

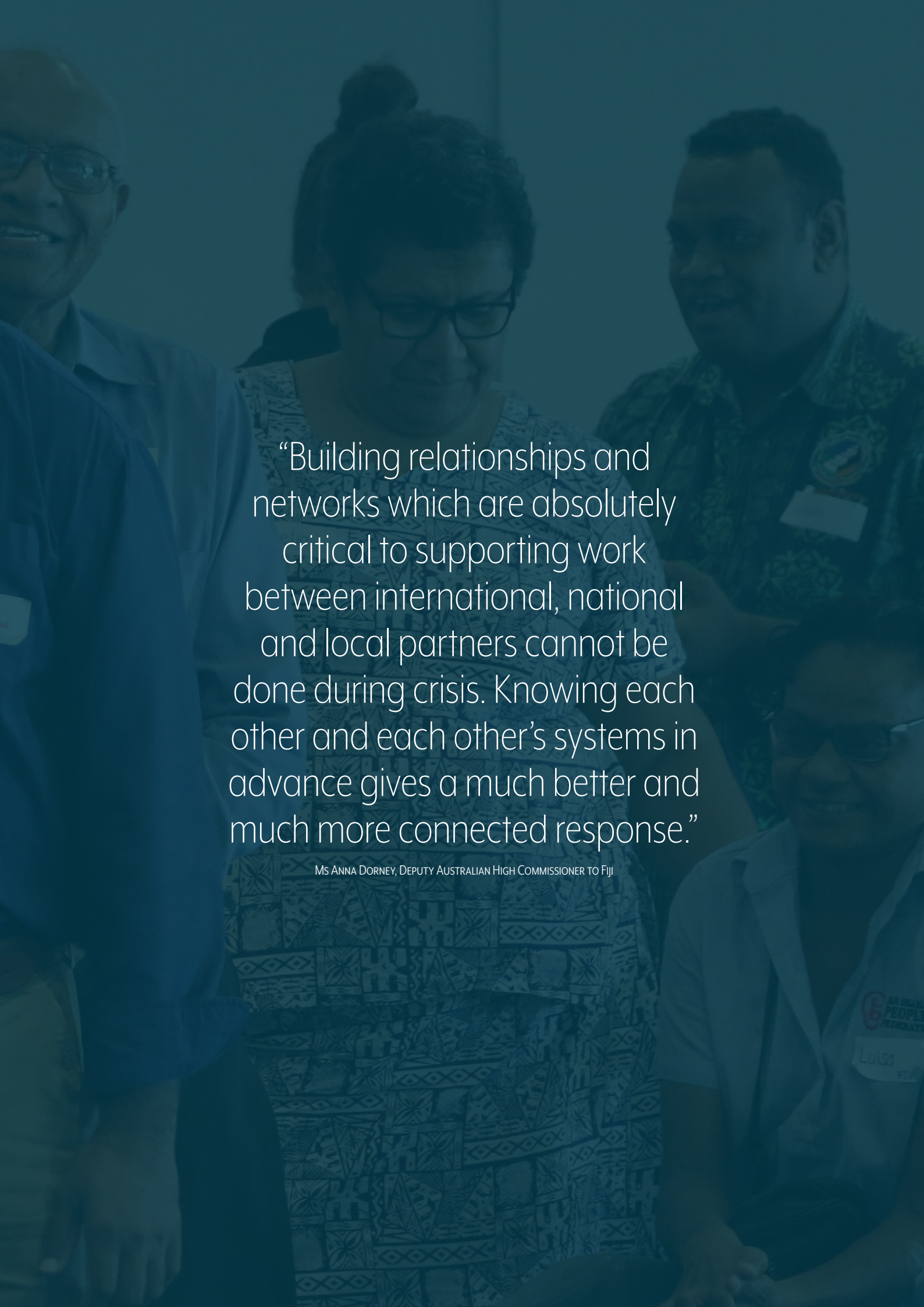
LEARNING REPORT

# Operationalising Localisation and the Participation Revolution: Communications Preparedness and Accountability for Disaster Response in Fiji and Vanuatu

A SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM THE JOINT FIJI-VANUATU KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING EVENT :  
5 - 6 MARCH 2020, HOLIDAY INN, SUVA, FIJI





A group of four people are gathered around a document, looking at it intently. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. The text is centered over the image.

“Building relationships and networks which are absolutely critical to supporting work between international, national and local partners cannot be done during crisis. Knowing each other and each other’s systems in advance gives a much better and much more connected response.”

Ms ANNA DORNEY, DEPUTY AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER TO FIJI



## LEARNING REPORT

# A Summary Of Findings From The Joint Fiji-Vanuatu Knowledge And Learning Event

5 - 6 MARCH 2020, HOLIDAY INN, SUVA, FIJI



**REFLECTING ON THE PROJECT:**  
*Operationalising Localisation  
and the Participation  
Revolution: Communications  
Preparedness and  
Accountability for Disaster  
Response in Fiji and Vanuatu*

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“Establishing the CCE Working Group has brought together a broad range of stakeholders involved in the communication space and has opened up more room for better coordination amongst ourselves. I for one can vouch for the importance of communications with our stakeholders and with the community in the event of a disaster.”

MS VASITI SOKO, DIRECTOR, FIJI NDMO

## About The Project

THE JOINT FIJI AND VANUATU LEARNING EVENT held over 5 - 6 March 2020 in Suva, Fiji was a key action linked to the project *Operationalising Localisation and the Participation Revolution: Communications Preparedness and Accountability for Disaster Response in Fiji and Vanuatu* – a project funded by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

The project seeks to operationalise the Grand Bargain participation revolution and localisation commitments through government-led preparedness platforms in countries where the majority of disasters are caused by natural hazards. It is jointly implemented by members of the national Communications Clusters, the National Disaster Management Offices (NDMO) and the Ministries of Information and Communication in Fiji and Vanuatu, in collaboration with the Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities (CDAC) Network and Ground Truth Solutions (GTS)

The overall rationale behind the project is that systematic engagement with communities improves programme quality and impact. The project is a locally driven systems-level innovation with the potential for replication in other countries and seeks to address two critical needs in times of disaster or conflict:

- i) That affected communities are meaningfully engaged throughout the humanitarian preparedness and response phase and have access to life-saving information and communications capacities to enable their leadership.
- ii) That the humanitarian response is systematically informed by and adapts to the views, perceptions and priorities of affected communities. Perceptual data from crisis-affected people will feed into and inform the nationally-led communication platform.

