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Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

the power of
humanity



Going Local

Achieving a more appropriate
and fit-for-purpose
humanitarian ecosystem
in the Pacific

October 2017

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Lead Authors: Yaseen Ayobi, Ayla Black, Linda Kenni, Railala Nakabea and Kate Sutton

Research Team: Ayla Black, Humanitarian Advisory Group; Yaseen Ayobi, Centre for Humanitarian Leadership; Railala Nakabea, Fiji National University; Na'aluse Taiala, Tonga Community Development Trust; Linda Kenni, Independent Researcher – Vanuatu; Smith Sapaka, Independent Researcher – Papua New Guinea; Kate Sutton, Humanitarian Advisory Group; and, Associate Professor Phil Connors, Centre for Humanitarian Leadership.

Research Partners: Dr Lalen Simeon, Pacific Adventist University; Rasika Mohan, independent consultant

Graphic Design: Jean Watson

Copy Editor: Campbell Aitken

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Cover: In the days after Cyclone Winston struck Fiji, more than 300 Fiji Red Cross staff and volunteers were mobilised and emergency response teams delivering relief supplies to their communities. These teams reached some of the worst affected communities.

Photo: Navneet Narayan/IFRC



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Foreword

In 2016, the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) examined the challenges facing the international humanitarian system in meeting unprecedented and growing humanitarian need. It reinforced 'localisation' as a priority issue by compelling leading global donors, aid organisations and NGOs to sign up to 'The Grand Bargain', which addresses not only the issue of the humanitarian funding gap, but more broadly the pursuit of international humanitarian action that is efficient, effective and fit-for-purpose.

The discourse is judicious, given the increasing frequency and intensity of natural disasters, the growing risk of pandemics, the inadequate investment in disaster risk reduction and community resilience, and the complexity of protracted conflicts.

The localisation agenda presents both a major challenge and an opportunity for all humanitarian organisations, including the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, to take stock and to re-boot. But to begin this process we need the perspectives of local actors, across various contexts, who have until now remained largely absent from international humanitarian debates. This report, therefore, reflects an important piece of Pacific-led research, which adds significant weight to a growing international evidence base around the importance of localisation of humanitarian action.

As the research attests, the dominant approach to localisation within organisations has been to tweak – in a programmatic sense – rather than re-think the systematic approach to local humanitarian action. Implicit in the research findings are challenges to existing partnership and business/operating models, engagement with new actors and technologies, and an openness to new ways of thinking. The push is to work across the humanitarian/development nexus, and collaboratively across the sector, to leverage a bigger change than we could achieve on our own, and allow local actors to lead at every turn.

It is encouraging to see that the work around localisation is starting to gain momentum. What Pacific actors define as 'a process of recognising, respecting and strengthening the independence of leadership and decision making by national actors in humanitarian action' has been recently buttressed by initiatives such as 'forecast based financing', local supplier engagement and pre-disaster agreement processes, the latter the subject of a recent Red Cross pilot in the Solomon Islands.

While the need for further exploration of implications remains pressing, Australian Red Cross has begun to engage in discussions around the corresponding impacts for our work and we are looking to the many recommendations from this particular research to guide us through this opportunity.

We hope this report stimulates rich and textured discussions across the sector and beyond, anchored by the philosophical principle that humanitarian aid should be as local as possible, and only international as necessary. Given the scale and significance of many of the challenges the global community will face in the coming years, it is clearly time for a re-think. Inaction is an unsatisfactory proposition, which is why we must all ready ourselves for self-reflexive critique and genuine systems reform.



Peter Walton
Director, International
Australian Red Cross

Acronyms

CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CBO	Community-based Organisation
DFAT	Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
GPPi	Global Public Policy Institute
HR	Human Resources
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
INGO	International Non-Government Organisation
KPI	Key Performance Indicators
NDMO	National Disaster Management Office
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
OCAC	Organisational Capacity Assessment and Certification
PNG	Papua New Guinea
TOR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations



Executive Summary

*Fiji Red Cross volunteers have been providing psychological first aid to villagers affected by Cyclone Winston, which has helped repair the emotional wounds left by Tropical Cyclone Winston.
Photo: Damien Light/Zoom Fiji*

This report presents the findings of research conducted across the Pacific region in 2017 on the localisation of humanitarian action. Findings respond to the main research question *“what would a successfully localised disaster management ecosystem in the Pacific look like, and what changes do Red Cross and the broader humanitarian system need to make to get there?”*

Localisation of humanitarian action refers to the shift of resources and decision making to local and national responders in humanitarian action. Localisation was given momentum in the regional consultations

leading up to the World Humanitarian Summit and with the adoption of the ‘Grand Bargain’ at the World Humanitarian Summit by a number of key donors and implementing agencies. Despite the momentum, localisation of humanitarian action has remained largely conceptual, rather than a coherent and operational framework for change. The specific changes required to localise humanitarian action— at what levels, and by whom — have not been articulated. This has caused some confusion and disillusionment about the localisation agenda among Pacific-based actors and there is strong desire to ensure localisation is not simply a fad, but rather a platform for concrete change.

Australian Red Cross commissioned this research to improve understanding of the challenges and opportunities for localisation of humanitarian action in the Pacific region. This research is intended as a first step towards articulating the change required to achieve a more localised approach to humanitarian action.

Methodology

In this research project we endeavoured to ‘walk the talk’ of localisation. Fiji National University was a lead agency in the research and Pacific Island national researchers comprised over 50 per cent of the research team. The team included practitioners and researchers from Australia, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Tonga and Vanuatu. An analysis of the approach to the research can be found in the Insights paper ‘Localising the Research Process’.¹

The research used a primarily qualitative approach with methods including shadowing, visioning, key informant interviews and focus group discussions. These tools were selected to provide the depth and richness of data required while also being culturally appropriate (see Annexe 1 for further information on the research tools). Research focused on four case study countries (Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Tonga and Vanuatu) with additional input from Australia, New Zealand and Cook Islands.

Research participants included local communities, state actors, civil society organisations, Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement representatives, local and national NGOs, and international NGOs in the region.

Data analysis was undertaken by the whole research team at a joint workshop event and local researchers were involved in the presentation of research findings at regional conferences including the Pacific Update Conference in Fiji in July 2017.

The approach had strengths and limitations. The local researchers leading research in their own countries and in their own national language generated a unique richness of data. However, local researchers also approached the research in different ways and with different levels of research experience. For example, some used the visualisation exercises extensively while others were less comfortable with the methodology. As a result, despite the same tools being applied there is some inconsistency in data sets from case study countries.

Research Findings

The first component of the research gave voice to Pacific perspectives on what localisation of humanitarian action means in their own contexts. While much of the global framing of localisation of humanitarian action is relevant, humanitarian actors in the Pacific emphasise different aspects. In particular, Pacific actors recognise localisation of humanitarian action as a process in which both national and international actors have complementary roles, but the emphasis is on shifting relationships and power.

PACIFIC DEFINITION OF LOCALISATION

In order to discuss localisation in a meaningful and contextually relevant way, Pacific researchers suggested the team develop a definition to frame conversations in visioning exercises, group discussions and interviews. During the initial methodology workshop, the research team collaboratively developed the following working definition of localisation appropriate to the Pacific context, and used it throughout the project.

lo.cal.is.a.tion (*n.*); 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.

From the perspective of Pacific humanitarian stakeholders, the process can only start once there is an understanding of the current power dynamics and a desire to see these dynamics change. Pacific participants expressed concern that international actors perceive their current approaches as already localised, a perspective that is not broadly shared by local and national actors.

Key approaches to a more appropriate and fit-for-purpose humanitarian ecosystem in the Pacific that consistently emerged across the research are captured in Figure 1.

¹ Australian Red Cross, Localising the Research Process, Walking the Talk Insights Series, 2017

Figure 1: Key approaches to a more appropriate and fit-for-purpose humanitarian ecosystem in the Pacific



LOCALISED HUMANITARIAN ACTION...

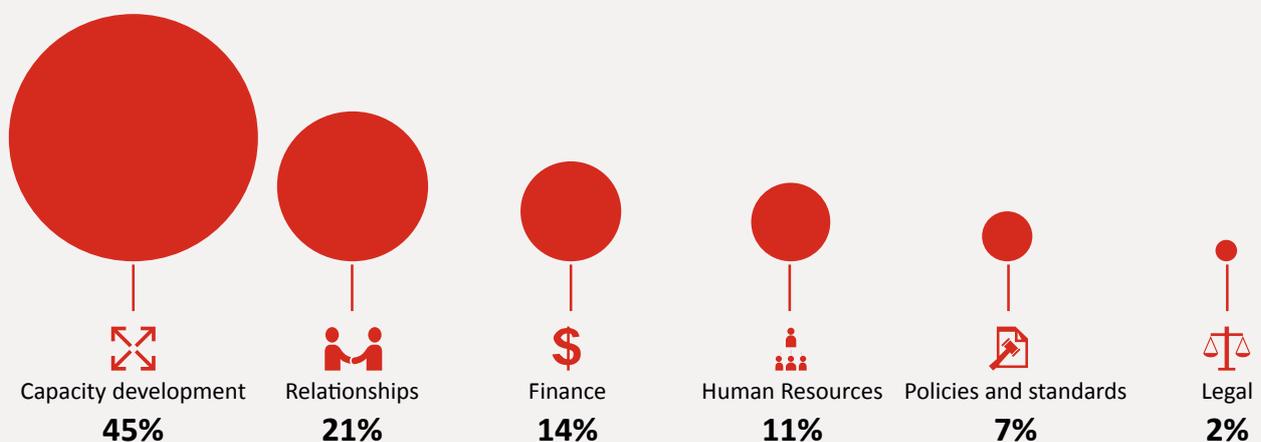
- 
... is led by national actors at all levels of society, with leadership encompassing the decision-making and ownership of the response
- 
... builds on and strengthens local and traditional practices and people
- 
... maximizes the potential of national and regional capacity before requesting international support
- 
... may engage international resources but retains control over when, how and where they are engaged
- 
... may request international actors to take a supporting role in alignment with national and local priorities
- 
... is directed by nationally appropriate tools, systems and processes

“Domestically we have our own system and ways of doing things, our own way of reaching the people, our churches, our skills and knowledge and I don’t think this has been recognised by the international actors. So for localisation this has to be considered by the international system during a response situation.” (Pacific humanitarian actor)²

What needs to Change?

The localisation of humanitarian action requires substantial changes in the way the humanitarian system operates — more change than international actors might anticipate. Research participants were asked about required changes in key thematic areas (finance; relationships; human resources; capacity development; legal; policies and standards). Figure 2 summarises the number of times specific thematic areas were mentioned in responses as percentages of all mentions, reflecting the perceived importance of thematic areas in relation to localisation of humanitarian action. The data highlights the significance that Pacific humanitarian actors place on capacity development and relationships relative to thematic areas such as finance and legal that feature more prominently in the global debate.

Figure 2: Relative importance of thematic areas to localisation reflected in the frequency of mentions in the research data



Capacity Development

“Capacity building is key. We need to get this right.” (Pacific government actor)³

Capacity development has an important role in localising humanitarian action. The current approach, however, is broadly considered ineffective; frustratingly, past lessons are not being reflected in capacity development practice. Local and national actors continue to navigate multiple, short-term, fragmented capacity development courses. In a humanitarian response, they are rarely given adequate responsibility or opportunity to practise their skills and learn from successes and failures.

“In good times they train us to be managers and then when disaster happens they turn up and take over the show – when can we learn? They have to give us the opportunity to practice.” (Pacific humanitarian actor)⁴

International organisations can be rigid in their approach to capacity development. They have often made considerable investment in international staff and deployment capacities and are keen to use established approaches rather than considering more appropriate local solutions.



EXAMPLE OF LOCALISED APPROACH TO CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT:

A Pacific based humanitarian organisation required capacity development for its finance team. The partner international humanitarian organisation looked to its deployment register to source international finance expertise for three months. The Pacific based humanitarian organisation instead suggested training by an accountant in country, who could train in the national language and be on call for a whole year to provide support for roughly the same cost.

A more appropriate humanitarian ecosystem requires a transformation of the way capacity development is conceived. The model needs to shift from a short-term to a long-term focus, reducing the focus on external short term training courses and allowing national actors to put skills and capacities into practice. International

³ Interview 18

⁴ Interview 83

surge and standby rosters maintained by international organisations in their headquarters need to be reviewed and, where retained, made as local as possible and only as international as necessary. Local, national and regional capacity development options should be used first before seeking international support.

Relationships

The research intentionally focused on the relationship between national and international actors as an important indicator of localisation. Findings suggest that Pacific stakeholders perceive a significant power imbalance in the current humanitarian ecosystem. International actors often have authority and decision making power, control resources and key coordination mechanisms, and dominate shared forums; this erodes trust and confidence. Pacific stakeholders see strengthened relationships built on mutual trust and respect as the key to localisation. This should include greater recognition of traditional knowledge and approaches as well as appreciation of existing leadership and authority.

