



Lessons Learnt Workshop

03/05/11 – 10/05/11



organised

by



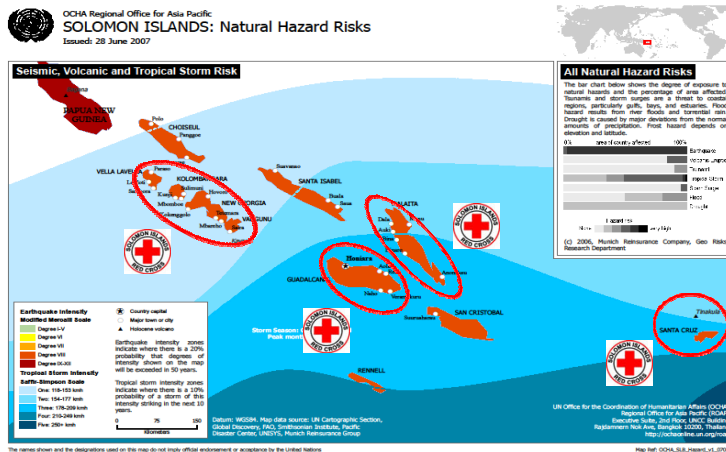
with support
from



Disaster preparedness project funded by the European Commission Humanitarian's Aid Department and the French Red Cross

TOGETHER, BECOMING RESILIENT!

PROJECT SUMMARY



Well organized disaster preparedness is of high importance in the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu due to its location in the Pacific Ocean, and the potential natural hazards faced by their communities. In addition, their communities' inaccessibility and low level of socio-economic development, reinforces the need for

communities to cope with natural hazards. It is therefore essential to enable and help them to deal with threats linked to their natural environment and climate change.

To reduce the vulnerability of outlying and inaccessible communities with limited resources, a natural disaster risk reduction program, *Together, Becoming Resilient!* (TBR), funded by the EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S HUMANITARIAN AID DEPARTMENT is implemented in the Solomon Islands (Guadalcanal, Western, Malaita and Temotu provinces) and in Vanuatu (Torba province). This program is implemented by the SOLOMON ISLANDS RED CROSS SOCIETY (SIRCS) and the VANUATU RED CROSS SOCIETY (VRCS) with the support of the FRENCH RED CROSS (FRC). The main objective of this program is to strengthen disaster preparedness capacities of vulnerable communities. This community based program is involving all stakeholders dealing with natural disaster management so that they are empowered to prepare for and respond to future events.



WORKSHOP CONTEXT

At the end of the TBR project, a Lessons Learnt Workshop (LLW) addressed the success (best practices) and the remaining room for improvement (recommandations) in similar activities. The SIRCS and the VRCS with the support of the FRC have identified what was positive and what was lacking in this project. This gives as well best practices and recommendations for any further activities in Community Based Disaster Preparedness (CBDP) in the Pacific. To ensure that these recommendations are widely spread through the Red Cross / Red Crescent Movement, a training officer from the International Federation of the Red Cross / Red Crescent participated actively to the LLW.

Moreover, the representatives from the Solomon Islands and the Vanuatu National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) and representatives from the Torba province government were also included in this LLW. The LLW was held in Port Vila, Vanuatu, from the 03rd to the 10th of May 2011 with the participation of thirty persons from Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Fiji and New Caledonia.

OBJECTIVES OF THE WORKSHOP

The LLW provided an analysis of the TBR project results and identified best practices and recommendations to be shared nationally, regionally and globally.

The objectives of the workshop were:

- To monitor and evaluate results and impacts on the main TBR project activities.
- To provide a list of good practices for other DRR activities/projects.
- To make recommendations that might improve design and implementation of other DRR activities/projects.
- To identify the best ways to involve the relevant government representatives in activities/projects.

APPROACH

The workshop looked at the following aspects of the TBR project:

- Working with communities.
- Tools and trainings.
- Awareness and First Aid.
- Action and Response Plans.
- How to improve the Red Cross capacity and its link with NDMO?
- How to improve the coordination?
- What exit strategy at the community level?



Group work during the lessons learnt workshop

For each subject, the workshop explored:

- The adaptation of the tools developed by the project to the local context
- The involvement and the interest of the communities.
- The dissemination and the passing on of knowledge.
- The main challenges and barriers faced by the activity and the ways the project recommends to tackle these challenges.
- The good ways of implementing these activities.
- The success stories.
- The mechanisms of replication.



SIRCS and VRCS staffs working together

The workshop also considered experiences at different levels of intervention, such as:

- The community level.
- The provincial level.
- The national level.

