LOCALISATION IN VANUATU: DEMONSTRATING CHANGE

JANUARY 2019

VANGO
Vanuatu Association of NGOs

PIANGO
Pacific Islands Association of Non-governmental Organisations | Association Des Ongs Desiles Du Pacifique

HUMANITARIAN ADVISORY GROUP

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

About VANGO

Vanuatu Association of Non-Government Organisations (VANGO) is the non-government organisation (NGO) and civil society organisation (CSO) umbrella body for Vanuatu.

About PIANGO

Pacific Islands Association of Non-Government Organisations (PIANGO) is the major regional NGO with membership in the 23 countries and territories of the Pacific Islands. For over 25 years, PIANGO has served the Pacific through strengthening and building the capacity of the civil society sector. This is through giving the sector a voice for policy formulation and development, and strengthening National Liaison Units (NLU) or the umbrella organisations in member countries.

About Humanitarian Advisory Group

Humanitarian Advisory Group (HAG) was founded in 2012 to elevate the profile of humanitarian action in Asia and the Pacific. Set up as a social enterprise, HAG provides a unique space for thinking, research, technical advice and training that can positively contribute to excellence in humanitarian practice.

Partnership for research impact

PIANGO, VANGO and HAG are partnering on this research. Working together increases reach and influence across the region.

PIANGO has a strong civil society network of organisations involved in humanitarian preparedness and response in the Pacific, and has been involved in promoting localisation initiatives and perspectives in national, regional and global forums including the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS). PIANGO was actively involved in the Pacific lead-up to the WHS. Its priorities include reinforcing local leadership, strengthening community resilience and localisation of aid.

HAG is undertaking a three-year research initiative called Humanitarian Horizons supported by the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The first project in the Humanitarian Horizons research program is *Intention to impact: the localisation of humanitarian action in the Pacific*. This project explores the action and impact of localised approaches to humanitarian action in the Pacific, with a focus on two case study countries. The project aims to generate tools and approaches to measure localisation that can be adopted and used to inform humanitarian programming in the Pacific. The first paper outlines a proposed approach to measuring localisation, and the second outlines Pacific priorities for measuring change.

FOREWORD

Emele Duituturaga,
Executive Director, PIANGO

In the Pacific where 80% of our population are rural based, the first and the last response is always the local response and so we need to reinforce local leadership, strengthen community resilience and reinforce localisation of aid. This focus on localisation is at the heart of transforming the humanitarian system which emerged strongly at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit and is also embraced in the Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific (FRDP), endorsed by Pacific Forum Leaders as an integrated approach to address climate change and disaster risk management. As a member of the Pacific Resilience Partnership established in 2018 to implement the FRDP, PIANGO sees localisation is a key strategy to achieve the goals of the Framework.

One of PIANGO's key strategic areas of focus is evidence based advocacy and so we were excited in June 2018 to partner with HAG to bring together Pacific Humanitarian actors in Fiji, Vanuatu and Tonga to identify six Pacific priorities for tracking localisation. Building on this, our partnership with HAG extended to conducting this baseline research in Vanuatu with the engagement of the Vanuatu Association of NGOs –VANGO, PIANGO's national member. It is critically important that that local CSOs on the ground share ownership of the research process in order that they use the research findings to drive the necessary changes to progress localisation within their respective context. This research is ground breaking and the baseline data collected contributes to our policy influencing advocacy at regional and global levels.

Laisiasa Sakita,
Board Chair, VANGO

VANGO is the umbrella body for CSOs and NGOs in Vanuatu to coordinate relationships between CSOS and make links with governments. Humanitarian response in Vanuatu has been internationally led, so the focus on localisation in Vanuatu has been at the core of VANGO's advocacy given the experiences from TC Pam and the Ambae situation. We are working with CSOs to strengthen their capacity and ability to recognise the needs of people and traditional structures to respond better and effectively to disasters

Usually, we are bystanders to externally driven research but here, VANGO is a significant research partner in leading on this baseline research on the ground – thanks to PIANGO and HAG. This is critical to enhance the visibility of local actors such as VANGO members as well as supporting the calls for localisation of humanitarian response. In 2017, VANGO set up its own Humanitarian Relief Taskforce which was instrumental in organizing its community network (farmers, chiefs, women and youths) to provide relief assistance to the people of Ambae who were displaced by the Lombenben volcano.

In 2018, VANGO acted as a conduit to influence government intervention in the evacuation of people on Ambae who voluntarily relocated themselves to Santo – by convening a meeting between the community representatives and the government with the support of key stakeholders. To this effect, VANGO believes that any humanitarian response must adopt a bottom-up approach as envisaged in this baseline process. It is our ambition that the report would ultimately lead to changes in how the humanitarian response is shaped in Vanuatu and to ensure greater local ownership and leadership.

Emele Duituturaga

PIANGO Executive Director

Laisiasa Sakita

VANGO Board Chair

INTRODUCTION

The international humanitarian sector is currently developing ways to measure progress on localisation following the commitments made at the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016. This has also been a key issue for humanitarian actors in the Pacific region. Generating an evidence base on localisation is important in order to demonstrate what change is happening and the impact it is having. This report provides a baseline snapshot of localisation in Vanuatu. It pilots the Measuring Localisation Framework developed through a consultation process in three countries led by PIANGO and HAG.

WHAT IS THIS BASELINE FOR?

The baselining process is intended to create an evidence base to allow international, national and local organisations to track progress on localisation.

1. For **international actors**, it is intended as a resource and evidence base for tracking implementation of localisation commitments.

2. For **national and local organisations**, it provides a body of work on what localisation means to them and outlines how progress can be monitored. It is intended to be used as a resource and evidence base to advocate for accountability and change.

About the Framework

The Measuring Localisation Framework has **seven areas of measurement:** partnerships, leadership, capacity, coordination and complementarity, funding, participation, and policy influence and advocacy. **Each area has a set of qualitative and quantitative indicators**, with associated means of verification. The

indicators and means of verification were drawn from the consultation process and previous work on localisation at regional and global levels including HAG's *Measuring Localisation* paper, the START Network, ALNAP and the NEAR Network.[1]

In this paper, we assess the level of evidence of action against indicators in each of the seven areas of measurement. The four levels of evidence are: **no evidence; limited evidence; some evidence**; and **strong evidence**.

DEFINITIONS

Localisation This report uses a definition of localisation developed by Pacific actors: "Localisation is a process of recognising, respecting and strengthening the independence of leadership and decision-making by national actors in humanitarian action, in order to better address the needs of affected populations.[2]

National, local and international organisations This report uses the definitions from the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Humanitarian Financing Team's localisation definitions paper. National and local organisations are considered to be: "Organisations engaged in relief that are headquartered and operating in their own aid recipient country and which are not affiliated to an international NGO."[3]

METHODOLOGY

The baselining methodology was developed by HAG and PIANGO. The research team comprised international, regional and national researchers from PIANGO, HAG and VANGO.

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1   HAG, *Measuring localisation*, 2018; START Network, *Localisation in practice: emerging indicators and practical recommendations*, 2018; ALNAP, *Making it count: a feasibility study on collective indicators to monitor progress in the Agenda for Humanity*, 2018.
2   This definition comes from the Australian Red Cross research *Going Local: Achieving a more appropriate and fit-for-purpose humanitarian ecosystem in the Pacific*, 2017.
3   Inter-Agency Standing Committee Humanitarian Financing Task Team, *Localisation Marker Working Group Definitions Paper*, 2018, p.2.

The baseline process used a mixed methods approach. A guided self-assessment process was conducted with 27 organisations to capture quantitative data against key indicators in the Measuring Localisation Framework. Interviews were conducted with key informants to explore the themes emerging in the self-assessment surveys and to provide context specific examples. VANGO and national researchers also led focus group discussions with communities to capture their perceptions and experiences of humanitarian actors.

Data from all sources were triangulated to determine the level of evidence of action and/or impact against the indicators in the Measuring Localisation Framework. Indicators were assessed as having one of the following: **no evidence, limited evidence, some evidence** or **strong evidence** of action and impact in each of the areas.

ETHICS

This research recognises the importance and primacy of ethical localised research. PIANGO's and VANGO's research expertise and knowledge of ethical processes in the Pacific set the research approach. This included how and when to engage stakeholders, and seeking the necessary permissions and processes according to *kastom*. The Pacific region has various ethical frameworks drawing on traditional concepts that guided this approach.[4]

Vanuatu has a national ethics research process stipulated in the *Vanuatu Cultural Research Policy*. The Vanuatu Cultural Centre is the executive arm of the Vanuatu National Cultural Council. This research was guided by principles outlined in the policy such as respect for *kastom*.

35+
Documents reviewed

1
Workshop with 50 particpants

27
Organisations completed self assessment surveys

35
Key informant interviews

1
Perceptions exercise

METHODOLOGY
ETHICAL RESEARCH PRINCIPLES

LIMITATIONS

Sample size: The size of the quantitative data sets is not statistically significant (data from 27 organisations). However, the quantitative data set was analysed alongside the qualitative data set, which strengthened the significance of the findings and provided context and nuance.

Interpretation bias: The research team spent time with each organisation to facilitate the self-assessment jointly and explain each question. Despite this, the baseline data may be influenced by differing understanding and interpretation of key terms used during the self-assessment survey process. This also resulted in some partially completed data sets.

Representation: Most of the stakeholders involved in the research were from national NGOs and international NGOs. Some donors and government representatives also participated in the process.

Level of evidence: Where there is no or limited evidence of action this does not mean that no action is taking place but that it did not emerge as part of the baseline process.

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4   See 'Pacific research methodologies' by USP Oceania Centre for Pacific Studies MOOC program on www.youtube.com/watch?v=nPfcotbuv2Y. The Kakala Research Framework was developed by Professor Konai Thaman using the metaphor of garland-making. The framework was enhanced by other Tongan academics.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

PARTNERSHIPS

Key Finding: **LIMITED EVIDENCE.** There is limited evidence of action to support a shift towards equitable and complementary partnerships between local, national and international actors.

- ✓✓ There is **some evidence** of good partnership practices like umbrella partnership agreements to minimise reporting, some agreements framed by ethical partnership principles, and some core funding available.

- ✓ There is **limited evidence** of action to support increased power and decision-making for national and local actors within partnerships, and partnership support that reflects their ambitions and goals.

LEADERSHIP

Key Finding: **SOME EVIDENCE.** There is some evidence of action to support a shift towards national actors leading on humanitarian action.

- ✓✓✓ There is **strong evidence** of increased leadership by government and by local and national actors in decision-making. There is also evidence of increasing engagement with donors by national and local actors.

- ✓✓ There is **some evidence** of investment in national and local organisational leadership and respect for in-country leadership mechanisms and structures.

CAPACITY

Key Finding: **LIMITED TO SOME EVIDENCE.** There is some evidence of international actors providing appropriate and targeted capacity strengthening support to local and national organisations.

- ✓✓ There is **some evidence** of action to reduce reliance on international surge and to develop contextualised plans and legislations.

- ✓ There is **limited evidence** that capacity support has increased alignment, appropriateness and relevance to the requests of local and national actors (versus the compliance needs of international actors).