“Localisation needs to consider that people can't just fly in and make decisions, but if you have a relationship with a partner built on trust, you can make decisions together, using that shared knowledge.” (Pacific humanitarian actor)⁵



EXAMPLE OF POWER IMBALANCE IN RELATIONSHIPS:

In some cases cluster meetings still reflect international control over resources and decision making. In one example of a food security cluster meeting the agenda and amount of speaking time was dominated by internationals. Two participants (15%) were internationals, but took over 50% of the floor time and led decision making processes. Whilst this is an extreme example it reflects the power dynamic observed to some degree in all of the observed humanitarian forums.

A more appropriate humanitarian ecosystem requires investment in strong relationships between national and international actors before, during and after humanitarian responses. Many international

⁵ Interview 26

organisations claim to do this, but according to many Pacific actors, they do not. Organisations and individuals can be proactive in ensuring that their engagement in Pacific countries supports and defers to national leadership. A concrete approach would be to analyse and reform the structure, representation and voice in shared forums such as cluster meetings, workshops and conferences.

Finance

The issue of finance — including where it comes from, who gets it and who decides how it is spent — is central to localisation. Pacific stakeholders raised the directness of funding as part of localisation, but this was not as important as transparency of financial transactions and the transfer of decision making to local and national actors.

“Do you get to decide how money is spent? Sometimes yes, sometimes no.” (Pacific humanitarian actor)⁶



EXAMPLE OF FINANCIAL TRANSPARENCY FACILITATING LOCALISATION:

A national NGO in Fiji described very positively the localisation of funding received from their international partner organisation. Although the funds were sourced through DFAT [Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia], when it came in country it was the local partner that had decision making authority.⁷

An appropriate humanitarian ecosystem requires transparent financial transactions and greater national authority over how funding is allocated in-country. This process needs to be supported by more flexible and realistic accountability mechanisms and effective capacity development of local financial staff and systems. Consideration should be given to in-country partnerships for building financial capability, and there is a clear role for further engagement with the private sector on this.

Human Resources

“It makes such a huge difference when responders are from the region rather than outside the region.... [Communities were] much

⁶ Interview 96

⁷ Interview 26

more comfortable with other Pacific Islanders.” (International humanitarian actor based in the Pacific)⁸

Current human resources policies and practices often undermine or hinder localisation. The current humanitarian ecosystem relies heavily on established deployment registers and standard recruitment and performance frameworks. This reliance prevents organisations from thinking creatively or embracing locally generated human resource solutions.



EXAMPLE OF UTILISING NATIONAL HUMAN RESOURCES:

A Pacific based organisation was given funding for a communications staff member at a junior level. The Pacific based organisation decided to contract an experienced local journalist part-time instead. They felt this solution would deliver higher-quality products more rapidly. The funding organisation was reluctant to support this on the basis that there was no capacity building precedent for this approach. It took further negotiations by the Pacific based organisation to reinforce the position that the experienced local journalist was appropriate to their capacity needs. This example highlights the lack of attention to locally conceived capacity development approaches.

A more appropriate humanitarian ecosystem would enable national actors to generate local human resource solutions. Deployment of international staff (including delegates) would become the exception rather than the rule and be governed by the principle of ‘as local as possible and as international as necessary.’ Human resource policies and practices need to be reviewed with a localisation lens to identify required changes and allow more peer-to-peer support between Pacific countries.

Policies and Standards

In the current humanitarian ecosystem, local and national actors must comply with policies and standards that do not necessarily make the most sense in context and are sometimes seen as counter-intuitive or counterproductive. There is a clear belief that localisation could enable the development of more appropriate standards and tools.

⁸ Interview 29

“It’s always ‘do it our way’ not ‘look at what’s happening there and do it the best way.’”
(Pacific humanitarian actor)⁹



EXAMPLE OF A COUNTERPRODUCTIVE INTERNATIONAL STANDARD:

A Pacific based humanitarian staff member explained the frustration of having to demote an excellent Finance Manager to a more junior position because the donor standards required a trained accountant in the management position. Despite providing excellent financial services for over five years, she was demoted in order to access international funding. The staff member suggested a better approach would have been to set standards in relation to expected outcomes (i.e. strong financial management) rather than to set standards in relation to means (i.e. employment of trained accountant).

A more appropriate humanitarian ecosystem requires a shift away from funding and development of inappropriate global policies and standards towards investment in local and national processes. This may involve adaptation of existing tools such as the Sphere handbook or the Core Humanitarian Standard. Processes need to be led by, and outcomes owned by, national actors to ensure they are more locally and culturally appropriate. International organisations will need to adapt their own partnership requirements (contractual or otherwise) to accommodate these adapted standards.

What is the perceived impact of the localisation of humanitarian action?

To date, no-one has measured the impact of localisation. Part of the research focused on understanding the potential impact and this report captures perceptions of impact that are consistently positive. Stakeholders expect that localisation will bring about greater effectiveness, efficiency, economy and equity.

“You are bringing in a battleship when you need a canoe, it is just crazy.” *(Pacific humanitarian actor)¹⁰*

⁹ Interview 35
¹⁰ Interview 64

Increased effectiveness and efficiency are the logical outcomes of more appropriate humanitarian assistance. Pacific locally-based humanitarian actors drew their perceptions from recent disaster responses, and conclude that over-reliance on international intervention can be both ineffective and inefficient. As an example, some Pacific-based humanitarian actors believe the timeliness of the response is compromised: it takes longer to deploy international staff and for those staff to become acquainted with the context and networks they need to operate within. International actors add another layer of decision making, and the national government’s attention and time is diverted to managing multiple incoming organisations.

The perception is that localisation will deliver economic benefits; the evidence suggests that this is true for human resources but more complicated in relation to humanitarian supplies. In one Pacific Island country, the employment costs of a delegate are five times those of a similarly skilled and experienced national staff member. However, in another Pacific Island country, it would cost up to three times as much to buy tarpaulins locally as to import them from China. This illustrates the complexity of balancing competing priorities to achieve localisation in humanitarian contexts and the difficulty in measuring impact. In the case of tarpaulins considering cost in isolation ignores other positive impacts such as support for local suppliers and stimulating local economy.

More work is required to understand the real impact of localisation. This will require agreement on measures of impact and operationalisation of change.

What are the perceived risks?

“You do get into issues of risk and risk management so [the issue] is how to bring in the voice of governance in a way that is enabling and solves the challenges that pop up at the governance level all in a context of being supportive of the change.” *(Donor government actor)¹¹*

The process of the localisation of humanitarian action involves risks. Most of the risks identified through the research focused on greater localisation having a detrimental impact on affected populations. The risks largely related to erosion of humanitarian standards, inadequate capacity to respond and/or detrimental outcomes for marginalised groups.

¹¹ Interview 81

Leadership is considered central to creating an environment for risk identification and constructive management. This includes ensuring due diligence in the localisation of humanitarian action and moving forward in a way that will enable constructive capacity and organisational development.

Recommendations

Significant change is required to achieve localisation of humanitarian action. It needs to occur at ecosystem, organisation and individual levels. The recommendations detailed in this report provide a starting point for the journey that will look different across countries in the region.

At the humanitarian ecosystem level, change is required to enable more national and local leadership and decision making and to support organisations to localise. To achieve these goals this report recommends:

- ✔ Invest more in national and regional processes to develop appropriate policies and standards. This may include adaptation of existing standards such as the Core Humanitarian Standard, but it may also include supporting national/regional development of (for example) financial transparency standards for international actors.
 - ✔ Determine requirements for reporting, monitoring and evaluation and accountability that can be piloted in the region. This may include Australian donors and organisations working with Pacific partners to agree a minimum set of monitoring and evaluation and accountability standards that can meet the needs of donors and local organisations.
 - ✔ Increase national participation in, and leadership of, all shared forums in the humanitarian ecosystem. This requires greater awareness of current national representation and voice and concrete steps to rebalance participation.
 - ✔ Increase visibility of national leadership in humanitarian action. This requires new approaches to surge capacity, such as national or regional standby capacity development.
 - ✔ Promote access to funding for national actors, support transparency in financing, and encourage localised decision making on funding. This may include supporting initiatives to set up pooled mechanisms in the region that are accessible only to national actors. Use the opportunity initiated by the Grand Bargain to consider innovative finance mechanisms that promote localisation, including project management models that engage with domestic private sector.
- ✔ Undertake further study to measure and understand the impact of localisation and in particular the impact on gender equality.
- Change is required across national and international organisations. In particular, the research suggests that the way international organisations do business must change fundamentally — hence the focus of these recommendations.**
- ✔ Shift capacity development from established approaches to creative locally generated approaches; from reliance on international capacity to reliance on national and regional capacity; from a focus on response to a focus on preparedness; from fragmented and short term to strategic and long term. This may require a stocktake of the organisation’s approach to capacity development and identification of key changes to facilitate the shift, e.g. reducing short-term training courses and increasing opportunities for staff to practise skills and capacities on-the-job.
 - ✔ Develop flexibility in organisational policies, standards and tools through consultation with national partners on adaptation. This may include a joint review with national partners to reduce and revise products such as accountability standards. When revised policies are adopted national actors should be engaged in, and ideally lead, trainings and briefings on organisational policy and practice.
 - ✔ Invest in strong and equitable national and international relationships before and during a response. Assess the strengths and weaknesses of existing relationships through exercises such as decision tracking to understand where influence and power lies in the organisation. Once there is a clear baseline, organisations can take concrete steps to improve equality of relationships.
 - ✔ Review human resources practices and policies with a localisation lens. Prioritise review and revision of recruitment, performance management and deployment policy and practice. Consider also how practice and policies support national staff retention and professional development.
 - ✔ Provide more funding directly to national partners and facilitate more transparency and control over funding decisions, including more overhead allocations to national partners.



Individuals can make valuable contributions to achieving a more appropriate and fit for purpose ecosystem through changing individual practice and/or an organisation and/or the ecosystem.

- ✔ Consider your role as an enabler — how to make tools and standards work in context.
- ✔ Review your role in national–international relationships and take steps to improve the balance. This may include changing the way you interact in cluster meetings — speaking more or less, or influencing the agenda to give more floor time to national actors.
- ✔ Review your own job description, skill set and role with a localisation lens. Consider who you report to and how your performance is measured; advocate for changes to promote localisation.
- ✔ Consider how you facilitate capacity development in your organisation. Promote and support localised solutions to capacity gaps and push back on default international approaches.

In the remote Vanuatu island community of Buninga, Red Cross worked with a team of community volunteers to repair the school roof in time for the start of the school year after Cyclone Pam in 2015. The reconstruction of the school roof signalled a new start for the Buninga community and despite the challenges ahead, it left them with a renewed sense of hope and positivity. Photo: Vanuatu Red Cross



Introduction

Samoa Red Cross water and sanitation aid worker Isara Iose and a team of Fiji Red Cross volunteers helped rebuild more than 300 toilets of villagers who lost theirs in Cyclone Winston, February 2016. Photo: Corinne Ambler/IFRC

The localisation of humanitarian action refers to the shift of resources and decision making to local and national responders in humanitarian action. This approach pre-dates the use of the term, but it was given new momentum following the adoption of the ‘Grand Bargain’ at the World Humanitarian Summit (May 2016). The Grand Bargain saw donors and international actors commit to reforms intended to reduce the humanitarian financing gap by improving the delivery and efficiency of aid.

One of the work streams of the Grand Bargain focused on national and local responders’ ability to increase institutional capacity, reduce barriers that prevent partnering with national organisations, increase inclusion in coordination mechanisms, and achieve a target of 25 per cent of humanitarian funding directed to local and national responders. ‘National and local responders (localisation)’ has been one of the most active work streams of the Grand Bargain, with over 45 per cent of relevant signatories reporting action.¹²

The Red Cross and Swiss government were co-conveners of the Grand Bargain work stream on localisation at the World Humanitarian Summit. Reflecting the agreed commitments and building on a joint pledge from Australian Red Cross and the Australian government to

¹² Global Public Policy Institute (GPPI), Independent Grand Bargain Report, June 2017

strengthen local humanitarian action, particularly in the Pacific,¹³ Australian Red Cross identified localisation as a key policy and influencing priority. In order to improve understanding of the challenges and opportunities of localisation, Australian Red Cross commissioned this research, which was designed to identify ways to achieve a more appropriate and fit-for-purpose humanitarian ecosystem in the Pacific.

This paper presents the findings from that research. It outlines the parameters and characteristics of localisation as defined by Pacific actors. It articulates concrete steps required to make a more appropriate and fit-for-purpose ecosystem, and begins to unpack the implications of localisation for the effectiveness, efficiency, economy and equity of humanitarian assistance.

Research question, scope and purpose

This research explored the question “what would a successfully localised disaster management ecosystem in the Pacific look like, and what changes do Red Cross and the broader humanitarian system need to make to get there?”

Using case studies of Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Tonga, and Vanuatu, we explored how Red Cross, and the broader humanitarian ecosystem, could better support localisation by shifting their approaches to and understanding of humanitarian action. The scope of the research included questions regarding change needed in the following pre-determined thematic areas: capacity building, relationships, financing, human resources, legal frameworks, and policies and standards. It also included questions regarding the potential impact of localisation on pre-determined categories: effectiveness, efficiency, equity and economy.

