BEYOND BARRIERS:
Behaviours to enable a more resilient Pacific

September 2022

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

About HAG

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 contributes to excellence in humanitarian practice. As an ethically driven business, we combine humanitarian passion with entrepreneurial agility to think and do things differently.

About Disaster READY

The Disaster READY initiative is part of the Australian Humanitarian Partnership (AHP), a five-year (2017–22), $50 million partnership between DFAT and Australian non-governmental organisations to improve humanitarian response. Disaster READY was designed to strengthen disaster preparedness and management across the Pacific and Timor-Leste.

Beyond Barriers research overview

The AHP commissioned HAG to conduct research to determine persistent barriers to, and realistic opportunities for, better integration of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation programming to build and sustain community resilience. The project began by publishing a foundational literature review in July 2021, before proceeding to collect data across five case study countries to complete Phase 1 of the research. Case study data collection was led by national researchers in each country and supported by a regional research lead based in Suva, and included desk review, key informant interviews and community focus group discussions. This phase resulted in case study reports for Fiji, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, PNG and Timor-Leste – the countries where AHP Disaster READY programming is active.[1]

Phase 2 began with a reflection and learning workshop in December 2021. This brought more than 60 stakeholders together to share learnings from Phase 1 and observe presentations from practitioners and technical experts working towards similar goals. This workshop served to target and validate emerging themes and opportunities identified by this research and to ensure collaboration with other initiatives. Phase 2 also includes an additional study in Tonga (forthcoming), and is described in detail in this report.

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1   For more information about AHP Disaster READY programming, see Box 4 below.

CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

AHP   Australian Humanitarian Partnership

DRR   Disaster Risk Reduction

CCA   Climate Change Adaptation

DFAT   Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

FRDP   Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific

HAG   Humanitarian Advisory Group

NAB   National Advisory Board on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction

NGO   Non-Governmental Organisation

PIC   Pacific Island Country

PNG   Papua New Guinea

PRP   Pacific Resilience Partnership

PRS   Pacific Resilience Standards

TC   Tropical Cyclone

VDRC   Village Disaster Climate Risk Committee

VS   Vanuatu Spotlight

INTRODUCTION

The agenda for more resilient communities[2] has long dominated conversations, strategies, policies and actions across the Pacific region. Key national, regional and international stakeholders, from government to practitioners to civil society, have driven the growing momentum and urgency in the region to respond to increasing climate and disaster risk.[3] However, despite significant progress in the region, persistent challenges remain, leaving Pacific communities increasingly exposed and vulnerable to compound risks from climate change and a range of hazards. This research paper contributes to the agenda for a more resilient Pacific by recognising the need for actors across the region to support more integrated approaches to foster resilient Pacific communities.

This report is evidenced by findings from research conducted between 2020 and 2022 by Humanitarian Advisory Group (HAG) in partnership with World Vision Australia and the Australian Humanitarian Partnership (AHP) (see page 2). Insights and principles from behavioural science were applied to evidence from this research to develop the vision for resilient communities and a practical framework for agencies to help drive real change.

> 'The key for me is enabling the environment for communities to help them understand their risk [...] if you want to encourage behavioural change to help the communities understand the integration agenda, there needs to be some self-reflection in the system that supports them.' (Regional actor)[4]

What this report does

The behavioural objective that this report is designed to influence is for implementing agencies to empower and support communities to holistically understand disaster and climate risk and implement measures that strengthen their resilience in their day-to-day lives. Hence, this report:

▶ **Presents a vision for resilient Pacific communities:** The vision is evidenced by multi-year research in the Pacific seeking to explore opportunities to advance the integration of disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change adaptation (CCA) programming to improve community outcomes. The vision depicted below (see Box 3) acknowledges that integration of DRR and CCA is part of the process, while community-led resilience is the ultimate behavioural objective

▶ **Proposes a behavioural model to guide effective agency practice that moves away from historical silos towards integrated approaches:** This report focuses on the most important behavioural shifts required among key actors that will better enable Pacific communities to reduce their risk and exposure to climate change and increasing natural hazards. The proposed behavioural interventions target actors implementing DRR and CCA programming in the Pacific, because these actors have the ability to offer options to communities that otherwise may be inaccessible

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2   Refer to Box 2 below for how this research defines communities, noting that communities are not homogeneous and are made up of diverse individuals
3   See Section 1 for more information about regional momentum
4   Interview 11

- **Provides a framework for agencies to ensure they are contributing towards resilient Pacific communities:** The guidance for implementing agencies was developed to overcome behavioural barriers and target key behaviours that can support integrated approaches and facilitate community-led resilience. The end objective is that agencies can facilitate conversations and enable sustainable solutions that can be maintained in the absence of external support.

This report has three sections.

- Section 1 unpacks the vision and model for action for agencies to support community resilience.
- Section 2 describes the behavioural barriers that have prevented progress in the region.
- Section 3 concludes the report and provides a guiding framework for agencies, supporting conversations and actions to reshape their approaches.

METHODOLOGY

This report builds on the evidence gathered in six case studies. The dataset from the case studies is supplemented by a foundational literature review, a reflection and learning workshop, an examination of factors contributing to success in Vanuatu, and targeted interviews with key global and regional stakeholders.

Case study data collection was led by national researchers in each country. Analysis was supported by a regional research lead based in Suva and further analysed and written up by HAG.

