

# TRACKING PROGRESS ON LOCALISATION:

A PACIFIC PERSPECTIVE

JULY 2018

HOW CAN WE DEMONSTRATE CHANGE  
TOWARDS A MORE LOCALLY-LED  
HUMANITARIAN SYSTEM IN THE PACIFIC?

This paper is part of Humanitarian Advisory Group's *Intention to impact: Localisation of humanitarian action in the Pacific* research project.

HUMANITARIAN  
ADVISORY GROUP



**PIANGO**

Pacific Islands Association of  
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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Cover, interior pages: Damage to palm trees caused by Tropical Cyclone Gita in Oni-i-Lau, Fiji, February 2018.

Source: PIANGO

## About PIANGO

The [Pacific Islands Association of Non-Government Organisation \(PIANGO\)](#) is the major regional non-governmental organisation with membership in the 23 countries and territories of the Pacific Islands. For over 25 years, PIANGO has served the Pacific through strengthening and building the capacity of the civil society sector. This is through giving the sector a voice for policy formulation and development and strengthening National Liaison Units (NLU) or the umbrella organisations in member countries.

## About Humanitarian Advisory Group

[Humanitarian Advisory Group \(HAG\)](#) was founded in 2012 to elevate the profile of humanitarian action in Asia and the Pacific. Set up as a social enterprise, HAG provides a unique space for thinking, research, technical advice and training that can positively contribute to excellence in humanitarian practice.

## Partnership for research impact

Humanitarian Advisory Group and PIANGO are partnering on this research; both organisations have a focus on research and localisation. Working together increases reach and influence across the region.

PIANGO has a strong civil society network of organisations involved in humanitarian preparedness and response in the Pacific, and has been involved in promoting localisation initiatives and perspectives in national, regional and global forums including the WHS. PIANGO was actively involved in the Pacific lead-up to the WHS. Its priorities include reinforcing local leadership, strengthening community resilience and localisation of aid.

Humanitarian Advisory Group is undertaking a three-year research initiative called [Humanitarian Horizons](#) supported by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The first project under the Humanitarian Horizons research program is Intention to Impact: the Localisation of Humanitarian Action in the Pacific. This research explores the activity and impact of localised approaches to humanitarian action in the Pacific, with a focus on two case study countries. The project aims to generate tools and approaches to measure localisation that can be adopted and used to inform humanitarian programming in the Pacific. The first paper outlines a [proposed approach to measuring localisation](#).

Intention to impact:  
Measuring Localisation

Tracking progress on  
localisation:  
a Pacific perspective



# HOW CAN WE DEMONSTRATE CHANGE TOWARDS A MORE LOCALLY-LED HUMANITARIAN SYSTEM IN THE PACIFIC?

## OVERVIEW

**The global humanitarian sector is currently developing ways to measure progress on localisation following on from the commitments made at the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) in 2016. This has also been a key issue for humanitarian actors in the Pacific region.**

In June 2018, the Pacific Islands Association of Non-Government Organisations (PIANGO) and Humanitarian Advisory Group brought together Pacific humanitarian actors from Fiji, Tonga and Vanuatu to discuss progress on localisation and

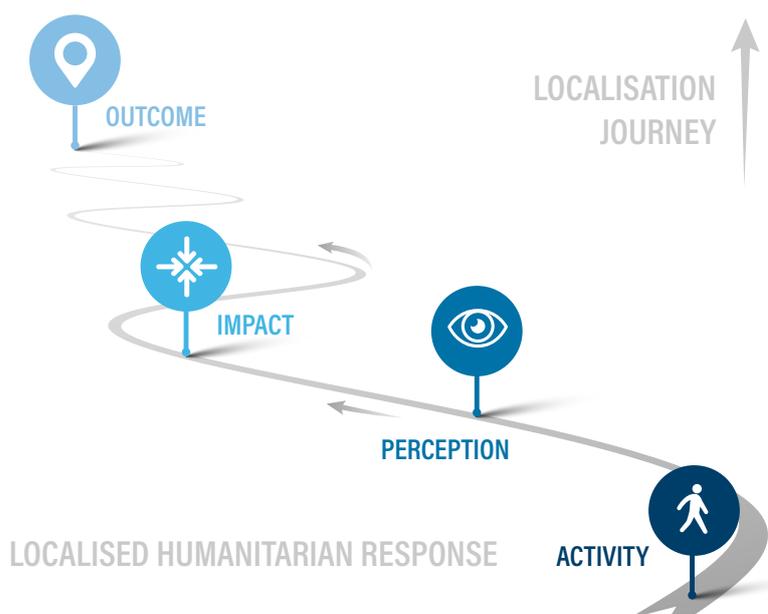
to explore priorities for measuring change. What emerged from this 'Pacific Talanoa' was the idea of a 'localisation journey'. All humanitarian actors are on this journey together, although priorities and contexts differ. Pacific actors sought to define the 'signposts' along this journey that would show what change is happening, and whether progress towards a locally-led humanitarian system is occurring.

This outcomes paper provides an overview of the consultation discussions and highlights Pacific priorities for measuring change. It will inform the development of a framework for measuring localisation in Pacific case study countries across the next three years.<sup>1</sup>

## LOCALISATION: SIGNPOSTS FOR CHANGE

Localisation refers to recognising, respecting and strengthening leadership by local authorities and the capacity of local civil society in humanitarian action, in order to better address the needs of affected populations and to prepare national actors for future humanitarian responses.<sup>2</sup> Across these consultations, Pacific actors reflected on their localisation priorities and ways of tracking progress on localisation. A rich discussion ensued, encompassing measurement of both the processes and the impact of localisation of humanitarian action in the Pacific. Several aspects of the discussion were country specific, but common themes also emerged.

**"When we as a country or a region can define what humanitarian action is in our own context and this is accepted by the international community."<sup>3</sup>**



<sup>1</sup> This is part of Humanitarian Advisory Group's Intention to Impact: Localisation in the Pacific research project as part of the Humanitarian Horizons Research Program.

<sup>2</sup> Definition adapted from a Pacific definition developed by national researchers from four Pacific countries as outlined in Going Local: Achieving a more fit for purpose humanitarian ecosystem in the Pacific, Australia Red Cross, October 2017.

<sup>3</sup> Vanuatu consultation

## ABOUT THE TALANOA PROCESS

*Talanoa* is a traditional Fijian process that involves bringing people together to talk. Building on previous localisation consultations,<sup>4</sup> PIANGO's research on traditional coping mechanisms in Tropical Cyclone (TC) Gita and the [Australian Red Cross's research](#) on envisioning localised humanitarian response in the Pacific,<sup>5</sup> this consultation process brought together key Pacific stakeholders to discuss how localisation should be measured. PIANGO facilitated three consultations with representatives from local NGOs, communities, INGOs, faith-based organisations and government representatives to discuss how localisation can be measured.