LEVEL OF PROGRESS	⊘ NO	✓ LIMITED	✓✓ SOME	✓✓✓ STRONG

COORDINATION AND COMPLEMENTARITY

Key Finding: *LIMITED TO NO EVIDENCE.* There is limited to no evidence of commonly agreed approaches to complementarity ('as local as possible, as international as necessary').

✔✔ There is **some evidence** of actions to shift the operating language of coordination meetings to the local language and to support national leadership of clusters.

⊘ There is **no evidence** of funding or technical support to national CSO coordination mechanisms or evidence of intentional processes to analyse approaches to complementarity.

FUNDING

Key Finding: *LIMITED TO NO EVIDENCE.* There is limited to no evidence of action to localise funding.

✔ There is **limited evidence** of local and national actors having direct access to funding.

⊘ There is **no evidence** that the amount of humanitarian funding has increased, and **no evidence** that local and national actors have increased decision-making over financial matters.

PARTICIPATION

Key Finding: *LIMITED EVIDENCE.* There is limited evidence of changed practice in community participation.

✔✔ There is **some evidence** of standards being contextualised and circulated with local and community stakeholders.

⊘ There is **no evidence** that increased community engagement is shaping humanitarian programming (in the Ambae response in particular).

POLICY INFLUENCE AND ADVOCACY

Key Finding: *LIMITED TO SOME EVIDENCE.* There is limited to some evidence that policies better reflect the priorities of national and local civil society actors due to their increased engagement in policy and advocacy.

✔✔ There is **some evidence** of national and local actors increasing their awareness of relevant policies and influencing their development.

✔ There is **limited evidence** that local and national civil society actors influence donor priorities in Vanuatu.

| LEVEL OF PROGRESS | ⊘ NO | ✔ LIMITED | ✔✔ SOME | ✔✔✔ STRONG |

LOCALISATION IN VANUATU: CONTEXT

Localising humanitarian action is a hot topic in Vanuatu. Local, national and international stakeholders alike are considering what localisation means for responding to the increasing frequency of natural disasters. In recent years, cyclones, earthquakes and volcano eruptions have affected communities across the country. The international response to Tropical Cyclone Pam in 2015 led to a shift in the dynamics of humanitarian assistance in Vanuatu and the wider Pacific region, and broader recognition of the need to better support locally led response.

Contextual factors and relevancy for localisation

1   Government-led disaster response system

The Government of Vanuatu leads on disaster management, with the National Disaster Management Organisation (NDMO) as the lead agency. The cluster system is also government-led, with international agencies acting as cluster co-leads.

2   Frequency of disasters

Vanuatu has some of the highest levels of disaster risk and exposure in the world.[5] Recent disasters include Cyclone Pam (2015), Cyclone Donna (2017), Cyclone Hola (2018) and the Manaro Voui volcano eruption and evacuation of Ambae Island (ongoing).

3   Scale

Vanuatu has a population of 276,000 people. The ongoing evacuation of Ambae Island has affected 11,000 people; Cyclone Pam in 2015 affected 188,000 people. While these are small on an international scale, frequent disasters have a significant impact on small populations.

4   International presence

Vanuatu has a large presence of international actors compared to many other Pacific Island states. It experienced a large international response to Cyclone Pam in 2015, significantly influencing the localisation agenda in-country.

5   Traditional leadership, church and community structures

Traditional leadership structures and coping mechanisms are often the primary way of responding across diverse communities in Vanuatu. The nakamal is the traditional system used where everyone in a village or community in Vanuatu meets to discuss issues and share stories or concerns.

6   Humanitarian funding

Humanitarian funding fluctuates significantly from year to year. Much aid is directed bilaterally, with UN agencies and INGOs also providing humanitarian funding and programming. A small amount of humanitarian funding outside government is multi-year or core funding, and there are limited mechanisms for funding CSOs.

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5   *World risk report*, 2017

LOCALISATION IN VANUATU: FINDINGS

This section is divided into **seven areas.**

- Partnerships
- Leadership
- Capacity
- Coordination and complementarity
- Funding
- Participation
- Policy influence and advocacy

CAPACITY

COORDINATION AND COMPLEMENTARITY

LEADERSHIP

FUNDING

PARTICIPATION

PARTNERSHIPS

POLICY INFLUENCE AND ADVOCACY

LOCALISATION IN VANUATU
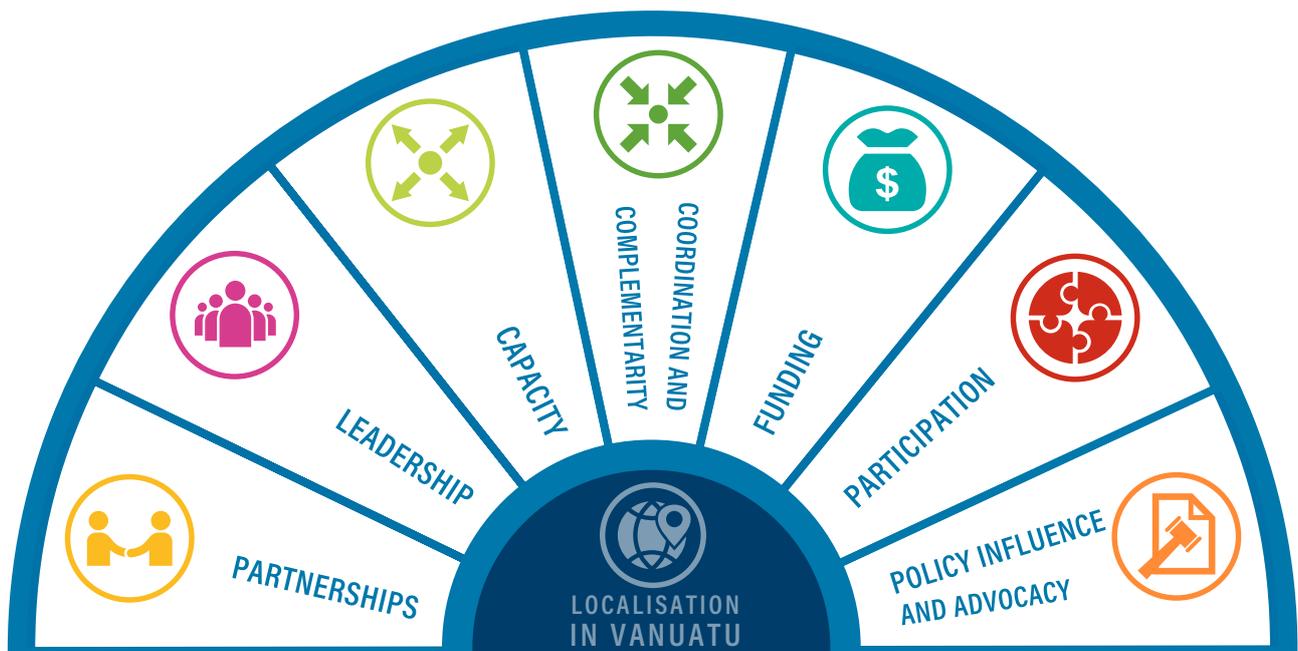
Each area presents the key findings and evidence of progress against localisation indicators. There is also a snapshot data page showing the headline issues and some standout statistics.

Throughout the report, the following symbols are used to identify international and national actors.

national actor

international actor

PARTNERSHIPS

Bulgaituva - Gida dulvai tam bulgaituva: Everyone in the community comes together to put forward a plan or set up a plan to help someone or the community as a whole (from the island of Pentecost).

PARTNERSHIPS

Key Finding: **LIMITED EVIDENCE.** There is limited evidence of action to support a shift towards equitable and complementary partnerships between local, national and international actors.

✔✔ There is **some evidence** of good partnership practices like umbrella partnership agreements to minimise reporting, some agreements framed by ethical partnership principles, and some core funding available.

✔ There is **limited evidence** of action to support increased power and decision-making for national and local actors within partnerships, and partnership support that reflects their ambitions and goals.

| Impact indicator	Indicator	Evidence of progress
There are equitable and complementary partnerships between local, national and international actors.	1. Partnerships based on equitable and ethical practices	✔✔ **Some**
	2. Longer term strategic partnerships that build systems and processes which mirror the ambitions and goals of local/national partners	✔ **Limited**
	3. Increased power and decision-making of local and national actors within partnerships	✔ **Limited**

What evidence did we look for against the indicators?

▶ Existence of partnership MoUs or agreements

▶ Existence of partnership principles embedded in documentation and review processes

▶ Opportunities for national partners to assess capacity of international partners

▶ Partnership funding allocated to anything other than project implementation, and investment in organisational systems and processes

▶ Perceptions of equitable partnerships, increased decision-making and shifts towards strategic funding and partnerships

▶ Public recognition of partnerships

INDICATOR 1: PARTNERSHIPS BASED ON EQUITABLE AND ETHICAL PARTNERSHIP PRACTICES

There were **some examples of good practice partnering approaches outlined by international, national and local organisations.** This was especially the case where partnerships provided core or stable funding, joint reporting or compliance across multiple partners and donors, flexible approaches in rapid responses, respect for local knowledge and structures, and joint review processes.[6] One local actor described a joint partnership with an INGO and two international donor governments that had joint proposals, plans and reporting, thus minimising duplication.[7] Churches in particular reported positive partnering approaches with their international partners, and one INGO spoke of developing a partnership strategy based on increasing partnerships and ethical partnership practices, and minimising direct implementation.[8]

Local and national actors with ethical principles or guidelines embedded in partnership or funding agreements

0%
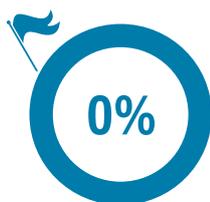
However, overall there is limited evidence to support a shift towards increased equitable and ethical partnerships. While some national-international partnerships had effective project review processes, these rarely considered the partnership as a whole.[9] No national actor stated that their partnerships were framed by ethical

partnership principles. There is currently no requirement by national leadership structures (and often not by donors)[10] for international agencies to partner when implementing programming. Many national and some international stakeholders felt this was of critical importance for the future.[11]

> All INGOs should work through local networks, through local and national NGOS. This should always be the case.[12] (International organisation)

Contracts and partnership agreements

Samples of 13 agreements were provided by four international and national actors covering both development and humanitarian work. These included agreements with a range of international actors, local and national NGOs, and government.

▶ In all reviewed national-international agreements there was only one way reporting to the international partner.

▶ In most contracts, there was a clause to protect the reputation of the INGO but no reciprocal clause for the local partner.

▶ One contract contained clauses around acknowledgement of both partners in communications materials. All agreements made reference to the international partner's quality standards without reciprocal recognition of local/national partner quality or other standards.

Good practice: One of the international-national partnership agreements had guidelines for partners working together, including mutual respect and trust, adaptability, transparency and accountability.

