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# “WHAT WILL WE EAT WHILE WAITING FOR THE CROPS TO GROW?”

Case studies on effective early recovery for off-the-radar communities in selected countries in Asia and the Pacific

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Five disaster risk reduction and early recovery interventions from the Philippines, Vanuatu, and Vietnam were assessed to identify which elements are likely to facilitate recovery from disasters among “off-the-radar” communities within the Asia-Pacific region. The research highlights the importance of existing relationships between communities and other actors, and of innovation—especially microfinance—in early recovery. Local leadership in conceptualizing and implementing interventions was most apparent where there were outstanding local risk reduction champions; otherwise local organizations tended to co-create interventions with external agencies and lead implementation. Projects generally consulted women, but the risk reduction outcomes for women are mixed, and women’s leadership was not consistently supported.

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The adoption of the 2030 Agenda commits United Nations Member States to ensure that “no one will be left behind” and to “endeavour to reach the furthest behind first.” Within this overarching context, shifts in how humanitarian and longer-term development work are conceptualized and resourced could help ensure that the rights of those hitherto “left behind” can be met in the face of disasters. Specifically, a greater emphasis on local humanitarian leadership and on resilience is relevant to achieving these higher-level commitments.

First, the notion of **local humanitarian leadership** recognizes that local people and organizations are typically the first responders after disasters, and their intimate knowledge of the context means that they can be best placed to lead risk reduction efforts. In response, the global humanitarian community has promised increased resources to local and national actors through the Grand Bargain made at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, although progress on these promises has not been as rapid as many hoped.

Second, a greater **focus on resilience**—the ability of women and men to realize their rights and improve their well-being despite shocks, stresses, and uncertainty—among humanitarian and long-term development practitioners has been shown to increase the impact and cost-effectiveness of aid, reduce the impact of hazards, and provide faster and more sustainable recovery when crises occur.

This research seeks to identify elements of disaster risk reduction (DRR) projects and climate change adaptation (CCA) projects that have facilitated speedy and effective early recovery among “off-the-radar” communities subject to natural hazards in the Asia-Pacific region. In the context of this research, off-the-radar communities are broadly defined as communities that are geographically or politically far from the centers of political power. As a consequence, they tend to receive less funding for risk reduction and emergency response. In other words, they are left behind, and the impacts of disasters may leave them still further behind.

The overall approach to answering these questions was to conduct research into five completed DRR or CCA interventions that are thought to have facilitated communities’ early recovery from natural hazards, with a specific focus on women’s roles, voice, and organizations in the recovery. The interventions are from the Philippines (two), Vanuatu (two), and Vietnam (one). Field research—a combination of focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews with community members and project officers—was conducted in four of the five sites, and this information was supplemented by literature. The fifth intervention, in Vietnam, was conducted solely on the basis of existing literature. Information was captured systematically from all interventions using a framework adapted from Twigg’s Characteristics of a Disaster-Resilient Community.<sup>1</sup>

The research is presented as five case studies that attempt to give voice to community members’ own experiences and perceptions of disaster recovery where possible, with a synthesis in the final section of the report.

The main findings from across the five interventions are as follows:

- **Recovery is multifaceted.** Perhaps the most obvious common thread between the case studies (not including Vietnam, where we were unable to interview community members) is that recovery from a disaster, in the experience of the people we interviewed, was not a single process with a distinct end, but rather a series of parallel but interconnected trajectories. In most cases, psychological and food security recovery were judged to have occurred relatively rapidly (weeks to months); recovery of shelter, more slowly (one year or more); and recovery of livelihoods, most slowly (one to three or more years).

- **Early recovery in off-the-radar communities poses special challenges.** The case studies represent different facets of being off the radar, including geographical, political, and economic marginalization. For reasons including cost and political will, it is typically more challenging for national agencies and NGOs to work in these types of communities. It is possible to work in these communities—as the case studies here demonstrate—but it is likely to require that technical and financial resources be directed specifically toward off-the-radar communities in order for their rights to be realized.
- **Local leadership of risk reduction and recovery varies.** This research has examined some very different interventions that involve a range of local leadership models. Only one intervention (Eratah, in Vanuatu) was both conceptualized and implemented entirely by a community. The local government of Salcedo (Philippines) led conceptualization and implementation with support from external organizations. Two of the remaining interventions were co-conceptualized by an international NGO and a local organization (Dulag, in the Philippines; Da Nang, in Vietnam). The work in Epau (Vanuatu) was apparently conceptualized by a consortium of principally international NGOs. The interventions in Epau and Da Nang included strong components of capacity building of local organizations. The case of Eratah additionally shows the limits of local leadership; in the absence of external funding and technical support, the intervention is inevitably restricted.
- **Preexisting relationships support effective recovery.** Clear, agreed-upon, and stable partnerships between communities and other actors are a known factor in community resilience. In four out of the five case studies, existing relationships between communities and agencies were considered important factors in effective recovery.
- **Results of DRR and recovery for women were mixed.** In all five cases, women were consulted, were often involved in making decisions, and were generally aware of disaster management and contingency plans. In some cases, however, women not aware of their rights during disasters, formal women's groups were not included in risk reduction and recovery, and interventions failed to support women's groups and leadership. Moreover, some of the risk reduction and recovery outcomes did not take women's needs and rights into account.

One of the tasks of this research was to attempt to identify key elements of resilience programming that enable early recovery in off-the-radar communities. While it would be premature to reach firm conclusions on the basis of five case studies, the following are offered as factors for program and project designers to consider:

- **Clear, agreed-upon, and stable partnerships between communities and other actors can aid recovery.** The comparative success of all the case studies in bringing about early recovery was firmly based on existing relationships between the communities and the key implementing (and in some case conceptualizing) organization. This suggests that agencies should coordinate to ensure that at least one ongoing partner is present in all high-disaster-risk areas.
- **Leadership makes a difference.** Salcedo and Eratah both demonstrate the importance of local leaders who can champion risk reduction and recovery efforts on behalf of the communities they represent. In both cases, there is evidence that the communities recovered more quickly than neighboring ones that had less active and committed individual leaders. The leader of Salcedo is a formal political appointee, whereas that of Eratah is a traditional leader. Identifying and supporting formal and informal leaders who are able to organize communities and mobilize external support could be a valuable tool in ensuring effective and speedy recovery in off-the-radar communities.
- **Local organizations do not have to be humanitarian experts to contribute to early recovery.** Not all of the key local organizations were humanitarian specialists, yet all were able to contribute to reduced damage and early recovery within the communities. Helping local partners innovate before and after disasters may be a better approach than engaging them in aspects of risk reduction and emergency response not closely aligned with their organizational mission and competencies.

- **Innovation is part of recovery.** Innovation in response to disasters is a clear narrative from all of the case studies, whether from an organization or from community members themselves. Consciously using the areas of specialty, contextual knowledge, and community relationships of local organizations to innovate before disasters or in recovery may be an approach that international agencies could use more often.
- **Community-level finance contributes to recovery.** Two of the case studies illustrate the potential of directed microfinance to reduce loss and to support early recovery and household innovations that contribute to increased resilience. This type of intervention could be explored more widely.
- **Women's contributions and needs must be better taken into account.** It is clear from these case studies that the potential leadership of women's organizations is not always effectively encouraged and that the outcomes of risk reduction still sometimes leave women short. Agencies need to redouble their efforts not only to consult women but to consistently foster women's leadership and ensure that women's needs and vulnerabilities are consistently and comprehensively addressed.

# 1 INTRODUCTION

The title of this report is a quote from a participant in the male focus group discussion in Salcedo, Philippines.

## Background to the research

Humanitarian and development programs that focus on strengthening the resilience of communities and households can increase the impact and cost-effectiveness of aid, help prevent humanitarian crises (or at least reduce the impact of hazards), and provide faster and more sustainable recovery from crises when they occur.<sup>2</sup> Definitions of resilience abound, but Oxfam's definition—the ability of women and men to realize their rights and improve their well-being despite shocks, stresses, and uncertainty<sup>3</sup>—emphasizes that a critical aspect of resilience is local agency.

In the past five years, the emergence of local humanitarian leadership is changing the way humanitarian responses are carried out. In the Grand Bargain made at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, some of the world's largest donors and aid providers committed to targeting 25 percent of global humanitarian funding to local and national responders by 2020.<sup>4</sup> The Grand Bargain also included commitments to provide national and local actors with more unrestricted funds and increased multiyear funding to ensure greater predictability of resources. As a consequence, more and more international groups are directing resources—sometimes voluntarily and sometimes spurred by government regulations—to local organizations through either long-standing partnerships or new agreements. Progress on delivering the commitments of the Grand Bargain have not been uniform; while some donors have increased their contributions to the Country-Based Pooled Funds managed by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and have adapted their organizational information systems and information-sharing practices, there has been little reported progress on investments in national actor core costs. Risk aversion, internal rules, staffing constraints, and due diligence concerns prevent donors from finding it easy to directly fund national and local actors.<sup>5</sup>

Oxfam America received a three-year grant from Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies for the project “Strengthening Community Preparedness, Rapid Response and Recovery in Asia/Pacific Islands” (known locally as Asia Pacific Local Innovation for Transformation, or AP-Lift), to help equip communities affected by recurrent natural hazards to co-lead on relief and recovery in collaboration with local authorities. The project runs from October 2017 to September 2020 and is being implemented by Oxfam and partners in the Philippines, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu. AP-Lift is designed to help test Oxfam's theory that locally led or managed disaster response and preparedness are more effective and more accountable and save more lives.

## Purpose and research questions

This research seeks to identify elements of disaster risk reduction (DRR) and/or climate change adaptation (CCA) projects that facilitated faster and more effective early recovery among “off-the-radar” communities subject to natural hazards in the Asia-Pacific region. By enhancing local capacity and reducing vulnerabilities, DRR and CCA interventions can better prepare communities to anticipate, respond to, and recover faster and more effectively from the impact of natural hazards.

The research looks at five completed DRR or CCA projects that are thought to have facilitated communities' early recovery from natural hazards, with a specific focus on women's roles, voice, and organizations (formal or informal) in the recovery.

"Off-the-radar" communities are broadly defined as communities that are far from the center of political power and geographically isolated or difficult to access yet exposed to recurrent natural hazards. Their distance from power and media attention means that they typically receive less funding from international agencies and the central government for risk reduction and emergency response.

Although the research has a specific focus on early recovery from disasters, the focus is on the relationship between the actions that took place before a disaster (resilience programming that includes DRR and CCA approaches) and those that happened in the weeks and months afterward. To focus only on the latter would be covering ground that is well understood and indeed codified.<sup>6</sup>

The specific research questions are as follows:

1. What approaches provided space for local leaders to emerge and led to successful humanitarian responses and in turn to effective early recovery of these off-the-radar communities?
2. What elements of these projects helped off-the-radar communities achieve effective early recovery in response to natural hazards?
3. In these completed projects, what quantity of resources (time, money, and people) were invested to achieve significant change and success in the early recovery actions? Who received the allocated funds?<sup>7</sup>
4. During a crisis, what enabling policies supported local communities, men, and women in emergencies and made their recovery faster and effective?
5. Were gender and power considered in the interventions? To what extent were the responses gender blind, gender aware, or gender transformative? Were power dynamics challenged by the interventions, and how did that impact change the sustainability of interventions?<sup>8</sup>

The research is intended to inform the AP-Lift project as well as the broader community of practitioners engaged in designing, implementing, and funding DRR projects and programs, especially in the Asia-Pacific region.

## **About this report**

At the heart of this research are case studies of five completed projects. Existing evidence showed that these projects had brought about effective and sustained recovery from disasters in communities that were either "off the radar" or in other ways marginalized. The research focuses on understanding what happened rather than evaluating the impact of projects. We therefore emphasize the experiences, perceptions, and insights of communities in their own words, where possible. There are inevitable biases in doing so; we chose the questions to ask, and we imposed "sense" on complex and sometimes contradictory testimony. However, we believe that the richness and granularity of the lived experience of disasters is worth hearing.

The case studies are preceded by a description of the methods. The final section of the report pulls out some of the main findings and suggests some practical implications of these findings for ongoing and future projects.

## 2 METHODS

### Case study selection

The first step in selecting case studies was to develop a set of criteria by which to evaluate the fit between the many DRR, CCA, and humanitarian projects that have occurred in the Asia-Pacific region and the research questions. In addition to a series of descriptors (e.g., country, lead agency, type of disaster), the key analytical criteria were the following:

- The communities were off the radar;
- The communities had experienced a natural hazard subsequent to the intervention;
- There was evidence that the interventions preceding the disaster had enabled the communities to recover more rapidly from that disaster; and
- Local actors (communities, local government, or local NGOs) had led the project conceptualization or implementation, or both.

We created and evaluated a preliminary list of interventions from online literature. The sources of information included case studies, reports, and project evaluations. Interventions were then evaluated against the above criteria. For practical reasons, we agreed to focus on three countries that represent a broad range of contexts that occur across the region: the Philippines, Vanuatu, and Vietnam. We further consulted with DRR and CCA practitioners in each of these countries to gain insights into the interventions we had shortlisted and to take suggestions on other potential interventions for inclusion in the study.

We then contacted the implementing agencies, requesting authorization to conduct field research that would include their staff and the communities in which they worked or had previously worked. Unfortunately, a number of agencies working in Vietnam refused these requests, and we had to abandon the plan of conducting field research there. The Vietnam case study is therefore based solely on existing literature. The final selection of case studies is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Case studies selected for research**

Country	Location	Off-the-radar characteristic	Intervention	Lead agencies
<i>Philippines</i>	Salcedo, Eastern Samar Province	Economically poor, far from the center of political power	Response to Typhoon Haiyan	Salcedo local government unit
	Dulag, Leyte Province	Far from the center of political power	Livelihood recovery loans	VisionFund International Community Economic Ventures Incorporated (CEVI)
<i>Vanuatu</i>	Epau, Efate island, Shefa Province	Limited access to government services	Vanuatu NGO Climate Change Adaptation Program	Consortium of NGOs
	Eratah, Tongariki island, Shefa Province	Geographically remote, small population	Community-based risk reduction	Community of Eratah
<i>Vietnam</i>	Da Nang, Central Vietnam	Economically poor households “pushed” into risk-exposed urban/per-urban areas	Storm-resistant housing	Institute for Social and Environmental Transition–International (ISET-International) and the Women’s Union

Note: The research on the Vietnam project was limited to existing literature. All other interventions included combined information from field research and literature.

## Analytical framework

In taking a case study approach, it is inevitable that the research would confront a broad range of contexts, interventions, and elements that might have made significant contributions to the success of interventions. We therefore chose to develop an analytical framework to allow us to collect and assess information systematically from the range of interventions we examined.

Community resilience to natural hazards is multifaceted. There is no single way of describing the characteristics of a project or community that is likely to lead to successful early recovery. There are also numerous heuristic and program-design frameworks that each reflect an individual’s or agency’s priorities and approaches.<sup>9</sup> We chose to develop a framework based on Twigg’s Characteristics of a Disaster-Resilient Community.<sup>10</sup> In making this choice, we acknowledge the differences in conceptualizations of resilience. Any one framework will emphasize or de-emphasize particular aspects of resilience. For example, Oxfam’s framework<sup>11</sup> has a strong emphasis on ongoing learning among all actors as a key element of resilience. Twigg’s approach is perhaps more passive, focusing on information and knowledge. However, Twigg’s “Characteristics” is the most comprehensive framework of those we considered. Designed as a menu for users to adapt to their specific needs, it lends itself to developing tailored questions for informants (in fact, a number of other frameworks are based on Twigg’s “Characteristics”). It also contains elements that relate directly to the focus of our research, including the process and timelines of recovery, information on the agency of local actors, and the role that women (as individuals or in informal or formal women’s organizations) played in the recovery.

