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FEATURING THE RESEARCH TEAM & PARTNERS

RESEARCH TEAM

Humanitarian Advisory Group – Research lead agency

Humanitarian Advisory Group (HAG) is at the forefront of current thinking and research in the humanitarian landscape, with a particular focus on the Pacific. HAG provides a unique space for thinking, discussion and testing new ideas. HAG works with organisations on improving programming, strengthening policies, providing an evidence-base for decision-making and reviewing how responses have impacted at-risk and marginalised groups. In partnership with World Vision Australia and the Australian Humanitarian Partnership (AHP), HAG leads the extended project on disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation in the Pacific, 'Beyond Barriers'. HAG also led 2 previous studies in the disability inclusion sector and disaster risk reduction (DRR), namely [Organisations of Persons with Disabilities: making a difference in Vanuatu and Solomon Islands](#) and [Giving rise to rights: barriers and enablers to participation of persons with disabilities in PNG](#).

CBM Global Inclusion Advisory Group – Inclusion advisory agency

CBM Australia is a member of CBM Global, an international development organisation that has worked alongside people with disabilities to address poverty and exclusion for over 100 years. The [CBM Global Inclusion Advisory Group](#) (IAG) is a network of specialist disability inclusion advisors who provide advice to governments, UN agencies, development banks, management contractors and international and local NGOs. IAG work in partnership with the disability movement including organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) to support partners in the international development and humanitarian sector to achieve greater disability inclusion within their organisations and programs. CBM Advisor, Shannon Harmer, contributed to key stages of the study as a disability inclusion technical advisor. She also engaged with Vanuatu Disability Promotion and Advocacy Association (VDPA), building on the existing partnership with CBM and VDPA, and led a rapid desk review exercise on inclusive communication global best practices.

Community Based Rehabilitation Network Timor-Leste – Timor-Leste research lead agency

Community Based Rehabilitation Network Timor-Leste (CBRN-TL), promotes an inclusive society for all in Timor-Leste. The organisation focuses on community empowerment through information sharing on community-based rehabilitation and the rights of persons with disabilities. CBRN-TL also supports prevention of gender-based violence against women and girls with disabilities. Its research and monitoring branch evaluates access to various services by persons with disabilities and informs advocacy efforts for implementation of inclusive development programs in Timor-Leste. The Director, Norberta Vincente Soares Da Cruz, and her support team hope the present study can provide the Government of Timor-Leste and civil society organisations with a way forward to effectively address communication barriers and ensure access to vital information for persons with disabilities and diverse needs.

RESEARCH PARTNERS

Disaster READY Country Committees in Vanuatu and Timor Leste (Australian Humanitarian Partnership)

Disaster READY is a climate change adaptation (CCA) and DRR and resilience program, implemented through the AHP. It represents a significant investment by the Australian Government in disaster preparedness in the region and sees AHP partners delivering locally-led programs through their networks in Fiji, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste. The first phase of the program (2017 to 2022) equipped more than 245,000 people with knowledge and resources to mitigate the effects of disaster and climate change. The second phase (2022 to 2027) further builds on the initial phase, emphasising the inclusion of women and girls, and persons with disabilities. AHP partner committees in Timor-Leste (Care Lead) and Vanuatu (World Vision lead) played a crucial role in directing and enabling this study, facilitating access to information, communities and government actors as well as directly engaging in the design and feedback stages of the research.

Ra'es Hadomi Timor Oan

Ra'es Hadomi Timor Oan (RHTO) is the national disabled person's organisation for persons with disabilities in Timor-Leste. RHTO has a constituency of over 600 members, comprising people with many different types of disabilities from across all 13 municipalities of Timor-Leste. RHTO's mission is to advocate for the rights of persons with disabilities and to facilitate the inclusion of all persons with disabilities in society. RHTO works with government, partners in the disability sector, public and private organisations, civil society and the broader development sector in order to support and improve the inclusion of and access to human rights for persons with disabilities. RHTO supported the study with insights from its work and contextual knowledge in Timor-Leste. RHTO also participated in the design and feedback stages of the study.

Vanuatu Disability Promotion & Advocacy Association

The Vanuatu Disability Promotion & Advocacy Association (VDPA) is the only ni-Vanuatu national OPD. VDPA was established in 1999, is governed and staffed by persons with disabilities and has over 1000 registered members. The organisation's mandate is to advocate for the rights and promote the abilities of persons with disabilities in Vanuatu. VDPA has contributed to advancing the rights of persons with disabilities through the development of 32 affiliate groups, which work to raise awareness and advocate for disability inclusion at the community level across Vanuatu. Regionally, VDPA is a member of the Pacific Disability Forum. VDPA supported the study with insights from its work and contextual knowledge in Vanuatu.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Effective two-way communication is a human right, essential to ensure communities can prepare for, respond to and recover from the impacts of disasters and climate change. Yet, often the use of complex terminology and concepts as well as inadequate channels and formats of communication largely undermine access by communities, including persons with disabilities. **Inaccessible or non-inclusive communication channels have drastic and wide-ranging effects on persons with disabilities.** Persons with disabilities who are women, youth, rural and/or with communication difficulties, typically face heightened risks from disaster and climate, and are significantly less likely to access preparedness resources and participate in decision-making. Additionally, systemic barriers to education place people with disabilities at greater risk of low literacy, which can limit their ability to independently access written content.

Acknowledging those realities, **Programs like Disaster READY (2022 to 2027), by the Australian Humanitarian Partnership (AHP), embodied disability inclusion and support to local Organisations for Persons with a Disability (OPDs)** as core objectives and strategies to promote equitable access to disaster preparedness and climate resilience in the Pacific and Timor-Leste. **Such programs offer unique opportunities to learn from different country contexts and practitioners** in order to understand the most effective and promising practices to communicate and engage a diversity of persons with disabilities at scale.

Focusing on the case of Vanuatu and Timor-Leste, **the present cross-learning study, funded by World Vision Australia's 'Beyond Barriers' research project, aims to A)** take stock of effective inclusive and accessible communication practices, **B)** Uncover contextual and enabling factors to secure safe environment and two-way communication with a diversity of people, and **C)** Identify gaps and propose practical tools for action.

Key learnings and tools emerging from the study include:

A) Taking stock of effective communication practices and challenges

-  **Learning 1:** The use of multimodal communication and simplified messaging by some AHP partners are effective inclusive approaches to be further integrated and mainstreamed into disaster preparedness and climate resilience efforts.
-  **Learning 2:** The use of specialised and alternative communication methods and online inclusive platforms remain under-used, given the limited expertise, financial resources and structures available in both countries. The suitability of such approaches must be re-assessed as contexts evolve.

B) Meeting diversity and enabling two-way communication

-  **Learning 3:** Disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate actors need to embrace creativity and systematic contextualisation in order to explore new and effective ways to communicate with a diversity of persons with disabilities.
-  **Learning 4:** Working with and/or through OPDs is an effective communication strategy, building on OPDs' expertise, mandate and existing networks in-country. This also helps to address stigma and develops safe spaces for meaningful participation and representation of persons with disabilities.

C) Tools for action



Learning 5: There is a need for greater efforts and resources to be directed at the development of context-specific and inclusive communication standards and tools at national and organisational levels. Further investment in understanding the reach and effectiveness of different communication approaches should support the emergence of creative solutions.

The above learnings and close consultations with AHP partners and OPDs supported the development of 3 tools under the study, including:



TOOL 1: Simple Disaster and Preparedness Communication Template

A communication template uses simple messaging and pictures to support the standardisation of messaging on DRR and climate change adaptation (CCA) using accessible format in Vanuatu.



TOOL 2: Inclusive Communication Mapping Tool

The Inclusive Communication Mapping Tool outlines advantages and limitations of various communication formats and material/methods for communicating with a diversity of persons with disabilities. It is designed as a starting point to support the development of multimodal information-sharing strategies as well as provide intersectional considerations for the development of communication tools, ensuring they can reach a diverse audience.



TOOL 3: Inclusive Communication Guidance Note

The proposed guidance presents high level action points for AHP agencies to strengthen inclusive communication in future AHP program design. Action points detail key takeaways from each of the study key learnings above.

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INTRODUCTION

STUDY BACKGROUND

In 2021, World Vision Australia (WVA) partnered with Humanitarian Advisory Group (HAG) to lead a series of research initiatives, referred to as the 'Beyond Barriers' research project. The project supported the integration of climate change adaptation (CCA) and disaster risk reduction (DRR) under the Australian Humanitarian Partnership (AHP) Disaster READY program. Building on the evidence generated under the first phase of Beyond Barriers, a second phase of research was undertaken from July 2023 to June 2025. The objective was to support AHP members and partners to implement evidence-based actions that strengthen good practice approaches in enhancing community resilience under Disaster READY 2.0 (2022 to 2027).

In 2023, the Vanuatu Disaster READY Country Committee (DRCC) expressed interest in Beyond Barriers' action research initiative, with a participatory process identifying the opportunity to focus on inclusive communication in the context of integrated approaches to CCA and DRR. Following initial consultations with DRCC members and partners in Vanuatu, a written template for communicating key information to reduce the risk of disasters and mitigate climate impacts to communities was developed by HAG in close partnership with CBM Australia and Vanuatu Disability Promotion & Advocacy Association (VDPA). Further testing and communicating of the template with the Vanuatu government was, however, hindered by an earthquake emergency. This limited the availability of government officials and DRCC members to further engage on this topic in 2025.

Whilst this first attempt is yet to translate into practice, it revealed the need to further explore and anchor integrated approaches to accessible and inclusive communication in disaster preparedness and climate resilience initiatives. Following consultations with the DRCC in Timor-Leste, an opportunity for country specific learning was identified, as well as cross-country learning between Vanuatu and Timor-Leste on the topic of accessible, inclusive communication under the Disaster READY program.

PURPOSE & AUDIENCE

The purpose of this study is to support DRCC members and partners in Timor-Leste and Vanuatu to strengthen their practices of communication to communities for greater inclusion of persons with disabilities in disaster preparedness and climate resilience efforts. The study builds on global best practice and contextual realities to identify opportunities for scaling up effective communication in context. Recommended practices and practical tools were developed with the aim to support inclusive communication under Disaster READY, future AHP initiatives and the work of DRR and climate actors in Vanuatu and Timor-Leste more broadly.

The study responds to **3 research questions:**

- ▶ **What accessible and inclusive communication practices and strategies are in place for communicating to communities under the Disaster READY program in Vanuatu and Timor Leste?**

- ▶ **What does existing evidence from Vanuatu and Timor-Leste highlight about how to effectively communicate with persons with disabilities?**
- ▶ **What tools or approaches can strengthen effective climate and disaster risk communication with persons with disabilities?**

SCOPE & DEFINITIONS

The study focuses on capturing existing communication practices under the Disaster READY preparedness and climate resilience activities. However, it excludes Anticipatory Action (AA) and disaster response activities for reasons explained below.