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6   Interviews 5, 6, 25, 26, 30, 31; CAN DO, *Localising evaluations through participatory evaluation planning, 2018*
7   Interview 19
8   Interview 16
9   Interviews 10, 15, 17, 18, 31
10 Interview 25
11 Interviews 10, 15, 17, 18, 31
12 Interview 17

Quote from the agreement:

"[Both organisations'] adaptability recognizes the strengths, potentials and complementarity of [national partner], acknowledging that the dynamics of partnerships can and should change over time. This is fostered through approaches that prioritise mutual learning and improvement, and can also include practical strategies such as planning together, structured monitoring of the quality of the relationships, and clear procedures for revising the nature of the relationship."[13]

Local and national actors had the perception that partnerships were not always complementary to their skills and capacities.[14] It is standard practice for international agencies to assess the capacity of local partners, as well as the quality of the partnership, through evaluations and reviews.[15] There has been limited to little shift towards recognising the need for mutual structured processes: **no national actor interviewed had ever formally assessed the capacity of their international partners.**

INDICATOR 2: LONGER TERM STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS THAT BUILD SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES WHICH REFLECT THE AMBITIONS AND GOALS OF LOCAL/NATIONAL PARTNERS

There are some longer term strategic partnerships that seek to invest in national civil society systems and processes to strengthen humanitarian response,[16] but many local organisations largely felt that their funded partnerships with international agencies were short term and project-based. National stakeholders articulated that projects were commonly designed by international stakeholders and only sometimes reflected their organisational objectives.[17] International agencies tend to have longer term partnerships or relationships with key donors and governments compared to local organisations, whose partnerships are primarily with INGOs or UN agencies. International actors have a higher number of partnerships (56% have five or more partnerships, compared to 22% of local organisations).[18]

National and local actors frequently do not have operational staff and overhead costs funded in partnerships. 41% of national and local actors said partnerships never fund operational staff costs and 47% said they never funded overhead costs.

100%

international agencies
who had assessed the capacity of their local or national partner/s.

0%

National actors who had formally assessed the capacity of their international partners in their partnership.

13 International–national partnership agreement, 2018
14 Interviews 7, 10, 15, 31
15 Self-assessment data; sample agreements reviewed
16 Interviews 19, 25
17 Interviews 10, 14, 15, 31
18 Self-assessment data

INDICATOR 3: INCREASED POWER AND DECISION-MAKING OF LOCAL AND NATIONAL ACTORS WITHIN PARTNERSHIPS

> Where is the line where we have that mutual relationship and partnership? We can't say no to [international partner] or come to the table to have a discussion because of the power imbalance.[19] (National organisation)

Many national stakeholders highlighted the significant continuing power differential in partnerships. One national NGO felt they couldn't ask the 'hard questions' of their international partner because 'the power dynamic is too big'.[20] Another national NGO said international partners place a 'glass ceiling' over national partners and that it was challenging for INGOs to understand what the national actor wanted from their partnerships.[21] Agencies that felt they had increased power and decision-making were church agencies or those that had long-term funding and partnerships with international agencies. In some cases, national actors felt that partnerships were pursued 'just for the sake of getting funding' from the donor, especially in disaster response.[22]

National actors identified significant opportunity for improving partnerships – this was particularly the case where international actors were duplicating programming that was felt to be best done by national actors and not operating in a way that was complementary to the skillset of the local partner.[23] National stakeholders gave many examples of opportunities to improve partnership processes by involvement in the partnership/project design and development phases and focus on mutual benefits, rather than just being approached with a project that was already fully designed.[24]
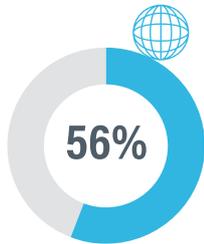
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19 Interview 15
20 Interview 15
21 Interview 10
22 Interviews 10, 15, 31
23 Interviews 10,15, 31
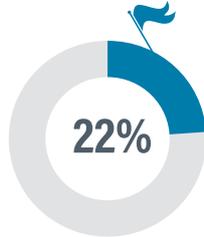24 Interviews 10,13, 15, 31

SNAPSHOT DATA: PARTNERSHIPS

NUMBER OF PARTNERSHIPS

56%

5+
PARTNERSHIPS

22%

International actors have **many more partnerships** than **national actors**

WHAT PARTNERSHIPS FUND

DO THE PARTNERSHIPS FUND **OPERATIONAL STAFF COSTS** OF YOUR PARTNER?

42% 35%
YES ALWAYS

29% 24%
YES SOMETIMES

29% 41%
NO NEVER

Funding local and national organisation **operational staff costs** and **overhead costs** is still not common practice in partnerships

DO THE PARTNERSHIPS FUND **OVERHEAD COSTS** NOT LINKED TO PROJECT?

42% 29%
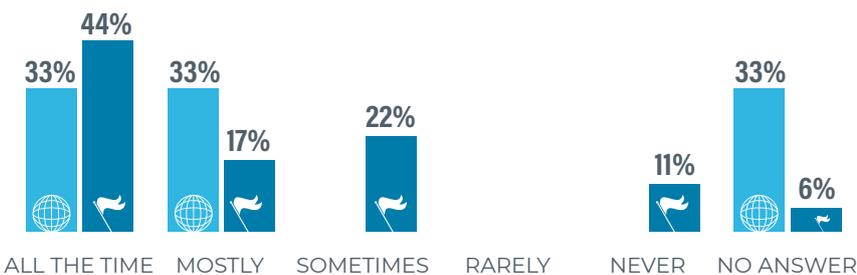**YES** ALWAYS

29% 24%
YES SOMETIMES

29% 47%
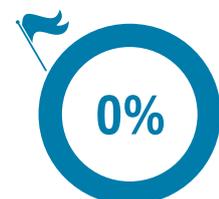**NO** NEVER

PARTNERSHIP EQUALITY

ARE THE NATIONAL PARTNER ORGANISATIONS' IDEAS AND VIEWS TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN THE PARTNERSHIP?

33% 44% | 33% 17% | 22% | | 11% | 33% 6%
ALL THE TIME | MOSTLY | SOMETIMES | RARELY | NEVER | NO ANSWER

🌐 **International**   🚩 **National**

LOCAL AND NATIONAL ACTORS WITH ETHICAL PRINCIPLES OR GUIDELINES EMBEDDED IN PARTNERSHIP OR FUNDING AGREEMENTS

0%

LEADERSHIP

Saleana: When leadership is good, people will live in peace (from the island of Ambae).

LEADERSHIP

Key Finding: **SOME EVIDENCE.** There is some evidence of action to support a shift towards national actors leading on humanitarian action.

✔✔✔ There is **strong evidence** of increased leadership by government and by local and national actors in decision-making. There is also evidence of increasing engagement with donors by national and local actors.

✔✔ There is **some evidence** of investment in national and local organisational leadership and respect for in-country leadership mechanisms and structures.

| Impact indicator	Indicator	Evidence of progress
National actors define and lead on humanitarian action.	1. International actors support and strengthen national leadership	✔✔ **Some**
	2. Local and national actors lead response and dominate decision-making	✔✔✔ **Strong**
	3. International actors work with and respect in-country leadership structures and mechanisms	✔✔ **Some**

What evidence did we look for against the indicators?

▶ Perceptions about national leadership structures and processes, and decision-making

▶ Evidence of action around engagement with donors

▶ Percentage of national staff in leadership positions

▶ Investment in local and national leadership, particularly in the last response to the evacuation of Ambae Island

INDICATOR 1: INTERNATIONAL ACTORS SUPPORT AND STRENGTHEN NATIONAL LEADERSHIP

56% of international NGOs had met directly with an international donor five or more times in the past six months, compared with 45% of local and national actors.

Frequency of engaging with donors

45% 56%
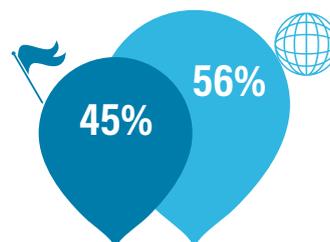
The baselining reveals positive examples of international actors supporting national leadership in disaster response. There were shifts in international organisational processes and systems, such as changing automatic surge-deployment processes, requiring international organisations to be part of national leadership bodies such as VANGO, and supporting emerging government processes and systems to lead response. International actors have also supported national actors to engage directly with donors and increased their own engagement with provincial and local government structures.[25]

Accountability in supporting national leadership

Increased accountability for international actors to support national leadership, particularly in response, is a significant recent development in the Pacific.[26] The Joint Australia–New Zealand Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for the Pacific that was piloted in the Ambae Island evacuation response includes specific reporting objectives for reinforcing nationally led response.[27]

Some international organisations have structured processes for nationalising their leadership teams and provide mentoring for their national staff to move into leadership positions.[28] The baseline also shows positive trends in the frequency of national actors engaging with donors, although there is room to strengthen this, especially for smaller organisations.[29] Some international actors are intentionally working to strengthen relationships between donors and partners.[30]

> Recently I went to a [international donor] meeting with a Ni-Van national partner representative. At the end of the day I will be going away, so it is always good to create that relationship for the Ni-van staff with donors.[31] (International partner representative)

However, supporting national CSO leadership was identified as a key gap – staff in local and national NGOs still lack targeted and ongoing support and professional development opportunities.[32] International technical assistance is usually targeted at government organisations, and often technical assistance does not have an adequate focus on mentorship, versus leadership roles. [33]

INDICATOR 2: LOCAL AND NATIONAL ACTORS LEAD RESPONSE AND DOMINATE DECISION-MAKING

> NGOs and government are taking the lead now. They didn't take the lead in Cyclone Pam, but they are taking the lead now in the Ambae response.[34] (National actor)

25 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Humanitarian assistance in the Pacific: an evaluation of the effectiveness of Australia's response to Cyclone Pam,* February 2017; Vanuatu National Disaster Management Office, *The Republic of Vanuatu country preparedness package*, 2017; *National policy on climate change and disaster-induced displacement* 2018; Vanuatu National Disaster Management Office, *Maewo response and recover action plan*, 2018; Interview 6
26 Australian Humanitarian Partnership Disaster Ready Monitoring and Evaluation Framework localisation indicators
27 Strategic results statement 5, *MFAT/DFAT Humanitarian Monitoring & Evaluation Framework for the Pacific*, 2019
28 Interviews 5, 11, 16
29 Interviews 10, 15
30 Interview 23
31 Interview 35
32 Interview 35
33 Interviews 2, 3, 13
34 Interview 1

> International actors are now starting to respect the government now that the policies are clearer and they are reporting back to the government. The big example now is the Ambae disaster. INGOs are listening to these decisions.[35]
> (Government ministry representative)

All participants perceived a significant increase in national government leadership since the last major international response to Tropical Cyclone Pam in 2015.[36] 100% of international actors and 95% of national actors perceived that government leads decision-making in humanitarian emergencies all the time or mostly. This included sub-national structures such as provincial governments, and increased involvement of traditional leadership structures such as the chiefs system. Some international agencies considered this shift a challenge to delivering rapid assistance to affected populations, and a delay to mobilising donor funding.[37]

Government leadership of humanitarian emergencies

100%
ALL THE TIME OR MOSTLY

95%
ALL THE TIME OR MOSTLY

International organisations have more international staff in leadership positions compared to national staff. Only one-quarter of international organisations have 75% of leadership positions filled with national staff.

