



LOCALISATION IN THE SOLOMON ISLANDS: DEMONSTRATING CHANGE

NOVEMBER 2019

This paper is part of Humanitarian Advisory Group's *Intention to impact: Localisation of humanitarian action in the Pacific* research project.

Development Services Exchange



PIANGO

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

HUMANITARIAN
ADVISORY GROUP



Research team: Inia Barry, Darius and Jennifer Wate from Development Services Exchange; Josaia Jirauni Osborne from PIANGO; and Josie Flint and Jessica McCommon from Humanitarian Advisory Group.

Graphic design: Jenny Moody and Jean Watson

Cover photo: Lone villager in canoe on Marovo Lagoon, Solomon Islands, South Pacific. Jan Butchofsky / Alamy Stock Photo.

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About Development Services Exchange

Development Services Exchange (DSE) is the national NGO umbrella body in the Solomon Islands. It was established in 1984 to facilitate and coordinate development services for NGOs and their partners. Currently DSE has a membership of 68 Civil Society Organisations (CSOs).

About PIANGO

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

About Humanitarian Advisory Group

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

Partnership for research impact

PIANGO, DSE and HAG are partnering on this research on localisation in the Pacific. Working together increases reach and influence across the region. HAG and PIANGO previously produced a paper outlining [Pacific priorities for measuring change](#), and two localisation baselines in [Vanuatu](#) and [Tonga](#).

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

HAG is undertaking a three-year research initiative called [Humanitarian Horizons](#) supported by the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The first project in the Humanitarian Horizons research program is Intention to impact: the localisation of humanitarian action. This project explores the action and impact of localised approaches to humanitarian action with a focus on four case study countries in the Pacific. The project aims to generate tools and approaches to measure localisation that can be adopted and used to inform humanitarian programming in the Pacific.



This little logo means we work hard to ensure that our business is a force for good. We have chosen to hold ourselves accountable to highest social, environmental and ethical standards, setting ourselves apart from business as usual.

FOREWORD

Inia Barry, Chair, DSE

DSE is the national umbrella body for civil society in the Solomon Islands, with the mission of strengthening effective civil society coordination. DSE works to achieve this by:

- ▶ coordinating civil society engagement with the national government, donors and development partners;
- ▶ facilitating information-sharing and exchange;
- ▶ fostering quality leadership; and
- ▶ promoting good governance practices for development effectiveness

Whilst DSE has not been traditionally involved in humanitarian coordination, many of our constituents are involved in DRR activities in addition to playing a key role in humanitarian response and recovery. Our interest in humanitarian work has been stimulated after being involved in leading this research on the ground.

Leading the research team during the field visit and getting to hear the voices of the people on the ground made us recognise the need for local actors to be involved in any humanitarian response since they are aware of the context on the ground.

Solomon Islands already has a localised mechanism in place which is led by the government through the NDMO; however for CSOs there is a greater need for a CSO mechanism whereby local NGOs and CSOs can meaningfully engage during humanitarian response and recovery.

To this effect, DSE believes that localised humanitarian action is needed to enhance the involvement of local actors. It is our hope that the findings of the report would lead to changes in how humanitarian response is shaped in Solomon Islands.



Inia Barry
DSE Chair

Emeline Siale Ilolahia, Executive Director, PIANGO

Localisation is a transforming agenda that emanated from the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit. This is reflected globally in the Grand Bargain's Localisation Workstream. At the Regional level it is also embraced in the Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific (FRDP), endorsed by Pacific Islands Forum Leaders in 2017 as an integrated regional approach to address climate change, disaster risk management and community resilience. In 2018, the Pacific Resilience Partnership was established to implement the FRDP. As a member, PIANGO sees localisation as a key strategy to achieve the goals of the Framework to reinforce local leadership, strengthen community resilience and reinforce localisation of aid. This is especially so in the Pacific because we recognise that communities have been living with disasters from time immemorial and it is the communities who are always the first and the last response in any disaster. Thus, it is imperative that we recognise the local systems that are in place and complement it with our actions.

This research is aligned to PIANGO's Strategic Focus Area 3 on 'Evidence Based Policy Advocacy.' We partnered with Humanitarian Advisory Group to convene a 'Talanoa' with some of the Pacific humanitarian actors in identifying the seven Pacific priorities for tracking progress on localisation. We have further extended this partnership with the Development Services Exchange – PIANGO's national member in Solomon Islands to undertake a localisation baseline in Solomon Islands. This recognises the critical role of local CSOs in owning the research process whilst at the same time driving the necessary changes to progress localisation on the ground. This research is groundbreaking and the baseline data collected contributes to our policy influencing advocacy in the regional and global arena.



Emeline Siale Ilolahia,
PIANGO Executive Director

INTRODUCTION

The international humanitarian sector is currently developing ways to measure progress on localisation following the commitments made at the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016. This has also been a key issue for humanitarian actors in the Pacific region. Generating an evidence base on localisation is important in order to demonstrate change is happening and its impact.