Methodology

A localised approach to humanitarian research

In this research project we endeavoured to ‘walk the talk’ of localisation. Fiji National University was a lead agency in the research and Pacific Island national

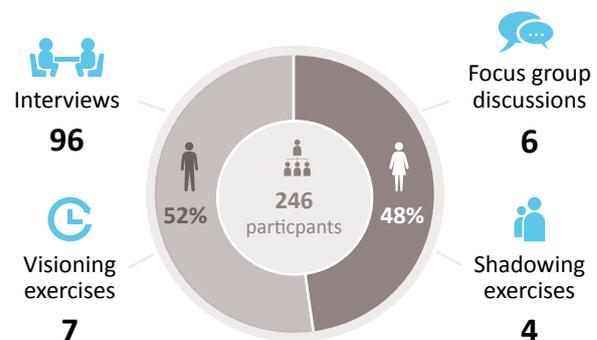
¹³ Joint pledge from 32nd International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent: <http://rcrcconference.org/2015/12/17/strengthening-local-humanitarian-action-with-a-strong-focus-on-the-pacific/>

researchers comprised over 50 per cent of the research team. The team included practitioners and researchers from Australia, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Tonga and Vanuatu. The full research team convened for a four-day methodology design workshop in Suva, Fiji, hosted by Fiji National University. During this workshop, the team worked collaboratively to design and test research tools for use in this project. The team’s Pacific researchers led the research in their own countries, with Australian-based colleagues providing support.

Research tools

The research used a primarily qualitative approach, drawing on a range of methods. Figure 3 provides an overview of the tools used (the methodology is outlined in full in Annex 1).

Figure 3: Summary of research participants and tools



Research participants

Research participants included local communities, state actors, civil society organisations, Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement representatives, local and national NGOs, and international NGOs in Fiji, PNG, Tonga and Vanuatu. Regional actors from Australia, New Zealand and other Pacific countries including Cook Islands also participated in the research.

Research Limitations

A localised research approach had strengths and limitations. The primary limitation was inconsistency of data sets between contexts. National researchers approached the research with different levels of research experience, so despite the same tools being applied there is variation in the depth and quality of data sets. The use of innovative research techniques such as visioning and shadowing also contributed to variance, as they were unfamiliar to some national and international team members.



Research Findings

Fiji Red Cross volunteer Josevata Laqere helps rebuild a home in Vanua Levu after Cyclone Winston. Red Cross mobilised thousands of volunteers in the wake of the cyclone. Photo: Zoom Fiji

What does localisation mean in the Pacific region?

This research set out to explore how localisation is conceptualised by Pacific-based humanitarian actors. In global humanitarian forums, the concept of localisation has been largely discussed and framed by large humanitarian organisations and major donors. The concept of localisation and the set of processes it encompasses have generally been described in technocratic, jargon-based language. Existing localisation initiatives, such as the Charter for Change and Shifting the Power projects, are focused on humanitarian practice in other regional contexts such as Africa and the Middle East. Therefore, an objective of this research was to unpack what the term localisation means to humanitarian actors based in the Pacific.

In order to discuss the localisation of humanitarian action in a meaningful and contextually relevant way, Pacific researchers suggested the team develop a definition to frame conversations in visioning exercises, group discussions and interviews. During the initial methodology workshop, the research team collaboratively developed the following working definition of localisation appropriate to the Pacific context, and used it throughout the project.

lo.cal.is.a.tion (*n.*); 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.

This working definition provided a starting point for the research. Localisation, as a concept, was then tested and discussed using the same framing for each research context, albeit in different languages. The definition resonated with research participants, and this section presents additional insights and interpretations that arose in the research.

■ The localisation of humanitarian action is a process

Pacific-based humanitarian actors considered localisation to be a process, rather than a rapid ‘switch’ from one way of doing things to another way.¹⁴ It is a process in which both national and international humanitarian actors need to evolve and in which the systems and structures they operate within need to change. In this sense, humanitarian actors and contexts cannot be considered in a binary way (i.e. either localised or not), but rather at different stages of a process.¹⁵

■ The localisation of humanitarian action needs to be reflected across all levels of civil society

The Pacific context is unique in terms of the geographic spread and the remote nature of many of the Pacific islands. The role of local community members as first responders in humanitarian action is critical, and Pacific actors emphasised the importance of a localisation agenda extending beyond centralised government. The following levels need to be included in a Pacific concept of localisation.

National actors: National disaster management and humanitarian actors at the national level are key to coordination and effective humanitarian response. The National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) or equivalent is normally the main government coordination mechanism.

The **Red Cross national society** is an auxiliary to authorities and provides first disaster response services. The role of national societies is defined by their governments in disaster response.

District and provincial actors: Local government and civil society organisations/NGOs at the provincial and district level are mandated to lead the front-line disaster management activity.

Within the Red Cross Movement branches sit under the national society. Regional branches work as community organisations to provide services.

Community-based actors: Successful localisation will be reflected in strengthened local community resilience.

¹⁴ Interview 80

¹⁵ This is consistent with the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade’s (DFAT) adopted concept of a localisation continuum.

The role of first responders such as faith-based organisations, community disaster committees and Red Cross volunteers is paramount. Faith-based institutions and Red Cross branches have unique resilience and capabilities in terms of network and coverage.

“You can find at least one church everywhere no matter how remote is the location but not the government or other actors.” (International organisation based in the Pacific)¹⁶

■ Relationships and power are central to localisation

During the research, Pacific-based humanitarian actors discussed the way in which the localisation of humanitarian action was inextricably linked with concepts of power, and respect, and how these play out in relationships between local, national, regional and international humanitarian actors.

Some themes that feature at large in the international discourse on localisation, such as the source and distribution of funding, appear to be less prominent among humanitarian actors in the Pacific. The current

international focus on defining direct and indirect humanitarian funding to local or national actors, for example, is perceived as less important than the way in which national actors are treated in the process of financial transfer for humanitarian programming. Pacific-based humanitarian actors in general are significantly more concerned about which actors decide how funds are spent and the transparency of financial transactions.

■ Respect for traditional and local approaches and customs

Across seven visioning exercises, five groups used images of traditional and local artefacts or symbols to communicate their vision of localisation. The importance of building on traditional and local approaches and making traditional knowledge central to localisation was raised consistently.

A summary of these key themes and other important descriptors of localisation from the perspective of Pacific-based humanitarian actors are detailed in Figure 4 below. Figure 5, on the following page, provides a sample of some of the drawings that emerged in visioning exercises and the key themes and interpretations of those drawings.

¹⁶ Interview 49

Figure 4: Summary of a more appropriate and fit-for-purpose humanitarian ecosystem in the Pacific

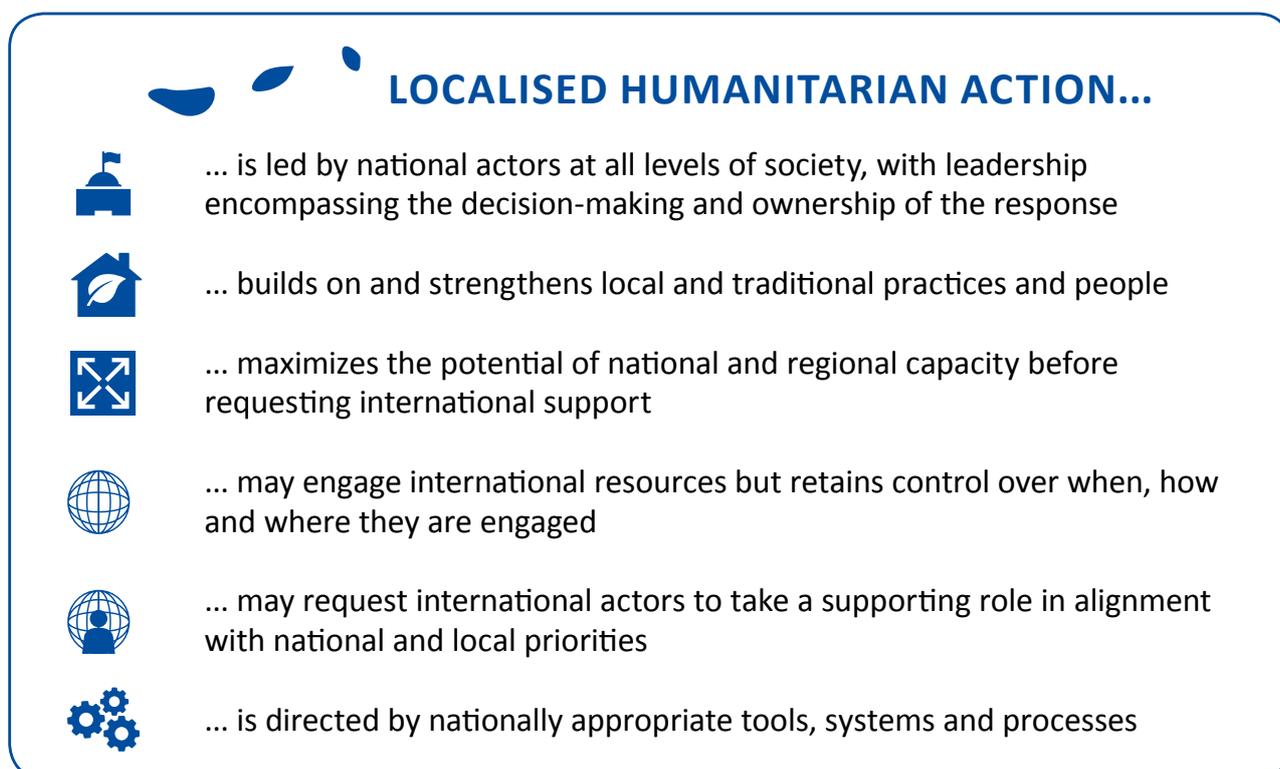
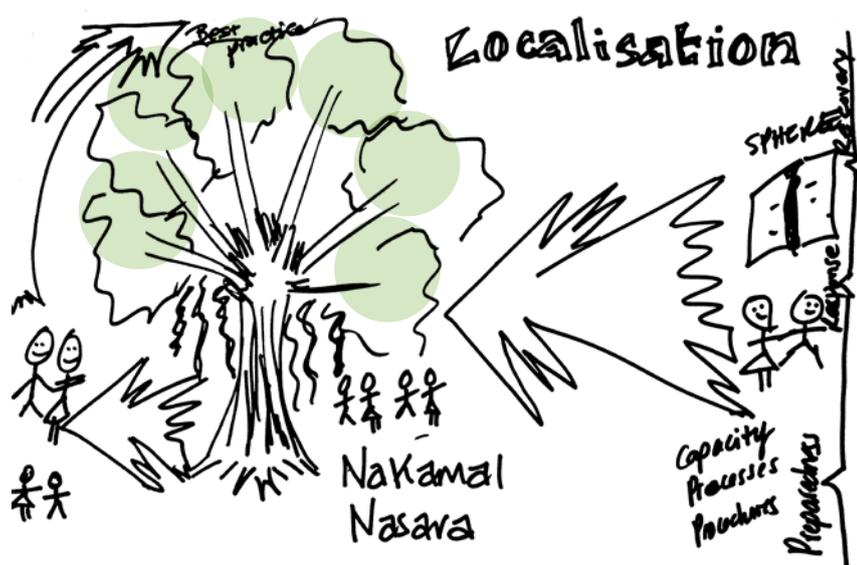


Figure 5: Drawings from visualisation exercises: key themes and interpretations



Vanuatu: Nakamal

Respect for traditional and local approaches and customs

Nakamal is where everyone in a village or community in Vanuatu meets. It is where people discuss, tell stories or address any concerns. In a Nakamal women usually don't talk. Their concerns are raised through appointed male leaders who speak on their behalf. However, women are instrumental indirectly in such meetings; they usually speak to their male counterparts or husbands who mostly take advice from them and share their insights or concerns. This picture communicates that people (men and women) are at the centre of

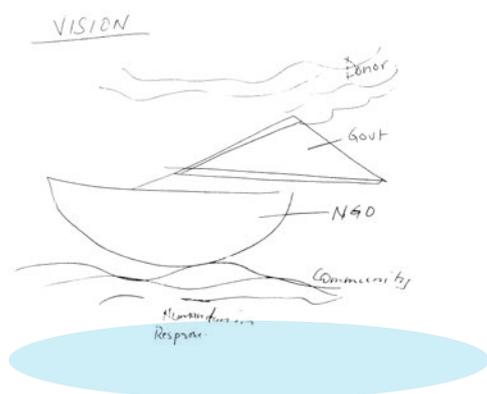
localisation. Anyone from outside, new ideas or external concepts must first be brought to the people in a Nakamal/Nasara. This should be part of preparedness, response and recovery phases. It is considered best practice in the context of Vanuatu and should be integral to a localised humanitarian ecosystem.

Fiji: Bure

Respect for traditional and local approaches and customs

Localisation needs to be reflected across all levels of civil society

Bure is a traditional Fijian house. The solid foundation constitutes rocks, clay and timber. The walls are made of flattened bamboo and weaved to give an external design to the wall. The roof is made of thatched leaves and reed plants to prevent rain and extreme heat. It takes more than 3 months to build a bure. The bure symbolises localisation. It reflects the time and effort required to build a localised response. It needs to consider the right materials, the right people, and the right approach. The front door is the Fijian Government and symbolises the appropriate entry to enable things to work; not through the windows or back door. The foundation is comprised of NGOs, CBOs, IFRC, Red Cross national societies and private organisations that can support a coordinated and localised response. Placing the Fijian population [individuals] at the roof top represents the paramount importance of the lives of the Fijian people.



