

Tropical cyclone Vania • 12 - 13 January 2011

DREF evaluation and lessons learned workshop
Vanuatu
13 – 17 June 2011



The lessons learned workshop participants outside the VRCS office 17 June 2011

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Executive summary

Thank you

Sincere thanks to the staff of VRCS particularly the CEO of VRCS, Jacqueline de Gaillande for hosting the workshop and Disaster Management support officer, Henry Jackson for organizing the event and ensuring everything went smoothly. Thanks to the branch, sub branch managers and volunteers who travelled to Port Vila to participate in the workshop. Also thanks to the French Red Cross head of delegation and PIROPS representative who also made a very valuable contribution to the workshop. I would also like to thank Michael Gloeckle, who co-facilitated the evaluation and lessons learned workshop.

Background Tropical cyclone Vania

Tropical cyclone Vania hit Vanuatu's Tafea Province as a category 1 cyclone on 12 – 13 January 2011. While the initial cyclone was low grade, its slow movement caused flooding, water logging and wind damage. A month after Vania, tropical cyclone Atu struck causing further damage to the outer islands; stopping all sea transport and cancelling flights.

The first assessment was a joint damage assessment undertaken by Provincial Government, which incorporated an assessment undertaken by VRCS staff, Shirley Johnson. A second assessment report was produced by a multi-agency assessment team comprising a UNOCHA representative, UNICEF representative, NDMO officer and Meteorology officer. Affected populations were calculated using census statistics from VNSO, collected in 2009. This assessment found, among other things, that in most affected areas that water sources were contaminated, although water sources had not been tested.

In the days following tropical cyclone Vania, a plan of action and DREF request were prepared by VRCS with the in-country support of French Red Cross, and with the support of the Pacific Regional Office in Suva. The DREF was requested on the 3 February and approved on 4 February, three weeks after cyclone Vania first hit Tafea province.

A further assessment focusing on WASH and water quality tests was undertaken by Frank Mallein, French Red Cross PIROPS volunteer, along with VRCS staff and volunteers, from 1 – 15 February.

One month into the operation, the plan of action was revised to exclude the water purification tablets and reduce the number of mosquito nets to be distributed. However, after assessments were completed, the target number of household increased from the initial plan of 2,500 to 2,906 as government census figures did not take into account widow or single headed households in their tally. See annex I for a detailed timeline of events.

The revised DREF operation had two outcomes:

Outcome 1: The risk of water-related diseases has been reduced through the provision of safe water and hygiene items to 2,906 households in Tafea province for three months

Outcome 2: The essential household needs of 2,906 households are met within three months in Tafea province through the distribution of food and non food items (i.e.) mosquito nets and hygiene kits) as determined by the assessment findings.

Key findings, recommendations and learnings of the evaluation

During the evaluation, VRCS said that while challenging at times, the DREF was needed and has been an important learning experience for the national society. VRCS indicate that they would apply for DREF again, should the need arise however they would try and request it sooner rather than delaying and would specifically ask for in-country support. VRCS will share their experience with other sister Pacific national societies.

Key findings of the evaluation

- Overall the operation met both its specific outcomes and the contributions made by VRCS were viewed by other stakeholders positively,
- Beneficiary satisfaction according to those surveyed was very high, with 100% of beneficiaries being satisfied or very satisfied with the assistance they received
- The operation faced challenges in terms of the speed of the assessment and distribution, due to a number of factors including: geographical dispersed islands, transport and logistical challenges, prevailing weather conditions and the lack of good assessment. As a result, approximately 50% of beneficiaries surveyed did not receive any assistance till several months after the cyclone first hit.
- VRCS did not have free reserves to undertake initial, rapid assessment upon which the DREF request needed to be based. This caused delays in submission of the DREF request.
- There appears to have been some coordination issues in preparing the DREF documentation. This is the first time VRCS has used this IFRC tool and there were challenges in preparing the documentation to a sufficient standard. It seems that different agencies were using different assessment forms, which made coordination problematic. This was discussed at the Interagency Disaster Management lessons learned workshop, held in Port Vila on 8 – 9 June, and was an action point to follow up was agreed as an output of the workshop.
- There also appears to be challenges in coordination communication flow between KL, Suva and PNS. It seems that there were delays in getting agreement with VRCS on a country team representative in place. While this is outlined already in the Asia Pacific disaster standard operating procedures, it is recommended that based on the challenges encountered in this operation that the standard operating procedures be reviewed or reinforced

Key recommendations of the evaluation

- It is recommended that VRCS considers putting resources in place, such as a buffer fund, in order to be able to start assessments and deploy prepositioned stock in advance of a DREF request being approved. This was discussed in the lessons learned workshop following the evaluation, and prioritized as a area for follow up
- It is recommended that VRCS share a pre-prepared assessment form, such as the 24 hour assessment form, with relevant bodies and advocate strongly for its adoption (with modification agreed with relevant agencies) as the standardized assessment form to be used in future disasters. Further training is required for volunteers to ensure that the assessment forms are used correctly. During the lessons learned workshop this was prioritized as an area for further work.
- During this operation, weather conditions, transport and logistics challenges slowed the response rate. VRCS should consider prepositioning of stock on outer islands,

where possible.

- It is recommended that a roster of country team representative be in place before next cyclone season and that the roster receives adequate training in using IFRC tools such as DREF.
- Further emergency response training required for volunteers and a pre-disaster meeting is recommended in order to prioritize activities and coordination with other Movement and external stakeholders.