Case study reports were peer reviewed, tested and validated by an expert and diverse regional Steering Committee and Reference Group.[5]

The vision and model were developed through thematic coding of case study data and key findings, especially the opportunities presented in each context, supplemented by behavioural science principles (see Box 1). Global and regional interviews were conducted to test and validate the vision and key actions. The methodology is summarised in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Methodology

1 literature review of **70+** documents

6 case studies

59 key informant interviews

450 community members participating in focus group discussions

4 conference presentations

12 global and regional interviews

6 Vanuatu spotlight interviews

1 reflection and learning workshop

1 expert steering committee

1 technical reference group

Application of behavioural science principles

Ethical research practices and localised research approach

Figure 2: Map of case study countries

Box 1: Why behavioural science?

Behavioural science is the science of understanding and changing human behaviour. It draws on insights from behavioural economics, neuroscience and psychology to help people working across various sectors to understand why behaviour does not always reflect stated beliefs or commitments and why context is so important in shaping outcomes.

Behavioural science highlights that much of what influences our behaviour is subconscious, and context influences our decisions powerfully. To change behaviour, we must understand our inherent biases to identify the triggers for positive behaviour that must be scaled up and the barriers that must be overcome. Utilising these principles presents an exciting opportunity to approach entrenched barriers in a new way. Past and ongoing work makes the case for integration and strengthening community resilience; this paper explores why the shift is not yet happening and how actors can overcome these barriers to realise their intentions.

SCOPE

Audience
The primary audience for this report is implementing actors (see Box 2) and practitioners working in the Pacific, but it also offers valuable insights to regional bodies, policymakers and other relevant stakeholders in the Pacific, as well as other regions looking to prioritise community resilience.

Focus
This research acknowledges that consistent, resourced, sustainable change will require systems reform that includes national governments, regional bodies and international structures; however, it offers a spotlight on a key piece of the puzzle that is often overlooked – community voices. While there has been considerable focus on integration at a policy and structural level, this research fills a gap in understanding how these shifts, or lack thereof, affect communities.

Evidence base
Evidence gathered for this research focused on AHP Disaster READY programming in Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Fiji, Papua New Guinea (PNG) and Timor-Leste. It is supplemented by a case study in Tonga to strengthen the dataset across the region and examine programming approaches in countries where Disaster READY is not active. While key findings and recommendations in the case studies target AHP agencies, the vision and framework were developed to target a wider audience of implementing actors.

Terminology
Box 2 provides a list of definitions that were used throughout this research to maintain consistent language and terminology.

Box 2: Terminology

Disaster risk reduction: DRR is aimed at preventing new and reducing existing disaster risk and managing residual risk, all of which contribute to strengthening resilience and therefore to the achievement of sustainable development.[6]

Climate change adaption: The process of adjustment to actual or expected climate change and its effects. In human systems, adaptation seeks to moderate or avoid harm or exploit beneficial opportunities. In some natural systems, human intervention may facilitate adjustment to expected climate and its effects.[7]

Integration: The intentional combining of interventions that are considered part of CCA and DRR, designed to improve humanitarian and development outcomes for at-risk and crisis-affected populations.[8]

Resilience: The ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate, adapt to, transform and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions through risk management.[9]

Community: For the purposes of this research, community is defined as a group of people with diverse characteristics who are linked by social ties, share common perspectives, and engage in joint action in geographical locations or settings to prepare for or respond to disaster.[10]

Implementing actor/agency: For the purpose of this report, the terms 'implementing actor' and 'implementing agency' are used interchangeably to refer to any organisation – including government and non-government, private and public sector, international and local groups – that is implementing DRR, CCA or resilience programming in a particular country.

LIMITATIONS

▶ *Regional representativeness:* Data was collected across six Pacific island countries (PICs). Case studies were undertaken predominantly in Melanesia, supplemented by one in Polynesia (Tonga). The research planned to conduct a study in Kiribati to include representation in Micronesia, but several contextual factors prevented it. Hence, this research does not represent the entire Pacific region, but represents the islands of Melanesia well.

▶ *National representativeness:* Case study data collection elicited a range a perspectives from diverse stakeholders including international, national, and local actors, government officials and community members. However, the small number of participants relative to the population of

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6   IPCC 2019 Glossary, available at https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/2019/01/SYRAR5-Glossary_en.pdf

7   Ibid.

8   Adapted from the Global Nutrition Cluster. Available at: https://fscluster.org/sites/default/files/documents/icnwg_developing_an_integrated_response_approach_gfsc_20191128.pdf

9   UNDRR Online Glossary, available at https://www.undrr.org/terminology.

10 Adapted from: MacQueen, K. et. al., 2001, "What is community? An evidence-based definition for participatory public health," Am J Public Health, 91(12), 1929-38.

each country means that findings should be considered in tandem with other context-specific factors. The COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions additionally hindered field travel to communities and reduced the availability of some stakeholders in country.

▶ *Applicability of findings:* This study is intended to present a vision and framework that is relevant not only to AHP agencies, but other agencies operating and intending to operate in the Pacific. However, research participants in the case study countries focused mainly on AHP agencies and programs, so the results may not be fully applicable to other agencies.

▶ *Targeted behaviours:* The scope of this research, as detailed above, focuses primarily on the agency behaviours that are required to support community-led outcomes. The research team acknowledges that the behavioural shifts proposed in this report must be accompanied by larger structural shifts to achieve sustainable change, but stresses the agency that implementers already have to create change within the existing system.

Photo: Melih Karaahmet on Unsplash

SECTION 1: A VISION AND MODEL TO SUPPORT MORE RESILIENT PACIFIC COMMUNITIES

A shared vision is a critical motivating factor in driving behaviour change.[11] This research has proposed and tested a vision for resilient Pacific communities. This vision provides a north star to orient agencies as they shift towards more holistic approaches. The vision is articulated in Box 3 below.