Accessible and inclusive communication

The term ‘accessible and inclusive communication’ under the present study refers to all measures in place to facilitate access to information for persons with disabilities. This includes a range of practices and strategies for the development of disaster preparedness and CCA content, material and access measures designed to address barriers for a diversity of persons with disabilities. Examples include using specific font and colour contrasts for all written materials, home visits to share information with households with persons with disabilities, the development of strategies with carers and support persons to relay and/or adapt information for persons with disabilities to receive and give information (two-way communication channels).

Disaster READY program focus

The present study is focused on Disaster READY’s climate and disaster risk activities only. Findings may be relevant to other activities and actors, such as the AA pilot and early warning systems currently in development and piloted under the program. However, given the early stage of the AA pilot and the fact that the TL government leads key decisions over messaging for specific disasters, the study best focused on activities for which the DRCC has most room for action. This includes the following:

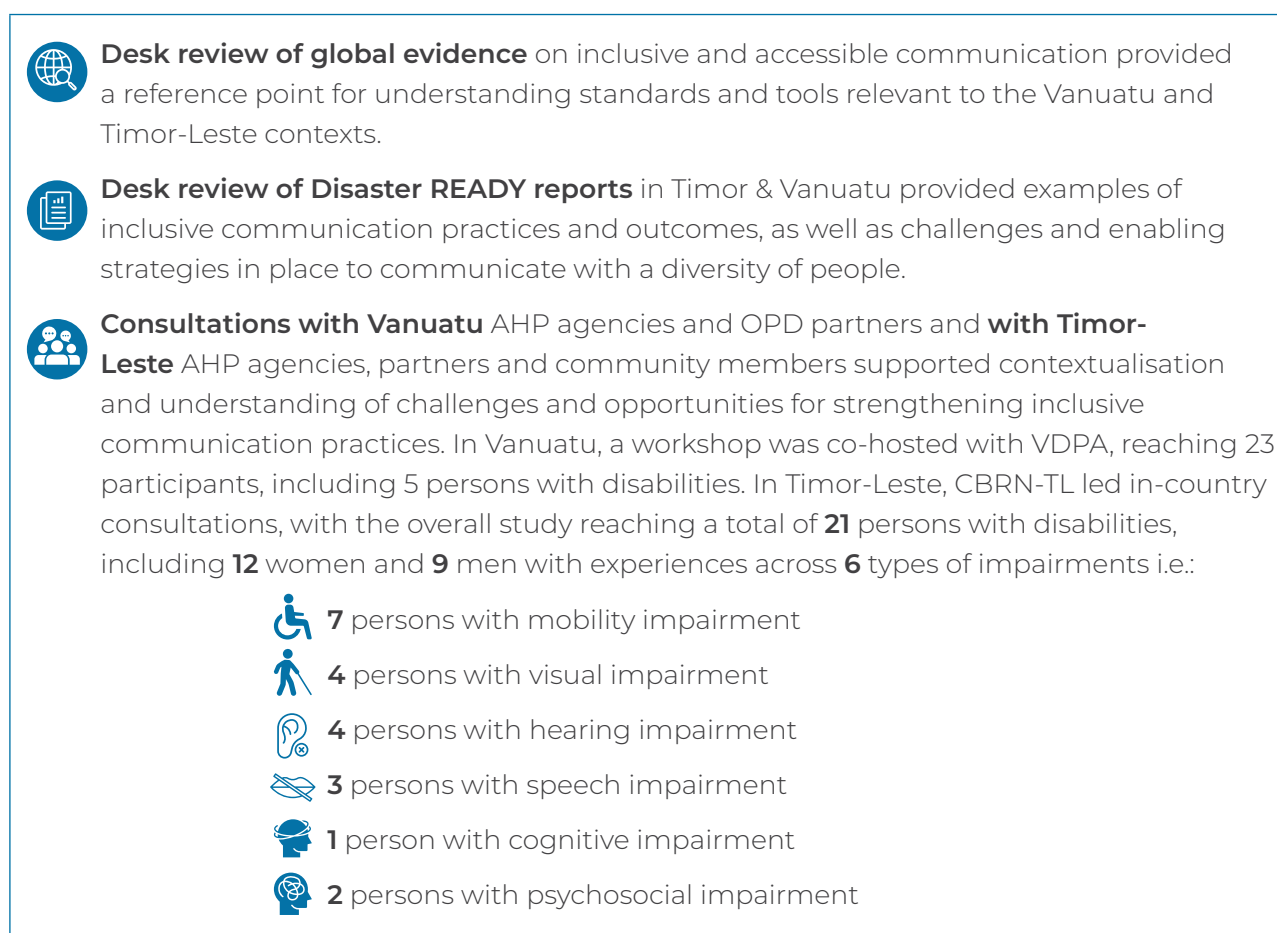
- ▶ Accessing information about disaster preparedness and CCA
 - How to protect assets from disaster
 - Evacuation locations
 - Resources available for CCA
- ▶ Accessing information about participation and feedback mechanisms
 - How to participate in specific or regular consultations under the Disaster READY program (time, place, support for participation)
 - Where to report/ask questions about Disaster READY program

Accessing information in the event of a disaster (via early warning system or other ways) is excluded from the scope of the study, given the government lead in this space and the preliminary stage of development of early warning system.

METHODOLOGY

The overall approach for this study is rooted in principles of partnership and localised research, ensuring participation from key interested parties in the design, implementation and validation of outputs, including recommendations and tools. An extended period for feedback from research partners also led to increased ownership and additional inputs from DRCC members and OPD partners, ensuring the relevance and usefulness of the study findings and tools. Annex 6 presents the research framework used to guide the study, including the areas of enquiry, methods and data sources employed to answer each research question. Figure 1 below also provides an overview of methods and sources of information.

Figure 1: Study methods and sources



Limitations

There are 3 main limitations to the present study, namely:

Learning over evaluating lens: This is not an evaluation of AHP inclusion practices, rather a cross-learning study aiming at identifying and promoting promising practices between AHP partners and between countries. The extent to which inclusive practices are in place under the AHP Disaster READY program and by specific AHP partners cannot be drawn from this study nor was it designed to do so.

Qualitative over representative enquiry: The enquiry is primarily qualitative and did not aim to include a representative picture of the needs of persons with disabilities in Timor-Leste and

Vanuatu. Quantitative and representative data was included when available from secondary sources of information, namely from AHP Disaster READY annual reports and global evidence on best practice and standards for inclusive communication.

More limited sources of information in Vanuatu: A greater number of persons with disabilities and partners were consulted in Timor-Leste compared to Vanuatu, where limited primary data collection activities were conducted. This resulted in additional insights and examples from Timor-Leste being used throughout the report and, in some instances, limited opportunities for cross-learning between the 2 countries.

STRUCTURE

This report is divided into 4 sections following this introduction.

- ▶ **Section 1** explains the rationale for the study and provides additional information about the importance of inclusive communication.
- ▶ **Section 2** takes stock of effective communication practices and challenges under the Disaster READY program in Vanuatu and Timor-Leste.
- ▶ **Section 3** explores contextual and enabling factors that support effective two-way communication with a diversity of persons with disabilities in Timor-Leste and Vanuatu.
- ▶ **Section 4** embraces the study objective to support 'action' by identifying gaps and proposing practical communication templates and guidance to support DRR and CCA practitioners in Vanuatu and Timor-Leste.

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SECTION 1: INCLUSIVE COMMUNICATION IN DISASTER READY – WHAT IS AT STAKE?

Prior to discussing key findings from the study, it is essential to understand what is at stake and the potential impact of more inclusive communication practices and integrated approaches into a program like Disaster READY. This section offers an overview of the main communication barriers and negative consequences identified from previous Beyond Barriers research, which served as the basis for the development of the present study. Significant efforts to address those barriers under the Program over the years shows important disparities between countries, with significant progress made in Vanuatu and Timor-Leste specifically – offering important opportunities for learning.

WHY A FOCUS ON INCLUSIVE COMMUNICATION?

‘Persons with disabilities are not inherently vulnerable. Rather, vulnerability is imposed on them, including by barriers and lack of support’ – *United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy*¹

Effective communication is crucial for ensuring communities can prepare for, respond to and recover from the impacts of disasters and climate change. Receiving information in formats people can understand and are able to express themselves in their chosen communication format are considered human rights, enshrined in the UNCRPD. However, recent research suggests that current communication strategies often fall short, particularly concerning CCA and DRR. The Beyond Barriers project identified 3 main barriers to inclusive communication with heightened consequences for persons with disabilities.

Key barriers:



Complexity of terminology: Communication on DRR and CCA often uses **complex scientific jargon and technical language**. Messages are typically crafted by experts who may **lack experience in translating technical content into plain, accessible language**. As a result, critical information becomes difficult for the general public – particularly for people with cognitive disabilities – to understand and act upon.



Conceptual confusion: There is a persistent **lack of clarity in distinguishing between DRR and CCA frameworks**, as they continue to be addressed separately in many contexts. This conceptual overlap contributes to **confusion among key actors**, including those directly involved in community-based disaster preparedness.



Inadequate accessibility in communication channels and formats: Many DRR and CCA messages are disseminated through formats that **do not meet established accessibility standards**, and are not accessible to people with diverse disabilities. For instance, persons who are blind, deaf or have cognitive disabilities may require alternative formats such as Braille, sign language, Easy Read materials, or pictorial guides.²

Consequences of inaccessible communication

Accessible communication is essential for equitable opportunities to prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters and climate-change related events. This includes access to the necessary information to prepare for climate change disruptions, so that persons with disabilities and their families can be part of the disaster preparedness and climate adaptation plans of their community.³ However, persons with disabilities and other members of the community cannot adequately prepare to act if they do not understand what these often-complex disaster and climate messages aim to communicate. Inaccessible climate and disaster communications have significant negative consequences, including:

- ▶ **Increased risks for persons with disabilities: Persons with disabilities face heightened disaster and climate risks** even when they receive the same information as other individuals. However, when communications are inaccessible for persons with disabilities, **these risks further increase**, putting them at increased danger.⁴ This is compounded for persons with disabilities who face additional forms of marginalisation from factors such as gender, rurality and communication difficulties (see also Box 1 below).
- ▶ **Limited access to essential preparedness resources: Inaccessible information can prevent persons with disabilities from accessing essential resources**, such as early warnings, evacuation locations, disaster preparedness guidance and how to access livelihood and climate resilience support.⁵
- ▶ **Exclusion from decision-making: Difficulty accessing and understanding information can prevent meaningful participation of persons with disabilities** in decision-making processes related to disaster and climate action.⁶ This means that DRR and CCA messaging, programs and activities are often missing the essential perspectives on how to ensure persons with disabilities' needs are met, potentially creating additional social inequities.