BEST PRACTICES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM TBR PROJECT

The lessons learnt, identified during this lessons learnt workshop, were classified in three categories:

- Best practices and recommendations for the **TBR project**, lessons learnt that would be especially useful for a follow up DRR project.
- Best practices and recommendations for **Red Cross activities**, lessons learnt that would be helpful for any Red Cross Red Crescent activities.
- **General** best practices and recommendations, lessons learnt valuable for any organisations.

Even if the General category would be really relevant to all stakeholders, the Red Cross activities and the TBR project categories could also be applicable to other project of any organisation.

The lessons learnt are hereafter in two tables, one for the best practices identified in the Together, Becoming Resilient! project (either in Solomon Islands or in Vanuatu) and one for the recommendations that came out from this lessons learnt workshop.

Best practices

Category	Lesson learnt
Best practices for the TBR project	TBR helps community to become resilient
	Implement micro project after setting up community action plans
	Recruit staff or volunteers coming from the targeted communities
	TBR increases community capacities to better cope with natural hazards
	The disaster committee registration template helps to set up a community group that deal with diverse communities' issues (not only disasters)
	Community cooperates and participates all along the project
	VCA tools help communities to identify their vulnerabilities and capacities
	Response plans help to set up evacuation site
	TBR gives great knowledge to communities about disaster preparedness
	Regular meetings and visits in communities are done during and after the project
	VCA tools help communities to visualise their own setting
	Improve community participation in VCA
	There is a good ownership of TBR and it belongs to communities
	VCA process was implemented within the time frame allocated
	Encourage community involvement since the beginning of the project
	Disaster committees organise their own DRR activities at their communities
	Adapt tools (e.g. mapping, awareness posters, VCA,..) to fit communities and context
	The tools used during the project provide knowledge to the communities
	TBR increases capacities of disaster committees
	Report project activities to provincial government and stakeholders
	Community are sensitized to build a store house for storing kits
	TBR contributes to improve community environment
	TBR contributes to strengthen community preparedness
	Response plans help community to protect themselves when facing disasters
	MoU are signed as soon as possible with communities
	Relationship between RC and communities are initiated with appropriate tools
VCA tools help communities to set up relevant and effective action plans	
Tools are ordered on a step by step format to simplify their use	
Clear and simple awareness tools are used in communities	
Prioritisation of community vulnerabilities contribute to identify the main needs of the community	

TOGETHER, BECOMING RESILIENT!

Disaster preparedness project funded by the European Commission Humanitarian's Aid Department and the French Red Cross

Category	Lesson learnt
Best practices for Red Cross activities	Volunteers are flexible in order to work with them
	Engage volunteers in any activities at the community, branch or national level
	Following up trainings strengthen existing programs
	FA in communities are very practical (simulations of FA scenarios)
	FA trainings enhance the capacities of communities
	Clear responsibilities of the RC are shared with stakeholders
	Communities involve in RC projects automatically become RC groups
	RC makes good reports about its activities
	DM project helps to test Disaster Management Plans of the RC
	RC implements humanitarian diplomacy with parliamentarians
	RC has good coordination of its activities
	Review FA manuals to adapt it to local context
	There is RC dissemination training in all RC programs about the Movement and its 7 principles
	There is good communication access and clear communication line in Red Cross
	Provide good logistics support to staff (e.g. safety equipment, communication equipment, First Aid kits, ...)
	Staff receives fair allowances for their work
	Strengthen advocacy about RC activities
	Local government to participate in Red Cross activities and trainings and vice versa
	Review FA modules according to community context
	Advocate Red Cross principles and values
Community must understand the importance of knowing FA practices	
Better coordination between RC and Government at all levels	
Increase RC visibility at all levels	
RC staff have clear roles and responsibilities	
Inform other RC partners on project and outcomes	
RC branch work plans are linked with community plans and national RC plans	

Category	Lesson learnt
General best practices	It's important to link with other agencies
	Good participation and involvement from communities is crucial for the success of a project
	Improve the communication between the community and the provincial / national level
	Establish and strengthen a good relationship with the community
	Train staff, volunteers and communities to do simple reporting
	Before distributing a kit, verify the contribution made by the community
	Share resources with agencies working in the same areas/fields
	Increase dissemination of all stakeholders about their missions/activities
	Improve communication between stakeholders at national and provincial level
	Have an MoU with relevant government authorities
	Involve neighbouring communities in your activities
	All project trainings involves community participation
	Importance of having good planning is strengthened and encouraged
	Agencies help to build community capacities on disaster preparedness
	Involve more youth in the implementation of projects
	Coaching and motivation of staff and volunteers is important throughout the project
	Share experience between stakeholders
	There is regular formal and informal meeting and information sharing between stakeholders
	Involve government from the beginning of a project until the end
	Information sharing is from national level to communities via provincial level and vice versa
	Manage community expectation
	Say the right words to avoid raising expectations
	Go simple
Understand the community (culture, traditions, values, systems existing) to fit in and not impose	
Communicate after consulting with the government	

TOGETHER, BECOMING RESILIENT!