Box 3: The vision for resilient Pacific communities

The shared vision is that:

At-risk communities in the Pacific use a strong understanding of their level of disaster risk to prioritise and implement inclusive community-led preparedness activities that reduce risk and build resilience to future disasters. By engaging in well-informed decision-making, community members shape the support they receive from others.

Four core areas of behaviour change are required to make progress towards the identified end state. By applying each of these components, and the associated actions detailed in Section 3, agencies can help community members to plan for and strengthen their own resilience in their day-to-day lives, based on a strong understanding of their climate and disaster risk.

> 'When it comes to communities, their coastlines are disappearing, they need to take action without differentiating between DRR, CCA, resilience, mitigation etc. They just need to act to protect their communities.'[12]

Components of the model for action

Centre community members as decision-makers

> 'When talking about the Pacific, having trusted relationships between people, for example between an expert and community leader, is critical. Behaviour change Is not just about handing over information, it's about building trust and helping people to change their own behaviour to become more resilient.' (International actor)[13]

Community members must be consulted and engaged in the planning and design of programs to ensure they are appropriate and sustainable. At present, community members are rarely viewed as essential stakeholders in decision-making. Current standard practice commonly categorises community members as passive recipients of assistance rather than leaders in building their own resilience.[14] For community members to take a more active role in building resilience, this practice and perception must shift. Agencies must respect and elevate local leadership, systems and structures and ensure resources are aligned with community-identified priorities rather

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11 Doten-Snitker, K. et. al., 2019, Developing a shared vision for change: Moving toward inclusive empowerment, Research in Higher Education, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-020-09594-9
12 Interview 8
13 Interview 3
14 Fiji Case Study; PNG Case Study; Timor-Leste Case Study

than donor objectives.[15] Agencies can gain valuable insights from traditional knowledge and practice, but must provide opportunities for them to be shared.[16]

> 'If you're doing climate adaptation in a way that is sustainable and community-led, you need to look at local structures, churches, chiefs, etc. or you're never going to get anywhere.' (International actor)[17]

For example, in Solomon Islands, Village Disaster Climate Risk Committees (VDRCs) have been established to coordinate local activities and support communities' participation and leadership in disaster preparedness and response. Once established and trained, VDRCs have facilitated the development of hazard maps, vulnerability and capacity assessments, evacuation plans and risk reduction action plans. Foundational principles also ensure that equity and social inclusion are central to the plans.[18]

Create new resilience defaults

> 'It's beyond actions, more about institutional behaviour change.' (Regional actor)[19]

Implementing actors are influenced by the established defaults and standard practice of their organisations.[20] A legacy of silos must be overcome to champion integrated programming as the default approach in program design and community practice. There are opportunities to do this at the agency level to drive change across the system. For example, one agency spoke to the fact that its own internal approaches were already integrated, and they overcame silos by making minimal tweaks (e.g. in language) depending on where their funding was coming from:

> 'We use the same approach at the community level (if the funding allows us to). What does the community care if it's DRR or CCA? I don't see it as an issue.'[21]

Greater momentum is required to install resilience as the default. A shared advocacy platform is needed across stakeholders to be able to influence donor and policy agendas to shift away from the siloed funding mechanisms that limit many agency approaches.

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15 Vanuatu Case Study; Solomon Islands Case Study; Fiji Case Study; PNG Case Study; Timor-Leste Case Study
16 Vanuatu Case Study; Solomon Islands Case Study; Fiji Case Study; PNG Case Study; Timor-Leste Case Study
17 Interview 4
18 https://solomonislandsdevelopmenttrust.files.wordpress.com/2014/12/marulaon-disaster-plan1.pdf
19 Interview 8
20 Behavioural science principle: status quo bias is evident when people prefer things to stay the same by doing nothing or by sticking with a decision made previously.
21 Interview 12

Box 4: Changing the default: refreshing the AHP Disaster READY program

The AHP Disaster READY mechanism is already making significant important progress in ensuring that climate change is centralised in the refresh process for the program, which has historically been more DRR focused. The previous iteration of the program was designed around humanitarian stakeholders seeking to achieve humanitarian policy objectives.

A more integrated and holistic lens has been applied to the program through the refresh process. By integrating climate change into the existing risk reduction footprint, the program can help to overcome some of the barriers related to siloed funding and misaligned frameworks.

Disaster READY 2.0 can continue to test, learn, adapt and share practices to promote strengthened integration within the program and across the region, including learnings on strengthening disability inclusion from Disaster READY 1.0.

> 'What we're doing now is talking about resilience. With a little shift, it has moved to integration.'[22]

Make processes simple and consistent

> 'There needs to be a common vision. Strategies need to be better written and include [all stakeholders] in the strategy writing process. If they are all engaged from the beginning, you can streamline these processes and visions rather than creating competition.' (International actor)[23]

There is a vast body of evidence from behavioural science to demonstrate that simply making something easier to understand or do significantly increases the likelihood of it happening.[24] In efforts to create a new default for integrated programming and champion community-led decision-making, actors must strive to make approaches and processes as simple as possible at all levels – particularly in coordination and information management. There are two primary ways this should happen:

▶ **Streamlining existing mechanisms:** bringing together complex systems and changing ways of working that have been standard for decades will require investment, but it will be critical for actors to work together to identify streamlined and accessible solutions.[25] For example, they must examine existing coordination mechanisms at the country level and determine how they could be more inclusive of a broader stakeholder group.[26]