We derived a series of questions from Twigg’s “Characteristics,” organized into five thematic areas: (1) governance, (2) risk assessment, (3) knowledge and education, (4) risk management and vulnerability reduction, and (5) preparedness and response (Appendix 1). In addition to including gender-specific questions (e.g., whether women’s needs were taken into account in evacuation centers), we further organized the questions to allow information to be disaggregated by gender and, where relevant, by potentially disadvantaged groups (e.g., people with disabilities).

With the addition of fields to capture basic descriptors (such as project name, location, informant, timeline of recovery), this framework was used as the basis for field interviews and focus group discussions, with questions being slightly modified depending on whether the informants were male or female and whether they were community members or implementing agencies. The framework was also used to systematically collate and analyze the data from interviews, focus group discussions, and existing reports.

## Field research and literature review

Local researchers were appointed to conduct interviews with community members, staff of implementing agencies, and members of nonproject communities, as well as to collate any additional documentation. All researchers were female (to aid interviews with women) and spoke the local language and—in the case of the Philippines—the dialect of the communities being interviewed. Note that although selecting a female-only field research team was not an intention, research protocol and ethics called for ensuring that both men and women were comfortable in the interviews and that their specific needs were taken into consideration.

Community stakeholders were engaged through a combination of focus group discussions (FGDs) and one-on-one or small group interviews. These interactions included male or mixed groups, male individuals, female groups, and female individuals (Table 2). Given the limited resources available—and out of respect for community members’ existing commitments—it was not possible to achieve the full sample in all locations (e.g., in Epau, Vanuatu, a women’s FGD could not be conducted). Participation in research was voluntary, unpaid, and in line with Oxfam’s Responsible Data Policy.<sup>12</sup>

**Table 2: Consultation protocol for fieldwork**

Type of respondent	Approach	Minimum number
Members of communities that received the intervention	Focus group discussions (male or mixed)	1
	Focus group discussions (female)	1
	Interviews (community leaders)	2
	Interviews (women in leadership roles or with a particular story of recovery)	2
	Interviews (specific disadvantaged people, e.g., from an ethnic minority group or with disabilities)	2
Members of communities that did not receive the intervention	Focus group discussions (male or mixed)	1
	Focus group discussions (female)	1
Implementing agency	Interviews with project officers or organization leadership	2

Additional information was sought from grey literature obtained by field researchers or available online. Literature was highly variable in both its availability and its nature; for example, the Da Nang case study was reported in a number of grey and peer-reviewed publications, whereas no literature was available for Eratah. Eratah and Slacedo had no evaluation available, but the other three cases did.

## Limitations of the research approach

A number of limitations of the research approach should be noted:

- There is no before-and-after assessment of households to gauge the extent of their recovery, or rigorous control group with which recovery can be compared. The notion that communities recovered from disaster more quickly as a result of the interventions is therefore based on a combination of community perceptions and existing impact evaluations. Similarly, because the projects include a range of interventions and contexts, and no randomized controlled trials are available, the information is used to generate hypotheses rather than to “prove” that a particular element works universally.
- Answers to some of the research questions—particularly those pertaining to the resources (staff time, finance) spent on the intervention—proved difficult or impossible to procure. This difficulty was due partly to the lapse of time since the intervention had been implemented and partly to our focus on a single community within a larger intervention.
- Because we were reviewing interventions that had occurred several years before, there was a risk of recall bias—a systematic error due to differences in accuracy or completeness of recall about past events or experiences. We managed this risk by (1) triangulating documentary evidence alongside testimony, and (2) asking each informant the same questions in the same way so as not to influence their responses.<sup>13</sup> In one community (Eratah, Vanuatu) no formal intervention documentation existed so triangulation was not possible, but we decided that it is important to recognize and learn from these informal, oral records in off-the-radar communities.
- To manage recipient bias (where an informant might focus on good aspects of a intervention in the hope that the agency would continue to support the community), the researchers were independent of the intervention-implementing agency and took pains to explain to all informants that no interventions would come as a result of the discussions.
- Women may not be able to speak out some settings. We mitigated this risk by using female researchers, conducting women-only FGDs and interviews, and meeting with female respondents where and when it was convenient for them.

## 3 CASE STUDIES

### LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP IN SALCEDO, PHILIPPINES

#### Context

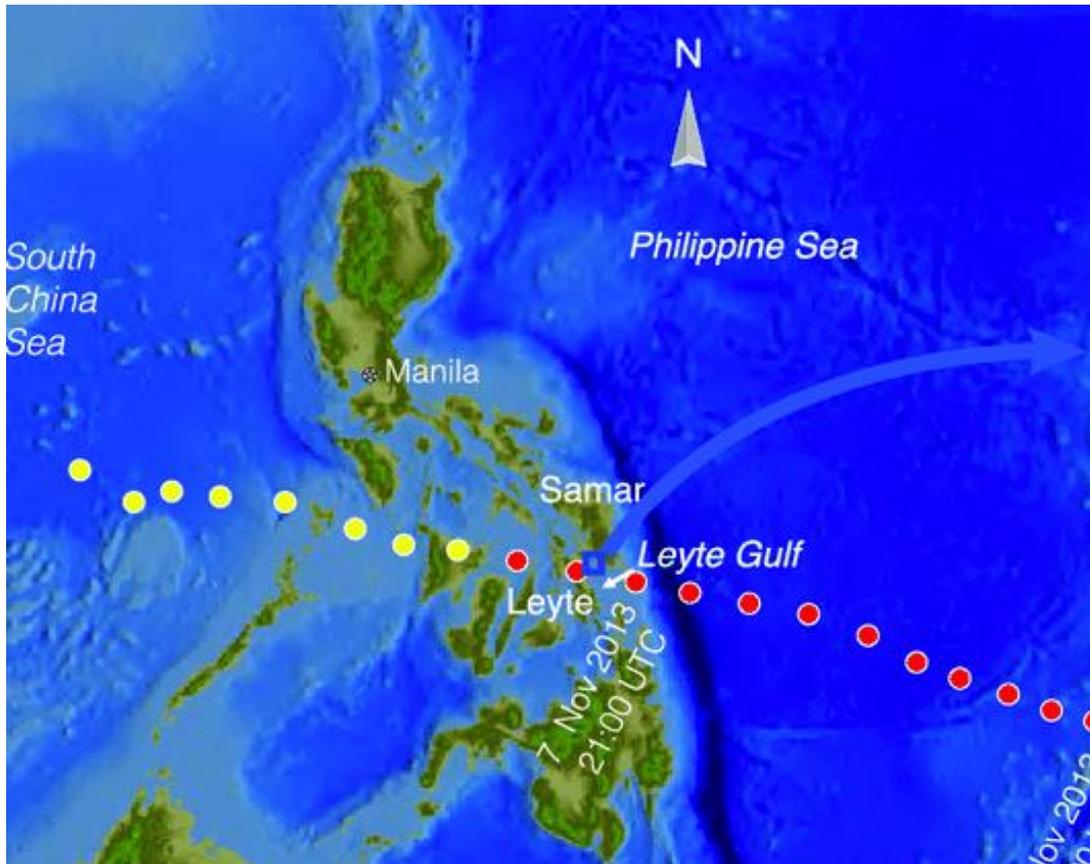
Salcedo, Eastern Samar, lies more than 90 kilometers from the state capital, Borongan City, and nearly 140 kilometers from Tacloban, the regional capital. It is a predominantly rural area with some small urban centers (see Figure 1) and a population of about 22,000 people. Twenty-four of the town's 41 *barangays* (or wards, the smallest administrative unit in the Philippines) are located along the coast. It is ranked a fifth-class municipality in the Philippines, meaning that it is in the second-lowest income bracket of local government units in the country.<sup>14</sup>

Approximately 96 percent of the local government's funding comes from the national government's Internal Revenue Allotment. The main sources of livelihoods for the residents of Salcedo are farming (particularly coconut cultivation) and fishing.



**Figure 1: Women volunteers at work in Barangay Caridad, Salcedo (Photo: Mary Joy Gonzales)**

Super Typhoon Haiyan (known in the Philippines as Yolanda)—one of the most powerful typhoons ever recorded—made first landfall close to the area (Figure 2) on November 7, 2013, causing widespread devastation.



**Figure 2: Track of Typhoon Haiyan**

**Source:** J. L. A. Soria, A. Switzer, J. Pilarczyk, F. P. Siringan, N. Khan, and F. Hermann, "Typhoon Haiyan Overwash Sediments from Leyte Gulf Coastlines Show Local Spatial Variations with Hybrid Storm and Tsunami Signatures," *Sedimentary Geology* 358 (August 1, 2017), doi:10.1016/j.sedgeo.2017.06.006.

At the time of Typhoon Haiyan in 2013, the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of the Philippines (Republic Act 10121) was barely implemented, having been enacted only in 2010. The act gives local governments the authority and capacity to implement DRR programs, projects, and activities, funded by 5 percent of its municipal Internal Revenue Allotment. The act's main implementation tool is the Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan (LDRRMP), which all local governments must comply with. The LDRRMP must follow the framework of the National DRRM Plan, which focuses on four thematic areas: prevention and mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery and rehabilitation. At the national level, the DRRM Plan is implemented by the Office of Civil Defense National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council.

The act encourages a bottom-up approach to disaster preparedness and both scientific and community-based approaches to risk reduction. From the city or municipal level down to the *barangay* level, local councils, headed by mayors, lead the development and implementation of the programs. The LDRRMP at the city or municipal level must be informed by the *barangay* plans. By law, civil society groups and people's organizations should be part of these councils, promoting collaboration and coordination among various sectors in society. The act contains no specific requirement to include women's groups.

## Intervention

A little over four months before Haiyan, the municipality had elected a new mayor, Melchor Melgar (Figure 3). His new administration had not had the time to develop a LDRRMP when Haiyan arrived. However, his predecessor (Mayor Melchor Gagante) had created a Disaster

Preparedness Plan for the municipality in 2006 and adopted it in 2009: “I made it my bible,” said Mayor Melgar.<sup>15</sup>

Salcedo’s Disaster Preparedness Plan, designed to be in effect from 2009 to 2013, and predates the national DRRM Law of 2010, identified three major groups of hazards: meteorological (including typhoons, floods, and storms), geological (earthquakes and tsunamis), and others (e.g., illegal fishing, fire, cutting of mangroves, unsafe water). The plan set out guidelines for organizing the Municipal Disaster Coordinating Council, with service committees reporting to the council and covering communication and warning, transportation, evacuation, rescue and engineering, health, fire, security, relief and rehabilitation, and public information. The plan included scenarios for pre-emergency, emergency, and post-emergency phases for each of the hazards identified.

With the typhoon approaching, Mayor Melgar and his administration needed to act to ensure the safety of the residents of Salcedo. Guided by the preparedness plan, Melgar signed an agreement with the National Food Authority to ensure access to rice supplies and prepared the limited rescue equipment available to them. Point persons from every unit of the municipal government were assigned specific tasks, and their mobile numbers were shared with *barangay* leaders and other emergency personnel. Relief goods were stockpiled in evacuation centers, and trucks were readied to evacuate residents. This preparedness—limited as it was—ensured that Salcedo was better prepared than many other municipalities in Eastern Samar.<sup>16</sup>



**Figure 3: Mayor Melchor Mergal and Municipal Planning Officer Isabel Abella, Salcedo, Philippines (Photo: Mary Joy Gonzales)**

Along the coast, church bells (*batingaw*) sounded the traditional warning that people must evacuate. Some residents complied, but others—perhaps inured to the danger by their frequent experience of typhoons—declined to leave their homes. Others took shelter in nearby concrete buildings.

Haiyan left 29 people dead, more than 2,000 injured, and almost all structures in the municipality of Salcedo totally or partially damaged, with damage estimated at around 500 million pesos (US\$9.5 million).<sup>17</sup> An estimated 75 percent of the coconut palms were destroyed, and boats and fishing equipment were damaged or destroyed.<sup>18</sup>

Two days after the typhoon, Melgar convened town officials and point persons in the various committees, and within two weeks they had put together a rehabilitation and recovery framework. The framework would guide them in dealing with the immediate aftermath—specifically relief, recovery, and rehabilitation—and contained the budget and time frame for each goal.

The immediate concerns to be addressed were identified as general food distribution, food for work, fuel for mobilization, waste and garbage management, clearing operations, age-appropriate stress debriefing, temporary electrification, and temporary communication.

The officials identified a further range of issues for recovery that became the core of the response over the one to three years after Haiyan: shelter; agriculture and fishery; education; economy; health; water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH); nutrition; protection of people (against trafficking and similar dangers); environment; disaster risk reduction; public service recovery; and children-youth development.

International organizations and NGOs, including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Plan International, Save the Children, and Oxfam, and their local partners, including the Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement (PRRM), were heavily engaged in supporting the recovery efforts.

## **Characteristics of early recovery**

### **Timelines of recovery**

The timeline to recovery—as articulated by the informants in Salcedo—varied significantly. The general perspective was that different aspects of people’s lives recovered at different times but that—with the exception of some livelihoods—the community had largely recovered within one to two years (Figure 4).



**Figure 4: Schematic representation of recovery times for different aspects of people's lives after Typhoon Haiyan in Salcedo, Philippines**

Note: Larger bubbles indicate longer times (e.g., coconut farming took more than four years).

Comments included, for example, "People seemed to recover from trauma faster"<sup>19</sup> and "Plan [International] provided psychosocial support for the children. It enabled them to recover faster."<sup>20</sup> Cash-for-work programs facilitated the rebuilding of houses,<sup>21</sup> although a number of respondents rated the overall recovery of housing as slow.

The speed of economic recovery depended on livelihoods; "The fastest recovery came from the business sector,"<sup>22</sup> whereas the recovery of agricultural and fishing livelihoods was slower. Fisherfolk who needed to replace their boats and fishing equipment were delayed in some cases by a shortage of replacement boats and by the need to borrow money to replace equipment. Because coconuts take at least four years to begin significant production after planting, the perspective of coconut farmers was that it would take at least five years to recover their livelihoods.

Informants perceived that the interventions resulted in a faster recovery than would otherwise have been the case because they "received more help not just from the local government but from other organizations as well."<sup>23</sup> However, because of the unprecedented damage caused to Salcedo by Haiyan, the recovery was slower than for previous, less damaging typhoons: "We recovered faster before because the damage was not as big as Typhoon Haiyan. We were used to typhoons."<sup>24</sup>

### **Thematic Area 1: Governance**

As described above, at the time of Haiyan, Salcedo had inherited a Disaster Preparedness Plan from the previous administration. Many of the institutional arrangements required by the plan were put in place immediately before Haiyan.

Informants confirmed that DRR in the municipality is led by the MDRRMO with cooperation from the Philippine National Police, Fire, and Department of Education, but with significant ongoing participation in decisions from local organizations, including the women's association (which, for example, participated in the committee that disperses DRR funds) and *barangay* leaders. These informants describe themselves as active in DRR planning activities: "We have an active *barangay* DRR council. I, myself, just finished training in water search and rescue. The municipal government is strict in ensuring that *barangays* have their own DRR plan or else we

will incur a penalty.”<sup>25</sup> The governance of DRR activities—because it is led by the local government—derives from an accepted plan and includes participation from local organizations, meaning that there are clear, agreed-upon, and stable partnerships between the community and other actors in Salcedo.