35 Interview 2
36 Interviews 1, 2, 3, 13, 21, 22, 30
37 Interview 11
38 Interview 11
39 Interviews 1, 2, 3, 13, 21, 22, 30
40 Interviews 5, 11, 16
41 Interviews 11, 18, 25

INDICATOR 3: INTERNATIONAL ACTORS WORK WITH AND RESPECT IN-COUNTRY LEADERSHIP STRUCTURES AND MECHANISMS

> There was a lot of damage and learning done during Cyclone Pam and we have taken on board the learning. The [international] agencies have been far more cautious about following directives, particularly in regards to waiting for permission to respond.[38]
> (International organisation representative)

Many national stakeholders reported a shift in the way that international actors are working with and respecting in-country leadership structures and mechanisms since the response to Cyclone Pam in 2015.[39] Many international actors also stated that their approach had shifted in terms of respect for national leadership, systems and processes, particularly in waiting for permission to respond and in engagement with traditional leadership structures.[40] Despite this, only 39% of national actors said that international stakeholders work with in-country leadership structures and mechanisms all the time or mostly. This appears to be more challenging for international actors at the sub-national level and there is a perception that they tend to dominate decision-making.[41]

Do international actors respect and work with in-country leadership structures and mechanisms?

67%
ALL THE TIME OR MOSTLY

39%
ALL THE TIME OR MOSTLY

SNAPSHOT DATA: LEADERSHIP

RESPECT FOR IN-COUNTRY LEADERSHIP MECHANISMS

DO INTERNATIONAL ACTORS RESPECT AND WORK WITH IN-COUNTRY LEADERSHIP STRUCTURES AND MECHANISMS?

Local and national actors still perceive that **international actors** do not adequately respect and work with in-country leadership and mechanisms

67% ALL THE TIME OR MOSTLY

39% ALL THE TIME OR MOSTLY
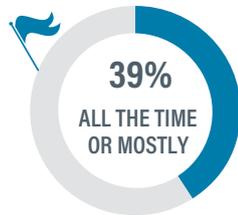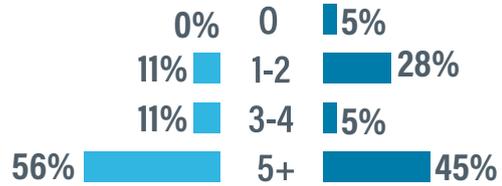
ENGAGEMENT WITH DONORS

HOW MANY TIMES IN THE LAST SIX MONTHS HAS YOUR ORGANISATION MET DIRECTLY WITH AN INTERNATIONAL DONOR?

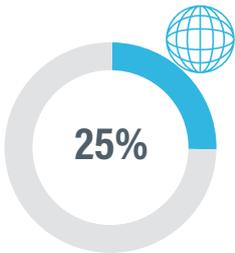**National organisations** are more regularly meeting with donors

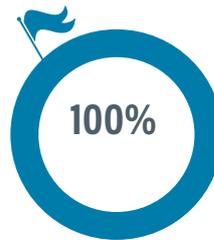| International		National
0%	0	5%
11%	1-2	28%
11%	3-4	5%
56%	5+	45%

ORGANISATIONAL LEADERSHIP

International organisations have more international staff in leadership positions compared to national staff.

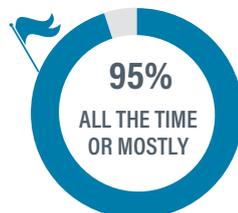**25%**

NATIONAL STAFF FILL **75%+** OF LEADERSHIP POSITIONS
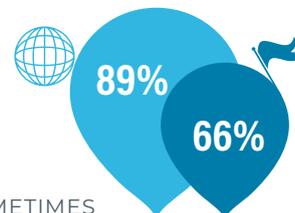
100%

PERCEPTIONS OF LOCAL AND NATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN RESPONSE

DO YOU THINK THAT LOCAL AND NATIONAL **GOVERNMENT** LEAD ON DECISION MAKING IN HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCIES IN YOUR COUNTRY?

100% ALL THE TIME OR MOSTLY

95% ALL THE TIME OR MOSTLY

DO YOU THINK THAT LOCAL AND NATIONAL **NGOs** LEAD ON DECISION MAKING IN HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCIES IN YOUR COUNTRY?

89%

66%

SOMETIMES

CAPACITY

Gu Ve Lei – Often relevant to formal meetings and custom events, *gu ve laei* refers to self-reliance, resilience and communal solidarity (from the island of Ambae).

CAPACITY

Key Finding: **LIMITED TO SOME EVIDENCE.** There is some evidence of international actors providing appropriate and targeted capacity strengthening support to local and national organisations.

✓✓ There is **some evidence** of action to reduce reliance on international surge and to develop contextualised plans and legislations.

✓ There is **limited evidence** that capacity support has increased alignment, appropriateness and relevance to the requests of local and national actors (versus the compliance needs of international actors).

Impact indicator	Indicator		Evidence of progress
Local and national organisations can respond effectively and efficiently, and have targeted support from international actors.	1.	National and regional surge capacity and use of local over international expertise	✓✓ Some
	2.	International actors do not undermine capacity of local and national actors in emergency response	✓ Limited
	3.	Contextualised humanitarian standards, tools, legislation and policies are available	✓ Limited

What evidence did we look for against the indicators?

▶ Perception and action about the use of surge capacity and local and national expertise

▶ Evidence of local and national actors being facilitated to contextualise global humanitarian standards

▶ Perception that local and national actors are appropriately supported in advance, during and after response, and perception that they identify their own capacity needs

▶ Existence and awareness of key disaster response legislation, policies and standards

INDICATOR 1: NATIONAL AND REGIONAL SURGE CAPACITY AND USE OF LOCAL OVER INTERNATIONAL EXPERTISE

> Donors have good ideas but they always overlook the capacity of the local NGOs.[42] (National organisation)

> We want to do the assessment and response. There is still a tension. Sometimes, it is done by people with experts. But we are the experts, not people from outside. We can ask for support if needed.[43] (National organisation)

Targeted and relevant support for local capacity strengthening was an area where both international and national stakeholders felt there was significant opportunity for greater progress. National actors consistently said that approaches need to fundamentally shift in two ways. The first is to shift the dominant narrative about the existing capacity of national actors from limited or non-existent capacity to under-resourced and under-utilised capacity. The second is to shift from internationally identified capacity priorities to national and local capacity priorities. National actors highlighted that the capacity of local and national organisations is overlooked or downplayed by international actors.[44]

The Ambae response: surge

The most recent disaster response for the evacuation of Ambae Island was at a scale that was managed at the national and sub-national levels, but there was still targeted international surge assistance in a range of areas requested by the government and provided by international actors, in particular FRANZ (France, Australia and New Zealand) partners. INGOs and church agencies also had technical surge support, but on a much smaller, more targeted scale than in the Cyclone Pam response.[45] Surge support for humanitarian response has also been influenced by government processes around visas for international staff and by increased accountability to report to government on international staff numbers.[46] Despite international agencies' concerns with this process, it is a significant development in government control over humanitarian response. The Australia and New Zealand review of the Ambae response was also, significantly, undertaken by a national consultant rather than an international consultant, representing a shift in the approach to assessing the donor response.[47]

National stakeholders have been supported to engage with international standards and frameworks, especially via programs like the Australian Humanitarian Partnership Disaster Ready program.[48] Despite this, there is still a tendency for international actors, including technical advisors, to deliver training and technical support that recognises international standards and approaches without appreciation or inclusion of relevant national and local approaches and standards.[49] Many national stakeholders felt there needs to be increased focus on incorporating traditional knowledge:

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42 Interview 14
43 Interview 30
44 Interviews 6, 7, 10, 13, 15, 31
45 Interviews 3, 25
46 Interview 6, 27, 29
47 Interview 38
48 https://www.australianhumanitarianpartnership.org/disaster-ready-regional
49 Interview 12

> The international actors should focus on different capacity that national actors need. They should focus on knowing the traditional knowledge. Many international actors come with the standards they want local actors to follow and not focusing on traditional knowledge. If you combine the two, it will last but your own, it won't last.[50] (International organisation)

organisations, in particular international church agency support to local church partners.[52]

However, **there is still a dominant perception that support does not always focus on the needs identified by national partners**, with nearly half stating that it only sometimes focused on national partner needs. International actors view their support much more positively than local and national actors – 78% believe their support strengthens national capacity all the time or mostly, compared to 50% of national and local actors.

INDICATOR 2: INTERNATIONAL ACTORS DO NOT UNDERMINE CAPACITY OF LOCAL AND NATIONAL ACTORS IN EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Do international actors strengthen the capacity of local and national actors?

78%

50%

ALL THE TIME
OR MOSTLY

Does international capacity support focus on the needs identified by local or national actors?

50%   45%

SOMETIMES

The response to Cyclone Pam in 2015 saw examples of international actors undermining the capacity of national actors by taking over programming previously led by national actors (e.g. protection support to women and children).[51] There were fewer examples of this in the recent response to Ambae and some stakeholders raised positive examples international actors supporting national

There are no examples of discretionary capacity strengthening funding for local and national partners to address their self-identified needs. In addition, it is critical to note that local and national organisations continue to consistently lose staff and built up capacity to INGOs. Both international and national stakeholders raised this as a concern and there seems to have been little change in the Vanuatu context despite the explicit Charter for Change commitments to address this issue.[53]

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50 Interview 55
51 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Humanitarian assistance in the Pacific: an evaluation of the effectiveness of Australia's response to Cyclone Pam,* February 2017; SPC, *Tropical Cyclone Pam lessons learned workshop report*, 2015
52 Interviews 22, 23, 26
53 Commitment 4, Charter for Change, 2016

> Local NGOs find it so hard to attract valuable people because they lose them to INGOs. That's a far cry from localisation.[54] (National organisation)

in particular, were not aware of humanitarian policies and processes in Vanuatu.[57] Legislation implementation is also varied. International national and local actors emphasised the importance of policies, procedures and tools to roll out legislation and to articulate the roles of all relevant actors.

INDICATOR 3: CONTEXTUALISED HUMANITARIAN STANDARDS, TOOLS, LEGISLATION AND POLICIES ARE AVAILABLE

Small proportion of humanitarian tools, policies and standards publicly available in Bislama or other local languages

Strong perception that national humanitarian policies are not accessible or appropriate, including clarity on how they operate in practice

> There are policies that are developed and there are policies that are implemented – and they are not the same thing. We have identified a lack of tools to implement policies; for example, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) across humanitarian policies still need to be improved.[58] (International organisation)

Many local and national organisations felt that policies need to be better contextualised to incorporate traditional disaster response mechanisms, knowledge and structures.

There are some notable examples of progress in this area, including revised disaster management legislation and associated policies.[55] A number of these have been translated into Bislama.[56] The recent 2018 NGO Policy is an example of how the government and NGOs have instituted and implemented a policy that will ensure that skills, knowledge and resources are transferred to national staff after a project is completed. The policy articulates any overseas expert is required to have a local understudy with capacity building program that will lead to local succession at the end of their contract.