In 2018, scoping missions were undertaken in [Fiji](#)<sup>1</sup> and [Vanuatu](#)<sup>2</sup>, with gaps for collective preparedness action identified. The project addresses the findings and recommendations outlined in both reports.

In 2019, the Fiji NDMO formalised the CCE Working Group (CCE WG) under the Fiji Communications Cluster as the national CCE platform that will progress collective CCE initiatives. Approximately 120 individuals from 46 organisations have been involved in CCE platform activities to date in Fiji - from government, international and national non-government organisations, telecommunications providers, donors, UN agencies and the private sector.

In Vanuatu, the CCE platform is a Sub-cluster of the national Telecommunications Cluster. Members include Government, NGOs, INGOs, Media and Telecommunications providers. Four Working Groups have been established, these are: Training, Feedback Mechanism, Systems, Coordination.

In March 2020, the project was coming to the end of its second year of implementation, providing an opportune time to reflect on achievements and challenges to date.

## About CDAC Network

Established in 2009, [CDAC Network](#)<sup>3</sup> is the global alliance of many of the world's biggest humanitarian and media development organisations – including UN agencies, the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, NGOs, media and specialist communications organisations – committed to putting the power in humanitarian action back in the hands of communities.

## About Ground Truth Solutions

[GTS](#)<sup>4</sup> is a specialised agency that helps humanitarian responders to systemically listen and respond to feedback from people affected by crisis.



## About The Learning Event

The Joint Fiji-Vanuatu Knowledge and Learning Event was organised by CDAC, GTS and CARE Vanuatu, in cooperation with the NDMOs and Australian High Commissions in Fiji and Vanuatu, together with Communication and Community Engagement (CCE) platform members and stakeholders from both countries.

Nine members of the Vanuatu CCE platform joined Fiji CCE stakeholders to together reflect on the strategies, best practices and common challenges of the two-country programme to date and take forward approaches and potential solutions that enable more consistent and systematic two-way CCE for disaster-risk and crisis-affected communities. A full list of participating agencies is provided in Annex 1.

The learning event was officially opened by Ms Vasiti Soko, Director, Fiji NDMO. A welcome message was provided by video from Mr Peter Korisa, Operations Manager, Vanuatu NDMO. The keynote address was delivered by Ms Anna Dorney, Deputy Australian High Commissioner to Fiji. A full agenda for the two-day event is provided at Annex 2.

### Expected outcomes included:

- » The benefits and challenges of collective and collaborative CCE approaches in Fiji and Vanuatu are captured and synthesised, with findings documented and key recommendations outlined for future action.
- » Common learnings are available that can be applied to the development of collective CCE platforms in other Pacific Island Countries and Territories.
- » Relationships are built between technical teams from Vanuatu and Fiji that support strengthened future collaboration.

“We set up the CCE Sub-Cluster to strengthen communication and community engagement during preparedness for a hazard and imminent disaster, and during response addressing the disaster impact. The CCE sub-cluster will help promote an understanding of the importance of and commitment to effective and timely communication with disaster-affected communities. Tools and systems have been put in place and we will continue to trial innovative approaches to ensure that disaster response is informed and effectively addresses the needs of affected communities.”

MR ABRAHAM NASAK, DIRECTOR, VANUATU NATIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT OFFICE



# What Is A Communication And Community Engagement (CCE) Platform?



“Communicating with affected communities lies at the heart of effective humanitarian action... It goes beyond providing information; it’s about relationships, understanding, engaging and acting in a way that empowers communities, amplifies their voice and enables their contribution to lead their own response.”

MS ANNA DORNEY, DEPUTY AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER TO FIJI

**COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (CCE)** is an area of humanitarian action based on the principle that communication is aid. It gives priority to sharing life-saving, actionable information with people affected by disaster using two-way communication channels so aid providers listen to and act on people's needs, suggested solutions, feedback and complaints, and people receiving assistance have a say in and lead decisions that affect them. It also prioritises keeping people in crisis connected with each other and the outside world.

National CCE Platforms are designed to provide a national capability to support a full lifecycle of engagement between communities and those that support them during a crisis. This is a nationally based effort to listen to communities, use those insights to guide and adapt response strategies, and then effectively communicate information that communities and individuals need.

While some might think of platforms as technical projects, these initiatives include far more than just technology. It is built upon three major components that need to work together, linking diverse organisations, communities, and groups in a collaborative effort to speak and listen to one another. These components are:

- 1. A Collaborative Structure/ Network:** One of the principal challenges of communications and engagement during a crisis is that many different organisations are actively engaged in crisis response. Their efforts to communicate with communities and interview those affected by the crisis often overlap or leave gaps in coverage. Because organisations communicate independently, practices vary widely with the potential for inconsistent quality. A Collaborative Network addresses this fragmented approach to communications and engagement by linking diverse organisations together that support a crisis response effort.
- 2. Talking to Communities (Disseminate):** The second major Platform component focuses on enabling clear, accurate, and consistent communications from disaster response organisations to communities in crisis, using language and terminology that members of a community understand. To realise this mission, there is a need to understand the preferences of different groups within a community, including those who live outside traditional positions of power and influence. These insights can then be used to craft messages and information that are appropriate to community needs and are delivered through channels that they most easily access and trust. Leveraging the collaborative network, messages can be coordinated so that information is consistent across many different crisis responders.
- 3. Listening to Communities (Listen):** A key aspect of the Cycle of Engagement is that the varied members of a community facing crisis have important information, insights, and feedback that can help shape and direct effective crisis response efforts. Engaging with diverse groups within a community closes the loop of communication and learning so that information doesn't simply flow on a one-way path from crisis response organisations to people in crisis. As before, this work is rooted in an understanding of the different groups within a community and their engagement preferences. Many different channels can support this work from formal surveys to highly unstructured social media feeds. Many different organisations may participate in this listening effort, so there is a need to bring the information together and then share it across different response organisations.

