



# Cyclone Pam One Year On

A year since Cyclone Pam devastated Vanuatu, Red Cross reflects on how far the country has come along the road to recovery.



Over the 13th and 14th of March 2015, Tropical Cyclone Pam devastated many of the islands of Vanuatu. The category 5 storm brought winds of 250km/hr with gusts up to 320 km/hr. Winds and flooding caused extensive destruction and damage to homes, livelihoods and infrastructure, which led to a drastic reduction in living conditions, income, and access to basic services.

Eleven people were killed and approximately 66,000 lost their homes. In total, 188,000 people were affected by Cyclone Pam - approximately 70% of the total population of Vanuatu.

Since then, Vanuatu Red Cross, with support from our partners have assisted 39,915 people in their recovery. Assistance has been provided in the form of emergency relief items, water distribution, tools and training to rebuild homes, construction of rain water harvesting systems and sanitation facilities, hygiene promotion activities in communities to reduce the risk of disease and workshops for young women to assist in the restoration of livelihoods following the disaster.

Red Cross continues to work with communities across Vanuatu to assist in their recovery and help them to better prepare for the next disaster.



*Above: Cyclone damage in Mele village, Efate (Hanna Butler, NZRC); Right: Red Cross surveys cyclone damage on Emae island (Dickinson Tevi, VRCS)*

**39,915** people assisted by Red Cross

The work outlined in this report has been completed in partnership with the International Federation of Red Cross Red Crescent, Australian Red Cross, French Red Cross and New Zealand Red Cross.

## FROM THE CEO

One year ago, Vanuatu encountered our strongest cyclone on record. Cyclone Pam was like nothing we had seen before. In response, Vanuatu Red Cross Society (VRCS), with great assistance from international partners and in close coordination with the Vanuatu government, mounted its largest ever emergency relief and recovery effort. Twelve months on, we present a snapshot of the work we have done and are continuing to do with hundreds of communities across Vanuatu, as we work together towards recovery.

VRCS has certainly faced challenges along the way but we have also made some impressive achievements. However, the real success story of this recovery has been the strength and resilience shown by the people of Vanuatu. The work Red Cross has done would not have been possible without the commitment shown by the communities with whom we work and the willingness of these community members in volunteering their time to rebuild and recover. I take this opportunity to thank each and every one of these people for their patience and partnership. Together, we will overcome the challenges and recover.



*Above: The CEO and Vice-President of Vanuatu Red Cross await the arrival of relief supplies in Port Vila (Dickinson Tevi, VRCS); Below: Red Cross volunteers load relief supplies in Port Vila, Efate (Dickinson Tevi, VRCS)*

“the real success story of this recovery has been the strength and resilience shown by the people of Vanuatu”

## EMERGENCY RESPONSE

In the immediate aftermath of the cyclone, Vanuatu Red Cross mobilised over 200 local volunteers to assist in the delivery of relief supplies to 39,915 people. Emergency repairs were undertaken on water supply infrastructure on Tanna and clean water provided on Tanna & Efate. Kitchen sets, sleeping equipment, tarpaulins, hygiene kits, solar lanterns and jerry cans were distributed across 14 affected islands to 7,983 families.

Further information on the emergency response can be found in the VRCS Cyclone Pam Emergency Response report available on the website – [www.vanuaturedcross.org](http://www.vanuaturedcross.org).





## SHELTER

The Shepherd Islands and Tanna were two of the worst hit areas with many villages reporting that following the cyclone, the majority of buildings had been destroyed. Red Cross is focusing on rebuilding essential community infrastructure as well helping people to rebuild their homes. Building methods which make structures more able to withstand further disasters are a focus of the work.

Damaged or destroyed school buildings are currently being reconstructed in communities on Efate, Emae and Buninga Islands. In North Tanna, planning is underway to build 16 kindergartens and 10 traditional cyclone shelters which will be more resistant to future disasters. 900 families in over 100 communities in West Tanna have also received shelter fixing kits to assist in the reconstruction of their homes after participating in awareness demonstrations. Red Cross has conducted 'Build Back Better & Safer' awareness sessions within these communities to ensure people are equipped with the necessary knowledge to better prepare their homes for the next cyclone.

Reconstruction is also underway on the Red Cross branches in Tanna and Efate, both of which suffered extensive damage in the cyclone.

*Above: A child stands next to his school currently being rebuilt by Red Cross in Buninga (Edwina Yeates, VRCS), Below: Joe Simeon, Head Teacher, works on school roof repairs in Buninga (Edwina Yeates, VRCS)*



**5,168**

families provided with tools to repair their houses



## WATER, SANITATION & HYGIENE

The devastation brought by Cyclone Pam seriously affected people's access to clean and safe drinking water. 68% of rainwater harvesting systems in Vanuatu were damaged or destroyed. Since Cyclone Pam, in addition to emergency repairs to the water supply in North Tanna, Red Cross has constructed or repaired 159 rainwater harvesting systems in Shefa and Malampa provinces. As a result of this work, 882 households have increased access to safe water. 35 latrines have also been installed to improve community sanitation.

Water committees have been re-established in 34 communities on the Shepherd Islands, Paama, Moso and Lelepa to encourage local management of water resources. This has proved to be particularly important during the current El Nino weather event which has caused water shortages in many communities of Vanuatu due to lower than average levels of rainfall.

In any post-disaster situation, good hygiene is key to stopping the spread of disease and illness. Since Cyclone Pam, Red Cross has reached 5,198 people with hygiene promotion activities. Local volunteers have been trained in areas such as proper handwashing, disease transmission pathways and how to remain hygienic with a limited water supply. These volunteers then pass this knowledge on through awareness sessions in their local communities allowing them to work together to prevent illness and promote healthy communities.