Lessons learned for strengthening VRCS capacities (drawn from the lessons learned workshop)

- Contact details for key staff and volunteers change on a regular basis in Vanuatu. In preparation for the next cyclone season, VRCS will ensure that key staff and volunteer contact details are current and up to date.
- Communications after the cyclone, especially with more remote islands; proved a big challenge in this operation. In advance of the next cyclone seasons, VRCS will undertake simulations exercises using communications tools, such as satellite phones and high frequency radios. Volunteers will be trained to use communication equipment, have established frequencies and know the agreed procedures in case of a disaster.
- In order to ensure a efficient and effective response, VRCS will try and increase the number of ERT trained volunteers, with a focus on assessment, distribution and hygiene promotion.
- During the evaluation it was found that some branches lacked basic resources to prepare and respond to cyclone Vania. In advance of the next cyclone volunteers will have adequate resources such as sufficient assessment forms and tracking maps and will receive training on how to use them. Financial resources are also required at the branch level in order to hire transport and pay per diems for volunteers.
- Data management is challenging, especially with some of the more remote, outer islands. Staff at VRCS will maintain good data management records of the operation, including assessments, distributions and reports, in order to maintain a good audit trail.
- One of VRCS's key mandates in case of a disaster is WASH, however VRCS was reliant on the French Red Cross WatSan volunteer to bring the testing tubes required to test water quality with him to Vanuatu. As a result of this operation, several staff members and volunteers have been trained to use the testing tubes. The lesson learned for future disaster is that, as far as possible, VRCS will have pre-positioned stock of water quality testing tubes available in case of a future disaster
- VRCS will try and develop a closer working relationship with the National Disaster Management Office and will advocate for standardized assessment forms and a clear definition of households in order to streamline assessment and distribution for the next cyclone.
- During this DREF operation, there were times when VRCS staff were out of the office and human resources were stretched. In future VRCS will mobilize additional personnel at headquarters, will consider timely requests for additional RDRT support and will request in- country support sooner from Suva.
- During this current operation there was little media coverage of the work done by VRCS. If there is capacity in future operations, VRCS will try and raise their visibility in

a media.

- There were numerous transport and logistical challenges faced in this operation and while some of these are unavoidable, VRCS aims to create relationships with supplies and transport companies in advance of the next cyclone season; in order to help to mitigate some of these challenges.
- While an informal complaints mechanism was in place during this operation, it doesn't appear that it was particularly effective. VRCS will consider putting a formal complaints procedure in place for future operations.



VRCS staff, Noel Manwoi feedback to the lessons learned workshop on discussions for the transportation focus group

Methodology of the evaluation

The evaluation, over three days, consisted of desk based review of secondary data, followed by semi structured interviews with a range of internal and external stakeholders including;

- Jacqueline de Gaillande, CEO of VRCS
- Augustine Garae, DM officer of VRCS
- Branch and sub branch managers from three islands
- Herve Gazeau, Head of Delegation, French Red Cross
- Natasha Freeman, Country Team Representative (Phase I)
- Peter Korisa, Research and Planning officer, National Disaster Management Office (NDMO)
- May Pascual, UNICEF
- Salonge Leingkone, Marie Ng and Noel Manwoi, Finance and logistics, VRCS
- Ronnie Bong and Roger Shem, VRCS volunteers
- Aurelia Balpe, Head of Regional Office, Suva

Unfortunately, the evaluators were not able to meet with beneficiaries from any of the affected areas due to the time and financial resources required. Instead beneficiary satisfaction surveys were undertaken by staff and volunteers using standard survey templates in two of the affected areas; Tanna and Aniwa.

A total of 235 responses were received from Tanna South East/White Sands (73%), Tanna South (24%) and Tanna South West (3%). Unfortunately the responses from Aniwa were discounted because of concerns over the validity of the data. Rather disappointingly no responses were received from Erromango North or Erromango South.

Surveys were then entered into survey monkey and the data analyzed and the findings presented at the lessons learned workshop. For further detail on the beneficiary satisfaction surveys, see annex III.

Following the evaluation, a two day lessons learned workshop was held with key VRCS staff and volunteers. The workshop aimed to be participatory, in order maximize the knowledge and expertise of those present, and allow for a shared understanding of how the operation unfolded. The key objective of the workshop was to examine what went well, what didn't go well and identify areas that could be improved. The key output of the workshop were two plans, one prepared by VRCS headquarter staff and one prepared by branch, sub branch managers and volunteers, of concrete steps that could be taken over the next six months; before the next cyclone season. See page 17 for the plans. Lessons learned are also drawn out under each of the relevant sections of this report. See annex VII for the evaluation of the lessons learned workshop.

Outcomes of the evaluation

This evaluation is structured in a way as to respond to the key areas highlighted in the DREF review concept paper, being:

- Quality, relevance and accountability
- Effectiveness and efficiency of management
- Capacity of the national society

See the DREF concept paper in annex VI for full detail of the guiding questions.

Quality, relevance and accountability

How effective has the operation been in identifying the most vulnerable among the affected population and in developing appropriate strategies to respond to their particular circumstances?

It seems that the most vulnerable were not initially targeted as assessments and distributions were made on a blanket basis using government statistics. However during more detailed assessments it became clear that the Government figures excluded the widow and single headed households. As a result, the target number of households was revised and the most vulnerable households included in the operation.

During the lessons learned workshop beneficiary selection was discussed by a focus group and it was agreed that where possible the most vulnerable should be included; if not prioritized. These include widows, the elderly, people with disabilities, homeless, single headed households and poorer families. The group agreed that beneficiaries themselves should be involved in beneficiary selection, along with village chiefs, church leaders, health centre staff and women's groups.

How effective has the operation been in terms of responding to the needs identified by affected communities? Did it focus on the priorities of the target groups? To what extent was the most vulnerable population reached/provided with assistance relevant to their needs?