Tonga: kalia

Respect for traditional and local approaches and customs

The local canoe (kalia) symbolises the country of Tonga. The Tongan Government as a decision making body makes the sail symbolising community resilience. The structure of the boat and the sail have been built with strong traditions and culture. The boat needs to be structured to survive so many storms. The localisation of humanitarian response brings in a fresh breeze to change mind-sets by building community resilience that is inclusive and collaborative. Localisation uses local knowledge and people who are already on the ground and have built community trust. This will give them a sense of ownership and allow the sail to be strong.



Australia: taxi

Relationships and power are central to localisation

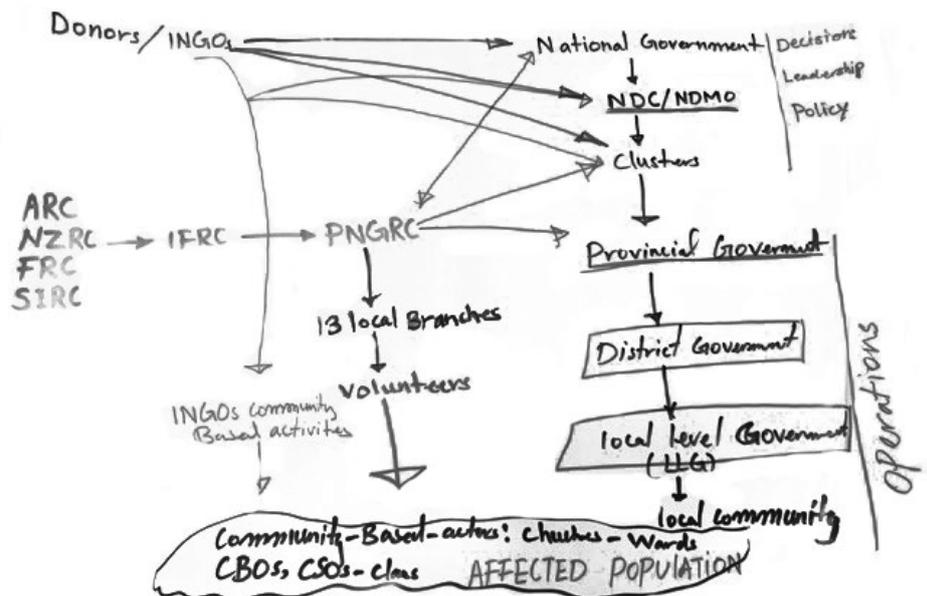
The taxi symbolises the localisation of humanitarian response because it is driven by the community with the welcome insights of back seat drivers. The engine has many cogs but the largest is national actors supported and working in sync with other regional and international actors. The exercise unpacked a number of details with respect to localisation including appropriate manuals and guidance documents (relevant to the make and model of the car), licence plates symbolising accountability and the fluffy dice on the rearview mirror described as unsolicited bilateral donations.

PNG: actor map

Localisation needs to be reflected across all levels of civil society

Relationships and power are central to localisation

The actor map was developed by staff from the PNG Red Cross national society and captures the key actors, processes and relationships that are required for localisation. The map emphasizes the importance of strengthening relationships among government, local and international actors. It also captures the importance of respecting the national and local systems and the existing capacity and resources that already exist at all levels: national to provincial, district to local. Importantly, the exercise articulated the strengths, resilience and capacity of local actors such as Red Cross national societies, churches and local level government, whilst at the same time recognising areas for improvement in leadership, governance, and financial management that would support localisation in PNG.



What needs to change?

“[Localisation is] a great idea, but it’s not about just thinking it’s a great idea, it’s about the actual steps required to achieve change.” (Pacific humanitarian actor)¹⁷

This section outlines research findings in relation to required changes to to achieve localisation of humanitarian action. To date, localisation — as conceived in the Grand Bargain — has remained largely conceptual with limited articulation about what specific changes are required, at what levels, and by whom.¹⁸ This has led to some confusion and disillusionment about the localisation agenda among Pacific-based humanitarian actors (both national and international), and some stakeholders expressed an opinion that the focus on, and disagreement over, a definition is indicative of a lack of willingness to go all the way¹⁹ and actually implement concrete actions. There is strong desire among Pacific-based humanitarian actors to ensure localisation is not simply a fad, to move the discussion forward and to begin developing and implementing actions.²⁰

“We need to talk about how [localisation] is operationalised.” (Pacific humanitarian actor)²¹

This section is concerned with the types of changes needed to achieve localisation. Participants were asked about changes in key thematic areas (finance;

relationships; human resources; capacity development; legal; policies and standards).

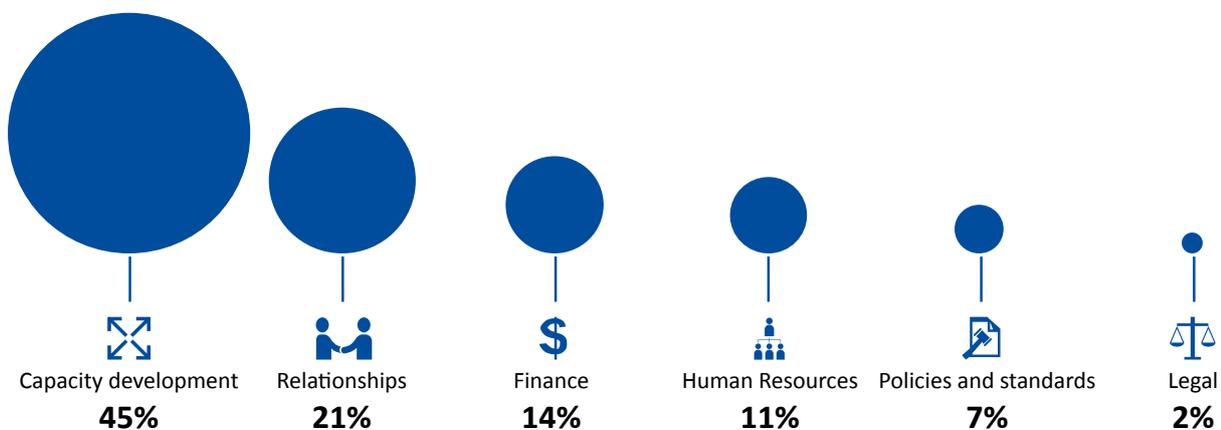
Figure 6 shows the number of times specific thematic areas were mentioned in responses as percentages of total mentions. These percentages reflect the perceived importance of thematic areas in relation to localisation. For example, stakeholders engaged enthusiastically in discussions related to changes in capacity development and relationships but had almost no engagement in discussions related to changes in legal frameworks.

Capacity Development

“Capacity building is key. We need to get this right.” (Pacific government actor)²²

There is an important role for capacity development in the shift to the localisation of humanitarian action. Capacity development was the most frequently mentioned theme by both international and national actors and across all country contexts. Alongside highlighting substantial local and national capabilities, Pacific-based humanitarian actors also identified areas where strengthening and support is desirable. Local and national actors can struggle to develop coherent systems and approaches to coordination and to meet donor requirements in relation to organisational capacity. In-country actors are further disadvantaged by having to manage a multitude of capacity development approaches adopted by donors and INGOs, often overlapping minimally with national approaches and lacking buy-in from local and national government structures.

Figure 6: Relative importance of thematic areas to localisation reflected in the frequency of mentions in the research data



17 Interview 29
 18 Interview 41
 19 Interview 41
 20 Interview 27
 21 Interview 27

22 Interview 18

Pacific-based humanitarian actors do not consider the current capacity development approaches of international organisations to be consistently effective. Although there have been capacity development gains and some effective methods have been used, in general this approach is described as ‘old school’, with its focus on individual capacity targeted through short-term and fragmented training courses.²³ There was a tangible sense of frustration with the continual rounds of training courses that seem to deliver inadequate increase in capacity. Moreover, the frequent implementation of training courses sometimes depletes the available capacity in national offices to progress ongoing work agendas. Stakeholders suggested that international organisations and donors are all aware that the short-term course approach is not working adequately, and appear to be repeating the pattern in the absence of more innovative approaches.²⁴

*“We send staff members on short and long term trainings but there is no action when they come back and we don’t see a lot of changes.”
(Pacific humanitarian actor)²⁵*

Pacific-based humanitarian actors suggested several shifts in capacity development approaches that would facilitate the localisation of humanitarian action. These suggestions were: identifying and building on existing local capacity; supporting localised solutions to capacity gaps; promoting greater regional capacity exchange; and enabling space for on-the-job learning.

There was a strong sense that while international actors refer to strengths-based approaches to capacity development, there is little real recognition of existing capacity. When a strengths-based approach is adopted, it is often limited to internal organisational capacity rather than considering national capacity that can be drawn on to support the organisational needs. The national and community systems and structures need to be better understood and used in order for approaches to capacity development to be implemented more effectively.

International actors often work with national actors to identify capacity development needs but less often engage authentically with national actors to identify solutions. When international organisations have

pre-established courses, training teams and capacity development approaches, they tend to promote these options rather than encouraging, and being open to, more localised and potentially creative approaches to capacity development. As an example, a Pacific based humanitarian organisation identified the need for capacity development of its finance team. The international partner organisation reverted to its default approach of providing a financial deployee from Australia. The Pacific based humanitarian organisation had to push back assertively to pursue their own approach of contracting a national accountant to work with the team once a week and provide on-call services throughout the year.²⁶

Representatives of national Red Cross societies and other national organisations positively described opportunities to exchange capacity within the region. The Red Cross practice of ensuring that national society representatives from the region are involved in lessons-learned events and evaluations of response operations in other Pacific countries was considered particularly useful. This practice can be expanded and built on in the Red Cross and used much more extensively across all organisations.

“Actually sharing between Pacific countries, rather than looking outside internationally, what we can learn from Tonga, Samoa can learn from Fiji, this sort of building capacity within the Pacific at regional level, which is much more easier to relate to, because, of course, we are facing the same challenges, the geographical locations are quite scattered over a vast ocean, which is difficult to respond to, you know, when the nearest island in Tonga is Samoa, and the context is exactly the same, the similarities are there, there are common issues we can learn and build on.”(Pacific government actor)²⁷

Some Pacific actors expressed frustration with the repeated scenario of receiving capacity development as part of disaster preparedness, but in the event of a disaster being sidelined and prevented from putting those capacities into practice.

23 Interview 93

24 Interviews 42 and 52

25 Interview 52

26 Interview 83

27 Interview 66

Creating and enabling opportunities for national actors to learn on the job is a critical step in the capacity development process. Promoting on-the-job learning may involve rethinking the phasing of capacity development with a greater focus on preparedness and reduced focus on response. This has the advantage of allowing people to get on with their jobs in the event of an emergency rather than having to manage additional staff arrivals and logistics. A Pacific based humanitarian leader also pointed to the importance of allowing leaders the space to lead in a response. This may include the creation of a buffer, whereby appointed people protect national leadership from the continual requests and phone calls only allowing critical issues to get their attention. This has worked successfully in the past and enabled national leaders to focus on strategy and organisational leadership in response operations.²⁸

“In good times they train us to be managers and then when disaster happens they turn up and take over the show – when can we learn? They have to give us the opportunity to practise.” (Pacific humanitarian actor)²⁹

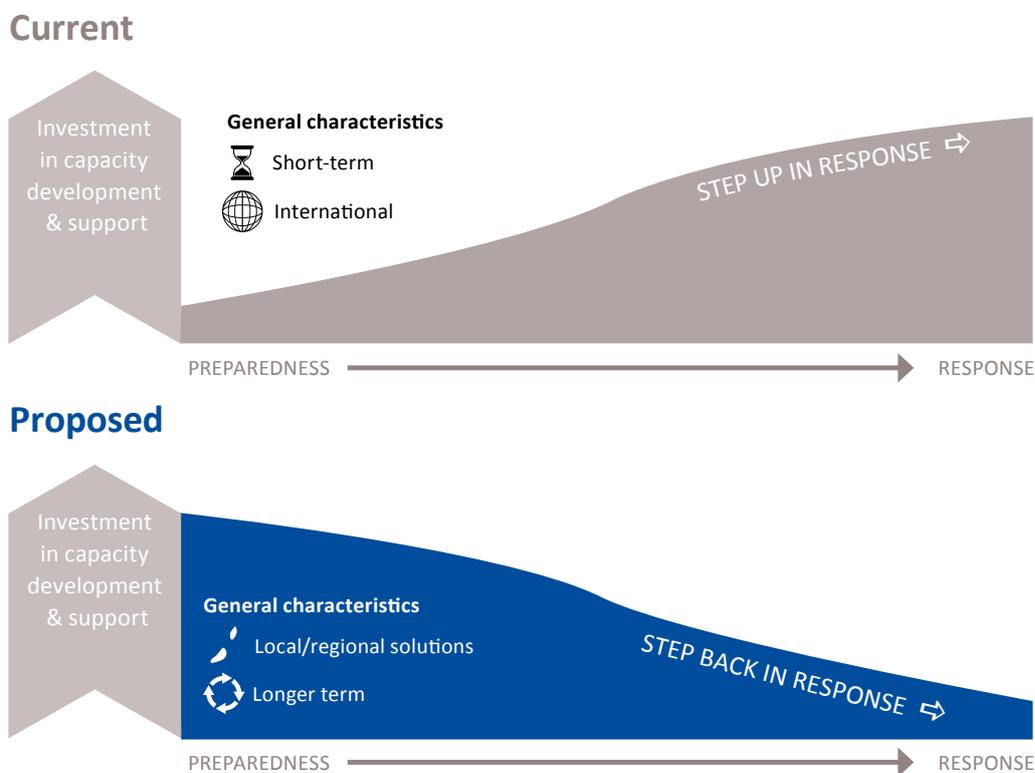
National and regional regulatory frameworks that reinforce local agency and leadership such as the

international disaster response laws, rules and principles³⁰ are also important for focusing on preparedness and creating predictability and space for national leadership.