The Solomon Islands is highly vulnerable to disasters. Each year, it is expected to incur an average USD\$20 million in losses due to earthquakes and tropical cyclones.¹ Localisation in disaster response and disaster risk management is an important issue, and influenced by a history of conflict and international engagement. This report outlines a high level snapshot of progress on localisation in Solomon Islands, incorporating the perspectives of 17 national and international actors and a number of communities.

The report is part of the localisation baseline series of reports for four Pacific countries – Fiji, Vanuatu, Tonga and the Solomon Islands. It outlines progress on localisation in the areas of partnerships,

leadership, capacity, funding, coordination and complementarity, participation and policy influence and advocacy. The baseline utilises the Measuring Localisation Framework developed through a consultation process in three countries undertaken by PIANGO and HAG.

METHODOLOGY

Humanitarian Advisory Group developed the baselining methodology in collaboration with PIANGO. It was designed to reflect Pacific ethical research approaches, and methods of conducting research in participatory and localised ways. This included undergoing national research approval processes in the case study countries. The research team comprised international, and national researchers from PIANGO, DSE and Humanitarian Advisory Group. The full methodology is outlined in first baseline report for Vanuatu.² It is important to note that this is a high-level snapshot of trends, and as such, limitations arise from interpretation bias, representation of actors and availability of evidence.



¹ <https://www.gfdr.org/en/solomon-islands>

² https://humanitarianadvisorygroup.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Vanuatu-Baseline-Report_February-2019_FINAL.pdf

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS



PARTNERSHIPS



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



LEADERSHIP



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



CAPACITY



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



COORDINATION AND COMPLEMENTARITY



Key Finding: LIMITED to SOME EVIDENCE. There is limited to some evidence of commonly agreed approaches to complementarity ('as local as possible, as international as necessary').



FUNDING



Key Finding: LIMITED EVIDENCE. There is limited evidence of action to localise funding.



POLICY INFLUENCE AND ADVOCACY



Key Finding: LIMITED to SOME EVIDENCE. There is limited to some evidence that policies better reflect the priorities of national and local civil society actors.



PARTICIPATION



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

Level of progress



NO



LIMITED



SOME



STRONG

LOCALISATION IN SOLOMON ISLANDS: CONTEXT

Throughout the past decade, the Solomon Islands has been affected by numerous disasters, including cyclones, floods, earthquakes, and tsunamis. Localisation of humanitarian action has been influenced most recently by responses to the Temotu earthquake and tsunami in 2013, Tropical Cyclone Ita in 2014, and the Makira earthquake in December 2016.

Contextual factors and relevancy for localisation



1 Civil society presence

Sixty-eight civil society organisations (CSOs) are registered in the Solomon Islands.³ Only a few international organisations have an ongoing presence there.



2 Humanitarian response architecture

The Solomon Islands government leads on disaster management. This establishes national clusters headed by sectorial committees which differ from the traditional international cluster system. The National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) and National Disaster Operations Committee (NDOC) lead in planning and coordinating response across local and international actors.⁴



3 Disaster profile

Solomon Islands ranks fourth globally in terms of disaster risk.⁵ Tropical cyclones and earthquakes are the most common hazards, in addition to flooding and tsunamis. Recent large-scale disasters include severe flooding in the capital city, Honiara caused by TC Ita in April 2014 and a strong undersea earthquake of magnitude 8.0 which occurred near Makira. Both disasters triggered a significant international response.⁶



4 Scale

The Solomon Islands is an archipelago comprised of 992 islands. It has a population of approximately 560,000 spread over 347 inhabited islands.



5 Traditional structures

The church plays an important role in civil society in Solomon Islands, with 98% of the population identifying as Christian. The majority of land is under customary ownership, managed by specific community-based landowning groups. Village communities are also increasingly being organised into formalised community-based organisations to address high priority needs.⁷



6 Humanitarian and development financing

The Solomon Islands is the third largest recipient of development aid in the Pacific region, receiving USD\$114 million in 2017. Less than 1% of this was directly for humanitarian programming. Australia is the largest donor, followed by Taiwan, Asian Development Bank, EU institutions, and UNDP.⁸

³ <http://www.piango.org/our-members/member-countries/solomon-islands/>

⁴ National Disaster Risk Management Plan, 2009

⁵ RUB-IFHV, World Risk Report, 2018

⁶ <https://www.gfdr.org/en/solomon-islands>

⁷ ADB, Civil Society Briefs: Solomon Islands, 2017 <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/228836/csb-sol.pdf>

⁸ Lowry Institute Pacific Aid Map, Solomon Islands, 2017 <https://pacificaidmap.lowryinstitute.org>