As noted, however, at the time of Haiyan many of these structures were in their infancy. For example, not all women’s groups were able to participate in decision-making before and after Haiyan: “Before Haiyan, there were women’s organizations already but they were unregistered in the DOLE [Department of Labor and Employment]. This is important because INGOs always ask if we were registered, because if not it also affects our credibility as an organization.”<sup>26</sup> Conversely, their experiences with Haiyan may have enabled greater women’s leadership, in terms of both formal arrangements and the personal growth of women leaders. One leader of a women’s organization said, “I had to think about a lot of things, and that was when I came up with the idea of reaching out to NGOs. The linking was easier, and it allowed me to talk to the mayor and governor. I care so much for my *barangay* that I acted immediately and asked around about what I could do in order to come up with solutions. This is how most of our problems are solved” (Figure 5).



**Figure 5: Women’s group leaders Felisa Castro and Jessica Rojero, Salcedo, Philippines (Photo: Mary Joy Gonzales)**

## **Thematic Area 2: Risk Assessment**

As described, a risk assessment had been carried out before Haiyan. After Haiyan, risk assessments conducted by the local government and NGOs saw increased involvement from civil society organizations (CSOs) and local leaders representing communities. When asked whether they had participated in hazard, vulnerability, and capacity assessments, community respondents confirmed that they were “very much” involved and that women’s needs and concerns were raised through biannual *barangay* assemblies. Local knowledge formed part of the assessment: “During the assessment, our local knowledge has helped us out a lot. We rely on our past experiences to prepare for the future. For example, we know the type of marine

organisms that would thrive well in our communities. Instead of seaweed, we'd rather propagate sea cucumbers. It is a more resilient livelihood."<sup>27</sup>

### **Thematic Area 3: Knowledge and Education**

A notable feature of Haiyan in Salcedo was that although the local government had made contingency plans for evacuation to emergency shelters and instructed communities to evacuate, many community members did not. Their familiarity with previous typhoons led many in the community to underestimate the force and impact of Haiyan.

Community and local authority informants confirmed that the experience of recovery from Haiyan significantly changed how knowledge and awareness on vulnerability and disaster management were shared among those at risk. Participation in risk assessment and disaster management planning, along with frequent training programs, has made a sizable difference to how those at risk now understand disasters: "Before, most of us did not believe in evacuation. Now, we are also able to reach out to the community with the things that we know, and we assemble"<sup>28</sup> and "Our knowledge has improved because of our experience during Yolanda [Haiyan]. I think we are ready in case it happens again because we have an idea what to do."<sup>29</sup>

### **Thematic Area 4: Risk Management and Vulnerability Reduction**

In the days leading up to Haiyan, the local government had identified places to be used as emergency shelters and had secured relief supplies, including food.<sup>30</sup>

Since Haiyan, there has been evidence of a shift toward more resilient livelihoods. Part of this is through necessity; the four-year time lag between planting coconuts and harvesting them has meant that people whose livelihoods were previously largely or wholly dependent on coconut farming have had to diversify crops to provide income in the short to medium term. Many are now cultivating bananas, vegetables, and livestock as well as coconuts. In some cases, NGOs have promoted alternative and more resilient livelihoods, such as seaweed farming.

However, the extent to which individuals have been able to adopt more resilient livelihoods has also been dependent upon the type of assistance and the way it was given: "It really is a question of whether the help [provided by the government and NGOs] has made them dependent on the assistance being given to them. But some people in the community have learned to look for alternative livelihoods like raising livestock while farming." A further problem remains—one that is familiar to most practitioners who have tried to help communities change or diversify livelihoods: "Our main challenge is always the [access to] market or people who would purchase our products."<sup>31</sup>

Unfortunately, we were unable to ascertain whether women had changed their contribution to household incomes as a result of changing or diversifying their livelihoods.

At the time of Haiyan, some community members had access to community savings and credit schemes or to a community disaster fund to implement preparatory, responsive, or recovery activity. Now *barangays* have access to a certain amount of funds for disaster risk reduction. At the household level, however, the situation is patchy: "Not everyone has access to those yet.... The mayor himself encourages us to create a community savings group so that, rather than borrowing money from lending institutions, we save money among ourselves so that the interest we earn will be divided among us instead of paying the interest of the lending institutions" and "The CSG [community savings group] that we started in 2015—a project supported by Plan [International]—was a big help in augmenting our income. Before, we only had 15 members; now there are 40. So far, our members have benefited from the CSG and have received enough money to start their livelihood. It is still ongoing."<sup>32</sup>

Informants emphasized that community members had access to safe emergency shelters that take women's needs into account and that the evacuation plan includes actions to protect the vulnerable. However, the capacity of emergency shelters in some *barangays* is not sufficient to

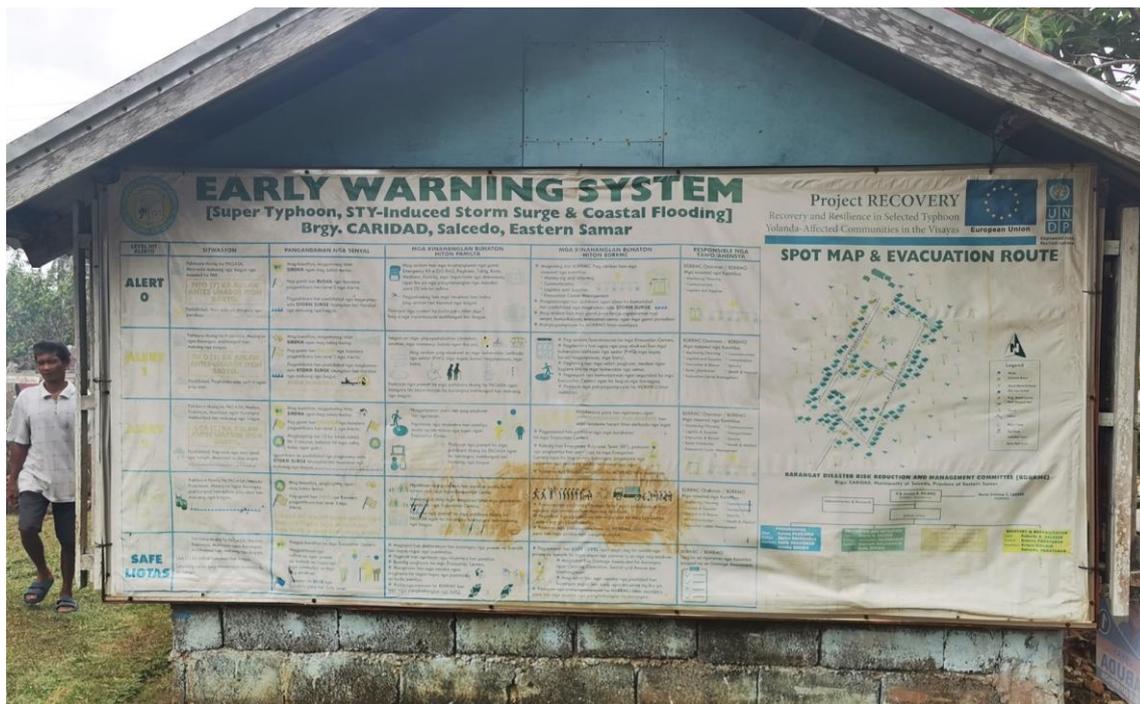
accommodate everyone. Moreover, there are ongoing concerns about the robustness of some of the housing that was rebuilt after Haiyan: “The only concern we have is housing because the materials given to us are only good for five years. Most of the houses are decaying, and the walls are starting to fall apart.”<sup>33</sup>

Finally, there has been learning between agencies involved in Salcedo, which speaks to increased future resilience: “I began to observe that NGOs do not just focus on immediate response after a disaster but also on the recovery of an area like women’s economic empowerment, livelihoods, financial management, values formation, sanitation, and health. And because of our community’s good engagement and cooperation, these organizations are also staying and are able to carry out these programs successfully.”<sup>34</sup>

**Thematic Area 5: Disaster Preparedness and Response**

An early warning system in which hazard information passed from national authorities to the municipal government, when then alerted communities, already existed before Haiyan. Most respondents highlighted that before Haiyan made landfall, the major limitation to disaster preparedness was people’s limited cooperation with the warnings and evacuation plans rather than any failure to receive the warning: “We really cannot avoid those who are stubborn, but most of our people are pretty much cooperative when it comes to these announcements.”<sup>35</sup>

Several respondents asserted that people now know better how to respond to warnings (see Figure 6). For example, “There was an earthquake a few days ago, and we were surprised that the children were already outside.”<sup>36</sup>



**Figure 6: Community early warning information, Salcedo, Philippines (Photo: Mary Joy Gonzales)**

**Discussion**

A notable feature from our field research in Salcedo is that almost every characteristic evaluated across all five thematic areas—governance, risk assessment, knowledge and education, risk management and vulnerability reduction, and disaster preparedness and response—was addressed in the intervention. In the aspects investigated, Salcedo represents a comprehensive approach to DRR and early recovery.

The recovery from Typhoon Haiyan in Salcedo is in essence a narrative of local governance. First, disaster risk reduction plans—however imperfect—already existed. The plans outlined the institutional structures required and some of the key needs likely to arise in the case of a range of natural hazards. These plans gave the Salcedo authorities a template for how they should prepare for and respond to the impending typhoon, enabling them to mobilize people and resources and create detailed implementation plans to a degree that would have been difficult in the absence of any prior planning.

The second aspect of governance that enabled Salcedo to respond was leadership. The Philippines Typhoon Haiyan response review by the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) and Humanitarian Coalition (HC) noted that “Eastern Samar is poorer and less equipped for instance than Tacloban or Ormoc City. However, in Salcedo the newly elected mayor, described as ‘a go-go action mayor,’ organized stockpiling of food and evacuations in advance of the typhoon.”<sup>37</sup> Similarly, a study of disaster responses in the Philippines cites Plan International’s assessment report of the Haiyan response, which noted the relatively high levels of awareness among local officials of the DRRM law and the structure and functions of the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Councils: “The new mayor (elected in May) mentioned that in his induction training by the Department of the Interior and Local Government, DRRM was highlighted as top priority and that the review of a contingency plan was on top of his to-do list.”<sup>38</sup>

A third aspect of governance, participation, appears to have been ingrained in local processes, with *barangay* leaders, women’s groups, other community groups, and government officials participating in decisions on disaster risk reduction. From our interviews it was not always possible to determine the extent to which various community groups had contributed to the pre-Haiyan and immediate post-Haiyan plans and activities. Their participation in disaster risk reduction is now more apparent, and, in the case of women’s groups, their formalization as entities appears to have reinforced this participation.

A final aspect of governance, accountability, appears to have been stimulated by the experience of Haiyan, with local government actors feeling that they are accountable to communities for developing and delivering disaster risk reduction and response.

Alongside the greater involvement of community groups in disaster risk reduction, Haiyan clearly stimulated other innovations, such as livelihood diversification (e.g., seaweed farming, crop diversification), which was often supported by NGOs, and a more formal role for women’s organizations. These changes point toward greater capacity to recover quickly from future disasters.

## RECOVERY MICROFINANCE IN DULAG, PHILIPPINES

### Context

The Municipality of Dulag is a coastal town that lies 36 kilometers south of Tacloban, the provincial capital of Leyte Province, Eastern Visayas. Dulag is classed a third-class municipality (i.e., it is in the third-highest income bracket of Philippine municipalities). The predominant livelihoods among the population of over 48,000 include coconut cultivation, fishing, and petty trading.

The municipality is prone to floods and typhoons. Typhoon Haiyan made first landfall close to the area (

Figure 2) on November 7, 2013, and Dulag’s location made it one of the hardest-hit areas. The storm surge caused by Typhoon Haiyan left 29 people dead in Dulag and caused extensive

damage to livelihoods, buildings, and infrastructure. Haiyan affected 48,438 people across all 45 of the municipality's *barangays* and damaged about 8,884 houses.

## Intervention

Microfinance is established in almost all low- and middle-income countries. When disasters affect the incomes and livelihoods of poor people, there is typically an increased demand for microfinance. This presents a challenge for microfinance institutions (MFIs); an institution and its staff may themselves be affected by disaster, and the MFI may not have the liquidity to meet a post-disaster spike in demand. Moreover, providing microfinance to individuals who may not have a functioning livelihood creates a risk that loans will not be repaid, potentially affecting both the liquidity and solvency of the MFI. Donors and humanitarian relief programs do not commonly work with or fund MFIs for lending to promote recovery after disasters. For these reasons, MFIs typically respond to disasters by reducing lending.

VisionFund International and its Philippine microfinance operation, Community Economic Ventures Incorporated (CEVI), had been operating for several years before Haiyan struck, affecting more than 7,000 of CEVI's clients. Eight weeks after the disaster, staff surveyed clients to understand whether microfinance could help them rebuild their livelihoods. The main findings of the survey were as follows:<sup>39</sup>

- Nearly a third of existing clients reported they would be able to repay their existing loans without further assistance.
- Another third said they would be able to repay if they were given an extension of the loan. These clients were confident they would be able to rebuild their businesses quickly and restore their incomes.
- The final third said that a new loan to replace lost assets (e.g., fishing boats and fishing gear) would enable them to start earning an income and repay both old and new loans.
- Fewer than 5 percent of clients believed that they would be unable to repay their existing loans without assistance.

In response to this information, CEVI created a new microfinance product—the Bangon Kabuhayan, or livelihood recovery loan—designed to assist people in restoring their livelihoods. The approach was funded by the Asian Development Bank's Integrated Disaster Risk Management Fund, financed by the Government of Canada. The Bangon Kabuhayan loans averaged US\$450 (nearly double the size of standard loans), had a longer repayment period of up to one year (compared with a five-month term for standard loans), and had less frequent, fortnightly payments (compared with weekly payments for standard loans). When needed, the recovery loans included the refinancing of existing loans. Bangon Kabuhayan recovery loans were typically disbursed one to two weeks after application. More than 4,600 Bangon Kabuhayan loans totaling US\$2,065,000 were disbursed across the Philippines, including in Dulag. CEVI reports that 80 percent of its clients are women (Figure 7).<sup>40</sup>



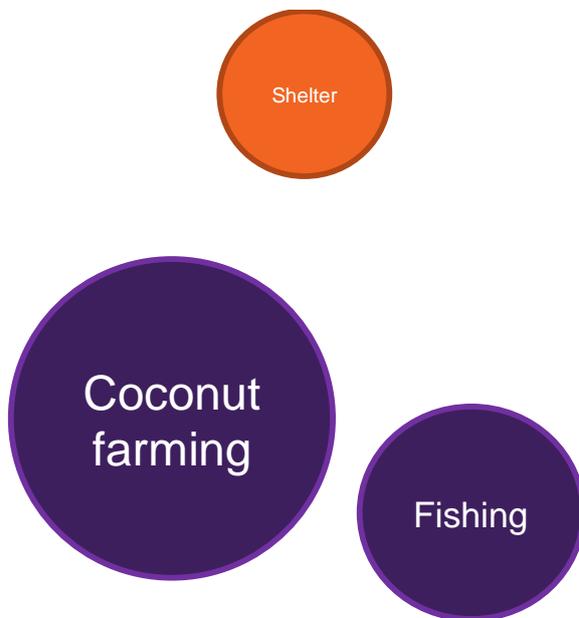
**Figure 7: Barangay Alegre CEVI women’s loan group meeting (Photo: Mary Joy Gonzales)**

It is important to note that the provision of Bangon Kabuhayan loans was one specific intervention within the context of broader disaster risk recovery and emergency response efforts in Dulag; recovery was therefore not solely due to microfinance. Other key organizations involved in the response to Haiyan in Dulag included the local government, the Red Cross, Save the Children, Oxfam, Caritas, and World Vision. We therefore use informants’ perceptions of whether recovery loans helped them recover to assess the role of Bangon Kabuhayan in supporting early recovery, while acknowledging the broader DRR and relief context and actors.