“We don’t allow people to work at their capacity. We continually throw things at them left right and centre. We tie them down, wear them down ... everyone talks about capacity development but the first fifty per cent of it is just letting people work and do their thing and you’ll find that there is a lot of capacity around. This allows them to use the capacity they do have more effectively.” (International humanitarian actor based in the Pacific)³¹

The conceptual shift in capacity development that would encompass greater use of national and regional solutions and greater focus on preparedness capacity development is depicted in Figure 7. Note that this conceptual shift is based on the perceptions of Pacific actors as to how capacity development currently works, not on actual financial investment in capacity development.

Figure 7: Proposed conceptual shift in capacity development approaches to achieve localisation



28 Interview 100

29 Interview 83

30 IFRC, Guidelines for the domestic facilitation and regulation of international disaster relief and initial recovery assistance, 2007

31 Interview 30

MOVING IT FORWARD

Recognise existing local and national capacity.

International organisations need to assess capacity, not just in terms of organisational strengths, but in terms of the systems and structures of the community and country.

Shift from short-term and fragmented capacity development to longer-term engagement.

International organisations have been using short-term approaches for a long time. Our research highlighted that this approach is ineffective, and leads to frequent gaps in capacity due to staff being required to attend off-site training.³² NDMOs are often understaffed and unable to operate at capacity because key staff are undertaking capacity-building courses elsewhere in the country or region. Longer-term engagement may need to be supported with core funding to move beyond project-based capacity development.

Allow organisations to define their own capacity needs and localised solutions.

International organisations need to support local, national and regional solutions to capacity development needs. This may involve reducing the reliance on (and funding of) the existing default capacity development systems and structures.

Shift the focus of capacity development from response to preparedness.

An important part of capacity development is learning through experience. Organisations need to allow national actors to use their capacities and strengthened systems in response to disasters. This includes being allowed to succeed and fail as part of that learning process.

Identify opportunities for regional capacity exchange.

This may build on existing models for exchanging staff and expertise between countries within organisations, but could also explore more radical approaches. INGOs could collectively invest in regional expertise on standby for deployment and capacity development across all organisations.

Long-term future institutional strengthening approach is required to strengthen local leadership within national government and civil society organisations in the Pacific.

The hierarchical and bureaucratic nature of leadership affects strategic coordination, direction and guidance of the sector-wide actors during response situations. Strengthening the organisational functional capacity in key areas such as designing programs, monitoring and evaluation, and financial management would enable local actors to take the lead during humanitarian response operations.

Relationships

The research intentionally focused on the relationship between national and international actors as an important indicator of localisation. Findings suggest that relationships between national and international actors are typically undermined rather than strengthened in humanitarian responses in the Pacific. One international humanitarian actor described a “window of frustration” as United Nations and international responders arrived with their coordination systems to respond to a tropical cyclone in the Pacific.³³ The arrival of internationally deployed staff is frequently considered unnecessary and undermining of established relationships.

“It undermines our position when international delegates turn up and they come at a higher level than our staff and even us at management level – in terms of where they stay [and the fact] they have to have high security.” (Pacific humanitarian actor)³⁴

Localisation needs to turn humanitarian response into an opportunity to strengthen and build on established relationships, to consolidate trust and support national leadership. This will require a significant shift in the way that organisations and individuals behave in response operations.

³² Interviews 93, 42, and 65

³³ Interview 32

³⁴ Interview 83

“Localisation needs to consider that people can’t just fly in and make decisions, but if you have a relationship with a partner built on trust, you can make decisions together, using that shared knowledge.” (Pacific humanitarian actor)³⁵

Shared forums prior to, during, and after humanitarian responses — where national, regional and international representatives of various organisations come together — provide important opportunities to strengthen relationships before or during a response. Shared forums include meetings, conferences, symposiums and workshops. Power can be distributed or withheld in shared forums. Power in forums can be measured by indicators such as coordination, management or chairing, agenda setting and time, and outcome ownership.

Through the use of shadowing exercises, we unpacked the structure and power dynamics of shared forums across four recent points of engagement in the Pacific as indicative of the current state of relationships in the humanitarian ecosystem. These included a government coordination meeting, two cluster meetings and a Pacific-focused conference. Findings from observations were triangulated with team blog entries and interview data.

The research indicated that within shared forums, international actors are more likely to hold power. In some cases this is reflected in the visibility of participants, for example, numbers in attendance and roles in the meeting. Conferences and high-

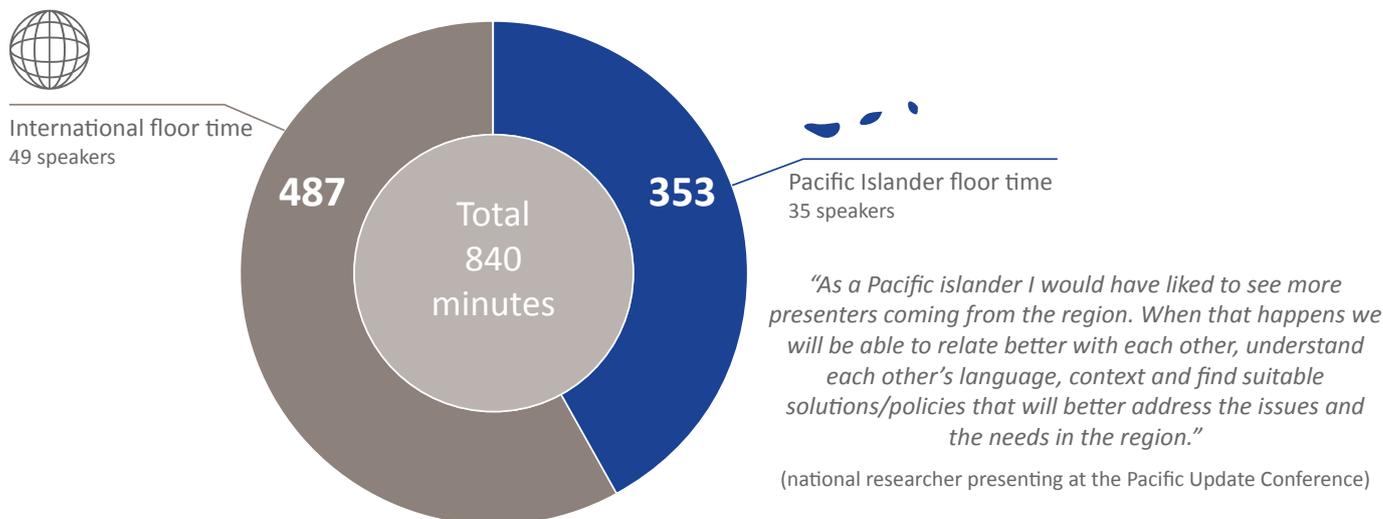
profile meetings seem to attract a disproportionate representation of international actors, even when Pacific issues are the focus of the meeting. For example, over half of all speakers at the Pacific Update Conference in Fiji in July 2017 were international. Figure 8 shows the floor time taken by international and Pacific islander presenters at the Pacific Update Conference. It does not include time devoted to questions and responses after presentations, which was also dominated by international attendees.

Similarly, data from the Pacific Humanitarian Team meeting in 2016 reveals an imbalance in national and international participation, with representatives of local (24) and regional (15) organisations constituting only 26 per cent of the total (152). To emphasise this point, 74 per cent of participants at the meeting were representatives of international organisations.

It is clear from the disproportionately high representations of international organisations alone that there needs to be greater commitment to inclusion of regional, national and local organisations.

“We see [international organisations] coming into Fiji to conduct week-long talk fests where they bring a lot of other international and government people in ... but none of this translates into direct response and service delivery on the ground. None of the civil society organisations we work with are ever invited to those events.” (Pacific government actor)³⁶

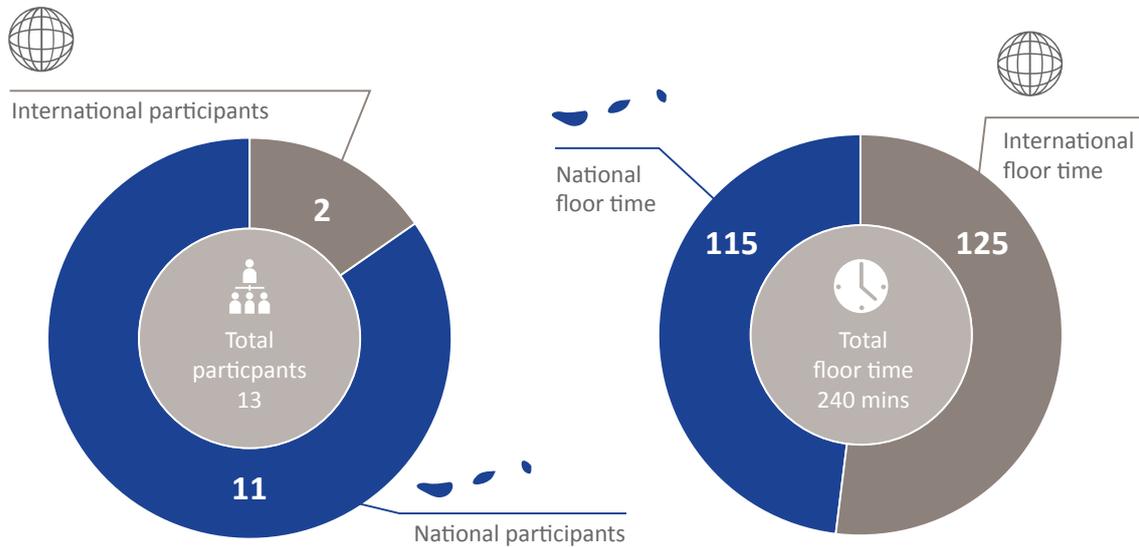
Figure 8: Floor time (voice) of nationals and internationals at the 2017 Pacific Update Conference, Fiji



35 Interview 26

36 Interview 36

Figure 9: Food security cluster meeting



Increasing the representation and visibility of national and local actors is a first step, but it needs to be accompanied with the elevation of the voice of national and local actors in shared forums. A shadowing exercise at a food security cluster meeting demonstrated that even when the visibility of national and local actors is high, international actors may still dominate the floor time and diminish the participation of national and local actors (see Figure 9).

MOVING IT FORWARD

There are several entry points for establishing and maintaining more equitable relationships.

Invest time and effort in establishing relationships before a disaster strikes and maintaining it through the duration of a humanitarian response.

Numerous stakeholders cited positive relationships built on trust as being crucial to successful partnering on a humanitarian response.³⁷ Pre-existing relationships were said to make it easier to work together; one local organisation continually praised their partnership with an INGO, established through regular communication across several years prior to partnering to respond to a tropical cyclone.

Consider who represents the relationship and activities.

Positive examples of national actors being given the opportunity to be the face of national-international organisational partnerships were raised in the research. One national actor who holds a senior leadership role spoke of how their international CEO promoted their leadership in interactions with key donors, rather than having the international staff present at these meetings.³⁸

Ensure at least 50 per cent participation by national actors (increasing visibility).

Ensuring equal participation in shared forums applies to both physical presence and allocated floor time. Mechanisms such as ensuring that all international actors can only participate in meetings if they have a local or regional counterpart with them have been used successfully in Vanuatu. In addition, shared forum conveners can shape event agendas to ensure that national actors are allocated at least 50 per cent of the forum time.

Consider who gets the glory (increasing voice).

A national stakeholder described a very positive relationship with an international organisation. Much of the narrative related to the recognition that they were given as the lead of the in-country partnership; this ranged from representation in donor meetings to their voice in cluster workshops.³⁹

37 Interviews 26 and 39

38 Interview 26

39 Interview 26

Review the structures of shared forums.

The way a forum is structured can support or inhibit national and local engagement. Issues such as the language, use of technology and the venue set-up can all affect the level of national and local actor engagement. One ni-Vanuatu stakeholder – reflecting on participation in a recent Pacific-focused conference – stated, “I would have felt more confident and comfortable if the structure was different — if I could speak openly and not worry about whether I was presenting in their way or if I was presenting well.”⁴⁰

Consider who owns the information generated.

