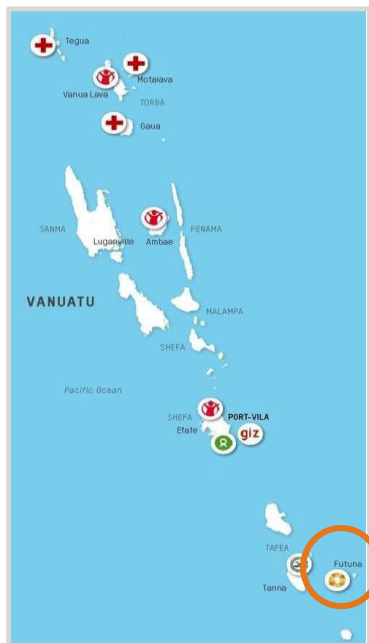




Vanuatu Case Study

Standing Together: Strengthening Climate
Change Resilience in Vanuatu

Map of project area



Map: Locations across Vanuatu where NGO consortium members worked including CARE in Futuna (Oxfam/<https://www.oxfam.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/lessons-from-the-vanuatu-ngo-climate-change-adaptation-program-web.pdf>)

Climate change in Vanuatu

- Increased land and sea temperatures
- Extreme temperatures
- Extreme rainfall events
- Ocean acidification
- Damaging cyclones
- Sea level rise.

Project goal

To increase the resilience of women, men and young people in Vanuatu to the unavoidable impacts of climate change.

Key project outcome areas

- Livelihoods that are better able to adapt to climate change
- Disaster risk reduction that integrates climate change issues
- Stronger capacity within communities, partners, civil society and government

PROJECT CONTEXT

"The land is important because it provides me with food to live."

Male program beneficiary (Vanuatu CBA project)

Futuna sits majestically in the Pacific Ocean, one of Vanuatu's 83 islands. It is a remote but special place. Here, resident's fish and farm, and are renowned for their weaving talents, making baskets and bags.

Since 2009, CARE has been working with the community of Futuna to support their efforts to reduce disasters and to adapt to climate change. In 2012, CARE began a new initiative to strengthen the resilience of women, men and children to climate change and weather-related disasters. Over the following three years, the program worked with every village on the island, using a variety of strategies to build resilience.

PROJECT IMPACT

CARE supported communities to build resilience through:

- **Promotion of climate-resilient livelihoods strategies.** CARE worked with communities members to build community and home-based gardens. New vegetables were trialled (such as tomato, cucumber, cabbage and carrots) in order to increase the diversity of vegetables grown, as well as increase the nutritional value of food consumed. This helps communities increase their resilience to climate change as they have more diverse food sources, spreading risk, so that if one crop fails, others will continue. As a result of the success of the gardens, a local language recipe book was developed by CARE and women on the island, containing nutritional guidance and recipes for new vegetables introduced.
- **Disaster risk reduction strategies** to reduce impacts of increasing climate-related natural disasters on vulnerable households. CARE worked with community members to strengthen existing disaster risk reduction committees operating in each village. Committee members attended workshops and training to help them better understand climate change and its potential impacts, increasing their knowledge and skills and ability to take adaptive action. As part of the training, scientific knowledge was combined with traditional knowledge to improve disaster risk reduction plans and activities.

- Planning and policy development that is more inclusive and responsive to community needs and priorities.
 - **Strengthening capacity.** CARE worked community members to build their adaptive capacity across a range of areas, including: providing better access to climate information (via community boards and workshops); providing user-friendly information on climate-adaptive agricultural techniques (mulching, watering, seed saving, pest management); and providing training to existing disaster risk reduction committees to ensure they integrated climate change concerns.
 - **Local and national level empowerment, advocacy and social mobilisation** to influence the policy and enabling environment. CARE worked with community members to support the equitable participation of women, youth and other vulnerable groups in local planning processes such as the Area Development Councils, resulting in Area development Plans that were more inclusive of local needs and priorities, including those related to climate change and disaster risk. This is an important adaptation strategy as it helps communities raise their voice about local concerns; influences local decision-making to be more inclusive of local needs and priorities; and ultimately supports better policies and practice that mainstream disaster and climate risk.

PROMISING PRACTICES

Trisha is a 14 year old girl who attends a primary school on the island of Futuna. As part of the program Trisha and other school children learned about climate change through awareness activities run by CARE. “We saw changes happening in our community because of climate change. We learned that it can also cause heavy rain fall, landslides, hotter season and cyclones.”