Finally, not all persons living with a disability associate themselves as such, and/or are connected with the disability community. This was often stressed under this study by OPDs and community leaders, observing that stigma around the disability label can often prevent people – such as older persons and persons with psychosocial impairments – from accessing disability-specific support. Community members and other actors interviewed also pointed to socio-economic factors further excluding certain groups of persons with disabilities, such as people with lower literacy, people living in remote locations, women and girls, youth, and persons with multiple and/or certain types of impairments.

Box 1: Unpacking diverse experiences of disability

Not all persons with disabilities have the same life experiences nor face the same barriers and risks of exclusion. The study identified 6 common factors of exclusion in Timor-Leste and Vanuatu but notes this is not an exhaustive list, reiterating the singular experience of each person with disabilities due to their individual, family, community and society characteristics.

1. A diversity of impairments

Not all impairments – including physical, visual, hearing, speech, cognitive, and psychosocial – are perceived the same or have the same level of disability support structures available in country. This is particularly true for cognitive and psychosocial types of impairments that often go unacknowledged in communities and are commonly dismissed as ‘medical conditions’ rather than disabilities themselves.⁷ Persons with cognitive and psychosocial impairments may be unrecognized as having different needs such as requiring visual aids, simplified language, or verbal reinforcement to understand or remember information. As a result, they are often left behind during disaster processes, overlooked compared to more visible disabilities.⁸

2. Gender at play

In Vanuatu and Timor-Leste, patriarchal structures and social norms continue to disproportionately affect women, girls and persons with diverse SOGIESC, increasing risks of discrimination, exploitation and violence. Women with disabilities face extra barriers to access support and services and have lower representation in customary and official leadership structures.⁹ Men with disabilities are also more likely to be aware of and have participated in DRR activities than women with disabilities. In some cases, this can be attributed to family members deliberately withholding information about disasters from women with disabilities due to a concern that the information would be stressful and upset them.¹⁰ The marginalisation of women with disabilities ultimately reinforces the stereotype and belief that women, women with disabilities and persons with disabilities are incapable, need constant care and have little value to offer CCA and disaster management spheres.¹¹

‘Gender and disability is a significant issue when it comes to preparedness. Because of patriarchal norms, it is common for men to take responsibility for making decisions in a disaster. They do not realise that women also have capabilities and can help prepare. This is exacerbated further for people with disabilities, particularly women.’ – Summary Notes, VDPA interview

3. Age and disability

Age is referenced as a key compounding factor of exclusion for persons with disabilities by several Disaster READY partners in Timor-Leste and Vanuatu.¹² In particular, young people with disabilities are found to be often excluded from decision-making processes, and lack confidence and support to actively engage and participate in CCA and disaster management activities.¹³ On the other end, older people (over 60 years old) represent more than half of all persons with disabilities¹⁴ and were found to be more likely to face communication barriers to access information.¹⁵

4. Location and access to public spaces and services

Disaster READY partners repeatedly highlight how the geography and limited transport and communication infrastructure in Timor-Leste and Vanuatu are intersectional barriers to inclusive communication and participation. 'Hard to reach areas' and limited internet coverage and technology access continue to lead to isolation from disaster-related information and planning processes for many persons with disabilities in both contexts.¹⁶ Persons with disabilities living in remote and hard to reach areas are also less likely to access disability health services and assistive devices, further hindering their mobility.

'Some islands don't have strong network. It can require walking up a hill or travelling several kilometres to get network range. In this case, engaging with people with disabilities directly can take days to coordinate and requires liaising through family members with phones via text.' – *Summary Notes, VDPA interview*

5. Education and literacy

The continued inaccessibility of many school settings in Vanuatu and Timor-Leste isolates children with disabilities and reinforces perceptions that persons with disabilities should not be and cannot be included in everyday life.¹⁷ This further contributes to persons with disabilities being more likely to be illiterate or have low literacy, increasing barriers to access information in written forms.¹⁸

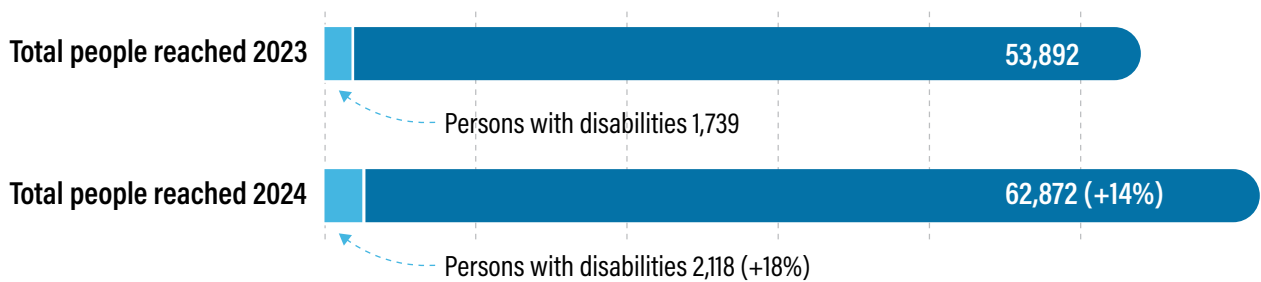
6. Poverty and low participation

Persons with disabilities and their families are more likely to live in poverty. A low economic status also means persons with disabilities – who might require support service to attend and participate in development program activities – may not be able to do so, given the economic cost of missing a day of work and its impact on the household.¹⁹

PROGRESSING DISABILITY INCLUSION UNDER THE DISASTER READY PROGRAM

Disability inclusion is a key principle of the Disaster READY Program.²⁰ **Phase 2 re-iterated its commitment to ‘bolster collaboration among Australian NGOs and local civil society organisations in the wider Asia-Pacific region to address issues of inclusion’.**²¹ Previous evaluations found limited evidence of the extent to which disability-inclusive activities were leading to positive outcomes for persons with disabilities under Disaster READY Phase 1. Such findings elevated issues of participation and agency of persons with disabilities as critical areas for Phase 2.

Figure 2: Snapshot of disability inclusion under Disaster READY Phase 2²²



AHP partners have demonstrated effective efforts to promote disability inclusion over the years. This is illustrated by the increased inclusion of persons with disabilities between 2023 and 2024, which is proportionally greater than the overall increase in people reached over the same period (see Figure 2). Such progress over the last 5 years is attributed to improved collaboration and coordination with local civil society organisations, especially OPDs, and the inclusion of a disability screening tool – the Washington Group Set of Questions – into disability identification and targeting processes.²³

However, different countries and partners show different results and progress, outlining opportunities for cross-learning. Countries like Vanuatu and Timor-Leste programs are making positive contributions, respectively reporting 5 and 3 percent of people reached in 2024 were living with a disability.²⁴ Both countries offer a unique opportunity (sized by the present study) to **investigate how the integration of inclusive and accessible communication may be supporting meaningful participation in program activities, resulting in effective disaster preparedness and CCA resilience for a diversity of persons with disabilities.**

SECTION 2: TAKING STOCK OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION PRACTICES AND CHALLENGES

To address key barriers of communication for a diversity of people, several AHP partners in Vanuatu and Timor-Leste use different channels of communication and investigate ways to simplify and facilitate access to complex or new messaging and concepts. However, contextual challenges, namely the limited technical resources and support structures available in country have hindered AHP partners' ability to use other specialised or alternative communication formats recommended as global best practice. **Learning 1** below explores positive outcomes from the use of multimodal and simplified communication efforts by AHP partners, whilst **Learning 2** outlines remaining gaps in light of contextual challenges in each country.

Learning 1:

The use of multimodal communication and simplified messaging by some AHP partners are effective inclusive approaches to be further integrated and mainstreamed into disaster preparedness and climate resilience efforts.

Several AHP partners in both Vanuatu and Timor-Leste demonstrate the use of multimodal communication channels as well as efforts to simplify messaging, using local language and Easy Read formats. Further details on each inclusive communication practice and examples of positive outcomes for persons with disabilities are described below.



1. Multimodal Information Sharing

BOX 2: What is Multimodal Information Sharing (MIS)?

Multimodal Information Sharing (MIS) involves simultaneously using several communication channels to convey meaning to a diverse target audience. Commonly involving the concurrent use of audio (i.e. radio, siren, megaphone), visual (i.e. pictures, cultural symbols, flags), audiovisual (i.e. TV), and written (i.e. posters, billboards, phone texts) material, MIS, when applied appropriately, ensures that persons with seeing, hearing, walking, cognition and communication disabilities can access information and dialogue.

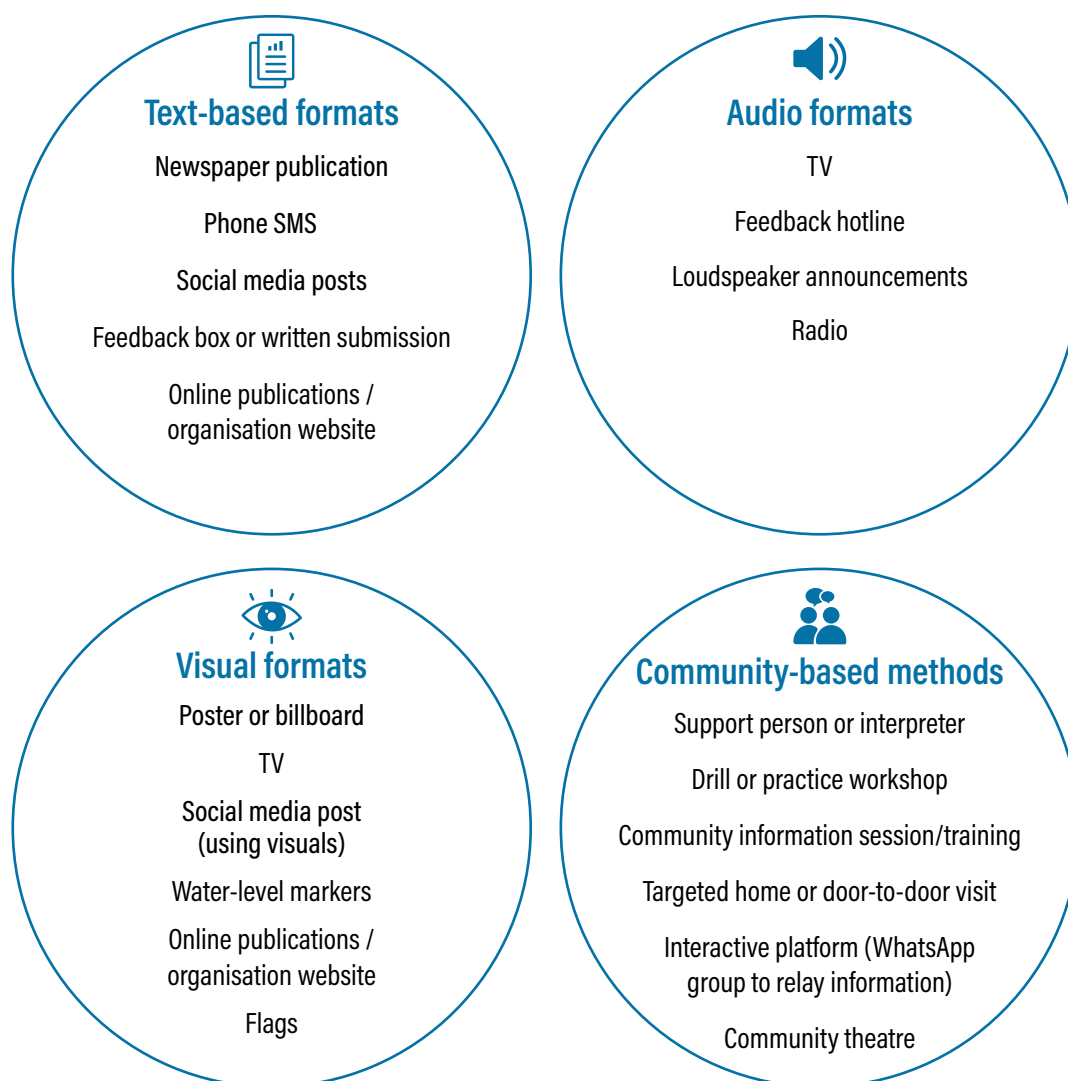
Why use MIS?