Awareness of legislation and policies varies amongst actors. International actors were more aware than national actors of legislation and policies; many of the smaller national NGOs,

> Government should include traditional knowledge. They should teach it from an early age so children can adapt to the cyclone and embed it into the education system … INGOs should also have traditional knowledge – it should be mandatory for organisations to understand the traditional ways of knowledge.[59] (National government actor)

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54 Interview 19
55 Vanuatu is currently reviewing the Disaster Management Act and developing associated policies for implementation.
56 Interview 33
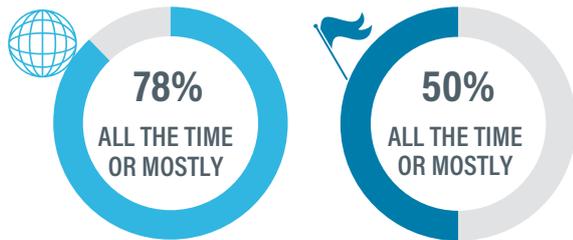57 Self-assessment survey; Interviews 1, 34, 16, 13
58 Interview 16
59 Interview 2

SNAPSHOT DATA: CAPACITY

INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR CAPACITY STRENGTHENING

DO YOU FEEL THAT THE CAPACITY OF THE IN-COUNTRY PARTNER IS STRENGTHENED BY INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT?

78%
ALL THE TIME OR MOSTLY

50%
ALL THE TIME OR MOSTLY

Local and national stakeholders do not think that their capacity is always strengthened by international support

APPROPRIATENESS OF CAPACITY STRENGTHENING

DO INTERNATIONAL ACTORS FOCUS ON THE AREAS OF CAPACITY STRENGTHENING THAT LOCAL PARTNERS REQUEST?
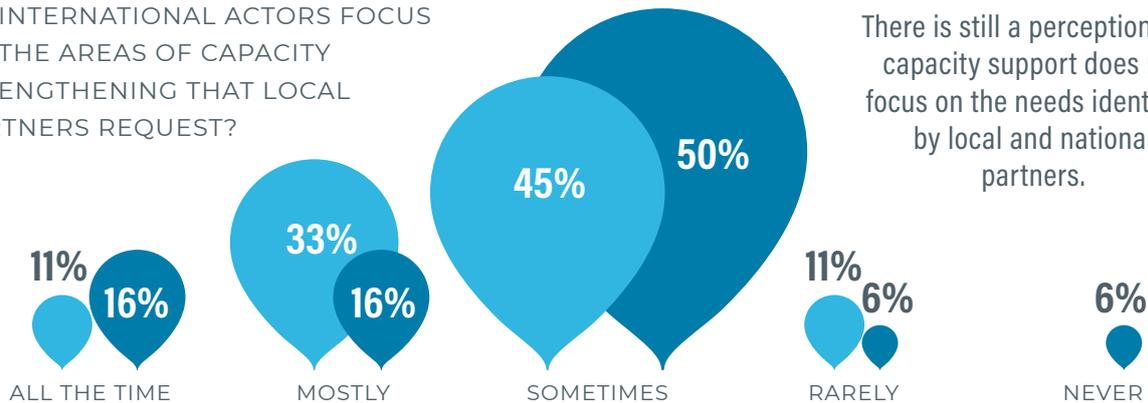
There is still a perception that capacity support does not focus on the needs identified by local and national partners.

11% 16%	33% 16%	45% 50%	11% 6%	6%
ALL THE TIME	MOSTLY	SOMETIMES	RARELY	NEVER

CONTEXTUALISED LEGISLATION, TOOLS, STANDARDS AND POLICIES

Small proportion of humanitarian tools, policies and standards **publicly available in Bislama or other local languages**

Strong perception that **national humanitarian policies are not accessible or appropriate**, including clarity on how they operate in practice

All stakeholders indicated that **clearer disaster response policies** are needed

International

National

20

COORDINATION AND COMPLEMENTARITY

Coordination – *Kaitopo - Na bolokiana* – Someone that instructs and dedicates work – making plans and giving direction to do it (from Ambae Island).

Complementarity – *Hango Hango* – Many different things that are brought together or combined to fulfill or complete a need.

COORDINATION AND COMPLEMENTARITY

Key Finding: **LIMITED TO NO EVIDENCE.** There is limited to no evidence of commonly agreed approaches to complementarity ('as local as possible, as international as necessary').

✔✔ There is **some evidence** of actions to shift the operating language of coordination meetings to the local language and to support national leadership of clusters.

🚫 There is **no evidence** of funding or technical support to national CSO coordination mechanisms or evidence of intentional processes to analyse approaches to complementarity.

Impact indicator	Indicator	Evidence of progress
There is application and respect for commonly agreed approaches to be 'as local as possible and as international as necessary'.	3. National engagement in coordination forums	✔ Limited
	4. Clearly defined parameters for international actors complementing local and national actors in humanitarian response	🚫 No
	5. National CSO coordination mechanisms are funded and have technical capacity to operate in humanitarian response	🚫 No
	6. Humanitarian response is delivered in a way that is collaborative and complementary (i.e. based on analysis of the strengths/weaknesses of different humanitarian actors)	🚫 No

What evidence did we look for against the indicators?

▶ Leadership, participation, language and reporting of the clusters

▶ Perception that local and national actors can engage as equal partners, and that international actors support, rather than undermine, coordination mechanisms

▶ Funding of national CSO coordination mechanisms

▶ Pre-mapping of roles to support complementarity and extent to which actors feel their full capacity is used

INDICATOR 1: NATIONAL REPRESENTATION AT, AND ENGAGEMENT IN, COORDINATION FORUMS AND MEETINGS

Do you think your ideas and suggestions are heard in coordination forums?

78%

28%

ALWAYS
OR MOSTLY
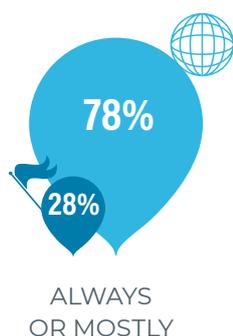
Many local and national NGOs felt that the cluster system was dominated by the influence of international agencies. Many local and national stakeholders engaged in coordination forums, but consistently felt that their voice and participation were overshadowed by internationals.[60] All clusters are co-led by a national government department or ministry and an international organisation, with participation from local and national NGOs, the private sector and community representatives. A number of national NGOs said there should also be opportunity for national NGOs to co-lead clusters, in order to support national leadership, visibility and voice, as well as achieving community group representation. In absence of a strong leadership role, one national NGO said it was 'de-clustering' itself because the resources and time spent attending cluster meetings was not beneficial, stating, "We still haven't seen any money or what it was used for … we have wasted so much time and resources."[61]
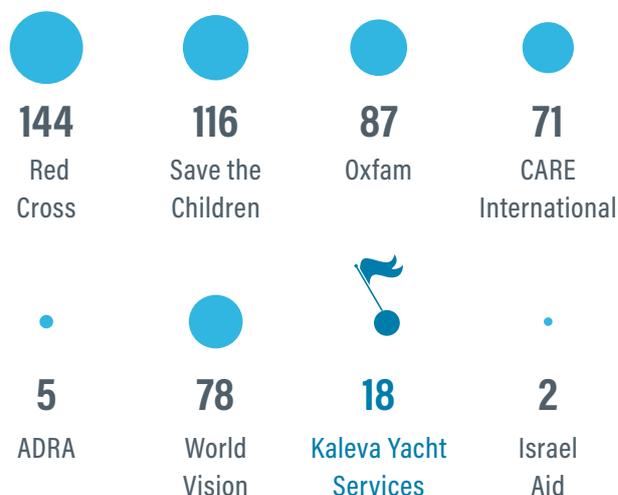
The WASH Cluster website has a breakdown of projects by cluster members– only one local private sector partner was mentioned.[62]

144
Red
Cross

116
Save the
Children

87
Oxfam

71
CARE
International

5
ADRA

78
World
Vision

18
Kaleva Yacht
Services

2
Israel
Aid

Lack of national ownership of cluster agenda-setting and reporting is as a key issue. Much of the cluster reporting and administration is undertaken by international organisations. Cluster reports are mostly written in English. An additional challenge is funding within the cluster system, which leads to less ability for national NGOs to influence and participate in the clusters:

> It is important to ensure the clusters are funded by the government to ensure sustainability. The government has established them, which is great. But are they resourced? … [It's a] great governance structure, but come to resources and there isn't any. Clusters are under-resourced, which is why INGOs come in and dominate through the 'push to help'.[63]
> (International organisation)

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60 Interviews 2, 10, 13, 15, 31
61   Interview 19
62 https://ndmo.gov.vu/resources/88-clusters/88-wash, data as of October 2018.
63 Interview 17

WHY ARE INGOS LEADING THE CLUSTER MEETINGS? It makes it so **DEPENDENT** if internationals continue to **DOMINATE.**[64] Those that talk a lot were the expats from organisations like INGOs plus technical advisors present. **They dominated.**[65] The locals would be MORE COMFORTABLE TALKING IN BISLAMA. (International organisation) **The ideas and views of local/nationals is slowly picking up.** Before it is mostly the co-leads but now the government leads are leading more. **When INGOs lead, no one wants to talk.** (International organisation) It is mostly **INTERNATIONALS** that are leading the clusters.[66] (National organisation) **Inside the cluster, many locals have very good ideas and opinions but they cannot speak because they cannot speak the jargon and terms, and eventually they stop coming to cluster meetings because they are not accessible. So the cluster should be at a level that everyone can participate, not framed from an international lens.** (National organisation) It is difficult to allow enough time for local involvement. It is not sufficient and again that is difficult to balance. They will send the [international] technical advisors to do the work … **the conversation is over-represented by the white boys. It is difficult to combat – I try not to talk because every time we speak, a Ni-Van doesn't.**[67] (International actor)

Cluster meetings are conducted in local languages mostly or sometimes

100% MOSTLY OR SOMETIMES

77% MOSTLY OR SOMETIMES

Cluster reports were never written in the local language

44% NEVER

67% NEVER
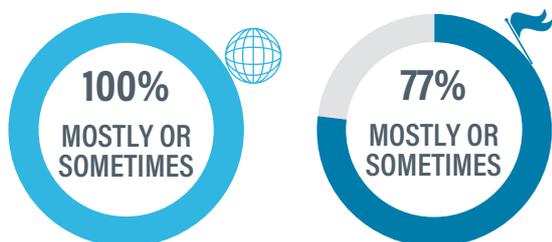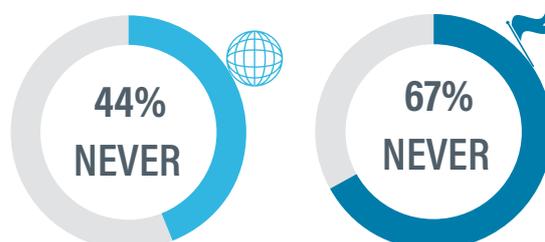
INDICATOR 2: CLEARLY DEFINED PARAMETERS FOR INTERNATIONAL ACTORS COMPLEMENTING LOCAL AND NATIONAL ACTORS IN HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

Complementarity is not clearly understood and there is a lack of clarity around which roles the different actors are best able to lead on. The role of international actors' support was recognised by many local and national stakeholders:

Vanuatu has adopted the cluster system – that is Vanuatu saying we want to be part of this system and us saying we acknowledge the value of our international friends.[68] (National staff of international organisation)

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64 Interview 27
65 Interview 27
66 Interview 19
67 Interview 3
68 Interview 12

> The most progress has been made at government level, where specific and targeted support to complement government capacity has been requested in recent responses (e.g. logistical assets, technical support for monitoring volcanoes and specific relief supplies).