## **Characteristics of early recovery**

### **Timelines of recovery**

Informants in Dulag confirmed that in general recovery had taken a year or more. As with Saledo, different aspects of people’s lives recovered at different rates (Figure 8), with shelter often being rebuilt faster than livelihoods: “I would say it took us more or less a year to recover. Homes were the fastest to be rebuilt because of NGOs and different groups giving out housing materials. We had houses in more or less a month. The longest to recover would be livelihoods because everything was wiped out and everyone had to start from scratch. When you plant, we would have to wait for a certain time before we can harvest.”<sup>41</sup>



**Figure 8: Schematic representation of recovery times for different aspects of people's lives after Cyclone Haiyan in Dulag, Philippines**

Note: Larger bubbles indicate longer times (e.g., coconut farming took more than four years).

Households' pathways to recovery were inevitably idiosyncratic: "I would say it took me one year to fully recover from the impact of Haiyan. I lost everything after the typhoon so I would take fish from the merchants and sell them with a marked-up price. At the end of the day, I would return the principal to the merchant and then keep the markup."<sup>42</sup> According to one informant, their coconut-farming livelihood may not even have recovered now: "It took us more or less two years to get back on our feet. We received building materials but not housing projects, and everyone's properties were totally damaged. The livelihood never really got back to normal."<sup>43</sup> By implication, respondents defined recovery as returning to a pre-Haiyan state.

As already mentioned, without significantly more household-level research than was possible here, we could not formally evaluate the degree to which Bangon Kabuhayan recovery loans helped individuals and households recover more rapidly than they otherwise would have after Haiyan. However, VisionFund and CEVI have closely tracked the project. They have concluded that 96 percent of loan recipients believed that Bangon Kabuhayan recovery loans had supported their recovery within 20 months of Haiyan, and half of these reported recovery as "full" or "better than before the typhoon."<sup>44</sup> Our own interviews confirmed that recipients credited the recovery loans as an important element in their early recovery after Haiyan: "Definitely the Bangon loan with our house and pig raising [was a major factor in our recovery]. We were able to buy four piglets at P6,000.00 because my sibling was also into selling pigs. We still raise pigs now, and we have a sow that we are raising from the loan we got. We also had our pigsty repaired for the sow."<sup>45</sup> The economic circumstances of households affect the speed and ease of recovery: "Though everyone was affected, it cannot be denied that the rich recover faster while those who have no one to help them out would really take a lot more time than the others."<sup>46</sup>

The evaluation by VisionFund and CEVI also found that the Bangon Kabuhayan recovery loans were affordable and did not lead to overindebtedness. Only 3 percent of clients reported that repayments had been significantly challenging, and only 6 percent said they would not necessarily recommend a recovery loan to someone in a similar situation in the future.<sup>47</sup>

Moreover, the Bangon Kabuhayan recovery loans were good business for CEVI, which might otherwise have struggled with liquidity or solvency. On-time repayment rates and write-off ratios were better than their averages for regular loans. As a senior member of CEVI's staff put it, "It would be difficult for us to recover our portfolio if we did not intervene."<sup>48</sup>

## **Thematic Area 1: Governance**

The specific activities of focus here—the recovery loans—means that broader questions of governance, such as the existence of financed DRR legislation, regulations, codes, and plans at national and local levels are not within the scope of the analysis. More pertinent questions of governance—and ones that also pertain to the other interventions assessed—regard the degree of involvement of local people and organizations in devising and implementing the recovery loans.

As described, the Bangon Kabuhayan recovery loans were conceptualized and implemented by CEVI and VisionFund, a local organization and an international NGO, respectively. Critically, CEVI was already operating in the area, with an established client base and with local staff who possessed a profound understanding of the local context. In governance terms, there was a strong and stable relationship between the three main protagonists: between VisionFund and CEVI on the one hand, and between CEVI and community members on the other.

Moreover, the idea of the recovery loans, and the plans for them, resulted from consultation with existing loan holders.<sup>49</sup> This suggests not only that existing loan holders participated in developing plans for the recovery loan program, but also that community members had influence with CEVI. It is worth noting that the details of each loan (e.g., loan value and detailed repayment schedule) were always agreed in consultation with the recipient.<sup>50</sup> Community members were, in effect, involved in decision-making. The nature of the intervention means that women were involved (as individuals and loan groups rather than formal women's organizations) in all of the processes described above.

## **Thematic Areas 2 and 3: Risk Assessment and Knowledge and Education**

Unlike the previous case study which investigated a comprehensive approach to preparedness and recovery, this case study focuses on a specific intervention. However, the Bangon Kabuhayan recovery loan program was developed and implemented in the context of existing DRR approaches and a broader emergency response.

DRR activities before Haiyan focused on training and awareness raising in schools and on training *barangay* frontliners (*tanods*) in emergency response procedures. Informants reported that communities are now better prepared for disasters than they were before Haiyan: "People are more informed of what they should do and how they should prepare. They are more aware and interested in disaster reduction efforts and trainings. We were very shocked with Haiyan. We were complacent because it was unlike previous calamities, which were not as devastating."<sup>51</sup> When asked whether this increased preparedness and knowledge were likely to result in a faster recovery from future disasters, the response was affirmative: "Yes, definitely. We are able to prepare and adjust now because we are aware of the things that we need to do disaster- and livelihood-wise. We have disaster trainings for all kinds of disasters like earthquakes and floods. We also have first aid training. Haiyan taught us a lot experience-wise as well."<sup>52</sup>

## **Thematic Area 4: Risk Management and Vulnerability Reduction**

The availability of finance (savings, loans, or community disaster funds) for community members is a critical aspect of resilience and recovery. The Bangon Kabuhayan recovery loan program ensured that financing was available to some community members in Dulag in the aftermath of Haiyan. CEVI reported a significant increase in clients after Haiyan, including in Dulag.

The rate of on-time repayment of the loans was 95 percent, higher than the rate for CEVI's standard loans. As noted, CEVI's data suggest that the loans did not lead to overindebtedness for the vast majority of clients. Achieving these results required careful management by CEVI: "Bangon Kabuhayan was closely monitored, and we really conducted home visits once the loans were granted to confirm if the loans were really used for the reasons stated when they

applied for the loans. That was when we found out that not everyone applied their proposal and diverted their loans to other things like fixing their house. We understand that it is a need, and we gave a little leeway to those who had sources for repayment.”<sup>53</sup>

The purpose of the Bangon Kabuhayan loans was livelihood recovery, and the evidence from our informants is that the loans allowed recipients to engage in a combination of restoring their previous livelihoods, modifying their previous livelihoods, and adopting new livelihoods, which may or may not prove to be more resilient than their predecessors. The all-but-unprecedented damage caused by Haiyan inevitably made livelihood recovery difficult for most community members, whether or not they were part of the Bangon Kabuhayan loan program.

A typical example of the modification of a previous livelihood, facilitated by a Bangon Kabuhayan loan, comes from coconut farmers. When asked if she had changed her livelihood practices, one informant replied, “Technologically, yes. We also learned to balance and check our prices with the prices of equipment and fertilizers that we need to grow coconuts. Our farmers have also learned to plant other crops in between the coconut trees like vegetables and root crops. The most common intercrop is taro.”<sup>54</sup> Another informant confirmed that some loans were used to expand and diversify livelihoods: “We have one [loan group] member who was able to take out a bigger loan, and it really helped them fund their business of selling vegetables in the market. Right now, they have a number of different businesses that they used their CEVI loans to build. They were also able to fix their water pump for their vegetable and rice plants. After Typhoon Haiyan, the people were able to diversify and widen their livelihood opportunities.”<sup>55</sup>

Loans were also given for new livelihoods, such as petty trading: “Even those who would prefer to engage in a new business type are considered as long as we can see that it [the business] is feasible for their recovery.”<sup>56</sup> However, diversification of livelihoods and new livelihoods were not unique to recipients of Bangon Kabuhayan recovery loans.<sup>57</sup>

Livelihood diversification is often hindered by the difficulty of finding good markets for new products: “After Haiyan, we decided to plant other crops like bananas, root crops, and vegetables on the land that was emptied of coconuts. We had a lot of products, but the issue would still be that they had low prices. There were many changes, and for a few years we struggled. Good thing many groups came in and helped us out like microfinancing institutions.”<sup>58</sup>

Interestingly, one of the impacts that the Bangon Kabuhayan recovery loans may have had was to broaden community members’ concept of how they could make a living: “I did not like to engage in loans before because it would be a headache to pay for it, but now I realize that [it is a good thing] as long as I put it into the business intended for it and not for anything else.”<sup>59</sup>

### **Thematic Area 5: Disaster Preparedness and Response**

Early warning systems and evacuation plans were in place in Dulag but were often not heeded: “The municipality had an early warning and pre-emptive evacuation system, but everyone was complacent and refused to evacuate because the weather was fine. When dawn came and the typhoon hit, it was already too late.”<sup>60</sup> This situation has changed: “We have improved our early warning systems and are actually heeding them”<sup>61</sup> and “We are now aware of what we should do and where we should go for evacuation. Because of Haiyan, we have learned to take storms seriously and now know what a storm surge can do.”<sup>62</sup> Preparedness is also reportedly improving, including the ongoing construction of emergency centers.<sup>63</sup>

## **Discussion**

The research in Dulag focused on a single intervention, unlike the preceding case study from Salcedo, which considered a broad range of DRR and response activities. The Bangon Kabuhayan recovery loans were one intervention within the context of broader DRR and emergency response institutions and activities. CEVI and VisionFund have compiled evidence

that the Bangon Kabuhayan recovery loans helped community members recover after Haiyan, diversify their livelihoods, or both. The case study also demonstrates the potential importance of finance in supporting early recovery after disasters and shows that single, well-designed, and well-implemented interventions can be effective—single organizations need not always attempt comprehensive DRR approaches.

Importantly, CEVI was already an established organization before Haiyan, with existing relationships, clients, trust, and a deep understanding of local circumstances. It is difficult to imagine that the recovery loan program could have been conceived and delivered effectively by an organization that did not arrive in an area until after a disaster.

Haiyan threatened CEVI as an organization, challenging its liquidity (as it would have any other MFI), and its staff was affected alongside other residents of Leyte. In a sense, CEVI had to innovate to survive, and that innovation, in turn, enabled communities to recover and in some cases diversify their livelihoods.

Finally, in CEVI and VisionFund's view, preparation will be key to improve future recovery lending. Funding the Bangon Kabuhayan recovery loan program was described as challenging, not least because emergency response funding does not generally support lending. Additionally, the perceived increase in CEVI's risk profile made conventional funding sources scarce. This reality has stimulated VisionFund to promote a scalable approach to recovery lending—the Asian Region Disaster Insurance Scheme (ARDIS). The scheme is envisioned as a regional insurance scheme that will provide financial support to VisionFund's MFIs across Asia so that they might have the financial resources to assist their clients after disasters.<sup>64</sup>

## CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION IN EPAU, VANUATU

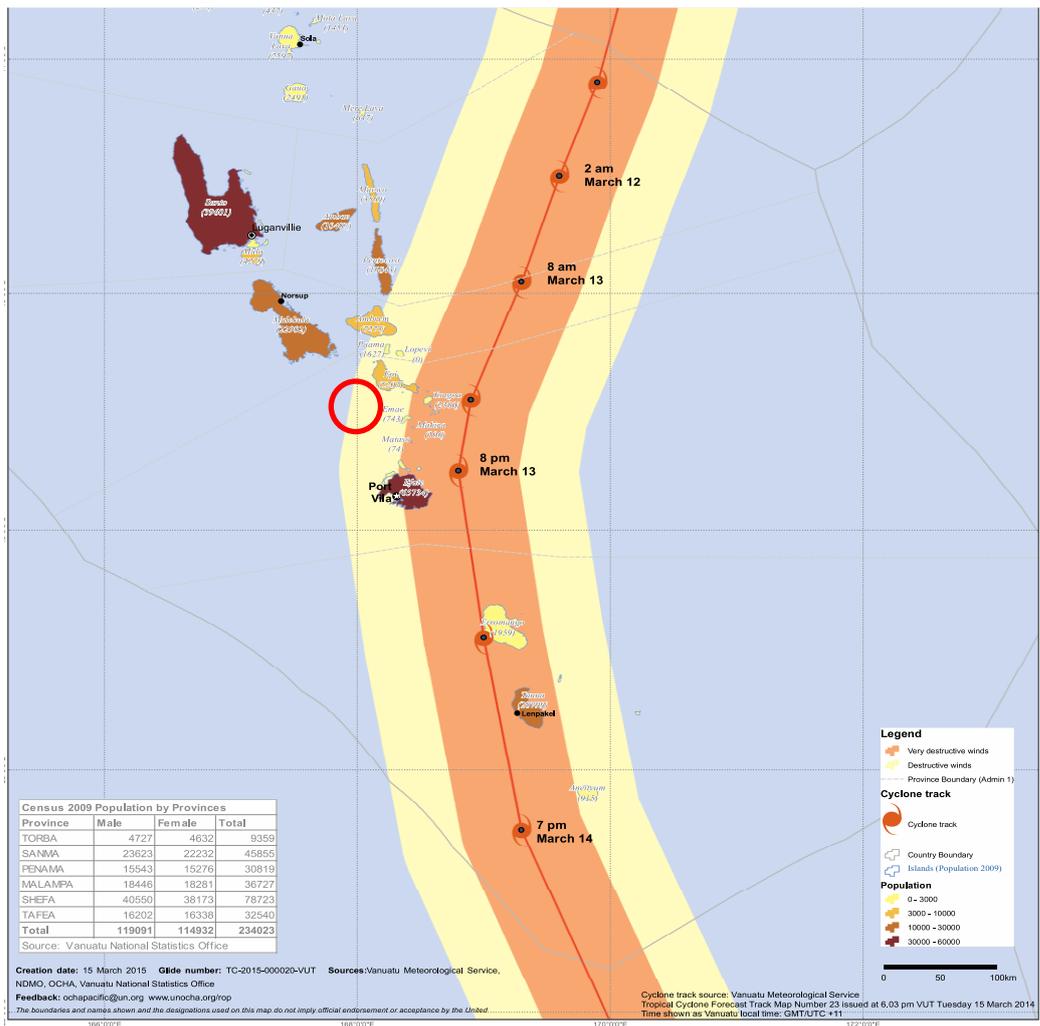
### Context

Vanuatu is made up of 83 islands scattered across 1,200 square kilometers of Pacific Ocean, leaving remote populations isolated and making access and service delivery difficult. It is ranked as a small island developing state and a least-developed country—meaning it has low gross national income, low human resource capacity, and high economic vulnerability—but is expected to graduate toward developing-country status in 2020.<sup>65</sup>

Vanuatu faces a range of hazards, including cyclones, volcanoes, earthquakes, tsunamis, droughts, and floods. These hazards, combined with the country's social, economic, and ecological conditions, make Vanuatu one of the highest-risk countries in the world for natural hazards.<sup>66</sup> Moreover, Vanuatu is currently experiencing significant changes in weather, with projections of longer-term climate change showing a range of potentially adverse impacts.<sup>67</sup>