The capacity of MIS to **meet the communicative needs of many diverse people** has led the international humanitarian community to consider MIS crucial to effective disaster management and climate change response efforts and, more specifically, vital to the safety and inclusion of persons with disabilities.

‘[Multimodal Information Sharing is an opportunity to] intentionally create spaces for people with disabilities [and access information that was previously] difficult for people with disabilities’ eyes and ears to get’ – Timor-Leste AHP partner staffer

In both countries AHP partners report using a variety of communication channels to support preparedness and resilience at community level. Reported communication channels were similar in Vanuatu and Timor-Leste, however varied between AHP partners. **Few AHP partners demonstrated intentionally using more than 1 channel to communicate the same message in their plans and activity reports.**²⁵ The diversity of channels in use across all AHP partners in both contexts (see Figure 3 below) stresses the opportunity to intentionally combine different types of channels to increase accessibility of key messages by a diversity of persons with disabilities.

Figure 3: Example of communication channels in use under Disaster READY in Vanuatu and Timor-Leste



Where AHP partners have been intentional about MIS, positive outcomes were recorded from community members living with a disability. Below examples from Timor-Leste and Vanuatu demonstrate how MIS broadens the reach of Disaster READY communications and enhances the inclusion of persons with diverse disabilities.



In Timor-Leste, CAN DO reports **intentionally utilising a diversity of communication channels and formats to ensure that key messages** – in CAN DO's FUSONA and El Niño programs about reforestation and climate change – **are accessible to persons with hearing, seeing, cognition and communication disabilities**. This included using radio announcements (reaching 200+ listeners) alongside an interactive and in-person presentation for 71 participants from targeted households and a community group. Additional visual and written aids, including brochures, pamphlets, signs and t-shirts, were distributed during the presentation and in public places. When asked about the accessibility of FUSONA and El Niño information, 3 persons with disabilities interviewed under the study, shared how the combined use of written, visual and audio materials had allowed them to access and understand disaster preparedness.

'When information is shared through posters like the Long Summer Poster, I cannot access it because I am visually impaired. I can only understand if someone explains the content to me, like when I join activities about natural disaster preparedness, which often happens.' –

Community member with visual impairment in Viqueque



In Vanuatu, VDPA stresses the diverse needs of persons with disabilities. VDPA employs various communication modalities across its work to ensure information is accessible and that a diversity of persons with disabilities have opportunities to participate. Rather than systematically using multiple modalities for all communication purposes, VDPA reports adapting communication tools to individual requirements. For example, when conducting home visits to a person with hearing impairment, VDPA is able to use basic sign language and/or pictures to communicate and exchange information.

2. Simplified and accessible communication of complex concepts

BOX 3: What are simplifying techniques to help communicate complex concepts?

Inclusive communication best practice recommends using **simple language, clear design and visual aids to explain ideas**. **Easy Read** materials use consistent formatting, inclusive language (including gender-inclusive) and accessible fonts and colours. The approach further emphasises the **need for user testing to ensure messages are meaningful** and contextually appropriate.²⁶

Why use simplified and accessible communication of complex concepts?

Posters, images, videos with sign language and Easy Read materials are **used to communicate messages to people who have diverse literacy levels, psychosocial and cognitive disabilities**.

In both Timor-Leste and Vanuatu contexts, AHP Partners report efforts to use local language to facilitate communication of key messages, including new concepts. VDPA further stressed **the use of local dialects in Vanuatu also supports some individuals from the deaf community, who might be lip reading in their local language**.

'Most people with disability [in Vanuatu] are illiterate and many deaf people do not know sign language. This means that they lip read their own dialect. Communicating requires translating materials... for family members to then share with relatives who are deaf in local dialect through lip reading.' – *Summary Notes, VDPA interview*

Easy Read materials, using pictures and simple language were widely employed by Disaster READY partners in both countries to support and facilitate access to information for people with lower literacy and cognitive disabilities. AHP partners also **systematically planned to test and adapt Easy Read materials with communities**. This aligns with global best practice, recommending that the development of Easy read employs technical expertise to support simplification of messaging and co-development with people with disabilities and people within the cultural context to ensure relevance and transparency of messaging.

'I cannot fully access the Long Summer Poster because I cannot read. I can see the drawings and understand a little, but to understand better, we need explanations of the poster's content.' – *Community member with a mobility impairment in Viqueque*

However, when asked about the accessibility of the Disaster Ready Easy Read material used in Timor-Leste, persons with disabilities consulted stressed these materials are not sufficient on their own and required complementary community engagement to provide sufficient verbal explanation for people who cannot read at all. This feedback illustrates the fact that, whilst Easy read materials are a useful tool to support a greater number of people to access critical information, **these need to be seen not as an end in themselves, but part of a broader approach to provide people with information in appropriate formats and support**. Examples of positive outcomes from testing, developing and adapting information content and format to specific audiences are provided below.



In Timor-Leste, CAN DO, in partnership with ADRA TL, engaged 101 youth, including 2 youth with disabilities, in a series of information sessions and exercises on DRR. The training sessions involved accessible communication tactics, such as simplified language, visuals and use of local language, and were informed by the 2 rounds of feedback collection. The first round of feedback found that youth participants were unfamiliar with disaster terminology and needed simpler language. ADRA adjusted subsequent training sessions, including regular pausing to confirm participant understanding and additional efforts to use simple language in Tetum. After these changes had been implemented, the feedback from the second session was more positive. Participants indicated that 'they found the training useful and believe that they can use the training provided to help them to become more active in DRR and disaster response in their local communities'.²⁷



VDPA reports an essential part of its work involves breaking down information into simpler forms of messaging for persons with disability. This is done through talking directly with people where possible. For people who are illiterate or only speak Bislama, VPDA frequently translates materials provided in English or French, highlighting key points and simplifying messaging. This is often done in verbal conversation. VPDA does this across all of its work, including DRR.

Learning 2:

The use of specialised and alternative communication methods and online inclusive platforms remain under-used, given the limited expertise, financial resources and structures available in both countries. The suitability of such approaches must be re-assessed as contexts evolve.

Whilst the use of MIS and simplified communication approaches are positive inclusive practices used in both countries, other inclusive practices such as **augmentative and alternative communication methods and online inclusive platforms were nearly absent** from AHP partners' reports. Reasons for this often go beyond AHP partners' control, **indicating gaps in the technical, financial and structural resources available in country**. Below is a review of the potential benefits, gaps and challenges associated with various specialised, alternative and online communication approaches, acknowledging that **the suitability of such approaches must be regularly re-assessed as contexts evolve**.



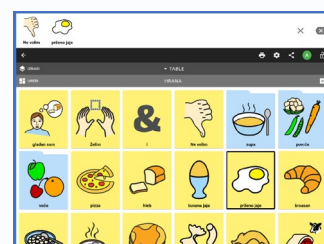
1. Specialised and alternative communication methods (e.g. augmentative communication, Braille, sign language)

BOX 4: What are specialised and alternative communication methods?

Specialised and alternative communication methods are advanced and technical methods of communication designed to support persons with communicative difficulties. This is done by supplementing or replacing the written or spoken word by, for example, coded gestures, sign language, braille or augmentative communication tools (such as picture cards, storybooks, communication boards and mobile / tablet / PC applications – see picture below). Such approaches require individuals to be trained and comfortable using specific methods and tools prior to starting conversation.

Why use specialised and alternative communication methods?

When used alongside other information-sharing techniques, these methods **enhance multimodal information-sharing practices and extend the capacity of practitioners to communicate** with persons with speech and cognitive impairments, engaging them in **meaningful two-way dialogue**. There are many platforms and apps available (both free and at cost), however these do **not currently cover topics of DRR or CCA**, and would require some contextual and thematic adaptation before being used for preparedness and climate resilience in Vanuatu and Timor-Leste.



Specialised and alternative communication methods hold the potential to dramatically improve the inclusion of persons with disabilities in climate change and disaster management conversations. Whilst AHP partners demonstrated an increasing interest in and use of MIS, efforts to address disability-specific communicative issues remain limited without the usage of specialised and alternative communication strategies. In a few ad hoc occasions, AHP

partners reported using a dedicated facilitator or interpreter to support communication to and participation of persons with disabilities; however, the broader use of specialised and alternative methods remains limited by 3 contextual and organisational factors described below.

'In many communities, communication systems do not consider the diverse needs of people with different types of disabilities. Information is commonly shared via radio, posters or through community leaders, but these methods often lack local sign language interpretation or facilitators who can translate messages from posters or TOA announcements into accessible formats.' – *Local OPD, Viqueque*

Key challenges in using specialised and alternative communication methods:

- ▶ **Lack of support structures in-country:** Specialised structures for teaching and/or producing specialised and alternative communication methods and materials are limited in Vanuatu and Timor-Leste. The absence of sign language schools outside of capital cities in both countries inhibit the learning capacity of persons with disabilities, community members and professionals located outside of Port Vila and Dili.²⁸ Similarly, there are limited opportunities to learn Braille and very few Braille materials available in both countries, resulting in few persons with visual impairments knowing how to read it.²⁹
- ▶ **Lack of technical (and locally informed) expertise:** The lack of technical expertise poses a significant barrier to the use of sign language, Braille and augmentative communication methods in Timor-Leste and Vanuatu. This is especially true for sign language, for which users are steadily increasing, despite structural challenges mentioned above. Disaster READY partners' reports, interviews and plans frequently call for sign language interpretation to be included in staff practice.³⁰ However, in both countries, there is no official version or adaptation of international sign language to the local contexts, leading to different versions being used throughout the country. As a representative from VDPA highlighted in interview, local communities often use a form of sign language developed within local context by community members, rather than standard sign language itself. Failure to adapt various local forms of sign language into a standardised, national language inhibits access to information for persons with disabilities.
- ▶ **Lack of financial resources:** Gaps in financial resources or discontinued funding at OPD and public school levels undermine abilities of OPDs to secure experienced staff and public schools' ability to employ and train disability support educators where required.³¹ A 2022 study on the role of OPDs found 'the ability to train, retain and support the needs of staff with a disability to perform in the workplace also requires a minimum of funding security for organisational running costs';³² something that remained a challenge for all OPDs consulted under the present study.