INDICATOR 3: NATIONAL CSO COORDINATION MECHANISMS ARE FUNDED AND HAVE TECHNICAL CAPACITY TO OPERATE IN HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

National CSO mechanisms are not funded and generally do not have enough staff or resources to coordinate or lead civil society in response. Resourcing of CSO coordination for response in Vanuatu was raised by a number of stakeholders. In addition to the cluster system, there are a number of other platforms used to coordinate national civil society in humanitarian response.

Civil society coordination: role of VANGO

In recent years VANGO, as the umbrella body for NGOs and CSOs, has re-established governance mechanisms and developed the VANGO 2020 Roadmap to strengthen institutional capacity and collaboration among members. International, national and local agencies are part of VANGO. It has a standing Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the government and coordinates with the Ministry of Internal Affairs on NGO issues in-country. VANGO established a Humanitarian Relief Response Taskforce to support coordination in the Ambae response and a Civil Society Humanitarian Group in Santo. Local and national actors see opportunity for VANGO to support civil society coordination more.

Community disaster committees (CDCs) also have a role in coordinating local CSO actors. National and local NGOs also coordinate with other leadership structures such as the traditional leaders (chiefs) and churches. While supporting government-led response in Vanuatu, donors and INGOs have a significant opportunity to better support CSO coordination bodies. **Donors and international agencies said there is huge potential to strengthen locally led response by supporting national coordination mechanisms in peace time**; however, humanitarian funding is generally committed to specific programs or organisations.[69]

INDICATOR 4: HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE IS DELIVERED IN A WAY THAT IS COLLABORATIVE AND COMPLEMENTARY (I.E. BASED ON ANALYSIS OF THE SPECIFIC STRENGTHS/ WEAKNESSES OF DIFFERENT HUMANITARIAN ACTORS)

There is no evidence that international, national and local NGOs are mapping the strengths and weaknesses of different actors. As a result, international actors still engage in implementation of activities that national actors perceive to be unnecessary. Many national actors said INGOs should move away from directly implementing programming as much as is currently the case, and instead support national actors to do so through partnership.

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69 Interview 25
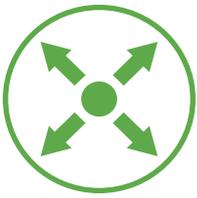
SNAPSHOT DATA:
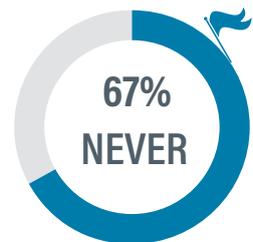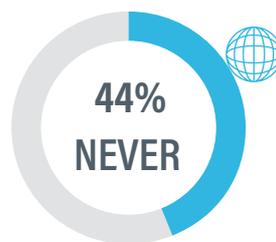## COORDINATION AND COMPLEMENTARITY

COORDINATION LEADERSHIP

100% CLUSTERS ARE CO-LED BY AN INTERNATIONAL ACTOR AND NATIONAL ACTOR

CLUSTER MEETINGS ARE CONDUCTED IN LOCAL LANGUAGES MOSTLY OR SOMETIMES

100% MOSTLY OR SOMETIMES

77% MOSTLY OR SOMETIMES

CLUSTER REPORTS WERE NEVER WRITTEN IN THE LOCAL LANGUAGE

44% NEVER

67% NEVER

ENGAGEMENT IN COORDINATION FORUMS

DO YOU THINK YOUR IDEAS AND SUGGESTIONS ARE HEARD IN COORDINATION FORUMS?

Majority national and local actors interviewed perceived that the **cluster system is dominated by international agencies.**

33%
18%
ALL THE TIME

45%
12%
MOSTLY

22%
41%
SOMETIMES

29%
RARELY

🌐 International

🏴 National
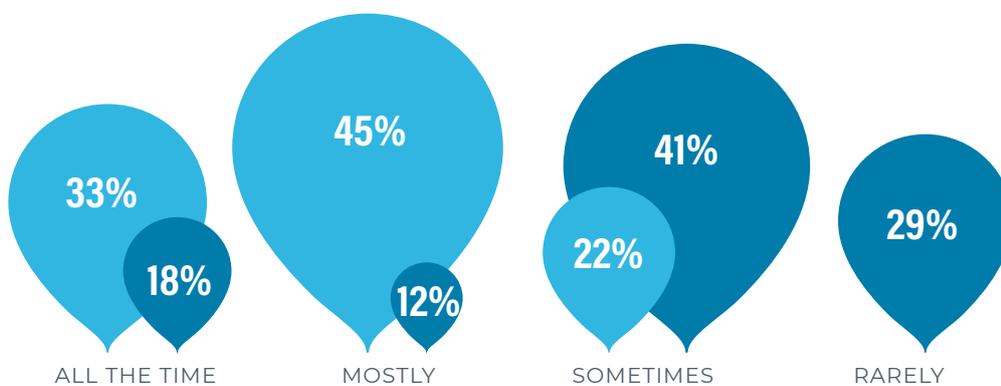
FUNDING

Boluiana – meaning we give help to each other in financial and other forms
(from the island of Pentecost).

FUNDING

Key Finding: **LIMITED TO NO EVIDENCE.** There is limited to no evidence of action to localise funding.

✔ There is **limited evidence** of local and national actors having direct access to funding.

🚫 There is **no evidence** that the amount of humanitarian funding has increased, and **no evidence** that local and national actors have increased decision-making over financial matters.

Impact indicator	Indicator	Evidence of progress
Increased number of national/local organisations are describing financial independence that allows them to respond more efficiently to humanitarian needs.	1. Local and national actors have access to direct funding with limited or no barriers	✔ **Limited**
	2. Increase in the amount of humanitarian funding to local and national actors	🚫 **No**
	3. Local and national actors have increased decision-making over financial matters	🚫 **No**

What evidence did we look for against the indicators?

▶ Number of funding sources for international and national actors

▶ Increase in international actors publishing funding of local and national partners

▶ Perception that local and national actors receive a fair proportion of funding and have increased control

▶ Transparency of financial decision-making in partnerships

▶ Evidence that funding had increased to local and national actors

INDICATOR 1:
LOCAL AND NATIONAL ACTORS HAVE ACCESS TO DIRECT FUNDING WITH LIMITED OR NO BARRIERS

[There is] no mechanism. It is still ad hoc and done sector-based. Mostly, national actors are still left out from receiving funding from international actors/funders for humanitarian response. [70] (International actor)

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70 Interview 34

> When thinking about funding local organisations, we have to think through their capacity to report and acquit. Having spoken to a lot of INGOs and donors, there are not a lot of local NGOs in Vanuatu so, when an NGO is strong, all the donors go to them to fund them. That then brings up issues of risk. On the other hand, grassroots organisations have no access to funding organisations.[71] (International actor)

Sources of funding

11% of **local and national actors** had **5 or more** sources

33% of **international actors** had **5 or more** sources

How often do you feel your organisation is financially stable?

12% RARELY OR NEVER

46% RARELY OR NEVER

All national and local NGOs reported significant barriers in receiving funding. Most local and national NGOs face significant barriers to accessing direct funding. There are some notable examples of good practices in relation to core funding, and access to humanitarian response funds provided by international donors that had met compliance and government standards, but these largely go to a very small number of national NGOs.

International actors were likely to have more numerous sources of funding and have much higher levels of financial stability. Many reported that barriers were numerous and included many of the same issues raised in localisation discussions elsewhere:

▶ legal and risk management constraints

▶ challenges of effective partnerships; and

▶ inherent inflexibility of some international actors' financial and accounting systems.[72]

There is no mechanism currently, such as Country-Based Pooled Fund or similar initiative, for local and national actors to access funding. National and local NGOs have submitted plans and budgets to clusters for funding by the government, but in many cases have not been successful. For small Pacific island countries like Vanuatu, key donors and INGOs have the opportunity to completely rethink how national and local NGOs can receive humanitarian funding.

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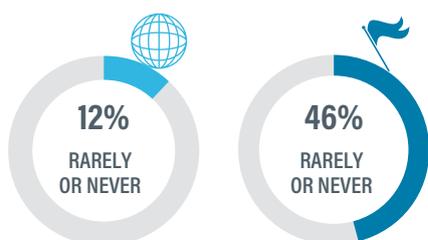
71 Interview 16
72 CHS Alliance, *Humanitarian accountability report 2018*, pages 55–57

INDICATOR 2:
INCREASE IN THE AMOUNT OF HUMANITARIAN FUNDING TO LOCAL AND NATIONAL ACTORS

72% of national actors and 44% of international actors thought local and national organisations rarely or never received a fair proportion of funding in humanitarian response compared to international organisations.


44% RARELY OR NEVER

72% RARELY OR NEVER
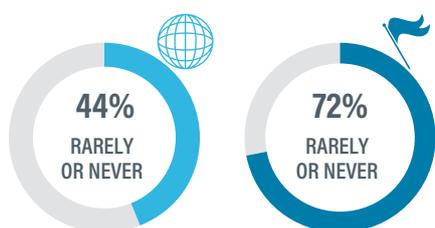
International NGOs do not often publicly report on the amount of funding provided to national partners in Vanuatu, nor is this broken down in UN OCHA's Financial Tracking Service.[73] For 2017 and 2018, the top recipients of humanitarian funding were UN agencies, INGOs, the Government of Vanuatu and the Red Cross.[74] There is limited evidence that progress has been made on Grand Bargain and Charter for Change commitments to increasing direct funding to local and national organisations in Vanuatu. Key donors mostly do not require their international partners to report on their funding to local and national partners. A review of publicly available reports by international agencies did not provide information about funding amounts to local and national actors.[75] Many national NGOs also said that government should be more transparent about how humanitarian funds are allocated, including to civil society.[76]

We have built our capacity but we still have this ceiling that restricts us. We are begging staff to stay on and I am working by faith because we don't have ongoing funding. We are losing staff. They are not providing the funding so you can become bigger and stronger and increased in capacity. CSOs face this challenge.[77] (National organisation)

The need was there [disability inclusion] from day one. There was just no funding because it was going to the INGOS [for the Ambae response]. (National organisation)[78]

INDICATOR 3:
LOCAL AND NATIONAL ACTORS HAVE INCREASED DECISION-MAKING OVER FINANCIAL MATTERS

85% of local and national actors said international actors rarely or never share project budgets; 44% of international actors said rarely or never.

85%

44%

RARELY OR NEVER

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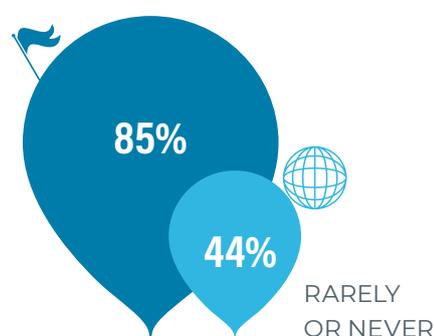
73 Vanuatu Red Cross Society is the only national actor listed as receiving funds in FTS data for 2017 and 2018; however, there is a portion of funding not specified.
74 UN OCHA, Financial Tracking Service data for Vanuatu, 2017–18
75 Of five INGO annual reports for the last three years, none provided data on funding overall to their partners in Vanuatu.
76 Interview 23
77 Interview 10
78 Interview 10

There are very few examples of transparency in financial transactions and budgets. As a result, local and national partners consider themselves to have little influence over financial decision-making.