The DREF operation seems to be relevant to the needs of affected people and was within the VRCS's mandate of the provision of shelter, non food item and WASH. The biggest needs identified during assessment, and then verified through the beneficiary satisfaction surveys, were for food and non food items. VRCS has no mandate to provide food as this is the pre-assigned responsibility of the government. As a result, VRCS distributed non food items and to assisted with government distribution of food. During the lessons learned workshop a focus group discussed the issue of mandate and agreed that VRCS does not have the capacity or the experience to move into food or livelihoods (another priority of surveyed beneficiaries) sectors.

Distributions were done on a blanket, rather than targeted basis, which was in line with Government and WASH cluster. The distributions on Aniwa and Ipota were done directly to households. The all male team of volunteers were trained in first aid, but had no emergency response training (ERT). On Tanna, apparently half of the distributions were done directly to households and the other half by disaster committee, chairman or chiefs. It is unclear from

reviewing distribution lists available, and also because not all areas were covered in the beneficiary satisfaction surveys whether all households received the same number of items.

Definitely the households surveyed in Tanna (South, South East/White Sands/South West) were satisfied with the assistance received by VRCS. Furthermore, it is unlikely that the government would have been able to distribute the food assistance without the volunteers of VRCS. However, relevance could be questioned of relief items that took in some cases two plus months to reach the beneficiaries.

During the lessons learned workshop we discussed whether cash (or a voucher system) could have replaced food or non food item distributions, particularly on Tanna, where banks and functional markets that continue to operate. It seems that this was not an option considered by VRCS for this operation.

To what extent were the beneficiaries involved in planning, design and monitoring of the operation? What was the beneficiary feedback and ongoing communication process?

Beneficiaries had some involvement in the planning of the intervention, through assessment of needs. It is not clear to what extent beneficiaries were involved in the ongoing monitoring of the operation, as no monitoring reports from the field were reviewed during the three-day evaluation. However, beneficiaries were involved in monitoring through the beneficiary satisfaction surveys. There is definitely scope to include beneficiaries more rigorously in all stages of the operation, however limited access to affected areas means that this may have to happen on a targeted basis.

During the DREF operation, hard to reach places received distributions of jerry cans and soap at the time of assessment, and these communities were not visited again. This seems to be one of the realities of working in the Pacific. It is sometimes not possible to allow the several days required to undertake assessments, community mobilization, distribution and monitoring as weather, road/sea conditions and transportation make it costly and inefficient to carry out such a rigorous process.

A formal complaints procedure was not set as part of this operation. It seems that there was an informal mechanism in place, however this is not adequate. Beneficiaries are unlikely to make complaints to the volunteers undertaking the distributions or to the chiefs or village leaders undertaking distribution and there is no guarantee that these complaints will be registered and followed up in a systematic way. In order to ensure accountability it is recommended that a complaints procedure be put in place. A complaints procedure will help to ensure that distributions are fair and transparent. A complaints procedure should be confidential and should be arbitrated by an independent group, separate from those undertaking the distribution. This was discussed at the lessons learned workshop, and was generally agreed that a complaints mechanism would help to ensure accountability.

Were the operations strategies and priorities in line with the priorities of the authorities and other key coordination bodies?

Coordination with Government

The government official interviewed admitted the government response was slow. Food distribution did not start until March, two months after the cyclone hit. While planning was undertaken in Port Vila, the government found that the conditions on the ground in Tanna were completely different than anticipated.

The government's decision to distribute rice, rather than a balanced food basket is questionable. Rice is not a large part of the Islanders diet and it is not clear whether beneficiaries were satisfied with what they received or whether it was adequate quantity to sustain them, whether provision of food for one month was sufficient for households that lost their cash crops, which may take between 2 – 6 months to replace.

It seems that VRCS volunteers undertook food distributions on behalf of the government wearing Red Cross identification and using Red Cross distribution forms. This was discussed in the lesson learned workshop and it was acknowledged that if VRCS undertakes distributions on behalf of other agencies; it could lead to confusion and problems. In future, VRCS will be mindful of implications that this may have to their image when undertaking distributions for others.

It seems that National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) has not yet received the final report on distribution from VRCS. It is recommended that VRCS make any final reports to NDMO on distribution, according to the terms of agreement or Memorandum of Understanding with the government. In conclusion, NDMO agree that there is room for better coordination between stakeholders.

Coordination with WASH cluster

Convened by UNICEF, VRCS participated in the cluster as an implementing partner through the provision of water containers and soap. VRCS also supported the water source rehabilitation work of the cluster, through the provision of logistical support. VRCS was represented at the cluster meeting, initially the Head of Delegation of FRC and the Country Representative attended and sometimes the CEO of VRCS, the DM person or DM Support person would attend.

One respondent interviewed questioned whether a WASH cluster was needed; as it seems to them that activation of the cluster was based on limited information. The effectiveness of the cluster was also questionable because, for most the operation, UNICEF didn't have a WatSan expert in-country and as a result the cluster lacked technical WatSan support.

UNICEF were more focused on assessing the state of the water supply system than water quality and felt that Red Cross tests were too rigorous and could have been simplified to enable rapid response. It seems that the cluster had to wait for all assessment and test results, in order to make a consolidated order for equipment and supplies; which caused some frustration. UNICEF's focus on water system rehabilitation/upgrade had more of a development than relief focus. Despite some challenges, overall the cluster worked well and VRCS was a valued member of the cluster.

What were some of the success and opportunities that came out of the operation?

After self evaluation (see annex II for the outcomes of the self evaluation) the VRCS staff and volunteers felt that a number of areas of the operation went well, including information sharing and coordination with the WASH cluster, mobilizing of volunteers and aspects of volunteer management, particularly volunteer insurance. It was felt that staff and volunteers gained a lot of experience undertaking this operation and that the financial management went particularly well, given that this is VRCS most significant operation to date. VRCS also felt that communities recognized the support and assistance given by the Red Cross and that it was much appreciated.