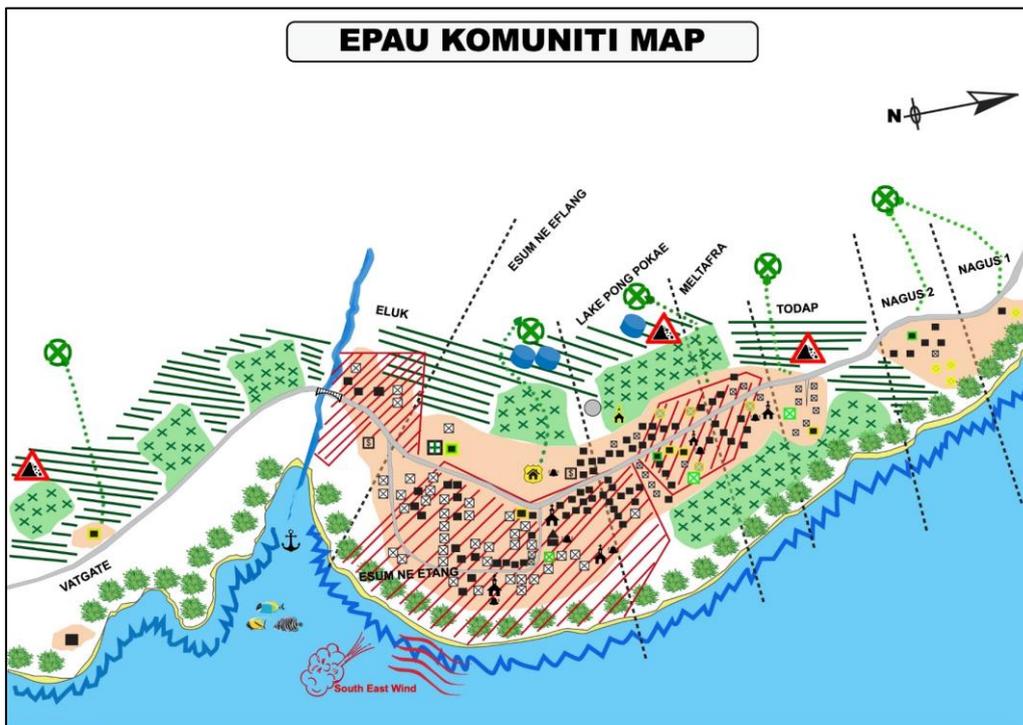
On March 13, 2015, the Category 5 Tropical Cyclone Pam struck Vanuatu. Tropical Cyclone Pam brought estimated wind speeds of 250 kilometers per hour with gusts of 320 kilometers per hour.<sup>68</sup> The strong winds created a storm surge, and the consequent flooding destroyed homes, schools, health facilities, crops, and livestock across huge areas of the country. Approximately 188,000 people (70 percent of the population) were affected.<sup>69</sup> An estimated 65,000 people were displaced, approximately 17,000 buildings were damaged or destroyed, and 96 percent of food crops in the worst-affected areas were damaged or destroyed.<sup>70</sup> The total losses from Tropical Cyclone Pam were estimated to be 64.1 percent of Vanuatu's gross domestic product, or US\$449.4 million,<sup>71</sup> and recovery is ongoing. In the immediate aftermath of the cyclone, it was estimated that more than half of the population required emergency food assistance, about 40 percent required drinking water, and almost a third required emergency shelter.<sup>72</sup>

Tropical Cyclone Pam passed within kilometers of Epau village on the island of Efate (Figure 9). Epau is about 60 kilometers by road from Port Vila, where community members typically go for government services, healthcare, and markets for their produce. The village hugs the coastline, with no topographical protection from the prevailing wind (Figure 10).



**Figure 9: Map of the Tropical Cyclone Pam track, with Epau highlighted**

**Source:** Map from the UN Office of the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs found at from Relief Web (<https://reliefweb.int/map/vanuatu/vanuatu-tropical-cyclone-pam-track-map-15-march-2015>).



**Figure 10: Community map, Epau, Vanuatu**

Source: Map produced by Epau Community with the Vanuatu Red Cross Society, June 2013.

## Intervention

The cyclone caused extensive damage to houses, livelihoods, and infrastructure in Epau. However, Epau was one of the locations where the Yumi Stap Redi long Klaemet Jenis (Vanuatu NGO Climate Change Adaptation Program) had run between 2012 and 2014. The program was implemented by a consortium composed of Oxfam, CARE International in Vanuatu, Save the Children, the Vanuatu Red Cross Society in partnership with the French Red Cross, the Vanuatu Rural Development Training Centre Association (VRDTCA), and the Secretariat for the Pacific Community–Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (SPC-GIZ).

The objectives of the program were to increase the capacity of communities to adapt to the impacts of climate change, to help the government develop and implement policies that are based on evidence and learning and that better assist communities in adapting to climate change, and to increase the efficiency of climate-related work through close collaboration between stakeholders. The intervention reached more than 5,000 people and operated in 39 communities on 12 islands, including in Epau.<sup>73</sup>

Awareness raising, training, and workshops held in the communities gave community members—including women, men, girls, boys, and people with disabilities—more knowledge of weather, climate variability, climate change, and climate change adaptation. Moreover, an evaluation of the program concluded that communities actively used the knowledge and skills they obtained to adapt their water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH); natural resource management; agriculture; and disaster risk reduction. The program also provided material inputs in WASH, natural resource management, infrastructure, and agriculture.

The program helped form Community Disaster and Climate Change Committees (CDCCCs), which have high levels of participation from local communities, include female participants, and are seen as having influence at the government level. Through these committees, people participated in mapping risks and making action plans for before, during, and after a disaster. The effectiveness of this planning became apparent during Tropical Cyclone Pam; warnings were relayed to the community, and safe houses (usually classrooms) were identified. After the

cyclone hit, training programs taught people (especially women) how to diversify their livelihoods and market their crops.

The program also helped community members improve links with local government, although the durability of those links remains to be seen. Knowledge sharing between the consortium, the wider Vanuatu Climate Action Network, civil society, and the government has enabled consortium members to increase their input into government policies and planning processes. The program evaluation viewed this as a positive step in promoting policies and practices that better reflect community priorities.<sup>74</sup>

Despite these gains, the magnitude of Tropical Cyclone Pam stretched local and national response and recovery capacities in a way that previous, smaller-scale disasters had not.<sup>75</sup>

## Characteristics of early recovery

### Timelines of recovery

Two distinct responses were given regarding the timeline of recovery from Tropical Cyclone Pam. Some respondents concluded that recovery from Tropical Cyclone Pam had taken about three years, and they identified distinct stages. During the first stage, which lasted one and a half years, community members planted and harvested crops, and fruit trees grew back to normal (Figure 11). In the second stage, which took two and a half years, households gained the resources to send their children back to school. Finally, rebuilding the majority of houses took two to three years,<sup>76</sup> although there are still houses that require reconstruction.<sup>77</sup>



**Figure 11: Schematic representation of recovery times for different aspects of people's lives after Tropical Cyclone Pam in Epau, Vanuatu**

Note: Larger bubbles indicate longer times (e.g., shelter took two to three years to recover).

Other informants reported a quicker recovery, noting that food was fully available after one to two months, most houses were rebuilt within one year,<sup>78</sup> and communities had essentially recovered in four to five months, albeit with some longer-term work required, such as the rehabilitation of water systems.<sup>79</sup>

The speed of recovery was considered slow compared with past, smaller cyclones, but informants acknowledged that the damage resulting from Tropical Cyclone Pam was on an altogether greater scale: "Recovery from Pam took time because it was big and caused a lot of damaged compared to other smaller ones."<sup>80</sup>

Program officers emphasized the positive effect that the DRR work before Tropical Cyclone Pam had on recovery: “Before Pam, we trained them [members of the community] on the stages of the disaster management cycle: there is preparedness, then disaster, then response, then recovery. Short term and long term were explained to them, what their roles are. After Cyclone Pam, we went back and reviewed that with them, to see where they are at, what they have learned and done after Cyclone Pam.... They were already using the skills and training by, for example, planting seeds.”<sup>81</sup> Other informants agreed that the benefits of the training; the participatory risk assessment; the creation of action plans for before, during, and after a disaster; and the formation of community disaster committees became apparent during the aftermath of Tropical Cyclone Pam.

Several informants further emphasized that the program’s awareness raising and training work had changed how the community responded. Whereas responses to earlier disasters had essentially been a matter for each family, after Tropical Cyclone Pam, the community acted with shared responsibility: “After cyclones, in previous experience, there was no community coming together to recover. But after training, the community members said they sprang back really quickly compared to other disasters”<sup>82</sup> and “Under the chief’s leadership they identified where the homeless people were and helped them out. They learned that the priority is to help them out first, and this was instructed by the chief. So, for example, they made sure they had firewood and contributed leaf *natangura*<sup>83</sup> to them before outside help comes.”<sup>84</sup> This echoes a research finding from other project areas showing that project communities acted to assist the recovery of vulnerable members in a way not reported from non-project communities.<sup>85</sup> Community informants also noted the importance of outside aid, from sources including the government, NGOs, and domestic and foreign private donations, in early recovery.

### **Thematic Area 1: Governance**

Informants confirmed that the communities, via the CDCCCs trained by the Yumi Stap Redi long Klaemet Jenis program, led the recovery after Tropical Cyclone Pam, working closely with the provincial government. The program explicitly aimed to strengthen the links and accountability between community groups and different levels of government. The National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) supported needs assessment. NGOs, including the members of the Yumi Stap Redi long Klaemet Jenis consortium, were also cited as key actors. This finding appears to confirm that the process was driven by committed, effective, and accountable community leadership, supported by external agencies. The relationship between CDCCCs, provincial authorities, and NGOs was repeatedly articulated, suggesting that the relationships and roles are well understood.

The implementation of enabling DRR legislation, regulations, codes, plans, and funding at the time of Tropical Cyclone Pam appear to have been mixed. One respondent stated, “At that time area secretaries did not know about it. Even the officers in NGOs did not know about it. But now they know and are slowly implementing it. The NGOs were mainly the ones funding the DRR activities in the communities, but now the Provincial Disaster Officer has come in and tapped into this fund to implement DRR in the community.”<sup>86</sup>

The community—through the CDCCCs—were involved in decision-making, alongside the area secretary and the village chief. Women are part of the CDCCCs: “Whenever there is a decision that needs to be made, women are also in the meetings.”<sup>87</sup> There are, however, no women-only decision-making groups. Informants generally thought that the community DRR plans considered women’s needs but that these sometimes fell short—for example, the lack of separate toilet facilities in the classrooms that serve as emergency shelters.

### **Thematic Area 2: Risk Assessment**

Community risk maps were built through participatory transect walks that identified vulnerability and capacity inside the community. One informant noted that this process also informed NGO consortium members of groups that required capacity building: “If they [women’s groups or

community associations] are looking out for [the] chief, already we know they are not strong.”<sup>88</sup> The same informant stressed that to be truly participatory, those who conducted risk assessments and community prioritization must “[in the] initial phase, be open and collect everything, good and bad, to help the community identify priorities. If the community does not buy in, when we leave it does not go on, [the] sustainability side of it. At the initial stage, we can even change the total idea.” Informants confirmed that women participated in the risk assessments and that their needs were considered (though see the observation on the provision of women’s toilets, above). Finally, the risk assessment appears to have incorporated local knowledge, with the men’s focus group citing, for example, that they showed the community’s traditional safe houses to the Red Cross.

### **Thematic Area 3: Knowledge and Education**

The men’s focus group gave three examples of how the program had improved their understanding of risk, vulnerability, and disaster management. First, they learned that when there is a warning, they must move vulnerable people (such as people with disabilities) to safe places. Second, they must have the materials they will need during an emergency, such as torches and batteries. Third, the community now understands which places are safe to use when there is a disaster. Informants displayed knowledge about contingency plans, facilities, and services, listing the nine designated evacuation spaces, including the traditional safe houses, that were incorporated into the DRR plans developed under the Yumi Stap Redi long Klaemet Jenis program. In the absence of a women-only focus group, it was not possible to determine whether women within the community had a similar understanding of contingency plans.

### **Thematic Area 4: Risk Management and Vulnerability Reduction**

Community members mentioned that they had requested and received training on resilient crops and agricultural techniques from the Department of Agriculture after Tropical Cyclone Pam.

Before the cyclone, women’s main source of income was weaving *Pandanus* leaves.<sup>89</sup> After the cyclone destroyed most of the *Pandanus*, women found it difficult to earn income. Many received training on alternative livelihoods including poultry rearing and fruit and vegetable cultivation. They were also trained on marketing their produce. One informant thought that these interventions had been important in supporting the recovery of women’s livelihoods and bridging the period until the *Pandanus* regrew and women could resume weaving.<sup>90</sup> Informants confirmed that no community disaster fund, savings, or credit were available at the time.

Informants had conflicting views on whether the emergency shelters were accessible to all. Some pointed out that there were no facilities for expectant mothers, people with disabilities, or the elderly or safe houses with facilities specifically for women. Another informant argued that most people evacuated to classrooms, which were generally accessible to the elderly, pregnant women, and people with disabilities. Perceptions about the need for emergency shelters suitable for women are changing: “It was not really understood at that time by the officer. Knowledge was not enough at that time to push for [appropriate shelters]. The officer now knows and understands that this is very important, and a lot of programs are now pushing for this and now have more knowledge on gender inclusion.”<sup>91</sup>

### **Thematic Area 5: Disaster Preparedness and Response**

Early warning systems, including radio broadcasts and ringing of church bells, existed at the time of Tropical Cyclone Pam. Informants reported that they had responded to the Tropical Cyclone Pam warnings. The men’s focus group confirmed that they have evacuation maps and cyclone-tracking maps. The men also suggested, however, that follow-up activities were essential to ensure that their knowledge of how to respond to early warnings is refreshed.

## Discussion

An evaluation of the Yumi Stap Redi long Klaemet Jenis program concluded that the intervention had improved NGO coordination, increased the influence of NGOs with the government, created functioning Community Disaster and Climate Change Committees (CDCCCs), raised community DRR knowledge, and led to greater gender inclusion. Many of these changes have continued to improve the resilience of communities since the original project finished. Although that evaluation did not include Epau, the testimonies we collected from community informants and project implementers is consistent with it.<sup>92</sup>

Two further points are worth emphasizing. First, the timing of the project—in the years immediately preceding one of the most intense cyclones that Vanuatu has experienced—meant that the relationships, linkages, and knowledge that were built during the project were still active and ready to be used in the run-up to and immediate aftermath of Tropical Cyclone Pam.

Second, the twin approach of building community governance structures at the bottom while coordinating as a consortium to partner with and influence various levels of government has, in the view of one evaluator, led to the promotion of “policy and practice that are more reflective of community priorities.”<sup>93</sup> In this sense, the Yumi Stap Redi long Klaemet Jenis program has driven bottom-up governance that appears to have both aided recovery from a specific disaster and contributed to broader community resilience.

## COMMUNITY-LED RISK REDUCTION IN ERATAH, VANUATU

### Context

Eratah is a small, remote community on Tongariki island, which is part of the Shepherd Islands archipelago in Shefa Province, Vanuatu (Figure 12). The island is a mere 3.8 kilometers long and 1.7 kilometers wide, with a population in 2015 of 274 people in 55 households.<sup>94</sup> Access to government services is very limited although the island has a school and a first aid post. Ships come to the island once every week or two, and the cost of traveling to the provincial capital is high. There are no NGOs working on the island.