**For more information see:** [A Framework for Assessing Success of National CCE Platforms](#)<sup>5</sup>

“CCE advocates on the use of two-way communication channels so aid providers can listen to and act on people's needs, feedback and complaints, and people receiving assistance have a say and take a lead role in decisions that affect them. It also prioritises keeping people connected with each other and the outside world.”

MS VASITI SOKO, DIRECTOR, FIJI NDMO





“Fiji and Vanuatu as small developing countries in the Pacific share similar experiences and sentiments on managing crisis. According to the World Risk Index 2019, both Fiji and Vanuatu are among the 12 most vulnerable disaster countries in the world and we are therefore honoured to share these experiences with you.”

MS VASITI SOKO, DIRECTOR, FIJI NDMO

#### HIGHLIGHTS FROM LEARNING EVENT DISCUSSIONS

## 1. Benefits of collective and collaborative approaches to CCE in Fiji and Vanuatu

### Workshop participants identified the following benefits of collaborative approaches to CCE:

- » Strong relationships and connections developed during ‘peacetime’ ensure information is disseminated more effectively to stakeholders when a disaster strikes
- » Better coordination of information dissemination among stakeholders
- » Better understanding of community’s information needs
- » Messaging is more effective – messages are simplified, ensuring they are understood by communities
- » Identifying and addressing the needs of the vulnerable groups (people with disabilities, sexual minorities and the elderly). Ensuring these diverse groups are included and information following a disaster is accessible to all.
- » Sharing data collected after a disaster among stakeholders ensures a more effective response and recovery effort.

Participants felt that collaboration between Fiji and Vanuatu is really important as the two countries share similar challenges, natural hazards (such as cyclones) and settings (such as government and community structures, geography) and can learn from one another.

### Possible areas of collaboration between Fiji and Vanuatu could include:

- » Looking at how to ensure community inclusiveness, in other words, listening to the community about what information they want and in what language
- » Looking at how information is shared among all networks/ CCE stakeholders and developing and disseminating messages that are trusted by church leaders
- » Furthering the connection with government and the broader humanitarian architecture– as the CCE platforms in both Fiji and Vanuatu are led by government (NDMO and communication focal points)





## 2. Key Achievements And Progress To Date

Localisation is working from a national ownership point of view; the platforms in Vanuatu and Fiji are completely locally owned and led with a strong sense of local leadership. There is a strong and growing commitment to the importance of communicating with disaster-affected communities in both countries and the platforms are valued with demand for them to continue. This takes time, but the NDMO led model provides a strong basis for sustainability.

In Vanuatu, collaboration among different levels is working well. For example, Community Disaster and Climate Change Committees (CDCCC) are already linked with the Department of Communications.

### Key activities for the Fiji CCE platform to date include:

- » Review of CCE components of the Fiji Communications Cluster Terms of Reference, finalise governance arrangements for the Cluster, development of a collective CCE action plan
- » Development of Who is doing What Where When (4Ws) mapping tool relating to CCE in Fiji to improve coordination among CCE stakeholders, in partnership with NDMO and OCHA
- » Technical training in CCE/ Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) tailored to the Fiji context with over 40 representatives from government, national and international partners and the private sector taking part, co-facilitated by CDAC, IFRC and UNICEF and a range of CCE stakeholders and partners
- » Training delivered in Suva on systematic data collection, analysis and feedback, facilitated by Ground Truth Solutions
- » One-day Northern Divisional CCE meeting/ training during National Disaster Awareness Week (NDAW) involving over 45 participants from NDMO and other Northern divisional stakeholders
- » Updating the Fiji Media Telecommunications Landscape Guide as a preparedness resource to inform communication strategy design
- » Safeguarding/ social protection and inclusion training for CCE Working Group – co-facilitated by Save the Children, FDPF, Rainbow Pride, Live and Learn
- » Development of survey tools, data collection and analysis completed in three communities by GTS & Habitat for Humanity Fiji. Habitat then identified 16 'corrective actions' in response to community feedback, adapting their programming accordingly

[Find out more information about the CCE platform in Fiji<sup>6</sup>](#)

“This project has enabled us in Fiji to revitalise the Communication Cluster through collaboration between the Ministry of Communications and NDMO. The focus areas covered by the Communication Cluster are communication and community engagement (CCE) and I can reconfirm the Fiji Government is very forefronting in regards to community engagement and emergency telecommunication.”

Ms VASITI SOKO, DIRECTOR, FIJI NDMO

## FIJI PROGRAMME SNAPSHOT:

# Development Of A 4Ws Mapping Tool For CCE In Fiji

Ms Prishika Nadan, Senior Administration Officer, Aid & Humanitarian Coordination, Fiji NDMO presented the Who is doing What Where When (4Ws) mapping tool relating to CCE in Fiji [available here](#) that has been developed with CDAC support in partnership with NDMO and OCHA. Its purpose is to:

- » Support coordination at national and sub-national levels
- » Encourage the sharing of resources
- » Reduce duplication
- » Improve efficiency

“We’ve been really pleased with the progress on this project... it’s a credit to the leadership of the NDMOs and to the Vanuatu and Fijian Ministries for Communication and Information.”