What problems and constraints have been faced during the implementation of the operation (including issues of context etc.) and how did the operation deal with them?

The operation encountered numerous challenges in terms of transport and logistics. Limited transport was available immediately after the cyclone, which lead to inevitable delays in assessment and distribution. For intermittent periods after cyclone Vania, Air Vanuatu suspended services, sometimes without warning due to weather and take off and landing hazards. While Government boat services are free, services are unreliable and intermittent. During the disaster there were fuel shortages, which lead to an increase in price. The boat chartered by VRCS broke down, causing delays to the distribution of water systems rehabilitation material. Roads after the cyclone were impassible, making it difficult to reach remote villages. Transport owners sometimes did not agree to go to the most affected villages because of poor road conditions. It seems that VRCS branches don't have their own resources to pay for transport hire or fuel to undertake assessments or distributions, and are reliant on funds to come from VRCS headquarters in order to arrange appropriate transport.

While a buffer fund for headquarter is discussed in this report, branch and sub branch managers interviewed highlighted their need for discretionary funds (or at least bank accounts where possible) to be available in order to arrange transport. Pre-arranged agreements with suppliers could also help to manage the price and availability of transport after a cyclone. Prepositioning stocks of fuel was discounted as not feasible or practical during the lessons learned workshop.

The findings of the interagency assessment highlighted contaminated water sources, so water purification tablets were endorsed by the WASH cluster. VRCS, as part of the WASH cluster, felt obliged to abide by the decision made by the cluster; despite being against the IFRC Asia Pacific zone Water and Sanitation coordinator's advice. Based on the findings of the FRC/VRCS water quality assessments the tablets were deemed unnecessary. While VRCS did not have to go with the cluster's decision to include water purification tablets, upon reflection VRCS staff felt it was good to include the tablets in the original DREF plan of action, as it was consistent with the WASH cluster decision and helped to reinforce joint decision making.



VRSC branch and sub branch managers and volunteers work on their plans for the next six months

Effectiveness and efficiency of management

Has the operation met and does it continue to meet its objectives in an efficient and effective way?

It took three weeks after the disaster for DREF request to be submitted. Delays encountered include lack of funds available to undertake immediate, rapid assessments, compounded by communication and transport challenges (including air, road and sea) in reaching affected islands and ongoing weather conditions (including progressive cyclones); all hampered the timeliness of the operation.

Communities, particularly those on outer islands are not necessarily used to receiving assistance. Communities usually rely on indigenous knowledge and materials to repair their own water sources; given time. Apparently there was no pre-cyclone baseline of what water systems/sources were like before. Hopefully this broader operation does not raise expectations or create dependency in affected communities.

Key VRCS staff and volunteers were out during critical times on training, assessments etc. resulting in a lack of capacity at some stages of the operation. At one time, only one staff member was at VRCS headquarters. It is important that the headquarters retains key staff and ensures that there is adequate capacity during disasters.

During this operation, a WatSan volunteer was deployed by French Red Cross to lead on the water quality testing assessments. Additional RDRT would be welcomed by VRCS, as they could provide additional capacity in technical areas such as logistics and assessment. During the lessons learned workshop, VRCS reflected that they would prioritize deployment from New Caledonia, PNG and the Solomon Islands as they share common languages, but would also welcome support from other Pacific national societies.

It should be noted that the zone also needs to be mindful of their own capacity. During this operation both the Pacific zonal DMU operations coordinator and the regional DM coordinator went to the Cook Islands to undertake a DREF evaluation (17 – 21 January). While away in the Cook Islands the zone's Pacific operations coordinator continued to manage his workload. During the DREF operations period the Pacific operations coordinator covered the South Asia portfolio, which included managing several significant operations, including Pakistan Monsoon Floods and Sri Lanka Floods. While it is acknowledged that correspondence was answered in good time, maybe more consideration should be given to ensuring that the operations coordinators are not overloaded and that there is sufficient surge capacity in the zone.

One of the key factors contributing to the slowness of the operation was the lack of funds to undertake initial assessments. VRCS can not undertake assessments without money, and cannot prepare a DREF without adequate assessments. VRCS relied on a loan made available by French Red Cross 29 January of approximately 800,000 VUV. These funds made possible initial assessments, upon which the DREF request could be based. It seems that a buffer fund could indeed improve the efficiency of the operation.

During the lessons learned workshop a focus group discussed the practicalities of a buffer fund. VRCS calculated that AUD 15,000 would be an adequate amount to hold in case of future emergencies. VRCS identified potential donors as IFRC and Japanese Red Cross and propose contributing a third of the amount required from their own funds. VRCS may need to look beyond these donors to include Australia Red Cross, New Zealand Red Cross, French Red Cross but also respective government Missions in-country, who have access to discretionary funds. Also discussed was the issue of cash flow, by amalgamating bank accounts VRCS could increase cash flow thereby creating access to a buffer fund.

As part of the priorities agreed during the lessons learned workshop, VRCS have undertaken to try and mobilize 300,000 VUV by the end of November 2011.

Final expenditure on the DREF operation was CHF 51,353 (with PSSR still to be added) compared with budget of CHF 90,322. This was largely due to the contribution from Australian Red Cross of relief items and freight as goods in-kind, (including jerry cans and mosquito nets), to the value of CHF 35,260. However, other changes to the plan of action led to savings being made. Water purification tablets which were initially budgeted for based on the multiagency assessment report, released on the 24th January, which said water sources (in Tanna, Aniwa, Futuna, Erromango and Aneityum) were contaminated, were actually found to be safe when tested.

How effective were the national society/IFRC systems and processes in supporting the operation (e.g. management decisions making and approval, logistical systems, financial systems etc.)?