The island has only one truck, which was broken down at the time of field research, and a small shop that sells only a few goods. The island is rural, and the population is largely dependent on subsistence farming, with minor sales of yams, woven mats, and baskets to Port Vila and within the island at community-organized market days. Community members list the main natural hazards as cyclones and describe themselves as resilient.<sup>95</sup>

Tropical Cyclone Pam passed almost directly over the island on March 13, 2015. The cyclone damaged and destroyed housing and the main crops, yam and kava (the root of which is used to produce a mildly intoxicating drink). As the village chief put it, “The whole community was naked.”<sup>96</sup>

### Intervention

The work described here is not a project in the conventional sense; it was initiated, resourced, and implemented by the community of Eratah itself without significant external inputs.<sup>97</sup>

In the aftermath of Tropical Cyclone Pam, the village chief mobilized the community to rebuild gardens and homes, which were initially rebuilt using any materials that were available. To support households that had no money, the chief called for the community to raise funds: each

family cooked food or brought something to sell. Other households needed labor, and the chief called on the community to assist, with men building and women cooking for these households.

The community is constructing a multipurpose community center and safe house to help cope with future disasters. The idea for this evacuation center took root in 2006, long before Tropical Cyclone Pam. Community members raise funds for the building by selling yams, mats, and baskets. The original idea was to build a men's house, like the mothers' house<sup>98</sup>. The mothers' house is a common meeting place for women or mother's in the community. After Tropical Cyclone Pam, they decided that the building will also become an evacuation center.

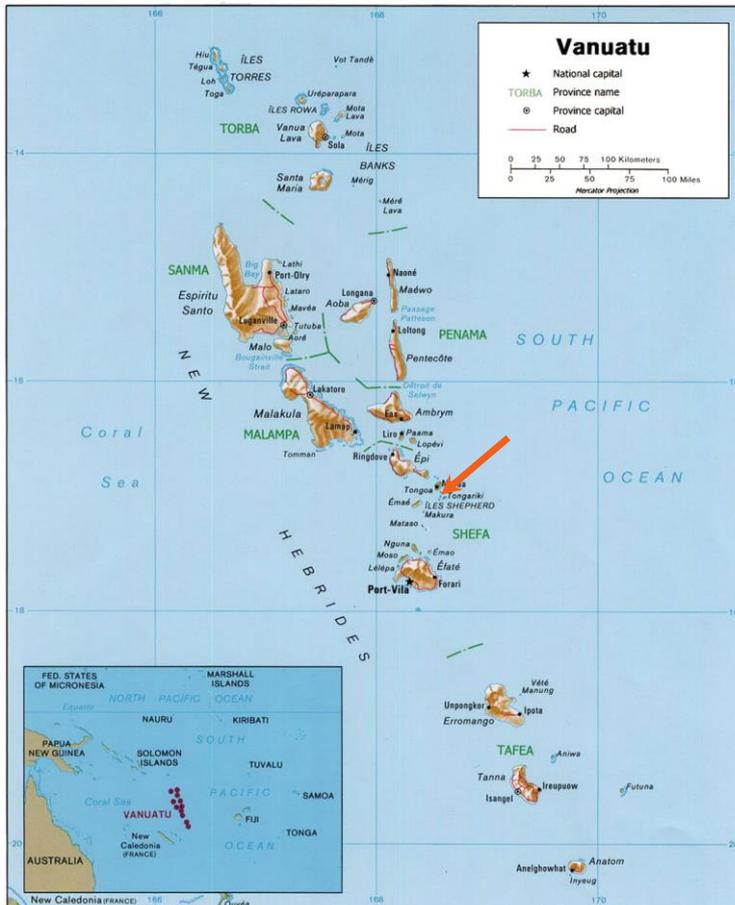


Figure 12: Map of Vanuatu, with Tongariki Island indicated by arrow

Source: <http://www.mappery.com/Vanuatu-Islands-Map>.

## Characteristics of early recovery

### Timelines of recovery

The community defined recovery by considering a number of aspects of their lives, especially the recovery of agriculture, regrowth of trees, rebuilding of houses, and the ability to pay for their children to go back to school. It is clear that not all of these aspects have recovered fully for all members of the community (Figure 13).



**Figure 13: Schematic representation of recovery times for different aspects of people's lives after Tropical Cyclone Pam in Eratah**

Note: Larger bubbles indicate longer times (e.g., shelter has not fully recovered after four years).

Respondents generally reported that their gardens had recovered fully within about a year. The kava crop, however, which was destroyed by Tropical Cyclone Pam, has not recovered at all.

Regrowth of trees provided a sense of normality. One informant said, “When trees started growing again and leaves grew back, recovery started there. The leaves brought me a feeling of being lucky that I am alive—new leaves mean life.”<sup>99</sup> Another informant achieved a sense of full recovery only when he was able to pay for his children’s school fees in 2018–19.

Community members’ main concern was rebuilding houses. At first they rebuilt houses using any material they could find. Under the leadership of the chief, one of the first things community members did was to find every blown-away roof—damaged or not—to use to create temporary shelter. Rebuilding more robust houses has been slow, difficult, and expensive. Households need money to build stronger houses, and not every household has had the funds to do so. In addition, there were not enough mature trees on the island to use for timber.

Community members have supported each other in the rebuilding process. House rebuilding is usually started by an individual household, and then the chief intervenes by asking the community help in its completion. Those with sufficient funds engage community members to dig up sand from the bottom of the sea or under rocks (there are no beaches on the island), and this sand then has to be transported uphill, bag by bag, in a human chain. Householders sell yams to procure other building materials, such as cement. Informants noted that, in contrast to other islands, they had received no external support. For these reasons—lack of suitable materials, lack of money, and the absence of external support—for most of the community, house rebuilding was still ongoing at the time of the field research: “Currently only four households have rebuilt their kitchen, and most not yet.”<sup>100</sup>

Community members were clear that the recovery from Tropical Cyclone Pam was slower than for previous, less devastating cyclones. The only comparable cyclone that the community could recall happened in 1972 but was less powerful than Tropical Cyclone Pam. The mixed focus group noted, however, that the recovery of other communities on Tongariki island was even slower than that of Eratah. The village helped some other communities by giving them food. The reason they gave for their comparatively quick recovery was that they have a very active chief who is perceived as being good to his people and who is in turn respected by them.

## **Thematic Area 1: Governance**

In the absence of external support, recovery efforts in Eratah were led by the village chief, with the full cooperation of the community. First, the chief instructed everyone to work together to rebuild every damaged house belonging to each household in the community. Second, he traveled to Port Vila and set up a development committee to represent Eratah. This resulted in his returning to the island with some housing materials. His other role was to make sure that community members had food by instructing everyone to come together on specified days to make agricultural gardens for every household.

Beyond the effort to build a safe evacuation center, there are no DRR plans for the community. So far, funds for the center have been generated from within the community. A community subcommittee deals with fundraising for the evacuation center, but given the limited opportunities that villagers have to raise money, the process is slow. When there is a shortage of funds for building supplies, they can ask to use money from the chief's "basket" (i.e., reserves set aside for the chief's affairs). Both men and women take part in decision-making.

A women-only group, the Limakikihirik Women's Association, has been active in the village since 1984; "The mamas collected money and bought cement. The fathers made bricks. The women started this as an initiative to help men instead of leaving everything to them. The men even made fun of them, but they eventually built a women's house. [Tropical Cyclone] Pam came and destroyed it, but they rebuilt it again."<sup>101</sup> However, women's specific vulnerabilities and needs do not seem to be taken into account. For example, there are no separate WASH facilities for women in the community.<sup>102</sup>

The minimal external support for either the response to Tropical Cyclone Pam or the attempts of the community to increase its resilience illustrates the lack of structures that would allow Eratah to access funds from national and provincial governments. Few community members are aware of the funds that are available. Informants gave only two examples of the community's effective drawing down of resources from formal DRR institutions. One was the chief's trip to Port Vila, where he set up a development committee that accessed funds for some construction material. The other example was assistance from the local member of Parliament, who procured roofing material to repair the Limakikihirik Women's Association's house.<sup>103</sup>

## **Thematic Areas 2 and 3: Risk Assessment and Knowledge and Education**

The community has not conducted a formal risk assessment and has not been supported by external organizations to do so. Through experience, however, community members have built collective knowledge of basic preparation for disasters. For example, they understand the need to secure the roofs of houses with strong rope or twine before a cyclone and to cut down banana and cassava stems to prevent uprooting. They are also aware of the need to move to safe (i.e., concrete) structures. The village chief expressed a desire to understand more about risk reduction.

## **Thematic Area 4: Risk Management and Vulnerability Reduction**

Informants confirmed that the community has little in the way of emergency stocks and supplies other than the food in their agricultural gardens. There is no community disaster fund or credit scheme. Savings are typically individual, although the Women's Association has savings that members have raised by weaving mats and baskets and cooking for visitors to the village. There is also the "chief's basket," to which community members contribute if requested and which is intended to cover the costs of the chief's affairs (e.g., paying helpers). The chief stated his belief that a dedicated community disaster fund would have helped the community recover more quickly from Tropical Cyclone Pam and suggested that one could be started by planting a large yam garden and setting aside the money for a fund to rebuild houses and replace lost belongings after disasters.

As already noted, there was no safe house at the time of Tropical Cyclone Pam, and the community is in the process of constructing one. This is an entirely community constructed, owned, and managed endeavor. Women's needs are not specifically taken into account in the intervention, although it is now hoped that the construction will be modified to include separate toilet and bathroom facilities for women.

### **Thematic Area 5: Disaster Preparedness and Response**

Interviews revealed little information on early warning. The mutually supportive community response has been described in the preceding sections.

## **Discussion**

The village of Eratah, despite its isolation and lack of external technical, financial, or material support, has shown remarkable resilience in the face of the Category 5 Tropical Cyclone Pam. Part of its resilience undoubtedly stems from having lived with the experience of frequent cyclones, storms, and earthquakes for millennia. The crops that are grown, such as yams, are likely to be grown at least in part because the roots remain intact and edible even if the stems and leaves are destroyed, and therefore they continue to provide nutrition after disasters. Community members have learned to secure their housing and to cut down crops that are vulnerable to uprooting so they will regrow after the storm passes. Importantly, they have committed their own time, resources, and labor to reducing their vulnerability to future disasters by undertaking the construction of a safe house.

Alongside this indigenous resilience, our research has shown the importance of leadership in Eratah's recovery from Tropical Cyclone Pam and its attempts to increase its resilience to future disasters. The village chief's resourcefulness and direction undoubtedly played a major role in the recovery, and the esteem in which he is held helped the community work together. Our informants reported both that Eratah had recovered more completely than other parts of the island and that it had been able to help other villages on Tongariki with donations of food.

Nonetheless, the recovery has been slow and at times unpleasant (e.g., for the female community members, who had no toilet facilities). The lack of external inputs of resources and knowledge means that many straightforward actions that the community could undertake to increase its resilience and recover more quickly from disasters in the future have thus far not occurred. At this stage it is uncertain whether the safe house will withstand severe cyclones and other disasters. In general, there is also a chronic shortage of resources—both financial and material, such as construction materials—that can be deployed for recovery efforts. On one hand, the story of Eratah illustrates the resilience of traditional communities and the importance of leadership in recovering from disasters. On the other hand, it highlights the limitations of what can be achieved without external support and the difficulty of extending national disaster management capacity across the many islands of Vanuatu and the often remote populations that live on them.

## **STORM-RESISTENT HOUSING IN DA NANG, VIETNAM**

### **Context**

Da Nang, with a population of more than 1 million people, is Vietnam's fifth most populous city and the largest city in central Vietnam. It is a leading industrial center and has one of Vietnam's major ports.

The city is highly exposed to tropical storms and typhoons. Three major typhoons in recent years—Xangsane in 2006, Ketsana in 2009, and Nari in 2013—caused severe structural damage to thousands of houses in Da Nang. The severity of such events is expected to increase owing to climate change.

The rapid development of Da Nang's urban and peri-urban zones and, in particular, expansion into low-lying areas are increasing the severity and frequency of flooding in the city during extreme rain events such as typhoons and storm surges during high tides. Construction standards based on historical experience are unlikely to be sufficient to make houses and infrastructure resilient to future extreme weather events.<sup>104</sup> The poor population of Da Nang is disproportionately vulnerable owing to their low adaptive capacity and low standards of housing.

It proved impossible to conduct field research in Da Nang, so this case study is based entirely on existing literature (including case studies, evaluations, and academic articles) about the project.

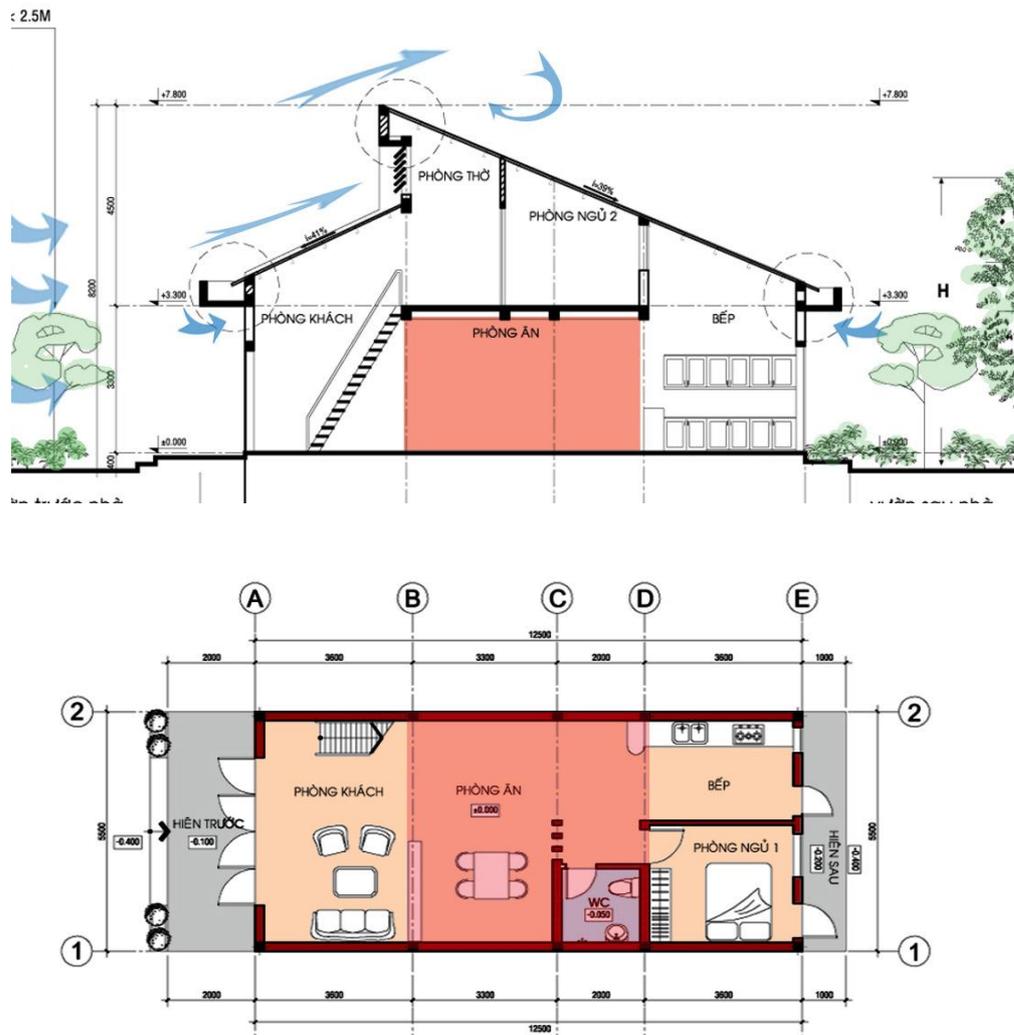
## **Intervention**

The intervention reported in this case study is the 30-month Storm-Resistant Housing for a Resilient Da Nang City project, implemented by Institute for Social and Environmental Transition–International (ISET-International) and the Da Nang Women's Union. The core aim of the project was to provide storm-resistant housing for poor households. Low-income urban households typically have unstable livelihoods, high rates of unemployment, and temporary, low-paid jobs, and these conditions severely limit their ability to build more resilient housing. In addition, most people in Da Nang have limited awareness of climate change and the importance of climate risk reduction. Local builders have limited skills in building safer and more resilient shelters, and little knowledge about building resilient shelters is being transferred to them.