PARTNERSHIPS

Evidence of progress



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

Impact indicator	There are equitable and complementary partnerships between local, national and international actors.	
Key data ⁹	Evidence of progress	
Indicator 1: Partnerships based on equitable and ethical practices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ International, national and local actors highlighted some good practices and use of principles in partnerships ▶ International agencies and local and national actors reported a similar number of partnerships: 83% of international actors had more than 3 partnerships compared with 70% of local and national actors ▶ Local partners perceived limited equitable partnerships with mutual transparency 	 Limited	
Indicator 2: Longer term strategic partnerships that build systems and processes which mirror the ambitions and goals of local/national partners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ There is some evidence of longer-term strategic partnerships, particularly with the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) and through the Solomon Islands Humanitarian Alliance of NGOs (SIHAN) ▶ Many local and national actors raised concerns about the prevalence of short-term, project-based partnerships which lacked continuity and accountability ▶ National and local actors frequently do not have operational staff and overhead costs funded in partnerships – only 30% indicated that partnerships always fund operational costs and only 40% reported that international partners always fund overheads costs not linked to projects ▶ 30% of national and local actors indicated that partnerships always fund training for staff not related to the project compared to 100% of international actors 	 Limited	
Indicator 3: Increased power and decision-making of local and national actors within partnerships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The decision-making process is still largely dominated by internationals – some local and national actors report being regularly left out of the decision-making process 	 Limited	

⁹ For the means of verification and data sources against each indicator, see the Vanuatu baseline https://humanitarianadvisorygroup.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Vanuatu-Baseline-Report_February-2019_FINAL.pdf

Perceptions and practice

Nearly all international actors indicated that they had multiple local and national partners in the Solomon Islands. Partnerships with the government and National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) were common, whereas local and national civil society organisations were less represented. There is some evidence towards progress on better utilising local partnerships. One international actor highlighted that they provide direct funding, monitoring and support for all work done by local partners.¹⁰

NUMBER OF PARTNERSHIPS



Effective Partnerships

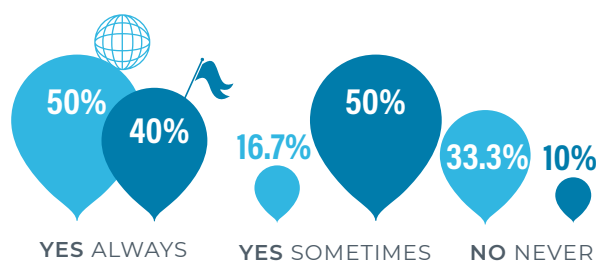
One example of strong and complementary partnership practices can be seen through the Australian Humanitarian Partnership (AHP) and Disaster READY initiatives across the Pacific. Through this program, various Australian NGOs are operating in Solomon Islands in partnership with local and national NGOs, communities and local government. The initiative focuses on strengthening preparedness and response leadership in village-based institutions and schools, implementing village and school disaster action plans and further connecting provincial disaster management offices and communities.¹¹

100% of international organisations reported that partnerships always involved financial support

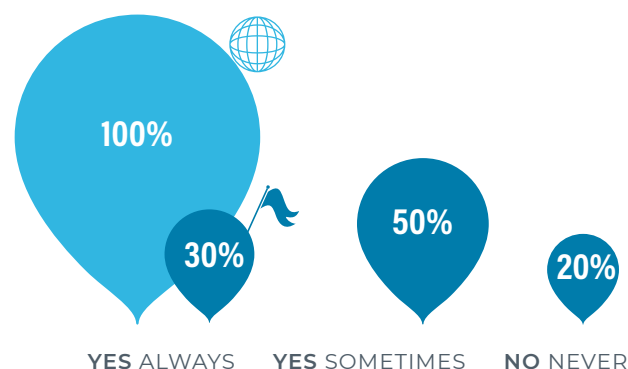


All international respondents indicated that local partners received financial support from their organisation. Some partnership agreements included operational, training and overhead costs, while others did not.¹² National actors reported that some partnerships provide training.¹³ Interviews highlighted there is need for more adequate and accessible funding from partners.¹⁴

Do the partnerships fund overhead costs not linked to projects?



Do the partnerships fund operational staff costs of your partner?



¹⁰ Interview 12

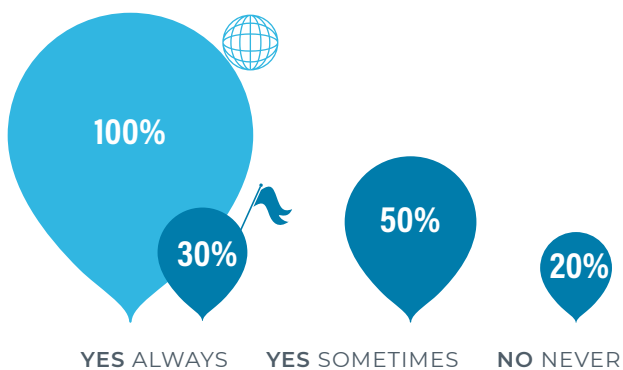
¹¹ <https://www.australianhumanitarianpartnership.org/solomonislands>

¹² Interview 13, 7, 9

¹³ Interviews 2, 3, 7, 8

¹⁴ Interviews 1, 3, 4, 6, 7

Do the partnerships fund training for staff not related to the project?