Using the information learned, and observing the other community gardens already established, the school asked if they could also plant a vegetable garden to grow food to provide to children boarding at the school. The school gardens have been a great success; providing nutritious food for the school and teaching children how to garden. “Before CARE came I only saw the vegetables we now grow in a book. Now we have a school garden that the students take care of. Every morning and afternoon we have to water our vegetable gardens to help them grow during the dry season” explains Trisha. “We know that if we don’t water the plants they will die.”

‘Working Together to Adapt’ⁱ

“Individually, we are one drop.
Together, we are an ocean.”
*Ryunosuke Satoro (Japanese
writer and poet)*

While the primary focus of the program was to work at the local level to support grassroots resilience building, CARE realised that it could not work alone to bring about sustainable improvement and change in people’s lives. Working with others has been a key feature of CARE’s work in Vanuatu. In this project, by working in partnership with other NGOs – Oxfam, Save the

Children, the Red Cross/Red Crescent, and the Vanuatu Rural Development Training Centres Association – CARE has been able to support the overall consortium program to increase the resilience of women, men and young people in 39 communities across 12 islands.

The consortium approach, whereby agencies work together under the umbrella of one program rather than separately, is a key feature and factor for success of the project. It brings together different agencies, with different sets of knowledge and skills (or agency 'superpowers' as they are commonly referred to), to share information, learn from each other, work together and reduce duplication, which increases the capacity and reach of the program. Key outcomes of this approach include:

- **Increased collaboration on climate change initiatives.** Working together, consortium program partners have increasingly shared information and resources with each other and with the broader Vanuatu Climate Action Network (also a product of the program). Networking, sharing of information and resources, joint planning and development of consistent tools and approaches for monitoring and evaluation has helped strengthen partnerships and increase awareness of the strengths and resources held by each agency. As a result, there is now increased consultation on and coordination with incoming climate change initiatives in Vanuatu, as well as increased collaboration between NGOs and Government on climate change initiatives, leading to increased awareness among Government staff of the work of civil society and a more consultative and inclusive approach taken by government in developing CCA policy and practice.
- **Input into climate change policy development.** Trust built with the government through the work of individual consortium agencies has facilitated input into national, regional and international community based climate change policy development and planning processes. While policies and dialogue are ongoing, the involvement of the consortium (and VCAN and civil society more broadly) in their development can be viewed as a positive step in promoting policy and practice that is more reflective of community priorities, in particular though emphasising the importance of gender and equity as foundation blocks of sustainable development, and the effectiveness of focusing on capabilities rather than technological fixes for development issues. This is an important point, given that prior to the program very little engagement of civil society in climate change issues was occurring.
- **Better coordination of technical support.** The ability to access technical support from within the consortium, and not needing to bring in external (and sometimes international) expertise, has been a key success of the program. Different consortium partners have worked together to build each other's capacity and this has helped agencies broaden their work with communities. Examples include: gender training co-facilitated by CARE and Oxfam; child protection training facilitated by Save the Children; monitoring and evaluation training co-facilitated by CARE and Oxfam; photography and videography training facilitated by Save the Children; and numerous work by SPC-GIZ across the program supporting organisations to develop and implement climate change adaptation actions.
- **Increased opportunities for funding of CBA.** The consortium model is the first of its kind in Vanuatu and has attracted a lot of interest from other stakeholders (including government), particularly in terms of the creation of collective learning, collaboration and the opportunity for increased funding (as a result of being viewed as 'value for money' and a 'one stop shop' by donors).

- **Greater efficiencies in program delivery.** The consortium approach has been instrumental in increasing the structural efficiency of the program. Consortium agencies have supported the implementation of each other’s activities. Greater documentation and sharing of lessons between consortium partners has also led to greater efficiency gains. For example: resources developed by SPC-GIZ, VRCS and CARE have been shared and used by other staff and agencies in communities not targeted by this program, as well as across VCAN and the National Advisory Board (NAB). These include: CARE’s Climate Smart Agriculture Manual; and the Vanuatu Red Cross/Vanuatu Meteorological and Geo-hazards Department’s Weather, Climate and Climate Change and Communicating Climate Change Booklets. In addition, information and learning from the 2013 and 2014 National Youth Symposiums, as well as the Futuna Agriculture have also been shared widely

‘A Framework for Resilience’ⁱⁱ

While CARE’s CBA Framework was the main apparatus for CARE’s project in Vanuatu, there was an overarching framework that provided a broader unifying approach for *all* consortium partners. The Vanuatu Resilience Framework, inspired by Twigg’s (2009) ‘Characteristics of a Disaster resilient Community’,ⁱⁱⁱ was developed jointly by consortium partners to support individual agencies’ work towards the common goal of resilience without being too prescriptive; rather providing a visual, aspirational goal to work towards together.