Multiyear programs like Disaster READY have offered a unique opportunity to develop equitable partnerships with OPDs, committing to contribute to OPDs' organisational staff costs. However, the national mandate of OPDs like VDPA and RHTO largely exceed the capacity of their current 8 and 10 staff respectively, and volunteers employed point out to a lack of resources to carry out activities in the field.³³



2. Online inclusive platforms

BOX 5: What are key standards for developing online inclusive platforms?

There are various **guidelines for comprehensive accessibility** requirements for online platforms; however, the key inclusion messages emphasise the need to **engage persons with disabilities as users of content** to guide design. Further to this, basic principles of accessibility include:

Ensuring web content adheres to WCAG 1.0 standards, readability standards are met for all documents,³⁴ content is clearly visible, screen readers can read text for persons with visual impairments, captioning and sign language are provided for videos where possible, and multilingual translation is available.³⁵

The [CBM Global Digital Accessibility Toolkit](#) provides in-depth guidance and recommendations on various ICT platforms, centred on a rights-based approach to disability inclusion.

Why use online inclusive platforms?

Online platforms that follow inclusive guidelines and standards typically increase access to online information by persons with disabilities, offering **live updates and information** readily accessible on people's smartphones or other devices. Interactive and inclusive platforms may also enable direct participation from people with a diversity of impairments and **offer great potential for more equitable and scalable reach**.

Whilst all AHP partners have a website, the content available is often designed for an international or potential funder audience. The use of social media, on the other hand, usually targets a more local audience, with most AHP partners having specific communication staff and strategies in place. Whilst these strategies may include basic inclusive standards of formatting for online posting, **online content is unlikely to reach targeted communities** for the purpose of sharing disaster preparedness and climate resilience information. Indeed, **the limited availability of internet, mobile service and mobile devices themselves in remote communities of Timor-Leste and Vanuatu was raised as a major challenge** to ensure equitable access to online information. A World Vision survey of persons with disabilities in Timor-Leste found that out of 70 people surveyed only 5 were typically receiving warnings about natural disasters through their phones. In contrast, the other 65 persons with disabilities in Viqueque expressed a preference for warnings to be disseminated via loudspeaker.³⁶ This also explains the little investment to date made in the development of more interactive online platforms to support preparedness and resilience in both countries.

'What doesn't work is only using English, or only sharing online, because many people don't have internet or phones. Some people also cannot read. – Summary Notes, VDPA interview

Whilst the above contextual realities and challenges limit the use of specialised and alternative communication methods and the use of online platforms, AHP partners demonstrate other strategies to promote participation from a diversity of persons with disabilities in Vanuatu and Timor-Leste. The study identified 3 enabling and effective strategies employed under the Disaster READY program to promote two-way communication at scale. These are further discussed in Section 3.

SECTION 3: MEETING DIVERSITY AND ENABLING TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION

Two-way communication to ensure persons with disability can participate in programs, design, or feedback is essential for meaningful engagement and accountability to affected populations.

Whilst Section 2 reviewed the main communication channels and methods in use under the Disaster READY program and globally, this section explores parallel and enabling strategies to maximise meaningful engagement and two-way communication with a diversity of persons with disabilities in Timor-Leste and Vanuatu. There were 2 enabling strategies that emerged from the study, namely:

- ▶ Embracing creativity and context (Learning 3)
- ▶ Working with and through OPDs (Learning 4)



Learning 3:

DRR and climate actors need to embrace creativity and systematic contextualisation in order to explore new and effective ways to communicate with a diversity of persons with disabilities.

Discussions with AHP partners, OPDs and inclusion experts under this study stressed that **contextual challenges and the large diversity of persons with disabilities necessitate DRR and climate actors to deploy and cultivate creativity, ensuring their communication efforts speak to their local context and overcome operating challenges.** Global evidence also demonstrates that whilst there are multiple methods utilised to promote two-way communication, sometimes meaningful engagement requires creativity, including the use of art or cultural forms of expressions.³⁷

In order to address the specific and intersectional barriers preventing access to information and meaningful participation by women, youth or remote persons with disabilities,³⁸ **DRCC partners often rely on in-person targeted interventions. However, there is an opportunity to further strengthen mainstreaming approaches, including new and creative approaches.**

'We need to stop assuming there is only one way of doing things when perhaps the development of community maps as part of DRR activities may not speak to everyone who may not be familiar with how to use maps and have different spatial conceptions.' – AHP partner



1. Prioritising in-person targeted approaches

In-person communication is by far the preferred and most effective communication channel cited by persons with disabilities consulted.³⁹ Combined with the localisation commitments of the Disaster READY program, such approaches often recruit local community leaders or local

OPD volunteers to engage a person with disabilities with whom they share common references, language and often have an existing relationship. **Employment of women and persons with disabilities as volunteers can also increase participation and ensure safe spaces** are created for two-way dialogues. All those factors facilitate the tailoring of messaging to individual requirements, supporting locally-appropriate interactions for meaningful participation.

'[Participant] mentioned that he prefers receiving information directly from village or suco chiefs. He believes they are familiar with the local community's needs and can provide more inclusive and understandable information.'⁴⁰ – *Focus Group Discussion notes with person with disabilities in Viqueque*

However, many actors, including OPDs interviewed, stressed that **in-person targeted approaches are costly, suffer some delays, and therefore need to be prioritised to most-at-risk individuals**, whilst other mainstreaming inclusive approaches must also be pursued. **This required actors to use disability mapping data to effectively target and prioritise** in-person and/or home-based engagements.

2. Mainstreaming flexible and context-appropriate approaches

Mainstreaming approaches are vital to ensuring a broader reach of people can access and participate in preparedness and resilience activities. This is particularly true for cognitive and psychosocial types of impairments that often go unacknowledged in communities. The below example from Timor-Leste illustrates the wealth of knowledge carried by experienced local staff that can be used to drive innovative and context-relevant approaches.



World Vision's Disaster Risk Program Coordinator described the need to further integrate the use of culturally relevant communication material and methods.⁴¹ He observes that current Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials are often not inclusive and would preference the following systematic practices:

- ▶ Using local images to ensure cultural relevance
- ▶ Presenting information in the local dialect, especially for those who have limited understanding of the official language
- ▶ Using clear visuals and symbols to help people with various disabilities, including those with reading difficulties

He reflects on the need to pilot innovative communication methods to support the inclusion of a diversity of persons with disabilities. This includes exploring alternatives to commonly used emergency communication tools, such as sirens and loudspeakers, which are not the most effective for persons with intellectual or cognitive disabilities. A current pilot is under way to test the use of light- or colour- based signals to better convey emergency messages in Bobonaro. Such coded systems – with, for instance, a red light indicating the need to evacuate and a blue light indicating the possibility to return – have the potential to support people's rapid understanding and response to alerts. Learning from this pilot could also support communication under DRR activities.

Another promising mainstreaming approach is the increased use of ‘reasonable accommodations’ (see Box 5 below) in development programs globally. Whilst the study found limited evidence of use of reasonable accommodations in Disaster READY projects,⁴² **there is an opportunity to systematically include such provisions in budgets and further explore and document relevant applications to local contexts and for different groups of people.**

BOX 6: What are reasonable accommodations?

Reasonable accommodations refer to the provision of specific support or modifications, with the aim of overcoming barriers to participation by people with disabilities. A budget line dedicated to reasonable accommodations ensures programs have the flexibility to meet various needs of people with disabilities that may arise at different stages.

Why use reasonable accommodations?

Reasonable accommodations make a significant difference in persons with disabilities’ abilities to attend and/or engage in activities. They can take various forms depending on the specific barriers faced by individuals – for example, paying for transportation, an interpreter or support person, childcare or a temporary assistive device.



Learning 4:

Working with and/or through OPDs is an effective communication strategy, building on OPD’s expertise, mandate and existing networks in-country. This also helps to address stigma and develops safe spaces for meaningful participation and representation of persons with disabilities.

OPDs are national and local civil society organisations in Timor-Leste and Vanuatu that seek to represent, empower and include persons with disabilities in development efforts. Made up of national advocates, OPDs represent the interests and rights of those living with disabilities. OPDs engage a diversity of government, civil society and community actors. Relying on an existing network of persons with disabilities (their members and volunteers) and professionals (their staff), **OPDs represent a critical resource for development programs such as Disaster READY.** The study found strong evidence of positive communication outcomes from working with and through OPDs under Phase 2 of the program, including evidence of 1) increased reach and expertise, 2) increased trust and meaningful participation of persons with disabilities, and 3) essential contributions to addressing stigma and building inclusive environments.

‘We need a good line of coordination for us with disabilities so that we with disabilities know that we do not walk alone.’ – TL local OPD, World Vision Inclusion Survey report



1. Working with OPDs supports local disability networks, increasing reach and expertise

National OPDs like VDPA and RHTO offer valuable inclusion expertise to support the development of inclusive communication strategies and tools in context.⁴³ They have well-established networks of individuals dedicated to promoting the rights of persons with disabilities alongside local expertise developed through long-term relationships with local communities. This includes connections to other specialized OPDs with communication expertise for specific impairments, offering support services such as sign language interpretation. Key contributions as technical advisors from OPDs under Disaster READY include: technical advice and demonstrated expertise on local context and disability community engagement, ability to adapt and/or develop inclusive communication tools and employ a range of communication methods, support to disability mapping activities, and the identification of barriers to inclusion (including communicative barriers) and ways to address these.

OPDs also prove to be valuable as direct implementors and mobilisers, assisting and engaging persons with disabilities and community members.⁴⁴ Partnerships with national and local OPDs under Disaster READY have demonstrated how OPDs' existing networks of volunteers and members with disabilities can be mobilised to relay information, collect feedback and voices from a diversity of persons with disabilities, and even facilitate access to emergency assistance.