In practice international actors are still perceived to dominate partnerships. Some international actors reported partnerships through the Solomon Islands Humanitarian Alliance of NGOs (SIHAN). SIHAN was established to assist with collaboration and joint programming in response. However, the network consists largely of international organisations and is not perceived to adequately incorporate local NGOs and community groups.¹⁵ Overall, local and national actors raised concerns that partnerships are not equitable, and international organisations are perceived as seeking to ‘tick the box.’¹⁶ One international actor outlined that partnerships with local and national actors are predominantly for program implementation, lacking evidence of equitable partnership principles.¹⁷

“If it is genuine then good, but if it is to tick the box, the impact will not go down well with the people. Internationals should consider that it is the local actors that will be criticised at the end of the day.”¹⁸ (National actor)

“We always question the partnerships of our immediate partners. It is only for project implementation. Some of the partners are dictating; it needs to be clear and be on both terms.”¹⁹ (National actor)

Local actors highlighted numerous ‘short term partnerships’ formed in the direct aftermath of a disaster. These arrangements tend to involve mainly short-term project-based work that does not always align with national and local priorities. Local and national organisations are seeking mutual accountability and transparency from their partners, and further stress the importance of developing strategic partnerships in humanitarian response and DRR.²⁰

¹⁵ Interview 9, 11, 12
¹⁶ Interview 1, 2, 5, 6, 7
¹⁷ Interview 9
¹⁸ Interview 2
¹⁹ Interview 5
²⁰ Interview 5, 6






LEADERSHIP

Evidence of progress



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

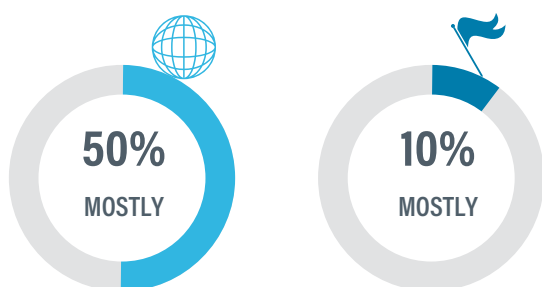
Impact indicator: National actors define and lead on humanitarian action.	
Key Data	Evidence of progress
<p>Indicator 1: International actors support and strengthen national leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ There are some positive examples of this however the majority of national and local actors interviewed still see significant opportunity for international actors to strengthen local and national leadership ▶ 83% of international actors indicate they have facilitated local and national partners to meet with an international donor: 40% of local and national actors indicated that they had met with an international donor more than 5 times in the past 6 months 	 Some
<p>Indicator 2: Local and national actors lead response and dominate decision-making</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ International, national and local actors perceive that the national government leads response ▶ 67% of international actors and 80% of local and national actors perceived that the government leads on decision making in emergencies ▶ Only 20% of national actors perceive local NGOs to lead on decision making mostly or all of the time, whereas no international actors perceive this to be the case 	 Some
<p>Indicator 3: International actors work with and respect in- country leadership structures and mechanisms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 50% of international actors indicated that international actors mostly respected in-country mechanisms, compared to just 10% of local and national actors ▶ Local and national actors indicate that existing networks are not always used effectively, and some international actors bypass national and provincial leadership structures ▶ All actors identified that working with traditional leadership structures needed to be significantly strengthened 	 Limited

Perceptions and practice

Both international and local and national actors agree that the national government has taken a strong leadership role in humanitarian response.

"The government has to give the green light to NGOs before we can respond."²¹
(International actor)

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

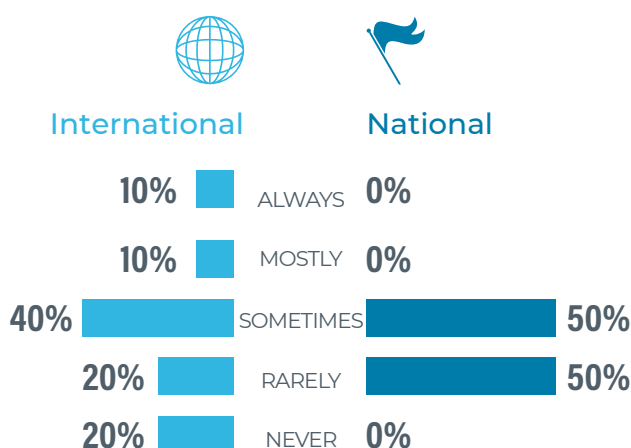


Actors at both levels reported areas in which the government was effectively leading humanitarian response, but also highlighted that national actors are still fairly dependent on donor funding, which can affect this leadership in practice.²²

"Government leadership is there on paper, but it is donor driven. There is focus on what the donors want so the leadership bends."²³ (National actor)

Through the National Disaster Council, the NDMO and the National Disaster Operations Committee (NDOC) lead in planning and coordinating response across local and international actors.²⁴ Local and national actors report that international organisations sometimes overstep national leadership.²⁵ Only 10% of local and national actors indicated that international organisations respect in-country leadership structures and mechanisms. International actors reported that there can be confusion at times when working with the government during response.²⁶

Do you think that local and national NGOs lead on decision making in humanitarian emergencies in your country?