Ms ANNA DORNEY, DEPUTY AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER TO FIJI



“It’s critical that Communication and Community Engagement platforms involve diverse stakeholders coordinating and working collaboratively together, with the leadership and guidance of NDMO and Ministry of Communications”


MR VILIAME TIKOTANI, SENIOR INFORMATION OFFICER  
WITH THE FIJI MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS  
AND FIJI CCE PLATFORM LEAD

### Key activities for the Vanuatu CCE platform to date include:

- » National stakeholder training
- » Area Council, Community Disaster and Climate Change Committee (CDCCC) and/ or Provincial Disaster Committee (PDC) training conducted in Tafea and Sanma provinces
- » Standardised questions agreed and three pilot surveys have been developed, relating to preparedness and information preferences. These survey tools could be shared with the Fiji CCE platform as an example
- » Communications channels mapped, Media Landscape Guide developed/ updated
- » National SOP relating to communications and community engagement reviewed
- » An adaptable training package has been developed, with Bislama translations developed for training videos and animations
- » A CCE Handbook is currently in development, including humanitarian response communications channels map, enumerator TOR and code of conduct, collective feedback mechanism partnership agreement, and data analysis guidelines

[Find out more information about the CCE platform in Vanuatu<sup>7</sup>](#)





“[The project] assisted the Communications Cluster to ensure we don’t focus only on the hard solutions but ...[also that we] ensure communities in affected areas are fully aware of what we’re doing at the national level... as well as at the community level. [Two-way communication also helps us] get a clear understanding of the real needs of the affected community.”

MR PETER KORISA, OPERATIONS MANAGER, VANUATU NDMO

#### VANUATU PROGRAMME SNAPSHOT:

## Pilot Surveys

Pilot surveys were developed to test a feedback mechanism that could be used before and after disasters, demonstrate how it can fit with the disaster response system, and understand the cost, usability and response rates obtained by using Kobo as opposed to Rapid Pro data collection software.

The surveys were tested in three different islands with different contexts that are affected by disasters (East Ambae and South East Ambrym - remote islands affected by an active volcano, and Blacksands - a peri-urban area near Port Vila, susceptible to flooding and cyclones).

#### Survey findings revealed that:

- » Many people in both Ambae and Blacksands feel they didn’t receive enough information before and after the last disaster, especially two months after.
- » Information on the Government’s plans for support is important to people in both Ambae and Blacksands, immediately after but especially two months after a disaster.
- » There are different information preferences between urban Blacksands and remote Ambae, but information from NDMO (direct and via SMS) is important to both.
- » People in Blacksands prefer direct feedback channels to Government (e.g. surveys, direct meetings) while people in Ambae prefer community-based channels (e.g. via chiefs).

#### The Vanuatu CCE platform is now considering the following questions:

- » Radio is an important source of information – how do we use this to its full advantage?
- » Chiefs are highly trusted information sources – how can we leverage this more?
- » People want to provide feedback directly to national government – how can we facilitate that? Eg. community meetings, a feedback phonenumber or messaging service?
- » There is mixed awareness of Community Disaster and Climate Change Committees (CDCCC) – how can we raise their profile in communities?





“As we all know, communities themselves are always first responders, playing an active role when it comes to ensuring their own protection and resilience. The more local the communication-related actions, more effective they are, and the more likely they’ll be to reach the most vulnerable. Enabling these capabilities is vital.”

Ms ANNA DORNEY,  
DEPUTY AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER TO FIJI

### Furthering localisation – Pacific localisation indicators

In June 2018, PIANGO and Humanitarian Advisory Group (HAG) convened a Pacific Talanoa of humanitarian actors from Fiji, Tonga and Vanuatu to discuss progress on localisation and to explore priorities for measuring change. The idea of a ‘localisation journey’ which all humanitarian actors are on developed, although priorities and contexts differ. Pacific actors articulated the ‘signposts’ that would show what change is happening along this journey, and whether progress towards a locally-led humanitarian system is occurring. A framework for measuring localisation in Pacific was developed to be used in Fiji, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and Tonga.

#### Pacific actors prioritised the following critical areas in which evidence of change is needed:

- » Leadership
- » Participation
- » Coordination and complementarity
- » Partnerships
- » Capacity
- » Funding

#### Find out more about the localisation indicators<sup>8</sup>

Ms Vani Catanasiga, Executive Director, Fiji Council of Social Services (FCOSS), shared the progress Fiji and Vanuatu have made on localisation, including a mini comparative analysis. More information on Fiji and Vanuatu’s localisation journeys is available [here \(Fiji\)](#)<sup>9</sup> and [here \(Vanuatu\)](#)<sup>10</sup>.

#### The way forward includes:

1. The Localisation Technical Working Group under Pacific Resilience Partnership was established in January 2020
2. Fiji CSO District protocols and CSO directory drafted, to be socialised in 2020
3. Fiji Sub-national coordination synergy workshops between DCOSS, local NGOs who operate in divisions and Central and Western Divisional Commissioners
4. Early-stage discussions to establish national localisation steering committee (local NGOs and divisional government arms to collaborate and lead)



### 3. Challenges

Understanding the challenges identified by CCE stakeholders and platform members helps us to collectively design solutions and supports more coordinated responses. Participants identified challenges relating to the relationships between stakeholders and the broader humanitarian system, utilisation of selected communication channels and the dissemination of messaging to communities.

In many cases, platform members have already identified solutions to these challenges and are working on implementing them. In other cases, further awareness of these challenges will support the identification of common solutions.

#### Vanuatu

##### CCE system and structures

- » **Engagement across government** is limited at times, for example with the Vanuatu Office of the Government Chief Information Office, as there is a reluctance to be involved in 'non-technical' work.
- » **Disconnect between government and community levels** – information is not reaching communities effectively. In theory, two-way communication is in place between national and sub-national levels and communities but in practise this is not functioning.
- » **Lack of readiness for some disasters** - CCE stakeholders from Vanuatu felt less prepared for drought, coconut rhino beetle and pandemics than for cyclones, volcanos or tsunamis.
- » There is a lack of agreement on **where communications and community engagement work fits** within Vanuatu's response system and who is responsible, particularly at sub-national levels.
- » **Low literacy and limited English** at sub-national levels can be overcome with visual-based and Bislama-language resources. Therefore, an adaptable training package has been developed for Vanuatu, with Bislama translations developed for training videos and animations.
- » Facilitating **community participation in surveys** and managing respondents' expectations can be a challenge. Volunteers help to encourage respondents to participate in surveys and to explain questions where needed, therefore volunteer training is important. Digital data collection tools such as Kobo make data collection and analysis faster and easier.