▶ **Ensuring the accessibility of new processes where integration is the default** (refer to section above on creating a new default for integration): New integrated processes must not only be easy for agencies to implement but easy for community members to engage with and understand.[27] This is critical

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22 Interview 7
23 Interview 6
24 Behavioural science principle: human decision-making is dominated by a fast and automatic mode of processing (system 1). Science has demonstrated that if the desired behaviour change is easy to understand and can be processed in system 1, it is much more likely to be achieved.
25 Interviews 6, 8, 11; Vanuatu Case Study; Solomon Islands Case Study; Fiji Case Study
26 Fiji Case Study; Solomon Islands Case Study; PNG Case Study
27 Vanuatu Case Study; Solomon Islands Case Study; Fiji Case Study; PNG Case Study; Timor-Leste case Study

in ensuring that information flows and coordination mechanism are streamlined across actors, with the shared vision guiding approaches.

For example, in Vanuatu, systems and structures were integrated fully with the establishment of the National Advisory Board on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction (NAB) in 2012. Strategy and implementation for DRR and CCA were unified under a single policy framework and coordinating body that is accessible to diverse actors. This provided consistency and simplified the integration process for implementing actors (see Box 6).[28]

Strengthen authority and accountability for resilience outcomes

> '[Implementing actors] understand the concept of resilience, it's not that they don't, but they try to meet requirements set by [donors]. They need to set up proper indicators.' (Regional actor)[29]

The Pacific region is regarded as a global leader in integration, as highlighted at the recent Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction[30] (see Box 5). There is further opportunity to strengthen the existing authority at the regional level, and at the national level in order to generate a sense of accountability between agencies and communities. Establishing

a credible central authority is essential for motivating and sustaining behaviour change. This could look different at different levels. For example at the regional level, strengthening alignment with the Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific (FRDP) and associated mechanisms to build coherence, authority and momentum across the region towards integrated approaches and tools. At the national level, this could be advocating for increased investment in a central authority responsible for integrated coordination, such as the NAB in Vanuatu (see Box 6). People tend to attribute greater importance and influence to the calls of a trusted authority figure or body.[31] Without endorsement and monitoring by a common authority, agencies lack the incentive to change their behaviour.

Authority can be reinforced by disseminating and using the joint measurement framework for regional integration efforts, thereby improving accountability and enabling learning. There is also an opportunity to use key stakeholders at the national level to build authority for translating integration into policy;[32] this serves to strengthen the connection between community-level interventions, national policies and regional initiatives. A summary of regional progress and how this can be leveraged to support behavioural shifts is provided below.

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28 Vanuatu Case Study; Vanuatu Spotlight Interviews
29 Interview 8
30 https://globalplatform.undrr.org/conference-event/implementing-integration-reflections-and-lessons-pacific-future
31 Behavioural science principle: authority bias represents the tendency to attribute greater weight and accuracy to the opinion of an authority figure and be more influenced by that opinion.
32 Interview 11

Box 5: Building on regional momentum

There is opportunity to further connect implementing actors to initiatives and resources at the regional level to build authority for these structures and provide greater consistency in programming. Many components of the vision directly reflect ongoing work and developments at the regional level, including the FRDP, the Pacific Resilience Partnership (PRP), and the recently launched Pacific Resilience Standards (PRS) (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Important regional initiatives

PRM

FRDP

Pacific Resilience Partnership

PRS

The FRDP is the world's first integrated regional framework to reduce exposure to climate and disaster risk, support low carbon development and improve disaster response and reconstruction. Pacific Island Forum Leaders endorsed the framework in 2016; it provides high-level strategic guidance on how to enhance resilience to climate change and disasters in ways that promote sustainable development.[33]

> 'The FRDP is really useful at all levels. It's not hugely prescriptive but supports the integration agenda from that broader resilience perspective – something like that which has been developed in the Pacific rather than from outside will be really helpful [in future efforts to support resilience].' (International actor)[34]

The endorsement of this framework places the region well ahead of the curve in the journey to *create a new default for integration*. It demonstrates that the region's leaders have prioritised this shift in standard practice and pursued a strategy to *make this easier for stakeholders* by developing a common framework. The FRDP emphasises the importance of community-based approaches throughout the document, but does not provide any accountability for community leadership. The voluntary nature of the framework and limited authority create challenges for consistency and accountability.

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33 Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific
34 Interview 3

In efforts to advance the FRDP, the Pacific Island Forum Leaders endorsed the PRP shortly afterwards in September 2017. The PRP is a network of stakeholders that drive resilience action at national, sub-national, regional and international levels. It hosts the annual Pacific Resilience Meeting to bring together masses of diverse actors in the region to share learnings and develop shared ambitions to advance the goals of the FRDP.[35] This supports efforts to **create a new default for integration** by sharing examples of good practice and bringing diverse actors together to discuss issues around integration.

The FRDP and PRP cannot reach their full potential without intentional efforts to increase the authority and accountability for these mechanisms. This is an important point of consideration for the upcoming mid-term review of the FRDP, designed to strengthen its ability to drive momentum.