"International humanitarian actors marched into the country and they were wanting to lead without realising that we have been doing this for the last hundreds of years."²⁷ (National actor)

²¹ Interview 11

²² Interviews 13, 16

²³ Interview 8

²⁴ National Disaster Risk Management Plan, 2009

²⁵ Interviews 1, 7, 8, 17

²⁶ Interview 11

²⁷ Interview 17

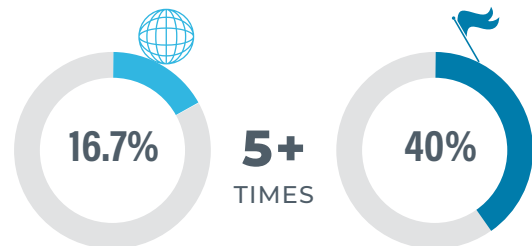
“There is little consensus decision made for us rather than by us; but it is changing.”²⁸
(National actor)

While international organisations still appear to carry more weight in the decision-making process, there is evidence of increased engagement with local actors. Local and national actors report a gradual shift to more inclusive approaches and reveal some instances in which community-based organisations are taking the lead.²⁹ There is opportunity for local NGOs to strengthen their leadership role.³⁰

How many times in the last six months has your organisation met directly with an international donor?

ENGAGEMENT WITH DONORS

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



²⁸ Interview 8

²⁹ Interviews 6, 15

³⁰ Interviews 1, 9, 17



CAPACITY

Evidence of progress



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

Impact Indicator: Local and national organisations are able to respond effectively and efficiently and have targeted and relevant support from international actors.	
Key Data	Evidence of Progress
<p>Indicator 1: National and regional surge capacity and use of local over international expertise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ There is limited to some evidence that capacity support has increased alignment, appropriateness and relevance to the requests of local and national actors (versus the compliance needs of international actors) 	<p>✓✓ Some</p>
<p>Indicator 2: International actors do not undermine capacity of national actors in emergency response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 60% of local and national actors perceive that the capacity of in-country partners is strengthened by international support mostly or all of the time ▶ 40% of local and national actors indicate that they independently define their own capacity needs and 60% report that needs are assessed by a combination of both local and international organisations ▶ 67% of international actors and 70% of national and local actors agree that international organisations focus on the areas of capacity strengthening that local partners need 	<p>✓✓✓ Strong</p>
<p>Indicator 3: Contextualised humanitarian standards, tools and policies are available</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Contextualising international standards is perceived as significantly important by local and national actors ▶ There is limited evidence of contextualised standards and tools accessible at the local level 	<p>✓ Limited</p>
<p>Indicator 4: Legislation and plans in place to support national response capacity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The National Disaster Response Plan was reviewed in 2018 and prescribes roles and responsibilities at the national and provincial levels ▶ There is limited to some evidence of any other contextualised plans or policies to standardise national response 	<p>✓✓ Some</p>

Perceptions and practice

"In our view, the international agencies here should be strengthening national agencies to deliver but that is not the way it is at the moment."³¹ (National actor)

Both international and national actors agree that appropriate capacity strengthening for local partners is essential for effective response. Both have cited challenges mobilising resources effectively and in a timely manner in emergencies.³² International organisations stress the importance of enabling local partners to manage their own projects, but local actors feel that internationals do not always focus on appropriate initiatives tailored to their priorities.³³

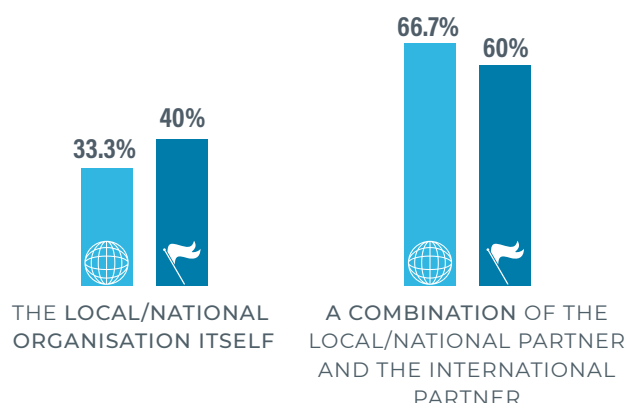
Do you feel that the capacity of the in-country partner is strengthened by international support?



"Now that you have trained us; where is the support?"³⁴ (National actor)

One of the most frequently cited concerns for capacity development revolved around the sustainability of operations. Local and national actors report that international organisations generally do not remain in the communities long-term and it is often left up to community organisations to take over for recovery phases.³⁵ National actors emphasised the importance of building the capacity of communities in disaster risk reduction and preparedness so that they are better able to act in the absence of international support.³⁶

Who defines the capacity needs of national partner organisations?



³¹ Interview 3

³² Interview 3, 5, 7, 14

³³ Interview 9, 1, 3

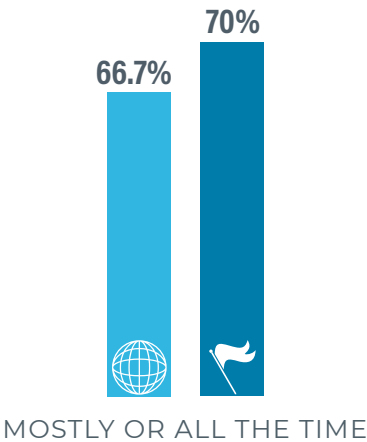
³⁴ Interview 1

³⁵ Interview 4, 6

³⁶ Interview 8, 10, 17

Capacity strengthening appears to be a top priority for both international and national actors. The drive for localisation is evident but international actors report that 'localisation takes time' and it can be challenging to provide an enabling environment.³⁷ 60% of local and national actors indicate that their organisation is strengthened by international support and 70% perceived that international actors mostly or always focus on areas of capacity strengthening that local partners need. No local or national actor indicated that they were ever entirely left out of the process to determine capacity needs.

