Community resilience in the face of climate-driven extreme events

A Vanuatu case study

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COP21 Climate Generations Area
5 December 2015
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Community Resilience

- Climate-driven extreme events are experienced most directly at the community level
- Building community resilience is the best defense
- Apart from technical preparations like early warning systems, adequate shelters, improved building codes and evacuation plans, building community solidarity is essential
- Capacity to organize, to consult together, to take responsibility, young people empowered to act
Natural catastrophes are increasing.
Vanuatu

- Island nation in the South Pacific
- Independent 1980 (formerly New Hebrides)
- Land area: 12,190 sq.km.
- Sea area: 710,000 sq.km.
- Population: 282,000

Tanna Lat. 19.59°S Long. 169.33°E.
- Area: 555 sq.km. Altitude: 1,084 m.
- Active volcanic island, raised coral fringe
- Catastrophic threats: volcanic eruptions, cyclones, earthquakes (some coast raised 20m in last 200 years)
Cyclone Pam

Severe Tropical Cyclone Pam of 2015 was the most intense tropical cyclone in the southern hemisphere in 2015 and regarded as one of the worst natural disasters in the history of Vanuatu. (Wikipedia)

Date: 6-15 March 2015

Category: Category 5 Hurricane (SSHS)

Affected areas: Fiji, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Tuvalu
Cyclone Pam over Vanuatu
Damage from Cyclone Pam in Vanuatu

On 15 March, 21.29 UTC, an earthquake of 0.3 M, depth 50 km, occurred west of Port-Vila, Sanma Province. As of 16 March, no damage has been reported.

The airport in Port-Vila has reopened, allowing military aircraft to bring in relief supplies and personnel. Telecommunications networks are down throughout the country.

The National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) is coordinating the response, activated the national Emergency Operations Centre (NEDC). The Government is coordinating and collecting the various offers of assistance. The Vanuatu Humanitarian Team (VHT) is supporting the Government and is a coordination between Vanuatu based NGOs, the Red Cross, UN and government agencies.

Several organisations are stepping up relief efforts (WFP, UNICEF, OCHA, Save the Children, Vanuatu Red Cross, World Vision, ADRA, CARE). An UNDAC team arrived on 16 March 2015.

As of 16 March 2015, according to the Food Security and Agriculture Cluster’s initial briefing, crops across the country are severely damaged. banana crops and leafy vegetable crops are likely to have been destroyed. loss of livestock and destroyed fisheries infrastructure have also been reported.

ECHO support from ECHO Bangkok arrived in Port-Vila on 16 March 2015. A second airlift is expected to land tomorrow.

Sources: ECHO, OCHA (L & Z), SPACE, Vanuatu Government Media
The end of Cyclone Pam
Video: Bahá'í communities on Tanna

• Two days after the passage of Cyclone Pam
• Based on first-hand reports from local Bahá'ís
• Experience of the cyclone
• How the communities responded
• With other images of the Vanuatu Bahá'í community and a 2013 youth conference
• Made for the Bahá'í community
Bahá'í Faith

• World faith founded in 1844 in Persia
• Bahá'í World Centre in Haifa, Israel
• In Vanuatu since 1953
• Prophet-founder Bahá'u'lláh 1817-1892
• 'Abdu'l-Bahá 1844-1921
• Local Spiritual Assembly
• Institute process with booklets for community education: study circles, children's classes, junior youth, devotional meetings
• Period of fasting 2-20 March (like Ramadan)