##### CCE channels and message development

- » Ensuring the **right, high quality information** is disseminated to the right audience (considering age, gender, ability) at the right time is critical.
- » In some cases **timely dissemination** of messaging has been a challenge
- » The **cost** associated with utilising some communication channels to reach communities is a challenge – emphasising the need to strategically select communication channels, considering the reach to and impact on target audiences and the resources required to utilise the selected channel
- » People only act on **information from trusted sources** – therefore, it is essential to ensure that official messages are developed, targeted to appropriate audiences and disseminated on the appropriate channels and platforms.
- » The Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) disseminates messages through all available channels, however, they recognise the need to **tailor messages** appropriately for communities, and ensure **NDMO authorisation** of messages prior to dissemination.
- » The difficulty in informal settlements of getting the message across, as there is no formal channel of communication or community leadership. Radio can be an important channel to reach these informal settlements.
- » In formal settings, it is important that key spokespeople get the message right as they have more influence than in informal settings.
- » Religious leadership is a key stakeholder to utilise – the Church Agencies Network Disaster Operations (CAN DO) is one example which cuts across faiths.



“As I stand here in Suva, I’m conscious that localisation is something you live, sleep and breathe each day and have for centuries and your journey is the authentic localisation experience.”

MS MARIAN CASEY-MASLEN,  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CDAC NETWORK



CARE/Victoria Hernandez 2020

## Fiji

### CCE system and structures

- » There is more emphasis on disaster response rather than planning for preparedness – we need to consider how to change this and involve CSOs more in preparedness.
- » Facilitation of the CCE platform tends to fall to an individual focal point within the Ministry of Communications – how can this be strengthened so that there is a robust system in place that remains even when the leadership or individual focal point changes or is unavailable?
- » Understanding roles and responsibilities - in Fiji, NDMO is now the umbrella organisation for all disasters – previously, the Ministry of Health took the lead on some, while NDMO led on the response to natural disasters. Group discussion by Fiji participants indicated that this needed further clarification as it caused confusion amongst stakeholders and delayed coordinated messaging to communities.
- » Partnerships between the CCE platform and the media and private sector are essential and need to be further strengthened

### Improving coordination, maintaining momentum

- » While NGOs and government are increasingly working together on CCE in Fiji, there appears to be **miscommunication between different levels of government**, both internally (at national, divisional, provincial, district levels) and externally, between government and NGOs.
- » In addition, there are many **layers of administrative command** and there could be better **coordination** between the Clusters and their respective Ministries. Currently, civil society organisations often deliver response efforts before the government is aware they are doing it. Participants felt that this situation could be improved by:
  - a) Ensuing delegated authority works in accordance with the National Disaster Management Act. Entry into a region needs to go through a central body to enable better communication and avoid duplication.
  - b) Clarifying and communicating the role of Clusters, FCOSS and the NDMO in relation to national coordination (FCOSS is responsible for NGO coordination only).
  - c) Strengthening communication from the provincial and district levels to the community and making it more systematic. Leadership roles and responsibilities and the flow of communication top-down and vice versa must be clearly communicated and understood at all levels.
  - d) Strengthening communication at the district level. In addition, all Clusters should be represented at the district level to ensure streamlined communications minimises duplication.
  - e) NGOs need to better communicate among themselves (for example, using a Viber chat group to improve NGO coordination)
  - f) Need for further clarification on the legal framework upon which National Disaster Management is based (National Disaster Management Act)
- » It is important to develop a **solid foundational relationship** with national actors and government partners, consult widely and ‘bring people along’ from the beginning to support local ownership
- » Encouraging a core group of interested stakeholders to drive the CCE platform improves **sustainability**
- » Joint, common or collective activities help to build **momentum**
- » There is a need to continually consult and **coordinate** with CCE partners and stakeholders, including aligning organisational workplans to fill gaps
- » Building **flexibility** into the project timeline and joint workplan enables adaptability to changing needs
- » **Multi-year funding and support** would provide certainty to CCE stakeholders

### CCE channels, message development and two-way communication

- » Information from the MET Service is often **too technical** – it needs to be explained using language and terminology that the community understands
- » There is a need for more **CCE support/ technical assistance** as well as hardware such as satellite phones and radios
- » **Two-way communication** needs to be strengthened - the delay receiving incoming information from communities, the format of the information received, the process for verifying information received from communities needs to be examined
- » The **‘feedback loop’** needs to be strengthened – information and what it was used for needs to be fed back to the ‘owner’ of the information (the community)



“Overwhelming amounts of data are now potentially available to decision makers from numerous sources but the challenge for all of us lies in ensuring that this data is analysed quickly and it is used to inform decisions.

This will require creating greater incentives to take the voices of affected people into consideration and to adapt programs accordingly. Here at DFAT, we want humanitarian actors to demonstrate how they’ve used information from affected people to inform programme decisions. We’re keen to follow the learning from this two-country project and to identify what can be adapted for use in other Pacific countries.”

MS ANNA DORNEY,  
DEPUTY AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER TO FIJI



## TABLE TOP EXERCISE:

# Reflections From A Cyclone Simulation Activity

### SCENARIO: Tropical Cyclone Valentine, March 2020

**SITUATION:** A tropical disturbance has been recorded off the coast of Samoa on the 14th of February 2020. As it gently passes Samoa without incidence, it intensifies into a tropical cyclone to the north of Tonga and is tracking towards the east coast of Fiji. Cyclone Valentine continues on its path gradually increasing in strength to a category 5 intensity and is due to make landfall on Viti Levu on the 1st of March 2020

TC Valentine tears through Fiji and by the 3rd of March is moving west and north towards Vanuatu. Over the course of 5th-10th March, it tracks north up the east coast of Vanuatu and eventually dissipates to the north east. While TC Valentine has degenerated, ongoing monitoring shows several additional erratic and unpredictable disturbances in the same Pacific basin region.