Oxfam Timor-Leste observed an increase in participation from persons with disabilities due to RHTO technical support with door-to-door community mapping and identification of barriers for a diversity of people. Access barriers such as the lack of transportation and need for accessible venues were addressed and as a result, the organisation recorded an increase of 1% in the number of persons with disabilities participating in Disaster READY activities in 2023 to 2024, including some activities recording very high participation rate up to 28%.⁴⁵

'RHTO regularly conducts disaster preparedness simulations that actively involve persons with disabilities at the aldeia and suco levels. These activities well build their capacity by ensuring the drills reflect their specific needs.' – *RHTO community-based focal point*



As part of the Tropical Cyclone Harold response, VDPA mobilised its network to ensure persons with disabilities in affected areas effectively accessed information about available assistance. The organisation facilitated referrals of persons with disabilities in need of assistance, and co-led small-scale distribution of dignity and hygiene kits to persons with disabilities (with service provider VSPD). VDPA's identification of access barriers led to the provision of reasonable accommodations supporting a number of persons with disabilities requiring transport to receive monthly cash assistance for 6 months post-cyclone. **There is evidence that VDPA's expertise allowed for a tailored approach that improved visibility and safety for persons with disabilities to access available programs.** This led to relatively **large reach of persons with disabilities under the AHP TC Harold response** – including report of nearly 9% of people reached identified as having a disability.⁴⁶



2. Evidence of increased trust and meaningful participation from persons with disabilities

OPDs bring disability visibility, leadership and real-life experiences of persons with disabilities to the forefront of public awareness. Typically comprised of a voting membership of persons with disabilities and a board – of which a majority percentage (51% or over) are persons with disabilities – OPDs embody what it means to live with disabilities and to actively participate in community dialogues.⁴⁷ **This representation and role of advocate helps build a space where persons with disabilities feel connected and truly welcomed.** In turn, this provides greater opportunities for relatable information sharing, dialogue and meaningful participation supported by shared life experiences.

'In areas where there are community disaster committees with a disability representative, people with disabilities are more likely to have access to DRR information. However, where there is no OPD and no one with a disability on the disaster committee, they are unlikely to access important information regarding DRR or CCA' – Summary Notes, VDPA interview

Given their representation, connections and trust with the disability community, **OPDs were often mobilised for feedback collection and community participation in decision-making** under the Disaster READY program.⁴⁸ Described as critical for 'facilitating two-way communication' where persons with disabilities not only receive information but know, recognise and trust in 'a space to provide feedback', **engagement with OPDs is considered by persons with disabilities to be a safe environment for consultation and concerns raising.**⁴⁹ This perception of OPDs echoes throughout the testimonies of working Disaster READY practitioners who acknowledge OPDs as effective facilitators for feedback and participation.⁵⁰



Under the CAN DO consortium, Caritas Australia explains how its partnership with RHTO ensures the disability community in targeted communities are encouraged to provide feedback by RHTO's municipality focal points. Focal points ensure persons with disabilities understand how to ask questions, share concerns, and report any issues related to the Disaster READY program. Five women and 5 men with disabilities were selected for this role, building trust and acting as true advocates in their communities. While the availability of feedback mechanisms – e.g. hotline, community meetings or written submissions – vary in each community, **focal points act as accessible and trusted contacts within each municipality to channel community feedback** to Caritas Australia and the AHP consortium for follow-up and action.⁵¹



The Women I Tok Tok Tugeta (WITTT) Sunshine Initiative by Action Aid Vanuatu (under the Plan International AHP consortium) is a women's network specifically for women with disabilities. The network has over 600 members and is supported by two mobilisers who are women with disabilities themselves. It supports the voice of women with disabilities by channelling their concerns directly to the Vanuatu DRCC as well as feed into broader climate and humanitarian action developments regionally. In response to the 2023 twin-cyclones affecting the main island of Efate, WITTT Sunshine was mobilized to lead a response to some of the most at-risk and excluded persons with disabilities, providing relief targeted to their specific needs.⁵²



3. Evidence of building safe and inclusive environments

A constant challenge and barrier for meaningful participation and communication with persons with disabilities is **the prevalence of stigmatisation and negative attitudes towards disability** in various spheres of society, in both Timor-Leste and Vanuatu.⁵³ Disaster READY actors report greater difficulties to ensure inclusion of persons with disabilities in locations where community members, leaders and sub-national authorities may not be receptive to or have limited understanding of the rights of persons with disabilities to participate.⁵⁴ **This includes sub-regional authorities** that play a critical role in approving program activities and securing support by village authorities. **Village authorities** then play an essential part in relaying information to the broader community. Finally, **family members and carers** of persons with disabilities are often used as proxies or facilitators to communicate with persons with disabilities. The views and understanding of rights, needs or capacities of a person with disabilities by each of those actors are therefore determinant to ensure persons with disabilities effectively access information and have a say in programs affecting their lives.

'Families frequently do not share information with their members who have disabilities about opportunities to participate in community or public activities. This lack of communication means that people with disabilities may remain uninformed or unaware of events and consultations.' – *Timor-Leste OPD*

In such contexts, the role of OPDs in promoting disability rights and awareness is considered essential to systemic change through their capacity to share information and present 'live examples of the positive contributions that people with disabilities can bring to societies'.⁵⁵ **A shift in attitudes at the community level is critical for the success of projects like Disaster READY that heavily rely on local community leaders and family members to relay information** and lead a number of preparedness activities on the ground. Whilst there is limited evidence of the effectiveness of disability awareness raising activities, several DRCC partners observed that communities with a person with disability on their disaster committee or with active OPD presence were better placed to share information with and secure participation of persons with disabilities into Disaster READY activities.



During a community focus group discussion in Viqueque, participants with disabilities described their contributions to disaster monitoring and preparedness in their community and in close coordination with local authorities. This included reporting heavy rain, strong winds, or floods occurrence to local delegates, village heads, and/or sub-regional ('Suco') authorities. These leaders then pass the information on to Care International and the national Civil Protection Authority. Participants with disabilities further reported receiving guidance from the village and Suco authorities, advising them on what to do in response to each event.⁵⁶ Interviews with local and sub-regional authorities in the same area also confirmed the efforts deployed by local authorities to ensure 'that no one is left out of important updates and decision-making processes'.⁵⁷



Oxfam supported Wan Smolbag's Rainbow Disability Theatre group in their creation of a play called 'Bae I kam' and depicting the lives and stories of people living with disabilities, and the challenges they face when preparing for natural disasters. The 30-minute play is followed by a workshop with the audience that is designed to shift perceptions through the sharing of emotions and empathy with the play characters. It was found to also encourage persons with disabilities to come out and parents with children with disabilities to join and enjoy a community event. The play was toured around the country, at villages and theater venues, and is also available online [here](#).

SECTION 4: TOOLS FOR ACTION

This section reviews key gaps and support needed by practitioners to strengthen inclusive communication practices to communities in Timor-Leste and Vanuatu. It further presents tools developed as part of this study to remedy those gaps, as identified in close consultation with DRCC members in Vanuatu and Timor-Leste.



Learning 5:

There is a need for greater efforts and resources to be directed at the development of context-specific and inclusive communication standards and tools at national and organisational levels. Further investment in understanding the reach and effectiveness of different communication approaches should support the emergence of creative solutions.

Building on key learnings presented above, the research team worked closely with practitioners to 1) identify gaps in inclusive communication tools, and 2) develop tools responding to priority needs identified in each context.



1. Identifying gaps in inclusive communication tools in Vanuatu and Timor-Leste

There are several frameworks and policies at global, national and AHP agencies levels establishing the rights of persons with disabilities to access information and participate in disaster preparedness and climate resilience development efforts. Annex 4 provides an overview of relevant frameworks and policies at global, national and AHP levels. This includes several 'guidance notes' by AHP, also outlining various key areas to progress in order to further advance inclusion in programs and contexts like Disaster READY.

'There is no official national standard specifically for disability-inclusive communication.' -
Timor-Leste Government Official

'The lack of internal protocols or communication guidelines limits the organisation's ability to systematically engage persons with disabilities in two-way dialogue or to tailor messages to [people] with diverse needs and impairments.' - *Timor-Leste OPD*

However, all key actors consulted in Timor and Vanuatu highlighted **national and organisational gaps, including the lack of contextualised national and organisational standards and procedures, guidance and practical tools to further enable inclusive communication practices.** There is also a **further need to investigate and document the effectiveness of various communication practices in reaching and engaging a diversity of persons with disabilities.** Only such assessments and the subsequent identification of potential gaps can lead to more creative thinking on how to close those gaps in context. An example of a recent rapid assessment led by World Vision in Timor-Leste is described below and directly informed the present study.



A recent survey of 70 persons with disabilities led by World Vision in Timor-Leste investigated community preferences for accessing information on disaster preparedness and early-warnings. The survey found a community preference for drill exercises at the village level, along with the communication of information via home sign language (preferred by 44 people) and Braille (12 people). The remaining 14 people did not report specific barrier related to the format of communication. Regarding early-warning messaging, 3 channels of communication were identified, including warning lights (preferred by 28 persons), alarms (32 persons), and in-person or via family members for 10 persons with disabilities who could not access rapid information in other proposed forms because of their location or personal situation.



2. Developing tools to support inclusive communication in Vanuatu and Timor-Leste (and beyond)

Whilst the present study is not in a position to remedy the gaps in standards and procedures at national levels, a focus on practical tools to support Consortium partners in their day-to-day practice was adopted instead.

The first tool developed, Simple Disaster Preparedness Communication Template, was designed in close coordination with DRCC members in Vanuatu. The second tool, Inclusive Communication Mapping Tool, emerged from key learnings and further consultations with practitioners in Timor-Leste and Vanuatu. **Both tools are easily adaptable and likely relevant to other development contexts.** Finally, a third tool, Inclusive Communication Guidance Note, provides a summary of key takeaway and action points for AHP partners specifically, as emerging from each key learning from this study.



TOOL 1 (ANNEX 1): Simple Disaster and Preparedness Communication Template

SOURCE: The Simple Disaster and Preparedness Communication Template was specifically developed for the Vanuatu context in close consultation with the Vanuatu DRCC. The tool was designed in a participatory workshop held in Port Vila, attended by AHP agencies, local partners and OPD representatives.

PURPOSE: The tool was designed by DR partners at a workshop in Vanuatu in 2023, to standardise communication on DRR and CCA in an accessible format. The use of pictures and simple language facilitate access to key information by persons with cognitive or psychosocial disabilities.

USE: It is recommended that this tool be adapted by practitioners to share print and online information about disaster preparedness, risk reduction and climate change adaptation. The graphics (including alternative text) and text can easily be edited to fit a variety of messages and ensure communication is clear and easy to understand.



TOOL 2 (ANNEX 2): Inclusive Communication Mapping Tool

SOURCE: The Inclusive Communication Mapping Tool was informed by a mapping exercise with OPDs in Timor-Leste and Vanuatu. Further insights from desk review and consultations with a range of practitioners and communities in Timor-Leste under the present study also informed the guidance.