The key intervention mechanism for delivering storm-resistant housing was a system of loans disbursed by the Da Nang Women's Union between October 2011 and September 2014. ISET-International provided technical support, training, and financial monitoring to the Women's Union, enabling it to create and administer the loan program by year 4, after ISET handed over the project.

To decide who was eligible for the project, the Da Nang Women's Union and the Central Vietnam Architecture Consultancy (CVAC), the main implementers of the project, assessed households' needs, the condition of their housing, and their income and repayment ability. The project sought to reinforce or reconstruct 425 homes over six years, making them sturdy enough to withstand typhoons. The principal financial mechanism was a revolving loan.

The core elements of the storm-resistant housing were simple building forms, a roof pitch of 30–40° securely connected to the main structure, a stronger housing structure, and a solid room in the house to provide safety in case of damage to the structure (Figure 14).<sup>105</sup>



**Figure 14: Technical drawings for storm-resistant housing**

Source: Tran Van Giai Phong, *Lessons from Typhoon Nari: Storm Resistant Housing Shown to Be Effective* (Hanoi, Vietnam: Institute for Social and Environmental Transition–International, 2013).

On October 15, 2013, Typhoon Nari made landfall in Da Nang with wind gusts up to 130 kilometers per hour. The typhoon caused severe damage. The persistent winds coupled with heavy rainfall led to flooding in many parts of the city. Many people were injured, and thousands of houses were destroyed or damaged. The typhoon seriously impaired power and water supplies and traffic systems. The damage in Da Nang was estimated at VND 868.8 billion, or over US\$41 million.<sup>106</sup>

### Timelines of recovery

The day after the typhoon, ISET-Vietnam and the Da Nang Women’s Union conducted an assessment of damage and resilience capacity in the eight wards covered by the storm-resistant housing project. Nearly 3,000 non-project houses suffered partial damage or complete collapse in those eight wards. No damage was reported for any of the 244 beneficiary households, even when neighboring houses had suffered heavy damage.<sup>107</sup> Based on the success of the project, the Women’s Union mobilized about VND 840 million (US\$40,000) from local and international organizations and the community to repair or rebuild 82 houses damaged by Typhoon Nari.<sup>108</sup> In short, damage was avoided rather than recovered from.

## **Thematic Area 1: Governance**

The storm-resistant housing project in Da Nang was driven and led principally by ISET-International (an international NGO) and the Da Nang Women's Union (a local government agency). The Women's Union in Vietnam, founded in 1930, has clear, well understood, and stable existing relationships with communities and government agencies. From the information available, it seems that community members were consulted as individuals, and no other formal community group led the risk reduction efforts and decision-making.

Consultation with beneficiaries appears to have been extensive. The Da Nang Women's Union and the CVAC discussed households' needs and expectations based on their particular financial capacity in order to develop a suitable design for house reinforcement or reconstruction.<sup>109</sup> Both men and women in the poor and very poor households targeted by the project were consulted, including a number of women-headed households.<sup>110</sup> It should be noted that traditionally in Vietnam men make decisions about shelter,<sup>111</sup> but because the Women's Union was the main local implementing agency, it might be assumed that women were purposely included in consultation and decision-making. Project beneficiary households were consulted on the design specifics for their own houses but do not appear to have had a role in conceptualizing and planning the overall project. This is a potentially important point, as there is evidence that involving communities in all phases of project design and implementation of post-disaster shelter reconstruction maximizes the capabilities of beneficiaries and can lead to better project outcomes.<sup>112</sup>

At the government level, given the large number of houses in Da Nang that were damaged or destroyed by Typhoon Nari, it appears that building regulations, codes, plans, and practices for housing in Da Nang are inadequate and unlikely to be able to cope with emerging extreme events related to climate change.<sup>113</sup>

## **Thematic Area 2: Risk Assessment**

The Women's Union and the CVAC carried out risk assessments to develop a suitable design for the reinforcement or reconstruction of houses. Households were involved in the risk assessment process, and as mentioned, this included men and women from poor and very poor households, including a number of women-headed households. The information used to assess risk and mitigation included both technical information (e.g., from the CVAC) and the needs and capacities of the individual households.<sup>114</sup>

## **Thematic Area 3: Knowledge and Education**

A major part of ISET-International's contribution to the project was enhancing the capacities of Women's Union staff on climate change, community-based disaster risk management (CBDRM), microfinance management, project management, and monitoring and evaluation approaches.<sup>115</sup> Approximately 650 beneficiaries participated in awareness-raising workshops and a contest on climate change and responses, CBDRM, and storm-resistant housing techniques.<sup>116</sup> By June 2015 nearly 800 staff had been trained, and the Women's Union reportedly continues to regularly use the planning, monitoring, evaluation, and learning tools they were introduced to.<sup>117</sup> Moreover, local builders were trained in resilient house construction techniques.

## **Thematic Area 4: Risk Management and Vulnerability Reduction**

The project had a specific focus on safe housing, so a number of other elements of risk management and vulnerability reduction, including livelihoods, emergency shelters, and WASH, are not considered. However, a key element of risk vulnerability reduction—availability of finance—was a core element of the project.

## Thematic Area 5: Disaster Preparedness and Response

Given the focus of the project, the disaster preparedness and response elements of the analytical framework (early warning systems and evacuation procedures) are not considered.

## Discussion

The Da Nang storm-resistant housing project is different from the preceding case studies in that it is focused solely on vulnerability reduction rather than on a combination of risk reduction and emergency response. Owing to circumstances beyond our control, we were unable to conduct interviews with beneficiaries and project staff and hence are not able to gather evidence on whether the avoided damage to beneficiaries' houses enabled recovery from other losses (e.g., livelihoods).

As in the case study from Dulag, Philippines, the core of this project was a financial mechanism (in this case a revolving loan) intended for a specific use, suggesting the importance of financial interventions in risk reduction. The loans in Da Nang were supported by highly technical support in the form of architectural advice on housing construction.

By June 2015, loans had been disbursed and construction finished for 377 households (222 houses were renovated and 155 were reconstructed). In addition, grants of VND 35 million (about US\$1,700) were provided to 20 extremely poor households for new storm-resistant houses. The majority of the grant financing (VND 30 million) came from the Vietnam Fatherland Front (a national mass organization), and VND 5 million came from the project budget. All households receiving loans and grants were provided with technical assistance, with CVAC conducting technical surveys, design, and construction management, including the hiring, training, and monitoring of construction companies.

A cost-benefit analysis shows that if a disaster occurs soon after construction of resilient housing, then the internal rate of return on that housing is 14 percent (higher than the market discount rate of 10 percent). This finding implies that investing in resilient housing is preferable to keeping money in a bank. The more time passes between construction and the disaster, the smaller the benefit. The authors of that study also point out that despite the positive return on investment, most households choose not to invest in resilient housing. They suggest that this is because households have inadequate information on risks and on the resilient construction available to them.<sup>118</sup>

An important aspect of the project, like other case studies considered here, consisted of the existing relationships between implementing agencies (in this case the Women's Union) and communities. The technical aspect of the project was delivered using local materials and skills in the form of local masons and architects (CVAC).

# SYNTHESIS AND DISCUSSION

## Synthesis

### Recovery is multifaceted

Perhaps the most obvious common thread between the case studies (not including Vietnam, where we were unable to interview community members) is that recovery from a disaster, in the experience of the people we interviewed, was not a single process with a distinct end but rather a series of parallel but interconnected trajectories. In most cases they reported that psychological and food security recovery occurred relatively rapidly (in weeks to months); shelter recovery, more slowly (in one year or more; the outlier is Epau, where there remains a paucity of building materials); and livelihood recovery, still more slowly (in one to three or more years). How quickly livelihoods recover in these mostly coastal communities also depends on the livelihood in question; fishing can resume once boats and nets are repaired or replaced, but coconuts take years to produce a crop after new seedlings are planted.

Interviewees were free to choose their own comparator against which they judged recovery. Invariably, this comparator was a return to a pre-disaster state. This is in essence similar to the first of Lindell's three definitions of disaster recovery: "a goal that involves the restoration of normal community activities that were disrupted by disaster impacts—in most people's minds, exactly as they were before the disaster struck."<sup>119</sup> Lindell's two other definitions of disaster recovery are a phase in the emergency management cycle, and the process by which a community achieves the goal of returning to normal (which in effect was the focus of most of our research questions).

This self-defined recovery does not, however, imply that their efforts and those of governments and NGOs were focused solely on returning conditions to a pre-disaster state. In fact, the major disasters that communities experienced often led to significant innovations, such as moving to a more diversified agriculture (Salcedo, Dulag), building a safe evacuation center (Epau), learning how to respond to early warnings (Salcedo), adopting novel financial mechanisms (Dulag), and strengthening DRR governance (Salcedo, Eratah).

There is an obvious interplay between the severity of disasters and the speed of subsequent recovery. Informants in the Philippines and Vanuatu repeatedly noted that recovery from Haiyan and Pam was slower than from more frequent but less severe cyclones, even though the preceding DRR and CCA interventions had left them better prepared.

Finally, informants consistently articulated that the various interventions had enabled their recovery from disasters. Because the case studies cover a wide range of interventions, it is not easy to summarize which elements of the interventions were considered most important in the view of community members. Perhaps the common element is revealed more by *how* communities articulated their experiences of recovery, which they consistently spoke of in relation to their needs, including shelter, food, and livelihoods recovery, and the extent to which interventions met their specific needs within their context.

### Early recovery in off-the-radar communities poses special challenges

The case studies represent different facets of being off the radar, including geographical, political, and economic marginalization (Table 1). For reasons including cost and political will, it is typically more challenging for national agencies and NGOs to work in these types of communities.

However, as the case studies here demonstrate, it is possible. More than this, for organizations that take a rights-based approach, it is necessary. The adoption of the 2030 Agenda commits UN Member States to ensure that “no one will be left behind” and to “endeavour to reach the furthest behind first.”<sup>120</sup> Five factors are proposed as key to understanding who is being left behind and why: discrimination, place of residence, socioeconomic status, governance, and vulnerability to shocks.<sup>121</sup> These factors are interrelated. For example, people who live in small, remote communities may not have access to the same level of government services as other communities, making them more susceptible to hazards. Given that local and national actors are almost always the first responders to rapid-onset crises and often the only responders in the critical hours immediately following a disaster, developing greater local leadership of risk reduction and humanitarian responses could be a key strategy in ensuring that off-the-radar communities are less affected by disasters and recover more rapidly from them.<sup>122</sup> Local actors may also be better able to ensure the transition from emergency response to recovery and development than international actors.<sup>123</sup>

Despite the promises of the Grand Bargain, remarkably little humanitarian assistance goes directly to national and local actors in crisis-affected countries. Between 2007 and 2013, the resources provided directly to national and local actors averaged less than 2 percent of total annual humanitarian assistance.<sup>124</sup> Increased financing of national and local actors may not on its own be sufficient to address the needs and rights of off-the-radar communities. A better-financed center does not necessarily result in a better-resourced periphery. It is likely that technical and financial resources will have to be directed specifically toward off-the-radar communities in order for them to benefit.

**Local leadership of risk reduction and recovery can take various forms**

This research has deliberately examined some very different types of risk reduction and early recovery interventions, which provide a range of different local leadership models. Considering two basic aspects of project management—conceptualization and implementation—allows us to map the relative roles of communities, local organizations, and external organizations in projects (Figure 15).



**Figure 15: Roles of local and external organizations in intervention leadership**

Eratah was the only intervention entirely conceptualized and implemented by a community. In Salcedo, a local organization—in this case, the local government—led project conceptualization and implementation with support from the national government and international agencies and

their local partners on implementation. Three of the remaining case studies (Dulag, Epau, and Da Nang) were all conceptualized by external agencies (international NGOs) or co-conceptualized by an international NGO and the local implementing partner. Epau is an outlier in that the project was both conceptualized and largely implemented by international NGOs, but the objectives and rationale of the project were to build the capacity of community organizations (the CCCDCs) and to support them at national and provincial levels. In that sense, the project was attempting to create the structures and enabling environment for future local leadership. Based on just five case studies, we are not in a position to assess which, if any, of these models of local leadership are more effective. The relative concentration of local efforts on implementation and of international agencies on conceptualization, however, may point to a broader trend that deserves further consideration.

The case study from Eratah also makes a clear case for considering the limits to local leadership. The community of Eratah, with no external technical and financial inputs, is recovering from Tropical Cyclone Pam and attempting to reduce its vulnerability to future disasters. Typically, however, external inputs would seek to create broader-based community resilience (e.g., hazard, vulnerability and capacity assessment; more resilient livelihoods and WASH; contingency plans; and supportive policies and finance). Local leadership without external support to provide capacity, finance, co-conceptualization, and co-implementation is unlikely to be effective in many off-the-radar communities.

The Salcedo and Eratah case studies illustrate one final aspect of local leadership. In both instances, the key element driving action has been an effective, accountable, and committed leader. In both cases, it is unlikely that recovery and resilience would have been as effective without such leadership. Indeed, informants in Eratah cited communities elsewhere on the island of Tongariki that did not have the same quality of leadership and recovered more slowly from Tropical Cyclone Pam. Similarly, Salcedo was better prepared than some neighboring municipalities; the implication again is that the principal difference is leadership.<sup>125</sup> Interestingly, the leader in Salcedo is a formal political appointee, whereas that in Eratah is a traditional leader—a notable nuance, particularly in the context of off-the-radar communities where formal leadership may have little influence with national structures.

### **How gendered are DRR and recovery?**

There is ample evidence that risk reduction and early recovery can be transformational for women<sup>126</sup> and indeed are likely to be more effective in increasing resilience when they are.<sup>127</sup> Women's roles in early recovery were explored through three main types of questions: Did women participate, and were they able to influence decisions? Did women increase their awareness and knowledge? Were risk reduction and recovery outcomes gender sensitive? (See Annex 1.) Although these questions by no means cover all of the actual and potential roles that women play in risk reduction and early recovery, they give at least some indication of the ways in which women are included or seek inclusion.

The results are mixed. In most of the case studies, we found evidence that women were involved to some degree in decision-making for local-level risk reduction planning and had been consulted in those case studies where there was a risk assessment. These consultations, however, were generally with individual women and less often through representative women's groups (Table 3).

**Table 3: Women's participation and decision-making in risk reduction and early recovery**

Thematic area	Salcedo	Dulag	Epau	Eratah	Da Nang
<i>Thematic area 1: Governance</i>					
Relevant and enabling legislation, regulations, codes, plans, etc., exist, are financed, and address and support disaster risk reduction at national and local levels.					
• Are women involved in community decision-making?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
• Are there women-only decision-making groups?	Yes	n.a.	No	Yes	No
Community disaster risk reduction plans are developed through participatory processes.					
• Are women involved in community decision-making?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	n.a.
<i>Thematic area 2: Risk assessment</i>					
Participatory hazard/risk, vulnerability, and capacity assessments are carried out.					
• Are women involved in participatory capacity and vulnerability analysis?	Yes	n.a.	Yes	n.a.	Yes

Note: n.a. = not known or not applicable.

The development of women's awareness and knowledge of disasters and disaster management was not consistent across the case studies. We found clear evidence that women were aware of their rights in disasters only in the Salcedo and Epau case studies, and women in the same interventions also understood the community contingency plans. Women across most of the case studies were able to articulate information on risk and disaster management practices and knew how to respond to early warnings (Table 4).

