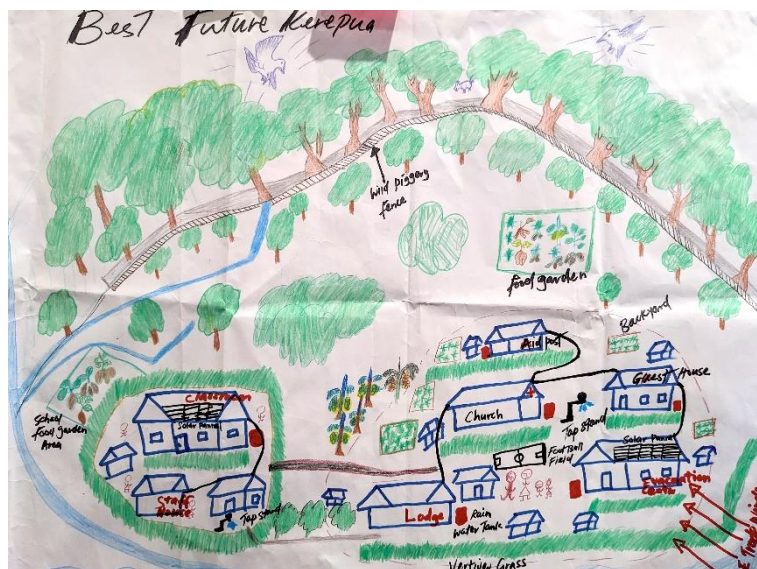




LINKING VANUATU PROFILES TO RESILIENCE PLANNING

As part of the Climate Resilient Islands programme, communities in Vanuatu participated in information gathering on community assets, values, livelihoods and challenges. This data was used to produce each community's Community Resilience Profile. These profiles in turn are the basis for Community Resilience Plans, which contain practical resilience strategies based on an 'absorb, adapt, transform' framework (as outlined below).

Based on the information communities provide in the profiles, communities envision in workshops what their 'best futures' look like and establish priorities, initiating a process of applying targeted strategies for resilience building of local resources and skills. This process is unique to each community, responding to their unique challenges and strengths, and driven by the community. These strategies are linked to grant funding and are also intended to provide a basis for the community to seek other partnerships and other forms of funding. The process is monitored, and adjustments made to the plans as the process of building resilience continues.



Absorb, Adapt, Transform framework

The CRI programme operates on the understanding that community resilience can be conceptualized as a three-level structure, incorporating the community's ability to absorb,

adapt, or transform. Absorption utilizes community skills and structures to bounce back after negative events. Adaptation requires adjustments to a community's ways of living, sometimes with external help. Transformation almost always requires varying levels of external help to significantly change societal structures and habits in order to remain resilient.

Within the programme, in order to help communities understand these capacities, we symbolize them with the coconut palm, the crab and the butterfly.



Most CRI communities cannot simply absorb the majority of pressures on livelihoods, food security and infrastructure. Overfishing threatens marine environments and fish stocks. Continued, long-term agriculture has depleted soils. External pressures such as logging, while providing income for some, affect local ecosystems, including forests and community farmland, degrading soils and polluting and silting waterways. Pollution is also encountered in waterways from mining activities upstream.

Considerable threats also come from the effects of climate change, the focus of the CRI programme. These include:

- sea level rise and saltwater intrusion
- storm surges and coastal erosion
- erosion of soil and riverbanks from increased storms
- cyclone damage to forests, plantations and community infrastructure
- temperature rises and longer dry periods, affecting yields, forest plants and marine ecosystems.

Modernisation provides some benefits, but it has also entailed loss of community knowledge around management of local ecosystems, traditional farming techniques and traditional handicrafts that provide subsistence and livelihoods. Loss of traditional knowledge also leads to disconnection between community members.

Pathway thematic areas

Planning pathways are aligned with three outcome areas: nature-based solutions (NbS), food security and disaster risk reduction (DRR). These are at the core of the programme and align to grant seeking activities.

Nature-based Solutions include forest, river and marine restoration and the use of sustainable land management (SLM) techniques. These involve tree and grass planting for soil stabilization and water quality improvement, sustainable farming methods, agroforestry that preserves native forest, and restoration of mangroves for fish stock conservation.

Food security involves sustainable farming techniques, diversity of crops, prioritization of local foods, conservation of forest and marine resources, training on farm business, and the creation of community cooperatives and associations.