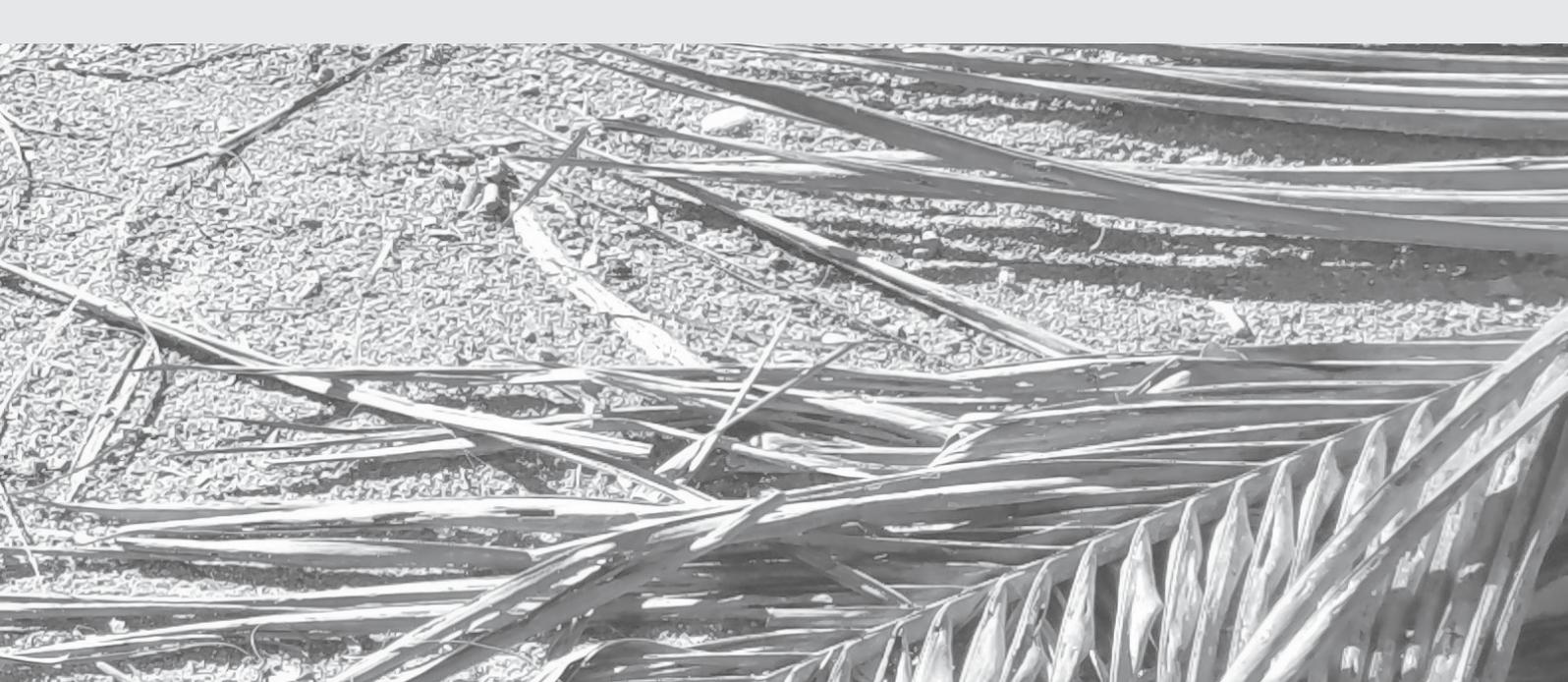
Pacific actors discussed two questions during the consultations:

1. How will Pacific stakeholders know that humanitarian actors are changing practices? (Measuring process)
2. How will Pacific stakeholders know localisation has worked? (Measuring impact)



<sup>4</sup> Regional Pacific Workshop on Localisation, Auckland, New Zealand May 2017; World Humanitarian Summit Symposium, Melbourne, November 2016.

<sup>5</sup> Yaseen Ayobi, Ayla Black, Linda Kenni, Railala Nakabea and Kate Sutton, Going Local: Achieving a more fit for purpose humanitarian ecosystem in the Pacific, Australia Red Cross, October 2017, <https://humanitarianadvisorygroup.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/ARC-Localisation-report-Electronic-301017.pdf> PIANGO, Na Yadravakivi: Case study of community-led resilience during Tropical Cyclone Gita, 2018.



# WHY IS DEMONSTRATING CHANGE IMPORTANT?

The process of defining priorities for measuring change for Pacific actors is important. Existing challenges in the available information, and opportunities provided by having concrete evidence of change, are outlined below.

- 1**  **Challenge:** Currently there is little evidence of the impact of the shift to a more localised approach to humanitarian action in the Pacific. It is unclear how change at the country and regional level can be captured.

 **Opportunity:** This consultation process enabled local, national and regional actors to take a first step to define *what* is important to measure and *how* to measure it. An opportunity exists for local and national actors to develop ways of measuring change that contribute to an evidence base around localisation in the Pacific.
- 2**  **Challenge:** Across all humanitarian contexts, a unique combination of factors influence the localisation of humanitarian action. In the Pacific region, the challenges and opportunities for localisation are distinct, particularly in frequent large-scale natural disasters and where humanitarian action is further complicated by large scale conflict. Participants highlighted that aspects such as traditional knowledge in communities, local leadership structures, regional frameworks and the different humanitarian actors in each country need to be considered in thinking about how change is measured.

 **Opportunity:** This consultation process allowed actors to identify and prioritise those aspects of humanitarian action unique to the Pacific region, and individual countries, that need to be considered in the localisation process. There is an opportunity to drive a process that only measures changes that are relevant to the context.
- 3**  **Challenge:** Current tracking and interpretation of localisation success is driven by an international narrative.

 **Opportunity:** Tracking progress builds an evidence base that would enable national and local actors to hold the international system to account for delivering on their localisation commitments, including those made at the WHS.<sup>6</sup> There is also an opportunity for national and local actors to establish a body of work on what localisation means to them and how progress is monitored.

## MEASURING PROGRESS ON LOCALISATION SO FAR IN THE PACIFIC

Research and reporting on localisation in the Pacific is happening. Australian Red Cross research, led by national researchers in four Pacific countries, explored what a localised humanitarian system would look like in the Pacific. Approaches to measuring localisation were explored in Humanitarian Advisory Group's first research paper in the Intention to Impact: Localisation in the Pacific research stream.<sup>7</sup> Reporting at the global level in recent months has included the ODI Independent Grand Bargain Report, alongside pieces such as Trocaire's research and Ground Truth Solutions' work.<sup>8</sup> Much of this recent discussion has highlighted a persistent challenge in demonstrating concrete changes in relation to localising humanitarian aid.