Shared forums generate valuable information. During the research, some friction was observed with respect to who owns this information and has the right to process and share it. “At the end of the meeting, some tension was raised over taking the lead on the report writing of this cluster meeting. While the NDMO was committed to doing so, the international representatives were owning the meeting materials and presentations and thought he [the international representative] would be better placed to do so.”⁴¹

Finance

*“Do you get to decide how money is spent? Sometimes yes, sometimes no.”
(Pacific humanitarian actor)⁴²*

The issue of finance — including where it comes from, who gets it and who decides how it is spent — is central to the localisation process although it is significant to note that issues of relationships and capacity development were raised with greater frequency. Finance was a more often mentioned theme by actors in Fiji and Vanuatu compared to other country contexts—both of which have recently responded to large tropical cyclone events. Two key themes emerged from the research. The first was the directness of funding provided to local organisations, and the second was decision making and control of financial resources, regardless of the directness of funding.

Some Pacific-based humanitarian actors want a shift of funding away from international actors directly to local and national actors. In reference to the Cyclone Pam response in Vanuatu, one Pacific stakeholder

40 Pacific Islander presenting at the Pacific Update Conference

41 Interview 97

42 Interview 96

explained, “so many INGOs were getting the money that local actors felt should be coming to them.”⁴³ There was an acknowledgement that financial capacity needs to be increased in some organisations to make this possible, but there was also a strong feeling that a shift within donor and intermediary organisations is needed. One stakeholder expressed frustration at the rigidity of financing and accounting standards focused not on the outcomes that need to be achieved, but on the specific ways that donors insist outcomes should be achieved. In his organisation a highly competent finance officer had to be demoted and replaced with a qualified accountant to meet the standards required for receipt of funding. This stakeholder felt that lip service is given to flexible approaches, while there is very little support for alternative accountability mechanisms.⁴⁴

The extent to which localisation is supported through indirect funding seems to be linked to questions of transparency and decision making. In a very positive example an INGO provided funding to a national NGO partner and ensured that a lot of time and effort was made to build the partnership and set clear expectations. A Pacific representative from that national NGO stated that:

*“in terms of localisation, what we saw with [our partner], was that they were very transparent, although the funds were sourced through their connection with DFAT [Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia], when it came in-country it was the local partner who had the decision making authority around that.”
(Pacific humanitarian actor)⁴⁵*

Other stakeholders gave examples involving less transparency and opportunity for local and national actors to engage in decisions regarding how funding was used. A Pacific humanitarian actor described the need to accept large international contingents of delegates for a response because they were tied to funding commitments.⁴⁶ The presence of international staff can further remove national actors’ control over financial resources, with national staff describing how they “are not in charge. They [international actors] bring in their staff and they make the decisions.”⁴⁷ Three Pacific humanitarian organisations independently described the lack of control over, or ability to influence, funding decisions.⁴⁸

43 Interview 31

44 Interview 31

45 Interview 26

46 Interview 83

47 Interview 96

48 Interview 50, 83 and 96

“The international appeals [are centrally] controlled. The national organisation does not have control over it. I don’t think they should have 100 per cent control but [they should have] some say over how funds are spent otherwise how can they develop their own agenda?” (Pacific humanitarian actor)⁴⁹

MOVING IT FORWARD

The following potential changes were highlighted in the research:

Consider alternative and flexible accountability mechanisms.

This requires donors and international organisations to work with national actors to define accountability outcomes (rather than the processes and mechanisms required to achieve those outcomes). Once these are agreed, allow national actors to identify and implement the best mechanisms (which might include less traditional approaches) to attain those outcomes.

Promote transparency in financing and localise decision making as much as possible.

Local and national actors appreciate transparency in financing that allows them to participate as equal partners in funding decisions and accounting processes. This is also considered important for capacity and organisational development, permitting local and national actors to make decisions about the most effective and economic ways to build capacity. There could be options for national actors to develop their own financial transparency standards to be applied to international actors in the Pacific.

Strengthen local financial mechanisms to enable absorption of donor funding.

This requires effective capacity development approaches (explored in previous section) and the confidence to use and test these approaches in the event of an emergency.

Provide more funding directly to national actors.

Where feasible, international actors should provide funding directly to national actors (including overhead costs) and provide the support and systems necessary to make this successful. This might include the establishment of a pooled funding mechanism for national actors.

Human Resources

“It makes such a huge difference when responders are from the region rather than outside the region. We found when distributing items or when providing psychosocial support, affected communities were much more receptive and open when the responders were from the region ... they felt they were able to speak more freely about what their needs were, than when they met with people from outside the region. [They were] much more comfortable with other Pacific Islanders.” (International humanitarian actor based in the Pacific)⁵⁰

International organisations have invested a lot of time and resources into developing human resource policies and approaches. Typically, these include recruitment and promotion policies, deployment registers for surge capacity, frameworks for performance appraisal and capacity development approaches. This investment has often hindered organisations being willing to explore alternative, potentially more localised approaches to human resources. Many stakeholders felt that greater commitment to localisation was needed in human resource practice, and particularly that international actors need to be recruited for their belief and commitment to localisation just as much as they are for their skills and knowledge.⁵¹

“We need to recruit different personalities into the humanitarian sector ... we need people who genuinely believe in localisation and capacity development.” (Pacific humanitarian actor)⁵²

It was suggested that international organisations could make better use of in-country human resources. Several Pacific-based humanitarian actors felt international

49 Interview 83

50 Interview 29

51 Interview 5

52 Interview 5

expertise was often flown in before local, national and regional expertise was exhausted.⁵³ The overuse of delegates was also cited by national humanitarian organisations.

“The process of recruiting delegates needs to change ... [in a recent response] a lot of delegates came from around the world whilst we have the experience and expertise just next door.” (Pacific humanitarian actor)⁵⁴

Pacific-based humanitarian actors consistently indicated that in the event of national and local actors being overwhelmed and external human resources being required, they would always prefer to source responders from the region rather than international responders.

In the event that international staff are required and requested by a national organisation a greater emphasis on, and commitment to, capacity development is required.⁵⁵ Capacity development outcomes need to be more measurable and national actors should be responsible for assessing the performance of deployed staff and delegates.⁵⁶

“Donors should respect our organisational structures ... and shouldn’t be creating parallel reporting mechanisms. One of our donors is funding our branch coordinator and they make him reportable to them not to us, which makes it difficult for us to have access and control on our own resources.” (Pacific humanitarian actor)⁵⁷

MOVING IT FORWARD

The following potential changes were highlighted in the research:

Review all human resources policies with a localisation lens.

Localisation requires looking at policies and procedures from a different perspective — using a new lens. If an organisation has decided to embrace localisation as an approach as well as an outcome, then this should be reflected

⁵³ Interviews 83, 82 and 18

⁵⁴ Interview 28 and 83

⁵⁵ Interviews 26, 7 and 51

⁵⁶ Interviews 5 and 16

⁵⁷ Interview 59

in all human resources (HR) policies, including recruitment, promotion, compensation, deployment and capacity development.⁵⁸



WHAT IS A LOCALISATION LENS?

The following questions could be used to review all HR policies and related documents to assess the extent to which they are localised.

- How is localisation reflected in engagement with potential employees?
- How are key performance indicators (KPIs) and performance measured in relation to localisation? Who makes HR decisions according to policies and procedures?
- How is localisation reflected in capacity development approaches?
- To what extent do the terms of reference (TOR) of international staff reflect supporting roles to national leadership?
- How does policy and practice support national staff capacity development and retention?



Support in-country recruitment practices that encourage flexible and innovative solutions to human resources.

As noted earlier, local and national actors repeatedly described instances of existing in-country capacity being overlooked in favour of flying in international expertise for humanitarian response. Local and national actors also described ways to engage national capacity that international actors had dismissed in favour of their own approaches. One organisation described the value of having national media and accounting expertise on retainer, allowing it to be called upon in the event that surge capacity was required.⁵⁹ These options need to be explored and supported.



Adopt a principle of only engaging international staff in any capacity once all national and regional options have been explored and after a specific national request for international expertise.

The need for international deployments, including delegates within the Red Cross Movement, needs to be justified against an increasingly high threshold. A rigorous and nationally-led process of identifying the need for any international actors

⁵⁸ Interview 83

⁵⁹ Interview 83

in country needs to be undertaken. Questions that could be asked include: how can need be addressed in-country and in the region? Would an international deployee/delegate be more useful to the response than the funds associated with that deployment?⁶⁰ This approach may also require all positions, including leadership positions, are made available to national and regional applicants.

Enable national actors to determine the TOR of any required international deployments and to manage performance appraisals.

National actors' assessment of the utility of international actors' presence in-country should be the standard against which international staff performance is measured. All capacity development-focused roles should have key performance indicators developed by national actors that outline specific targets and assign timelines to them; for example, by X date national counterpart must be able to do Y, or have Z skill.⁶¹

Review of executive board priorities and KPIs for Australian-based agencies.⁶²

Localisation is more likely to be a priority if it is reflected in executive board priorities and the KPIs of Australian-based agencies. KPIs that continue to prioritise growth and profit margins are unlikely to facilitate a shift in the sector.

Reconsider the use of international consultants.

Many national actors felt that when sourcing consultants, in-country capacity was being overlooked in favour of international consultants. As one stakeholder asked, "why are they not hiring local consultants?"⁶³

No lead roles should be given to international staff.

Position descriptions for international staff should state clearly that their role is to support local and national actors. Ensure that this is reflected in relevant policies.⁶⁴

Policies and Standards

Humanitarian action involves globally adopted and agency specific policies, tools, standards and guidelines. These range from procurement policies to health program standards to gender guidelines. In this research, Pacific-based humanitarian actors advocated for a shift away from the heavy focus on development of global tools and global capacity, describing the challenges presented when international actors attempt to introduce global tools. One stakeholder described the pressure on national and local actors to be buffers between what the global tools require and what works in the national context.⁶⁵ The resulting sense of frustration was palpable.

There is a clear belief, particularly among local and national actors, that localisation could provide an avenue for the development of more appropriate standards and tools, such as a Pacific Code of Conduct or adapted Sphere standards. It was suggested that national and local actors need to feel comfortable identifying the global tools and standards that are applicable and useful to their contexts, while feeling able to do away with those that aren't. Currently national and local actors don't feel able to do that for reasons linked to either capacity or contractual requirements.⁶⁶ One local actor gave an example of an unrealistic and unreasonable procurement policy which requires three quotes to be submitted prior to purchasing, even during an emergency; it means that while other actors are responding, the actor's organisation's policy requires it to pause and source three quotes before beginning response operations.⁶⁷

It was emphasised that 'contextually relevant' policies and tools shouldn't be developed without leadership and input from local actors; the process must be inclusive and consultative and strive for national/ local ownership.⁶⁸

*"It's always 'do it our way' not 'look at what's happening there and do it the best way'."
(Pacific humanitarian actor)⁶⁹*

60 Interview 96

61 Interviews 5 and 16

62 Interview 41

63 Interview 82

64 Interview 5

65 Interview 32

66 Interview 32

67 Interview 28

68 Interview 26

69 Interview 35

“Policies should not be developed outside the country context and brought in.” (International humanitarian actor based in the Pacific)⁷⁰

Whilst national actors frequently noted the issues with globally defined policies and standards, the research team also found that many international actors felt that standards were unreasonable and restrictive, preventing local actors from designing their own solutions.⁷¹

“The prescriptive nature of [international] standards, the detailed financial information required... restricts the ability of local organisations to define locally appropriate solutions for their situation.” (Pacific humanitarian actor)⁷²

MOVING IT FORWARD

The following potential changes were highlighted in the research:

Consider flexibility in standards and adaptation to national and local conditions.

Where standards are imperative, consulting with national partners regarding these standards and how they think they can be best adapted to their context. This may include adaptation of Sphere standards, the Core Humanitarian Standard or Codes of Conduct.

Avoid prescribing specific policies and tools to partners as contractual requirements.

Consult with local partners and allow them to determine which policies, tools and standards they feel are most useful for their context; consider making this consultation a requirement rather than compulsory adoption of prescribed tools.

Develop policies in consultation with those they will impact.

If a policy is to be put into practice in a specific country context, it should be developed in that country context with ample participation, leadership and ownership by national actors.

Consider investment in global standards and tools relative to national processes.

International organisations should consider whether they have the right balance of investment in global tools relative to national processes; this should inform dialogue and budget decisions.

What is the perceived impact of localisation?

This section outlines our findings in relation to the perceived impact of localisation on four pre-defined areas: effectiveness, efficiency, equity and economy. Pacific-based humanitarian actors generally believe that localisation will be positive across all four areas of impact. When asked to what extent localisation will offer greater effectiveness, efficiency, equity and economy (on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being ‘not at all’ and 5 being ‘completely’), stakeholders consistently placed the impact of localisation between 4 and 5 (see Figure 10).

Stakeholders gave reasons for their positive perceptions of the potential impacts of localisation, but also highlighted the difficulties of conceptualising localisation and the ability of measuring the impact of a process and outcome that cannot be quantified easily. The research process involved taking a double conceptual leap, in that stakeholders were first asked to identify what localisation could look like for the humanitarian ecosystem in the Pacific, and secondly to consider what the impact would be if localisation was to occur. This visioning proved challenging. Stakeholders also found it difficult to discuss the four areas of impact in isolation from one another, highlighting that in any context or scenario, they interact in complementary or contradictory ways. As an example, sourcing humanitarian supplies locally could have a damaging impact on the economy of a humanitarian response (see Figure 11, which suggests it is much more expensive to source some supplies in the Pacific than to source them internationally). However, sourcing humanitarian supplies locally would be more beneficial to the local economy, and may be more time-efficient and effective in terms of building the capacity of local private sector entities.

