

CARE International VANUATU

Technology: Improving Accountability in Emergencies



During the 2015 Cyclone Pam emergency response, the CARE team in Vanuatu provided lifesaving emergency assistance to 15,897 men and 15,171 women across Tafea Province. Sixty-six staff and 45 volunteers delivered over 32,000 essential household items, including 2,800 Emergency Shelter Kits, 5,800 Build Back Safer Fixing Kits, 3,300 Hygiene Kits and 84 tonnes of food to 237 communities.

CARE's Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) team managed the household registration lists required for distributions, conducted extensive monitoring surveys and facilitated focus groups. These rigorous accountability measures generated a significant amount of paperwork, which needed to be entered into a complex beneficiary tracking system. For staff working in high pressure environments – often with limited experience in high volume data management – accurate and timely data entry was a challenge.

CARE's M&E team capitalised on technology to improve data accuracy, following a Rapid Accountability Review that identified some common difficulties in data entry processes. Simple Word and Excel functions were used to manage household information; pre-prepared drop down lists helped staff select village names and minimised data entry spelling errors; and automatic calculations checked the accuracy of entered beneficiary numbers and alerted staff to typing mistakes.



Photo 1. Resilience team member conducting paper-based monitoring

Field Monitoring with KoBo Toolbox

In August, M&E field teams had the opportunity to trial electronic data collection, contributing to the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development's Risk Resilience Unit's El Nino Hotspot survey, using the KoBoCollect app. This trial was a success, with the technology appealing to the existing capabilities of M&E volunteers who are adept at using touchscreen technology. As a result, CARE invested in its own tablets, as well as tablets to support the Tafea Provincial Disaster Committee to collect data.

October post-distribution monitoring (PDM) was the first fully electronic survey undertaken by CARE in Vanuatu. The survey used forms built with Kobo Toolbox software. The improvement in data quality and processing times was significant: the June PDM took a team of 14 data entry volunteers four weeks to process, then a week-long data cleaning effort was completed before analysis could even begin. **The October PDM was processed, analysed, and a preliminary summary available within 48 hours.**

Resilience program teams are currently in the field using the tablets for a baseline Disaster Risk Reduction survey, the results of which will easily be shared with other NGO consortium members, who are also using the software, allowing data from across provinces to easily be compared and analysed.



Photo 2. Paper-based PDM filled files with surveys which then required time-consuming data entry; new tablets are easy to transport, simple to use and data automatically uploads to the database for rapid analysis.

CAPTURING EVERY VOICE

The M&E team have placed considerable focus on ensuring effective feedback mechanisms were in place for the Cyclone Pam response: mechanisms that could be used by all community members. While feedback boxes were well-used and well-known, not all community members had the literacy skills to fill in feedback forms.

Instead, people often approached CARE's field teams, to directly provide verbal feedback. To ensure verbal comments were captured and considered, an **electronic feedback form** was introduced.

With staff now equipped with tablets, it is simple to enter any verbal feedback, complaints, suggestions and contact details into a KoBo form, which is uploaded to the central database for immediate action.



Photo 3. M&E team member using a tablet to record comments