> 'The buy-in is there [...] but factually it is a bit more difficult to showcase. It's a shame we don't have a strong [monitoring and evaluation] process behind the FRDP to have the proper figures. There is a strong recognition of its significance, but when it comes to working with the countries and collaboration, it is less successful.' (Regional actor)[36]

To combat these challenges and reinforce the FRDP, in 2018 the PRP endorsed the development of the PRS, launched in early 2022. The PRS provide a measurement tool and 'progress criteria' to demonstrate stakeholder achievement of the guiding principles of the FRDP. The Standards also provide 'good practice essentials' to articulate 'expected levels of resilience building practice and progress' in efforts to promote self-assessment of progress and support the planning process for the resilience journey.[37]

Providing a measurement framework to accompany the FRDP is an important step towards greater accountability for the framework. However, to be effective, the PRS must be fully understood, accepted and implemented. If this happens, they can help to convert voluntary commitments into mechanisms for meaningful accountability.
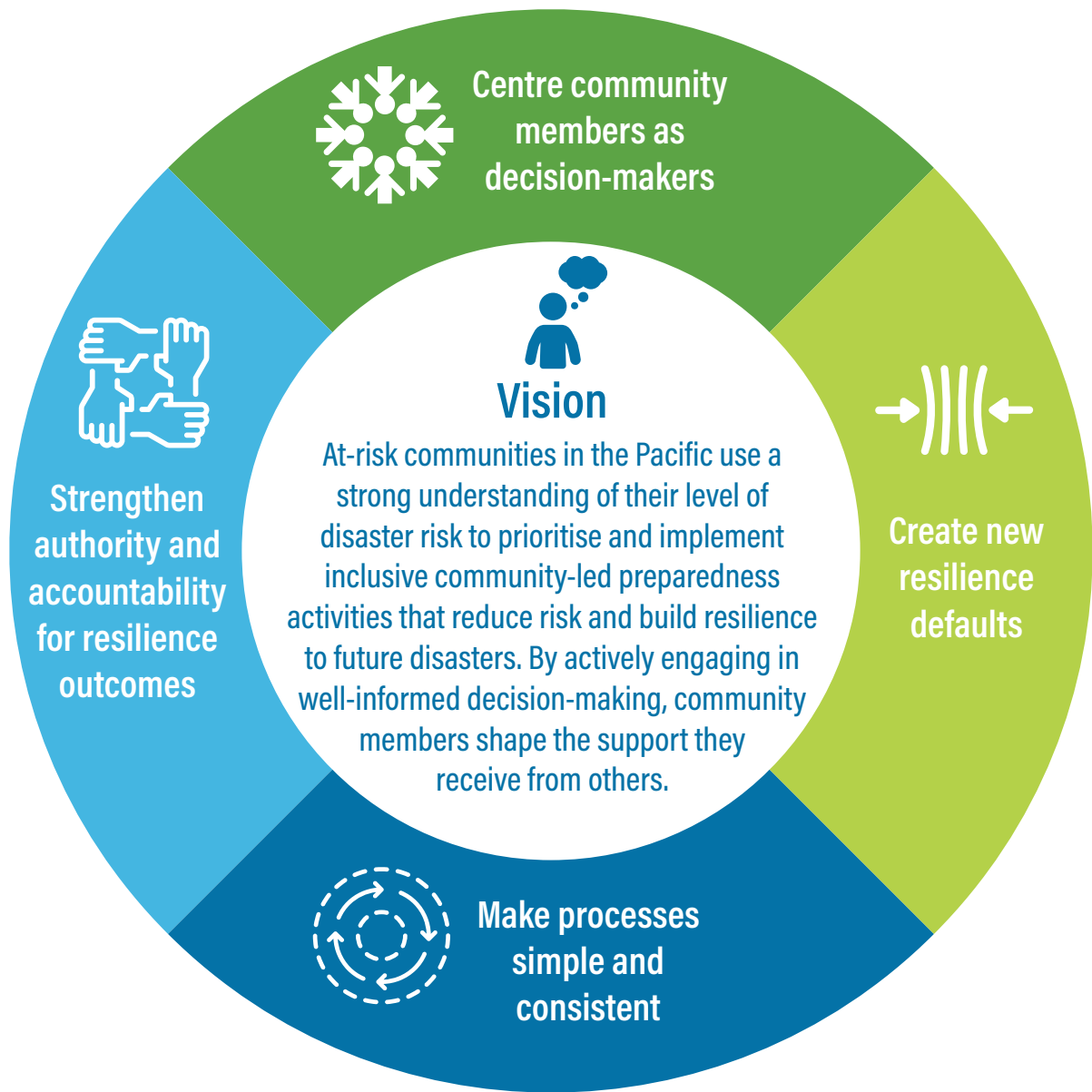
Figure 4 on the following page shows how the components of the model come together at a high level. We build upon this model further in Section 3.

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35 Pacific Resilience Partnership
36 Interview 2
37 Pacific Resilience Standards

Figure 4: infographic of model to achieve the vision

Centre community members as decision-makers

Create new resilience defaults

Vision

At-risk communities in the Pacific use a strong understanding of their level of disaster risk to prioritise and implement inclusive community-led preparedness activities that reduce risk and build resilience to future disasters. By actively engaging in well-informed decision-making, community members shape the support they receive from others.

Strengthen authority and accountability for resilience outcomes

Make processes simple and consistent

SECTION 2: BEHAVIOURAL BARRIERS PREVENTING PROGRESS

The vision and model for action were developed to overcome the key behavioural barriers presented below, which have prevented substantial progress thus far. These are widespread and longstanding,[38] but examining them through a lens of behavioural science presents new opportunities to better understand and mitigate existing challenges.

Confronting persistent barriers is essential to moving from good intentions to effective actions. Some deeply entrenched barriers will require extensive systems reform from the top; however, that does not mean that bottom-up approaches to help overcome these challenges are fruitless. Examining barriers through the lens of behavioural science provides a new perspective to incite real change. Implementing actors have agency to manoeuvre and evolve within the construct of the system and to prioritise community engagement and leadership throughout the process.