<sup>6</sup> These include the Grand Bargain and the Charter for Change.

<sup>7</sup> Measuring localisation, Intention to Impact, Humanitarian Advisory Group, 2018, [https://humanitarianadvisorygroup.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/HAG\\_Intention-to-impact\\_research-paper\\_FINAL-electronic\\_140218.pdf](https://humanitarianadvisorygroup.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/HAG_Intention-to-impact_research-paper_FINAL-electronic_140218.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> Trocaire, On the Road to 2020: Grand Bargain Commitment to support local and national responders, 2017, <https://www.trocaire.org/sites/default/files/resources/policy/on-the-road-to-2020-localisation-the-grand-bargain.pdf> Ground Truth Solutions, Tracking the Grand Bargain from a field perspective, <http://groundtruthsolutions.org/our-work/tracking-the-grand-bargain-from-a-field-perspective/>

# TRACKING PROGRESS ON THE LOCALISATION JOURNEY – PACIFIC PRIORITIES

“We are going through a most exciting process – this concept of localisation is one of the most exciting times, revolutionising how we think, work and act together. [It is] a challenge to change the way we think.”<sup>9</sup>

Pacific actors prioritised the areas of **leadership, participation, coordination and complementarity, partnerships, capacity** and **funding** as critical areas in which evidence of change is needed.

The below section shows how the localisation journey could be measured across these priority areas.

## Pacific priorities



## LEADERSHIP

### ‘Liutaka’ is the Fijian term for leadership.

Liutaka is derived from the word ‘liu’ meaning to lead. In the context of humanitarian action being ‘in charge of’ means to take charge in designing programmes that are contextualised to community priorities.

“It is about putting locals first. How do we measure local leadership? It’s about the level of ownership.”<sup>10</sup>

Local and national leadership in humanitarian action is a critical aspect of measuring change. Participants highlighted that we need to be able to track progress on leadership specifically. This includes how local and national actors in the Pacific are increasingly defining their own priorities and leading their own responses, with targeted and

specific international support where relevant and requested. Key indicators include national actors leading in designing and implementing their programs relevant to their priorities and contextual needs and directly leading engagement with donors on funding. Tracking which actors are leading on decisions, and where the power lies in decision making processes was also important. Another key indicator was progress in formalising and strengthening the role of leadership structures for national and local NGO coordination, such as the Fiji Council of Social Services (FCOSS) and the Vanuatu Association of Non-Government Organisations (VANGO). PIANGO is supporting this strengthening of national NGO umbrella bodies.

National actors leading on developing priorities and trialling projects for direct funding by donors at scale was also raised. “We are talking about localisation – but we are not conceptualising what should happen in Fiji and selling it to donors ... We should birth the idea here – designed locally, trialled locally.”<sup>11</sup>