It appears that there were delays in accepting the first country team representative despite this being pre-agreed between Suva and KL as surge capacity in case of a disaster in the Pacific. There were also delays in getting the country team representative into Vanuatu, which would need to be addressed in the case of another disaster, not only in Vanuatu but

the whole of the Pacific region. The country team representative needs to be in-country as soon as possible after the disaster and not based in Suva. VRCS were grateful of the support provided by both country team representatives, and don't feel they have the capacity to handle a DREF operation themselves. However they would have benefited earlier on from in-country support of the country team representative. It has already been agreed by KL and Suva that a roster of available country team representatives will be prepared and agreed by Pacific national societies in advance of the next cyclone season. The country team representative should ideally be someone with contextual knowledge and experience, or a generalist that can pick things up quickly.

A pre-agreed roster of pre-trained people familiar with the country's specific culture and context is the ideal, however if this not forthcoming and suitable people are not identified (note that this idea was mentioned as a priority in meeting minutes from back in December 2010) then the pragmatic alternative would be to identify the season's surge capacity for the regional office and get agreement with each Pacific national society that they will use this person, unless they can identify an suitable alternative.

During the lessons learned workshop, groups undertook self evaluation of what went well in the operation. VRCS were particularly pleased with the logistical system set up by the country team representative. They also thought that the financial and administrative side of the operation went smoothly, although again they acknowledge the support given by the first country team representative.

How effective were the operation's processes for planning, priority setting, and monitoring, reporting and quality management?

This was VRCS's first DREF operation and VRCS found preparing the documents required a challenging process. A lot of time was spent in negotiations with Suva, which seemed to be a long and protracted process. It is advisable that KL and Suva revise the arrangements currently in place and agree the best way to streamline the process.

Feedback from VRCS was that once the first country team representative arrived in Port Vila on the 13 February, and with the necessary DREF funding in place, the operation gained momentum.

The plan of action was reviewed, part way into the operation and several elements changed. The number of households increased from 2,500 to 2,906 based on actual assessments of the number of households affected.

VRCS had challenges in good data and file management. It appears that distribution lists were not stored in one place and not all were available upon request. Furthermore, no documentation was available for Dillions Bay. All documentation including assessments, distribution lists and monitoring reports etc. should be stored in one place, and then archived accordingly. Good record keeping and archiving is essential as VRCS starts to attract contributions from institutional donors.

It appears that the annual review of the Asia Pacific Standard Operating Procedures for

Disaster Response and Early Recovery is currently underway, and the findings of that overarching review yet to be released. General feedback from several stakeholders interview was that while national societies are aware of the SOPs, they are not really familiar with them until they have to use them. It can be noted, based on this evaluation, that the current SOPs are perceived as being Asia driven SOPs, with less relevance to the Pacific context.

Was there integration across the different programmes?

There doesn't seem to have been much integration across the different programmes, as the operation was managed by the VRCS disaster management department. It seems that the VRCS health coordinator was assigned to another programme of work over the course of the DREF operation.

Leaflets were distributed to health workers or put onto community notice boards but no hygiene promotion demonstrations or activities undertaken. While the DREF update reports that 35 volunteers were trained, it seems that this basic training did not include hygiene promotion. It is not clear the extent of hygiene promotion that was originally planned for; however it seems that the provision of soap and leaflets fulfilled the operation's objective.

Was there effective coordination with other parts of the movement? How appropriate were the inputs of partner organizations in the implementation of the operation?

It seems that during the first part of the operation, partner national societies (PNS) were contacting the Pacific regional office in Suva directly. This goes against the currently agreed Asia Pacific SoPs. The French Red Cross head of delegation remarked that, from his perspective, direct contact with KL was the preferred option as KL deals with emergencies on a regular basis and are familiar with the IFRC tools and protocols. The country team representative should ideally write brief daily and then later into the operation weekly updates for KL, which can be shared with PNS in a systematic way. This information can also be used as monitoring reports for the operations progress, which can be drawn upon for DREF updates and the final DREF report. PNS should also respect this communication line, as it reduces the burden on VRCS and the country team representative.

PNS should make their contributions known as soon as possible in order to prepare an accurate DREF plan and budget. The operations coordinator in KL made individual calls to PNS in advance of the DREF request being sent to Geneva for approval, however at that stage no contributions were forthcoming. If PNS anticipated making in-kind contributions to the DREF then this should preferably have been done in advance of the DREF request.

The contribution from Australian Red Cross provided relief items and freight as goods in-kind, (including jerry cans and mosquito nets), to the value of CHF 35,260. This has resulted in a large under spend on the DREF, and this money will be returned and the respective donors informed accordingly. Although it is acknowledged that during emergencies the needs and context are evolving, there is pressure nonetheless from donors to minimize refunds where possible. This apparently is not an isolated incidence in the Pacific, and runs the risk of the availability of DREF in the future.

Jerry cans and mosquito nets were sent in one batch by Australia Red Cross, resulting in insufficient storage at VRCS headquarters. The supplies were left in the VRCS compound as there were nowhere else to store them and two volunteers were recruited to sleep in the compound; in order to provide 24 hour security for the in-kind goods.

Capacity of the National Society

What changes in capacity, capability, understanding and learning have occurred within the National Society as a result of the ongoing operation? Are these appropriate?

It seems that this first DREF operation has helped to build the capacity of VRCS and while several staff members interviewed said that could not undertake such an operation without external support, VRCS are a stronger national society as a result of this operation.

VRCS staff and volunteers have been trained in water quality testing by the French Red Cross WatSan volunteer. As a result, these staff and volunteers are now able to undertake the water quality tests themselves.

For the first time VRCS participated in the cluster system. VRCS are now more aware of how the cluster system operates. VRCS was a valued member of the WASH cluster and benefited from this experience.

