





Community planning meeting

Hiu, Vanuatu

Communities across Vanuatu can experience very wet or very dry conditions as a result of El Niño and La Niña. These conditions, along with extreme events like cyclones, can have serious impacts on a community's water and food supplies, infrastructure (like houses and roads), livelihoods and health.

A very important action that communities can take to get ready for these impacts is to hold regular community meetings. A key step in taking early action is to bring everybody in the community together to: discuss issues, warnings and forecasts; to identify which other communities, organisations or government departments they can talk to and work together with; and to make smart decisions and plans about what can be done to prepare.





Food preservation

Pele, Vanuatu

In Vanuatu, we need healthy gardens so that we have enough food for everyone in the community. Very wet or very dry conditions, along with extreme events like cyclones, can have serious impacts on our gardens and food supply. Food preservation is one early action that communities can take to prepare for times when there is little food available. There are many ways that different foods can be preserved.

This picture shows one example of food preservation on Pele Island. These Pele women are working with the SPC-GIZ program to preserve fruit and nuts using a solar fruit dryer. The dried food can be stored away for times when there is little food available and also provides island women with a source of alternative income from the sale of some of these products.

You can encourage discussion by asking workshop participants: 'What food preservation techniques are used or have been used in your community? What food preservation techniques could you use to prepare in advance for wet and dry times?'





Hand washing, hygiene & water conservation

Ambrym, Vanuatu

In Vanuatu, communities can often experience drought or very dry conditions during an El Niño event. Low rainfall and potential water shortages can have serious impacts on health, food security and livelihoods. For example, waterborne disease outbreaks like diarrhea are often associated with very dry conditions.

There are many low or no cost actions that communities can take to prepare for times when there may be very dry conditions or water shortages. Communities in Ambrym are working with the Red Cross to raise basic hygiene awareness, and promote hand washing and water conservation.

You can encourage discussion by asking workshop participants: 'What water conservation methods and good hygiene practices are useful and relevant to your communities or schools?'





Disaster simulation exercise

Gaua, Vanuatu

Disaster simulations are an important tool that communities can use to take early action by practicing their response to extreme events like cyclones or floods. Communities can work with government departments, non government organisations (NGOs) and organisations like Red Cross to make an assessment of the specific risks that they might face. This will help people to plan a 'smart' simulation and have a clear understanding of potential situations – for example, what areas are most at risk, where they should go in the event of a disaster and how quickly they will need to move. Forecasts can determine what kind of disaster simulation is done and can help communities to make a plan for those particular conditions.

This picture shows a cyclone simulation in the Banks Islands. Communities in Gaua are working with the Red Cross and taking a range of early actions to prepare for disasters. Some of the actions they have taken include setting up a Community Disaster Committee, identifying evacuation centres and conducting disaster simulations like the one in this photo. Evacuation centres should be located in safe sites and need to be well maintained, with supplies (for example, a First Aid Kit) and basic necessities like water, food and sanitation facilities.





Erosion control

Mota Lava, Vanuatu

Soil erosion, landslides and coastal erosion are already a big problem for many communities in Vanuatu, causing serious damage to infrastructure (such as houses, roads and airstrips) and livelihoods, and threatening food and water security. Cyclones, storms, flooding, very wet conditions and changes in sea levels can further increase the risk and intensity of erosion.

There are many ways that communities in Vanuatu can reduce the risk and severity of erosion, both inland and on the coast. This picture shows a community in Mota Lava taking early action and re-vegetating with local plant species an area close to the sea.

You can encourage discussion by asking workshop participants: 'What are the benefits of erosion control in your area?'