9 Fiji consultation

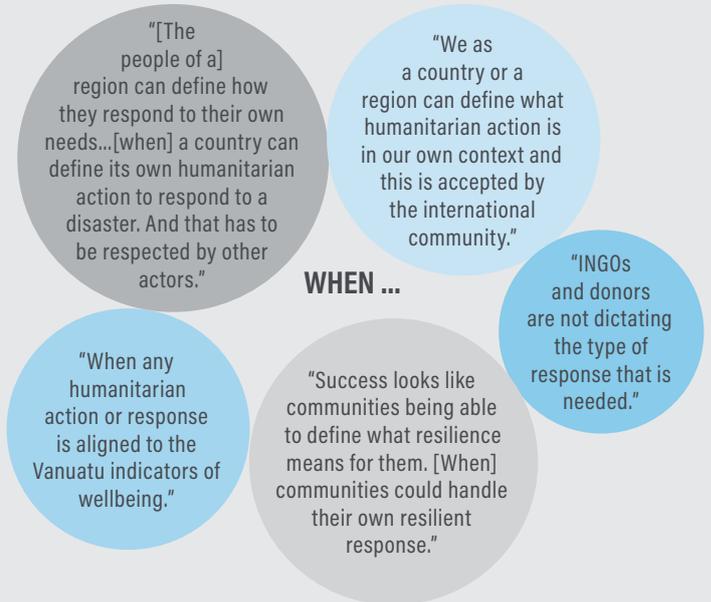
10 Fiji consultation

11 Fiji consultation

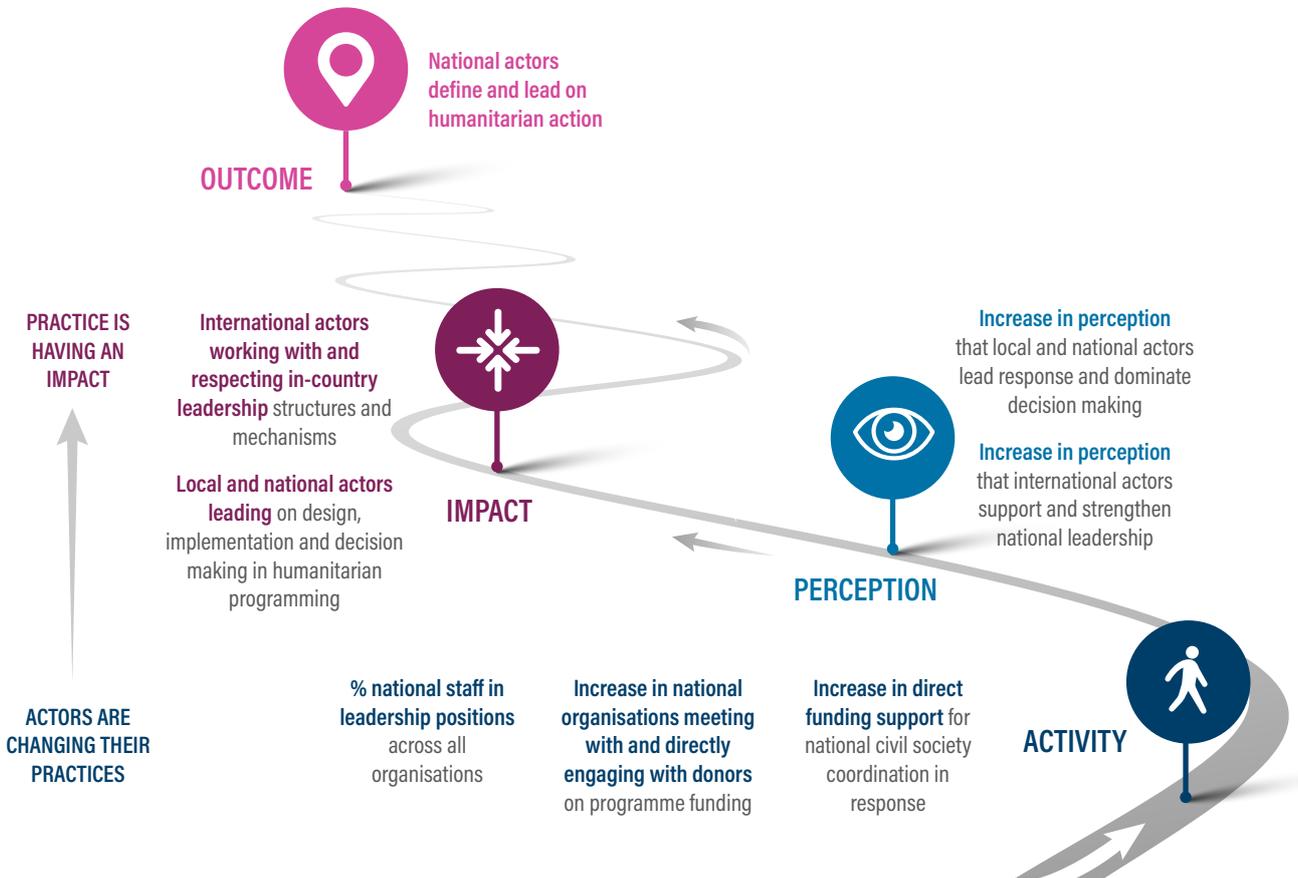
## Defining who sets the agenda

Pacific stakeholders emphasised that the process of localisation has been successful when Pacific countries define how they respond to their own needs in humanitarian response and this is accepted by the international community. This includes defining the roles of different actors, the priorities for response, the relevant humanitarian standards and the use of traditional knowledge for disaster management. It involves international actors understanding and working with the structures, systems, process and priorities as defined by the affected country. In Vanuatu, for example, context-specific wellbeing indicators have been developed; participants suggested that Vanuatu could use these in setting its own agenda in terms of humanitarian action.<sup>12</sup>

## How will Pacific stakeholders know that localisation has worked?<sup>13</sup>



## Signposts for change: Leadership



<sup>12</sup> Malvatumauri National Council of Chiefs, Alternative Indicators for Wellbeing for Melanesia, Vanuatu Pilot Study, 2012; SPC, Pacific Living Survey, Subjective Wellbeing Indicators, 2015.

<sup>13</sup> Fiji and Vanuatu consultations

## COORDINATION AND COMPLEMENTARITY

**The Fijian term for coordination is 'veiliutaki'.** It refers to taking a leading role in commanding/directing something or someone.

**The term for complementarity is 'cakacakavata'** meaning 'working together.' In a Fijian village setting it refers to the different roles played by the various clans in the upkeep of the village. When contextualised to humanitarian action, it refers to how each actor plays different roles that complement one another during a disaster response.

National and local actors discussed what complementarity of roles means for them in a localised response involving government, national civil society, the private sector and international actors. Developing clearer complementarity of roles at the national and local levels, and whether this leads to better complementarity with international actors as well is an important area to in which to track change. This would enable articulation by local and national actors of where targeted and specific international assistance is required or what 'as international as necessary' means in practice.

Evidence for change in this area includes the strengthening of formal mechanisms that support complementarity, such as legislation that outlines roles and responsibilities. For example, Fiji's National Disaster Management Act is currently being reviewed with this intention. It also includes developing agreements or MoUs between government and civil society, national leadership of national clusters, and international actor engagement with traditional mechanisms of coordination in communities. It also involves ensuring international coordination architecture (such as the Pacific Humanitarian Team) does not duplicate the in-country cluster system, and international actors are engaging with and working through traditional and government leadership structures across local, regional and national levels.

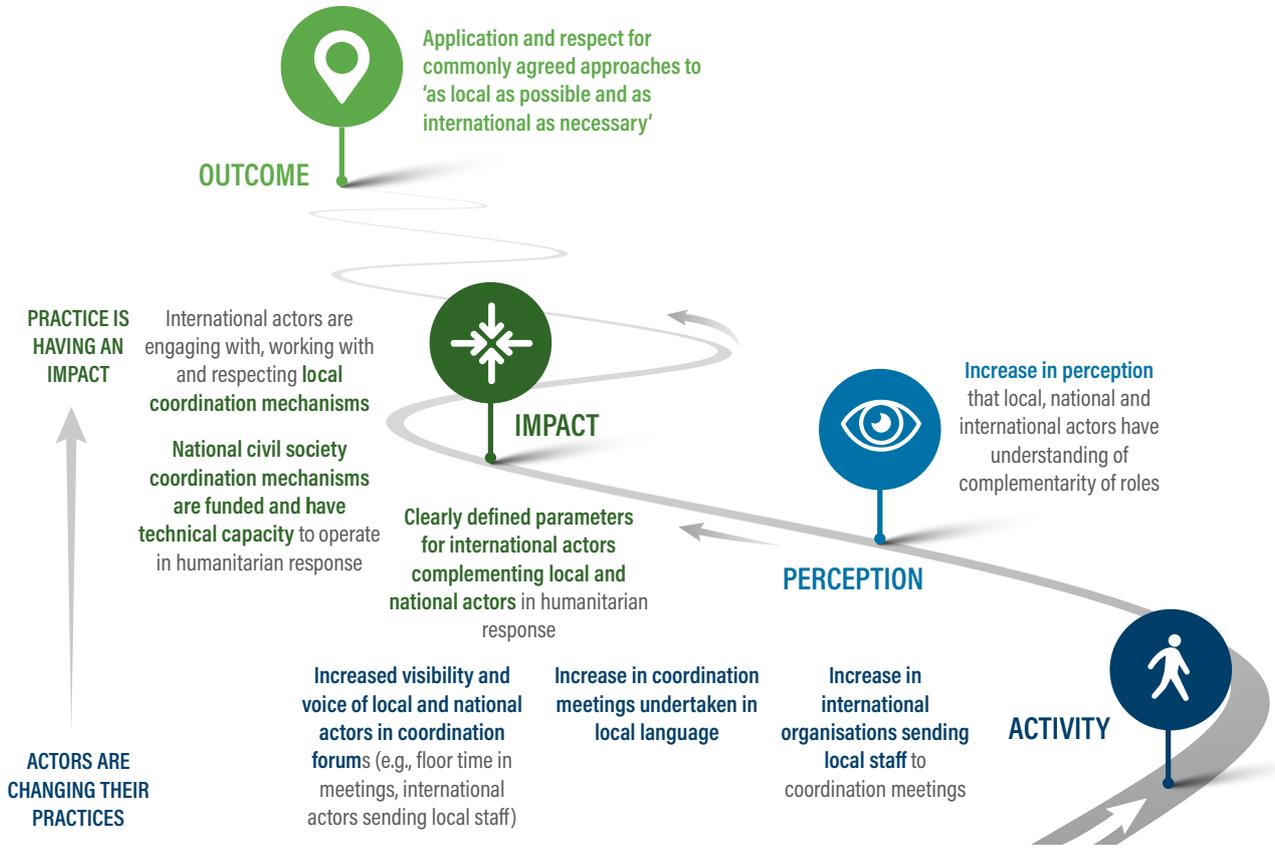
Tracking strategic support to local coordination mechanisms is important. In Fiji, civil society actors highlighted that there is no current mechanism to coordinate and report as a group on their humanitarian programming to government. National and local organisations do not necessarily engage in all clusters; civil society platforms are therefore an important mechanism at the national level.

