusing on agriculture, food security, livelihoods, and water resource management. As a result of these trainings and workshops, communities are taking adaptation actions including replanting hybrid plant cuttings from demonstration plots, using solar dryers to preserve their food ahead of the cyclone season, reusing their water and cooking scraps to increase the nutrient levels of their soils, and continuing to engage with their local government departments to ensure that their activities continue to be responsive to their changing environments.

The project's Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) endline survey clearly showed positive changes across all three domains from the initial baseline. The survey showed a measureable increase in knowledge and understanding of climate change and disaster risk reduction within communities in Tafea and Sanma provinces. The survey also highlighted a change in attitudes, with participants more motivated to take proactive action to address climate and disaster risks. Significantly, the survey also found that practices introduced by the project had been adopted and replicated across communities.

These achievements were made possible by the project's focus on process, participation and partnerships as the key implementing approaches. These included the design and



> The project's achievements were made possible by a focus on process, participation and partnerships. © Mark Chew/CARE

implementation of gender-transformative approaches to adaptation planning, a learning-by-doing approach to training, the development of cross-learning opportunities for communities and project staff, the support of community-based disaster management structures, and the provision of training to Zone Curriculum Advisors to ensure that climate change information and existing materials is integrated across the school curriculum.

The project built on previous community-based climate change adaptation interventions in Vanuatu. Where this project worked in areas that had had previous climate change projects, progress was faster and outcomes stronger. This demonstrates the importance of continued investment in this area of work over the longer term. Climate finance remains a critical component for sustaining project outcomes and enabling sub-national government departments to support the work that is led out of communities and schools. To continue building the evidence base for community-based adaptation, and ensure that project activities are scaled up, project interventions not only need to address the finance gap but should also operate over a longer period of time. Sustainably building the technical capacities of government officials and community members, and transforming gender norms, can only begin over a 16-month project period. These constraints are common-place, but will inevitably raise a number of challenges to ensuring that project interventions remain viable over time.

The relationships that were developed, and the development of Provincial Disaster Response and Climate Change Management Plans and Community Disaster and Climate Change Committees are significant achievements of this project within a tight timeframe and with limited resources. The processes, mechanisms and outputs of this project could be replicated across Vanuatu and the broader region. The activities implemented through the project add to the inventory of options and opportunities for governments and communities to develop and sustain their own locally-relevant adaptation plans and actions. Only through the consistent application of this growing toolkit across a range of communities and geographies, with strong support from communities, governments, civil society, NGOs and donors, will transformative change occur – setting communities on the path to climate-resilient sustainable development.



> Community-based adaptation has a proven track record of success and should be considered a key component of the fight against climate change. © Mark Chew/CARE

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