PURPOSE: The tool outlines advantages and limitations of various communication formats and material/methods for communicating with a diversity of persons with disabilities. It is designed to not only help practitioners identify potential gaps in their communication strategies but also provide specific considerations for the development of those communication tools to ensure their effectiveness in addressing common barriers by people with different impairments and further known intersectional barriers for a diversity of persons with disabilities.

USE: It is recommended this tool to be used and adapted by practitioners as they come across new evidence of what works and doesn't work in their context and for different groups of people.



TOOL 3: Inclusive Communication Guidance Note

SOURCE: Findings from this study informed the identification of key actions or steps to further strengthen inclusive communication under AHP's future DRR and CCA programs. Recommended actions were further discussed and tested with the research team and DRCC members in Vanuatu and Timor-Leste.

PURPOSE: The guidance note was designed to present high-level action points to be adopted by AHP agencies in order to strengthen inclusive communication in future AHP program design. The guidance note further establishes key takeaways from each of the study findings and supports action by breaking down several steps to progress inclusive communication under future programming.

USE: This tool is specifically addressed to AHP partners to inform the design of future programs.

Photo: Shutterstock



ANNEX 1: SIMPLE DISASTER AND PREPAREDNESS COMMUNICATION TEMPLATE

PURPOSE: The tool was designed by DR partners at a workshop in Vanuatu in 2023, to standardise communication on DRR and CCA in an accessible format. The use of pictures and simple language facilitate access to key information by persons with cognitive or psychosocial disabilities.

USE: It is recommended that this tool be adapted by practitioners to share print and online information about disaster preparedness, risk reduction and climate change adaptation. The graphics (including alternative text) and text can easily be edited to fit a variety of messages and ensure communication is clear and easy to understand.

The template is accompanied by three examples of how to use it to share DRR, CCA and disaster warning information.

1. Simple Disaster Communication Template (Word Template access link [HERE](#))
2. Preparedness Example
3. Cyclone Warning Example_Tanna Island
4. Volcano Warning Example_Tanna Island

NOTE for use of these templates

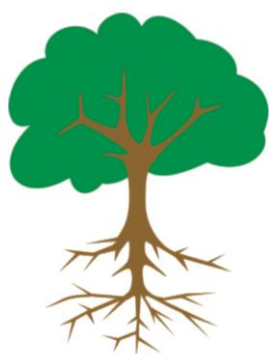
- ▶ Use language that is as simple as possible, preferably translate into local language
- ▶ Identify ahead of time some simple images that can be used for each type of disaster
- ▶ Make sure you add Alt Text to every image so if it is accessed online, it can be described by screen reading software
- ▶ Add the date and location at the top
- ▶ Refrain from adding logos, and other branding information as this can complicate and divert attention from main messaging.

Preparing for increasing disaster and climate impacts



Plant climate resilient crops

Crops such as **yam**, **taro**, **manioc**, and **sweet potato** are resilient to weather extremes.



Protect ecosystems

Plant mangroves and native trees to prevent soil erosion and protect coastal habitats.



Consult early warning and weather information

Regularly check for early warnings and weather information from the VMGD.

<https://www.vmgd.gov.vu/vmgd/index.php>

For more information, contact: John Doe at 1234 5678

Residents on Tanna Island Urged to Seek Safety



Go to Evacuation Centre

Residents are **urged** to go to the nearest **Evacuation Centre**.



What to Bring

Residents are advised to bring **bottled water, identification cards** and **essential medications** with them.



Cyclone Coming

A cyclone is coming. It is **expected to make landfall at 6:00pm tomorrow**.

Emergency Contacts
SES – 1234 5678

Next update 15
Dec 2024

<https://www.vmgd.gov.vu/vmgd/index.php>

Residents on Tanna Island Urged to Seek Safety



Evacuate Now

Residents should go to the nearest **Evacuation Centre immediately.**



What to Bring

If the following items are within reach, bring **bottled water, identification cards** and **essential medications.**

If they are not in reach, leave them behind and evacuate immediately.



Volcanic Eruption

The **Mt Yasur volcano** has just **erupted** at 2:30pm today, Wednesday 22nd April. Ash and lava are flowing fast, which is very dangerous.

Emergency Contacts
SES – 1234 5678

Next update 23
Apr 2024

<https://www.vmgd.gov.vu/vmgd/index.php>

ANNEX 2: INCLUSIVE COMMUNICATION MAPPING TOOL

PURPOSE: The below tool outlines advantages and limitations of various communication formats and tools for communicating with a diversity of persons with disabilities. It is designed to not only help practitioners identify potential gaps in their communication strategies but also to provide specific considerations for the development of those communication tools. This is to ensure the tools meet inclusion standards as well as document additional considerations to adapt the tools to address common barriers faced by specific groups of persons with disabilities, such as women, youth or people with lower literacy.

USE: It is recommended that this tool be used and adapted by practitioners as they encounter new evidence of what works and doesn't work in their context and for different groups of people.

IMPORTANT NOTE: *Color coding is only indicative* and doesn't replace actual feedback and assessment of effectiveness of different tools in communicating information for diverse people.

Communication Formats and tools	Barriers addressed Green = Addressed Orange = Neutral Red = NOT supported	Format considerations and standards	Intersectional considerations – e.g. gender, location, communication difficulties, age
 Communication Format 1: Text-based formats (eg. Easy Read, social media posts, newspaper publication, online publications, feedback box)	Visual Hearing Mobility Speech Cognitive Psychosocial Multiple	<i>Mainstreaming & targeted</i> ▶ Use simple language and local dialect and concepts. ▶ Accompany with visuals where possible. ▶ Engage EasyRead expertise and test material before wider usage. ▶ For online publications, follow the United Nations Disability-Inclusive Communications Guidelines	Additional barriers may include: ▶ Lower literacy rates for persons with disabilities and children ▶ Location and accessibility of material for remote or persons with limited mobility

 Communication Format 2: Audio formats (e.g. radio, community announcements, TV, feedback hotline)	Visual Hearing Mobility Speech Cognitive Psychosocial Multiple	<i>Mainstreaming & targeted</i> ▶ Ensure audio is loud and clear, articulated and slow. ▶ Use simple language and local dialect and concepts. ▶ Standard guidelines: Making Audio and Video Media Accessible Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) W3C	Additional barriers may include: ▶ Lack of access to radio and remote locations
 Communication Format 3: Visual formats (e.g. Poster, billboard, EasyRead, hazard map, online publications)	Visual Hearing Mobility Speech Cognitive Psychosocial Multiple	<i>Mainstreaming & targeted</i> ▶ Use local pictures and symbols. ▶ Include a diversity of people (gender, disabilities) if representing people. ▶ Consider risks of misinterpretations or over-simplification. ▶ Standard guidelines: Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.2	Additional barriers include: ▶ Location and accessibility of material for remote or persons with limited mobility
 Communication Format 4: Community-based methods (e.g. Community information session/ training, drill or practice workshop, home visits)	Visual Hearing Mobility Speech Cognitive Psychosocial Multiple	<i>Targeted only</i> ▶ provide useful tips for communicating with persons with diverse impairments. ▶ Ensure reasonable accommodations to support participation in activities outside of home visits. ▶ Engage carers and/or support person to help communicate with persons with hearing, speech, cognitive and psychosocial impairments (as appropriate). ▶ Use local dialect to allow for lip reading by persons with hearing impairments. ▶ Communication guidelines from the Pacific Disability Forum	Additional barriers include: ▶ Location and accessibility of venues for community events ▶ Stigma and negative attitudes towards participation of women, youth, persons with diverse SOGIESC

ANNEX 3: INCLUSIVE COMMUNICATION GUIDANCE NOTE

The below action points are drawn from key learnings from a study on inclusive communication practices under AHP's Disaster READY Program in Vanuatu and Timor-Leste (2025). These were reviewed and discussed with inclusion specialists, OPDs and AHP partners to ensure their relevance and appropriateness at the time of the writing of the study.



Learning 1: The use of multimodal communication and simplified messaging by some AHP partners are effective inclusive approaches to be further integrated and mainstreamed into disaster preparedness and climate resilience efforts.

Actions for AHP partners:

- 1.1 Invest in Multimodal Information Sharing:** Intentionally use more than one channel to communicate the same message and address multiple barriers to accessing information.
- 1.2 Identify barriers to inclusive communication:** Ensure the specific communication and participation requirements of persons with disabilities are well understood via mapping and door-to-door disability screening activities. Use this information to develop MIS communication strategies.
- 1.3 Invest in and plan for contextualisation, simplification and testing of IEC:** Check that the use of local dialect, concepts and/or images conveys the right information. OPDs are a useful in-country resource to test IEC materials prior to use or publication.



Learning 2: The use of specialised and alternative communication methods and online inclusive platforms remain under-used, given the limited expertise, financial resources and structures available in both countries. The suitability of such approaches must be re-assessed as contexts evolve.

Actions for AHP partners

- 2.1 Support local expertise:** Invest in developing technical and locally informed expertise in specialised and alternative communication methods – for example, sign language, braille and augmentative communication methods.
- 2.2 Monitor context change:** Regularly assess suitability of agreed approaches as contexts evolve, including evolving opportunities to use new technologies for targeted households.
- 2.3 Support adaptation of new global tools to CCA and DRR sector:** Engage and support local OPDs to adapt new communication tools to their local context and sector. This includes exploring the use of augmentative tools for DRR and CCA purposes in countries like Timor-Leste and Vanuatu.



Learning 3: DRR and climate actors need to embrace creativity and systematic contextualisation in order to explore new and effective ways to communicate with a diversity of persons with disabilities.

Actions for AHP partners

- 3.1 Create space for creative solutions:** Create space to discuss challenges and solutions in context with local staff and communities. Test and learn from new ideas to address communication barriers in context.
- 3.2 Strengthen local networks to relay information:** Prioritise in-person targeted approaches as much as resources allow, recruiting local community leaders and OPD volunteers to engage people with disabilities with who they share common references, language and often have existing relationships.

- 3.3 Target in-person engagement:** Prioritise in-person engagement for the most-at-risk individuals; use disability mapping data to effectively target and prioritise households.
- 3.4 Build safe and inclusive environments:** Employ a diversity of people, including women and persons with disabilities as volunteers to increase participation and ensure safe spaces for two-way dialogues are created.
- 3.5 Strengthen use and understanding of reasonable accommodations:** Increase consideration and use of reasonable accommodations, explore what this means in local contexts, include provisions in budgets and socialise with staff.



Learning 4: Working with and/or through OPDs is an effective communication strategy, building on OPD's expertise and existing networks in-country. This also helps to address stigma and develops safe spaces for meaningful participation and representation of persons with disabilities.