**"No one [funds] coordination to make it work, there is no visibility for national civil society coordination actors such as FCOSS."<sup>14</sup>**

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<sup>14</sup> Fiji consultation

## Signposts for change: Coordination and complementarity



# PARTICIPATION

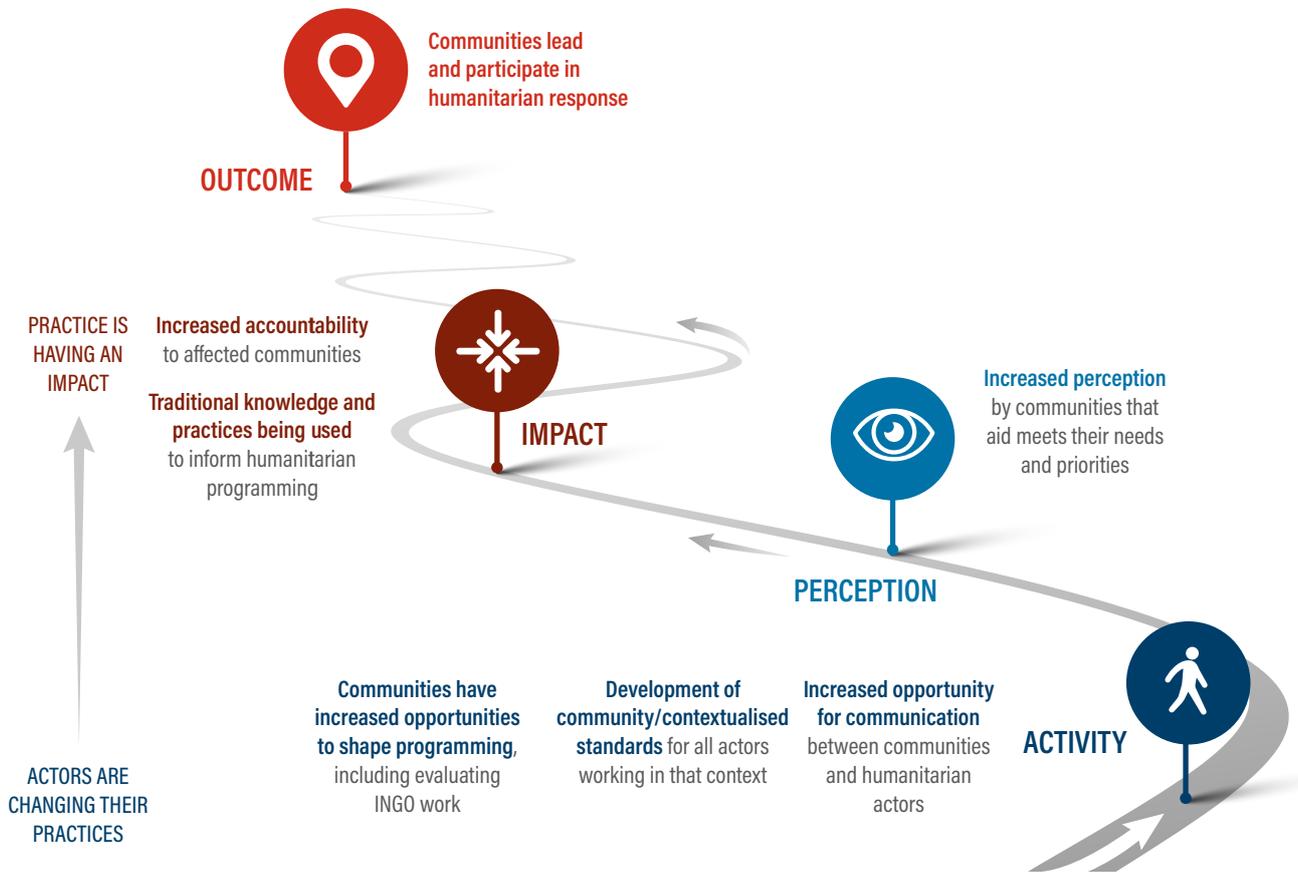
**The Fijian term for participation is 'vakaitavi'** meaning 'having a share or duty.' The concept of 'vakaitavi' means to partake or have a duty in any activity or work. In relation to humanitarian action, this relates to how local actors and communities are able to participate in humanitarian action.

Community participation in defining priorities in humanitarian action was perceived as critical in the consultations. This area was consistently referred to as needing the most attention in relation to localisation. Recognising, respecting and strengthening the role of affected communities was seen as key in enabling them to lead on their responses in alignment with traditional coping

mechanisms. It was highlighted that all actors have a role to play in this aspect of localisation. Suggestions for tracking change included measuring how humanitarian actors increase their engagement with traditional leadership and governance mechanisms in communities, greater community voice/input in requests for international assistance, opportunities for communities to evaluate the work of national and international NGOs, and more examples of international actors supporting existing community processes in humanitarian response.

The process of measuring change in this area will draw on and align with research conducted by other actors that are currently collecting data on community perceptions.

## Signposts for change: Participation



# CAPACITY

The Tannese term (from the island of Tanna in Vanuatu) for capacity is 'nalpakauien.' It refers to knowledge, skills and talents. In humanitarian action it refers to the knowledge and skills of the community in responding to disasters.

“Our capacity definition is not the same as that of the [international] humanitarian actors. There is no trust from them because their way of work is different from ours.”<sup>15</sup>

“What is currently missing is local design. For us to have localisation – you need local concepts, local design and implementation. You conceptualise an idea that you see that need for – you design the program that will meet this need and then you trial it and then you write a paper that says this is workable. We don’t think about ourselves as marketers. To get donor funding you need to market a design, idea and concept.”<sup>16</sup>

A shift is needed in the way the international sector talks about and approaches capacity. Progress on this shift needs to be measured. For example, local and national actors expressed that capacity and/or capacity support required needs to be defined locally. Indicators of progress towards this goal include an increase in national actor perception that capacity is defined by national actors, and that international actors are working to support this. It also includes tracking whether national actors are defining their own requirements for capacity strengthening. Participants highlighted that rather than project-based support or more training, local partners would be likely to request targeted support in areas such as financial systems, risk management and proposal development.

A further way of tracking change in this area is monitoring the proportion of locally designed projects that draw on local and national capacity, rather than being designed by international actors based on externally defined capacity needs.