The lessons learned workshop highlighted that VRCS have capacity in a number of areas, including assessment, distribution, beneficiary registration, finance and administration. VRCS identified areas for continued development including (in order of priority) management, logistics, reporting, and monitoring and evaluation.

According to the findings to the management survey (see annex IV for an analysis of the management survey), it appears other stakeholders consider that VRCS has also built capacities in terms of technical areas, in particular assessment relief and logistics, and also in coordination, decision making and volunteer management.

VRCS Priorities moving forward

In advance of the next cyclone season, the headquarters staff agreed that:

Plans for the next 6 months	Who will be responsible	Timeframe	Costs in VUV
Standardise emergency forms (VRCS) and training (refresher ERT, Hygiene Promotion)	DM – Augustine and Henry	August (1 month)	700,000+
Emergency fund in place	Jacqueline and HQ staff	June - November	300,000
Communication: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Map HF frequency - Liaise with TRR - Time agreement - RC dissemination 	Augustine, Henry and Dissemination Officer		N/a
Storage capacity/Preposition stock HQ/Branch/clean container	Noel and volunteers	End July	5,000
Review DM Plan SOPs	Augustine and Henry	October August	IFRC
Collect and organize DREF operation paperwork and archived	Henry	July	N/a
Review volunteer management policy	Henry	October	Not clear
Strengthen VRCS relationship with other key partners	All of HQ staff	Ongoing	N/a
Pre-arrange transportation in place: MoU Land/sea/air transport discount	Augustine and Henry	End of October	N/a

In advance of the next cyclone season, the branch/sub branch managers and volunteers agreed that:

Plans for the next 6 months	Who will be responsible	Timeframe	Costs in VUV
Start preparations for an office (provincial/sub branch)	Sub branch manager and HQ	12 months	Quotations to be done
Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Set up regular contact btw HQ and branch (schedule) - Training for volunteers on how to operate the radio 	Henry Shirley Jacky Alfred	August July	N/a
Fundraising <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Donation box in Tanna - Hold 1 fundraising activity 	Shirley Committee	August September	No cost 10,000
Assessment form stock replenished	Augustine/Henry and branch managers	End of June	20,000
Cyclone tracking maps	Donnie	End of June	No cost

ANNEXES

Annex I Timeline of events



Workshop participants developing the chronology of events for the DREF operation

Date	Action
January	A desk simulation exercise following the SOP's was done in Suva with the Regional Office team, Daniel and Natasha
Early January	ERT training held in Tanna (Branch manager Shirley Johnson plus 11 other volunteers attended)
10-14 January	TBR team on mission to Banks for Disaster Awareness Training (attended by Augustine, Paulo and Lesley)
12 January	CYCLONE VANIA hits First call from VRCS to Tanna First assessment undertaken by Shirley in Tanna
17 January	NDC initial report
17 – 21 January	Cook Islands tropical cyclones DREF evaluation, attended by Daniel Bolanos and Ysabeau Rycx Volunteers mobilized in Tanna Activate VRCS Emergency Operations Centre
18 – 20 January	Multi agency assessment carried out in Tanna Daily conference calls between IFRC Suva and VRCS
23 January	Increase number of jerry cans in the plan of action
24 January	Assessment report released for Vania affected Tanna and Tafea outer islands
24 – 28 January	Nomad training (Branch manager, Shirley Johnson participated) Request from VRCS to FRC for WatSan support WASH cluster activated (informally)
27 January	initial assessment report for TC Wilma
29 January	FRC lends VRCS funds to undertake assessments (800,000 Vatu)
30 January	TC Yasi hit the North on the islands of Mota Lava, Vanua Lava and Gaua. Flash reports shared by VRCS WatSan technical support (Frank Mallein, volunteer from French Red Cross PIROPS) arrives in Vanuatu

31 January	Frank Mallein departs Port Vila for Ipota to undertake water quality testing and assessment, accompanied by Henry Jackson and Romain Estebe
2 February	VRCS reports TC Yasi Draft DREF request received in KL; Teleconference for IFRC and country team (including French Red Cross head of delegation and VRCS)
3 February	IFRC Suva informed that the country team representative remains in Suva and not in Vanuatu; DREF request received in KL (on a public holiday: Chinese New Year) and circulated for technical review;
4 February	DREF approved; Erromango assessments completed.
5 February	Assessment of water quality finishes in Ipota (Henry Jackson, Frank Mallein and Romain Estebe) Transport of water containers to Ipota from stocks at VRCS
5 – 6 February	UNICEF distribution in Middle Bush, Tanna
6 – 15 February	Assessment of water quality in Tanna (Frank Mallein and Shirley Johnson)
7 – 11 February	WASH reflection workshop in Ambrym (Jacqueline de Gaillande, George Worwor, Romain Estebe attended)
7 February	IFRC/PNS telephone conference; JD for WatSan prepared; ToR for country team prepared
8 February	Natasha confirmed as country representative; Australian Red Cross announced bilateral contributions.
11 February	The first transfer of funds from Geneva (2.2 million VUV); PNS's teleconference. Distribution of jerry cans and soap in Ipota Disaster Awareness and First Aid Training (Augustine Garae participated)
13 February	Natasha Freeman, country team representative arrives in Vanuatu
15 February	Arrival of jerry cans and mosquito nets from Australia Red Cross
18 February	Oxfam funding received (1.65 million VUV); MoU between IFRC and VRCS (for this DREF) received in KL
19 – 22 February	Cyclone Atu strikes Ministry of Health refuses distribution of Red Cross mosquito nets Information disseminated to key partners on WASH assessment of Tanna Distribution of food with NDMO Red Cross received clothes, biscuits and canned food donated by general public and transported with rice in containers from Port Vila to Tanna First distribution of food from the government in Ipota – Port Narvin
19 February	HoD, French Red Cross leaves Vanuatu
21 February	First NDMO boat with Red Cross jerry cans and clothes arrive in Tanna
23 February	IFRC confirms replenishment of jerry cans through DREF; number of volunteers involved in the operation shared with KL for insurance;
24 February	High priority action matrix published
25 February	Teleconference with PNS's
26 February	Flight chartered to Erromango, Tanna and Aniwa (Natasha Freeman, Jacqueline de Gaillande, Henry Jackson, a photographer)
26 February	French government/military flight and helicopter Distribution of relief items on Tanna Food distribution in Aniwa Additional jerry cans provided by French Red Cross Assessment and water quality test done in Dillions Bay Assessment undertaken in Futuna and food distributed Meeting with Ministry of Health regarding distribution of mosquito nets Assessment of water quality in Aniwa (Frank Mallein and Shirley Johnson) Assessment of Anitiym and food distribution