In both Fiji and Vanuatu, TC Valentine causes huge storm surges, significant wind damage and heavy rainfall resulting in a number of deaths, localised extensive flooding and landslides due to prolonged and intense rainfall. It likewise causes damages to housing, infrastructure and agriculture.

“The simulation exercise turned our discussions into a practical application and broadened our thinking.”

FEEDBACK FROM THE Fiji NDMO

### Response Planning Matrix – probing questions

Cluster/WG collective action	Outgoing communications to communities	Incoming information from communities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Is a CCE WG or sub-cluster meeting triggered?</li> <li>» By whom? Who triggers it if that person or agency is unavailable?</li> <li>» What role will it play and how often does it meet?</li> <li>» Is there additional/surge capacity to respond to a category 5 cyclone in country, if needed.</li> <li>» What resources are available for additional CCE response actions?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» What messages need to be shared, to whom, and when?</li> <li>» Are they pre-prepared and is technical content endorsed?</li> <li>» If not, who will draft or revise the messages, who will approve them?</li> <li>» Who will send the messages?</li> <li>» What channels will be used?</li> <li>» What mechanisms or systems are needed to facilitate this process?</li> <li>» What are the challenges that might arise and how could we mitigate against them?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» What information would you need, and from whom?</li> <li>» Who will decide on the content, who will collect it and who needs to see the data?</li> <li>» What channels will be used to collect the information?</li> <li>» Who will analyse and share incoming information from communities?</li> <li>» How will the feedback data be used to inform agency, NDMO and response-wide decision making?</li> <li>» What mechanism or systems are needed to facilitate this process?</li> <li>» What are the challenges that might arise and how could we mitigate against them?</li> </ul>

Above: questions posed to participants during a simulation exercise, enabling them to reflect on preparedness for disasters





“We all know that there is often a massive disconnect between global commitments and the reality on the ground – and, as DFAT noted, there is often a need for learning, unlearning and relearning – this learning curve or circle is particularly relevant to the humanitarian sector where we have a tradition of top-down approaches.”

Ms MARIAN CASEY-MASLEN,  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CDAC NETWORK

## 4. Opportunities and needs going forwards

Participants identified a number of areas that could be further strengthened, in addition to the summary of needs highlighted in section 1.

- » **Embedding CCE capacity with NDMO** is a really important strategy. It provides opportunities and entry points for communications to be strengthened, helps to link with and embed in the national disaster response systems, and supports strong local leadership.
- » The need to **increase understanding of how the system works** – what the established national and sub-national structure is, how we can work through the structure and in other ways to communicate effectively. In Fiji, the Disaster Management Act is currently being reviewed - once this is finalised, stakeholders need to be updated and informed.
- » **Communication between Clusters** needs to be consistent and strengthened, and NDMO needs to be kept updated to reduce duplication and gaps
- » The need to **plan for staff turnover and improve knowledge management**. Successive policies have been brought in but new staff/stakeholders don't have the background knowledge they need to communicate with communities effectively.
- » The **media** during an interactive session indicated they are always available to help CSOs and governments during disasters. In Fiji, there have been instances where communities provide pertinent information for first responders through radio and social media.
- » **Regional surge capacity and cross learning** in the Pacific is critical - we have an opportunity to foster that.
- » More training on how to **unpack and simplify the jargon in messaging** including the use of colours and braille for people living with disabilities

### Priorities for the CCE platform in Fiji going forwards include:

- » Strengthening **systems and coordination** among CCE stakeholders to further linkages with existing activities (across both development and humanitarian/ DRR sectors)
- » Continuing to **expand the membership** and deepen participation of CCE WG members, including across a diverse range of government Ministries and national, private sector, INGO and UN representation
- » Ongoing **advocacy** as to the benefits of collective CCE approaches and activities



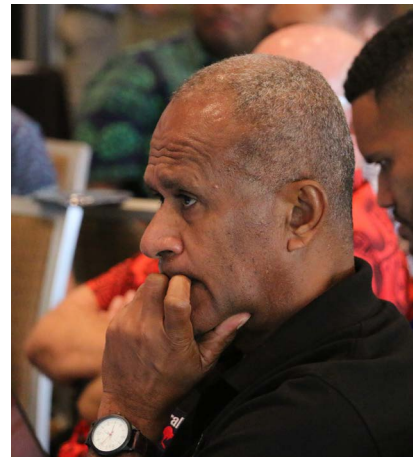


- » Providing **technical assistance, mentoring and training** to improve the effectiveness of CCE activities
- » Expanding roll out of CCE support at **divisional levels**
- » Support the Development of a **knowledge management platform** for the CCE WG
- » Further **message development** and pre-testing with communities

In Vanuatu, opportunities exist to build on the increased awareness of CCE's value and the increased capacity for implementing CCE as a result of capacity strengthening, mentoring, accompanying and training, in order to improve systems and integrate them more thoroughly in disaster response.

**Priorities for the CCE platform in Vanuatu include:**

- » Continuing to **integrate CCE** within national and provincial disaster plans
- » Developing, updating and disseminating **tools** to strengthen CCE within preparedness and response, including Disaster Response Community Perception Survey tools
- » Digitising existing community feedback tools, including codifying data to link better to decision making
- » Provision of CCE **surge support** in the event of a disaster
- » Provision of CCE support to **other Clusters** in Vanuatu to integrate CCE elements within cluster plans, including supporting clear communication of key messages, such as safeguarding PSEA messaging from the Gender and Protection Cluster
- » Conduct national, provincial, Area Council and TOT **training** on CCE
- » Reviewing **online platforms or knowledge management systems** to support information sharing and advocacy



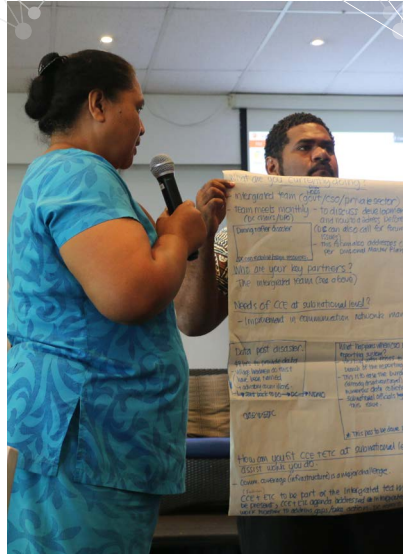


## 5. Summary Of Needs

A summary of identified needs is included below, in line with the Pacific priorities or indicators for measuring progress on localisation.