Disaster preparedness project funded by the European Commission Humanitarian's Aid Department and the French Red Cross

Category	Lesson learnt
General best practices	Strengthen community relationship with other stakeholders
	Have partnership with government and Red Cross for a sustainable action
	Do regular monitoring and reporting
	Dissemination of similar information to avoid confusion in the communities
	Have a participatory approach
	Increase communities capacities to better cope with natural hazards
	Community roles are specify clearly under an MoU
	Provide proper training venue (easy to access, suitable for training, ...)
	Use the right tools that fits the community context
	Trainings provides common understanding on the project and strengthen relationship between community and partners
	Involve community members to help translating tools, awareness and trainings in local language
	Ensure that project activities are included in the relevant government annual work plan
	Communities have a sense of ownership
	Work within the structure of the community
	All projects aim to reduce the vulnerabilities of the communities

Recommendations

Category	Lesson learnt
Recommendations for the TBR project	Implement simulation exercise with other stakeholders
	Ensure that roles & responsibilities of all actors is clearly specify in the response plan
	Disaster committee should have clear role and responsibilities
	Appropriate resources should be provided in project implementation
	Encourage gender balance in all project activities
	Set of rules should be formulated for kits usage including replenishment
	Facilitators should have good knowledge to serve well the communities
	Have good follow up of activities (field visits, field monitoring check-list, regular contacts, etc.)
	The number of VCA tools should be adapted to the communities capacities
	Relevant government agencies should participate in all activities of the project
	There should be regular review of community plans
	All community plans should comply to what is already in place
	Identify other training needs that could help the community (e.g. proposal writing)
	Regular monitoring is crucial for project implementation
	Exchange of ideas and staff facilitate skills sharing between branches and HQ
	Traditional knowledge should be incorporated in awareness and action & response plans
	Good and appropriate logistic support should be provided for project implementation
	Exchange information between former communities and new identified communities
	Share community plans with all stakeholders
	Ensure disaster committee sustainability by linking them with provincial government
	Disaster committee should be trained to do simple reporting
	Print a <i>Step by Step</i> poster for communities which describe each step of the project (management tool elaborated at the beginning of the TBR project)
	RRA could be reviewed to make it user friendly
	Provide recognition of disaster communities
	MoU could be reviewed to include modification at the beginning of the project
	Action and response plans and VCA outcomes should be laminated
	Adapt kits quantities according to community population
Frequent awareness should be done in communities	
Other type of hazards could be included in awareness	
Good reporting of activities should be done to have proper follow up	
More visual support / illustrations (e.g drawings, posters, brochures, ...) should be included in awareness	
FA training in communities should be done during 2 or 3 days	

Category	Lesson learnt
Recommendations for Red Cross activities	Strengthen communication between SBO, BO, HQ and DM partners
	Mapping and sharing resources in awareness and first aid to Public, Private and NGOs
	Promote gender balance in volunteer registration
	RC should organise provincial stakeholders forums
	Increase the number of RC First Aid Trainers at National and provincial level
	More CBDP training for communities should be done (e.g. ERT)
	Strengthen partnership between National Societies to improve RC action
	Red Cross staffs should be trained in other areas (FA, Health, Dissemination, Disaster Awareness, CBDP approach, Watsan, safety training, ...)
	Exchange ideas / staffs between National Societies
	Increase the use of Focus group in trainings
	Seek technical advice, materials and resources from IFRC/ICRC
	Need to improve RC facilitators capacities
	Have valid certificates for FA instructors
	Volunteers must be properly trained (e.g. awareness)
There must be recognition of volunteers involvement	
Have integrated approach with communities (Health, Dm, FA, ...)	