Do international actors focus on the areas of capacity strengthening that local partners need?



³⁷ Interview 9, 14



COORDINATION COMPLEMENTARITY

AND

Evidence of progress



Key Finding: LIMITED to SOME EVIDENCE. There is limited to some evidence of commonly agreed approaches to complementarity ('as local as possible, as international as necessary').

Impact Indicator: There is application and respect for commonly agreed approaches to be 'as local as possible and as international as necessary'.	
Key Data	Evidence of Progress
<p>Indicator 1: National representation and engagement in coordination forums and meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 100% of international actors indicated that they participate in international-national coordination forums and meetings, compared to 60% of national actors ▶ 50% of international actors and 30% of local and national actors report that cluster (sector committee) meetings are mostly or always conducted in the local language ▶ 67% of international actors and 40% of national and local actors report that cluster (sector committee) reports are never written in the local language ▶ 50% of international actors perceive that their ideas are always or mostly valued in coordination forums, compared to 40% of local and national actors 	<p>✓✓ Some</p>
<p>Indicator 2: Clearly defined parameters for international actors complementing local and national actors in humanitarian response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Some policies developed and utilised regarding role of international actors in humanitarian response, however in practice there is a perception that this needs to be strengthened³⁸ ▶ Coordination between international and national actors is still sometimes fragmented in practice, in particular between national and sub-national levels 	<p>✓✓ Some</p>
<p>Indicator 3: National civil society coordination mechanisms are funded and have technical capacity to operate in humanitarian response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Limited funding for civil society coordination in response through DSE and SIHAN 	<p>✓ Limited</p>

³⁸ National DRM Plan, 2009

<p>Indicator 4: Humanitarian response is delivered in a way that is collaborative and complementary (i.e. based on an analysis of the specific strengths/weaknesses of different humanitarian actors)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ There is limited to no evidence of analysis of specific strengths or weaknesses of different humanitarian actors ▶ Some actors reported duplication of services between international and national actors in response 	<p>✓</p> <p>Limited</p>
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Perceptions and practice

Actors at both levels identified that whilst there are some positive practices, coordination and complementarity of roles in the Solomon Islands can be significantly strengthened to support localisation. The Solomon Islands' national coordination mechanism differs somewhat from the international cluster system. Under the umbrella of the National Disaster Council and NDOC, there are five national clusters: response and initial assessment, welfare and internally displaced persons (IDP), livelihood, public services, and infrastructure. These are run by the appropriate ministries at the national and provincial level.³⁹ Local and national actors expressed that international actors need to better adapt and contextualise approaches for working with the Solomon Islands' national cluster approach.⁴⁰ International actors reported challenges with working through structures in a variety of ways.

"Sometimes they don't follow our structures, sometimes they step on our toes."⁴¹ (National actor)

"There are so many parallel structures and systems – doing it in many different ways."⁴² (International actor)

All actors suggested that coordination needed to be strengthened and complementarity of roles in response better articulated.

"The government needs to be more proactive on grey areas – clearly saying where INGOs should be focusing."⁴³ (International actor)

International actors reported a higher level of participation in coordination forums; only 30% of local and national actors indicated that cluster meetings were generally conducted in the local language. Both international and national actors raised challenges with supporting nationally-led coordination in response and particularly in recovery phases.⁴⁴ International and national respondents agree that there is considerable room for improvement in the complementarity of roles in humanitarian response.⁴⁵

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



³⁹ National DRM Plan, 2009

⁴⁰ Interview 10, 17

⁴¹ Interview 4

⁴² Interview 14

⁴³ Interview 13

⁴⁴ Interview 3, 12

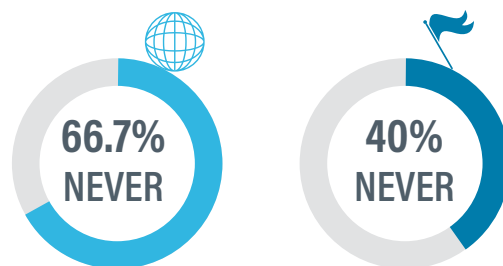
⁴⁵ Interview 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 16

Are cluster meetings conducted in the local language?



"SIHAN is all international NGOs, there is a need for local actors."⁴⁶ (International actor)

Are cluster reports written in the local language?