	Indicators	Summary of needs
1	<p><b>Leadership</b></p> <p>NDMO leadership is critical for sustainability as it's about disaster management; with support from other Ministries. CCE cuts across all departments in times of disaster.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Ensure leadership and political will is 'secured' at all levels of leadership</li> <li>» Champions/influencers of CCE are identified and consistently updated to ensure communication/information is disseminated at all levels</li> </ul>
2	<p><b>Coordination</b></p> <p>Dedicated CCE Platforms are needed. There needs to be clarity on and knowledge of national and sub-national communication and decision-making structures and processes from top down and bottom up to reduce confusion and prevent duplication. This includes knowledge of the legal framework, traditional and faith leaders, women leaders, etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Strengthen support for relationship building between stakeholders (national, local/district, and community) with government and external development partners</li> <li>» Build capacity of members of Cluster to ensure information and resources are shared in a coordinated manner</li> <li>» Strengthen coordination and political will across government departments/Ministries for sharing of information, resources and personnel</li> <li>» Support strengthening of capacity and understanding of structures (reporting, feedback loop to community, collection of data etc.,)</li> </ul>
3	<p><b>Capacity &amp; Surge Support</b></p> <p>Need to develop a common understanding of what we mean by CCE. Preference for Pacific expertise/ surge capacity from the region, not outside it.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Consistent support for capacity – technical expertise is needed to build capacity of local staff</li> <li>» Funding to recruit and build capacity of communications team (there is a need for personnel/physical bodies to provide support especially around communications)</li> <li>» Coordination of surge support</li> </ul>
4	<p><b>Partnership</b></p> <p>Equitable and complementary partnerships are critical; national and regional agencies need to have the resources to lead as they have the capability and in many cases are part of the community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Consistent communication with partners/ stakeholders</li> <li>» Ensure partnership with non-traditional stakeholders are also identified and fostered – including with the private sector, tourism sector, and faith-based organisations</li> </ul>
5	<p><b>Policy – Influence &amp; Advocacy</b></p> <p>Embedding CCE in legal and operational frameworks is critical for sustainability. Standard Operating Procedures will be critical for systematisation and consistency in times of response.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Develop and/or strengthen policies pertaining to CCE</li> <li>» Support roll-out and monitoring of implementation of activities related to policies (eg communications strategy)</li> </ul>
6	<p><b>Resourcing</b></p> <p>Collaborative work across diverse actors takes time as does developing common approaches. It requires long-term resourcing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Ensure adequate resourcing – for human resourcing, finance, CCE/communication equipment</li> <li>» Communication equipment – the purchase of the latest equipment will improve the quality and consistency of media products</li> <li>» Funding for preparedness and recovery activities</li> </ul>
7	<p><b>Participation</b></p> <p>Recognising, respecting and strengthening the role of affected communities in CCE work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Increasing community participation/ voice in defining CCE priorities and action planning, and in evaluating the work of CCE platforms</li> <li>» Increasing engagement with traditional leadership and governance mechanisms in communities.</li> </ul>





## ANNEX 1

### Participants List

More than 50 individuals attended the joint learning event, from the following agencies:

- » Fiji NDMO
- » Fiji Ministry of Communications
- » Fiji Council of Social Services (FCOSS) - with District Council of Social Services (DCOSS) representatives from Nasinu and Lami (Central Division), Labasa (Northern Division), and Nadroga (Western Division)
- » Fiji Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development - including representatives from Central Commissioners Office, Sigatoka (Western Division), Seaqaqa (Northern Division)
- » Fiji Ministry of Education, Heritage & Arts
- » Fiji MET Service
- » Save the Children Fiji
- » Live and Learn Fiji
- » Habitat for Humanity Fiji
- » Fiji Red Cross
- » Fiji Disabled Peoples Federation
- » ADRA
- » Fiji Commerce and Employers Federation
- » Investment Fiji
- » Communications Fiji Limited (CFL)
- » Pacific Community (SPC)
- » FCC
- » OCHA
- » Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC)/ World Food Programme
- » PIANGO
- » femLINKpacific
- » Vanuatu Office of the Government Chief Information Office
- » Digicel Vanuatu
- » Vanuatu Christian Council
- » CARE Vanuatu
- » Vanuatu Red Cross Society
- » ActionAid Vanuatu
- » CDAC Network

## How the learning event benefited participants

Workshop participants shared some of the action they are planning to take as a result of the discussions at the joint learning event:

- » “Relook at the early warning systems for cyclone with Fiji MET”
- » “Learn more about the formal and informal structures that reach down into the community”
- » “Strengthen partnerships and resources from national and sub-national levels”
- » “Tap into already existing platforms within the CCE Working Group on messaging development”
- » “Improve messaging and strengthen partnerships”
- » “Bring attention to government regulatory authority on data specification”
- » “Continue to work with iTaukei Affairs and cross reference with Bureau of Statistics”
- » “Networking better with other Government agencies and non-government partners to ensure that they effectively receive information and are able to further disseminate the information to the communities that they serve”
- » “Take back to the community what was learned today”