International actors also need to commit to using local capacities and resources in response, and to be held accountable. Participants agreed that another way of measuring change is to track the development and use of Pacific expertise in humanitarian response.

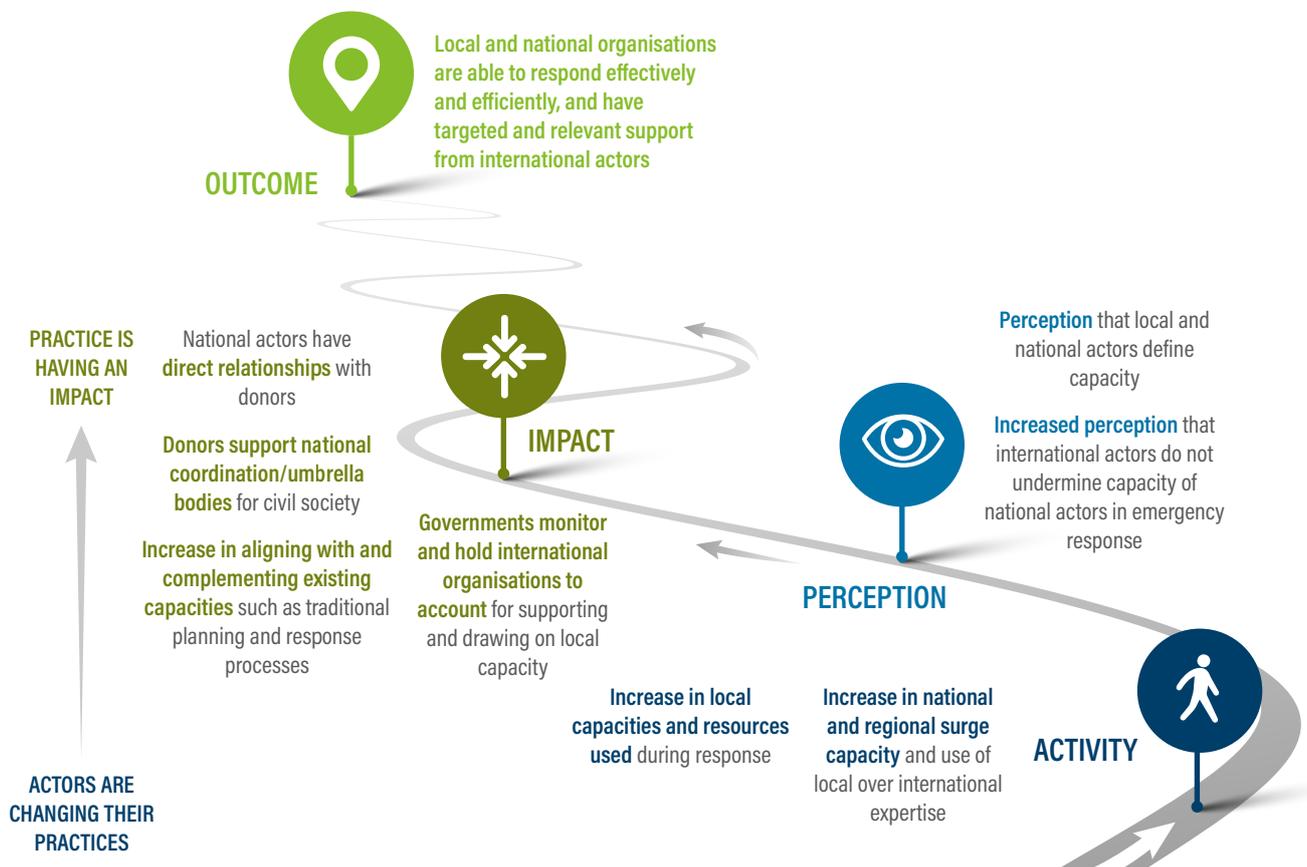
<sup>15</sup> Vanuatu consultation

<sup>16</sup> Fiji consultation

[Localisation is] “when the Pacific has set up a register of ‘humanitarian experts’ rather than depend[ing] on international experts; when we have our own Pacific humanitarian experts and they [are] registered so that we can lead our own Pacific response when there is a disaster.”<sup>17</sup>

Beyond this, localisation requires a shift towards more strategic investment (see also partnerships section) in development of systems, proposal writing and linkages with donors. Another part of this is increased recognition of and support for traditional capacities and coping mechanisms in times of disaster. This process can be measured as part of the localisation journey.

