



CASE STUDY

Putting Words into Action

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

CARE International in Vanuatu is working with communities across Tafea to build their resilience to disasters and climate change. As part of the Resilience program, communities form their own Community Disaster and Climate Change Committee. With CARE's support, the committees include balanced numbers of men and women, helping to increase women's voice in community decision making.

Meet David

David Tarofua is a 40-year-old father of three girls from the island of Futuna in Tafea Province, Vanuatu. David is the vice-chair of the Area Council and is a member of the Matangi Community Disaster and Climate Change Committee (CDCCC). David is also an advocate for women in leadership.

Before CARE came to David's community in 2008, households prepared themselves for disasters, with little communication between community members. Now, everything has changed. David's community is currently receiving support from the "Yumi Redi 2 (Be Better Prepared)" project funded by the Disaster Preparedness Programme of the European Commission's Humanitarian Office and the Australian Aid-funded "Yumi Stap Redi Long Climate Change" project implemented in an Oxfam-led consortium.

In David's community, CARE has been providing training to the CDCCC members and supported the CDCCC to organise and run cyclone simulations. CARE, in partnership with the Vanuatu Red Cross has also run basic first aid training. The consortium project has been working with communities on Futuna to improve their food preservation techniques to strengthen their resilience to climate shocks and improve their food security.

When Cyclone Lusi was bearing down on Vanuatu in March 2014, the CDCCC and the broader communities sprang into action. "We called the CARE office for information on the cyclone, the CDCCC used the cyclone tracking map; we put the information on the community noticeboard and kept the community updated. People were really prepared," says David.

Since the cyclone, the National Disaster Management Office has recruited a Provincial Disaster Officer to be based in Tanna, Tafea Province, who will provide the crucial link that communities need when disasters strike instead of relying on CARE for disaster information.



David Tarofua is determined to put words into action and include women in the local Area Council. © CARE

David was chosen by his community to represent Futuna at a DIPECHO Partners Workshop in Port Vila, with donors, government and NGO representatives present. This workshop gave him and seven other community representatives the opportunity to provide direct feedback to the government and to donors on their needs, hear from other NGOs on their projects, and also ensure that they helped shape the disaster management priorities over the next three years.

“I was very excited and happy,” he says. “I felt like somebody. I now have the information and am going to help my island and help to change the mentality of the people.”

David has seen a number of changes in his community since the CARE project started. “People prepare early now,” he says proudly. “Also, before CDCCs only had men but now we have women representatives. They speak on their own. They are brave. They have good ideas. Before men decide things and women just have to do it. Now, things are getting better.”

But David is not stopping there. “I have a plan to involve women in the Area Council. I told the Assistant Secretary General (second in charge for Tafea Province) that we need to change. Churches have women but chiefs (Area Councils) don’t have women,” David says with a beaming smile.

When asked why it was important to include women in the Area Council, David explains, “We need women’s voice on the council. We also need transparency and to be accountable. It will help the council. If there is only men, there will be misuse of everything. We say we respect women but it’s only a word. We need women on the Area Council.”

David is still working to convince some senior officials but with his determination and commitment to the cause, anything is possible.

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