## Annex 2 – Joint Fiji-Vanuatu Learning Event Agenda

DAY 1 - MARCH 05, 2020

08.00 – 09.00	Registration	Speaker/Lead
09.00 – 09.20	Welcome from host & Opening Remarks	Ms Vasiti Soko, Director, <i>Fiji NDMO</i>
09.20 – 09.40	<b>Keynote address:</b> DFAT Fiji	Anna Dorney, <i>Deputy Australian High Commissioner to Fiji</i>
09.40 – 09.45	<b>Welcome</b> message including community perspectives from Vanuatu	Peter Korisa, Operations Manager, <i>Vanuatu NDMO</i> (by video)
09.45 – 10.00	<b>Event Context Setting</b>	Marian Casey-Maslen, Executive Director, <i>CDAC Network</i>
10.00 – 10.30	MORNING TEA	
10.30 – 11.00	Introduction of Participants	Facilitators: Bronwyn Olul (Vanuatu programme team)
11.00 – 12.00	<b>Setting the scene:</b> <b>What is the state of play in Fiji and Vanuatu?</b> Group discussions by country	Fiji lead facilitators: Amelia Makutu & Jacinta Isaacs (Fiji programme team) Vanuatu lead facilitators: Bronwyn Olul & Elissa Webster (Vanuatu programme team)
12.00 – 13.00	<b>National Platform progress and communications preparedness activities to date</b>	Presentations by Viliame Tikotani (Fiji Ministry of Communications) & Bronwyn Olul (Vanuatu National CCE Sub-Cluster) followed by open plenary
13.00 – 14.00	LUNCH	
14.00 – 15.00	<b>Programme snapshots:</b> <b>Coordination</b> in Fiji/ Vanuatu	Presentation from Fiji – Prishika Nadan, Senior Administration Officer, Aid & Humanitarian Coordination, NDMO & Jacinta Isaacs, CCE Specialist, Fiji CCE Working Group will present on 4Ws mapping tool Presentation from Vanuatu – Bronwyn Olul, National Coordinator, Vanuatu National CCE Sub-Cluster will present on pilot surveys
	<b>Programme snapshots:</b> <b>Localisation</b> in Fiji/ Vanuatu	Presentation from Vanuatu – Olivia Finau, Communication Officer, Vanuatu Red Cross
15.00 – 15.30	AFTERNOON TEA	
15.30 – 17.00	<b>Reflections – Lessons learned linking to the Pacific context</b> A session to challenge each other on what we've heard and learned	Facilitators: Marian Casey-Maslen, CDAC & Megan Chisholm, Director, CARE Vanuatu Presentation from Fiji – Vani Catanasiga, Executive Director, FCOSS will present on localisation indicators developed with HAG and PIANGO Followed by open plenary session
17.00 – 19.00	COCKTAIL RECEPTION – with wider invite list	

DAY 2 – MARCH 06, 2020

Time	Agenda item	Speaker / Lead
09.00 – 10.00	<b>Role of the private sector and media in CCE platforms</b> Presidential style Q & A facilitated by Rusiate Baleilevuka, Fiji NDMO Media Officer	Rita Narayan, Pacific Hub - Head of Content, <i>Trend Media Pacific/ Digicel</i> Vijay Narayan, News Editor, <i>FM96/ Communications Fiji Limited</i> Craine Bambu, <i>Digicel Vanuatu</i> Waisea Vosa, <i>Fiji Commerce and Employers Federation</i>
10.00 – 11.00	<b>How prepared are we? Putting it in practice</b> A table top simulation – best practices in context	Facilitators: Marian Casey-Maslen, CDAC & Husni Husni, <i>OCHA Asia Pacific</i>
11.00 – 11.30	MORNING TEA	
11.30 – 12.15	<b>Systems reflection post exercise</b> What's working well; areas for improvement	Facilitators: Marian Casey-Maslen, CDAC & Husni Husni, <i>OCHA Asia Pacific</i>
12.15 – 13.00	<b>Systems improvement – a focus on sub-national level</b>	Group discussion – with sub-national representatives
13.00 – 14.00	LUNCH	
14.00 – 15.45	<b>Where to now? Future learning priorities, and systems improvement</b> Surge capacity; links to a global common service; potential to scale regionally/ link to ongoing initiatives	Facilitators: Marian Casey-Maslen, CDAC, Husni Husni, <i>OCHA Asia Pacific</i> & Megan Chisholm, <i>CARE Vanuatu</i>
	Including 15.00 – 15.30 AFTERNOON TEA	
15.45 – 16.00	Closing remarks Evaluation <b>Event close</b>	Flora Vano, <i>ActionAid</i> Vani Catanasiga, <i>FCOSS</i>





## Endnotes

- 1 Fiji Scoping Mission Report: <http://www.cdacnetwork.org/contentAsset/raw-data/ad244abd-13ad-44e7-8def-9c56643d2806/attachedFile>
- 2 Vanuatu Scoping Mission Report: <http://www.cdacnetwork.org/contentAsset/raw-data/d4ad93a7-2096-488d-a729-3f3507821eb2/attachedFile>
- 3 CDAC Network: <http://www.cdacnetwork.org>
- 4 Ground Truth Solutions: <https://groundtruthsolutions.org>
- 5 A Framework for Assessing the Success of National CCE platforms: <http://www.cdacnetwork.org/i/20201028232035-e9h05/>
- 6 Pre-positioning community engagement in the Pacific: <http://www.cdacnetwork.org/i/20201027185416-z76fn/>
- 7 Pre-positioning community engagement in the Pacific: <http://www.cdacnetwork.org/i/20201027185416-z76fn/>
- 8 Tracking Progress on Localisation: A Pacific Perspective: <https://humanitarianadvisorygroup.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Tracking-progress-on-localisation-A-Pacific-Perspective-Final.pdf>
- 9 Localising in Fiji: Demonstrating Change: <https://humanitarianadvisorygroup.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Localisation-in-Fiji-Demonstrating-Change-Final-Report.pdf>
- 10 Localising in Vanuatu: Demonstrating Change: [https://humanitarianadvisorygroup.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Vanuatu-Baseline-Report\\_February-2019\\_FINAL.pdf](https://humanitarianadvisorygroup.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Vanuatu-Baseline-Report_February-2019_FINAL.pdf)



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