> It's really frustrating that [INGO] asked [NNGO] to put in a budget to do the cash transfer for the Ambae response. They came back and said to cut that budget and take out key admin and overhead costs for us. Now we haven't even heard from them and that has taken time and resources away from us.[79] (National organisation)

Best practice: donor support for core funding and governance

A donor described best practice funding for a national actor, including support to strengthen systems and processes in order to be able to receive increased funding.

"They [the national organisation] went through a bad period – core funding was lost and people lost faith in managing money. We [the donor] gave them a grant but helped them alongside. We were able to support them to write a new constitution, support processes and procedures, board development and growth in their confidence. It's about helping and building that."
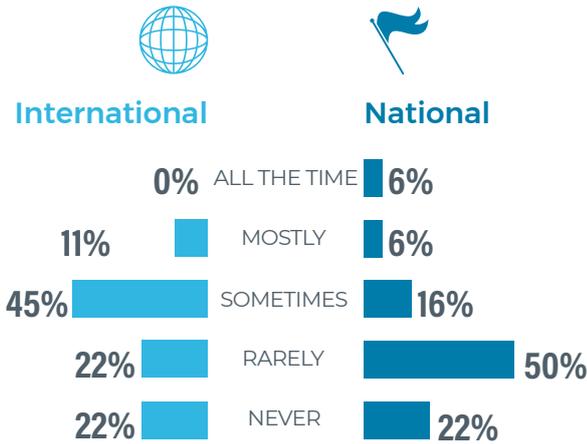(International donor) [80]

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79 Interview 15
80 Interview 30

SNAPSHOT DATA: FUNDING

PROPORTION OF FUNDING

DO YOU FEEL THAT NATIONAL AND LOCAL ORGANISATIONS RECEIVE A FAIR PROPORTION OF FUNDING COMPARED TO INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS IN HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE?
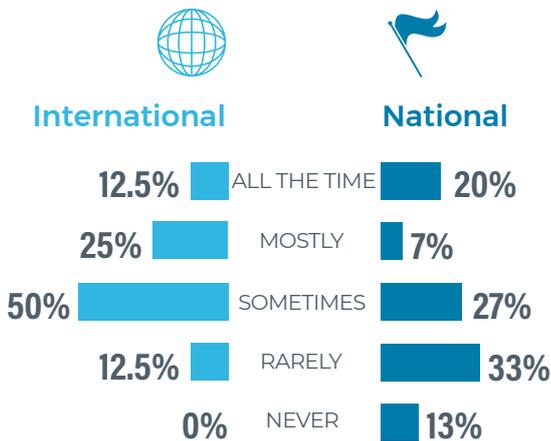
International   **National**

International		National
0%	ALL THE TIME	6%
11%	MOSTLY	6%
45%	SOMETIMES	16%
22%	RARELY	50%
22%	NEVER	22%

All national and local NGOs reported significant barriers in receiving funding and **still perceive that they do not receive a fair proportion**

44%
RARELY OR NEVER

72%
RARELY OR NEVER
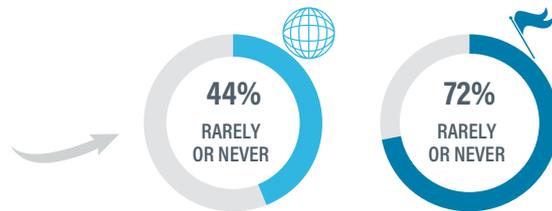
FINANCIAL STABILITY

HOW OFTEN DO YOU FEEL YOUR ORGANISATION IS FINANCIALLY STABLE (E.G., OPERATIONAL BUDGET ENOUGH FOR THREE MONTHS)?

International   **National**

International		National
12.5%	ALL THE TIME	20%
25%	MOSTLY	7%
50%	SOMETIMES	27%
12.5%	RARELY	33%
0%	NEVER	13%

International actors were likely to have more numerous sources of funding and have **much higher levels of financial stability**

There are **very few examples of international organisations transparently sharing information about financial transactions and budgets** with local and national partners

SOURCES OF FUNDING

44% of **local and national organisations** had **1-2 sources of funding**

11% of **local and national actors** had **5 or more sources**

33% of **international actors** had **5 or more sources**

PARTICIPATION

Wojwojan nga kete majinen - when the community engage and participates in work identified as important and directed by traditional leadership. (From the island of Atchin in Malekula)

PARTICIPATION

Key Finding: **LIMITED EVIDENCE.** There is limited evidence of changed practice in community participation.

✔✔ There is **some evidence** of standards being contextualised and circulated with local and community stakeholders.

🚫 There is **no evidence** that increased community engagement is shaping humanitarian programming (in the Ambae response in particular).

Impact indicator	Indicator		Evidence of progress
Communities lead and participate in humanitarian response.	1.	Development of community/contextualised standards for all actors working in that context	✔ **Limited**
	2.	Communities have increased opportunities to shape programming, including evaluating INGO work	🚫 **No**

What evidence did we look for against the indicators?'

▶ Common standards and policies that have been contextualised

▶ Perception that tools and standard are appropriate to meet needs of affected people

▶ Existence of mechanisms and processes to ensure participation of affected people (including feedback)

Most international and national stakeholders said community engagement in humanitarian response needs to be strengthened, in particular in the recent response to the Ambae Island evacuation.

This perception was reflected by communities that had been evacuated and are now living on the nearby island of Santo. Most organisations said they mostly or always take community views into account when designing and implementing humanitarian programming, but it was consistently felt that this was not being done well in the current response. National organisations perceive that international organisations are still not contextualising their responses adequately or engaging effectively with traditional leadership structures and mechanisms.

THE DECISIONS MADE [IN THE AMBAE RESPONSE] WERE NOT WHAT THE LOCAL COMMUNITY WANTED. They have recognised there is a LEADERSHIP AND SKILL GAP and are trying to work out how to fill that and if they are capable of making the decisions and leading.[81] (National actor) **International organisations don't understand the context** and therefore can't approach the local community like we can to find out what some of the real issues are.[82] (National actor) The **opinions and needs of the community come second to the politicians** who are the decision-makers. It is not the priority to those doing the distribution.[83] (Government actor) THE GOVERNMENT COORDINATION IS BETTER, BUT THERE IS STILL A LACK OF COMMUNITY VOICE.[84] (NATIONAL ORGANISATION)

Local capacity to respond in the community is not being utilised and responses are dominated by national government and INGOs. For example, CDCs have been trained in humanitarian response and principles, but felt that they were not closely involved by either the national government or INGOs in conducting needs assessments. From the perspective of the local NGOs, this led to a lack of contextualised understanding of the crisis. Communities felt that if the provincial and local community leadership structure had been respected and followed – namely, working through the *nakamal* – the affected population's needs would have been better met.

[In the Ambae response] when INGOs responded, they should have followed local structures such as the area councils and zones. If you work through them, it will be more effective. [85] (National actor)

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81 Interview 1
82 Interview 7
83 Interview 4
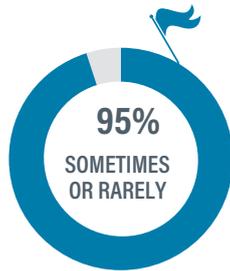84 Interview 6
85 Interview 14

LOCAL COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

DO COMMUNITIES LEAD ON DECISION MAKING?

Majority of national stakeholders indicated contextual knowledge and engagement of community response and leadership structures as a concern with international stakeholder programming

89%
SOMETIMES OR RARELY
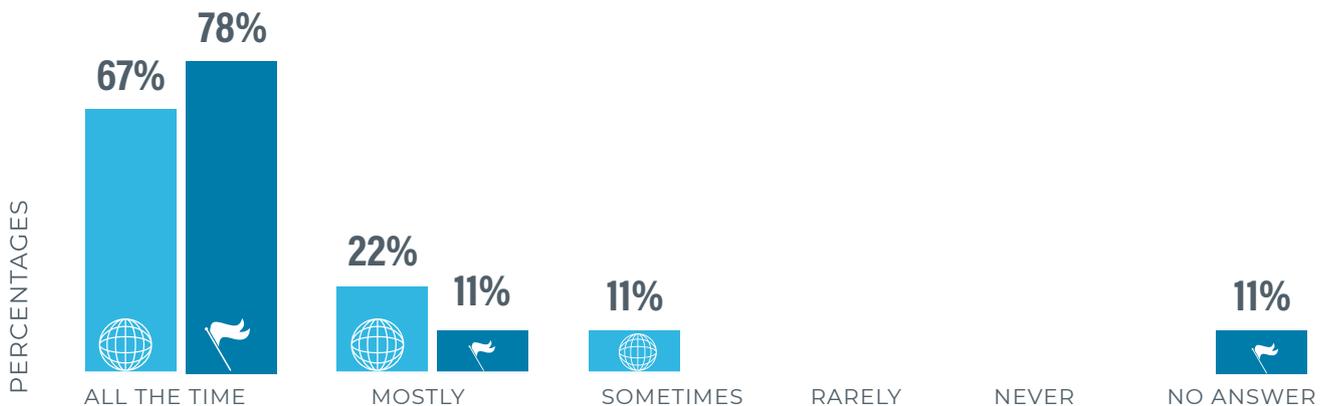
95%
SOMETIMES OR RARELY

Strong perception that there is **opportunity for significant improvement of community participation** in the most recent response by all stakeholders

ENGAGEMENT WITH AFFECTED POPULATION

DOES YOUR ORGANISATION TAKE OPINIONS OF AFFECTED PEOPLE INTO ACCOUNT DURING DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF PROGRAMS?

Most international, national and local organisations believe that they take the opinions of affected people into account

	ALL THE TIME	MOSTLY	SOMETIMES	RARELY	NEVER	NO ANSWER
International	67%	22%	11%			
National	78%	11%				11%

PERCENTAGES

International

National

POLICY INFLUENCE AND ADVOCACY

Silon Vanuanda - The rules and how things should happen; set up by the chief for the community people (from the island of Pentecost).

POLICY INFLUENCE AND ADVOCACY

Key Finding: **LIMITED TO SOME EVIDENCE.** There is limited to some evidence that policies better reflect the priorities of national and local civil society actors due to their increased engagement in policy and advocacy.

✔✔ There is **some evidence** of national and local actors increasing their awareness of relevant policies and influencing their development.

✔ There is **limited evidence** that local and national civil society actors influence donor priorities in Vanuatu.

Impact indicator	Indicator	Evidence of progress
Humanitarian action reflects the priorities of affected communities and national actors.	1. Policies are informed by local and national voices including communities	✔ Limited
	2. National actors are recognised as key stakeholders in national debates about policies and standards that affect them	✔✔ Some
	3. Local and national actors influence donor priorities in-country, including program design and implementation	✔ Limited

What evidence did we look for against the indicators?