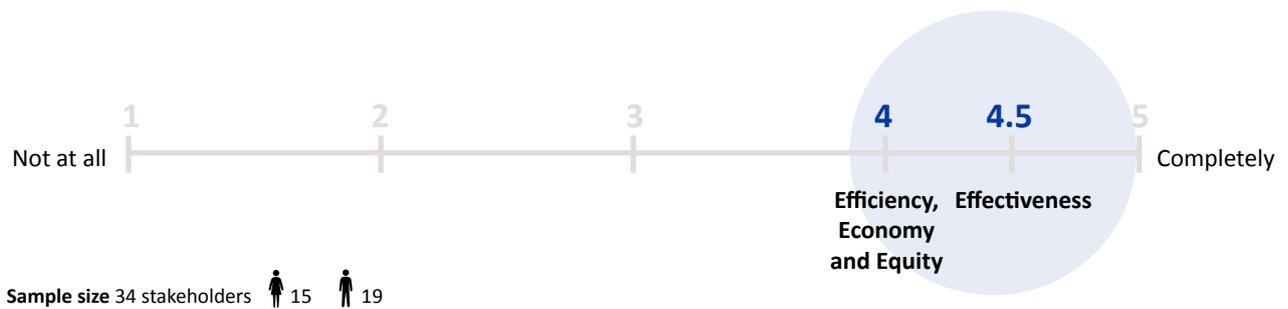
In the following sections we identify some of the key perceptions in relation to these four areas of impact. It must be noted that each area needs to be considered as interacting — both positively and negatively — with the others, rather than in isolation.

70 Interview 30

71 Interview 82

72 Interview 82

Figure 10: Average ratings of extent to which localisation will offer greater effectiveness, efficiency, economy and equity



Effectiveness

“Our job is to support locals to support themselves. I’m not going to know what the community needs. The people on the ground are going to know what the community needs. If we are doing our job to the best of our ability, if we are truly doing our jobs, we should [at some point] no longer be relevant or required.” (International humanitarian actor based in the Pacific) ⁷³

Effectiveness is the extent to which an activity or approach achieves its purpose. It is widely perceived that localisation will make humanitarian action more effective in two ways. Firstly, it will provide a more contextually appropriate response that is able to more effectively address the needs of the affected population. Secondly, it will better use existing networks, knowledge and capacity to deliver more effective humanitarian assistance in a timely and sustainable way.

Key stakeholders provided examples of previous response efforts being ineffective as a result of not understanding needs appropriately. This has been illustrated in recent responses to Tropical Cyclones Pam and Winston in Vanuatu and Fiji respectively.

For example, a key Pacific stakeholder described the work of the food cluster during a response, where international actors provided internationally-designated food options (rice and flour) rather than encouraging and supporting communities to use local food sources.

“After a cyclone, everyone starts putting their hand up for flour and rice and forgets about having a food bank in the garden. When you

⁷³ Interview 29

talk about this to the non-local, and you look at all the support provided by food clusters, there is no support for these local practices, it’s all about bringing in as much flour and rice as possible. The best bit about localisation in any work is sustainability. We should use existing infrastructure and practices — it’s more sustainable.” (Regional humanitarian actor) ⁷⁴

When local people are leading and making decisions during a disaster response, local organisations are likely to feel a greater sense of ownership over the activities, which in turn helps in achieving program objectives and accountability.⁷⁵ Sustainability was another recurrent theme in discussions of effectiveness.⁷⁶ Strengthening local leadership and decision making was perceived as leading to greater effectiveness during immediate response, but also in the long term: “It is important that governments feel they have responsibility over their own country, so that it is sustainable for their population long term.”⁷⁷ Stakeholders also felt better engagement of private sector networks was essential for effective humanitarian response; “You need connections to the private sector to respond rapidly and effectively.”⁷⁸

Efficiency

“You are bringing in a battleship when you need a canoe, it is just crazy.” (Pacific humanitarian actor)⁷⁹

⁷⁴ Interview 31

⁷⁵ Interviews 86

⁷⁶ Interviews 8 and 9

⁷⁷ Interview 8

⁷⁸ Interview 26

⁷⁹ Interview 64

Efficiency is defined as the quantity of outputs produced from specified inputs; it essentially means making the best use of resources to achieve desired outcomes. Participants' perceptions of how localisation will affect the efficiency of humanitarian response were mixed. While for the most part they perceived that localisation would offer much more efficient ways of working, some actors did not see localisation as a guaranteed route to greater effectiveness and efficiency; "I don't think localisation is a silver bullet to a more efficient and effective humanitarian system."⁸⁰

In many ways, an over-reliance on international intervention following disasters is very inefficient. The timeliness of the response is compromised: it takes longer to deploy international staff and for those staff to become acquainted with the context and networks they need to operate within. Systems and processes developed elsewhere, with little or no input from local actors, are rarely appropriate to the context and can take longer to operationalise (for example, the procurement policy discussed earlier in this document under 'Policies, Tools and Standards' requires three quotes to be submitted before proceeding with procurement, even in a response context). International actors add another layer of decision making: in addition to turning to the national government for decision making authority, local actors have to coordinate with the international community. Local actors may spend substantial time in arranging hotels, logistics and security for international staff being deployed to their agencies — time that could be spent in responding to the disaster. At a much broader level, the government's attention and time might be diverted to managing multiple incoming organisations.

Equity

Equity relates directly to fairness and impartiality. Unlike equality, it does not call for equal distribution and access (of resources, time, money, etc.) between parties, but rather for fair and equitable distribution and access. The predominant perception of stakeholders was that localisation will lead to greater equity in humanitarian action. Many felt that equity would be reflected in the opportunities afforded to national actors and the roles they could perform, as well as among the recipients of humanitarian assistance.⁸¹

In some instances, the research provided contradictory evidence with respect to impact on equity.⁸² Pacific-based humanitarian actors expressed concern that localisation may lead to exclusion of certain groups in communities.

"The Wantok system [a tribe or clan who speak the same languages] made disaster response distribution challenging. Following the concept of community clans, leadership favoured their own clan or leaders who don't deserve the assistance." (Pacific humanitarian actor)⁸³

Some participants stated that women could be disadvantaged by localisation. This is explored in the text box below.

A QUESTION OF GENDER?

Stakeholders identified several potential gendered impacts of localisation, both positive and negative. Further research is needed to improve our understanding of this issue, but an initial analysis of the available data suggests the following possible impacts should be considered.

Potential negatives

- There are currently fewer women in national decision making bodies at every level (national, provincial, local and community). As these bodies take on greater leadership and decision making responsibility in a process of localisation, the voice and participation of women might be compromised.
- Some national actors consider localisation provides an opportunity to reassert traditional cultural and gender norms. These typically include removing the influence of international ideas of gender equality.

Potential positives

- National and local actors know how to engage more constructively on sensitive issues such as gender. People, including women, feel more comfortable talking with local experts.
- Some national actors consider the opportunity to reassert traditional cultural and gender norms as a highly positive outcome of localisation.

⁸⁰ Interview 41

⁸¹ Interviews 5, 10 and 20

⁸² Interviews 32 and 12

⁸³ Interview 54

Economy

While the perception is that localisation will deliver economic benefits, the evidence suggests that this is the case in relation to human resources but is more complicated in relation to humanitarian supplies. It is more cost-effective to source staff in-country or from the region. In one Pacific Island country, it costs five times as much to cover the salary of a delegate as the salary of a national staff member with the same level of skills and experience (Figure 11). Moreover, this ratio does not take into account the housing, travel and security costs associated with international deployments.

This scale of benefit may be reduced if the effectiveness and efficiency of programming were compromised by greater use of national and regional human resources. However, stakeholders consistently reported that the quality of staff required could often be found in-country or in the region, but (as noted previously) it was standard practice that international human resources were brought in before exploring those options.

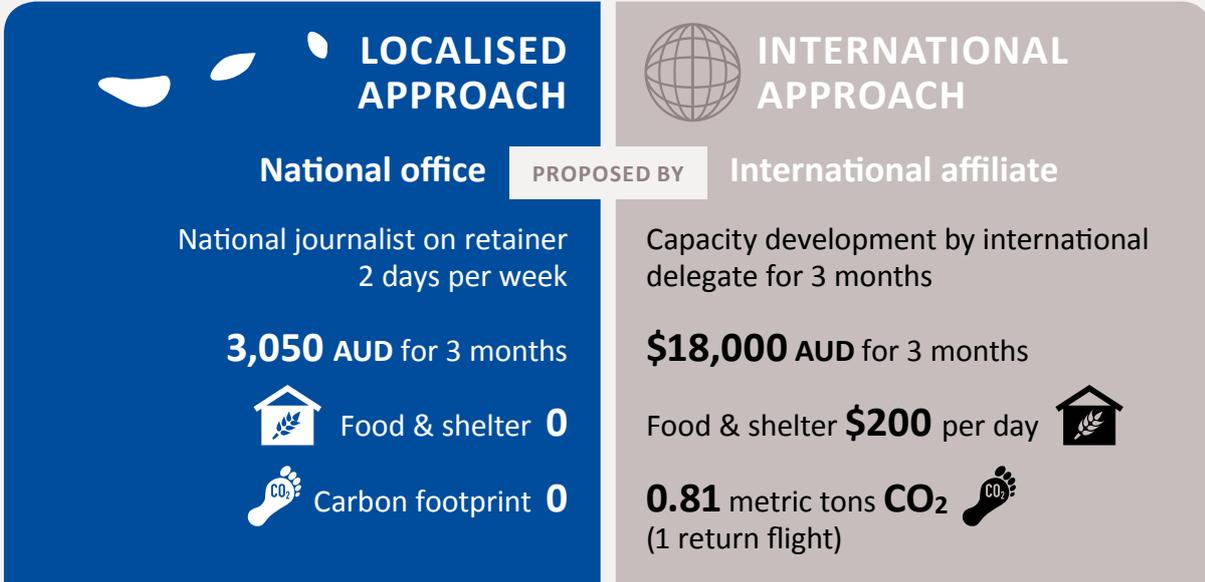
In the Pacific, the economy of sourcing humanitarian supplies locally is complex. This complexity is a result of the relative remoteness of the Pacific and geographic scattering of islands. There is a strong desire to source supplies locally and a belief that this will lead to reduced costs, but the available data indicates this is not necessarily the case. For example, it could cost up to three times as much to buy tarpaulins locally in comparison to bringing them in from China (See Figure 11).

*“Supplies should always be sourced locally before going to outside markets.”
(Pacific humanitarian actor) ⁸⁴*

⁸⁴ Interview 18

Figure 11: Economy Case Studies

Sourcing Communications Expertise in Case Study Pacific Island Country:
ECONOMY COMPARISON



Sourcing Humanitarian Supplies:
TARPAULINS IN VANUATU



SOURCED IN CHINA

\$18 AUD per tarp x 5000 = 90,000 AUD + Air Cargo \$173,400
TOTAL = \$263,400

SOURCED IN VANUATU

\$181 AUD per tarp x 5000 **TOTAL = \$905,000**

\$\$\$ UP TO 3X AS EXPENSIVE TO SOURCE IN VANUATU

The Risk of Localising versus the Risk of Not

There are risks involved in the process of the localisation of humanitarian action. The critical question is whether these risks are greater or less than the risks involved in not localising. Some stakeholders believed these risks were sometimes exaggerated.

“Risks can be mitigated, but [the main concerns] are definitely more perception than reality.” (Donor government actor)⁸⁵

Even if this is the case, most actors recognise that some risks exist. Leadership is central to creating an environment for risk identification and constructive management. This includes ensuring due diligence in the process of localisation of humanitarian action and moving forward in a way that will enable constructive capacity and organisational development.⁸⁶

“You do get into issues of risk and risk management so it is how to bring in the voice of governance in a way that is enabling and solve the challenges that pop up at the governance level all in a context of being supportive of the change.” (Regional humanitarian actor)⁸⁷

The text box below outlines the perceived risks identified by research stakeholders and the proposed mitigation measures.