The Framework has been used in various ways throughout the program.

- It has supported agencies to reflect on program progress and challenges. For example, it has been used in annual reflections to chart progress toward resilience across each of its eight characteristics, and was used to frame the end-of-program evaluation.
- It has been used to provide meaning to the program at a community level. For example, community members, when asked what resilience means to them during the end-of-program evaluation, came up with many examples of resilience related to the eight characteristics. The Framework has therefore helped community members express their own perception of resilience so that they can use this to guide their actions.



- It has been used to support collaboration in the development of tools. For example, the Weather, Climate and Climate Change Handbook was developed collaboratively and is being used by all consortium partners, and has proven to be a tool relevant across the different elements of the program.^{iv}

- It has helped frame national policy development. For example, the framework has been used to guide the development of the National Sustainable Development Plan; a key strategy that provides an alternative development paradigm, going beyond economic development to include recognition of the key importance of social, cultural, and environmental objectives in a nation's prosperity.

EMERGING LESSONS

- ***Collaboration through a consortium approach can lead to more effective and efficient programs.*** If planned for and managed well – consortium-led programs can allow for more efficient sharing of resources and greater impact through joint activities. Working in a consortium can also enhance coordination when agency roles and responsibilities are well defined, and lessons more easily shared. Consortia do however require time in essential relationship management and coordination meetings, which needs to be accounted for in project planning.
- ***The use of a framework can help unify different projects and provide guidance towards a common goal of building resilience.*** The Vanuatu Resilience Framework has supported agencies in their work and has motivated rather than constrained their interventions by being non-prescriptive, cross sectoral and inclusive.
- ***Collaboration between different agencies provides greater benefits to the Vanuatu people.*** By working together across different islands, focusing on different areas of work, the program as a whole has been able to provide greater geographic and sectoral reach. By collaborating to develop joint tools and resources, to influence national policy, and share learning freely, women, men and young people have better access to information, greater knowledge and skills, and strategies to strengthen their resilience.

Post-Script to Cyclone Pam

In March 2015, Vanuatu was hit by a category 5 cyclone, one of the most powerful cyclones ever recorded in the South Pacific- Cyclone Pam.¹ Despite this, the people of Vanuatu showed significant resilience in responding. It is clear that the investment in climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction and response through the Vanuatu NGO Climate Change Adaptation Program, Vanuatu Climate Action Network and the Vanuatu Humanitarian Team was integral to Vanuatu's ability to prepare and respond to this unprecedented challenge.¹