Category	Lesson learnt
General recommendations	Advocate Community Action Plans to other stakeholders depending of their areas of interest
	Ask technical support from relevant agencies
	Involve neighbouring communities in your activities
	Invite government representatives in field visits
	Explain what is inside a kit (e.g. First Aid kit) when distributing
	Program regular visit to communities even after the end of the project
	Disaster awareness in communities should be done regularly
	Train staff with technical knowledge to give them the opportunity to answer communities questions if they ask more
	Share the cost with other agencies when possible
	Promote safety and health care in the communities even if it's not a project activity
	The communication infrastructure should be improved
	There must be gender participation for all activities
	Involve relevant agencies in the meetings and trainings
	Identify clear roles and responsibilities of DRR stakeholders and other key agencies(e.g. Fire services, Police, Army, ...)
	Coordinate with stakeholders to avoid duplication of information
	Involve local stakeholders
Make sure to have good facilitators in all project activities that knows very well what they are doing	

From these lists of best practices and recommendations, both Vanuatu Red Cross Society and Solomon Islands Red Cross Society came up with an action plan for improving DRR and non-DRR activities in their organisation.



A Sub-Branch Officer presents the VRCS action plan

BEST PRACTICES ILLUSTRATED

Response plans help community to protect themselves when facing disasters

As news spread across the Pacific Ocean on the evening of the Friday 11th March following a tsunami that has been generated by a strong earthquake of magnitude 8.9 at 4:46 pm about 179 kilometres east of Sendai, Honshu, Japan, the small Pacific Islands ring their alarm bells through their warning systems.

At 8:00pm (Solomon Islands Time) the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) of the Solomon Islands has issued a Tsunami warning for the country through Solomon Islands Broadcasting Cooperation (SIBC).

In response to the Tsunami warning the communities of Matu and Venga in Santa Cruz Island, Temotu Province and Ghatere of Kolombangara, Western Province ran up to the higher and safe grounds for safety. Several phone calls from the communities in the Islands were made to the Solomon Islands Red Cross Society (SIRCS) to enquire and activate their Disaster Response Plans.



Matu community with disaster awareness posters from TBR project

According to Mr. Philip Lepping from Matu Community, he said “the entire community ran 2 km inland to the high ground” where the community has identified the Evacuation Center in their Response Plans. These Response Plans were done with the help and support of the TBR project

The Solomon Islands was very fortunate that there were no major damages following this event. Our thoughts and sympathy are with Japan and its people who were badly affected by the recent earthquake and tsunami.

VCA tools help communities to visualise their own setting

The VCA (Vulnerability Capacity Assessment) methodology is used by National Red Cross Red Crescent Societies for 20 years. During this time, it was improved to provide a easy set of tools to empower communities to identify their weakness / issues (vulnerabilities) and their strength (capacities). The VCA methodology is a central component of a Community Based Disaster Preparedness (CBDP) approach.

The VCA methoology was used during the TBR project where communities were trained to use some of these tools. Among them, the mapping is a way of setting out in visual form the resources, services, vulnerabilities and risks in a community. Maps can be used to indicate the location of health clinics, schools, water sources and shelter or to indentify locations at particular risk such as areas prone to floods or health hazards, indicating which groups are vulnerable.

Maps are useful as they facilitate and initiate discussion on various issues with the community. They help people to understand complex relationships and allow visual comparison of information. This can allow the community to find out about resources that exist and identify



California community map (Malaita province)

appropriate activities that will help the community to become more resilient when facing disasters. It can also gain a common understanding of the issues facing the community and stimulate discussion about resources and risks in the community.

With this tool, in Malaita Province (Solomon Islands), California community identified a risk for some of their houses, close to the bank of the river, that are prone to landslide due to the erosion caused by the river.

To reduce their vulnerability to landslide, they chose to write in their Village Risk Reduction Action Plan that this issue would be discussed in the next community meeting and the houses will need to be relocated to a safer area on higher ground.

Disaster action plans for the benefit of all the community

The community of Motalava Island in Torba province has realized the importance of natural disaster prevention, preparedness and mitigation work. The community disaster action work was taken place during the second week of April in the village of Nereningman and in Rah Island. The activities carried out were: the replant of trees on the coastal line; the digging of drainage in flood prone areas and the creation of rubbish disposal.

Chief Laurent Jean, chairman of Motalava council of chiefs said that Vanuatu Red Cross engagement with his people in Motalava is crucial as it helps educate the community to not only focus on development but also to consider disaster risk that the community is exposed to.

The community disaster action plans are integrated into the chief's 10 year work plans. All 3 communities in Motalava have inserted their action plans into the chief yearly plan. The days allocated to the chiefs are Monday and Friday. However, the chiefs have agreed that the action plan be implemented as soon as possible to enhance resilience of the community. The communities of Motalava are overwhelmed with community commitments, therefore the chiefs have allocated specific days to the community to work on their action plan.