Perceived Risk identified in the research	Proposed Mitigation Measures
<p>Inadequate capacity to ensure an effective humanitarian response.</p> <p><i>“While others are saying we won’t do anything until we are specifically asked, maybe there is a risk in that. Think of the Ebola response — the local response did not work. It was a disaster. The problem with localisation is they might just not have the capacity. Some Pacific Island Countries just don’t have the capacity or the skills, or any way of responding — think Tokelau.”⁸⁷ (Regional humanitarian actor)</i></p>	<p>Appropriate planning structured around a process of localisation that ensures systems and structures are in place prior to a humanitarian response. This process should have clear and realistic time frames.</p> <p><i>“I agree with the importance, but it doesn’t have to be done quickly. For example, getting rid of all expatriates in six months isn’t going to honour or adequately help Vanuatu. What is done to get there, and how, matters. Putting in proper support mechanisms is important. Do it, but do it well. Don’t set them up to fail.”⁸⁸ (Pacific based humanitarian actor)</i></p>
<p>Humanitarian principles are undermined, impartiality in particular. This risk may be raised in the context of strong family and community networks that may lead to preferential distribution of humanitarian assistance.</p> <p><i>“During the last disaster response, financial resources were provided to the political leaders who in turn provided the relief assistance to their tribal constituency rather than the affected populations.” (Pacific based humanitarian actor)</i></p>	<p>Strengthened country-to-country engagement and support within the region. If a government will not allow external arbiters of humanitarian response operations, it may be more open to have regional actors engage in that role.</p>

⁸⁵ Interview 39
⁸⁶ Interview 41

⁸⁷ Interview 81
⁸⁸ Interview 49
⁸⁹ Interview 17

<p>Reversal of progress on gender equality (see text box, page 30).</p> <p><i>“I’m not sure women’s interests are accounted for at the national and sub national level ... I’m not sure I know how to do it [localisation] but we all need to think through how we can integrate everybody’s interests.”(Pacific based humanitarian actor)⁸⁹</i></p>	<p>Strengthening of women’s voices in civil society so that they are able to take the lead on ensuring their participation in the localisation agenda. This may also require local adaptation of existing gender tools.</p> <p><i>“Gender tools [are] a set of standard gender procedures but we design them in a way so that people understand what we do [and] so communities can relate to it well. It is a sensitive topic so [it is] always better to localise.” (Pacific based humanitarian actor)⁹⁰</i></p>
<p>Erosion of standards of response.</p> <p><i>“Everyone wants to localise their tools and that leads to questions of quality and standards ... in a disaster, if a national society chooses to do away with the capacity development and tools they’ve been provided, then they will not get any support because the question of what standards they’re working against will hang over them.” (Regional humanitarian actor)⁹¹</i></p>	<p>Dialogue and agreement on non-negotiables. There may also be opportunity for agreement on required outcomes as standards rather than the methods or means of obtaining standards.</p>
<p>Some stakeholders in PNG perceived localisation as an international mechanism or approach designed to hinder engagement with globalisation.</p>	<p>Enabling national actors to define and engage with localisation on their own terms and in their own language.</p>
<p>Lack of mutual understanding and agreement among stakeholders on steps to achieve localisation as well as their willingness to change business models and processes.</p>	<p>Agree on measures of localisation and measure the impact of changes made by various organisations to ensure that continued change is evidence based.</p>

Stakeholders also raised the risks of not localising humanitarian action. Some of these related to continued ineffectiveness of humanitarian response, but most significantly a number of stakeholders felt that a lack of action on localisation would seriously undermine relationships between national and international humanitarian actors in the Pacific. Specific risks that were raised include:

- eroding relationships with Pacific actors whose opinions have been sought but not acted upon,
- repeating damaging mistakes in recent past responses in the Pacific
- encouraging humanitarian action that does not best respond to the needs of the affected populations.

“The more times people’s voices are asked for and not acted upon — it can be damaging too.” (Pacific humanitarian actor)⁹³

⁹⁰ Interview 40
⁹¹ Interview 28
⁹² Interview 32

⁹³ Interview 17



Recommendations

Hot work for volunteers building new toilet blocks and wash basins in the tropical Pacific islands of Kiribati. Photo: Darren James/Australian Red Cross

Change is required to achieve the localisation of humanitarian action — at the humanitarian ecosystem level. The following recommendations provide a starting point for journeys that will differ across countries, but will ultimately support a more appropriate and fit-for-purpose humanitarian ecosystem in the Pacific.

Organisations should discuss the research findings and recommendations with national partners in order to identify practical steps for creating positive change. The report's 'Moving it Forward' sections provide additional suggestions for concrete steps. An action plan, including a risk mitigation and management plan, could be developed in collaboration with national actors. Tracking and evaluating the impact of changed practice will be important for adapting and improving humanitarian systems.

Ecosystem

Number	Recommendation	Theme
1.1	<p>✔ Invest more in national and regional processes to develop appropriate policies and standards</p> <p><i>Support national and/or regional adaptation of existing global standards such as Sphere standards or the Core Humanitarian Standard. Support national and/or regional development of standards in important areas such as financial transparency or the codes of conduct.</i></p>	Policies and standards
1.2	<p>✔ Determine minimal requirements for reporting, monitoring and evaluation and accountability that can be piloted in the region</p> <p><i>Work with Pacific actors to establish minimum requirements for all funding from Australian actors. This may include Australian donors and organisations working with Pacific partners to strip away heavy reporting requirements and standardise expectations. Agreed requirements could be piloted to evaluate their effectiveness.</i></p>	Policies and standards
1.3	<p>✔ Increase national participation in, and leadership of, all shared forums in the humanitarian ecosystem</p> <p><i>Map out the shared forums, including cluster meetings, Pacific-wide forums and conferences and baseline representation and voice. Strive to maximise national participation and leadership of these forums, including specific initiatives such as 50:50 participation.</i></p>	Relationships
1.4	<p>✔ Increase visibility of national leadership (and reduce the surge of international staffing) in humanitarian response</p> <p><i>Work with national and regional organisations to develop new approaches to nationalising/regionalising surge capacity. Regional deployment (or delegate) teams could facilitate this.</i></p>	Human Resources
1.5	<p>✔ Promote access to funding for national actors, support transparency in financing, and encourage localised decision making on funding</p> <p><i>Promote access to funding by creating a pooled mechanism for national actors. Support Pacific actors to develop financial transparency standards for international actors that detail information-sharing needs and a process for shared decision making.</i></p>	Finance
1.6	<p>✔ Undertake further study to measure and understand the impact of localisation and in particular the impact on gender equality.</p> <p><i>Reach agreement on the measures of impact and support processes to base line and end line progress. This needs to include specific research into the potential impact of localisation on gender equality.</i></p>	Monitoring, evaluation and learning

Organisation

Number	Recommendation	Theme
2.1	<p>✔ Develop flexibility in organisational, policies, standards and tools through consultation with national partners on adaptation</p> <p><i>Ensure that requirements (contractual or otherwise) relate to the desired outcomes and not to exact standards or tools; e.g. a competent and accountable finance team is preferable to a qualified accountant. This may require a joint review with national partners to reduce and revise products. When revised policies are adopted national actors should be engaged in, and ideally lead, trainings and briefings on organisational policy and practice.</i></p>	Policies and standards
2.2	<p>✔ Invest in strong and equitable national and international relationships before and during a response</p> <p><i>Begin by assessing the strengths and weaknesses of existing relationships through exercises such as decision tracking to understand where influence and power lies in the organisation. Then, develop initiatives to shift power and increase trust in relationships — such as international representatives only attending meetings with national counterparts, and/or tracking and potentially shifting decision making power in the organisation.</i></p>	Relationships
2.3	<p>✔ Review human resources practices and policies with a localisation lens</p> <p><i>Within your organisation, ask national partners to review practice and policies on deployment, performance review and recruitment. Consider also how practice and policies support national staff retention and professional development. Ask questions such as: who is making decisions? What are staff reporting against? Who are they reporting to? How are national staff being supported and retained in the organisation? (see localisation lens on page 26)</i></p>	Human Resources
2.4	<p>✔ Provide more funding directly to national partners and facilitate more transparency and control over funding decisions</p> <p><i>When funding national partners directly, ensure they have control over the budget and allocate overheads to support capacity development.</i></p>	Finance
2.5	<p>✔ Shift capacity development from established approaches to creative locally generated approaches; from reliance on international capacity to reliance on national and regional capacity; from a focus on response to a focus on preparedness; from fragmented and short term to strategic and long term</p> <p><i>Assess the extent to which your organisation has embraced these shifts in approach and develop a plan to move it even further. This should include concrete changes such as reducing short term training courses and increasing opportunities for staff to practice skills and capacities.</i></p>	Capacity Development

Individual

Number	Recommendation	Individual
3.1	<p>✔ Consider your role as an enabler (how to make tools and standards work in context)</p> <p><i>Strive to make policies, tools and standards work for the context rather than the context having to conform to standards.</i></p>	Policies and standards
3.2	<p>✔ Review your role in national–international relationships and take steps to improve the balance</p> <p><i>Consider your participation in cluster meetings, Pacific-wide forums and conferences, and strive to maximise national leadership of these forums and humanitarian action more broadly. This may include specific individual initiatives such as speaking more or less, and/or influencing forum agendas to give more floor time to national actors.</i></p>	Relationships
3.3	<p>✔ Review your own job description and role with a localisation lens</p> <p><i>Consider: how is localisation reflected in your job description and daily tasks? How are you supported and encouraged to localise? Who do you report to? Can any of these components be changed to increase localisation?</i></p>	Human Resources
3.4	<p>✔ Consider how you facilitate capacity development in your organisation</p> <p><i>Consider whether you are supporting local and creative capacity development approaches or defaulting to the internationalised approach. Identify and support opportunities for local and national actors to practise skills and capacities.</i></p>	Capacity Development

Annexe 1

Localising the Research Process

Research Questions

Primary Research Question

- What would a successfully localised disaster management ecosystem in the Pacific look like, and what changes do Red Cross and the broader humanitarian system need to make to get there?

Secondary Research Questions

- How should Red Cross' approaches to Capacity Development be transformed to enable a more localised disaster management ecosystem in the Pacific?
- In what ways and to what extent does a more localised approach offer greater effectiveness, efficiency, economy and equity?
- What structures need to change, and in what ways (legal, policy, financing, relationships)?
- What risks are associated with more localised disaster management capacity, and what steps can be taken to mitigate these risks?

Tools

Visioning

To identify what a localised response looks like from the perspective of different stakeholders and to facilitate a discussion about how it can be achieved (barriers/enablers).

The research team used visioning to allow participants to creatively imagine the future of localised humanitarian action. Visioning took place with groups of approximately 10 stakeholders from diverse backgrounds, with the resulting vision being represented in a visual diagram. A minimum of two visioning exercises were conducted in each case study country.

Focus group discussions

To gain insight into community perceptions of disaster response and how it could be better localised, and the benefits of this.

We used focus group discussions to engage with community actors. In Fiji, the focus group discussions

were adapted to run as a Talanoa, a traditional discussion session similar to a focus group discussion. Two community-based focus group discussions took place in each case study country.

Shadowing (participant observation)

To observe and analyse the interaction, communication and decision making processes of international and local/national humanitarian actors during stakeholder meetings or workshops.

Shadowing (participant observation) was undertaken at four different shared forums (cluster or other working group meetings). The team used shadowing to observe the number of international and national representatives present, and what they were talking about (thematically). The extent of the engagement of, and contribution by, local actors, and the decision making processes.

Key Informant Interviews

To generate data from a number of diverse stakeholders involved in all areas of humanitarian response.

Key informant interviews were conducted with diverse stakeholders in each of the case study countries. Key informants included representatives from communities, government, leaders and staff from NGOs and INGOs, staff from Red Cross movement partners, United Nations, peak bodies and private sector.

Resource review

Resources were reviewed to obtain extensive data from a number of diverse resources. These resources included will include, but are not limited to:

- Current literature
- Internal Red Cross documentation
- National Disaster Response Plans
- Grey literature
- Recent case studies and reports from other humanitarian actors
- Recent evaluations of humanitarian action in the Pacific
- Videos and recorded interviews

Annexe 2

Overview of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

What is the Movement?

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (the Movement) is the world's largest humanitarian network. Neutral and impartial, it endeavours to prevent and alleviate human suffering – in particular during times of disaster and conflicts.

The Movement is made up of millions of committed volunteers, supporters and staff spanning almost every country and territory in the world. It has three main components:

- The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
- The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (the Federation)
- 190 member Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (national societies)

The Movement supports communities to become stronger and safer through development projects and humanitarian activities. The Movement also works in cooperation with governments, public authorities, donors, other humanitarian organisations and the private sector to assist vulnerable people around the world, no matter who they are and no matter where they live.

Governments are not members of the Movement, but they take part in the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, held every four years. Through these Conferences, significant commitments are made between the Movement and governments, and these commitments build upon the obligations and responsibilities that governments have granted national societies in the 1949 Geneva Conventions and the 1977 Additional Protocols.

The Movement is connected through the use of its universally recognised emblems, (the red cross, red crescent or red crystal).

How does Australian Red Cross work internationally?

Australian Red Cross works in partnership with national societies in the Asia-Pacific region. These partnerships

are an investment in local first responders: they go beyond joint health and disaster management programs to strengthen governance, accountability, planning and other key functions.

Australian Red Cross supports the International Federation in responding to natural disasters and regional crises. We also strengthen emergency response tools and processes. In armed conflicts, we support the ICRC in areas such as water and sanitation, emergency health, tracing and shelter.

The Federation, ICRC and national societies are independent bodies. Each has its own status and exercises no authority over the others, although we work together and have common principles and policy frameworks.

What does the auxiliary role mean?

The 'auxiliary role' is a term used to express the specific and distinctive partnership a national society should have with its government in providing humanitarian services. This auxiliary relationship is recognised in international law and is found in legally binding documents domestically, such as the 1941 Australian Red Cross Royal Charter. It is one of the distinguishing features which sets the Movement apart from the UN, NGOs and other organisations who provide humanitarian services.

This unique relationship with government in no way implies that the government controls or directs the work of a national society. Each government must recognise the national society in some legal form, and is required to allow the national society to work in alignment with the Fundamental Principles.

The practical implications of the auxiliary role differ from country to country, however the common thread is that national societies are reliable partners for national and local public authorities, and have a strong capacity to mobilise human and material resources at the community level.

the
power of
humanity