## Signposts for change: Capacity



<sup>17</sup> Vanuatu consultation

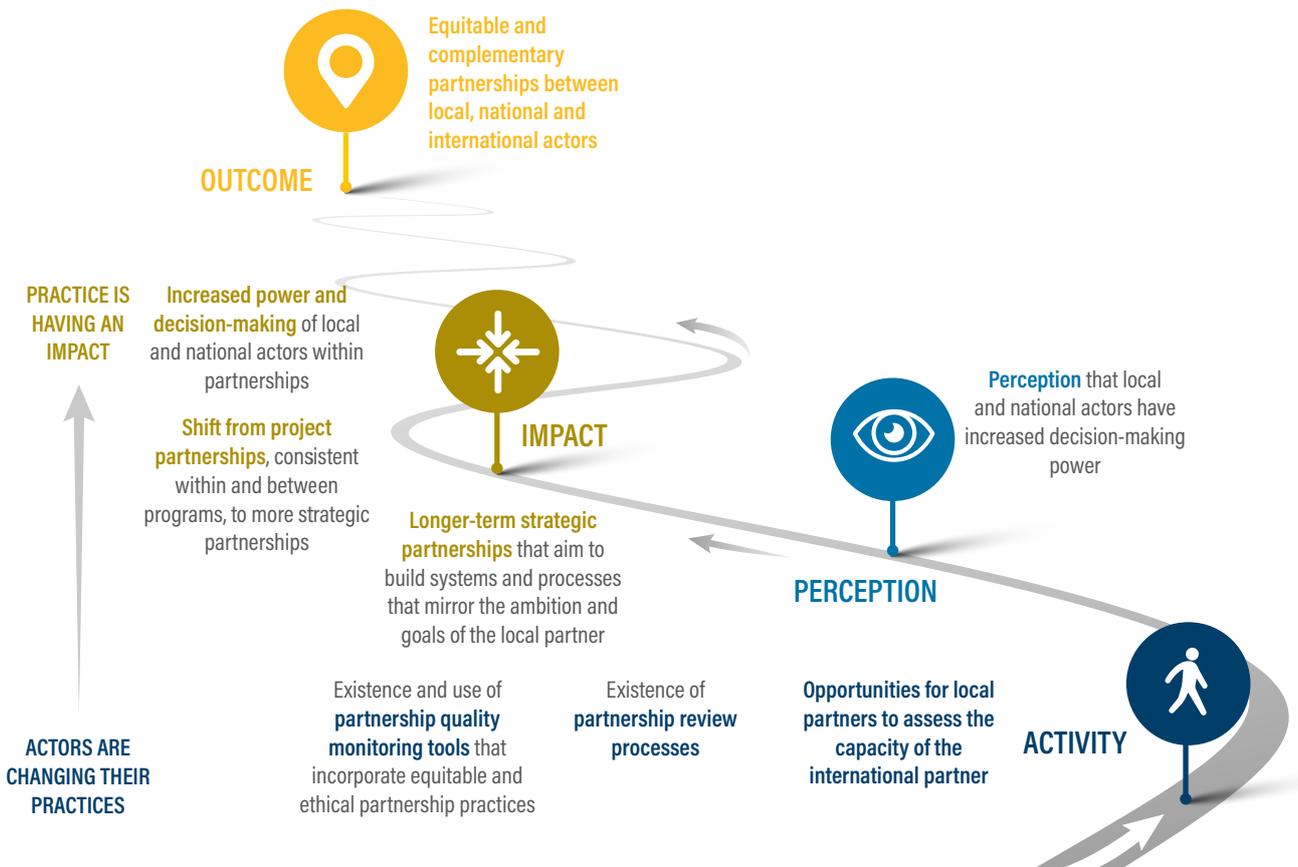
# PARTNERSHIP

**The Tannese term (from the island of Tanna in Vanuatu) for partnership is 'nuafumunian.'**  
It refers to community members coming together to work as a group to achieve a common goal.

Measuring progress on development of equitable and complementary partnerships between international and national/local actors was a core part of discussions. Participants highlighted that a shift of power towards increased decision-making and control for local partners needs to

happen and be measured. Increased clarity about roles in partnerships was also seen as key. This can be achieved by tracking the development of partnership protocols between international and national actors, for strategic support, rather than just project-based support, the ability for local partners to assess international partners, and funding for local partners to manage the partnership itself.

## Signposts for change: Partnership



# FUNDING

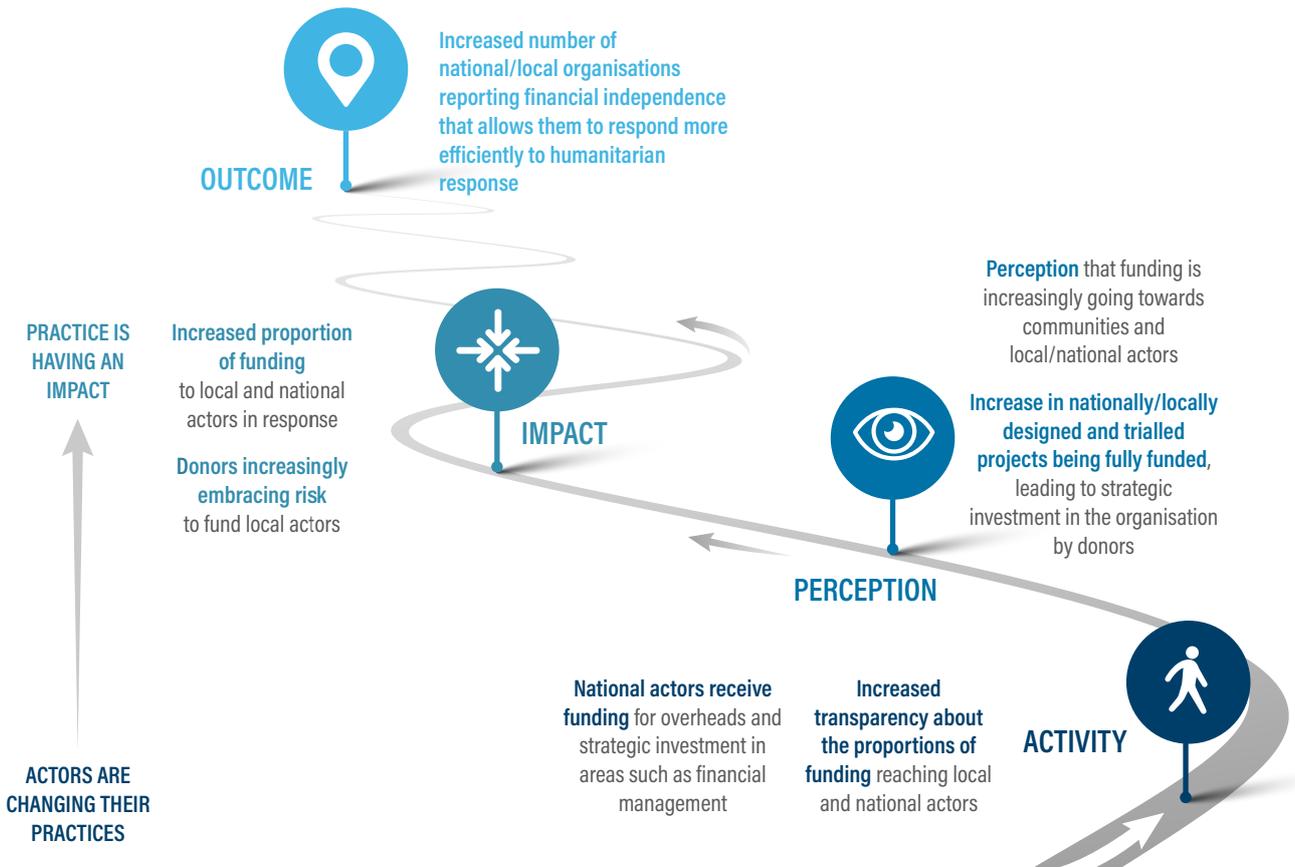
**The Fijian term for funding is 'vakailavotaki'** which means to give funds for something or someone. The term is derived from the word 'lavo' which means 'money.' In this context, 'vakailavotaki' may refer to funds allocated for a project or program by a donor.

Increased funding for local and national actors that leads to financial independence needs to be measured in a variety of ways. Participants' proposals for tracking change in funding included measuring the increase in funding to local and national actors, the 'trickle down' of funding to affected

communities, direct funding for locally designed and trialled projects, and increased transparency on where and how funding is spent by both national and international actors. There is a strong perception in the Pacific that financial assistance does not reach communities; participants identified a need for transparency about the proportion of assistance that reaches affected communities. This includes stipulation of administration fees and transparency by international actors in funding local actors.

Measuring change in funding could also include tracking how donors engage with local and national actors on locally designed projects and risk management approaches.

## Signposts for change: Funding



# POLICY INFLUENCE AND ADVOCACY

**The Fijian concept for policy is 'tuvatua.'**

It means 'arrangements' and is used when referring to policy because it is synonymous with 'a set of guidelines or arrangements' about something.