1. Community-led decision-making is not the social norm.[39]

Currently, the social norm for implementing actors is not one that prioritises community-led resilience planning and activities. There is the perception that communities are often left out of decision-making processes as agencies continue to align with donor priorities and structures that perpetuate thematic silos, rather than starting with community-identified needs and priorities as the focus.

Stakeholders acknowledged that community priorities *should* be central to planning and decision-making, yet it was assumed that this is generally still not the norm among actors – that there were no social or reputational repercussions from not following through on this expectation. The room to change ways of working was also perceived to be extremely limited.[40]

> 'Implementing agencies who are at the front line of bringing out behaviour change know what kind of change needs to take place, but ultimately, they can't change this because of the built-in structural way that [they] operate.' (Regional actor)[41]

2. The status quo does not facilitate integration as the default approach.[42]

The status quo in many PICs continues to be separate funding and governance structures for DRR and CCA and separate or distinctive approaches and methodologies for resilience building. Agencies are not consistently prioritising integrated approaches because systemic factors and standard continue to promote separate structures.

The legacy of historical silos and a broken system continue to limit opportunities for meaningful change. There is less resistance – so it is easier – to remain in the current system and ways of working than to attempt reform.

> 'Politicians are good at giving speeches, but not as good at implementing change. We need leadership, which is more visible at the community level.' (Regional actor)[43]

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38 For more information on challenges and barriers please see our literature review: Beyond Barriers: Integrating Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation in the Pacific
39 Behavioural science principle: social norms are unwritten rules about how to behave. They provide us with an expected idea of how to behave in a particular social group or culture.
40 Solomon Islands Case Study; Fiji Case Study; PNG Case Study; Timor-Leste case Study
41 Interview 11
42 Behavioural science principle: status quo bias
43 Interview 11

3. Existing structures and approaches are increasingly complex.[44]

The behavioural changes required to support integrated programming and community-led resilience are complex. Various frameworks and governance structures, duplicative coordination mechanisms and information management systems, and competing technical approaches and associated language present a difficult landscape to navigate.

Many stakeholders agreed that major changes are needed to improve community programming; for example, by streamlining access to information, cultivating and augmenting traditional knowledge, enhancing coordination mechanisms, finding consistency in approaches and meaningfully consulting and ensuring participation of all groups. Tangible steps for how these changes could be accomplished were less clear.[45] Inconsistent objectives, measures and outcomes result in no clear measure of success and low confidence in reported outcomes. In order to motivate stakeholders to make these changes, we must provide a simple solution that makes the change as easy as possible for people and provide opportunities to simplify complex processes.

> 'Fiji's DRR policy has over 200 strategies [...] what's the point of having great strategies if they are just going to sit there and not actually be implemented?' (Regional actor)[46]

4. Without a common authority promoting and guiding process, agencies have no incentive to meaningfully prioritise community voices or produce consistent reports.[47]

There is insufficient authority to drive motivation and promote accountability. The changes called for above will require more collective support and buy-in around a trusted point of authority in order to overcome persistent barriers and provide incentive for agencies to change their behaviour.

Agencies are not consistently held accountable for failing to integrate community voices in their programs or consider the full picture of community resilience. Currently, governments, international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and donors hold most of the authority that influences decision-making in community programming. Community priorities are often considered secondary to donor priorities. Even in contexts where community groups are active and local leadership is supported, entrenched power imbalances continue to hinder genuine community leadership.[48] The lack of a common authority diminishes accountability for agencies and nurtures the precedence of top-down approaches to programming. Community members can only do so much to shape the support they receive; in order for agencies to be held accountable for behavioural shifts, there must be authority to drive monitoring and reporting.

> 'There is accountability of local communities up to international donors, but no accountability down. The heads of [national disaster management offices] all raise the idea, "localisation for who?"' (International actor)[49]

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44 Behavioural science principle: human decision-making is dominated by a fast and automatic mode of processing (system 1); it is our preferred state. There is a vast body of evidence from behavioural science to show that simply making something easier to understand or do, significantly increases the likelihood of it happening.

45 Solomon Islands Case Study; Fiji Case Study; PNG Case Study; Timor-Leste case Study

46 Interview 8

47 Behavioural science principle: authority bias represents the tendency to attribute greater weight and accuracy to the opinion of an authority figure and be more influenced by that opinion.

48 Interview 9; on power imbalances in humanitarian and development programming, see: Time to Decolonise Aid: Insights and Lessons from a Global Consultation, Peace Direct, 2021; Sabina Robillard, Teddy Atim and Daniel Maxwell, Localization: A "Landscape" Report, Feinstein International Center, 2021.

49 Interview 10

SECTION 3: REALISING THE VISION

The vision and model for action is aspirational but also achievable in the Pacific. The region has already performed important groundwork in overcoming some of the key barriers identified above. This section presents a framework for behavioural shifts that agencies can take to support the resilience of Pacific communities.

The vision and supporting interventions put forward by this research build on the important progress to date, but also seek to address some of the barriers at an operational level that have prevented the FRDP from reaching its ambitions thus far.

Evidence suggests that the vision for resilience exists theoretically at the regional level, but increasing efforts are needed to distribute it evenly across PICs and see it realised at an operational level.[50] This is where implementing agencies play a key role.

> 'If you can get the agencies together to agree to a change, then you can move forward.' (Regional actor)[51]

The report hopes to link implementing actors to important regional initiatives that can be further socialised, implemented and consistently measured and reported. Tapping into these important resources and initiatives will not only make things easier for implementing actors, but will help to provide consistency, accountability and authority across the region.