Actions for AHP agencies

- 4.1 Continue long-term partnerships with OPDs:** Engage in sustained partnerships that support valuable local structures and capacities for disability inclusion. OPDs can make positive contributions as implementers, mobilisers and/or technical advisors.
- 4.2 Systematise participation in decision-making:** OPDs' representation and role as disability advocate mean they are in a unique position to support feedback collection and community participation in decision-making.
- 4.3 Increase advocacy for inclusive leadership:** Work with local community leaders to address stigma by demonstrating the value of investing in inclusion.
- 4.4 Focus on families and carers:** Engage families and carers to become disability advocates and ensure they know their responsibilities in sharing information and supporting the participation of their family members with disabilities.
- 4.5 Invest in behaviour change and community awareness raising:** Collaborate with OPDs to expand disability awareness-raising efforts to targeted communities, building synergies between resources aimed at promoting inclusion.



Learning 5: There is a need for greater efforts and resources to be directed at the development of context specific and inclusive communication standards and tools at national and organisational levels. Further investment in understanding the reach and effectiveness of different communication approaches should support the emergence of creative solutions.

Actions for AHP agencies:

- 5.1. Support standardisation of inclusive communication best practice in country:** Engage government partners on the development of tools and standard procedures in line with global standards to ensure various actors systematically employ inclusive practices for communicating on disaster preparedness, response and CCA with communities.
- 5.2. Promote shared learning in context:** Share key learnings from new or creative communication practices in context. This includes communicating the findings from the present study back with local actors and communities, including via the development an EasyRead version and translation of the executive summary.

ANNEX 4: MAPPING OF FRAMEWORKS AND POLICIES

GLOBAL FRAMEWORKS & TOOLS

- ▶ **UNCRPD (United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities):**
Emphasises the obligation that states have to develop and promote opportunities for Persons with disabilities to participate, communicate, and access information wholly in society as fundamental human rights, and includes three key articles explicitly mandating states to ensure inclusive communication and participation practices. Article 9, *Accessibility*, dictates that states employ measures to ensure equal access to physical environments, transportation, information and communication systems & technologies, public facilities and services. Article 21, *Freedom of Expression, Opinion, and Access to Information*, stipulates that states must ensure persons with disabilities enjoy the freedom to “seek, receive and impart information and ideas on an equal basis” in all “accessible means, modes and formats of communication” including sign language, braille, augmentative and alternative communication. Article 24, *Education*, mandates that states, in recognising the rights of persons with disabilities to education, facilitate inclusive education on the use of and through “braille, alternative script, augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communication” from professionals trained in disability awareness and inclusive-communication practices.⁵⁸
- ▶ **Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030:** Advocates for a “people-centred preventative approach to disaster risk” that prioritises the needs and perspectives of vulnerable groups, including Persons with disabilities, in disaster management activities. Calls for a) an open exchange of disaggregated data, b) tailored communications “to the needs of users,” and c) the involvement and leadership of diverse stakeholders, including persons with disabilities, to inform disaster management.⁵⁹
- ▶ **Washington Group Questions on Disability: As a standard set of universal questions on disability, this question set** supports the identification of persons with disabilities in a standardised way to enable the tailored application of inclusive communication strategies.⁶⁰
- ▶ **Research for All: Making Research Inclusive of People with Disabilities:** Provides practitioners with a set of guidelines for inclusive research practices. Emphasises the need to identify potential barriers to understanding and to provide information through a variety of formats depending on the identified barriers and the ‘personal preference’ of the person with disability.⁶¹

NATIONAL FRAMEWORKS



Timor:

- ▶ **National Policy on the Inclusion and Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities:**
Promotes equal opportunities to participate in all aspects of society, by mandating a) the promotion of equal opportunities, active participation and improved quality of life for persons with disabilities, b) the inclusion of strategies and activities promoting the rights of Persons with disabilities into all government and agency plans, and c) engagement with civil society to support government efforts and enable appropriate monitoring and evaluation of disability

inclusion. Calls for the use of a variety of communication channels to ensure equal access to information and greater community awareness.⁶²

- ▶ **National Action Plan for People with Disabilities 2021-2030:** Mainstreams disability inclusion across government ministries, settings targets for participation and outlines the need for inclusive communication for persons with diverse disabilities.
- ▶ **National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework (2019):** Aligned with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, this document guides disaster risk reduction efforts, inclusive of the needs of Persons with disabilities.



Vanuatu:

- ▶ **Vanuatu Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction Policy 2016-2030:** Promotes the active engagement and participation of vulnerable groups, including Persons with disabilities, in all aspects of disaster management planning, decision making and community action. Encourages growing community awareness around the needs and fundamental rights of persons with disabilities, and calls for the use of mainstream communication strategies, accessible communications for early warning, including the use of multimedia, stakeholder engagement, and community assessments.⁶³
- ▶ **National Disability Inclusive Development Policy 2018-2025:** Per the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Vanuatu's National Disability Inclusion Development Policy defends the right of persons with disabilities to participation on an equal basis in all aspects of development. It provides "a guideline for action for national and provincial government and non-government stakeholders" to improve the quality of life of persons with disabilities and calls for working officials and practitioners to ensure the access of persons with disabilities to both "physical environments as well as to knowledge, information and communication" through the use of a variety of inclusion strategies and communication channels.⁶⁴

AHP FRAMEWORKS & TOOLS

- ▶ **Thematic Guidance Note: Influencing Government-led Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction:** Provides practical guidance for disability inclusion within disaster preparedness activities. Calls for a) awareness of the rights and situation of persons with disabilities among key actors and decision-makers, generated through collaboration with OPDs and persons with disabilities, b) disability-inclusive government disaster preparedness and risk reduction mechanisms and activities that are shaped by partnerships with OPDs, c) government-led assessment process that locates persons with disabilities and identifies their needs, and d) disaster risk reduction activities that are inclusive and accessible both physically and communicatively to persons with diverse disabilities.⁶⁵
- ▶ **Thematic Guidance Note: Strengthening Disability Inclusion in Community-based Disaster Preparedness:** Recognises that persons with disabilities are disproportionately disadvantaged by disasters and are pre-exposed to disaster as a result of social barriers. Calls for a) collaboration with OPDs to improve awareness on national and community levels of the issues faced by persons with disabilities and their rights to inclusion in disaster management spheres, b) greater disability representation in key disaster leadership

committee, c) identification of persons with disabilities and their needs and use this to inform the accessibility of physical environments, information, communications, and services.⁶⁶

- ▶ **Thematic Guidance Note: Using Evidence to Inform and Monitor Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction:** Guides practitioners on the a) collection and disaggregation of disability data capable of informing improved inclusive disaster risk reduction activities, b) use of disability inclusive monitoring processes to “capture information about progress in disability inclusion,” c) use of evidence to inform programming and d) dissemination of information using disability inclusive communication strategies.⁶⁷
- ▶ **World Vision Disability Inclusion Policy:** Provides guidance for World Vision practitioners to protect, promote, and uphold the human rights and fundamental freedoms of people with disabilities, and commits working professionals to ensuring all people, including people with disabilities, are equally able to access information and opportunities for participation. Advocates for strong working relationships with OPDs, “twin track programs and initiatives” that empower all community members, and address negative social norms and practices, and call for awareness-raising on the needs, capabilities and barriers faced by people with disability. Commits World Vision to ensuring an inclusive, accessible and safe working environment for all, removing barriers to disability inclusion, promoting representation and the meaningful participation of persons with disabilities in design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programs and projects.⁶⁸
- ▶ **Oxfam Australia Disability Inclusion and Equity Policy:** Outlines a series of standards of conduct in the design, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation stages of a project cycle. Calls for recognition of and respect for the rights, needs and perspectives of people with disabilities and guides practitioners to ensure equal access to, meaningfully participate in, and benefit equally from, all Oxfam activities.⁶⁹
- ▶ **CARE Australia Disability Framework:** Details objectives, practical tips and an action plan that CARE “will work towards so that people with disability have equal access to, meaningfully participate in, and benefit equally from CA programs.” Calls for the concurrent use of Disability-specific initiatives and disability mainstreaming activities that allow the needs and perspectives of persons with disabilities to be included in all humanitarian programs, as well as increasing awareness and capacity among staff to ensure disability inclusion and participation, particularly through growing relationships with OPDs and disability representatives.⁷⁰

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ANNEX 6: RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

The below Research Framework outlines the approach to answering each research question under the present study, including key areas of investigation, methods and sources of information. Data collection tools were developed to meet the data needs outlined in this framework.

Research questions	Areas of enquiry and analysis	Method / Source of info
1. What accessible and inclusive communication practices and strategies are in place for communicating to communities under the Disaster Ready program in Vanuatu and Timor Leste?	▶ Evidence of practices and processes in place, including any guidelines, standards, tracking and approval mechanisms and lead agencies/clusters. ▶ Roles of different agencies and coordination in place between various levels – national/district government, program, community and family levels) ▶ Disaster Ready Access data (as available). ▶ Individual experiences from persons with disabilities including positive outcome and/or any gap and challenges from the existing system. Analysis: Mapping of existing communication system and key outcomes for: ▪ Accessing information about disaster preparedness and CCA, and ▪ Accessing information about participation in the program and feedback mechanisms ▪ A diversity of persons with disabilities (per impairment type)	▶ Desk review: DR program documents, progress reports ▶ KII with DRCC ▶ KII with OPDs ▶ KII with government ▶ FGD with persons with disabilities

2. What does existing evidence from Vanuatu and Timor-Leste highlight about how to effectively communicate with persons with disabilities?	▶ Global evidence/best practice to ensure two-ways and effective communication with persons with disabilities. ▶ Contextual lessons learned about how to best communicate with persons with disabilities in Timor and Vanuatu. ▶ Individual perceptions and preferences of communication systems from a diversity of persons with disabilities in Timor and Vanuatu. Analysis: <i>identify what ideal communication system would look like for communicating with a diversity of persons with disabilities in Timor-Leste and Vanuatu, including the 'what', 'how' and 'who'.</i>	▶ Desk review: global evidence and best practice (<i>CBM lead</i>) ▶ KII with DRCC ▶ KII with OPDs ▶ KII with government ▶ FGD with persons with disabilities
3. What tools or approaches can strengthen effective climate and disaster risk communication with people with disabilities?	▶ Most significant barrier for persons with disabilities to access information ▶ Practitioners (DRCC members, externals) preferred tool and format (e.g. template, checklist) that can strengthen inclusive communication practices. ▶ OPDs' feedback on proposed tools and approaches to improve inclusive communication. Analysis: <i>Identify and develop a tool that address priority need for improving communication with a diversity of persons with disabilities under Disaster Ready project (and beyond).</i>	▶ Desk review: regional evidence on challenges and barriers for persons with disabilities to access information (<i>CBM lead</i>) ▶ KII with DRCC ▶ KII with OPDs ▶ KII with government ▶ FGD with persons with disabilities

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