"We might not have the technical expertise to work in the cluster, but we bring the voices of the community."⁴⁷ (Local actor)

⁴⁶ Interview 12
⁴⁷ Interview 1



FUNDING

Evidence of progress



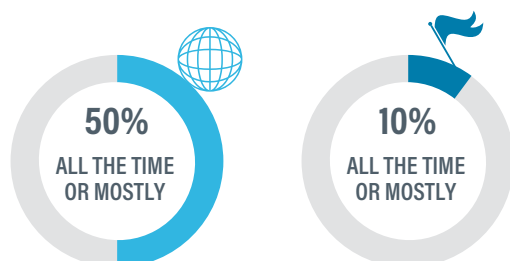
Key Finding: LIMITED EVIDENCE. There is limited evidence of action to localise funding.

Impact indicator Increased number of national/local organisations describing financial independence that allows them to respond more efficiently to humanitarian response	
Key data	Evidence of progress
<p>Indicator 1: Local and national actors have access to direct funding with limited or no barriers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Limited example of access to direct funding, however some good examples of partnerships funding core and overhead costs ▶ Local actors reported continued barriers to access and stressed the need for increased direct, core funding ▶ National and local actors articulated that partnerships need to include objectives for strengthening national and local actors' ability to be able to access direct funding 	<p>✓ Limited</p>
<p>Indicator 2: Increase in the amount of humanitarian funding to local and national actors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 100% of international respondents reported that partnerships always involved financial support to local and national partners; ▶ 60% of national and local actors feel that their organisation is mostly or always financially stable compared to 100% of international actors ▶ 50% of local and national actors had 3 or more sources of funding, compared to 33% of international actors ▶ No funding mechanism for national and local actors in response 	<p>✓✓ Some</p>
<p>Indicator 3: Local and national actors have increased decision making over financial matters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ There is some evidence of transparency in funding relationships, including international organisations sharing budgets with local partners. ▶ 10% of local and national actors indicated that international partners always share entire project budgets and financial reports compared to 50% of international actors ▶ There is little to no evidence that local partners have increased influence over financial decision making 	<p>✓ Limited</p>

Perceptions and practice

There are positive examples of transparent, equitable and longer-term funding agreements to support response and recovery in the Solomon Islands. One international organisation reported an agreed admin or overhead percentage fee with local partners, and others reported long-term funding agreements for disaster risk reduction and management. Significant barriers remain however for many local organisations to access funding, and there is no mechanism for funding local and national actors in response.⁴⁸

How often are project budgets and financial reports shared with national and local partners?



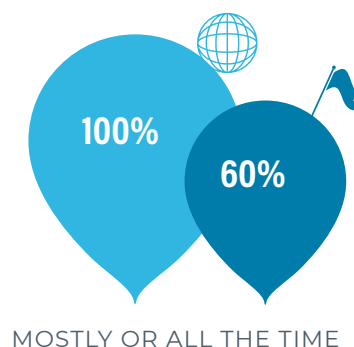
"We have some small assistance funds for immediate response, but it is not much. There is a need to pump more into the local organisations."⁴⁹ (National actor)

"All these (national or local) organisations have no allocated resources for humanitarian response."⁵⁰ (International actor)

"We don't have the money, but we have a lot of impact on the community with the little resources that we have."⁵¹ (National actor)

How often do you feel your organisation is financially stable (e.g. operational budget enough for three months)?

National and local actors articulated that partnerships need to include objectives for strengthening national and local actors' ability to be able to access direct funding. This should include focusing more on capacity strengthening for local partners and staff so that they are prepared to access direct funding and be grant ready.⁵²



48 Interview 12

49 Interview 1

50 Interview 13

51 Interview 1

52 Interview 2

"We were supposed to have financial training, and support developing organisational policies [from our international partner] but that is yet to happen."⁵³ (National actor)

Approximately how many sources of funding does your organisation have for humanitarian preparedness and response work?

66.7% of **international organisations** had **1-2 sources of funding**

50% of **local and national organisations** had **1-2 sources of funding**

50% of **local and national organisations** had **3-4 sources of funding**

⁵³ Interview 2






POLICY INFLUENCE AND ADVOCACY

Evidence of progress



Key finding: LIMITED TO SOME EVIDENCE. There is limited to some evidence that policies better reflect the priorities of national and local civil society actors.

Impact Indicator: Humanitarian action reflects the priorities of affected communities and national actors	
Key Data	Evidence of Progress
<p>Indicator 1: Policies are informed by local and national voices including communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ 70% of local and national actors report that their organisation is involved in influencing the development of humanitarian policies and national planning processes mostly or all the time, compared to 100% of international actors▶ Some evidence of feedback mechanisms being used to inform programming and policy, however this is limited▶ Strong perception that international policies and standards need to be contextualised	 Some
<p>Indicator 2: National actors are recognised as key stakeholders in national debates about policies and standards that may have significant impact on them</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ The recently reviewed National Disaster Management Plan was an opportunity for all actors to influence humanitarian response priorities	 Some
<p>Indicator 3: Local and national actors influence on donor priorities in country, including program design and implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Positive trends of local and national actors meeting with donors, however a strong perception by local and national actors that this could be strengthened▶ Limited examples of national actors leading on program design	 Limited

Perceptions and practice

“We are always consulted on policies at the national level, whether our views are taken on board is another thing.”⁵⁴ (National actor)

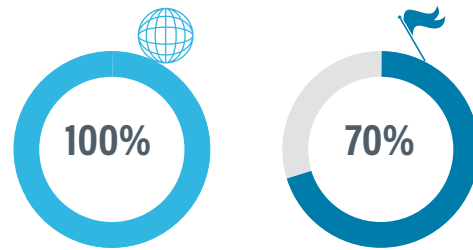
National and local actors described positive examples of engagement in policy development, however some articulated that their priorities were not always addressed or included. Both international and national actors articulated that there is a disconnect between policy and practice.