A framework for driving behavioural shifts for resilience is provided below. This framework seeks to guide discussions and decisions to move towards integrated resilient approaches rather than being a tool to guide interventions or measurement (such as exiting monitoring and evaluation approaches or technical toolkits).

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50   Interviews 2, 3, 8, 11
51   Interview 11

Photo: Yusril Dalia on Unsplash

Centre community members as decision-makers

Specific Actions

To help facilitate this shift, agencies can:

- **Elevate local leadership, knowledge and capacities** in planning and design phases. Work within existing local structures and leadership as the default processes for programming. Promote inclusive, community-led resilience planning that incorporates traditional knowledge and practice.

- **Align resources with community priorities.** Identify shared priorities with communities and elevate these priorities to donors to break the cycle of siloed funding and the perception that community priorities are not as important as those set by donors.

Questions to guide decision-making

- What is your approach to working with existing structures in communities? Are you strengthening what exists rather than creating new structures?

- How are you supporting diverse members from across communities to understand risk and implement actions to enhance resilience? Are you taking a holistic approach considering all risks across different timescales?

- How well do you understand community priorities? How well and accurately are they represented in what your organisation presents to donors? How can you elevate community priorities to advocate to donors for less siloed funding?

Create new resilience defaults

Specific Actions

To help facilitate this shift, agencies can:

- **Advocate for and apply new ways of working,** both internally within their own organisations, other partners, national governments and donors (e.g. seeking opportunities to harmonise internal approaches or models within organisational structures); promoting integrated governance and funding structures for resilience (e.g. integrated coordination structures, integrated information management systems).

- **Create opportunities to test, learn, adapt and share what works.** This could include creating or extending forums that bring together diverse stakeholders to share programming approaches and promote integrated practice. This will demonstrate that change is occurring and share success stories to motivate other actors to shift their own practice.

Questions to guide decision-making

- Is your internal organisational structure aligned with resilience outcomes? Or (for example) do you have specific disaster and climate structures that work separately? What processes/systems can you put in place to harmonise these?

- What coordination mechanisms are you represented in? Are there specific avenues to advocate for/champion a more integrated approach to representation?

- How are you sharing your lessons from integrating approaches? What opportunities are there to further socialise what works? How are lessons being incorporated into program adaptations?

Make processes simple and consistent

Specific Actions

To help facilitate this shift, agencies can:

- **Ensure accessibility of two-way information flows.** Streamline information pathways with communities, leveraging traditional knowledge and supplementing with scientific data.

- **Look for opportunities to simplify and streamline coordination mechanisms**, ensuring mechanisms are accessible to all relevant stakeholders, are operational at multiple levels (e.g. from national, to provincial to village level) and articulate clear information management pathways between communities and stakeholders.

Questions to guide decision-making

- Do you understand how information moves (or doesn't) between and among communities and different stakeholders?

- How can you strengthen and simplify pathways, ensuring that relevant climate and disaster risk information reaches communities, and augments traditional knowledge?

- What is the relationship between existing coordination mechanisms and information pathways?

- How can you champion coordination structures that include more actors and that centralise two-way information management pathways?

Strengthen authority and accountability for resilience outcomes

Specific Actions

To help facilitate this shift, agencies can:

- **Elevate the central authority of the PRP** and the FRDP as the regional guiding framework for resilience. Ensure that programs reflect the FRDP principles and connect them with community-level actions. Leverage the support of trusted organisations and individuals to lead this shift.

- **Utilise a common framework and measurement tools** to design programs and monitor outcomes to ensure consistent approaches and measurement of success. By minimising the number of frameworks and tools used, agencies can reduce inconsistencies and increase confidence and accountability in measured outcomes.

Questions to guide decision-making

- How does your organisation ensure accountability? Are you connected with the PRP? Do your programs align with priorities identified in the FRDP? If not, how can you create connections between your programs and regional initiatives that drive integration?

- What are you doing to increase expectations that stakeholders act on their commitments? Are there opportunities for you to advocate to partners to centralise the role of the FRDP in approaches?

- Have you referred to the PRSs in how you are monitoring and reporting on your programs?

A critical motivator for shifting behaviour is having practical examples of success.[52] Vanuatu has made significant shifts towards integrated approaches for resilience across many levels. The case study of Vanuatu (see Box 6) provides elements of a blueprint for other actors to build upon and learn from to test and adapt across the Pacific.

Box 6: Spotlight on success in Vanuatu: Change is possible!

Vanuatu's integration and resilience journey is a great example to highlight not only the success of the FRDP, but the many benefits enjoyed by implementing actors and communities in Vanuatu, where governance structures, systems and processes for DRR and CCA are fully integrated and inclusive community structures allow community members to take an active role in building their own resilience.[53]

Sharing best practice stories is a key strategy to disrupt the status quo, shift the social norm and motivate change. We make decisions based on what comes to mind easily. We can help to disrupt the status quo by making success stories highly visible and showing the tangible benefits and process used in simple to understand visual and memorable ways. This also helps to shift the social norm by demonstrating that change is happening and motivating stakeholders to align with positive examples.

Vanuatu was heavily involved in the development of the FRDP. Nearly all stakeholders interviewed for this research acknowledged that this process was fundamental for Vanuatu's own drive towards integration.[54] In 2012, when plans for the development of the FRDP were first endorsed by the Pacific Island Forum Leaders, Vanuatu established the National Advisory Board on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction (NAB) to oversee strategy, policy, implementation, coordination and financing for DRR and CCA. Our research demonstrates that this integration at the top is directly reflected in community programming.[55] So, how did Vanuatu enable this structural shift, and why is this structure successful in supporting integrated agency programming and community resilience?