**The Fijian term for influence is 'igu' which**

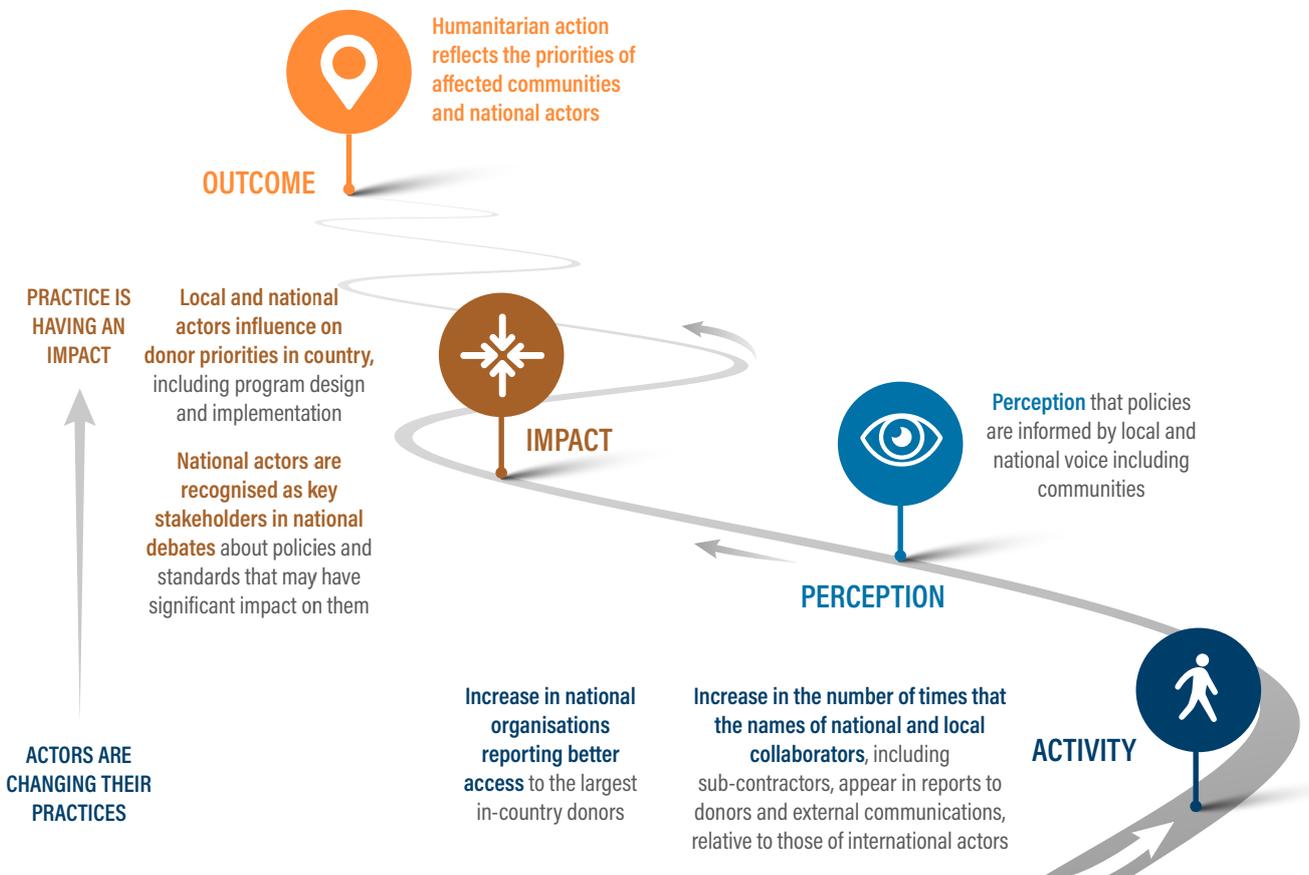
literally means 'effort.' Policy influence therefore means the efforts (igu) undertaken by people/ organisations to implement the local ideas into a policy (tuvatua) that is clearly articulated, agreed upon and used.

Consultation participants discussed policy influence and advocacy. Ideas for tracking change in these activities included measuring the ability of national and local actors to influence international actors' policies and strategies, and perceptions of increased local and national influence on donor priorities in country. Tracking could also encompass change

in international understanding of national policies and legislation, for example, through the uptake of initiatives such as the Country Preparedness Packages developed by the Pacific Humanitarian Team and UN OCHA.<sup>18</sup>

Regional structures and frameworks are also important. Participants identified that there is a need to track how they are contributing to localisation, including initiatives such as the Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific (FRDP).<sup>19</sup> In order to support the implementation and monitoring of the FRDP, the Pacific Resilience Partnership (PRP) Taskforce was formed, bringing together local, national and regional civil society stakeholders and development partners. PIANGO is one of the three civil society representatives to the PRP Taskforce. In a partnership meeting in May 2018, the PRP Taskforce recognised the connections between localisation, development, resilience, humanitarian action and the FRDP.

## Signposts for change: Policy influence and advocacy



18 For example the Cook Islands Country Preparedness Package, <https://reliefweb.int/report/cook-islands/cook-islands-country-preparedness-package>

19 Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific, <https://www.preventionweb.net/english/professional/policies/v.php?id=50272>

# AN ADAPTABLE APPROACH FOR MEASURING LOCALISATION IN THE PACIFIC

## THE WAY FORWARD

There are different challenges and opportunities for localisation across Pacific Island countries. For example, recent humanitarian events in the Pacific such as TCs Gita, Keni and Josie (2018), TC Winston (2016) in Fiji and Tonga, the evacuation of Ambae Island (2017-18), and TC Pam (2015) in Vanuatu had specific responses based on the country and disaster context, the assistance requested, traditional resilience processes and in-country mechanisms. In recent years Pacific governments have strengthened their leadership and coordination roles in disaster response, in particular around requesting and managing international aid. Civil society organisations have also been strong advocates for localising humanitarian aid and have strengthened coordination and leadership mechanisms. Key donor governments in the Pacific have also started to engage with localisation priorities in various ways. This means that priorities for measuring localisation processes and impact will differ according to country context. Ways of tracking impact therefore need to be contextualised.

## NEXT STEPS

The priorities outlined by Pacific actors in this paper will inform the development of a contextualised measurement framework. We will conduct a baselining process in Vanuatu and Solomon Islands that will capture what localisation currently looks like in those countries. The research will complement existing research processes in the Pacific on localisation such as PIANGO's work on traditional coping mechanisms, and will complement global reporting on progress such as the Grand Bargain Annual Report.

### Questions for next steps



Does the evidence demonstrate a shift towards a more locally lead humanitarian system in the Pacific?



In what areas is change happening? Where isn't change happening?



How do Pacific actors want to use this evidence on the localisation journey?

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