All Community Disaster Committees Chairmen work closely with the chiefs to ensure that the chiefs are well informed of the activities. It then becomes the duty of the chiefs to make the announcement in the village to make people aware. The last announcement is done on Sunday during the church service by the church representatives.

The people of Motalava are known for their willingness and enthusiasm when it comes to community activity. The people highly respect the chief's decisions which therefore becomes a bond of solidarity between the chiefs and their people. The chiefs encourage the community to always prioritize and consider their disaster action plans and ensure that it is being implemented for the benefit of all the community.



The men of Rah Island community work on their newly evacuated route

Use of traditional disaster risk reduction knowledge also benefits communities

In the old days, our ancestors in Vanuatu have already lived and experienced disasters. At that time, there was no technology but they rely solely on traditional ways of coping with disasters. Vanuatu regularly experience volcanic eruptions, cyclones, earthquakes, droughts, floods, etc. Due to the impact of climate change some of these hazards are increasing in frequency and unpredictability. The risks posed by such hazards can also be effectively reduced by expanding traditional approach to disaster preparedness, response and recovery.

The Vanuatu culture is rich with variety of knowledge including prediction of threats. The natural and man-made hazards are a threat to Vanuatu particularly in Torba province thus there is need to revive traditional mechanism on how to cope with disasters.

Through the TBR project, the Vanuatu Red Cross has begun to collect the DRR traditional knowledge of Banks and Torres Islands. The staffs based in the islands have questioned communities about their own and specific traditions and local practices to face natural disasters (before, during and after a disaster).

All these informations have been used during the awareness campaigns, particularly to highlight the usefulness and value of these DRR traditional knowledge. Indeed communities are more familiar with indigenous practices. Sometimes they can understand, handle and maintain them better than introduced western practices and technologies. They rely on locally available skills and materials and are often cheaper than western practices. It was also a way to involve the different generations inside the community.

This data collection was a first step, then the Red Cross could use and adapt its own community based disaster preparedness approach (and VCA methodology) taking into account these traditional information, practices, beliefs and methods. The final objective is to increase the community resilience through the preservation and the promotion of traditions and local practices, to encourage community members to place a higher value on local culture and practices. In addition to new and “modern” contributions, it seems to be a good way to strengthen their disaster preparedness capacities sustainably.

Some traditional knowledge collected:

- During the wild yams' harvest season, the yam is thoroughly dug without any kill to it. It is then buried in the house. It could remain in the ground until consummation time. Similar process is applied with manioc.
- In the old days, the indigenous used a special traditional calendar to organize days for social, farming and fishing purposes. This is done by giving local names to periods, typically days, weeks, months and years.
- The people on Gaua Island could predict the upcoming drought season when they observe a cloud feature locally known as *wuretongo* and win direction known as *Yongmase*.
- Calvas: it is a species of bean. It grows and extends wide its vine. Its fruits are long and when mature, it is collected for water storage.



According to the local practices, a community member is replanting a "nambangura", a species able to grow on the coastal area and to protect it

GOING FURTHER

For further information about this workshop or the best practices and lessons learnt identified you can contact:

- **For Solomon Islands:**

Ms. Nancy Jolo, Secretary General

Mr. Aloysius Erobaea, Disaster Risk Reduction Officer

Solomon Islands Red Cross Society, P.O. Box 187, Honiara

Tel: +677 22 682; Fax: +677 25 299

Email: secgen_sirc@solomon.com.sb / nancy_johlo@yahoo.com.au
aerobaea@gmail.com



- **For Vanuatu:**

Mrs. Jacqueline De Gaillande, Chief Executive Officer

Mr. Paolo Malatu, Disaster Risk Reduction Officer

Vanuatu Red Cross Society, P.O. Box 618, Port Vila

Tel: +678 27 418; Fax: +678 22 599

Email: redcross@vanuatu.com.vu
drr.redcross@gmail.com



OUR PARTNERS

croix-rouge française



The French Red Cross has been running disaster preparedness projects for more than 10 years. The French Red Cross implements projects benefitting to the most vulnerable communities affected by natural disasters. They are often remote communities, lacking

external help, and they shall know how to protect themselves from threatening hazards, and how to act for their own survival through mutual aid.

The European Commission's Humanitarian Aid department (ECHO) is one of the world's largest providers of financing for humanitarian aid operations. Its mandate not only includes the funding of disaster relief but also the support of disaster preparedness activities, in particular at local level. Through its disaster preparedness programme (DIPECHO) it assists vulnerable people living in the main disaster-prone regions of the world in reducing the impact of natural disasters on their lives and livelihoods.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION



Humanitarian Aid