Disaster risk reduction involves strengthening local housing and water supplies, securing evacuation centres, training on disaster planning and procedures, including assessment and reduction of flood and cyclone risks.

These three pathways are not isolated but are often integrated in resilience planning. For example, good soils are essential for crop health and therefore food security, while the stabilization healthy soils provide mitigates the risks of flooding, especially in tropical areas. Food security can mean the cultivation of crops, such as root crops, that preserve well to provide supply after disasters. The planting of mangroves as a disaster risk reduction strategy can restore local ecosystems that provide natural resources contributing to food security and general resilience.

Examples of pathways

The process of profiling communities provides opportunities to identify absorption capacity within communities. Communities generally grow a variety of crops, and this variety enhances resilience. The inclusion of sustainable land management techniques in community plans will enhance this capacity. But the majority of plans focus on opportunities for adaptation or transformation.

RESILIENT FARMING METHODS

Six out of seven participating Vanuatu communities identified resilient farming as a necessary adaptation. Training will be conducted on SLM techniques, especially in relation to soil conservation and adaptation of crops to climate variations. This will enhance food security. In at least four communities, sustainable farming methods will be enhanced through training on traditional methods, as part of the Indigenous Leadership program.

In five communities, resilient farming will include the assessment of market availability, both for existing crops and possibly value-adding programs. In one community, a farmers' association is proposed. Working with existing programs is integral to CRI. One community will integrate market analysis with the EU's current work on markets there, while another will tie-in to the Women in Agriculture program.

Grant funding will be sought for the purchase of seedlings, seeds and equipment for replanting and new crop varieties. Funding will also be sought in at least one community for equipment required for value-adding for agriculture products.

FISHERIES CONSERVATION

One coastal community will focus on fisheries conservation. This is linked to sustainable fishing business activities. The Department of Fisheries will be involved with setting up a fishing association and linking it to existing fishing groups. Further, the department supervising cooperatives will be involved in looking at potential markets. Grants will be sought for equipment.

Conservation of fisheries in this community and elsewhere is linked to setting up and managing community conservation areas, which involves conservation of forests and watersheds. In particular, replanting of mangroves as part of conservation area management will assist with marine conservation.

FOREST AND WATERSHED CONSERVATION

Forest and watershed conservation through designated conservation areas is significant for Vanuatu communities. Six out of seven communities either have existing conservation areas or are wanting to register one. Management of conservation areas involves formal agreements and management plans, as well as biodiversity assessments.

Three communities will be assessing the feasibility of agroforestry enterprises. Traditional forestry businesses tend to be monocultural, whereas establishing resilient agroforestry will include the prioritization of local species, intercropping, soil restoration and equitable distribution amongst local community members. This will also aid wider conservation of waterways, marine environments and local food gardens, as erosion, flooding and the like through deforestation has effects on surrounding ecosystems.

Sustainable land management relates to both forested areas and farmland, and CRI includes traditional methods of land management. These techniques will be strengthened through the Indigenous Leadership program, in conjunction with the Vanuatu Cultural Centre. The preservation of forest resources is also integral to traditional crafts, safeguarding both indigenous knowledge and livelihoods.

Grants will be linked with creating nurseries and purchasing seeds or seedlings, and for agricultural equipment. Grants will also be sought for the establishment of ecotourism sites, which aid both restoration and preservation of forest ecosystems and livelihoods.

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

Forest restoration and SLM techniques contribute to disaster risk reduction by reducing the risks and the extent of flooding. Five communities are involved with training on water conservation and the maintenance of water supplies, which contributes to disaster preparation. Some of this work will be done with the Department of Water Resources, and with existing water projects such as that run by ADRA.

INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

A cross-cutting issue within resilience planning is the maintenance of traditional community knowledge. As part of the profiling process, communities are asked about Indigenous knowledge and the extent to which traditional practices are passed on. This is particularly relevant for land management, livelihoods through craft and agriculture, assessment of changes to ecosystems and traditional methods of DRR. Indigenous Leadership training will be conducted in some communities, focused on the key areas of sustainable land management and the safeguarding of local handicrafts, which rely on local resources. This training will be conducted with the involvement of the Vanuatu Cultural Centre.

Climate Resilient Islands aims to strengthen community resilience and adaptive capacity to the impacts of climate change through nature-based solutions working with rural communities in Vanuatu, Fiji, PNG, Tonga, and Tuvalu. The project is a New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade initiative implemented by Live & Learn Environmental Education.