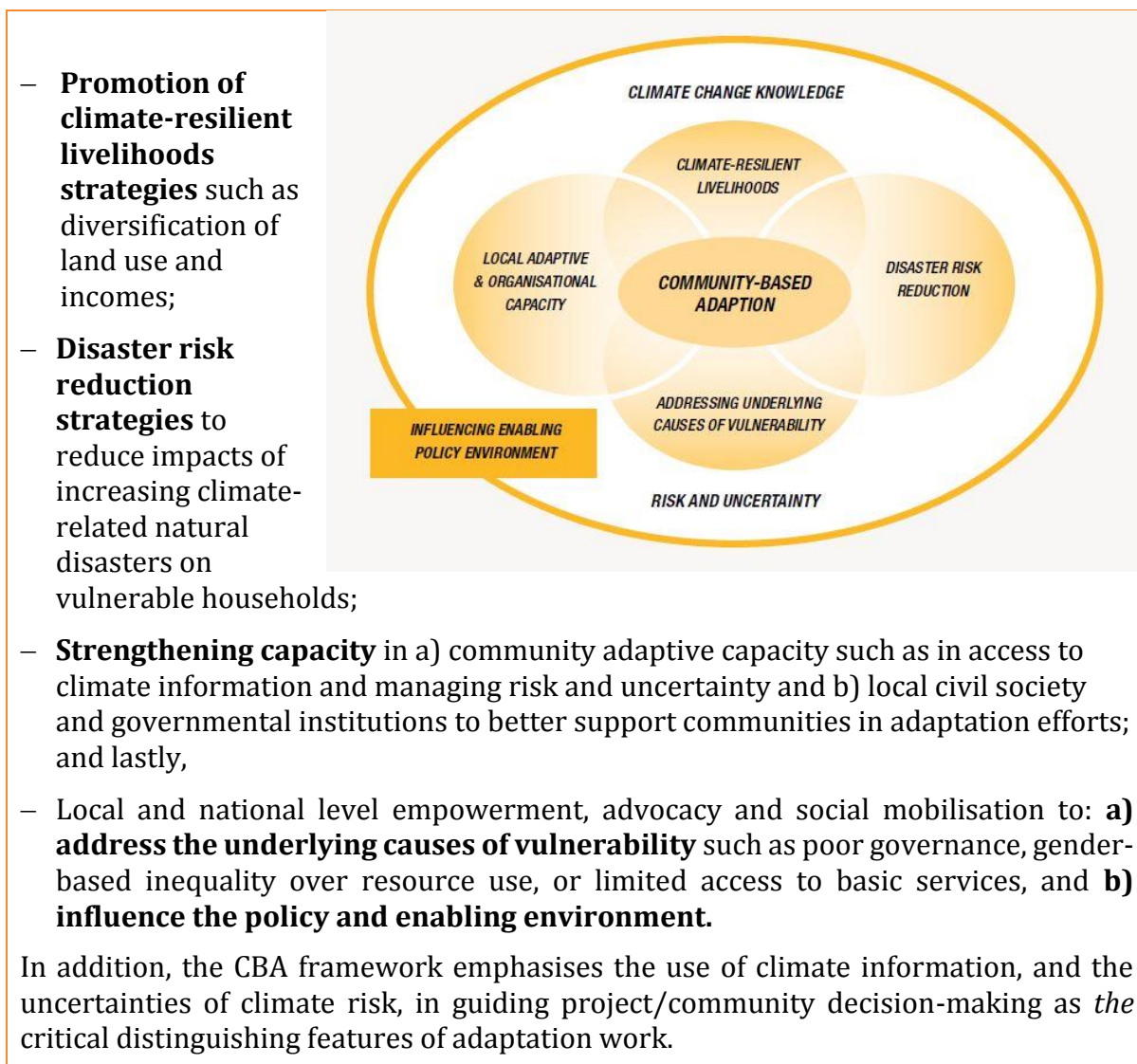
Glossary

Community-based adaptation (CBA): Interventions whose primary objective is to improve the capacity of local communities to adapt to climate change. Effective CBA requires an integrated approach that combines traditional knowledge with innovative strategies that not only address current vulnerabilities, but also build the resilience of people to face new and dynamic challenges.^v

Adaptive capacity: The ability of a system (individual or community to adjust to climate change (including climate variability and extremes) to moderate potential damages, to take advantage of opportunities, or to cope with the consequences.^{vi}

Resilience: The capacity of an individual, household, population group or system to anticipate, absorb and recover from hazards and/or effects of climate change and other shocks and stresses without compromising (and potentially enhancing) long-term prospects.^{vii} Resilience is not a fixed end state, but is a dynamic set of conditions and processes.^{viii}

Diagram 1: CARE's Community-Based Adaptation Framework^{ix}





This case study is one of a series from CARE's community-based adaptation (CBA) projects in Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste, Vanuatu and Vietnam. The purpose of these case studies is to highlight and provide examples of the practical application of CARE's CBA framework. CARE implemented these projects between July 2012 and June 2015 with funding from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) under its Community-Based Climate Change Action Grants (CBCCAG) program.

The paper was authored by Charlotte L. Sterrett of Climate Concern. www.climateconcern.net. It is based on the end-of-program evaluations conducted by Charlotte L. Sterrett, Patrick Bolte and Dennis Euker and other project materials.

The views in this paper are those of the author alone and do not necessarily represent those of CARE Australia, its partners or the Australian Government.

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ⁱ Sterrett, C.L. (2015) *Evaluation Report: Final Evaluation of the Vanuatu NGO Climate Change Adaptation Program*. Oxfam.

ⁱⁱ Ibid.

ⁱⁱⁱ Twigg, J. (2009) *Characteristics of a Disaster Resilient Community*. A Guidance Note. Version 2.

^{iv} Webb (2015) Webb, J., Vorbach, D., Boydell, E., McNaught, R. & Sterrett, C.L. (2015). 'Tools for Community-Based Adaptation: Lessons from NGO Collaboration in Vanuatu.' *Coastal Management*. 43:4: 343-345.

^v CARE (2010) *Community-Based Adaptation Toolkit*. Version 1. CARE International, p.6.

^{vi} IPCC (2000) 'Glossary of Terms used in the IPCC Fourth Assessment Report WGII'. Geneva, Switzerland.

^{vii} Turnbull, M. & Sterrett, C. L. (2013) *Toward Resilience: A Guide to Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation*. Emergency Capacity Building Project, p.160.

^{viii} Ibid.

^{ix} CARE International (n.d.) *Framework of Milestones and Indicators for Community-Based Adaptation*. CARE International.