1 March	Assessment for Tropical Cyclone Atu; Teleconference with PNS's
3 March	First boat returns back to Vila; Review of DREF budget and plan of action starts
4 March	French Red Cross head of delegation returns Vanuatu Second request for transfer of funds from KL (2.2 million VUV); final list of volunteers shared for insurance Fifth assessment of Tanna including distribution of food, jerry cans and clothes
7 March	Payment order for transfer done by Geneva
8 March	Second boat leaves with mosquito nets, pipes and tanks; confirmation by VRCS to replace Natasha Freeman in her role as country team representative; Operations Update 1 circulated for technical inputs WASH distribution on Aniwa, Futuna and Aneiyum
11 March	Charter payment; First distribution at Dillions Bay and Ipota Mosquito nets received in Ipota Operations update
13 March	Natasha Freeman leaves Vanuatu Distribution of mosquito nets in Erromango
14 March	Second boat breaks down Distribution of jerry cans in Aniwa Distribution in Tanna and Britain Island, Erromango
15 March	End of Mission for Natasha Freeman in Suva
16 March	List of volunteers with contact details shared with KL and Geneva for insurance.
21 March	Arrival of Michael Gloeckle as country representative
End of March	Second boat returns
22 March	Suva agreed with VRCS to do the DREF evaluation in April
30 March	VRCS partnership meeting
Early April	OFDA funding received (9.16 million VUV)
4 April	Third installment of DREF funds transferred Tracking and monitoring of distribution Last distribution of jerry cans and soap in Ipota
6 – 9 April	Augustine Garae, Henry Jackson and Michael Gloeckle go to Tanna to undertake beneficiary satisfaction surveys Last distribution in Aniwa Evaluation forms sent to Aniwa
14 April	Final DREF report drafted (narrative only, not the financial report) Final acquittals prepared
17 April	Anushka Gokul, Pacific regional finance manager returns back to Suva
18 April	Michael Gloeckle leaves Vanuatu Beneficiary satisfaction evaluation forms returned back to HQ – only from Tanna Evaluations entered into survey monkey
12 – 19 May	DM partnership meeting in Fiji (attended by Jacqui de Gaillande and Augustine Garae – 1 week, and Henry Jackson – 3 days)
23 – 28 May	Open day exhibition End of WASH rehabilitation programme Instalment of high frequency radio at Sola, Torba Province funded by DIPECHO programme Logistics emergency training by WFP
8 – 9 June	Disaster management forum, hosted by Red Cross and Oxfam
16 – 17 June	DREF evaluation

Annex II

Self evaluation by VRCS staff and volunteers of the DREF operation

What worked well?

- Early warning systems
- Sharing of information
- Mobilization of volunteers
- Finance (accountability and transparency)
- Coordination of WASH cluster
- Support from PNS
- Insurance of volunteers
- Staff and volunteers gained a lot of experience
- Recognition of Red Cross support by the communities

What could have been improved?

- Logistics
- Communication
- Evaluation forms/assessment forms
- Relief distribution
- Coordination with NDMO
- Agreed standardized SOPs for internal assessment
- Data management
- Pre-positioned stock (including water quality testing tubes)
- Disaster prepared plan
- Red Cross visibility in the media
- Volunteer capacity
- Volunteer resources (tracking maps, assessment forms, raincoats)

What would you do differently next time?

- Clarify the definition of household
- Training (ERT, hygiene promotion)
- Mobilization of additional personnel at headquarter level
- Advocacy with Air Vanuatu for sending free letters/documents
- Buffer funds for assessment/ongoing running costs
- Standardized assessment forms
- Better prepared branches for response (training, prepositioning of stock, assessment)
- Logistical systems in place
- Improve communication with branches (satellite phones and radios)
- Create relationship with stakeholders including suppliers and transport companies
- Better coordination with other organizations at provincial level

Annex III

Beneficiary satisfaction survey

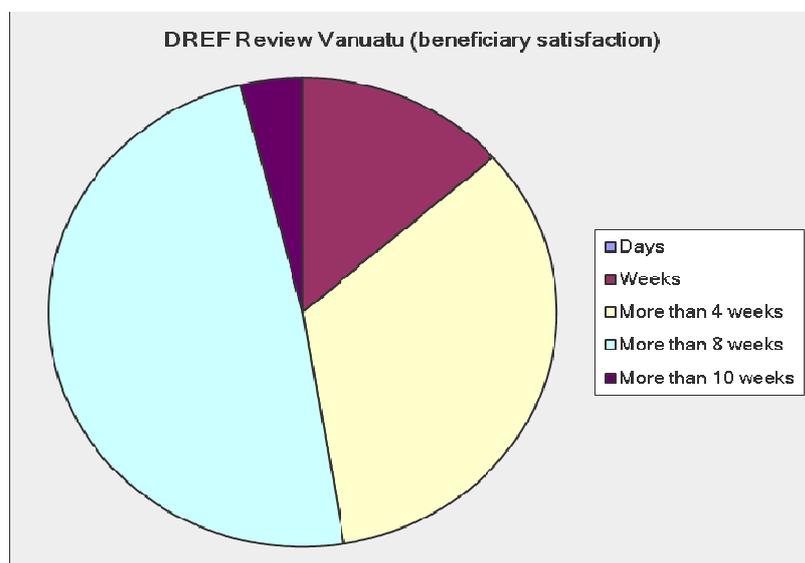
A total of 235 responses were received from Tanna South East/White Sands (73%), Tanna South (24%) and Tanna South West (3%). No response was received from Erromango North, Erromango South and Dillions Bay, and the responses from Aniwa were discounted as the data was not reliable.