This research identified several key behaviour change triggers that contributed to success in Vanuatu:

▶ The establishment of NAB resulted in **one system and a single authority** overseeing integration[56]

▶ **Diverse stakeholders at all levels were consulted and engaged** in developing new processes[57]

▶ International NGOs and development partners in Vanuatu prioritised and advocated for integrated policies, creating **a dynamic social norm** and motivation to shift ways of working[58]

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52 Behavioural science principle – Anchoring: when making a decision, people look for anchors or reference points they know and can rely on and adjust from this point.
53 For more information on Vanuatu's journey towards integration and resilience, please see the Vanuatu Case Study
54 Vanuatu Spotlight (VS) interviews 1–3, 5, 6
55 Vanuatu Case Study
56 VS interviews 3, 5, 6
57 VS interviews 5, 6
58 VS interviews 1, 2, 4, 6

▶ Political will from government leadership elevated the importance of integrated structures; this **leveraged the authority and credibility of the government** to motivate behaviour change[59]

▶ The impacts of Tropical Cyclone (TC) Pam in 2015 and TC Harold in 2020 – including damage, increased presence of NGOs and increased funding for resilience – **increased the salience of the impact of climate change and disaster and increased motivation** to prioritise integration[60]

▶ Momentum from communities and civil society **elevated the importance of local leadership**, knowledge and capacities in resilience planning.[61]

Key results of Vanuatu's momentum towards integration are more streamlined DRR and CCA governance and integrated programming, and that most community members in Vanuatu understand the concepts of DRR and CCA.[62] The importance given to these concepts is shown by their inclusion in education, and they have become household topics in many communities.[63] Community members have been elevated as a key stakeholder in resilience efforts, rather than passive recipients of assistance. Challenges persist around genuine community leadership and ownership of resilience programming, and insufficient institutional resources to monitor and maintain promotion of integrated practice.[64] Nonetheless, integration at an institutional level has been successful in bringing stakeholders together under a common framework, aligning agency programming, and supporting nearly all government and private sectors in Vanuatu to mainstream DRR and CCA in their plans and policies.[65]

Stakeholders identified important lessons for other Pacific countries wanting to progress integration further. This included, most notably, the importance of collaboration and political will.[66] The importance of using a common policy framework to guide strategy and implementation was referenced as critical for consistency and ease, as well as the need for inclusive consultation and collaboration with relevant stakeholders to develop the framework.[67] There is a lot that other countries can learn from the journey of Vanuatu, including the motivation to utilise and build on important work at the regional level.

'If a country wants to be successful nationally, we need to unify regionally. Now there is no communication from one Pacific country to another to understand their specific approach to deal with climate change impacts.' (National actor)[68]

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59 VS interviews 1, 2
60 VS interviews 2, 3, 4
61 VS interviews 2, 4
62 Vanuatu Case Study
63 VS interviews 1, 4
64 VS interviews 2, 4, 6
65 VS interviews 1, 3, 4, 6
66 VS interviews 1–6
67 VS interviews 3, 5, 6
68 VS interview 1

SECTION 4: CONCLUSION

The Pacific is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and increasing disaster.[69] Each case study country in this research ranks in the top 20 of the most at-risk countries, according to the World Risk Index 2021.[70] This has led DRR and CCA to be prioritised in Pacific communities out of necessity, but more work is needed to enhance their resilience.

Despite the leadership driving integrated approaches to resilience, too often agencies continue to work through siloed approaches to align with existing structures and standard practice. Coordination and information management remain complex and often inaccessible to communities, and while most stakeholders aim to centralise communities and ensure meaningful participation and decision-making in approaches, these are all too often deprioritised in favour of donor requirements.

The vision and model presented in this report present a pathway for agencies seeking to better support community-led resilience. The integration of DRR and CCA governance, funding, coordination and information management will be critical in this journey, but there is also room for implementing actors to manoeuvre in the absence of greater systems change towards enhanced resilience. By understanding and utilising principles of behavioural science, actors can help to shift the dial towards a future where integration is the default and community-led decision-making is the social norm.

Actors can build on regional momentum to drive this change home in their own organisations, their own communities, and on a greater scale. Lessons learned in Vanuatu demonstrate that this type of behaviour change is possible.

This work set out to influence implementing agencies to empower and support communities to holistically understand disaster and climate risk and action measures that strengthen their resilience in their day-to-day lives. By using the proposed framework as a tool to influence decision-making and overcome the identified barriers to behaviour change, agencies can continue to drive progress towards more empowered and resilient Pacific communities.

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69 IPCC, Sixth Assessment Report, Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability
70 World Risk Report 2021

Photo: Mayur Joshi on Unsplash

Box 7: Integration in action

A second phase of the Beyond Barriers research will take place under the Disaster READY 2.0 program with leadership from World Vision Australia, implemented by HAG. Phase 2 will build upon the extensive evidence, engagement and learning from phase 1 of the research program whilst moving from an exploratory research approach to an action research approach.

The objective of Phase 2 of Beyond Barriers is to support stakeholders to implement evidence-based actions that strengthen good practice approaches in enhancing community resilience. We will support key research partners and stakeholders to implement specific components of the framework for driving behavioural shifts at various levels. We will then support ongoing reflection, adaptation and learning on how different approaches can be leveraged and scaled across the region.

Interested in being involved and contributing to approaches that strengthen resilience across the Pacific?

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