**Table 4: Women's awareness and knowledge of risk reduction and recovery**

Thematic area	Salcedo	Dulag	Epau	Eratah	Da Nang
<i>Thematic area 1: Governance</i>					
Community members are aware of their rights and the legal obligations of government and other stakeholders to provide protection.					
• Are women aware of their rights?	Yes	n.a.	Yes	No	n.a.
<i>Thematic area 3: Knowledge and education</i>					
Information on risk, vulnerability, disaster management practices, etc., is shared among those at risk.					
• Do women have a demonstrated understanding of risk, vulnerabilities, and disaster management?	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
All sections of community know about contingency plans, facilities, services, and skills available before, during, and after emergencies, and how to access them.					
• Do women have a demonstrated understanding of risk, vulnerabilities, and disaster management?	Yes	Yes	n.a.	No	No
<i>Thematic area 5: Disaster preparedness and response</i>					
A community-based and people-centered early warning system is in place at the local level, producing messages that are trusted and understood by the whole community.					
• Do women in the community know how to respond to the early warning?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

Note: n.a. = not known or not applicable.

With the exception of Salcedo, even though women are typically consulted on risk reduction, their gender-specific vulnerabilities and needs were not always taken into account when it comes to outcomes (Table 5). For example, community plans do not reflect women's basic needs such as women's toilet and washroom facilities in evacuation centers, and they have limited access to food and financial services immediately after a disaster (men gave broadly similar responses about the availability of food and financial services).

**Table 5: Risk reduction and early recovery outcomes for women**

Thematic area	Salcedo	Dulag	Epau	Eratah	Da Nang
<i>Thematic area 1: Governance</i>					
Community disaster risk reduction plans are developed through participatory processes.					
• Are women’s specific vulnerabilities and needs taken into account?	Yes	n.a.	No	No	n.a.
<i>Thematic area 2: Risk assessment</i>					
Participatory hazard/risk, vulnerability, and capacity assessments are carried out.					
• Are women’s specific vulnerabilities and needs taken into account?	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
<i>Thematic area 4: Risk management and vulnerability reduction</i>					
Food and water supply is secure in times of crisis (e.g., through community-managed stocks) if applicable.					
• Does the community have safe stocks of food available for women?	Yes	n.a.	Yes	No	No
• Does the community have safe stocks of water available for women?	Yes	n.a.	Yes	No	No
Community has savings and credit schemes and/or a community disaster fund to implement preparatory, responsive, or recovery activity.					
• Do women in the community have access to credit, savings, and/or a disaster fund?	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Houses, workplaces, and public facilities are located in safe areas, or hazard-resistant construction methods are in use, if applicable.					
• Do these take women’s needs into account (safety, separate WASH facilities, accessibility for pregnant women)?	Yes	n.a.	No	No	Yes
<i>Thematic area 5: Disaster preparedness and response</i>					
A community-based and people-centered early warning system is in place at the local level, producing messages that are trusted and understood by the whole community.					
• Do women in the community receive the early warning?	Yes	Yes	Yes	n.a.	No

Note: n.a. = not known or not applicable.

Overall, while there was a general trend across the case studies of consultation with women—and often in considerable detail—there seems to be a need to more consistently include women’s groups in decision-making, to support women’s leadership, and to ensure that risk reduction and recovery more consistently meet women’s specific vulnerabilities and needs. In the Vanuatu Climate Action Network project, part of which we studied in Epau, international NGOs advocated for including women’s voices and leadership in national climate change and DRR policy discussions and successfully argued for equal representation of women in United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) country delegations.<sup>128</sup> This is

arguably one of only two examples from across the five case studies where a clear shift in women's power dynamics was shown. The other example was the increased voice and formalization of women's organizations in Salcedo.

### **Preexisting relationships support effective recovery**

Twigg's "Characteristics" framework identifies clear, agreed-upon, and stable partnerships between communities and other actors as a factor in community resilience.<sup>129</sup> There are pragmatic reasons why such relationships are important, including the reduction in transaction time when actors are trusted and roles and responsibilities understood, an enhanced ability to leverage resources through networks, and a reduction of duplicated efforts. In four out of the five case studies, existing relationships between communities and agencies were important factors in effective recovery: the local government in Salcedo (with its existing framework for DRR and response), the local microfinance institution (CEVI) in Dulag, the CCCDCs that had been set up before Tropical Cyclone Pam in Eratah, and the Women's Union in Da Nang.

### **Single interventions or complete DRR approaches?**

The most comprehensive approaches to DRR are shown by the Salcedo and Epau case studies. However, single interventions were also effective in early recovery (Dulag) and avoided recovery (Da Nang). In these communities, finance and technical support for livelihood recovery and storm-resistant housing construction, respectively, were critical interventions within the wider context of risk reduction and emergency response interventions.

## **Ingredients of early recovery**

One of the tasks of this research was to attempt to identify key elements of resilience programming that enable early recovery in off-the-radar communities. Although it would be premature to reach firm conclusions on the basis of five case studies, the following are offered as aspects for program and project designers to consider:

- **Preexisting partnerships between communities and other actors can aid recovery.** The comparative success of all the case studies in bringing about early recovery was firmly based on existing clear, agreed-upon, and stable relationships between the communities and the key implementing (and in some case conceptualizing) organization. This suggests that agencies should coordinate to ensure that there is at least one ongoing partner in all high-disaster-risk areas.
- **Leadership makes a difference.** Salcedo and Eratah both demonstrate the importance of local leaders who are able to champion risk reduction and recovery efforts on behalf of the communities they represent. In both cases, there is evidence that the communities recovered more quickly than neighboring ones that had less active and committed leaders. The leader of the Salcedo is a formal political appointee whereas that of Eratah is a traditional leader. Perhaps identifying and supporting formal and informal leaders who can organize communities and mobilize external support could be an effective tool in ensuring effective and speedy recovery in off-the-radar communities.
- **Local organizations do not have to be humanitarian experts to contribute to early recovery.** Neither the Women's Union in Da Nang nor CEVI in Dulag specializes in humanitarian action, yet both contributed significantly to reduced damage and early recovery, respectively, in the communities within which they work. Not all organizations need to be able to implement the whole range of humanitarian, long-term development and influencing activities that large organizations do, but the combination of specialization and local contextual knowledge enabled these organizations to provide valuable support to marginalized people affected by disaster. It may be better to help local partners innovate before and after disasters than to engage them in aspects of risk reduction and emergency response that are not closely aligned with their organizational mission and competencies.

- **Innovation is part of recovery.** The need to innovate in response to disasters is a clear message from all of the case studies, whether the innovator is an organization (e.g., the Bangon Kabuhayan recovery loan) or community members themselves (e.g., diversifying crops). On a broader scale, disasters are increasingly understood as a moment of innovation and systemic change.<sup>130</sup> Consciously using the areas of specialty, contextual knowledge, and community relationships of local organizations to innovate before disasters (e.g., microfinance for storm-resistant housing in Da Nang) or in recovery (e.g., livelihood recovery loans in Dulag) may be an approach that international agencies could use more often.
- **Community-level finance contributes to recovery.** While large-scale financing for risk reduction is established and well studied, the role of financial mechanisms in helping people living in poverty recover from disasters is perhaps a newer area. The Da Nang and Dulag case studies illustrate the potential of directed microfinance to reduce losses and to support early recovery and household innovations toward increased resilience. The question for program designers is, How will you incorporate financial mechanisms to reduce risk and to speed up recovery?
- **Women's contributions and needs must be better taken into account.** Most, if not all, international agencies prioritize gendered approaches to risk reduction and recovery. It is clear from these case studies, however, that the potential leadership of women's organizations is not always effectively encouraged and that the outcomes of risk reduction still sometimes leave women short. Agencies need to redouble their efforts not only to consult women but to foster women's leadership and ensure that women's needs and vulnerabilities are addressed consistently and comprehensively.

## APPENDIX

### ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK FOR EARLY RECOVERY OF OFF-THE-RADAR COMMUNITIES AFTER DISASTERS IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

Project description	Specific question	Response
Name of project		(name)
Country		(country)
Project duration		(years)
Lead agency		(name)
Number of beneficiaries		(number)
Extent that the community is “off the radar”		(description)
Name(s) of communities interviewed		(name)
Description of communities interviewed (e.g., predominant livelihoods, poverty levels)		(description)
Type of intervention	Intervention category	Humanitarian Disaster risk reduction Climate change adaptation
	Specific intervention (may be more than one)	Infrastructure Livelihoods Water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH)  Finance Early warning system (EWS)
	Short project description	(description)
Project budget		(number)
Budget for local organizations		(number)
Disaster type	Type of disaster (may be more than one)	Typhoon Drought Flood  Other (specify)
Characteristics of early recovery	Timeline of recovery	(weeks/months/years)
	How recovery is defined	(description, e.g., livelihoods, income, infrastructure, avoided loss)
	Comparator	(perception, baseline, previous disasters, “control” communities)
Evidence that the recovery was enhanced by the intervention		(description)

Recovery Index			
Thematic Area 1: Governance	Question	Specific detail	Reference (to Twigg's Characteristics of a Disaster-Resilient Community)
Processes are driven by committed, effective, and accountable community leadership (supported by external agencies).	Who leads risk reduction activities in the community?	Local NGOs	1.6
		International NGOs	
		Local government	
		National agencies	
		Local communities	
Relevant and enabling legislation, regulations, codes, plans, etc., exist, are financed, and address and support disaster risk reduction at national and local levels.	Do regulations, plans, etc., exist at the local level?	Yes/no	2.2
	Are plans financed?	Yes/no	
	Who is involved in community decision-making?	Men	1.5
		Women	
		Marginalized groups	
Other			
Are there women-only decision-making groups?	Yes/no		
Community disaster risk reduction plans are developed through participatory processes.	Who is involved in community decision-making?	Men	1.6
		Women	
		Marginalized groups	
		Other	
	Are women's specific vulnerabilities and needs taken into account?	Yes/no	
Community members are aware of their rights and the legal obligations of government and other stakeholders to provide protection, and can influence decisions that have an impact upon them.	Are all groups aware of their rights?	Men	1.2
		Women	
		Marginalized groups	
	Is there evidence that the community can influence other actors?	Local NGOs	1.2
		International NGOs	
		Local government	
		National agencies	
	Clear, agreed-upon, and stable partnerships between the community and other actors (local authorities, NGOs, businesses, etc.) provide resources for disaster risk reduction and recovery.	What is the nature of partnerships between the community and other actors?	Local NGOs
International NGOs			
Local government			
National agencies			

Thematic Area 2: Risk Assessment	Question	Specific detail	Reference (to Twigg's Characteristics of a Disaster-Resilient Community)
Participatory hazard/risk, vulnerability, and capacity assessments are carried out.	Who is involved in participatory capacity and vulnerability analysis?	Men	1.1, 2.1
		Women	
		Marginalized groups	
		Other	
	Are women's specific vulnerabilities and needs taken into account?	Women	
Risk assessment uses local knowledge and perceptions of risk, as well scientific information.	Is there evidence of local knowledge being used in the participatory capacity and vulnerability analysis?	Yes/no	3.2
	Are women's specific vulnerabilities and needs taken into account?	Yes/no	
	Is scientific information incorporated?	Yes/no	

Thematic Area 3: Knowledge and Education	Question	Specific detail	Reference (to Twigg's Characteristics of a Disaster-Resilient Community)
Information on risk, vulnerability, disaster management practices, etc., is shared among those at risk.	Do community members show demonstrated understanding of risk, vulnerabilities, and disaster management?	Men	2.1
		Women	
		Marginalized groups	
		Other	
All sections of community know about contingency plans, facilities, services, and skills available before, during, and after emergencies, and how to access them.	Do community members show demonstrated understanding of risk, vulnerabilities, and disaster management?	Men	2.4
		Women	
		Marginalized groups	
		Other	

Thematic Area 4: Risk Management and Vulnerability Reduction	Question	Specific detail	Reference (to Twigg's Characteristics of a Disaster-Resilient Community)
Food and water supply is secure in times of crisis (e.g., through community managed stocks) if applicable.	Does the community have safe stocks of food available?	Men	2.3, 2.4
		Women	
		Marginalized groups	
		Other	
		N/A	
	Does the community have safe stocks of water available?	Men	
		Women	
		Marginalized groups	
		Other	
		N/A	
Community adopts hazard-resistant livelihood practices (e.g., soil and water conservation, hazard-tolerant crops, livelihood diversification).	Have the community members adopted resilient livelihood strategies?	Yes/no	5.3, 5.5
	How have women changed their contribution to household incomes?	(open)	5.3, 5.5
Community has savings and credit schemes and/or a community disaster fund to implement preparatory, responsive, or recovery activity.	Does the community have access to credit, savings, and/or a disaster fund?	Yes/no	6.4
	Who has access?	Men	6.3, 6.5, 6.6
		Women	
		Marginalized groups	
Other			
Houses, workplaces, and public facilities are located in safe areas, or hazard-resistant construction methods are in use, if applicable.	Do all community members have access to safe housing and/or emergency shelter?	Yes/no	6.8
	Do these take women's needs into account (safety, separate WASH facilities, accessibility for pregnant women)?	Yes/no	
	Are emergency shelters community owned and managed?	Yes/no	

Thematic Area 5: Disaster Preparedness and Response	Question	Specific detail	Reference (to Twigg's Characteristics of a Disaster-Resilient Community)		
A community-based and people-centered early warning system is in place at the local level, producing messages that are trusted and understood by whole community.	Is there a community-based early warning system?	Yes/no	2.1, 2.3		
	Do all members of the community receive the early warning?	Men			
		Women			
		Marginalized groups			
		Other			
	Do all members of the community know how to respond to the early warning?	Men			
		Women			
		Marginalized groups			
Other					
Community has appropriate plans and mutual support systems in place to take care of the most vulnerable.	Does the community have plans to take care of the most vulnerable?	Elderly	6.7		
		Disabled			
		AIDS sufferers			
		Mothers and expectant mothers			

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- 7 In practice, this information was rarely provided by informants. It is reported where available.
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# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Steve Jennings, principal investigator for this research, is a partner at 3Keel LLP, and Lyra Schweizer, co-researcher, is also from 3Keel LLP. Janice Ian Manlutac is the regional program manager for Asia Pacific of Oxfam’s AP-Lift project, and Daniela Giardina, PhD is DRR and resilience advisor, both with Oxfam America. Field research was conducted in the Philippines by Mary Joy Gonzales and in Vanuatu by Linda Kenni, and document review was conducted in Vietnam by Tran Hoang Yen; all are independent consultants and researchers. Oxfam acknowledges the assistance of the peer reviewers, including Tara Gingerich, Marc Cohen, Amy Gray, Kasey Ochiltree, Sebastian Molano, Vincenzo Bollettino, Avianto Amri, and Segundo Joaquin Eclar Romero, and of Heidi Fritschel for editing and production.

Above all, this report would not be possible without the engagement and participation of the many stakeholders with whom we spoke, especially community members and leaders, civil society staff and leaders, and government officials.

The research was funded by a grant from Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies to support “Strengthening Community Preparedness, Rapid Response and Recovery in Asia/Pacific Islands,” known locally as the Asia Pacific Local Innovation for Transformation (AP-Lift) project, implemented in 2017–2020. Oxfam is deeply grateful to the MACP for their support.

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The information in this publication is correct at the time of going to press.

Published by Oxfam GB for Oxfam International under ISBN 978-1-78748-569-3 in February 2020. DOI: 10.21201/2020.5693

Oxfam GB, Oxfam House, John Smith Drive, Cowley, Oxford, OX4 2JY, UK.

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