Of the responses received, just over half of respondents were female. The hierarchy of needs after the cyclone ranged in order of food, non food items, health services, sanitation, livelihoods and water (the results were found by aggregating 'urgently need' and 'needed' responses).

News of the distributions came from a mixture of sources including church leaders, community leaders and chiefs, disaster committee, however a number of respondents didn't know about the distribution, while others didn't know the meaning of the word distribution.

The majority of beneficiaries (67%) were initially contacted by VRCS more than two weeks after the disaster, with a further 20% contacted more than one month after the disaster. Only 10% were contacted by VRCS one week after the disaster.

How long after cyclone Vania did you have to wait to receive your supplies from Vanuatu Red Cross?



According to survey results over half of the people survey received supplies from VRCS at least 8 weeks after the cyclone (49% received more than 8 weeks after the cyclone and 4% received supplies more than 10 weeks after the disaster.. This seems to be fairly slow, given that all respondents are from Tanna, which is relatively accessible compared to some of the other affected areas.

Despite the delay in receiving assistance, 97% of beneficiaries were very satisfied and 3% satisfied with the swiftness/timeliness of the assistance received from VRCS. Feedback from

Beneficiaries found that 88% of those surveyed found the items they received very useful, while 12% found the items somewhat useful.

A resounding 99% of people surveyed said that everyone in their communities received the same items. But it wasn't clear from the question whether everyone received the same quantity of items.

Just over half of respondents received information prior to the distribution. This was discussed during the workshop. It seems that it is not often possible to sensitize the community in advance of a distribution given poor weather conditions and access could make it difficult to visit communities once, let alone twice in order to sensitize communities prior to distributions.

In conclusion, 80% of people surveyed in Tanna were very satisfied with the service received from VRCS staff and volunteers, which 17% were satisfied and 2% were very unsatisfied.

While the survey monkey has highlighted overall satisfaction, there are some lessons learned from this exercise:

- The surveys should be kept simple. This survey was quite long, with 17 questions and could be shortened
- Some words and meanings were lost in translation, and concepts should be checked with local staff before finalizing the survey
- The staff/volunteers directly involved in the operation should not be the staff/volunteers undertaking the survey, this poses a conflict of interest (in this case, it was suggested to recruit students, however this was not feasible)
- People carrying out the survey should receive training on undertaking surveys and how they may lead or bias a respondent

While survey monkey has some value in soliciting beneficiary satisfaction, these types of surveys cannot replace beneficiary focus groups discussions which allow for a much greater depth of discussion. In the case of Vanuatu, the geographical disbursement of the affected areas and the budget constraints did not allow for focus group discussions with beneficiaries, community leaders or provincial disaster committees.

Annex IV

Management survey

Response to the management survey was disappointing, with only 5 responses received out of the 14 surveys sent out.

According to the results, it appears that food and livelihoods were the biggest need (both outside the mandate of VRCS), followed by water and non food items and while they were needed, they were not urgently needed.

Transport was identified as the main challenge, followed by coordination and monitoring. In terms of achievements, assessment, distribution of relief items and coordination were identified as the operations main achievements.

80% of respondents felt that the operation met the stated outcome: *To reduce the risk of water-related diseases through the provision of safe water and hygiene items and to meet the essential households needs through the distribution of food and non food-items for 2,906 households in Tafea province for 3 months*, despite the plan of action changing and the water sources always being safe.

Overall, respondents felt that the cluster system worked well, but felt that NDMO could have done better.

Three out of four respondents said that there was effective coordination with in the Red Cross. All respondents felt that the inputs from PNS were either appropriate or very appropriate, although one person noted that it did not particularly build the capacity of VRCS. To some extent PNS felt consulted in the planning and implementation of the operation.

It seems that the operation has helped develop VRCS in technical areas, in particular assessment relief and logistics, and in term of coordination, decision making and volunteer management.

Annex V

Vanuatu TC Vania DREF Lessons Learned Workshop (16 – 17 June 2011, Port Vila)

Participant Details:

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Annex VI

DREF lessons learned workshop/review concept paper.

Annex VII Evaluation of the lessons learned workshop

How useful was the workshop sessions?

1 – poor, 2 – OK, 3 good, 4 very good and 5 – excellent

Session	1	2	3	4	5
Timeline		2	2	5	1
Impressions from different perspectives			2	8	
Self evaluation		1	1	6	2
Beneficiary and management surveys		2	2	6	
Group discussions			1	5	4
Priority setting			2	8	2

To what extent do you feel the workshop has helped VRCS be more effective in emergency response?

1 – Not much	2 – some what	3 – a lot
0	3	6

1 – poor, 2 – OK, 3 good, 4 very good and 5 – excellent

Overall feedback on the workshop	1	2	3	4	5
How well was the workshop prepared?			2	6	2
Presenters			1	6	3
Meeting room				3	7
Food and refreshments	1		1		8