**4,410** people with improved access to drinking water



*Above: Red Cross has been helping communities access safe drinking water post-Cyclone Pam (Becky Webb, IFRC) Top of page: A water tank is delivered to Liro village, Paama (Nixon Joe, VRCS)*

## HEALTH

Red Cross has focused on building the resilience of communities to deal with health and medical issues through first aid training in communities. This program is currently being implemented in Malampa and Shefa provinces and aims to benefit 7,500 people. By having first aid trained community members, immediate assistance can be provided in emergencies until medical treatment can be accessed.



Above: A woman identifies her island on a map of Vanuatu, Emae (Madeline Wilson, IFRC) Below: Young women from semi-rural areas of Efate undertake small business management training in Port Vila, Efate (Renie Anderson, VRCS)

## DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

In all of the work that has been completed over the past 12 months, preparedness for future disasters has been a key consideration. Vanuatu is the most disaster prone country in the world, therefore the people of Vanuatu must be prepared. All construction of community infrastructure and water sources has been performed to ensure it is able to better withstand future disasters. In a country largely reliant on natural resources for income generation, the livelihoods program enables an alternative if and when resources such as garden produce are affected by disaster and are no longer a viable income source.

One of the most important roles of Vanuatu Red Cross in preparing for future disasters is to ensure that there is a sufficient supply of essential relief items readily available in country when a disaster strikes. By storing stock both at Headquarters in Port Vila and in the provincial branches, supplies are always close at hand. With assistance from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade, Red Cross now has enough relief supplies for 800 families positioned across the country, to ensure that in times of disaster, emergency assistance can be provided immediately to those in need.

## LIVELIHOODS

For many families, their ability to earn income was seriously affected by Cyclone Pam. In the year since the cyclone, Red Cross has run three intensive workshops for young women from Efate who were affected by the cyclone. These workshops aim to build skills in income generation and assist these women to be able to contribute more to their household's income. So far, 31 young women have attended these workshops. Through diversification of income sources, the workshops also help participants to be more resilient in the face of future disasters. Eight more workshops are planned for 2016.





## WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES

Red Cross is committed to making sure that we are working alongside communities through every step of the recovery. Red Cross is active in creating and developing community disaster committees and water committees to encourage local ownership and management. Communities are regularly asked to provide feedback on the activities that have been undertaken so that Red Cross can better understand what it is that they need. On Efate and Tanna islands over 500 households have participated in satisfaction surveys. In West Tanna, 300 households were given the opportunity to provide detailed feedback on Red Cross' shelter assistance, focus groups have also been recently conducted with women in West Tanna to gain gender specific feedback. The information received from these surveys helps Red Cross to gain a better understanding of how we can improve for future disasters and what we can do now to continue to help.



*Above: Women attend a focus group in Lamanian village, Tanna (Renie Anderson, VRCS)  
Left: Ellen Nok in Tanna with her two children. (Edwina Yeates, VRCS)*

## VOLUNTEER STORIES

### Ellen | Tanna

“After the cyclone I volunteered to look after the Red Cross warehouse and make sure we had the right number of items.

“We distributed mats, water containers, tarpaulins and hygiene kits. We also gave the people in North Tanna water, because they had no water.

“I didn't know any of the Red Cross team when they came over, but at the end of the work we became friends.

“We are nearly finished rebuilding our house. Red Cross gave us toolkits to use. I haven't slept in my own house since Cyclone Pam and now I'm really looking forward to it! I'm very excited.”

## VOLUNTEER STORIES

### Johnathon | Efate

“I will never forget Cyclone Pam, the biggest and the strongest I’ve ever known. Many of my family in Tanna lost their lives and it was very sad for all of us.

“Vanuatu Red Cross was the first organisation to respond to our community. We received tarps, shelter toolkits and food.

“During my volunteer deployment with Red Cross I learned a lot of ideas on how to rebuild a stronger house that can resist a cyclone.

“I would like to say a big thank-you to all Red Cross donors and supporters from overseas, for all the help they have sent us.”



## LOOKING AHEAD

Red Cross will continue to work with communities in Malampa, Shefa and Tafea provinces towards recovery. Work will focus on providing people affected by TC Pam with the knowledge and tools to both assist in recovery and to help them to prepare for the next disaster. Red Cross’ work on Cyclone Pam recovery is currently scheduled to continue into mid-2017.

*Above: Johnathon David working in Ohlen, Port Vila (IFRC) Below: Children on Buninga island standing outside the house they sheltered in during the cyclone (Edwina Yeates, VRCS)*



## WHERE WE WORK



Water, Sanitation & Hygiene



Shelter



Livelihoods



Disaster Risk Reduction



Health

Note: This map shows only current recovery operations. Red Cross is also working in other areas of Vanuatu on programs outside of the recovery.

## TO OUR DONORS

Vanuatu Red Cross would like to thank everyone who donated to our emergency response – governments, partner National Societies, businesses and individuals. These donations allowed Red Cross to assist the people of Vanuatu in their time of need.

## DONATE

With the compounding effects of the El Nino drought, there is still a lot of work to be done to help the people of Vanuatu recover. To donate to the Vanuatu Red Cross TC Pam recovery go to [www.vanuaturedcross.org/donate](http://www.vanuaturedcross.org/donate)

Our neighbours in Fiji have also just suffered extensive damage as a result of category-5 Tropical Cyclone Winston. To donate to the Cyclone Winston appeal go to [www.vanuaturedcross.org/helpfiji](http://www.vanuaturedcross.org/helpfiji)



For more information contact:

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