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VOLUME 7 • ISSUE 2

VILLAGE SAFETY IN VANUATU

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reduce poverty | protect refugees
prevent conflicts | empower communities

The international aid agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA)

Peel gently to open

Peel gently to open



Act for Peace is the lead agency in the implementation of the Pacific Community-focused Integrated Disaster Risk Reduction Project, which aims to improve the ability of villages to identify risks in their environment and take action to reduce and manage those risks in the Solomon Islands, Fiji, Tonga and Vanuatu.

The Vanuatu Project Manager, based in the Vanuatu Christian Council office, has formed Community Disaster Management Committees (CDMC) in regions of the country to select villages for assistance. The villages selected clearly understand that to minimise the effect of any form of disaster, they must prepare a disaster risk management plan. The CDMC enables communities to select and train committees to develop and use a Disaster Action Plan to reduce the effect of the natural hazards affecting their community, through:

- ✓ Conducting awareness sessions in schools and marketplaces
- ✓ Community meetings
- ✓ Church meetings



can train each of the ten members of a Community Disaster Management Committee

All gifts of \$2 or more are tax deductible.



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THANK YOU Partners for your commitment to Act for Peace through your prayers and regular gifts. Through your generosity, we are making a real and lasting difference to the lives of many people affected by conflict or extreme poverty.

If you would like to upgrade your regular gift, simply free call Howard or Emma, **1800 025 101** or email hgraham@ncca.org.au. Also, all feedback and suggestions are welcome, as we love to hear from you and to pass on comments to project partners.

On the other hand, if you are not yet an Act for Peace Partner and would like to be, or would just like to help this project, your call or email will be welcomed!

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Villages in Vanuatu Safer Thanks to Disaster Risk Reduction Training

Dear Partner,

My Name is Rosina Bong. I'm 19 years old and I live in the village of Emiotungan in the volcanic hills of West Ambrym, an island located in the central part of Vanuatu.

Our village has no water source nearby. Lack of water safety measures led to contamination of rain water collections due to acid rain from volcanic ash. Additionally, damaged wells in the community were not repaired.

One of my daily chores used to be to fetch water for my family from the creek below, which is quite a distance from the village. With the news of murder and rape cases that I heard on the radio, I was always uncomfortable walking to the creek on my own and preferred to go with others for safety and peace of mind.

Unfortunately, there were occasions when no one was available to accompany me. These solitary walks to the creek and back were very stressful experiences. I was tense and wary of every single noise as I made my way through the forest. I would pray every time I had to collect some water alone that God would protect me. I depended on God's protection.

The Pacific Community-focused Integrated Disaster Risk Reduction Project (PCIDRR), which is being implemented by Act for Peace, changed all that. Through this project, a Field Project Officer and training team came to our village. Following the PCIDRR training, the community began repairing existing damaged wells and started constructing new ones in the village. People in the village have become more responsive after the disaster training as they realise that the well-being of the whole community depends upon what the community can do instead of waiting for outside help. No longer do I need to walk to the creek on my own to fetch water.

All our drinking, bathing, cooking and washing needs have been met by the actions of the Community Disaster Management Committee with support by all the people in the community. The whole village is very grateful and happy about the benefit from the assistance of the PCIDRR Project.

I am so happy, not only because the disaster training in my village will make us better prepared to face the next disaster, but also because our village now has a plan to do many things that will make life in our village safer and better. I am so happy to be a part of this. Today, I understand risk management and have learnt to develop a risk reduction plan for any contingency, with special emphasis on volcanic eruption or cyclone. We are now aware of the simple actions we can take to ensure our safety.

Rosina

Partners Prayer Points:

- *Pray for the safety of people living in communities, where the risk of natural disaster is a constant hazard.*
- *Pray for the work of dedicated people who share their skills and knowledge with village communities on how to identify hazards, take action to reduce them and to plan procedures in order to save lives should disaster strike.*



Rosina carries water home from one of the new community wells.