▶ Engagement of local and national actors and NGO networks in humanitarian policy issues and standard-setting

▶ Perception that humanitarian policies and approaches are informed by local and national voice including communities

▶ Evidence for increase in representation of national and local actors, appear in humanitarian action plans relative to international actors

INDICATOR 1: POLICIES ARE INFORMED BY LOCAL AND NATIONAL VOICES INCLUDING COMMUNITIES

33% of national and local actors said they were rarely or never involved in influencing policy compared to 11% of international actors.

11% 11%

22%

RARELY   NEVER

> We don't have any influence on any policy.[86] (National actor)

There are some examples of local and national organisations influencing, providing input and advocating for humanitarian policies and standards. National platforms such as VANGO and the national not-for-profit peak body have recently influenced government policy and processes in the Ambae response.

> NGOs are really helpful. The government made a decision that everyone would have to be relocated to Maewo. The INGOs came in through VANGO and the Ambae Relief Committee and that decision was overturned – highlights influence.[87] (National actor)

National NGOs and CSOs also said they provide ideas and feedback through clusters. However, it is broadly perceived that international actors have more influence and can feed into policies and planning more so than national CSO actors. Community input into policy, while there are positive examples, is not widespread, particularly in the Ambae response.[88] The most recent humanitarian response plans developed by government, with significant input from international actors, make limited to no mention of national CSOs or structures.[89] In the event of a large-scale disaster, plans and processes to incorporate input by local and national organisations could be strengthened.

INDICATOR 2: NATIONAL ACTORS ARE RECOGNISED AS KEY STAKEHOLDERS IN NATIONAL DEBATES ABOUT POLICIES AND STANDARDS THAT AFFECT THEM

> Visibility of local NGOs – this should be increased at the national level.[90] (National actor)

> Don't talk on behalf of another organisation and say you are working together with them when you are not, while in meetings or forums overseas, just for the sake of getting more funding. [91](National actor)

In the Humanitarian Action Plan for TC Pam in 2015, national NGO partners (apart from Red Cross) were mentioned 4 times compared to 375 mentions of 14 international agencies and donors.

4
mentions of national NGO partners

375
mentions of international agencies and donors

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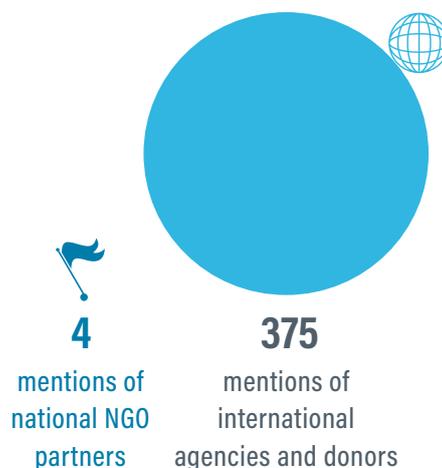
86 Interview 19
87 Interview 1
88 Self-assessment data
89 Government of Vanuatu, *Tropical Cyclone Pam humanitarian action plan*, 2015; National Disaster Management Office, *Response and early recover humanitarian action plan Cyclone Hola & Ambae Response*, 2018
90 Interview 14
91 Interview 31

National actors spoke more frequently about their visibility in proposals and program designs, rather than reporting, suggesting that they don't often see the reports from international actors. Research products and program evaluations are still predominantly authored by international organisations or international staff. Although there has been some shift towards more engagement of local consultants, it is not yet standard practice to engage national researchers or consultants on teams.

INDICATOR 3: LOCAL AND NATIONAL ACTORS INFLUENCE DONOR PRIORITIES IN-COUNTRY, INCLUDING PROGRAM DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

> Volume of your voice and ability to influence is heavily influenced by your dollars ... Many local NGOs come to those forums to find money.[92]
> (International actor)

As highlighted in the leadership section, **local and national NGOs generally have less access to donors in order to discuss and influence their in-country priorities, despite positive trends in the frequency of meetings.** National governments, on the other hand, have regular access, while not always representing the views of more localised actors. Local and national actors feel less able to influence donor priorities for a number of reasons, including having fewer staff that have time to plan and undertake meetings, the difficulty involved for local and provincial actors to travel to donor offices in capital cities and some discomfort with formalised meeting structures and approaches.
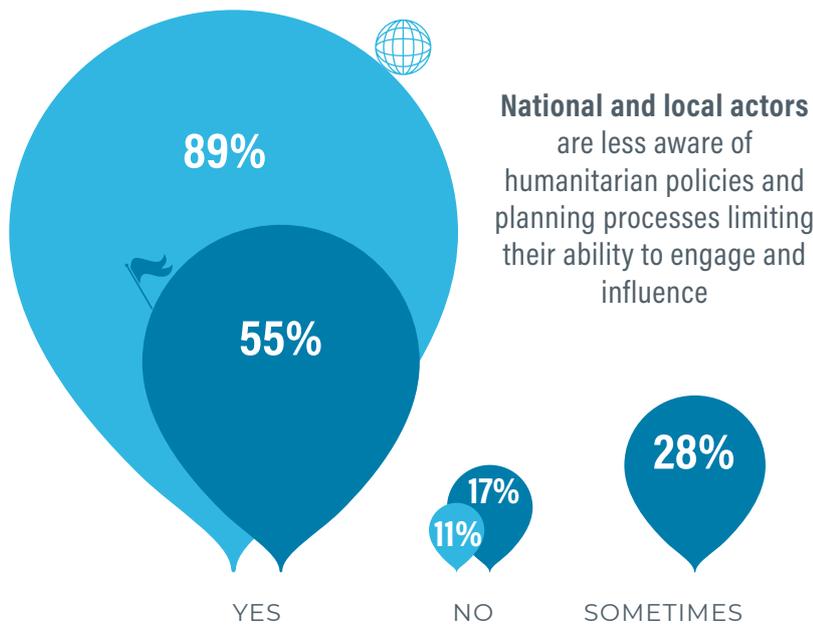
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92 Interview 18

SNAPSHOT DATA:
POLICY INFLUENCE AND ADVOCACY

POLICY INFLUENCE, ADVOCACY AND VISIBILITY

ARE YOU AWARE OF THE HUMANITARIAN POLICIES AND
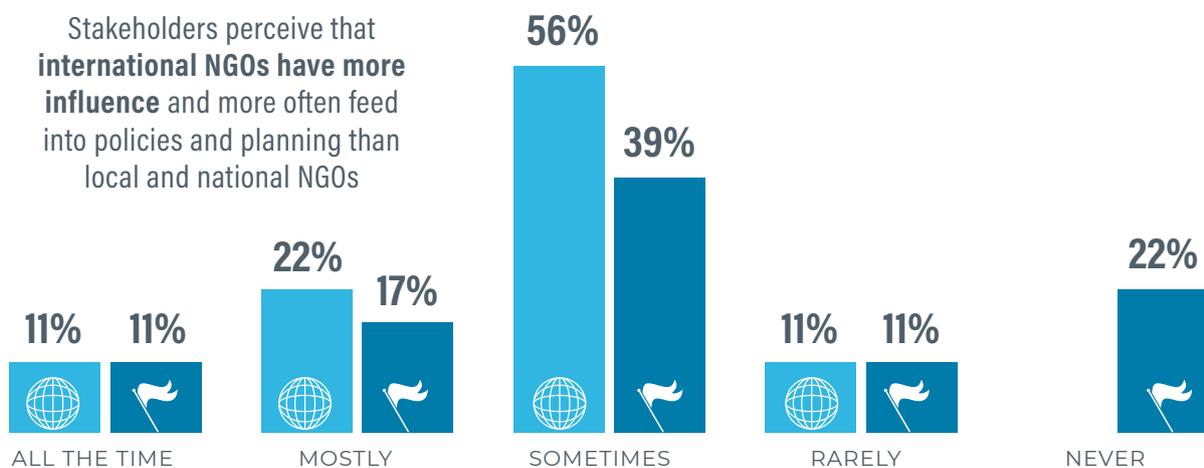PLANNING PROCESSES IN-COUNTRY?

89%

55%

17%

11%

28%

YES   NO   SOMETIMES

National and local actors are less aware of humanitarian policies and planning processes limiting their ability to engage and influence

In the Humanitarian Action Plan for TC Pam in 2015, **national NGO partners** (apart from Red Cross) were **mentioned 4 times** compared to 375 mentions of 14 **international** agencies and donors.

4   **375**
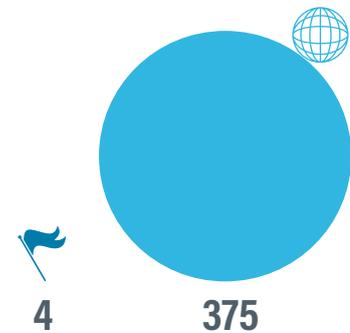
INFLUENCE ON NATIONAL HUMANITARIAN POLICIES AND PLANNING

HOW MUCH IS YOUR ORGANISATION INVOLVED IN INFLUENCING/FEEDING IDEAS INTO THE
DEVELOPMENT OF HUMANITARIAN POLICIES AND PLANNING PROCESSES NATIONALLY?

Stakeholders perceive that **international NGOs have more influence** and more often feed into policies and planning than local and national NGOs

11% **11%**

22% **17%**

56% **39%**

11% **11%**

22%

ALL THE TIME   MOSTLY   SOMETIMES   RARELY   NEVER

International   National

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

This baseline presents a mixed picture of localisation in Vanuatu at the end of 2018. On the one hand, there have been concrete efforts to shift power and decision-making to national and local actors, especially in leadership initiatives. On the other hand, there is limited evidence of activity or impact in key areas such as finance and coordination. Many of the activities to localise humanitarian action seem to be ad hoc and reported at an organisational level, with few initiatives across the country. This contributes to an overall picture of limited evidence of activity and impact.

This baseline also provides an opportunity. It can be used as a basis for discussion between key actors in context and as a catalyst for change. It also provides an opportunity for individual organisations and the humanitarian community in Vanuatu to set targets and track change. For example, currently only 11% of national and local actors have 5 or more sources of funding, and there is an opportunity to set a goal of 40% by 2021 and then develop key actions to achieve that goal. As another example, currently only 30% of national and local actors think their ideas and suggestions are consistently heard in coordination forums. There is an opportunity for discussion about how this percentage can increase over the coming years, including mapping out steps to bring about that change and setting a target for improvement.

USING THIS REPORT

As the basis for discussion: these facts and figures are intended to provide an objective basis for discussion about how localisation is progressing in context. This discussion would be useful at an organisational level, but also at an ecosystem level. Cluster meetings would be a good forum for examining some of the relevant datasets.

As the basis for planning: the report identifies areas where progress is limited and that could be prioritised in planning processes. Working as a group of international, national and local organisations, specific actions could be identified and targets set for change.

As the basis for tracking change: the framework for measuring change and associated indicators are publicly available. Organisations can track how they are progressing against these key indicators at any time and, if interested, can develop their own organisational baseline to track their own progress.

NEXT STEPS FOR THIS PROCESS

This baseline is the beginning of a process to track change. The research team will be conducting an end line in 2021 to understand whether there have been shifts in practices, perceptions and impacts. If you are interested in understanding more about the research or would like to be part of the ongoing process, please contact:

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