⁵⁴ Interview 3

There is also a need to better contextualise international standards and frameworks to better align with national policies, and the priorities of local and national actors. For example, contextualising Sphere standards and policies in relation protection, including rethinking roles, was articulated as important.⁵⁵

“International actors need to know about protection, participation and dignity in our own context. It is different from the international definition.”⁵⁶ (National actor)

How much are you or your organisation involved in influencing/feeding ideas into the development of humanitarian policies and planning processes nationally?



⁵⁵ Interview 13
⁵⁶ Interview 1



PARTICIPATION

Evidence of progress



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

Impact indicator: Communities lead and participate in humanitarian response	
Key Data	Evidence of progress
<p>Indicator 1: Development of community/contextualised standards for all actors working in that context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ National and local actors claim that the global cluster system and international standards do not work in the Solomon Islands▶ There is no evidence of established community standards	<p>✓ Limited</p>
<p>Indicator 2: Communities have increased opportunities to shape programming, including evaluating INGO work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Both international and national actors indicate that communities are often left out of the decision-making process▶ 83% of international actors and 90% of local and national actors indicate that they take opinions of affected people into account during design and implementation of programmes▶ There is no evidence of community engagement in evaluations of humanitarian programming	<p>✓ Limited</p>

Perceptions and practice

"Internationals should understand what are the norms and behaviour that work in the Solomon Islands."⁵⁷ (National actor)

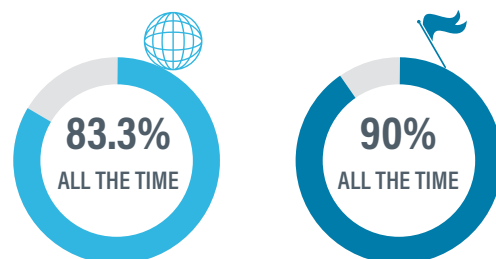
There are classic examples of good cooperation especially with the case of [international partner] and the community – whereby there is ownership by the community about the project.⁵⁸ (Community representative)

⁵⁷ Interview 16

⁵⁸ Community focus group discussion

There are some positive examples of community engaging in program design and implementation however there is a need to strengthen this. Local actors highlighted the importance of traditional knowledge and the recognition of local structures and methods which have been in place for centuries.⁵⁹ Local people are often able to better understand the context of disaster and mobilize communities and resources in a way that is culturally sensitive and appropriate. International norms and standards are not always suitable; there is need in the Solomon Islands to develop contextualised tools and standards at the community level which harness traditional knowledge and aid complementarity between international and national actors.

Does your organisation take opinions of affected people into account during design and implementation of programs?



We have built the capacity of communities; some of them have accessed funding from donors directly or we act as a fiscal agency for them. But there is STILL A GAP as partners should now work directly with the community. (National actor)⁶⁰ At most times, communities are left out.⁶¹ (International actor) We ensure that a representative from Provincial government is there with us when we engage with our local partners; we ask the communities to make decisions and ensure they come up with their own plans. Communities are taking the lead in identifying their own way of doing things."⁶² (International actor) Internationals should consider that it is the **local actors** that will be criticized at the end of the day.⁶³ (National actor) Places such as Rennel Islands experience a lot of disaster and they **STILL RESORT TO TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE**. There are caves that we evacuate to and there are easy to built structures that we construct for a cyclone. **The resilience level is still strong.**⁶⁴ (National actor)

59 Interview 1, 5, 6

60 Interview 5

61 Interview 11

62 Interview 12

63 Interview 2

64 Interview 3

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

This baseline presents a mixed picture of localisation in Solomon Islands in 2019. On the one hand, there have been concrete efforts to shift power and decision-making to national actors. The government is leading on disaster management and there is intention to support local capacity and partner more equitably with local partners in response.

On the other hand, there is limited evidence of activity or impact in key areas such as finance and participation. Most local actors indicate that funding from donors remains inadequate and communities continue to be left out of the decision-making process. International organisations appear to dominate most partnerships and donor agendas tend to overrule local priorities. This contributes to an overall picture of limited evidence of activity and impact.

This baseline also provides an opportunity. It can be used as a basis for discussion between key actors in context and as a catalyst for change. It also provides an opportunity for individual organisations and the humanitarian community in Solomon Islands to set targets and track change.

Currently only 10% of national and local actors think international actors respect and work with in-country leadership structures and mechanisms. There is an opportunity for discussion about how this percentage can increase over the coming years, including mapping out steps to bring about that change and setting a target for improvement.

USING THIS REPORT

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

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

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

NEXT STEPS FOR THIS PROCESS

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

Josaia Jirauni
josaia@piango.org

Josie Flint
jflint@hag.org.au

